

WRITINGS OF AMBROSE OF MILAN

by Ambrose of Milan

Writings of Ambrose of Milan (c. AD 397). Ambrose of Milan was an early church father whose writings have been preserved for the edification of the church.

70 Chapters

Table of Contents

0. Writings of Ambrose of Milan
1. Apology for the Prophet David
2. Commentaries on the Twelve Davidic Psalms
3. Commentary on Luke
4. Commentary on the Song of Songs
5. Concerning Repentance - Book 1
6. Concerning Repentance - Book 2
7. Concerning Virgins - Book 1
8. Concerning Virgins - Book 2
9. Concerning Virgins - Book 3
10. Concerning Widows
11. Concerning the Mysteries
12. Exposition On Psalm 118
13. Exposition of the Christian Faith - Book 1
14. Exposition of the Christian Faith - Book 2
15. Exposition of the Christian Faith - Book 3
16. Exposition of the Christian Faith - Book 4
17. Exposition of the Christian Faith - Book 5
18. Interrogation of Job and David
19. Letters - Epistle 17
20. Letters - Epistle 18
21. Letters - Epistle 20
22. Letters - Epistle 63
23. Letters - Letter 21
24. Letters - Letter 22
25. Letters - Letter 40
26. Letters - Letter 41
27. Letters - Letter 51
28. Letters - Letter 57
29. Letters - Letter 61
30. Letters - Letter 62
31. Letters - Letters 1-10
32. Letters - Letters 11-20
33. Letters - Letters 21-30
34. Letters - Letters 31-40
35. Letters - Letters 41-50
36. Letters - Letters 51-60
37. Letters - Letters 61-70
38. Letters - Letters 71-80

39. Letters - Letters 81-91
40. Letters - Preface to the online edition
41. Letters - Title page, introduction, contents
42. ON THE DUTIES OF THE CLERGY - Book 1
43. ON THE DUTIES OF THE CLERGY - Book 2
44. ON THE DUTIES OF THE CLERGY - Book 3
45. On Abraham
46. On Apostles Creed
47. On Cain and Abel
48. On Elijah and Fasting
49. On Isaac and the Soul
50. On Jacob and the Blessed Life
51. On Joseph the Patriarch
52. On Naboth the Jezreelite
53. On Noah and the Ark
54. On Paradise
55. On Tobit
56. On the Blessings of the Patriarchs
57. On the Decease of His Brother Saytrus - Book 1
58. On the Decease of His Brother Saytrus - Book 2
59. On the Harmony of Matthew and Luke in the Genealogy of Christ
60. On the Holy Spirit - Book 1
61. On the Holy Spirit - Book 2
62. On the Holy Spirit - Book 3
63. On the Instruction of the Virgin and the Perpetual Virginity of Mary
64. On the Sacrament of the Incarnation of the Lord
65. On the Sacraments
66. Second Apology for the Prophet David
67. Sermon Against Auxentius on the Giving Up of the Basilicas
68. The Memorial of Symmachus
69. The Six Days of Creation

Writings of Ambrose of Milan

Apology for the Prophet David

Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Apology for the Prophet David, to Emperor Theodosius.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.
- Chapter XII.
- Chapter XIII.
- Chapter XIV.
- Chapter XV.
- Chapter XVI.
- Chapter XVII.

Chapter I.

Why Ambrose undertakes to write a defense of David. The history of the deed is set forth. Then it is shown that the one whom God has justified is not to be judged; on the contrary, he is even to be praised, for in such power he did not commit more sins.

We have taken up the task of writing an apology for the present style of the prophet David, not because he needs this gift, who has excelled in such great merits and flourished in virtues, but

because many people, reading the sequence of his deeds without considering the power of the Scriptures or the hidden mysteries, wonder how such a great prophet did not avoid the contagion of adultery first and then of murder.

Therefore, it was our desire to review the history itself, which seems to have been exposed to sin. For in the second book of Kings (2 Samuel 11:2-27), we read that while David was walking in his royal palace, he saw a woman bathing (her name was Bathsheba), of remarkable beauty and grace, with a very attractive face, and he was overcome by the desire to possess her. However, the woman was married to a man named Uriah, and the scene of his death was arranged by royal command. For although it had no effect on his desire, yet it was considered to greatly impede his sense of shame for adultery.

Therefore, let us begin with the most obvious, whom God justified, so that you may not judge. 'For it is of little concern to me,' says Paul, 'that I should be judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself' (1 Corinthians 4:3). Even though he was still in the body and subject to temptation, he did not judge himself because a spiritual person is not judged by anyone but God alone. Finally, he added, 'The one who judges me is the Lord' (1 Corinthians 4:4). Therefore, do not judge anything before the appointed time (ibid., 4 and 5). But David has already fulfilled his time and has earned grace, and he is justified by Christ; since David himself rejoiced in being called the son of the Lord, and those who confessed him in this way were enlightened. Why do you call a man of God from a reward to judgment? The Lord has already judged him, of whom he said to Solomon: If you walk before me as your father David walked in the holiness of heart and righteousness, in order to do everything I commanded him (3 Kings 9:4). Is he worthy of judgment or reward, who has done everything according to heavenly commands, walking in holiness and righteousness of heart? Where the vices and sins of others are hidden, there David receives divine testimony of his virtue and glory. And we discuss his sin in vain, for it is through his merit and grace that the sins of others have been revealed. For when Solomon sinned by not keeping the Lord's commands and God intended to divide his kingdom into many parts, He said to him: However, I will not do this in your days because of your father David. I will take it from the hand of your son. However, I will not take the whole kingdom; I will give him one scepter because of my servant David (3 Kings 11:12-13). Therefore, since the Lord justifies, who is there to condemn? What God has cleansed, you must not call common (Acts 10:15).

Nevertheless, with due regard to heavenly judgment, in which you honor the prophet even more, enter into his actions and behaviors. Do not marvel at the man, and do not judge him to be equal to the angels, because he has spent most of his life, even from childhood, dwelling in riches, honors, and positions of power, and has been subjected to many temptations. He has only once given in to error, and it is through this error that even the angels of heaven, as Scripture recounts (Genesis 6:2), were cast down from their virtue and grace. Indeed, another error of his is mentioned, that he caused the people to be counted.

Chapter II.

David is praised for the humility of his confession; and three reasons are given why it is useful for saints to fall into sin, and God allows it.

Each one of us sins many times throughout the day, and yet each one of the common people does not think that they should confess their own sin. That king, so great and powerful, did not let the consciousness of his sin remain with him even for a brief moment; but by confessing early and with immense sorrow, he gave his sin back to the Lord. Now tell me, can you easily find someone who is honored and wealthy, who would not be greatly distressed if they were accused of some wrongdoing? But that region, famous for its empire, proven by so many divine oracles, when it was rebuked by a private man for having committed a serious offense, did not become indignant, but groaned, confessing with sorrow for the fault. Finally, the Lord, moved by the pain of intimate affection, prompted Nathan to say: 'Because you have repented, and the Lord has forgiven your sin.' Therefore, the maturity of forgiveness declared that the king's repentance was deep, which had brought the offense of such a great error.

Others, when they are rebuked by priests, aggravate their sin by desiring to deny or defend it; and in this way their fall is greater where correction is hoped for. But the holy servants of the Lord, who strive to complete the righteous struggle and run the race of salvation, if perhaps they stumble due to the weakness of human nature rather than a desire to sin, rise up with greater fervor to continue running, repairing greater battles with the spur of modesty; so that not only is it considered that their fall has brought no impediment, but also that they have accumulated incentives for swiftness. Therefore, if the course of those who are running is not disrupted, when perhaps some fall, it is not a contention of those who mourn, but rather harmless competitions; indeed, many even after one or two falls have won with greater grace: how much more should those who have entered the race of piety not be considered offended by a single stumble, seeing that blessed is he who can restore himself after a fall; since even after death, the gift of resurrection belongs to the blessed.

Moreover, we can understand that sin can also be advantageous, and that the providence of the Lord allows the saints to be overtaken by faults. For their purpose is to serve as examples for us to imitate; and therefore it has been arranged that they themselves should sometimes stumble. For if they had completed the course of this slippery world without being beset by vices, they would have given us an opportunity to think of them as having possessed a certain superiority of nature and divinity, so that they could not receive sin or have a share in guilt. What opinion indeed, so that, having been freed from that substance, it would call us back from impossible imitation. Therefore, for a short while, by the grace of God, those [saints] passed by; so that their life might become discipline for us to imitate; and just as we would accept the instruction of their innocence, so also of their repentance from their actions. Therefore, while I read about their failings, I also recognize them as partners in weakness; while I believe in them as partners, I presume that they are to be imitated. The apostle Paul also warns (2 Cor. 7:7) that our Lord God foresaw that, due to the height of revelations and the ongoing progress of his works, even human emotions might be exalted in the saints and they might ascribe to themselves and attribute to their own virtue what was given to them by divine operation. Therefore, in order to prevent them from falling into such great prejudice and sinking into the pit of unfaithfulness, the Lord allowed them to be confronted with guilt, so that they themselves might recognize the need for divine assistance and understand that they should seek the leader of their salvation. Finally, Paul testifies that weakness has been beneficial to him, with the Lord saying to him, when he asked that the stimulus of his flesh depart from him: My grace is sufficient for you; for power is made perfect in weakness (Ibid., 9). And rightly he boasts in weaknesses; for he knew that the abundance of virtue caused many even holy

ones to fall without remedy. How much more advantageous, then, to have given place to one or two reproofs than to have incurred the eternal offense of the divinity?

Chapter III.

It is said that David was exposed to temptation because athletes are trained in various competitions and God wants to serve as an example to us. Furthermore, the adultery of David is portrayed in a figurative manner, with various allegories being used to explain it.

What shall I also add, which we can deduce from the very use of the world, that when we have found many to be diligent and active in one duty, we want to test the same ones as industrious and energetic in another task? How many athletes, when they have excelled in that type of competition, are called to another type of contest! What if the Lord your God also wants to test you in another type of virtue, when you have shown a certain example of your virtue? Though he remained unharmed during the current of his holy work, he was nevertheless tested by the death of his sons and afflicted with sores all over his body, so that even in this he might prove his virtue, that he would not diminish his devotion to God either through injuries or harshness. It is clear that even the holy David, renowned for his faith and most outstanding in gentleness, wished to prove himself strong in hand, so that he might cover up a fault and correct a fall, and thus teach us how we might conceal a sin once committed.

Unless it seems a cheap excuse to someone that the prophet would err so greatly because of our correction, since Christ has taken upon himself our weaknesses for the redemption of all, who became sin for us though he did not know sin. And it is considered unworthy and not credible that David would fall into disgrace for the sake of future generations; when the Lord himself became a disgrace for us, as he himself says: But I am a worm, not a man; scorned by mankind, and despised by the people (Psalm 22:6). And elsewhere: And the reproaches of those who reproached you fell upon me (Psalm 68:10). Therefore, he foreshadowed the mystery of the future dispensation in his own precepts. And indeed, the servants of their own condition bore the sins, therefore they could not themselves be free from sin: but the Lord took on the burden alone, therefore he alone was without the fellowship of offenses. In conclusion, with the Apostle also teaching, we have learned that many things were done in figure which were done in former times. For when he said that the fathers who were bitten by serpents in the desert could not be healed in any other way except that Moses hung up a brazen serpent, and when this was seen, those deadly bites and injurious effects of the poison were cured, he added: But these things were done in figure to instruct us (1 Corinthians 10:6). In the image, a bronze serpent was placed on a cross; because the true one to be crucified was announced to the human race, who would empty the venom of the devilish serpent, cursed in its image, but in truth, would erase all curses of the world. He also said elsewhere, that is, to the Galatians: Because Abraham had two sons, one from a slave woman, and one from a free woman (Galatians 4:22). And he added: But the one born of the slave woman, according to the flesh; and the one born of the free woman, through the promise; which things are said by allegory (ibid., 23). He clearly explained what is meant by the allegory in the following, saying that those two generations, one born of a slave woman and the other of a free woman, represent two covenants: one indeed from Mount Sinai, which gave birth to slavery, in which Mount Moses received the Law from the Lord; but the other from Jerusalem, which is free, which gave birth to sons through Isaac, that is, in the freedom of grace, not the slavery of the

law. For punishment is imposed on slaves, while grace is bestowed on the free. Did not the patriarch Jacob take two wives in a double marriage, from whom he produced different offspring? Why is it read that after the death of his son, the patriarch Judah sought to have sexual relations (Gen. XXXVIII, 16), from which the birth of twins occurred, unless to foreshadow both the Old Testament and the New Testament of Jesus the Lord: one of which is hidden in the figure of his future death, the other in the truth of the Gospel, that two peoples would be generated, of which the latter would fall under the sign of the cross, breaking down all the walls and fortifications of the former people? Here is the people with a prior hand, later in birth. Perhaps because the Lord Jesus himself, born from the tribe of Judah, sent his works before he was born to us from the Virgin.

What can I say about Joseph, who, driven by his brothers' envy, stripped of his father's clothing, thrown into a pit, sold into slavery, clearly expressed a sign of the Lord's Incarnation? Because he, beloved of his father, was in the image of God, he did not consider equality with God as something to be seized, but rather he emptied himself; taking the form of a servant, he came and humbled himself even to the death of the cross. By the price of his blood, he both bought and sold and thus redeemed the human race from his own brothers. In whose type David, the lesser chosen from among the brothers, anointed as king, alone, with great danger of war, saved the entire people through a singular contest, triumphed over ten thousand; so that the girls would play the tambourines and sing: Saul has triumphed over thousands, but David over ten thousand (1 Samuel 18:7). What figure in those young men, if not the souls who sing the triumphant psalm to Christ? He gave birth to sons from himself, one incestuous, the other a parricide; because the incestuous and parricidal people would violate the flesh of their own author affixed to the gibbet of the cross. Finally, in the third psalm, the title 'Absalom' is given, and the passion of the Lord is prophesied.

What can I say about the holy Solomon, whose later actions, though not without serious error, the Jewish people still believe he came for the Christ? And how many people did his offense of serious error turn away? Therefore, the greater fault was more beneficial so that he would not be believed to be above a human who was not free from human vice. Therefore, there was envy in his wisdom and persuasive fault that confirmed the man. So what prevents Bathsheba from being believed to have been associated with the holy David in figure, in order to signify the gathering of nations, which was not connected to Christ by a legitimate bond of faith, which would enter before the Law through certain vestibules set for its sake, in which the naked sincerity of the mind, and the open simplicity of the justifying mystery of baptism, would lead, provoke the mind of the true David and eternal king, and stir up charity? He came rightly hidden, who deceived the prince of the world, like Uriah who is called my light by interpretation, transforming himself into an angel of light. He came, I say, into this world, and he came hidden, like an adulterer who entered, to claim his rightful authority.

Chapter IV.

By praising the repentance of David in a more detailed manner, he openly declares that no one is found to be immune from falling through the example of the most holy men.

We have distinguished valid allegations, as we believe, and have shown in detail the text of this history: now let us repeat what has been said before, and let us examine the error as if it were

stripped of its spiritual clothing. David sinned, as kings often do: but he repented, he wept, he groaned, which kings do not usually do. He confessed his fault, begged for forgiveness, lay prostrate on the ground lamenting his misery, fasted, prayed, and transmitted the testimony of his confession through eternal ages with the publication of his pain. What private individuals are ashamed to do, the king is not ashamed to confess. Those who are bound by laws dare to deny their own sin, disdain to ask for forgiveness, which he who is bound by no human laws sought. What he sinned, belongs to his condition: what he begged for, belongs to his correction. A common, but special confession. Therefore, it is the nature to have committed fault: it is the virtue to have washed it away. Who boasts, he says, to have a clean heart? The world is declared to be no more than a day old, according to the testimony of Scripture (Job 14:5).

Give me someone without the fault of sin. Samson is read as the strongest of all (Judges 14 and following), who even strangled a lion with his own hands; but if only he could have suffocated his love. He set fire to the harvests of the Allophylans, and he himself burned with the spark of a single woman. Jephthah returned as the victor from the enemy: but carrying back triumphal flags, he was defeated by his own oath, considering that he should reward the piety of his daughter who met him with the act of a parricide. First of all, what need was there to swear so easily, and to make uncertain vows in place of certain ones, of which the outcome was not known? And then, why does he render sad sacraments to the Lord God, in order to fulfill his bloody vows with funerals? Nor do I think we should remain silent about the priests, lest it seem that we are concealing our own crimes. Aaron himself, the high priest (under the leadership of Moses, when the Hebrew people crossed the Red Sea on foot), when asked by the people to make gods for them to worship, demanded gold, threw it into the fire, and a carved calf's head was formed, to which sacrifices were offered. By this indication, it became clear that the desire for gold is the source of treachery, and that sacrilege is accustomed to be produced by the greed for wealth. Once again, such a priest encounters a place of offense with his sister Miriam. For while both of them slander their brother because he had taken a foreign wife, immediately Miriam broke out in the contagion of blemished flesh.

It was in this visible place that there was a representation of the mystery, which that priestly people of the fathers belittled in later times to the brotherly people, unaware of that Ethiopian's sacrament. For if he had known, he would not have criticized it, because it was in agreement with the ancient mystery. Therefore, when the Jew declares him who believed from the Gentiles to be common, and desires to separate him from the Law, he has leprosy, which he will not be able to escape unless the spiritual recognition of the law has secured pardon for him.

Therefore even David, who knew himself to be born for the fall, sought forgiveness; but he did not despair of the Lord's mercy.

Chapter V. The parable that Nathan proposed to David is explained; and it is applied to Christ, and the human flesh assumed by Him. Nor does the parable seem to differ from the mystery. For who is rich, except our Lord Jesus, who said of Himself, as it is read today, that a certain man who was rich went to a far country to receive a kingdom and to return (Luke 19:13). And truly He was rich in the riches of His majesty, and in the fullness of His own divinity, to whom the Angels and Archangels, the Virtues and Powers, the Principalities and Dominions, the Cherubim and Seraphim served with unwearied obedience. But despite being wealthy, he left ninety-nine sheep

in the mountains, and one sheep that had become tired, he sought after. The ruler of this world, poor and needy due to the contemplation of that rich man, nourished her as if she were his own daughter with his own provisions. Indeed, she had rightfully failed, for her sustenance was the food of the world. This sheep had wandered in Adam, enticed by the deceit of the serpent. And not a bad sheep, which was full of the Word, namely the rational daughter of the week, and the holy gift of the author; nevertheless, it was nourished not by any precious things, but by the cheap resources of the poor for a long time. Finally, it is said that he ate of her bread and drank of her cup, and slept in her bosom (2 Samuel 12:3). Ethiopian food is not good, the harmful golden cup of Babylon that intoxicates nations: sleep is not beneficial to those who sleep, it is better to be awake. Finally, all the foolish ones were disturbed in heart, they fell into their sleep, and found nothing. Therefore, out of hospitality, because he had taken in a guest in order to provide him with a meal, he took away that poor sheep. For, if he were to sacrifice any animal from his own flocks or herds, he would not have been able to benefit us, whom he would not have redeemed unless he had sacrificed.

Therefore, due to the weaknesses of our fragile nature, he assumed a certain compassionate affection in his flesh, for the purpose of alleviating or rather restoring it; and he offered his flesh to that saving passion, so that he might provide us with the food of eternal life. And the Scripture well calls him a lamb, because he was born of a Virgin. This rich man is rightly pronounced worthy of death by the prophetic judgement; for even Caiaphas prophesied, saying: It is expedient that one man should die for the people. But only the Lord Jesus was worthy and chosen for such a death, by which he would take away the sin of the world. He also beautifully added: 'He shall restore the lamb' (2 Samuel 12:6); because he raised his own flesh, he restored that flesh to its virginal integrity. Nor is it idle what he says: 'He shall restore fourfold.' For the resurrection of the dead is quadrupled, as the Apostle teaches, saying: 'It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body' (1 Corinthians 15:42 and following). He shall undoubtedly restore fourfold the lamb even in the way that a man can now say: If I have taken anything from anyone, I will repay fourfold (Luke X, 8). Appropriately, he also added: Because he did not spare (2 Samuel XII, 6); for Christ did not spare himself in order to help everyone.

Therefore, it was said by the Lord Jesus Christ to his servant David, in order to declare the mystery: 'For you have done this in secret, but I will do this word before all Israel, and in the sight of this sun' (2 Kings 12:12). And at first, not knowing the sacrament, David was moved by indignation, but he did not err in his affection. But afterwards, when he understood the great mystery, the great sacrament of Christ and the Church, seeing the future forgiveness of all sins, foreseeing the brightness of grace through the washing of regeneration, and the infusion of the Holy Spirit, he confidently confessed his sin to the Lord, so that he could come into the fellowship of those to whom the remission of guilt would come. Who would wonder that he has been forgiven, considering how deeply he has lamented his own sin?

Chapter VI.

To differentiate between the good and the bad, it is because the former are followed by sins, while the latter are preceded by them; and to those works through which David covered up his sin.

Now let us consider his works by which he was able to cover sin. For, because human weakness cannot exist without sin, care must be taken that there be not more sins than works of virtue. This was expressively stated by Saint Paul, the holy one of great wisdom, saying: The sins of some men are, before hand, manifest, going before to judgment, and some men they follow after (1 Timothy 5:24), that is to say, no one is found free from fault; someone has good merits, and also has vices and sins. Therefore, all our actions are weighed as if on a balance scale: if good deeds outweigh sins, they go before judgment; for sins tend to sink like a weight, particularly those that are evident in severity or quantity. But, he says, some come after, that is, those who have conducted themselves with moderation but have occasionally succumbed to the frailty of their condition and allowed room for error. Good deeds come before, and evil deeds follow. *Hi honestiores, sed tamen homines lapsi levioribus vitiis et erratis. Ergo justos sequuntur peccata, non praeunt; injustos praecedunt. Praeponderant peccata quae vergunt; sequuntur autem si quae recte facta sunt, quasi quodam praejudicio peccatorumpraeaeuntium praegravata. Similiter et facta bona manifesta sunt. Lucent enim opere virtutum, et splendore meritorum; et quae aliter se habent, abscondi non possunt.* Therefore such things are not concealed, the charity which covers a multitude of sins does not overshadow them, the grace of good works does not cover them, the multitude of virtues is not hidden, but they are exposed as if naked and uncovered. For there is not in them who says: Protect me under the shadow of your wings (Psalm 16:8). For the cross of the Lord blots out and hides all errors. Who then has covered and concealed more than the holy David, who also says elsewhere: And under the shadow of thy wings I will hope, until iniquity pass away (Ps. LVI, 2); and thus he loved the Lord, so that he covered and hid every sin with excessive charity. For even if the holy apostle Peter abolished his fall by the confession of his love, and he was asked by the Lord three times: Simon son of John, do you love me (John XV, 16)? That he who denied three times, would confess three times, and thus hide his triple denial under the cover of triple love: if because Peter wept once, he obtained forgiveness, how much more so David, who washed his bed with tears every night, and soaked his couch with tears; whose tears were his bread day and night; who ate ashes like bread, and mixed his drink with weeping? For if Jesus had mercy on him who groaned in repentance; if he looked at Peter, and he wept: how much more so for him who wept for a long time, did he not depart from the sight of the Lord? Petrus denied, and did not weep, because he had not looked at Jesus; he denied a second time, and did not weep, because he had not looked at the Lord; he denied a third time, Jesus looked at him, and immediately he wept, and he wept bitterly. Therefore David, who always wept, said: My eyes are always toward the Lord (Psalm 25:15). He who always saw Christ, said: My eyes shed streams of tears (Psalm 119:136). But now let us also consider his accomplishments. Who would not overshadow the envy of such great virtues with one crime? Chosen by divine examination, he immediately proved himself unworthy of such a judgment. He went into battle, and while the others were trembling, he alone, with the throwing of words like Goliath and the terrifying force of his immense body, overcame his opponents with both faith and courage. His bravery became the victory of all. Let it be conferred, if it pleases, a private crime and the triumph of all: the death of one, and the life of the many whom he freed from death.

Let us move on to other things. He suffered from the plots of the king, who sought to extinguish his life. But by divine arrangement, the king was placed under his power, and when he was completely exposed to attack, David, the holy one, intervened and turned away the deadly wound from his body, saying: 'Do not touch the anointed one of the Lord.' (1 Samuel 24:7). Furthermore, the

enemies of David avenged his death and mourned his end with great sorrow. He postponed the authority that was rightfully his for a long time, knowing it was owed to him by God. By this alone he taught all men not to seize power, even if it is deserved; but to wait for it to be handed to them in due time. If only future generations had imitated this man, we would not have suffered such bitter calamities of war! You criticize that he has killed one man, but you do not consider that he has taught how peace can be preserved for the Roman world. How heavily we still pay for the devastation, how we have paid with the death of a king, sought by the public as if it were the death of the whole world. Alas, terrible punishments! From then onwards, the barbarous enemy insults us, while weapons prepared against them are turned against us. Thus, the strength of the state has fallen, Roman virtue has been weakened by its own movements, while it is seized by public parricide, which is undertaken with the religious concern of paternal care. And he has so far provided for this, that when he discovered that Adonias, his son, was plotting to usurp the kingdom for himself, he chose to sow discord, not with the one who desired to seize it, but with the one who was awaiting it. The most powerful of kings was dancing in front of the ark of the Lord, and when he was rebuked by his own wife for being naked in front of the maidens, he replied: I will dance before the Lord even more, and I will be even more playful before your eyes; for, he said, it is to honor the Lord who has chosen me over your father to be king (2 Samuel 6:21), teaching that royal power should not be considered when showing devotion to religion. It is indeed honorable to act for religion, even if it may be incongruous with power.

Look at another memorable spectacle. The son of a parricide violently seized the paternal kingdom, at first his father yielded to his madness and avoided a place of battle, so that perhaps the impious one would come to his senses from his fury. He also did not want to participate in the war, he asked those going to battle to spare his son. He was confident of victory, since he asked for mercy: nor was he devoid of piety, since he did not believe that even an impious son should perish. He wept and mourned the death of the parricide with great sorrow, saying: 'My son, Absalom, who will give me death for you, my son Absalom?' (2 Kings 18:33). He considered that the one who had killed out of filial duty deserved to be vindicated. But how patient he was of injuries and grief! He yielded, as I said, to the madness of his son Absalom, surrounded by strong warriors on the right and left. A man named Shimei cursed him, calling him a bloody man and a man of blood, and claimed that he had been deposed from the kingdom by the just judgment of the Lord. But he was not even moved by such insults; however, his companions were. Finally, one of his associates (a man named Abishai) threatened to take his head as the price of the injuries. But the king turned to Abishai and said, What is it to me and to you, O son of Zeruiah? Therefore he curses me because the Lord has commanded him to curse (2 Kings 16:10). He morally teaches that the times of our injuries or dangers, the struggles of temptations, and the trials of tests are meant to be punished by divine judgment. The good athlete is trained through insults, is trained through labors and dangers, so that he may be worthy of receiving the crown of righteousness. Therefore, the things that are considered adverse must be endured patiently. Finally, the divine Scripture also teaches you this elsewhere, with the righteous person saying: If we have received good things from the hand of the Lord, why should we not endure bad things? (Job 2:10). And the holy Prophet added, saying: Behold my son, who came out of my womb, seeks my life. But if Jemineus curses me, let him curse; for the Lord has commanded him to see my humility; and the Lord will repay me for this curse. O height of prudence! O sign of patience! O great discovery of devouring insults! You are moved, Abessa, that a stranger curses me, whom the son seeks with

patricide; the Lord has commanded him to curse me. But the Lord is not malicious, nor does He delight in insults.

See how carefully he guards each one. He does not accuse the Lord as if he were the author of the injury, but rather praises Him because he allows us to suffer lesser things so that we may obtain forgiveness for greater sins. Behold, the insult of words has lifted the burden of parricide, absolving the insolent one, whose curses are more beneficial, as they are rewarded by divine retribution. Who would not compensate for such an injury within himself, so that the one whom a man has harmed may be comforted by the superior retribution of God?

Chapter VII.

From the fight of David against the giants, and the pouring of water on the lake of Bethleem; from which and other illustrious deeds it is concluded that his sin was covered by him: especially since he committed it without a bloody emotion, and afterward preferred to entrust himself to God rather than to men; and he himself taught that the crime was forgiven to him.

Let us also consider his other exploits. He fought against the offspring of the giants, when one of them almost killed the king with a spinning javelin in battle, but the enemy, daringly, paid the price of death for his rescue.

After achieving victory over a ferocious tribe, he undertook another massive war in the valley of the Titans, not only against the enemy, but also against nature. For while he was fighting, he was thirsty and had nothing to drink. He said, 'Who will give me water from the well that is in Bethlehem, near the gates? (2 Samuel 23:15)' However, the enemy was situated between the well and the sacred place of David, and there were enemy encampments surrounding the area. Three men cut down a multitude of enemies and filled water from the lake in Bethlehem, and offered it to the king to drink. But the king refused to drink and poured it out to the Lord. For it was worthy of such a great gift that the emblem of living virtue became a sacrifice of piety. And he said a fitting sentence in the spirit of prophecy: Let me not do this; let me not drink the blood of the men who departed from their souls. Therefore, he conquered nature by not drinking when thirsty; and he set an example for all the army to endure thirst. He also trained his subjects in the duty of virtue, so that even voluntary soldiers would obey royal command through danger. But the fact that he did not want to drink, he declared was because of the grace of testing the soldiers, not the necessity of satisfying thirst. He also foresaw that the use of drinking by kings should not be sought through the dangers of others. Finally, the wound of a guilty conscience entreated, since she could not have the pleasure of drinking the water sought with the blood of so many men, which was determined by the horror of the proposed death. But if you desire to contemplate more deeply and penetrate the mystery, David did not thirst for water from the lake in Bethlehem, but in his spirit, he foresaw Christ arising from the Virgin. Therefore, he desired to drink not the water of a river, but the drink of spiritual grace. That is, he did not thirst for the element of water, but for the blood of Christ. In the end, he did not drink the offered water, but poured it out to the Lord, signifying that he thirsted for the sacrifice of Christ, not for the flow of nature. He thirsted for that sacrifice in which there is remission of sins, he thirsted for that eternal fountain, not one that is sought through others' dangers, but one that wards off others' dangers.

Therefore, do we not believe that the blood of one covered by such marvelous works? Justly the voice of the blood of Abel cried out to the Lord; for Cain, the wicked one, was not covered by any good works because he was a murderer, because he did not confess his crime, but denied it. However, David had indeed killed a man who was not at all guilty; but he killed him not out of a desire for cruelty, but to overshadow shame, to cover the shame of lust. I dare not say that he was oppressed by force of crime (for he who knew how to lift himself from the ruin of that sin was not oppressed), but I say that he was swayed by the force of temptation. For he had said above: Test me, O Lord, and try me; burn my kidneys and my heart (Psalm 25:2). And elsewhere: But I said in my abundance, I will not be moved forever (Psalm 29:7). And: You have tested me with fire, and no iniquity has been found in me (Psalm 16:3). The Lord wanted to subject Himself to temptation, so that He would not arrogate anything above mankind; for strength is perfected in weakness. He did not act out of cruel affection: nothing can be attributed to the holy Prophet that is less sanctified, who even in the last moments of his life called upon Solomon his son, to take away his innocent blood, which his commander-in-chief Joab had shed, when Abner, while negotiating a partnership, fell victim to the ambush of an enemy force, although he desired to lie with him. He wept for him, and after mourning for him, he walked with the insignia of power taken off, and attended to the proper funeral rites. Having taught, moreover, that a promised faith must be kept, he also showed that honor and virtue should be respected even in an enemy. Did he not, with the gentleness of his own inherited piety, also remove the stain of this error?

How excellent, however, that he chose whichever of the three conditions offered to him he wanted, when, with the people having been counted, he incurred offense, since he had proposed either whether he wanted a famine to happen over the land for three years, or to flee from the face of his pursuing enemies for three months, or to die in the land for three days; he chose the third, because he preferred the power of the Lord, rather than the power of men! For the Lord would quickly have mercy and forgive. Thus he says: I am greatly distressed in these three things, but I will fall into the hands of the Lord (for his mercy is very great) rather than fall into the hands of men (2 Kings 24:14). With this humility, prudence, and gentleness, he caused, to use the words of Scripture, the Lord to have repentance for his own disturbance. Finally, it is written: Because the Lord had repentance for the evil (Jeremiah 16:19). But truly that is also admirable (Of Penance, dist. 3, cap. That truly), when he offered himself to the angel striking the people, saying: This flock, what has it done! Let your hand be upon me, and upon the house of my father (2 Samuel 24:17). By this action, he was immediately judged worthy of sacrifice, who was considered unworthy of forgiveness. And it is not surprising that through such an offering for the people, he obtained forgiveness for his own sin, since Moses, by offering himself to the Lord for the error of the people, also erased the sins of the people.

Therefore, should one confess their sins or not? But who would deny this, when the Prophet himself has taught that sins be forgiven, crimes be covered, and not be imputed by the Lord? He himself has taught the remission of sin, as it is written: I acknowledge my offense, and I have not hidden my injustice. I said, I will disclose my injustice to the Lord, and You have forgiven the impiety of my heart (Psalm 32:5). If he said, I will disclose, and he deserved forgiveness before he disclosed; how much more when he spoke of himself saying: I acknowledge my iniquity (Psalm 50:5), was all his sin forgiven? It is especially permissible that Nathan the prophet responded: And the Lord has taken away your sin (II Sam. XII, 13).

Therefore, he earned the forgiveness of his iniquity, and he covered it with charity and concealed his sins, and he covered them with good works. No sin was imputed to him, because there was no malicious intent in him, but rather a slip of error. Furthermore, it was not a wave of wickedness, but rather a shadow of mystery. And yet, he confessed his offense, acknowledged his wrongdoing, saw the cleansing, and saw, and believed. He loved greatly, so that he could cover any error with excessive charity.

Chapter VIII. Why is Psalm 50 placed before some other compositions and what mysteries are contained in its fiftieth number? How does the example of David teach us to perform penance and how can one be cleansed from wickedness in various ways? But now let him defend himself, for he has written the fiftieth psalm about this story. And when he has included the history of his previous actions, such as the treachery of Doeg the Syrian, which is the title of the fifty-first psalm, and the attacks of the Ziphites, which seems to be included in the title of the fifty-third psalm; he has included this history that comes later, when Doeg had betrayed before, or the Ziphites, before the prophet David assumed his kingdom. Since he, fleeing King Saul, was still wandering in various hidden places as an exile; but when Bathsheba began to reign, he acquired it.

Why, then, does the order of the psalms not match the order of the events? Because it was intended to match not the order to the order, but the mystery to the events; and therefore, it wanted to assign the number of remission to this history. For the number fifty is the number of remission, as the Lord himself taught us in the Gospel, saying: There were two debtors to a certain moneylender; one owed five hundred denarii, the other fifty; since they had no way of repaying, he forgave both. Who then loves him more (Luke 7:41 and 42)? And in the Law you have (Leviticus 25:10 and following), because the jubilee is called the recurrence of fifty years, to be celebrated in a very special way, by which debts are canceled, the liberties of the Hebrews are confirmed, and possessions are restored. We celebrate this number joyfully after the Lord's passion, with the complete forgiveness of all guilt, and also with the cancellation of the handwriting, we are set free from every bond; and we receive the coming grace of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost: fasting is set aside, praise is given to God, and alleluia is sung. Finally (36, quaest. 2, cap. Finally), and the father of the girl who, by force, having been betrothed to no one, endured fifty silver didrachms, she herself, however, will remain in marriage (Deut. XXII, 29). Therefore, by this number, even vices are transformed into favor. Therefore, a great psalm, by which we are taught how repentance should be practiced. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to thy great mercy. And according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquity. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my iniquity, and my sin is always before me. Against thee only have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight; that thou mayest be justified in thy words, and overcome when thou art judged. For behold I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me. (Psalm 50:3 and following) Who among us, even if he confesses his sin, would rather not be reproved than repeated? Who would repent a second or third time? See how the great Prophet echoes his own sin in so many verses, how no verse is without the confession of a transgression. He confesses everything together, his iniquities and injustice, by personifying them, linking his sins to sins; and by frequently repeating them, he rightly demands great mercy; not only great mercy, but also a multitude of mercies. Therefore, does not such lamentation wash away sin, which kind of supplication does not cleanse guilt? He prays for the multitude of sins for one offense: we, for many sins, can scarcely believe that his mercy is to be

besought even once. Then we read (Psalm 135:11 and 12) that in his great power and his exalted arm he delivered his people from the land of Egypt, when he led them across the Red Sea, in which was a figure of baptism. Therefore, if great virtue was in the form of the sacraments, how much greater is their mercy in truth? Also, rightly is there a multitude of mercies sought where there is a multitude of sinners.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin (Psalm 50:4). He seeks to be washed not so much often as completely, so that he may wash away the accumulated filth. He knew that according to the Law there were many means of cleansing, but none that were full and perfect. Therefore, he hastens with his whole intention to that which is perfect, where all righteousness is fulfilled, which is the sacrament of Baptism, as the Lord Jesus himself teaches. For when he came to John, John said to him: I ought to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me (Matthew 3:14). Jesus answered: Let it be so for now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness (ibid., 15). But after Christ was baptized, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the Father sealed the Son from heaven, all righteousness was fulfilled. Therefore the Prophet says: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity. For great filth and stain are removed not by a small, but by a large lavacro. But if someone wants to receive it differently, they can shape their understanding in this way; divine speech purifies, our confession purifies; while it is heard, while it is uttered; good thought purifies, honest action purifies, good use of conversation also. Each person, purified by these things, more easily drinks them in and as if draws into themselves the splendor of spiritual grace. In the end, not by one infusion does the precious juice immediately radiate from the fleece, but first the fleece is stained with unholy juice; then it frequently washes away its natural appearance with other and other juices, and is often changed by different colors; and thus afterwards it is applied as a more complete dye, so that the truer and more perfect brilliance of purple may burst forth. Just as in the infection of purple, there is a multitude of thorns, so in the bath of regeneration, there is a multitude of heavenly mercies, so that wickedness may be removed. Therefore, one who is deeply washed is cleansed from injustice and from sin, and sets aside a certain inclination to sin in thoughts and habits, and forgets its nature. And one is cleansed well from injustice or iniquity, which is greater: one is also cleansed from sin, which is lesser.

Chapter IX.

Few admit their own sins like David, rather many of them boast about them; the wise never forget the memory of their wrongdoing; and how powerful is the conscience? There is a difference between sin and iniquity: and by what means are they erased, being joined together by baptism and repentance.

Therefore he added: Because I acknowledge my iniquity, and my sin is always against me (Psalm 50:5). It is no small thing for each person to acknowledge their sin. Therefore, it also says above: Who can understand his errors? (Psalm 19:13) That is, who is so great that they can understand? How is it said: Who shall dwell in your tabernacle, or who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord? (Psalm 15:1) Certainly not no one, but few. For whoever can recognize, can decline, can choose what to follow. Many boast in their own faults, and they think that those things which are a disgrace are praiseworthy. If he defiles another's bed, and overpowers the virtue of a chaste woman, if he alters the intention of a widow through some deceit: another thinks that to live by the

plundering and killing of men is virtue: some believe that to deceive and cheat is wisdom. Of these, no one can say: Since I acknowledge my iniquity, but he who can grieve for what he has done, condemn himself for what he has committed, whom his own vices torment. Hence the Prophet says, What you say in your hearts, and are pierced in your beds (Psalm 4:5). Many horses, when they fall, are accustomed to boast; and those whom misfortune has not harmed, weaken and break themselves by boasting. Others, of the nature of Greek horses, when they have been knocked down either in a chariot race or by chance, are accustomed not to move at all, and hold a certain discipline of calmness and patience. If a misfortune has not harmed him, calm is beneficial; surely offense does not embitter. Are not mute animals to be considered worse, those who boast about their own sins and think it is a mark of virtue when a crime has been committed? That is why it is said to the dumb beast: You have sinned, be still (Gen. IV, 7).

Hence he added beautifully: And my offense against me is always present. For the foolish take delight in their errors and, by shading the old with the new, consider themselves helped by their sins; therefore, they rejoice in their crime. But the wise judge their offense to be against themselves and, just as if they were opposing lines of battle, they think that the slips of their faults are resisting them. Whatever may have shone forth, whatever may have resounded, his own fault always comes to mind; whatever may have been said or read, he thinks was said about himself; whatever he may have intended, he thinks was marked by his nod, by his glance. If he worries, if he thinks, if he prays and beseeches, before his eyes there is always his own error, and at every moment guilt strikes his conscience, and it does not let him rest or forget, as if a harsh censor torments himself with perpetual terror. Therefore, he has all things against him who displeases himself, who is his own accuser, who is his own witness, and he does not find where to flee, who himself scourges and provokes himself. But this is of a noble mind, to feel the wound of sin. For those who are unfamiliar with pain, they do not feel the bitterness of injury, which is the incurability of illness. However, those who are stung by some pain, just as they do not lack the sensation of pain, they also do not lack the progress of health. For where there is the sensation of pain, there is also the sensation of life; for to feel is a sign of vitality and function. Hence, he who does not recognize his own error, is insane, rages, is foolish; but he who does recognize it, certainly repents, does not reject the remedies of health, but restrains himself, regrets his fault, always thinks about it, and by thinking, condemns himself. For in the beginning of his sermon, he is the accuser of himself. He who accuses himself is just; he who is just is sober, sane. The just man does not know how to favor himself, does not know how to bend the strictness of judgment even towards himself, dreads the remembrance of his own mistakes, and is ashamed of the error he has committed, fears, dreads, shrinks from every memory of it; he judges himself to be severe to himself, he flees from himself as judge, and does not dare to entrust himself to himself; which he thinks is no heavier burden for himself than that he cannot hide from himself, deceive himself, or escape and avoid himself, except to deny himself and take up the cross of the Lord.

Great is the power of a guilty conscience, great are the torments. Adam and Eve were afraid; and when they heard the voice of the Lord walking in paradise, they desired to hide themselves, whom no one was seeking. Cain also feared lest anyone who found him would kill him: thus he carried within himself the judgment that he was deserving of no forgiveness. Hence it is well said: And my sin is always against me, that is, the constant memory and the very image of my error assail me. Consider how it confuses us when we have done something wrong, how it makes our eyes cast

down, how it always comes back to our memory. One who is ashamed of what they have done does not know how to commit such an act again, and thus feels the same embarrassment.

However, injustice precedes, sin follows. Injustice is the root, but the fruit of the root is guilt. Hence, injustice seems to refer to the wickedness of the mind, sin to the downfall of the body. Injustice is more serious as the material of sins, sin is lighter. Finally, injustice is forgiven through baptism, sin is covered by good deeds, and is overshadowed by other works. Hence, he himself rightly says earlier: Blessed are those whose injustices are forgiven, and whose sins are covered (Psalm 32:1). For charity hides errors and covers a multitude of sins. Charity also forgives many sins itself, as it is written about the woman who poured ointment on the Lord: Her many sins have been forgiven, because she loved much (Luke 7:47).

There are also those who take the first verse to be about baptism, the second about penance. By this grace also, Peter, who had been previously baptized, is questioned after seeing the Lord and denies: Simon, son of John, do you love me? He said to Him: Of course you know, Lord, that I love you (John 21:15 and following). And he is questioned again: Simon, son of John, do you love me? And he responds again: You know that I love you. And he is questioned a third time: Simon, son of John, do you love me? And he was grieved because he said to him for the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he spoke to him: 'Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you.' And it was said to him three times: 'Feed my sheep; follow me' (John 21). He, as if he had covered his sin with excessive love, is commanded to govern the people after his confession of excessive love, who had not even lost his troubled state, as to how he should govern himself. We have mentioned these things for the sake of the grace of love, because it covers sin. Finally, some have said that the triple interrogation of love was made because there was a triple negation; so that the repeated profession of love could erase the triple fall of denial.

Chapter X.

David, though free from human laws, nevertheless subjected himself to God, to whom alone he sinned; and in how many ways can this be understood? It is a great crime to sin in the presence of God. He who denies himself as a sinner accuses God of lying, whose patience and moderation is commended. In addition, God is justified by him who repents of his error.

It follows, 'To you alone have I sinned' (Ps. 50:6). He was certainly a king, not bound by any laws, for kings are free from the bonds of sins. They are not called to punishment by any laws, being safe under the power of their rule. Therefore, he did not sin against man, to whom he was not bound. But although he was safe under the rule, he was still subject to God by devotion and faith. Knowing himself to be subject to His law, he could not deny his sin; but as a guilty person, he confessed with bitterness, knowing that he was held by greater bonds, because he owed greater things. For more is demanded from him to whom more has been entrusted. We can also receive it in this way. Who judges me, when all are under sin? Lastly, the Lord about that adulterer: He who is without sin, he says, let him be the first to stone her (John 8:7). And no one stoned her. Therefore the Prophet says: I have sinned against you alone, who alone are without sin. But he who is subject to sin cannot judge as a sinner. For every man is inexcusable who, in condemning another for the same things he himself does, condemns himself; for in judging another, he judges himself. I have sinned against you, he said, and done evil in your sight; so that you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you judge (Psalm 50:6). I have sinned against you, who have

provoked me to the pursuit of virtue, who have instructed me in your law. I have sinned against you alone, whom alone the secret thoughts and hidden intentions of the mind do not deceive. And I have done evil before you, whom only sanctification befits. We reject the testimony of man, and in your sight we commit things unworthy. It is a wrong to mankind to witness wicked deeds. We know that God is the judge of all, and by that very witness, we sin. And yet in these things, our Lord God is even more justified; for our injustice commends the justice of God, and our lies celebrate the truth of God. For God is true, but every man is a liar. In order that you may be justified in your words. The words of God are full of truth and justice, and therefore whatever the Lord has spoken about the frailty of human nature is true, because their hearts are inclined to wickedness and they lean towards deceit; and because it has been determined that there is no man who does not sin: for all have turned away and have become useless (Psalm 14:3). Therefore, He triumphs even when He is judged, because by the fall of all, He has proven whatever falsehood He has judged in us. Therefore, if we say that we have committed iniquity, we justify God in His words; but if we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us: but it is evident that we are all under sin.

Therefore, how can a person deny themselves as a sinner when it seems to undermine and refute the truth to the utmost extent in God Himself, who is so moderate and patient that He prevails even when judged? For God comes to judgment and says: My people, what have I done to you, or how have I grieved you, or how have I been a burden to you? For I brought you out of the land of Egypt, and delivered you from the house of slavery, and sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam before your face. My people, have in mind what Balach has thought of you (Micah 6:3 and following). He places his individual benefactions before your eyes, as if you were the judge of what you should have preserved, so that you may be all the more guilty for not being able to uphold divine benefactions. 'What have I done to you?' he says, as if he were setting himself up as the accused and you as the judge. 'Or how have I caused you sorrow?' He does not deny that his offended countenance is a crime, if you are saddened by God's prompting. But why was I a bother to you? He confesses the offense of interruption, if it was regarded as more annoying: he adds the favors for which he was not ashamed, who turned out ungrateful. In this case also consider how the Lord presented Himself to be judged by David, in order to conquer; for Nathan says: Thus says the Lord God of Israel: I anointed you as king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul, and I gave you all that belonged to your master, and his wives I put into your arms, and I gave you the house of Israel; and if these things are little, I will add to you. And why have you despised the Lord, doing evil in his sight (2 Samuel XII, 7 and following)? In remembrance of these things, when he saw himself to be inferior and judged, he said: I have sinned against the Lord (Ibid., 13). Thus, he justified the Lord, who dared not deny his own sin.

We can accept it in this way: the Lord is justified by the one who confesses his sin. Finally, in the Gospel (Luke 7:29), you have that the publicans justified God, being baptized with John's baptism. But John the Baptist performed a baptism of repentance. However, those who practice repentance do not deny their sins. Therefore, since David always acknowledged his sin against himself, he surely did not deny it and was ashamed, and he surely did not deny it and confessed it. However, by not denying, he certainly carried out the repentance of his mistake; and thus, by confessing the offense, he justified the Lord, and he himself was justified by the Lord. For the Lord is justified when his righteousness is proclaimed, and forgiveness is sought from him. At the same time, he

justifies the one confessing and is justified in his words, as it is written: Declare your iniquities, so that you may be justified (Isaiah 43:26).

Chapter XI.

The prophets teach, by their words, that there is no one who is not conceived in sin. Whether this sin belongs to parents or to offspring, from which only Christ is shown to have been immune.

Thus it follows: For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins my mother bore me (Psalm 50:7). Who acts with such fervor in repentance? He lay prostrate on the ground, poured out in tears, did not taste food, renounced bathing. What more shall I say that he abstained from the adornment and grooming of a king (Confessions of Saint Augustine, Book IV Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Chapter 11)? He added a confession of his sinfulness and transmitted it to be sung throughout the eternal ages in the whole world. Behold, I am conceived in iniquities, and in sins my mother bore me. Turn away your face from my sins: and blot out all my iniquities. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation. Before we are born, we are stained by sin; and before we enjoy the light, we receive the injustice of our origin, conceived in iniquity: it does not specify whether of our parents, or ours. And in their sins each mother brings forth her own child: nor did he state clearly whether the mother gives birth in sin, or if sins are already present in the unborn. But see that both interpretations are not to be understood. Nor is the concept of iniquity free, because parents themselves are not free from fault. And if an infant is not without sin even for a day, much less are the days of maternal conception without sin. Therefore, we are conceived in the sin of our parents, and we are born in their sins. But childbirth itself also has its contagions, and nature itself has not only one contagion. Indeed, marriage is good, a holy union; but those who have wives should live as if they did not. The marriage bed is defiled, and no one should defraud the other, unless perhaps for a limited time, to devote themselves to prayer. However, according to the Apostle, one should not engage in prayer at the time when they engage in physical union, and when a woman is menstruating, the cloth is defiled, and during those days of purification she cannot offer her sacrifice. And the woman who gives birth, and many others who are exempted from sacrifice, are forbidden until the woman is purified by the prescribed rite. The Lord said to him: Before I formed you in the womb of your mother, I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb, I sanctified you, and made you a prophet unto the nations (Jer. 1:5). Who is so great, to whom such things are bestowed? Is it Jeremiah, perchance? But he was not set forth as a prophet unto the nations, but unto Judea at that time; whereas now also unto nations which have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. See, however, lest it be said of him who, before he was born of a Virgin, already existed, and always was, and even operated while still in the womb of Mary; and so holy was he, that he sanctified his own prophets: in whom alone both the virginal conception and birth were without any mortal taint of origin. For it was fitting (Conf. S. Aug. lib. IV cont. duas epist. Pelag., cap. 11) that he who was not going to have the sin of the fall in his body would not experience any natural contamination of generation. Therefore, David rightly mourned deeply within himself the very stains of nature, that the blemish would appear in man before life.

Chapter XII.

The heavenly sacraments are revealed to those who confess their sins: when these uncertain things are said in the psalm, it is signified that they are not made manifest; but especially in this

place, the washing of baptism is prefigured.

While she was saying these things, and confessing the filth of special and common sins, suddenly the splendor of truth and the brightness of spiritual grace shone upon her. Having surpassed the shadow, by the prophetic spirit she herself saw the sacraments of celestial mysteries, of which Moses had foreshadowed in the Law (Exod. XXIV, 7 and following). Therefore, wounded by the wound of charity, and captured by the desire to investigate truth, she extended the gaze of her mind to higher things, and foreseeing future things, she saw treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ, she foreknew the sacrament of baptism and, amazed, she suddenly exclaimed, saying: Behold, for you have loved truth: you have revealed to me the uncertain and hidden things of your wisdom (Psal. L, 8). The mysteries are not uncertain, because they are certain; nor are the secrets and hidden things of wisdom uncertain, but not yet revealed. For this signifies that they have not yet been made clear. For eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him. Therefore, seeing these things, He says: 'Behold, now no longer in shadow, nor in figure, nor in type, but in truth the open light shines forth: behold, now I see the truth, I acknowledge the splendor of truth: now I worship You, O Lord our God, with greater devotion.' For behold, you have loved the truth, not by mirror, not in an enigma, but face to face you have shown yourself to me, O Christ; in your sacraments I find you. These are the true sacraments of your wisdom, by which the hidden aspects of the mind are cleansed.

Therefore, now happy and secure, because the fullness of wisdom had been revealed to him, he says to the Lord: You will sprinkle me with hyssop, and I will be cleansed; you will wash me, and I will be made whiter than snow (Psalm 50:9). And indeed, it does not empty the sacraments of the Old Testament, but it teaches that the mysteries of the Gospel are to be preferred; it demands to be cleansed with hyssop according to the Law (Exodus 12:22); it desires to be washed according to the Gospel; and it considers itself to be made whiter than snow if it has been cleansed. He was sprinkled with a bundle of hyssop with the blood of the lamb (Lev. 14:6), who desired to be cleansed by a symbolic baptism. But the one who is washed is cleansed by the flowing waters of the eternal font, and is made white as snow, and their guilt is forgiven. Finally, it is said of the soul itself: 'Who is she that ascends, purified?' (Song of Sol. 8:5). Before being baptized, she is the one who says: 'I am black but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem' (Song of Sol. 1:4). For she was black, dark, and disfigured by the horror of sins; but after being cleansed through baptism, she merits the forgiveness of her offenses and ascends to Christ, made white. Then the Lord spoke through Isaiah, saying: 'If your sins are like scarlet, I will make them white as snow' (Isaiah 1:18), meaning, if they are bloody, if they are foul, I will cleanse them. This is the intelligible snow, of which it is said that the garments of the Lord Jesus shone like snow in the Gospel (Matthew 17:2), because sin did not know Him. For the flesh He put on was free from all defilement. Why do you marvel that He saw the sacraments of baptism, when He said above, in describing the Lord's passion: 'The Lord feeds me, and I lack nothing; He has placed me in a green pasture, and He has led me by the water of refreshment' (Psalm 23:2). And elsewhere: The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the God of majesty hath thundered (Psalm 28:3). And concerning the same sacrament, He hath spoken more fully: Thou hast prepared a table before me, thou hast anointed my head with oil, and thy chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly is it! (Psalm 22:5).

Chapter XIII.

David, refreshed by the hearing of future forgiveness, predicts that the lowly bones will exult; but what are they? We must ask God to turn his face away from our sins, and to turn it towards us; likewise, just as sin, so also the iniquity that is its origin, is removed in three ways, which are explained.

Therefore, rightfully and joyfully, he also says: You will give joy and gladness to my hearing, and the humiliated bones will rejoice (Psalm 50:10). You have proven, Lord Jesus, that your words never pass away (Matthew 24:35). You have proven that Gospel statement when you said: Many prophets and righteous people desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it (Matthew 13:17). Look, David rejoices merely at the hearing, because the forgiveness of sins would be forthcoming; and he prophesies that the humiliated bones will rejoice. Just as all the bones of the righteous will say: O Lord, who is like you; so will the humbled bones exult, that is, the soul of the righteous who humbles itself. Therefore, the bones are called virtues; they are called bones like certain movements of the soul or of the mind, which are humbled by sins and exult in the gift of heavenly grace. And the bones are also called the people of the Churches; hence you have the saying in the psalm: My mouth shall not be hidden, which you have made in secret. He said that the Church is His own, and the sacred assembly of devoted people; for we are members of the body of Christ, of His flesh and bones. He therefore says this, that the Church of the Lord will know all divine works, and will receive the faith of the resurrection.

It follows: Turn your face away from my sins, and erase all my iniquities (Psalm 50:11). It is customary in prayer that we ask to forget the offense of those we have harmed. Therefore, the Prophet morally asks God to turn his face away from his sins and to assume them as though forgetting sins. But because God sees everything and nothing escapes him, he cannot forget like us, whose memory slips away from what we have known after a short period of time. Therefore, he rightly says that he should turn his face away, not from himself, so that he does not fail without support: but from sins, so that they do not have the power of his sins. For those whom the Lord looks upon, he enlightens, and in the face of the Lord there is mercy and indulgence. Therefore, he himself says here: Let my judgment come from your face (Psalm 16:2), for from the face of the Lord comes forgiveness, not punishment. Therefore, we should ask that he looks upon us, but turns his face away from our sins, so that he may destroy them. For what it does not see, it destroys; and what it has destroyed, that will be buried in memory, just as the Lord himself says: I am, I am the one who blots out your iniquities, and I will not remember: but you remember, and let us be judged (Isaiah 43:25).

However, sin is either forgiven, or deleted, or covered up: it is forgiven by grace, deleted by the blood of the cross, covered up by charity. Similarly, iniquity, which is considered the disposition of an unjust mind. Although John said in his epistle that whoever commits sin also commits iniquity, as it is written: Everyone who commits sin also commits iniquity (1 John 3:4), sin is iniquity, because in the very sin there is iniquity; however, as it seems to us, sin is the work of iniquity, and iniquity is the agent of guilt and fault. Therefore, it is necessary that wickedness itself be eradicated, the root and seedbed of sins be cut off; let the root of evils be removed, lest it produce evil fruits; let all inclinations for error be abolished, let all types of wickedness be removed.

Therefore, just as discipline in the soul removes ignorance, and knowledge removes ignorance: so perfect virtue removes wickedness, and forgiveness of sins removes all sin. Hence the Apostle

rightly says: Because the Lord Jesus has forgiven us our sins, wiping out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, and has taken it away, nailing it to the cross (Colossians 2:14). He has erased with his own blood the writing of Eve, he has erased the obligation of inherited guilt. Therefore, faith diminishes sin. And for this reason, the Lord, when forgiving sins, said: "Let it be done to you according to your faith." (Matthew 8:13).

Chapter XIV.

To have a pure heart is to be renewed by the sun; and within it, what are the organs, what is the spirit, of which the holy Prophet speaks? The averted face of the Lord is like a place of severe punishment; and how does He cast the same away from His presence? Who are subjected to this most dreadful punishment? After this, there is some discussion about freedom and unity of will in the Trinity.

Following: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me (Psalm 51:12). Above, it seeks to be cleansed from hidden faults (Psalm 19:13); here, it asks for a clean heart to be created for itself, which comes to one who is renewed in spirit. For in the new person, the heart is clean, in which the filth of past sins has been washed away, and no trace of iniquity remains inscribed. But it is indeed a great gift to have a clean heart. Where beautifully Solomon: Who will boast of having a pure heart? And the Lord in the Gospel: Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. The prophet David also desired to have a pure heart, so that he would not be cast away from the face of the Lord.

However, when the heart is clean, the spirit is renewed in its inner self. For just as the internal organs are the inner parts of the body, so are the intellectual organs of the soul, such as the organs of mercy (Colossians 3:12), as are the inner parts that bless the Lord, of which it is said: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all my inmost being, bless his holy name (Psalm 103:1). But the organs of the soul are the inventions of the senses, the pursuit of good thoughts, the perseverance of virtues, and finally those things that are called εὐνομαί in Greek.

However, the straight spirit that directs well, that leads on the straight path, this is the spirit of truth; or certainly the straight conscience of a person unswayed by any sins, or the spirit that is in a person. We do not disregard what others may think; however, it seems to us that the reading speaks about mysteries and expresses the grace of future renewal, and the infusion of the Holy Spirit is required.

Then follows: Cast me not away from thy face; and take not thy holy spirit from me (Ps. L, 13). If someone offends us servants, we tend to turn our face away from them. However, many rich people are accustomed to send away their slaves and exile them to small farms, and this punishment is considered more severe. Finally, they tend to offer themselves to beatings. If this is considered serious among humans, how much more so in the sight of our Lord God. As though from this point forward parricidal grief did not burst forth (indeed, it would have been curbed if piety could have tempered it), because God turned his face away from Cain's offerings; however, He looked upon Abel's offerings. Therefore, with a silent countenance, He pronounced one innocent, the other guilty. Therefore, as if the lowest servant, he humbles himself; and as if caught in sin and deserving of offense, he beseeches that he be whipped rather than cast out from the face of the Lord.

How does God cast out from his presence, hear him saying: Cast him into outer darkness, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 22:13). Whoever is not corrected, is placed in darkness before his face. Therefore, so that the righteous does not suffer darkness, he says: Your face, Lord, I will seek (Psalm 26:8). For where the Lord's face is, there is light, as it is written: Make your face shine upon your servant (Psalm 119:35). Finally, when he saw Peter for the first time, he enlightened him.

Therefore, a great punishment is to be cast away from the face of God. Adam was cast away when he left paradise, and not unjustly; for he had hidden himself from the face of God. Cain also went away from the face of God, not only after committing the act of parricide, but also because he thought he could deceive God and deny the crime. Therefore, the sinner is excluded from the face of God; but the righteous person says: Behold, here I am (Isaiah 6:8). Finally, David himself, when he saw the people perishing, offered himself, saying: It is I, I have sinned, and I have done evil as a shepherd (2 Kings 24:17); and thus the anger of the Lord was mitigated, and forgiveness was granted. At the same time, it shows that the saints remain, while the guilty are cast out. Therefore, we must preserve spiritual grace, so that it is not taken from us because of our sins. For the one in whom the Holy Spirit resides is not cast out, but rather, with the unimpeded fruit of his calling, seeks to always offer himself to the Lord, like the one who, when the Lord said, 'Do you also want to go away?' responded, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we believe' (John 6:68-69).

Furthermore, it must be considered that the Holy Spirit is not taken away except by the will of the Lord, just as it is not given except by the will of the Lord. And when it is given, it does not operate as if compelled, but rather is divided according to its own will, as it is written, with the Apostle saying: 'But all these things one and the same Spirit works, dividing to each one as He wills' (1 Corinthians 12:11). Therefore, since it is not taken away except by the will of the Lord, it is evident that there is one will of the Trinity.

Chapter XV.

The rational nature is capable of experiencing the joy of health alone; and it is strengthened by the guiding spirit; but who is that spirit?

Give me the joy of your salvation: and strengthen me with a principal spirit (Psalm 50:14). To whom it is owed, and to whom it is returned: it is returned to the rational nature by the joy of salvation. Joy and gladness, however, are the fruits of the Spirit. The firmament of our principal spirit is also firm. Finally, he who is confirmed by the principal spirit is not subject to servitude, does not know how to serve sin, does not waver, does not wander, nor does he vacillate with uncertainty; but being strengthened in the rock, he is firmly established in a solid footing. Whom do we think is called the principal spirit? Many think that the right spirit refers to the Lord Jesus, who has taken away the sin of the world and has renewed the whole human race by the shedding of his own blood. And therefore it is said: Renew a right spirit within me. But they understand the holy spirit of truth: but the Holy Spirit, they believe, is the principal one, God the Father. However, it is said morally: Do not cast me away from your face. He faithfully fears to be deprived of the grace he has received; therefore, he says elsewhere: My eyes are always looking to the Lord (Psalm 24:15). And in the following: Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of a maid look to the hands of her mistress, so our eyes are fixed on the Lord our

God, until he has mercy on us (Psalm 123:2). Indeed, this is the guiding and principled Spirit who rules the mind, strengthens the affection, draws it to where he wants, and directs it to the higher life.

There are also those who receive the spirit of man, which is in him. Therefore the Apostle says: For who knows the things of a man, but the spirit which is in him (I Cor. II, 11)? He who can know all things, whom the hidden things of man do not deceive, can have dominion over man.

Chapter XVI.

The skilled doctor is to teach the unjust ways of the Lord. How does this apply to both the character of Christ and David; or what does the Prophet pray to be delivered from bloodshed?

Sequitur: Docebo inequos vias tuas, et impii ad te convertentur (Psal. L, 15). Ille praecipuus est gubernator, qui scopuloso in littore navim gubernat: ille doctor bonus, qui duriora acuit ingenia ad eruditionis profectum: ille bellator egregius, dux mirabilis, qui timidiores accendit in praelium, exploratisque locorum ingeniis, fulcit; ut infirma virium commoda stationis opportunitate compenset: ille similiter magnus etiam fidei zelator, qui iniquos docet. Where he beautifully says: I will teach the wicked. He did not say: I will teach the righteous; for the righteous already know the ways of the Lord. But, he says, I will teach the wicked. Finally, the author of wisdom and master of all says: I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners (Matthew 9:13). And that divine physician says: It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick (Ibid., 12).

Therefore, whether it be from the perspective of the one who called the nations or from his own, he has well said: I will teach the wicked your ways, because corrupt affections can be changed, and heavenly doctrine can convert the wicked purpose, and divine operation can infuse the desire for piety into sacrilegious hearts, so that those who were living without law may be converted to the true Lord, whom they were previously turning away from. Also, by the example of royal repentance, let those who commit injustices and cruel crimes be corrected, and when converted in faith and action, let them receive the healing remedy of doctrine and enter the ways of the Lord, in which they will not encounter any winding paths of error or any dangerous deviations that lead to a fall. For just as there are men who have traversed the blameless seasons of their life as an example of good living and a model of virtue, so those who have renounced their past wickedness or errors of cruelty and have corrected the course of their later years are set before us as objects of imitation by those who are either slipping or stumbling in action or thought.

It follows: Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, God of my salvation (Psalm 50:16). And it can be attributed to the death of Uriah, that he who is conscious of the commanded murder seeks forgiveness for such a great offense, and although the king is absolved by the law, he is still guilty in his conscience; desiring to be released from these bonds, he prays for divine assistance, so that he may be cleansed from all the stain of the committed crime. And truly, since the holy Prophet, who is meek and gentle in heart, has always displayed the striking insignia of his gentleness and piety, forgiving his adversaries frequently and believing that he should abstain from their destruction; it is not surprising that he grieves so deeply that the sin of shedding innocent blood has crept upon him. Therefore, he asked to be freed from the blood, that is, from mortal sins. He praised his Lord God, proclaimed the justice of the Lord, and therefore added: My tongue will rejoice in your justice.

Chapter XVII.

David's words indicate that sin is forgiven, when God closes the mouth of the sinner. These same words also apply to Christ, who is the true David, from whom the future gathering of the nations and the foundation of the Church are foreshadowed, ultimately encompassing the sacrifice of Christ and the offering of Martyrs.

O Lord, you will open my lips, and my mouth will proclaim your praise (Psalm 50:17). Whoever praises the Lord will be saved from their enemies, as it is written (Psalm 18:4). And certainly, he had said earlier in the forty-ninth psalm: But to the sinner, God has said: Why do you declare my justices (Psalm 49:17)? Therefore, when he said with his own mouth that God had prohibited the sinner from declaring his justices, certainly by proclaiming the justice of God, he declared that this sin was by no means imputed to him. And he added: You will open my lips, and my mouth will proclaim your praise. God closes the mouth of the sinner, so that he may not speak the righteousness of God; but he opens the mouth of the righteous, so that he may speak. Therefore, the one whose lips he opens, he absolves from the guilt of sin. But the Lord opens the lips of him who receives the word in the opening of his mouth. Hence, the Apostle asks to be helped by the prayers of the people, that the door of the word may be opened to him to speak the mystery of Christ (Colossians 4:3). But we truly receive language for speech from him who exults in the praises of God. Therefore, it is also valued as such: My tongue is the pen of a swiftly writing scribe (Psalm 45:2), a speech infused to the Prophet. But if we accept it as being spoken by the person of Christ, let us take care that the scribe is not one who quickly writes the Word of God, which passes through and penetrates the depths of the soul, and inscribes on it either the gifts of nature or of grace; but the tongue to be that holy body derived from the Virgin, which has been purged from the venom of the serpent, and the works of the Gospel have been spread throughout the entire world. It also serves to empty sin, which it has taken upon itself with humility; it has broken its heart, which the Lord has chosen as a sacrifice more than the holocausts for sins which were accustomed to be offered according to the Law. Finally, he says above: 'You did not desire a holocaust and a sin offering; then I said, Behold, I come' (Psalm 29:7-8), that is, I did not consider it robbery to be equal to God, I come taking the form of a servant; I come in the likeness of human acceptance, in the reality of the cross, to prove obedience with the humility of death; that disobedience may be abolished.

Therefore, rightly does he say here: For if you had wanted, I would have given a sacrifice, but you will not be delighted with holocausts. A sacrifice to God is a spirit crushed: a broken and humbled heart, O God, you will not disdain (Psalm 50:18-19). And as I said earlier, it is certain that it agrees with the mystery that the Lord Jesus himself seems to speak here also in his own person, who above expressed it through clear testimony of his person. For He Himself, the true David, strong in hand, true in humility, and gentle, first and last, first in eternity, last in humility: through whose obedience the fault of the human race has been wiped away, and justice has been rejected. He, I say, Jesus, the end and fulfillment of the shadows and the Law, came as the teacher of humility to teach the proud that they must pass from arrogance and the swelling of the heart to gentleness and simplicity. Therefore, how can sin be imputed in the type of His mystery, when in the very mystery there is the forgiveness of sins? Unless perhaps David confessed his own wickedness and the sin he committed, so that he himself might obtain forgiveness of sin and the grace of the mystery. For what does a man who confesses his sin desire, that he sings from Zion and

Jerusalem, saying: Do good, O Lord, in your good will to Zion, so that the walls of Jerusalem may be built (Ibid., 29); unless it is because he is pleased to hasten the gathering of the Church through the call of the Gentiles, which, as a free Jerusalem that is in heaven, would spread the lineage of its faith throughout the whole world and establish the spiritual walls of the doctrine of the apostles by its proclamation?

Therefore, the walls of Jerusalem are fortresses of faith, defenses of debates, and peaks of virtues; the walls of Jerusalem are the gatherings of Churches founded throughout the entire world. For the Church says: 'I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers' (Song of Solomon 8:10). And indeed, the walls of Jerusalem are the assemblies of Churches; for whoever enters the Church with good faith and works becomes a citizen of that heavenly city and a dweller of the city that descends from heaven. This structure builds walls of stones for the living.

Therefore, seeing Jerusalem, the true and Zion, He said: 'When you bless Jerusalem and Zion in your good will, then you will accept the sacrifice of justice' (Psalm 50:21), that is the sacrifice of the body of Christ, who, when speaking of His own passion, said: 'Open to me the gates of justice, and entering through them I will confess to the Lord' (Psalm 117:19). And in the Gospel He said to John: 'Allow it for now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all justice' (Matthew 3:15). And below: Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (Matt. 5:10). Righteousness is Christ. Therefore, he asserts that the sacrifice of Christ will be acceptable to the Father. This is what he also says above: Sacrifice the sacrifice of righteousness, and hope in the Lord (Psalm 4:6). This is the spiritual offering of righteousness, and the burnt offering of fervent devotion, and the infusion of the Holy Spirit, which he says will happen when the souls of the believers begin to approach that spiritual altar of the Lord, renouncing pleasures and delights, and leading them as a plow in their own hearts, so that they may be able to bear the fruits of piety.

Certainly, when you bless the Church acquired from the Gentiles and the spiritual sacrifice of righteousness begins to be celebrated, then the holy martyrs who offered their bodies for Christ are to be commemorated, as if they were offered as sacrificial calves on the sacred altars; just as we find written in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 6:9), 'Under the altar were the souls of those who had offered their bodies for the name of the Lord Jesus by martyrdom, in order to obtain his grace for themselves'; to whom is honor and glory, praise, perpetuity with God the Father and the Holy Spirit from ages past and now and always, and unto all ages of ages. Amen.

Commentaries on the Twelve Davidic Psalms

Commentaries on the Twelve Davidic Psalms by Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- On Psalm 1
-
- Preface
- Commentary
- On Psalm 36
-
- Preface
- Commentary
- On Psalm 37
-
- Preface
- Commentary
- On Psalm 38
-
- Preface
- Commentary • On Psalm 39, Commentary • On Psalm 40, Commentary • On Psalm 41, Commentary • On Psalm 44, Commentary
- On Psalm 46
-
- Preface
- Commentary • On Psalm 48, Commentary • On Psalm 49, Commentary • On Psalm 62, Commentary On Psalm 1

Preface Since God has set forth the highest incentive to virtue to be the enjoyment of future blessedness, the devil also devised a powerful spur of delight in error. The first indication of both viewpoints is Adam, the first of the human race, placed by God in the paradise of pleasure so that he might enjoy eternal delight and be incited to virtuousness for the sake of future offspring. For it was not unknown to God that he would allow a place for error, and that he must propose hope of salvation to others, by which they would strive to restore the lost human seat to the race. And by the same likeness of the serpent which foreshadowed the enticement of pleasure, being deceived by the persuasion of his wife. Therefore, with the opportunity presented, the adversary worked death for me through pleasure. So what was given to me for life by divine grace became death for me, and the enemy had an easier agreement with man; for he presented a false appearance of nature to bring about the fall. For his works pleased the Lord: the beginnings of nature pleased him, which the Lord, seeing, said: Very good (Gen. 1:31). The Angels praise the Lord, the Powers of Heaven sing to Him, and before Him the beginning of the world, the Cherubim and Seraphim, with the sweetness of their melodious voices, say: Holy, holy, holy (Isaiah VI, 3). Countless thousands of angels stand by, and a great multitude of elders sings together like the voices of many waters, chanting Alleluia (Rev. XIX, 1 et seq.). The very axis of heaven carries a more explicit message, revolving with a certain perpetual harmony, so that its sound is heard in the furthest parts of the earth, where there are certain secrets of nature. And it does not seem contrary to the use of nature; since a sound sent forth from the woods or mountains results in a more pleasing applause, and that which they have received is returned with a sweeter sound. Nature even finds in the very rocks and stones something to delight in. The sight of some delights, the use of others, or simply their charm. Even wild animals and birds are soothed by the delight of a more pleasant or more melodious voice. Even to suckling infants, either severity is a terror or gentleness a pleasure. Therefore, it is a natural pleasure.

Therefore, even the holy David, who perceived from where man came and by what deceit he was cast down (for if he had held fast to the grace of that eternal and heavenly delight infused into him by the Lord, he would not have lost it, being captivated by worldly enticements, nor would he have undergone the injuries of such miserable afflictions), he therefore, striving to restore and reform that gift of singing, established for us a heavenly model of conduct.

Indeed, although all divine Scripture breathes forth the grace of God, the book of Psalms is particularly sweet; for Moses himself, who described the deeds of the ancestors in plain language, when he led the people of the fathers across the Red Sea with memorable admiration, beholding Pharaoh the king and his forces engulfed, raising his own genius to greater things (because he had achieved greater things by his own strength), sang a triumphal song to the Lord (Exodus 15:1 and following). Maria also took up the tambourine, encouraging the others, saying: Let us sing to the Lord; for he has been gloriously honored; he has thrown horse and rider into the sea (Exodus 15:20). Likewise, when Moses had read the law of the Lord, so that its memory might be fixed in the hearts of those who heard, he spoke through a canticle, saying: Listen, heavens, and I will speak; let my teaching come down like rain, my words descend like the dew, like showers on the grass, like snow on the earth (Deuteronomy 32:1 and following).

Therefore, God is delighted not only to be praised by a song but also to be reconciled by it. Therefore, Moses used a song most especially when he testified to heaven and earth, so that the world would eagerly listen to the sound of heavenly grace singing its salvation, and the sweetness

of the sacredness would endure forever in the hearts of human beings by the observance of the Law. Finally, the tablets of the Law were broken and shattered by the indignation of Moses before they were confirmed by a song. But when they were consecrated by such a seal, human anger had no place, because sanctification excluded it from the sanctuary. Therefore, the song of the Lord, soft as dew, descends from heaven, and the faith of men, like grass, is infused with a certain spiritual grace. These two songs, therefore, like the two eyes of the world, the lights of heaven, illuminate the whole body of his work. But indeed David was chosen by the Lord for this task as the one who excelled in what is rare in others: to shine constantly and consistently in this work. We read one song in the book of Judges (Judges 5:2ff), the rest, following the custom of history, having been recounted, in which the deeds of our ancestors are expressed. Isaiah also wrote one song (Isaiah 12:1ff), by which he sweetly comforted the hearts of readers; in the rest, he resounded with the terrifying trumpet of reproof. They could not even object to that song, those who persecuted him unto death because of other things he said. One from Daniel (Dan. III, 52 et seq.), one from Habakkuk (Habakkuk III, 2 et seq.). Solomon himself, though he is said to have sung countless songs, left one behind that the Church has received, the Song of Songs. Therefore, in the others, it is possible to notice individual songs.

History instructs, Law teaches, prophecy announces, correction chastises, morality persuades: in the book of Psalms is the progress of everyone, and a certain remedy for human salvation. Whoever reads it, has with which he can heal his own wounds of passion with a special remedy. Whoever wants to see, as in a common gymnasium of souls, and in a certain stadium of virtues, finding prepared different kinds of contests, let him choose for himself what he deems himself more fit for, so that he more easily reaches the crown. If someone wishes to recount the deeds of their ancestors and desires to imitate them, they will find the entire series of their father's history contained within a single psalm (Psalm 77:8 et seq.). In this way, they acquire a treasury of memory through the economy of reading. Those things which are explained more briefly also seem easier. Furthermore, consider the magnitude of how it distinguishes the opposing errors in a short span of time and interweaves a second act of reconciliation, so that you may simultaneously understand the weight of offense caused by disbelief and what prompt faith contributes. If someone wants to explore the power of the law, which is completely bound by love (for whoever loves their neighbor has fulfilled the law), let them read in the Psalms with what affection of love they defended themselves against the reproach of the whole people, exposing themselves to serious dangers alone; in which they will recognize the glory of charity not unequal to the triumph of virtue. If someone fears harsh rebukes, let them hear the one who says: Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath (Psalm 6:2); and let them learn how they should temper the criticism of an angry judge. If anyone wishes to learn an example of patience, let them read in the psalms: 'If I have repaid those who did evil to me' (Psalm 7:5); and let them take note that the Gospel precept foresaw this in spirit and surpassed it in virtue. You have, therefore, that proverbial saying: 'The patient man is a physician of the heart' (Proverbs 14:30). If anyone also wishes to be fortified against the assaults of spiritual wickedness, what more should they know than to sing psalms to themselves? David, when he was younger, used to play the harp; and he would drive away the evil spirit of Saul, who had previously tormented him. But what shall I say of the virtue of prophecy? What others have announced through enigmas, seems to be openly and clearly promised to this man alone, that the Lord Jesus would be born from his seed, as the Lord said to him: 'Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne' (Psalm 131:11). Therefore, in the

psalms, not only is Jesus born to us, but He also undergoes that saving passion of the body, rests, rises again, ascends to heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. What no one of human beings dared to say, this Prophet alone proclaimed, and afterwards the Lord himself preached in the Gospel (Luke 24:44).

Furthermore, all the writers of the psalms have presented examples in their writings, either from the sayings of those who came before: the psalms have nothing except what is their own. What, therefore, could be more pleasing than a psalm? As David himself beautifully said: 'Praise, he said, because the psalm is good: let it be enjoyable and fitting praise to our God' (Psalm 146:1). And truly; for a psalm is the blessing of the people, the praise of God, the praise of the people, the applause of all, the speech of all, the voice of the Church, the melodious confession of faith, the devoutness full of authority, the joy of freedom, the joyful shout, the result of joy. It mitigates anger, abdicates worry, and alleviates sorrow. It serves as nightly armor, daily instruction; a shield in fear, a festival in sanctity, an image of tranquility, a pledge of peace and harmony, like a lyre combining diverse and disparate voices into one melody. At the dawn of the day, it resounds with a psalm, and it echoes a psalm at sunset. The Apostle commands women to be silent in the Church; even the psalm itself proclaims: this is sweet to every age, this is suitable for both sexes. The old sing it, having laid aside the severity of old age; the veterans respond to it with joy in their hearts; the youths sing it without envy for sensuality; the adolescents sing it without danger and temptation of a loose age and attraction to pleasure; the young maidens themselves sing it without the expense of matronly modesty; the little girls, with sobriety and gravity, sing a hymn to God without any loss of modesty; and the afflicted intone it with the sweetness of their softened voices. This tenacious boyhood, this joyful childhood, delights in learning what others decline. This is a certain game of greater progress in education, which is taught with seriousness. How much effort is made in the Church to achieve silence when readings are read? If one speaks, everyone interrupts; when a psalm is read, he is the one who creates silence. Everyone speaks, and no one interrupts. The psalm resounds with the authority of kings. David rejoiced to be seen in this ministry. The psalm is sung by emperors, praised by the people. Each one strives to shout out what is beneficial for all. The psalm is sung at home, recited outside. It is received without labor, preserved with pleasure; the psalm brings together those who disagree, unites those who are divided, reconciles those who are offended. For who would not forgive him, with whom he has sent forth one voice to God? Truly a great bond of unity, for the entire number of the people to come together in one chorus! The strings of the lyres may be different, but the harmony is one. In the fewest strings, the fingers of the artist often make mistakes; but in the people, the artistic spirit does not know how to make mistakes. The Psalm is the exchange of nocturnal work, the reward of daytime rest, the instruction for beginners, the confirmation for the accomplished. It is the ministry of angels, the heavenly army, the spiritual sacrifice. The Psalm and the stones respond: the Psalm is sung, and even the stony hearts are softened. We see the cruel being made to weep, the merciless being forced to bend. The teaching contends with grace in the psalm. It is sung for delight, and learned for instruction. For the more violent precepts do not endure; but that which you have perceived with sweetness, once infused, is not accustomed to slip away from the depths of the heart. What is it that does not occur to you while reading the Psalms? In them, I read a Song for the Beloved, and I am inflamed by the desire for holy love (Psalm 44:1); in them, I recognize the winepresses of the divine mystery (Psalm 8:1 and elsewhere); in them, I recount the grace of revelations, the testimonies of the resurrection, and the enumeration of promises (Psalm 50:3 and following); in

them, I learn to avoid sin, and unlearn to be ashamed of repentance for my sins. So great a king, so great a prophet has provoked me with his own example, that I either strive to lessen a committed sin, or guard against one not committed.

Therefore, what is a psalm but an instrument of virtues, which the venerable Prophet, playing with the plectrum of the Holy Spirit, made heavenly sounds resonate on earth? At the same time, when he played on strings and chords, that is, on the remains of dead voices, he directed the song of divine praise to heavenly things; he certainly taught us first to die to sin, and then only in this body to discern the diverse works of virtues, by which the grace of our devotion would reach the Lord; so that with our minds fixed on heavenly things, no earthly desire for vices would find its way in, and our souls would shine with the sweetness of heavenly grace. Therefore, deservedly, the Lord, praising the servant of the great duty, said: I have found David according to my heart.

They also say that those who play the lyre are more skilled at singing inwardly, as the fables tell of the lyre player Aspendius; they also say that the reasons for the melodies and certain rhythmic constraints are in the upper part of the harp. Therefore, David taught us to sing inwardly, to sing with the soul, just as Paul sang, saying: I will pray with the spirit, I will pray with the mind; I will sing with the spirit, I will sing with the mind (1 Corinthians 14:15), and to shape our lives and actions with a view to higher things, so that the pleasure of sweetness does not arouse bodily passions, by which our soul is not redeemed but burdened; for the holy Prophet, remembering himself singing for the redemption of his soul, said: I will sing to you on the lyre, O Holy Israel: my lips will rejoice when I sing to you; and my soul, which you have redeemed (Psalm 70:22). But now let us begin the preludes of this psalm that has been proposed to us.

Commentary

(Vers. 1) "Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked." How fitting, how opportune a beginning! For just as those who have undertaken some solemnity of a contest usually propose a prize to be displayed, boast of the honor of the crown, so that they may gather with greater enthusiasm for the competition and strive with more determined effort: in the same way, our Lord Jesus has set forth the glory of the heavenly kingdom, the grace of perpetual rest, the blessedness of eternal life as incentives for human virtue. Moreover, when the emperor advances to war, he promises a donative to the soldiers, as well as promotions in military ranks, so that the hope of rewards may assuage their labors and conceal the fear of danger. Like a herald, therefore, of a great emperor, the holy David exhorts the soldiers, calling them athletes and expressing the reward, saying: Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. He begins with the reward, in order to elevate the weight of the future contest; he sends forth the reward, so that each person, leaping over the anxieties and labors of present affairs in their heart, may eagerly strive to obtain the blessedness of the future. Blessed, he said, is the man. What more could be given to a man, than that nothing more could be given to God by Apostolic authority (1 Tim. VI, 15 and 16)? For blessed indeed, and the only one powerful, and king of kings, and lord of lords, God is called. He alone is powerful, he alone is king of kings, he alone is lord of lords, yet he does not exceed the power of blessedness. He has given us a common partnership in his name, which is considered worthy of divine honor.

Let us now consider in what manner the Blessed man spoke, and not only the Blessed men: since both sexes are called to grace. Did he exclude women from the fellowship of beatitude because he

called only the man blessed? Far be it; for God did not exclude females from the fellowship of creation, because he created the man first. For God said: Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness... And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Genesis 1:26-27). In man, both are represented: in man, the sex is expressed. But just as when the word "man" is used, both are included: so when the word "man" is mentioned, the woman of whom that man is the husband is understood. Furthermore, She shall be called Woman, for she was taken out of Man (Genesis 2:23). Also, it is added that when the nature of two things is the same, their actions cannot be distinct: and when their work is equal, surely their reward is equal as well. Therefore, Scripture does not omit the partner of the union when it speaks of man, for it also does not remain silent about the partner of nature when it speaks of human. Therefore, just as there we read of man being made, and although there is one nature, we cannot deny that the principal sex was created first: so here, when we read of man, we also recognize the female sex as the principal part. Therefore, the studies of virtue are equal, because the prerogative of creation is equal. But why do you debate about gender, when it is not the struggles of the body, but of the soul, that require attention, which do not have a gender? Therefore, do not discern honor there, do not distribute rewards, where gender is not discerned. However, do not be careless if the one who was first called to exercise was the one who fell last. The one who started poorly should follow, not lead; so that she may be more modest after the experience. Eve deviated from the order of nature, she should have waited for the one who came before. The clever serpent began from behind; therefore the Prophet turns back to the higher one, assuredly one who would not have fallen unless he had followed from behind.

Finally, he called us back from falling before he challenged us to the palm of victory. Blessed, he said, is the man who has not gone in the counsel of the wicked. See where you are called blessed, O man: not in wealth, not in power and honors, not in noble birth, or in beauty and attractiveness, not in bodily health, in which there is no good of nature; finally, they not only have an easy change into opposites, but also serve as a means of sin for those who do not know how to use them. For who is righteous for the sake of money? Who is humble in positions of power? Who is merciful for the sake of nobility? Who is pure for the sake of appearance? These allurements are more for sin than fruitful for the progress of virtue.

What does he then want to say that he preferred to say: He did not leave, and he did not stand, as if from the past; when he could say: Blessed is the man who does not go in the counsel of the wicked, and does not stand in the way of sinners, and does not sit in the seat of the pestilent? See the doctrine; for he is not immediately blessed who is not wicked or a sinner, because of the uncertainty of the outcome. For it is not written in vain: Before death do not praise anyone (Ecclus. 11:30). Therefore, as long as someone is in this life, they cannot be praised with a definite statement, since they can still fall into error; however, the person who concludes life without stumbling is rightly considered blessed, as they enjoy the company of the blessed. But perhaps you will say: By what reason, then, did he elsewhere say: Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor (Ps. XL, 1)? For he did not say blessed is he that understands, but that one who understands; because those who do good, in the very work and by which they

are tested, find the reward of their work in that same work. Indeed, the blessed fruit is the good deed of conscience. However, those who restrain themselves from evil are not immediately blessed if they have deviated from fault once or twice, but if they are able to avoid the contagion of sin throughout their whole life.

Now it occurs, why he prefers to say 'blessed' not he who has fulfilled some duty of piety, but he who has restrained himself from the plan of the impious. For it seems that he is more praiseworthy who has fulfilled the duty of virtue than he who has escaped sin. For neither an ox, nor a horse, nor a stone have been accustomed to be in sin, or to sit on the throne of pestilence. But those things do not have the fruit of blessedness, which do not have the sense of virtue. But how do they reach the reward of the law, who do not have the intention of following the law? Therefore, I see the proposed opinion concerning rational beings, that is, concerning us. But for us, the beginning of goods is the abstaining from sins; for we read: Turn away from evil, and do good (Psalm 36, 27). For this is the order of discipline, that you strive from lower things to more perfect ones; lest you be frightened by the weight of greater things, which you should be provoked to from the beginning of lighter things. The Scripture teaches us that the ladder is like a scale of piety (Gen. XXVIII, 12), through which holy Jacob, a man of discipline, saw the angels of the Lord ascending and descending. He was presented to us as an example, so that we may know that we should gradually advance in virtue through him, and thus be able to strive from the lowest to the highest, if we progress step by step from small things to those that appear higher in the human nature. Always keep these scales in front of you. Do not be afraid, oh man, to climb these steps of discipline. The first step is close to the ground, the next is similar to the previous one. Thus, one ascends to the highest through equal steps. Do not despise, oh man, that first step as if it were the lowest. That first ascent separates you from the earth; you tread the air where you have lifted your foot from the ground. Placed in virtue, you rise when you leave the earth; you leave the earth if you turn away from sin. Therefore, the beginning of the journey to virtue is to abstain from sin. But so that we may know that this teaching is of doctrine, listen to the Law saying: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not commit murder (Exodus XX, 14 and 15); for these precepts seemed to be appropriate for the imperfect. Finally, the Lord Jesus himself, knowing the imperfect, answered him who asked by what works one might attain eternal life: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not commit murder, you shall not steal, etc. (Matthew XIX, 18). Then, to the one who said that he had done all these things, He added more perfect things, saying: Sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven (Ibid., 21). And He taught that there is such a difference between avoiding evil and imitating good, that he rejected the latter, who considered the former easy for himself. But because he had not yet attained the former, he was unable to adapt himself to the latter. For if he had loved his neighbor, he could have provided assistance to the poor out of his own inheritance. Therefore, ascend the first step of the Law, so that you may reach the celestial summit of the Gospel. Hence, I believe that, as if placed under the Law, the holy Prophet warns more against following the customs of the Law in the first psalm rather than proposing to follow them. However, in the fortieth psalm (Psalm 40:1 et seq.), which is written from the perspective of the Savior, the exhortation is more about virtue rather than the suppression of error; for it speaks of the passion of the Savior (Ibid., 6 et seq.). And therefore, as we can understand, the dispenser of the Gospel also, when we heard Him say, 'Blessed are the merciful' (Matthew 5:7); and in the psalm of His own passion, and in the Gospel, He crowned mercy. But let us now adore the explanation of the psalm, and let us examine the prophetic power.

"Blessed is the man, he says, who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of the pestilence." We can say that there are three kinds of sins, which are here thought to be expressed, thought, action, and persistence; and that he is called blessed who has not even thought what is evil. For how can he be blessed, who is to be condemned on the day of judgment by his accusing thoughts? Even if he deceived a man, escaped the witness, evaded the accuser, he will not be able to avoid being his own accuser, whom he should fear the most; because he will have both the accuser and the confessing defendant. Therefore, blessed is he who has not even thought of what is evil, and has not committed sin (for sometimes we sin without even thinking; for we do not escape sin by much speaking), and has not persisted in sin. Or like this: blessed is he who has not even thought of what would be an error, or has not remained in that thought, or certainly has not persisted in those thoughts that he has recognized as full of error. But whether these things are rightly understood, whoever reads them will judge. For someone who has once thought evil, should not have remained in it, nor persisted. But even if he did not persist, he could not be blessed; because he stayed in what he thought wickedly. Even if he did not stay, nevertheless, by the very fact that he thought evil, whether he has the fruit of blessedness, he should seek a compassionate interpreter. Finally, because no one can say that he has a pure heart, even if the thought is venial, is the action of sins venial? Finally, if someone has a venerable station, is it also full of blessedness because they did not persist in crime? Then, how could someone who did not even think about wicked things, continue to sin or persist? In order for someone to be blessed, they must rightly observe these three things, but the order is different. First, they must not persist in sin; second, they must not stand in it; third, they must not think that it is an error. For someone who did not persist, they could still stand; for someone who did not stand, they could still think; but for someone who did not even think, they are truly blessed.

Therefore, I also thought that another tradition should not be neglected, in which we assert that three degrees are made in a straight line: that one who wants to be blessed should not go in the counsel of the wicked, that is, should not walk in their thoughts; secondly, should not stand in the way of sinners; thirdly, should not sit in the seat of pestilence. Therefore, you who have become a Christian in the Church, or who strive for grace, abstain from the counsels of the wicked, so that you can say: Do not destroy my soul with the wicked, O God, and my life with bloodthirsty men (Psalm 25:9). And do not think about wicked things. What are those things, except those that are conceived against God's will? First, our duty is towards God; second, towards our parents. Indeed, the enemy often inserts different thoughts in our minds, and therefore the Prophet wisely believed that thoughts, rather than sudden inspirations, should be held accountable for wrongdoing. So, have you refrained from the counsels of the wicked? Rightly so, but you are not immediately blessed. Also, be careful not to stand in the path of sinners.

How often are the words of divine Scripture set forth? Indeed, because we are all under sin, it is not required of you beyond nature that you do not sin; for even an infant of one day is not without sin; but that you do not remain in sin in a certain prolonged state. Not all are wicked; therefore you are called back from all impious thoughts and associations; but all are sinners; therefore you are admonished to stop sinning. If there has been a lapse of youth, the process of maturity should correct it. Therefore, do not have involvement in more serious matters, do not stand in lighter matters. You have this also said by the Lord in Isaiah: Go out of Babylon, fleeing from the

Chaldeans (Isaiah 48:20): this means: And if you entered into the confusion of vices, go out. It was not necessary to enter; but you entered, compelled by the law of the flesh, and being captivated by the law of sin, go out, leave or rather, free yourself from heavy servitude. You could not refrain from entering into sin due to your weakness: sobriety to exit from sin is given to you. Therefore, leave Babylon, fleeing from the Chaldeans. Babylon is confusion, which does not maintain the order of virtues; for, confused by allurements, we commit sins. The Chaldeans are those who, with a vain zeal for superstition, explore the courses of the stars and sow the errors of wicked paganism. Flee from them, lest they capture you, lest they ensnare you with the heavy noose of captivity. Abraham was a Chaldean, but he fled from the Chaldeans and before the Law; you were born under the Law, flee from the wicked. He rejected the inheritance of his fathers, in order to possess the inheritance of faith; you abandon the succession of the body, acquire the inheritance of devotion. But if you do not remain in sin, you are not blessed in this way; you still have something that you should lack. There are many temptations, many deviations from virtue: the heavy allurements of pleasures, the heavy fuel of avarice, the desire for power, the ambition for honor, which, like a certain poison, corrupt the minds of men and contaminate their souls with the poisonous decay of vices. This is the seat of pestilence on which the Scribes and Pharisees sat, who impose heavy burdens on men, but they themselves do not want to move them with their finger. He expelled from the temple of the Savior their chairs those who boasted of their honor, sought for primacy in honor; those who used priesthood or the honor of primacy for profit; those who, indulging in gluttony, did not observe the proper restraint of abstinence. This is the true pestilence. Finally, the sons of Eli were sons of pestilence. In this certain seat of vices, Scripture prohibits us from bending our neck and reclining the strength of the whole body. Therefore, pay attention to the characteristics.

"And he did not stand in the way of sinners, and he did not sit in the seat of the pestilence." The path of this life, the course, is not in doubt; for the Scripture itself says: In the way in which I walked, they hid a snare for me (Psalm 141:4) . And: Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are with him on the way (Matthew 5:25) . Indeed, since we run the course of this life, we have a path on which we walk daily, until we reach the end. Although we do not appear to go bodily, we are progressing. For just as those who are sleeping in ships are carried by the winds into port; although there is no sensation of sailing for those who are resting, nonetheless the course urges them to the end and impels them unknowingly: so as the span of our life flows by, each one is led by the hidden course to his own end. Hence it is said: Rise, you who sleep (Ephesians 5:14); for you are sleeping, and your time is passing: and see lest while you sleep for a long time, time may pass by. Therefore, even if you sleep, your heart remains awake, your heart does not strike. If your heart is not idle, your time is not idle. You are on a journey, oh man, walk so that you may arrive; lest the night overtake you on the way, lest the days of life be consumed before you hasten the progress of virtue. You are a traveler of this life; everything passes, everything happens after you. You see everything on this path, and you pass by. You have seen the beauty of trees, the greenness of plants, the purity of springs, and whatever else delights the eyes; it was pleasant to behold, it delighted to pay attention for a while; while you paid attention, you passed by. Again while you walk, you came across a rocky and rugged path, hollows of cliffs, steep mountains, dense forests. You grew tired, yet you continued on. Such is life, in which neither the prosperous moments last, nor the adversities endure. Therefore, do not let the favorable circumstances lift you up, or the adversities break you, or the pleasing things delay you, or the sad things hold you back.

Always hurry towards the end, hurry so that you may arrive. However, choose the path before you run.

There are two ways: one of the righteous, the other of sinners; one of equity, the other of iniquity, of which the Prophet said: And see if there be in me the way of iniquity (Psalm 138:24). Therefore, not only is our life a way, but even in our very life there is either the way of virtue or the way of iniquity. Beware, therefore, that greed does not place its steps in you, and that you become a path of crime; that neither dishonesty, nor lust, become a path worn down by those who travel the way of iniquity and vices. It is allowed for you to choose whom you will follow, either the just or the unjust. The path of the just is narrower, the path of the unjust wider: the former is narrower in its sobriety, the latter wider in its drunkenness, so as to be able to contain those who are wavering; the latter has the allurements of this world, the former has the rewards of the future. In the former, the fruits are more immediate, in the latter, hope is slower; for those things which are sweet do not delay long expectation, but have an immediate fulfillment; but that which is serious is sought through labor, because it is scarcely grasped by a blessed thought; for no eye has seen, nor ear heard, what God has prepared for those who love Him. We often find it difficult to believe things we cannot see: and so the soul is restless, and it turns its thoughts here and there like eyes. Then there occur to it various kinds of things, and they overwhelm it. If it aims at eternal things, it chooses virtue; if at present things, it sets pleasure before everything. A grievous and unjust struggle against the pleasures of the present; here is liberty in one's desires, there slavery in wrongs, doing what you do not wish, and refraining from what you desire; here feasting, there fasting; here intemperance in joys, there perseverance in tears; here dancing, there prayer; here sweet songs, there mournful groanings. Indeed it is written: The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools (Ecclesiastes 7:5-6). But few hear these words, and even fewer follow them. People are more attracted to the sweet sin that gratifies the desires of the hearer in the present, than to the sad virtue that encompasses the hope of faith, as if wrapped in a bitter shell of toil. Blessed and marvelous, therefore, is he who, situated in the choice of such paths, has not been swayed by the allurements of pleasure; so that he may establish his step above treacherous and perverse ways. It is not said to him: Woe to you who have forsaken the straight paths, by going on the ways of darkness! (Eccl. VIII, 16)!

Therefore, we know what the path of sin is, in which the Prophet warns us not to stand; but also Ecclesiastes teaches, who says: Do not stand in evil speech, that is, do not persist in evil words, likewise in disapproved actions. As for how to stand in good, the same holy Prophet instructs, saying: Our feet were standing in your courts, O Jerusalem. (Psalm 122:2) Standing is required in Jerusalem, fleeing from Babylon. And to Moses it is said: But you stand with me (Deut. V, 31), who fled from Egypt, and stood with the Lord. And in the Gospel (Matt. XX, 9), those who stood until the eleventh hour received equal pay for their work. And the virgins who stood until the arrival of the bridegroom deserved to enter together into the wedding feast; but those who left and returned afterwards are excluded by the authority of the Lord's sentence (Matt. XXV, 10). Therefore, we have learned not to stand in the path of sinners, but to stand in the duty of virtue; for it is written: But you stand by faith (Rom. XI, 20).

Now let us consider what it is: And he did not sit on the chair of pestilence. And indeed, we have stated that not a simple assembly in such a throne as is used, should be criticized. For what fault

would envy have? But since the eyes of the Lord are always upon the faithful of the earth; placed as if under the sight of an emperor, and like being placed in a certain ministry, we ought to stand. A soldier stands in readiness, he does not sit; a soldier in arms does not turn back, but rather rouses and raises up. And so it is said to the soldiers of Christ: Behold now, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, who stand in the house of the Lord (Ps. 133:1). But on the contrary, wickedness sits on a leaden weight, because it is fixed in sin and cannot separate itself from it. Indeed, those who are deeply rooted in error and eagerly cling to vices are said to sit, because they do not want to rise or listen to the one who says: Arise, after thou hast sat down (Ps. 126:2). Finally, this Prophet himself elsewhere says: 'Princes sat and spoke against me' (Psalm 119:23). Do we not know that such a powerful force is the long-standing habit of sinning, that it excludes nature, which although it is curable for salvation, is found to be incurable by the passage of time with unhealed wounds? Therefore, let us not remain in vice; but let each person, even if they were, leap away from sin, as it is written (Proverbs 5:3) about the woman of the streets. Do not fix your gaze on it, but leap away, do not delay; may they find you leaping when the years of youth pass by. But, what is more serious, many are not ashamed of indulging in bodily pleasure even in old age, and they have led a spotted life up to the age of senility. For the disease of lust is conceived in the innermost viscera, and with the passing of time it accumulates. Therefore, beware of the wicked counsels, do not let such thoughts penetrate your mind; lest it be said of you: Has anyone put fire into their bosom, and their clothes were not burned (Prov. VI, 2)? For surely he who once kindles the flame of a burning crime in the bosom of his mind will quickly set fire to the clothing of his own body. And just as a fire, leaping onto a pile of straw, clings and remains until it consumes everything it has seized, so too a tiny spark of sin, if it has been ignited by the fuel of vices, stirs up a great conflagration. Therefore, do not remain in sin. Finally, you have placed your foot above the abyss of guilt, quickly remove it; lest pollution rise above your sole and, being easily deceived by a fall, you remain in the mud.

Therefore, vices must first be avoided, lest they then give way to more serious ones. For just as those who roll in mud, the more they roll, the more they become dirty; so too, those who once besmear themselves with the filth of wickedness, unless they quickly leap out, bring upon themselves a heavier cloud of disgrace with each passing day of their muddy conversation. And so, a foul odor from that land and a destructive whirlpool contracts a certain pestilence of souls, and with the breath of healthy thoughts corrupted, a pitiable plague of boiling passions rages. Hence a deadly virus infects the minds, hence sickness creeps upon the bodies, weakness upon the souls. For there is an evil weakness, the weakness of error, the weakness of greed, the weakness of insatiable desire. These are the riches, as Ecclesiastes says: There is an evil weakness that I have seen under the sun, that riches are kept to the harm of those who possess them (Ecclesiastes 5:12). Tell me, O Ecclesiastes, what is the cause of this evil weakness? He will answer, because greedy hope devours many. Insatiable greed is the voracity of desire. He who desires silver does not know satisfaction. Wealth stretches, but does not fill. And even if someone is satiated with riches, there is no one to allow him to sleep. Indeed, all his days are in darkness, sorrow, anger, weakness, and rage. How can one sleep, who is preoccupied with guarding gold? Who frets about profit, calculates interest, and counts his money? Therefore, illness is an evil that takes away the good tranquility of the mind. Illness is a bad thing, luxury, lust, desire, pleasure, secular ambition, which quickly corrupts the health of sobriety. Ultimately, all the corruption in this world is a pestilence. Therefore, do not touch it, do not defile it. It is a plague, it contaminates; it is

a disease, it pollutes. Do not taste the things that are all for corruption through their very use, as the Apostle said (Colossians 2:21-22), who also proclaims elsewhere: The root of all evil is greed (1 Timothy 6:10); it causes illnesses, it inserts pains. Finally, those who desire it, subject themselves to many pains (Ibid.). This is a pestilence, which often makes warm things neither warm nor cold, but rather lukewarm, which Jesus will vomit out of his mouth because of their serious sins. This is what provokes not only some, but all sicknesses. Every head in pain, every heart in sadness (Isaiah 1:5-6). From head to toe, ulcers of sins. Every head is in pain, when those who are wise are valued here, they are tormented by greed; for the mind of the wise is in their head. This can also be applied to the leaders of the Church: Every heart is in sorrow, when we understand earthly things, and we bury the sharpness of our heart in bodily pleasures. Hence the Lord says (Ezekiel 11:19) to those like this, that He will give them a heart of flesh. A vile disease of diseases creeps from the feet to the head, when they suffer from contagion, when they share with others, if anyone is deprived of the fulfillment of desire, a widow cannot conquer her modesty, invade her land; and everyone with difficulty transfers their illnesses to one another. How often do the elderly groan because they cannot drink for a long time? How often do they grieve because they have ceased to be prostitutes, when they have the desire to be prostitutes? How often are virtues of drunken people a disgrace in stories, sins praised, chastity mocked, continence laughed at, mercy made a mockery! These are the diseases that spread their evils to many. From a few corrupt individuals, it reaches everyone. They sit in councils, undermining the sober ones, belching out their drunkenness; they sit in taverns, fighting over drunkenness. Among them is a harlot, full of wine, smiling at one, burning another, and inflaming everyone with the fire of lust. If a modest person passes by, they blush and criticize them; if someone is immoral, they are praised by everyone and, like a disease, they pass into the souls of individuals. For he who is notorious in wickedness, leads many into the imitation of error. So while they imitate another's sin, they commit their own evil. Do not sit among those whom the holy Prophet fled. Imitate him, fleeing for sure, not sitting, who says: I do not sit in the council of the wicked, and I will not enter with those who do evil (Psalm 26:4). By what reason did you flee from them, David, explain to us. Show us these parts, so that we too can flee from them, lest we become infected by their contagion: They are corrupt, he says, and have become abominable. There is none who does good, not even one (Psalm 14:1). Therefore, generally speaking, this can be referred to all those who are wicked; specifically, it can be referred to those who mock good things, which Aquila called τῆς trashtalkers, because these people are truly sick, who by mocking the good, cause a great deal of confusion in the minds and corrupt the souls. How many things the blessed man said that one should abstain from! And he even adds more.

(Verse 2.) "But in the law of the Lord was his will, and in his law he shall meditate day and night"; that is, blessed is he who does these things with counsel, reason, prudence; for even a small child can abstain from those things which have been said, not by virtue, but by impossibility and ignorance of sinning. Even an irrational beast can comply, to which there is no power of counsel, no sense of error. Therefore, this is the fourth thing that follows, in which the definition of a blessed man is distinguished from a beast; because a wise man is subject to the law by will, not by necessity. For it matters greatly; because in willingness, there is the reward of fruit; in necessity, there is the obedience of dispensation. For thus the Apostle taught us, saying: If I do this willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of stewardship is entrusted to me (1 Cor. IX, 17). But the proper order is that you should first love the law, and secondly meditate upon it.

Whoever loves, fulfills the commandments of the law willingly; whoever fears, observes them against their will. We have also received this teaching of God's justice in the Law. For it is written: Hear, O Israel: The Lord thy God is one God (Deut. VI, 4). And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt tell them to thy children, and thou shalt speak of them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, and lying down, and rising up. And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets before thy eyes: and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates (Ibid., 5-9). And below: And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to love the Lord your God and walk in all his ways (Deut. 10:12)? Wisdom also says: Desire therefore my words, love them, and you will have discipline (Wis. 6:12). Wisdom is clear and never fades, and it is easily seen by those who love her, and found by those who seek her. Therefore, we are lawfully taught by the holy Prophet to have the will in the Law and meditation according to the Law. The will in the Law is present not only in intention, but also in action. The first is the will, the second is the operation. Finally, the Lord responded to the one who said to Him: 'If you wish, you can make me clean', 'I will, be clean' (Matthew 8:2-3), in order to demonstrate that our actions should be preceded by a prior will. Ultimately, the law seeks volunteers because the law of the Lord is blameless, converting the soul. However, no one turns unless they turn by their own will. But the volunteer hides and steals the meaning of work.

Therefore, day and night he meditates on the Law; in which the intention of reading is not so much required as the affection for keeping the Law. For he fully meditates who is his own law, having the Law written in his heart. However, the eagle set the day only, not the night. Not so much differing from others, as referring to something else; because whoever meditates on the Law is always in the light, he does not have night. For the work of whomsoever shines, he cannot certainly walk in darkness; because his justice shines like light. Let our life meditate on the Law, let our conversation meditate, let our actions meditate, let our understanding meditate on the mysteries of heaven. For the Law is an example and a shadow of heavenly things, a shadow of future goods, which he who believes in the Law recognizes in the Gospel. Let him meditate in darkness and in light, that is, in adversity and in prosperity. For the law commands that you love your Lord. Whoever loves, in every state, must keep the affection of lasting love. A father loves his son, he loves him even when he rebukes him, he loves him even when he beats him with a stick; for whoever spares his stick, hates his son. The Lord also chastises us, and loves us. Therefore, even when we commit worthy discipline, he still loves us, for he also receives the offender. For the Lord chastises every son he receives. And when you are chastised, love; for you are chastised so that you may be received. For what great thing is it, if you then love the Lord your God, when you have abundance of all things, when you enjoy your desires, when you rejoice in honors, riches, and children. And we are accustomed to show gratitude to the person from whom we have received a favor. Finally, when Job was praised by heavenly judgment, the devil said this (Job, 1, 10 and 11): It is not surprising if he is grateful to God, to whom so great prosperity is present; but it is to be proved then, if he loses all these and performs the duty of a pious worshiper. Therefore, the first virtue is that you are not broken by adversity, nor are you elated by success. The Law teaches you not to relax your purpose in affliction, nor to assume despair; you should not say, 'My strength and my power have brought me this' (Deuteronomy 8:17), but rather recognize that everything is to be attributed to divine mercy.

Isaiah cries out: The one who is in distress will not be put to shame until the time comes (Isaiah VIII, 22). Drink this first (Isaiah IX, 1). What is this, drink this first? Let us separate the mystical, pursue the moral teachings that the letter instructs. Because of serious errors, serious contritions and vexations of the people are said to come; and it is necessary for them to precede, so that mercy may follow. So drink first the tribulation; for through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God; drink, so that the sense of tribulation may be poured into your innermost being: drink with patient affection, mourning the pain. For when you have turned in lamentation, then will you reconcile the offended Lord to yourself. Therefore, drink this first, that you may be in sorrow and distress. Quickly, joy pours forth error. The people, having become fat and thickened, rise up to play, and they turn away from the Lord. It profits you to have a contrite heart. Drink this first, that your sacrifice may be accepted by the Lord. Let the Apostle teach you what this is: Drink this first, that is, the cup of tribulation. For tribulation produces patience. (Rom. 5:3-4) There cannot be patience unless there was first tribulation. Tribulation, it is said, produces patience, and patience produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. And hope does not disappoint. Drink first from the cup of tribulation, so that afterwards the drinks of many virtues may be served to you. And to show you that tribulation is drunk, you heard the Prophet say today: You have given us to drink the wine of compunction. (Psalm 59:5). And in the following he says: And you will give us drink with tears, in measure (Psalm 79:6). In measure he seeks drink, not beyond measure, lest he be unable to bear it. Finally, with what great affection he prayed for this, he approved by his own example, who mingled his drink with weeping (Psalm 101:10), so that the mercy of the Lord might incline towards him.

Therefore, drink this first, so that you may drink the second (for this is the time to insert the mystical). Drink the first Old Testament, so that you may drink the New Testament. Unless you drink the first, you will not be able to drink the second. Drink the first, so that you may quench your thirst; drink the second, so that you may obtain the satisfaction of drinking. In the Old Testament there is compunction, in the New there is joy. See how the Lord has opposed the arts of the devil for his servants. He deceived one with the food of deceit, in order to deceive all in one; but Jesus, with the food of salvation, redeemed all, in order to reform even him who had been deceived. He devised the golden cup of Babylon so that whoever drank more would thirst more; and because the drink could not be pleasing, he lured them to drink with a price of gold. He served his own wine, for which he also sought the approval of metals. But truly the Lord Jesus poured out water from a rock, and all drank. Those who drank in a figure were satisfied; those who drank in truth were intoxicated. Good drunkenness, which would pour forth joy, not bring confusion; good drunkenness, which would establish the step of a sober mind; good drunkenness, which would bestow the gift of eternal life. Therefore, drink this cup of which the Prophet said: 'And thy cup which inebriateth, how goodly is it!' (Psalm 22:5) And let it not trouble you that the golden cup belongs to Babylon; for you also drink the cup of wisdom, which is more precious than gold and silver. Therefore, drink both the cup of the Old and the New Testament; for in both you drink Christ. Drink Christ, for He is the vine; drink Christ, for He is the rock that gushed forth water; drink Christ, for He is the fountain of life; drink Christ, for He is the river, whose torrents gladden the city of God; drink Christ, for He is peace; drink Christ, for from His womb flow rivers of living water; drink Christ, that you may drink the blood by which you were redeemed; drink Christ, that you may drink His words; His words are the Old Testament, His words are the New Testament. The divine Scripture is drunk, and the divine Scripture is devoured when the juice of the eternal word

descends into the veins of the mind and the powers of the soul. Finally, man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. Drink this word, but drink in its proper order. First, drink in the Old Testament: quickly drink, and then in the New Testament. And as he himself hastens, he says: Galilee of the Gentiles and parts of Judea, people who walk in darkness, see a great light; you who dwell in the region of death, a light will shine upon you (Isaiah 9:1-2). So drink quickly, so that a great light may shine upon you; not an everyday light, nor a light of the day, nor of the sun, nor of the moon; but that light which excludes the shadow of death. For those who are in the shadow of death cannot see the light of the sun and the day. And as if to someone inquiring from you about such great splendor, such great grace, it responds: For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us (Isaiah, 6). The child, because he has been born of a Virgin; the son, because he has been born of God, is the author of such a great light. A child is born to us. To us who believe; not to the Jews who did not believe; to us, not to the heretics; to us, not to the Manicheans; he is born to us, because the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; he is born to us, because he took flesh from the Virgin, because a man is born from Mary. Flesh is born to us, the Word is given. What is ours is born among us: what is above us is given to us.

We have strayed far enough, as we think, but not without purpose; to show that even in troubles we must love the Lord and not turn away from Him, since often tribulation follows joy, and joy follows tribulation. Finally, blessed is the one who is not broken by tribulation and follows the law.

(Verse 3.) And it shall be like a tree that is planted by the courses of water, which will yield its fruit in its season. And its leaf shall not wither, and whatever it does, it shall prosper. What is this blessedness that is compared to the tree, unless we understand it to be in paradise, that blessed place, the tree of life produced from the earth in the midst of other trees? Among many trees that were beautiful to behold and good for food, even this tree was produced from the earth, and it was in the midst of paradise, so that the other trees flourished with its greenness. What we call this wood, except by which salvation comes to us? And rightly this earth produced it, because the Virgin gave birth to him, who was earth according to the Author's sentence, which was spoken to him: You are dust, and to dust you shall return (Gen. III, 19). It is also beautifully read among other woods; either because it was among the apostles who were learning, or because it was in the midst of the mind and heart, as he himself said: There is one among you whom you do not know (John I, 26). And elsewhere he says: 'But I am in your midst' (Luke 22:27). Finally, he also said about Solomon himself: 'The tree of life is for all who grasp it' (Proverbs 3:18). Therefore, blessed is the one who imitates the Lord Jesus, who is the tree of life, the tree of wisdom, planted in the womb of the Virgin by the will of the Father. It is planted by him to remain forever, in order to bear fruit in its season. For this plantation, which had the richness of spiritual grace within itself, could not wither. Finally, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan. These are the waters that are spoken of in the Gospel: 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' He said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were going to receive. (John 7:38).

There is also another tradition, because there are waters which Jeremiah prohibits us from drinking, saying: What have you to do with the way of Egypt, that you may drink the water of Geon (Jeremiah II, 18)? There is also the Tigris river flowing past the Assyrians. There is also the Euphrates flowing into Babylon. There is also the Phison, which in Latin interpretation is called commutation of mouths, encircling the land of Evilath, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good; and the carbuncle stone, and the green stone. Deservedly there, the exchange was

made, so that the faithfulness of promises is not held; but deceit is in their mouth, where there is good gold; for greed breaks faith, and does not hold the simplicity of words. Precious ornaments also change the mind and soul; so that there is one thing in the heart, another in speech. In those regions, the Jews were captives of the rivers, taken to Egypt, and to the Assyrians, and to the Babylonians, where they sat upon the banks of the river Babylon, and wept for their sorrow; and as the Prophet himself testifies (Psal. CXXXVI, 1 et seq.); there they hung up their instruments, and cast away all joy, where they endured more severe things. Finally, the remaining ten tribes were led to the Assyrians; however, the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, because of a more serious crime, went to Babylon. For the daughter of the priest who committed adultery was punished more severely than the others, for she stained the honor of the priestly lineage with shameful disgrace.

Just as they were in very serious temptations, so our Savior subjected Himself to many temptations, so that He would not pass over any of our struggles. Therefore, it is rightly said that He was planted beside the course of these rivers, not in their courses, so that you might understand that He was near, not immersed. This was His first encounter with flesh and blood. Finally, He says: Father, remove this cup from Me; yet not what I want, but what You want (Matthew 26:39). There was the temptation of riches, when all the kingdoms of the earth offered themselves as enemies if the Lord would worship him by bowing down. There are the courses of two rivers, the Gihon and the Pison. He struggled against the princes of the world: there was in his very passion a contest against the tempters, whom the Hebrew interpretation calls Persians, who presented false testimonies. Against those who said, 'Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe him' (Mark 15:32), which the devil suggested. You have the rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

However, the Apostle also includes that there is a fourfold struggle for us, saying: For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world's rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens (Ephesians 6:12). These are the rivers that flow out of paradise. Therefore, I believe that anyone who desires to return to paradise must cross these courses of water. The same holy Prophet expressed this not idly, demonstrating that those who would undergo all temptations should already owe themselves the rest of paradise. Thus he says: My eyes descended because of the course of waters (Psalm CXVIII, 136). For just as there is a fiery sword at the entrance to paradise, so that whoever returns may return through fire, burning his sins, testing his gold: so the one who returns, returns through these courses. And the saints rightly say: We passed through fire and water (Psalm LXV, 12). Regarding those journeys, Isaiah says: 'If you pass through water, the rivers will not overwhelm you' (Isaiah 43:2). Which rivers? Listen to David speaking about those who hasten to paradise: 'Perhaps our soul would have passed through intolerable water' (Psalm 124:5).

Although some interpret these four temptations as follows: You shall walk upon the asp and the basilisk, and you shall trample upon the lion and the dragon (Psalm 90:13). That He walked in His incarnation, trampled in His passion, or may trample in the handing over of the kingdom, which He will hand over to the Father, when He will have emptied all principality. But the Eagle beautifully said that which has been transplanted, that is, transferred, because He was first planted in the Virgin, then transferred to paradise; just as He said to the thief: Amen, I say to you, today you shall be with Me in paradise (Luke 23:43).

Therefore, this tree will bear fruit in its season. Earthly trees are said to not bear fruit, but to bear; but the tree of life and wisdom bears fruit, that is, it bestows and gives. Again, this comes to mind: If the tree is wisdom, why will it bear fruit in its season, and not always? So that it may not be burdensome for us to think this of Christ; but you, who have read that the Lord will set a faithful and prudent steward (Luke XII, 42) over His household, to give them their measure of wheat in due season, in due season, not always, surely should not be disturbed. Wisdom can always bear fruit; but because it is wisdom, it should give wisely, distributing prudently, if ever we are deserving or able to receive full measure. Just as in this final time it will bear fruit, so too will it provide good fruit among the nations; so that we may be able to attain and preserve fellowship in his resurrection. Now we are unable, we cannot endure this hateful age. For here there is corruption, and we must be cautious not to corrupt the good fruit that the tree of life would bring; because now we are corrupt, but there we will be incorruptible: when the dead, he says, will rise incorruptible, and we will be changed. For it is necessary that this corruptible be clothed with incorruption, and this mortal be clothed with immortality (1 Cor. XV, 52 and 53). Therefore, what profit is it for someone who is dying to receive what death will take away from him? Therefore, wisdom knows at what time it should give to whom, which never loses a leaf of its own tree. And so, let us consider what the fruit of wisdom is, that we may contemplate its leaf. The fruit is internal; the leaf by which the fruit is either protected from the heat of the sun or from the cold. The fruit appears to be faith, peace, doctrine, the excellence of true knowledge, good intention, the reasoning of mysteries. A good life preserves these fruits: even if it perceives evil, it loses them. But God said to the sinner: 'Why do you declare my justices?' (Psalms 49:16) In the mystical sense, the fruit is, in the moral sense, the leaf through the contemplation of heavenly mysteries. For virtues without faith are like leaves; they may appear green, but they cannot be of any benefit. They are blown by the wind because they have no foundation. As much as the Gentiles possess mercy, they possess sobriety; but they do not have fruit because they do not have faith! Leaves quickly fall when the wind blows. And some Jews have chastity, practice reading diligently, and have great diligence; but they are without fruit and are like leaves. These are perhaps the leaves that Jesus found on that fig tree, but he did not find any fruit (Matthew 21:19). The mystical [sacraments] save and free [us] from death; however, moral virtues are ornaments of beauty, not aids to redemption. Moreover, the Lord Himself teaches that mystical [sacraments] excel moral virtues in His Gospel, saying about Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to His word, while Martha was busy with her service and complained that her sister did not help her in serving at the table: Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her (Luke 10:41-42). If she who served at the table of Christ did not contribute to hearing the word she eagerly desired, to whom can we contribute our diligent efforts to attain eternal knowledge? And yet, let neither our faith lack in her service, nor our knowledge lack in operation like Mary's, so that neither the leaves are without fruit, nor the fruit is unprotected by natural safeguards, and be exposed to harm.

We can also understand this, that Adam and Eve clothed themselves with leaves, seeking earthly garments, because the resurrection of the Lord's body was being prophesied; for the flesh, which had previously been accustomed to perish instead of the leaves, would not perish in Christ; and all the righteous, who, according to the Gospel, were born of the Virgin to imitate the tree of wisdom in their lives and actions. For the Greek says, 'Will he not give his fruit?' which can be translated as 'Will the blessed one not give fruit?', in Greek; but in Latin it is said thus: because the blessed one

will give fruit, namely in his resurrection, when he is able to give perpetually. And so it may be understood, that the fruit of it shall be above the wood, referring to the cross, upon which all things shall prosper. In which there is clear evidence that this is said about the Savior. For only His actions can be praised in all things and have prosperous outcomes. But the eagle shall be guided, He says: which also seems to refer to any man whom the Lord directs with heavenly favor. For the steps of a man are directed by the Lord, and the prophet David requested that his prayer be directed in the sight of God (Psalm 140:2). But the Lord himself directed his works so that they were not bent by any twist of error.

(Verse 4.) It follows: Not so the wicked, not so; but like dust which the wind drives away from the face of the earth; this is, not so as the blessed man, who is blessed because he has not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of scoffers, desiring to corrupt by either believing or living wrongly; who has delight in the Law and meditates on it; or, as the eagle set forth, he will resound in the Law: so that he may resound the precepts of the Law in his life, and his behavior may be like theirs, whose sound has gone out into all the earth. Perhaps here the sound of human teaching may go out; but there, where it is given to be seen face to face, a fuller expression of the word is seemingly made. Therefore, not like that blessed one who will do these things, who will be like a planted tree, all his deeds will prosper, so will the wicked be. Therefore, he repeated, either the one who wrote, or the one who added afterwards (as some think), by repeating the sentence he may become more confirmed, saying: Not so the wicked, not so, who will be like dust; for they are earthly, and just as dust is thrown away by the wind, so will they be thrown away and scattered by the Holy Spirit, who breathes upon the fertile and fruitful soul like the southern wind used to do.

It is said of this wind in the Song of Songs: Come, O south wind (Cant. IV, 16), that the tenderness of the softer air may relax the fields of our hearts, which were closed by the harsh winter frost and denied the embrace of welcoming seeds. It is good for us that this wind may blow, which may safely guide the ships carrying the necessary provisions for Solomon to his temple into the harbor. But this wind blows only when that heavy wind, the north wind, ceases to blow. Therefore, either the Church or the pious soul says: Arise, north wind, and come, south wind (ibid.); this means: You, north wind, withdraw, and you, south wind, come: blow upon my garden that the flowers may not be scattered but preserved. Therefore, the soul full of the flowers of piety has a garden, or itself is the garden, which bears fruit; the soul that is open to impiety has dust, which is barren of fruit. Indeed, the Lord made that one fruitful; but it gathered for itself the dust of impiety.

Why do you boast, oh full of impiety? Is it because you are powerful in honors and abundant in wealth? Don't you realize that you are dust, and you will be scattered and dispersed? I have seen, he says, the wicked man exalted and lifted up like the cedars of Lebanon; and I passed by, and behold, he was no more (Psal. XXXVI, 35 and 36). Why do you glory in the fact that many services surround you, many friends cover your sides, and numerous horses follow you, of which you explain to us the lineage, as if it were the race of your ancestors. You prefer wealth, because you feed your companions at feasts. I wish you would feed the needy; I wish you were not ministers of jokes, but supporters of wishes. You boast that you immediately yield to someone who is promising, and people avoid you like a wild animal or a beast. Do you think these things are anything? Don't you hear that they pass by everyone like a shadow? What use are consular robes, or triumphal cloaks shining with gold? You will leave naked: no one will recognize you as a consul

there. What use are countless possessions? They are public, not yours. Today you hold them, tomorrow another does. When you leave, another enters. Hardly have you moved your foot, another puts in a step. How many were there before you, how many will rule after you, and do you think this to be private? Whom have riches ever redeemed from death? Nay, whom have riches not compelled to death? Whom have wealth recalled from the underworld? Whom has power excused from punishment? Dust is wickedness, as the dust is the power of the wicked: it brings darkness, it cannot give salvation. As soon as a strong wind begins to blow, it scatters and dissolves it: it disturbs the air, it lays bare the ground; as dust is thrown, it vanishes like smoke, it melts like wax.

Hence many have raised the question, whether divine Scripture seems to assert that nature will perish; especially because elsewhere it says: I will crush them like dust before the wind, and like mud on the streets I will wipe them out (Psalm 17:43); and elsewhere: Behold, all adversaries will be put to shame and will be ashamed; for they will be as if they were not (Isaiah 41:11). Therefore, first I ask, do they think impiety is according to nature or beyond nature? If they claim to follow nature, it is certain that their opinion is wrong. After all, let them say whether sin is in accordance with nature or not. But it is certain that to sin is to deviate from what is according to nature. What, therefore, is so absurd as to say that it seems less wicked to be a sinner than impious; when it is most bitter of all, whatever seems to be an offense against God? But if to act impiously is not contrary to nature, then to live impiously according to nature is not to be considered a sin, nor worthy of reproach; for no one is reproached who acts according to nature. Therefore it is concluded that impiety is beyond nature. So how does scripture bring about the destruction of customs, of natures that will be destroyed, that is, perishable natures, when impiety is not natural but beyond nature? For what does not have something, does not lose it: nor can that substance perish, which was not. For even a disturbed dust is either transformed into the substance of water, or into air, or into fire, that is, it often seems to transition into another nature. Therefore, it does not perish into nothingness, but it transitions into something else.

What therefore prevents that even he who is crushed by the power and reason of the word, like dust, is not dissipated into nothingness, but transformed for the better; so that he becomes a spiritual man from the earthly, and so that the clay of the streets is erased in such a way that whatever is rough and dirty is removed, and whatever is smooth and clean remains? And what he says about the adversaries of Jerusalem: They are as if they are not; surely he could have said: They will not be. But when he says: They will be confounded and they will reverence; surely you understand that they will exist in substance, and in the progress of conversion, but they will not be adversaries as they were. And so, due to the lack of wickedness, they will not be, they will be changed with faith and devotion. Furthermore, elsewhere it is said from the perspective of a sinner: 'And I will bear the wrath of God, because I have sinned, until he justifies my judgment' (Micah 7:9). For God, desiring to convert the sinner, punishes and burns them in order to purify them. Hence it is said: 'And he will bring me into the light' (ibid.). For even fire burns and melts wax, in order to purify it; and we are tested by fire; and smoke is purified when all material is consumed, and it does not pass through its nature. And so, the soul, purified from every stain, aims at what is lacking, not at what is not. Hence Balaam says: 'Let my soul die the death of the just' (Numbers 23:10), meaning that his fall and certain wicked uses should die, and that he should become accustomed to the life of the just; for God desires all things to be saved. Thus Solomon

also says: 'God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living' (Wisdom 1:13). He made the soul to exist; he created man for incorruption, whom he made in his own image. But men, deviating from the gift of nature, have rendered themselves subject to death, so that they may be corrupted like earthly beings. But God compels through tribulations to repentance, so that through repentance that evil accident of wickedness may be burned up and consumed, and perish; and that place of the soul, which was the possession of the accident of impiety, may be open for the reception of virtue and grace. It is certain, however, that the nature of the soul is precious, which, made in the likeness of God, admits the reception of all virtue; since it is not deprived of the fellowship of heavenly knowledge.

Now we think that what is constantly in everyone's mouth is left over, through which reason God, by whose will not even the most worthless sparrow falls, and before whom the hairs of the head are numbered, said through Isaiah: Thus all nations will be like a drop from a bucket, and like a speck of dust on the scales, and they will be valued like spit (Isaiah 40:15). So all nations will perish like a drop from a bucket, and like spit they will perish, and they will be of no use. But you, who know that our God did not consider the nations worthless, as he said to Abraham: All nations will be blessed through you (Gen. XII, 3); and as he spoke to the Son through David: I will give you the nations as your inheritance (Psal. II, 8); and further: All nations will serve him (Psal. LXXI, 11); you who have read that God offered his Son for the salvation of all nations, in order to save sinners (Rom. VIII, 32); you should consider the power of divine sentiment in this passage. For through the contemplation of the celestial creatures, which are many (just as the sky, which is many times greater than the earth, is considered by most to be a mere point in comparison to the sky), the nations were estimated as drops from a bucket, of which the whole fullness belongs. From that heavenly fullness, therefore, the nations are estimated as drops falling down. For how could they seem great, when the very earth in which the nations exist is a small part of the world, and the incline of the scales, by which God has worked all things, is so slight that the nations are like a small portion? At the same time, recognize through this scale that God has created all things with justice, and in the very nations there is naturally something in which justice seems to have even a small amount, and that the spit itself exists as an inner portion of the universality of the whole body.

Therefore, here mercy is preached more, because the one who comes to seek what was lost did not despise that drop of water as insignificant, and he lifted the moment of the scale; and giving him the substance of a good body with his spit, he deigned that all nations be gathered into one body of the Church. However, among the nations and Israel, it can by no means be said that they are devoid of God's divine justice; for Moses himself said of Israel: Behold, a wise people, and tenacious of discipline, a great nation (Deut. IV, 6). And so that you may know that above our merit God's goodness has overflowed, the Apostle, interpreting this prophetic passage, said: God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all (Rom. 11:32-33). And he added: Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them? (Rom. 11:34-35). But the Prophet, introducing this passage, says: Thus all nations have been esteemed as a drop from a bucket (Is. 40:15), and the rest, so that you may know that this understanding agrees with the Apostolic interpretation. But what is more evident than this, that it

does not seem to bring about perishable natures, since the holy Prophet himself has subjected: For the wicked do not rise again in judgment. For he did not say: They do not rise again; but he says: They do rise again, but not in judgment. However, whoever rises again, is indeed and remains; but because he did not believe in Christ, he has already been judged; and therefore he does not come into judgment, whom the punishment of judgment already completed remains. And concerning the resurrection, there are indeed many testimonies in the divine Scriptures, which we have not overlooked in the books of consolation and resurrection. But regarding what it says: The wicked do not rise again in judgment; according to the Gospel, this is an absolute statement, because not everyone will be judged. However, the Apostle says: For we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil (2 Cor. 5:10). Many people think that these things are contradictory; and they do not realize that the Savior spoke about the faithless and impious, those who did not believe in the Lord Jesus. For He said: 'Whoever believes in me will not be judged, but whoever does not believe has already been judged, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.' This is the judgment, because the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light; for their deeds were evil. (John 3:18, 19). Therefore it is clear about whom it has been said, that is, about those who have not believed in the Lord Jesus. The Apostle, though he said 'all', certainly spoke about those who have believed, but they will render an account of their own actions on the day of judgment. Moreover, he himself elsewhere says (Rom. II, 15) that the testimony of our conscience will be revealed on the day of judgment, when our thoughts will either accuse or defend ourselves, as it is written, and the hidden secrets of the heart will be revealed. But what is clearer than this, which he says elsewhere: 'We shall all rise again, but we shall not all be changed.' (I Cor. XV, 15) For the just shall be changed into incorruption, while the truth of the body remains. Daniel also says: 'Judgment has sat, and the books have been opened.' (Dan. VII, 10) He therefore shows that there will be future judgment, especially when elsewhere he says the same: 'Many who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some unto life eternal, and others unto everlasting reproach and confusion; and they that understand shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and many of the just as the stars forever and ever.' (Dan. XII, 2 and 3)

What is this judgment of sitting judges, and what is it but the open book of our conscience, containing the series of our sins? Although it is despicable to consider this as if it were a judgment similar to human judgment. Christ's judgment is different, where conscience itself reveals itself, which cannot hide from the judge of hidden things: where thoughts shine forth before Him, who still says to those who think: Why do you think evil in your hearts (Matthew 9:4)? When he was speaking to the Jews, he used to say to everyone, lest anyone should think that hidden things could deceive him, lest anyone should think that a witness of hidden error could escape with closed walls. And so the Evangelist also testifies, saying: But Jesus knew their thoughts. How then does he say: The books are open? Surely not written in ink, but by the traces of sins, and the contamination of crimes. The book of your conscience will be opened, the book of your heart will be opened, our fault will be recited. There is a book where there is a tablet; rather, there are books inscribed where there are inscribed tablets, which are inscribed by the Holy Spirit with the Apostolic teaching, as we read, with Paul saying: You are our epistle... inscribed not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God: not on stone tablets, but on fleshy tablets of the heart (II Cor. III, 2 and 3). Therefore, these tablets of the heart, inscribed with the Holy Spirit, will be recited. If you do well, Scripture will remain. See that you do not take away the grace of the Holy Spirit; see that you

do not erase, and write down your crimes with ink, lest the day of judgment come, and the Judge say: Let the books be read, let the tablets of his deeds be read; and let Him say to you: I wrote your tablets, why did you destroy my marks? I wrote my gifts, how did you destroy my offerings and write down your insults? Have you not read that I write? Have I not said to you through the mouth of my Prophet: My tongue is the pen of a swift scribe (Psalm 44:2); but judgment belongs to the Word.

Therefore, many who have slept in the tomb will rise from the earth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment (John 5:28-29). What Daniel says, 'to eternal life,' the Savior says, 'to the resurrection of life.' Likewise, what Daniel says, 'to shame and everlasting contempt,' the Savior says, 'to the resurrection of judgment.' Therefore, it is not profitable for us to come to judgment, nor is it profitable not to come; lest we appear to be condemned or bear the weight of judgment in this contamination of vices. The prophet asks that the Lord not enter into judgment with his servant (Psalm 142:2); how much more should we fear the judgment of the Lord? Consider that the merciful Lord will forgive: how much will be revealed that I thought was hidden? What shame, what embarrassment will there be for me, when the one whom I claimed to teach others, I myself am found guilty in that very thing in which I was accusing others? And therefore, since both the Savior and John in the Apocalypse spoke of two kinds of resurrection, and John said, 'Blessed is he who has a part in the first resurrection' (Rev. 20:6), these indeed come to grace without judgment. But those who do not come to the first resurrection, but are reserved for the second, will be burned until they fulfill the time between the first and second resurrection, or if they do not fulfill it, they will remain longer in punishment. Therefore, let us pray that in the first resurrection we may deserve to have a share. There are those who rose in the passion of Christ; and these are clearly blessed, who received the grace of Christ and heard His voice, of which it is written: The hour is coming when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live (John 5:25). And: They entered the holy city (Matthew 27:53). I think that it signifies more the heavenly city than this earthly Jerusalem, which He left, reproached, because they have entered into this one by foot, but into that heavenly one by merits. But let us also beware that we rise from this earthly tomb. There are those who, while alive, are surrounded and filled with the dead, whose throat is a grave, not the words of life, but of death. If we rise here from the dead, we will also rise there. If we are not dry bones here, but have received the dew of the Word, the moisture of the Holy Spirit, we shall live there. Thus, Jesus will raise us here with His mighty voice, as He raised Lazarus, and through His disciples He will loose us from the chains of death and lead us into Bethany, where Lazarus was, that is, the house of obedience. And He will invite us to His banquet here, and there we shall recline with Him, and there we shall always feast with Him, and there the perfume, which only the betrayer lamented being wasted, will be fragrant to us.

(Verse 5.) Therefore the wicked do not rise in judgment. That is, they do not rise to share in the fate of those who will be judged; nor do sinners rise in the council of the righteous. You see that the wicked arise, but they do not rise in the judgment of the righteous, because sinners, though they do not rise in the council of the righteous, do rise in judgment. Hence, those who have believed well and have also put their faith into action will not be judged, but will rise in the council of the righteous. But sinners who cannot rise among the righteous will rise in judgment. You have two orders. The third remains for the impious, since they did not believe and have already been

judged; and therefore they do not arise in judgment, but for punishment: for they loved darkness more than light (John 3:19); and therefore their judgment is punishment, and perhaps the punishment of darkness. And it could indeed be understood that those who have evil deeds, believing nevertheless in Christ, desiring indeed to live rightly; but being overcome by the allurements of sin, they loved darkness more than light: that is, they loved both, but darkness more. But because he warned about those who did not believe, I think that it should be understood that they loved darkness, and not light; for light is Christ. Therefore, those who did not believe in the light are absurd to be believed to have loved the light, which they did not know. For they did not know, nor did they understand, they walk in darkness, as it is written (Psalm 81:5).

(Verse 6.) It follows: For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, and the way of the wicked shall perish. Pay attention to the meaning: The wicked do not rise in judgment, for the Lord knows the way of the righteous. Certainly He knows their ways, whose steps are directed by the Lord. They are the steps of men who are guided by the Lord. They are guided by the Lord and the ways of man. The Lord knows these ways, which are straight and tend toward that life of which it is said: I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). This is the good way: but the way of the world is crooked. It does not deign to know that way. For it recognizes those who are its own, who do its works: but to those who do wickedness, the Lord says: Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity, I do not know you (Luke 13:27). They are not unknown due to ignorance, but because they are unworthy of the knowledge of God.

However, he said beautifully: 'And the way of the wicked shall perish.' Latinus separated 'iter' to mean 'way' and as if distinguished 'iter' from 'via'; but the Greek said 'via' in both cases. However, Latinus did not speak in vain, for the Lord said: 'I am the way,' he did not say: 'I am the journey.' But he said the 'way' of the wicked shall perish, not the wicked themselves. He preserves the substance of those who, if they convert, will lose only the way of wickedness, which neither was nor will be from the beginning. Therefore, what is accidental perishes: what is substantial remains. But the wicked perish in such a way as it is said: The soul that sins, it shall die (Ezekiel XVIII, 4); so that by the sting of sin, they do not perish by the dissolution of their entire substance. On Psalm 36

Preface

The Prophet, in the following psalm, states what should be the form of the just by expressing the form of the unjust beforehand. For we cannot know what the form of justice is unless we know what the image of injustice is; they are indeed opposed and contradictory to each other. For in one there is a simple disposition of nature, in the other there is deceitful cunning of wickedness; one presents the images of virtues, the other presents the transactions of vices. Moreover, reason itself teaches that this order is appropriate; and if testimonies are to be taken from opposites, the very teachers of philosophy have confessed as they follow. But who would doubt that David lived long before the times of Plato, whom not only his teacher, but not even his ancestors' ancestors could see: since David lived at the beginning of the kingdom of the Jews (which spread through countless cycles of years), while Plato lived after the times of captivity, when the kingdom of his people had already been dissolved. Therefore, he himself, who holds the primacy in all secular wisdom, when he said that the form of justice cannot be understood without first examining the series of injustice, gave the example that those who want to seek gold must first cover themselves

in mud. Therefore, gold is justice, iniquity is mud. And what has been said before by our own is not doubtful, as it is written: I will destroy them as the mud of the streets (Psalm XVII, 43). And truly mud; because it contaminates those who approach it. Let us flee from injustice, lest we be polluted by filthy dirt, and not only our external feet, but, what is more serious, our minds be submerged in its whirlpool. And indeed philosophy claims to seek gold; but it churns the mud, which seeks divinity in statues; but the potter's vessels will be shattered by a rod. We seek gold, with which we may cleanse our bodies, bearing the mortification of Jesus Christ in our bodies; so that the life of Jesus Christ may be manifested in our bodies. Good gold, the blood of Christ, rich in value, abundant for washing away every sin. We have spoken of the order, let us consider the title.

(Verse 1.) To the end, he says, a psalm of David, the servant of the Lord. In the entire body of the Psalter, this is the only title that testifies that David wrote this psalm as the servant of the Lord. Who is this servant of the Lord, let us see: what does the series of psalms signify: to whom is this psalm addressed? Let us hear to whom he speaks: O Lord, he says, your mercy is in the heavens, and your truth reaches to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mountains of God, your judgments are a great abyss (Psalm 35, 6-7). To whom does this refer, if not to the Son of God? For these things are not of human, but of divine power. But what does it mean that the title of this psalm is declared to the servant of the Lord (Ps. LXXXIX, 1), when he preferred the prayer of Moses, the man of God, to be called the servant of the Lord in the later title? I do not understand what the intention of the Prophet was, or rather of the Lord Savior himself, who spoke through the Prophet. Truly, his judgments are very deep, so that he would reserve honor to the servant and attribute the condition of servitude to himself. I seem to understand, I seem to have learned something about spiritual grace. Against injustice, as we have said, this psalm is written: and therefore the injustice of the faithless is even more burdened, who refused to receive Christ Jesus the Lord, when he undertook slavery for them. For what is more unjust than for the ungrateful to have received such great benefits, so that those to whom he gave salvation would shed his blood? Lastly, elsewhere when he spoke about his passion, in order to heap up the hatred of Jewish impiety, he said thus: Do not turn your face away from your servant, for I am in distress, answer me quickly... (Psalm 68, 18). I am poor and in sorrow (Ibid., 30).

Come, Paul, interpret for us, by what reason the Lord of heaven and earth declared himself poor, and what this poverty is. You certainly said that he is rich: how is the same person both rich and poor? Let us hear the testimony of Paul. You know, he says, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; that for your sakes he became poor, though he was rich; so that through his poverty you might be enriched (2 Corinthians 8:9). Come also, Isaiah, interpret for us how Christ, who is accustomed to heal the pains of wounds, declared himself in pain. The doctor came to care for the sick: what did he himself have to complain about? Let us also hear the testimony of Isaiah. He said, 'He suffers for us,' and we thought that he was in pain (Is. 53:4). The doctor expressed empathy, for even though he himself had no wounds to complain about, he still had compassion for the wounded. Therefore, in this psalm, the Lord reproaches the Jews, saying, 'I am poor because of you, I am in pain for you, and yet you raised impious hands against me, saying: Let us kill the righteous one, for he is useless to us' (Wis. 2:12). Let us put wood into his bread (Jeremiah 11:19). He spoke well of bread in place of his flesh. He brought nourishment, they gave punishment in return for kindness. It is not surprising, therefore, that those who denied themselves the food of eternal life are hungry. They also cleverly combined these two things: Let us put wood into his bread. The

Jews did not know what they were saying, and they were speaking a mystery. The Cross of Christ gave us Paradise. This is the wood that the Lord showed to Adam, saying that from the tree of life, which was in the middle of Paradise, it was to be eaten; but not from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam erred, did not keep the commandment, tasted the forbidden fruit. Through the wood we began to hunger; because his flesh received nourishment. Therefore the Lord joined flesh and wood in Christ, so that ancient hunger would cease and life would be restored. Blessed is the wood of the Lord, which crucified all sins. Blessed is the flesh of the Lord, which provided food for all!

Therefore, concerning poverty and the pain of the Lord, we have brought forth suitable testimonies of the saints, of whom one saw and spoke, and the other was chosen to speak. Therefore, let us again bring forth testimonies of those who have been proven, concerning the servitude of the Lord; indeed, his own words that he spoke about himself in both. Let us therefore hear what he says: Thus says the Lord, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to gather Jacob and Israel to him (Isaiah 49:5). Therefore, we warn that because of the gathering of the people, he undertook the form of servitude. Do you hear, O Jews, and you report insults of grace; and you attribute this to treachery, for which you should have believed more. He came to call you, and you revile him. He said he is a servant from the womb. Listen, O Arians, from which womb: go back a little above: From the womb, he says, of my mother, the Lord called my name (Psalm 49:1). Let us hear what his name is, by which the Father called him. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel, which means, God is with us (Isaiah VII, 14; Matthew I, 23). For what other name is there for the Son of God but Christ? Take another. Indeed, Gabriel said to Joseph concerning Mary: She shall bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus (Ibid., 21). Receive the voice of God: And you, Bethlehem in Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people (Micah V, 2). Behold the mystery: from the womb of the Virgin came forth both servant and Lord; the servant to work, the Lord to command; in order to establish the kingdom of God in the minds of men. Both are one, not one from the Father and another from the Virgin; but the same who existed before the ages from the Father, He himself later assumed flesh from the Virgin. Therefore, He is called both servant and Lord: servant for our sake; but by the unity of divine substance, God from God, Prince from Prince, equal from the equal; for He did not beget something inferior, in which He Himself remembered to take pleasure (Matthew 3:17).

Great, he says, is the name given to you, O my son, as you establish the Twelve Tribes of Jacob. He preserves everywhere the words of his own dignity. Great God, and great child: he does not lose the name of his greatness even in his flesh, of whom there is no end to his greatness. And rightly secure, when he was in the form of God, as the Apostle says, he did not consider it robbery to be equal with God: but he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and found in appearance as a man: he humbled himself, becoming obedient even to death, death on a cross (Philippians 2:6 et seq.). Here is therefore the equal of God the Son, here the form of a servant in flesh assumed, here death tasted, whose greatness has no end; for the end of the Law is Christ for righteousness to all who believe: that in Him we may all believe, and adore Him with inward affection. Good servitude, which has made all free: good servitude, which has acquired a name above every name: good humility, which has made it so that at His name every knee should bow, of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and every tongue

should confess that Jesus the Lord is in the glory of God the Father. Therefore, this psalm is directed towards the end that we may also be servants of righteousness, not proud towards arrogance. For service is the reward of freedom; arrogance, however, is the reward of death. But now let us adore the very sequence of the psalm.

Commentary

(Verse 2.) The wicked man said, in order to sin for himself. He did not express what he said, and therefore I think it should be understood thus: whatever the wicked man says, it is a sin. For every injustice is a sin, just as where there is a flawed instrument, how can the song not be flawed? The offspring of degenerate material is devoid of color. Therefore, whatever the wicked man speaks, it is iniquity, which is attributed to its author, just as it is a frequent saying that the offspring of a viper first splits its parent. (From Tobit, chapter 12, number 41, and below in Psalm 37, number 8). Therefore, he sins against himself. I think nothing is said more sublime in this statement. In those who have claimed wisdom of the world for themselves, I have not read or learned anything like this. It is not surprising, since they have spoken with human intellect, that the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, has infused this: that the unjust man sins against himself, generates wounds for himself, and wounds himself. For just as thorns are born in the hands of a drunkard, as Scripture asserts (Prov. XXVI, 9): so also the unjust are born from words, which afflict the speaker. The unjust man speaks, and his inner conscience is wounded; for in every word he speaks, he is not free from deceit. For what punishment is heavier than his own, when he exacts punishment for every word? The serpent infuses poison into others, unjust to itself; for whatever it pours out is poured back upon it. Therefore, the unjust man is useless to others and harmful to himself; but the life of the just is fruitful for others and sweet for themselves. For Solomon says: 'My son, if you are wise, you will be wise for yourself and for your neighbors; but if you are wicked, you alone will bear the evil.' (Prov. 9:12).

Therefore, we observe that justice is born more for the sake of others than for oneself: it expects the common good, not its own; and it considers the good of others as its own advantage. Blessed and illustrious justice, whose good benefits all: it often proceeds from one to many, and reaches everyone. Just is David, who spared his enemy and preferred his innocence over preserving his life; so that he would not seek retribution for the sake of the public, and so that he would not set an example for the prince to desire vengeance in all cases, since he himself took revenge on his assailant. Justus Abel, who considered the firstfruits of his sheep, which the Lord had given him, to be offered to the Lord; and therefore he pleased God more, because he did not delay and demonstrated devotion. But the wicked one could not bear this, a transgressor of justice, a root of iniquity; and therefore he killed his brother, because his offering had been approved by God more than his own. But he who was killed spoke to God in the voice of his blood, while the living one was rejected from the face of the Lord; and even though punishment did not yet come from the Lord, the conscience of his sins tormented him. The wretched man was hiding, trembling and fearing; and since there was still no executioner, his unjust life itself tortured him. He had received a sign, not so that he could enjoy the sweetness of life, but so that death would not take away his torment: so that he would suffer daily by fearing his executioner. Indeed, he had deserved that the executioner be restrained; but without any respite, he himself was his own executioner, he himself was the executioner.

What punishment is greater than fearing that which you cannot avoid, and not being able to escape that which you have feared? Hence, David expresses beautifully the heavy burden of a guilty conscience, saying: 'For I acknowledge my iniquity, and my sin is always before me' (Psalm 50:4). For the image of our sin is imposed upon us, and it does not allow its guilty one to be at peace, inflicting a miserable servitude upon him and dragging him into its own chains, so that he may not be able to free himself; for he willingly sold himself, although he was free to not accept the costs of his sins and to preserve the freedom of innocence. So while we pray, sin is poured out: when the senses of the body relax in sleep, sin returns. Our error always comes to us like a wicked tax collector, or like a dishonest moneylender meeting a debtor. Hence the Lord says: Whoever commits sin is the servant of sin (John 8:34). But the righteous person knows how to loosen the bonds of his sins, and does not wait for an accuser, but anticipates by confessing in order to alleviate every offense; so that the adversary may have nothing to accuse. And so Scripture says to you: The righteous at the beginning of his speech is an accuser of himself (Prov. XVIII, 17). For he takes away the voice of the adversary, and with a confession of his own sins, he binds them like teeth sharpened for the prey of accusation. Judas Iscariot said that he would betray him. What did he say: The one I shall kiss, he is: seize him (Matt. XXVI, 48). He said this, and he himself acted with his own mouth unto death. How many do we think there were in him who were torturers, that he himself burdened himself so heavily as the exactor of punishment, and strangled himself with a noose? The wicked man said that he sins for himself. The righteous man spoke: Behold, I, a sinner, have done evil, and what has this flock done? And all sin was forgiven. Thus the righteous man spoke, and it benefited him. Cain said: Am I my brother's keeper? and he lied to himself. Ananias said that he had brought forth the price of his sold land and he lied to himself, for he could have offered less without deception. Therefore, it says excellently: 'And iniquity lies to itself' (Psalm 26:12). It lies to itself beforehand when it lies to its own destruction; it sins against itself when it robs itself of the sweetness of innocence. For what fruit is sweeter than the purity and simplicity of the heart? What food is more enjoyable than that which the mind, well aware of itself, and the conscience of the innocent, feasts upon? But indeed, iniquity weighs down the conscience like a leaden weight, as Scripture testifies (Zechariah 5:7). And rightfully does David say: As a heavy burden are they befallen upon me (Psalm. XXXVII, 5). And Solomon: As a sour grape to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes, so is iniquity to all those who use it (Prov. X, 26). A severe punishment which hinders food, obscures sight; and, what is worse, it casts a dark shadow over the eyes of the inner mind, so that the unjust cannot see what is true. Therefore, he who takes away from himself what is precious, sins against himself.

Therefore the unjust man says that he may sin for himself. But the just man speaks in order to benefit others and himself; the former speaks for destruction, the latter speaks for salvation. But concerning the just and faithful, it is said: With the heart one believes unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. X, 10). His tongue wounds, but the tongue of the wise heals. Therefore, when David reproached King Saul for persecuting him to death, forgetting the favor and gratitude for saving him so many times, and seeking the life of him who had risked his own life for the king's safety, he said that the fruit of justice would not perish in him, who did not destroy his enemy, handed over to him by the Lord (I Sam. XXIV, 14). Injustice has enriched itself from the unjust, poison has been poured out by serpents, the poison and weapons of injustice have perished.

Therefore, it is written: The unjust says to himself that he may sin. What did he say? I will set my throne above the clouds, and I will be like the Most High (Isaiah 14:14). The words have no effect, but they have sin. It is an empty pomp of boastfulness; but the spirit of pride, being criminal, does not fear to violate the divine majesty with reproach. For if any fear of God were within him, he would not have believed in his deceitful self in the full sight of God, as if God cannot know hidden things, He who is the searcher of souls. God watches over everything; nothing passes Him by, no one deceives Him: to Him all present things are like those which are going to happen, and hidden things are clear. Indeed, if that worldly sun often offers its light to closed dwellings; how much more so the highest, eternal God, who investigates and anticipates the secret interior of the human mind and every counsel of the Angels with His knowledge? What else does the unjust person do, except seek injustice for himself and hatred? For it is written: There is no fear of God before his eyes: because he hath dealt deceitfully before him, that he might find his iniquity unto hatred. For what did he find? For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. But as commendable is he who finds the good he seeks, so elusive is he who labored to find the evil he sought; for our efforts should be directed towards good things, not towards wickedness and crime. What, then, is it but the utmost folly and madness, to seek hatred, to find injustice by means of greater arts, which no good person has ever sought?

Therefore, let us consider how the wicked seek their own iniquity and hatred. Indeed, Herodias was married to the tetrarch of Philip in a legitimate union, abundant in royal wealth and power. She received Herod, who was traveling to Rome, as if he were her husband's brother, by the right of hospitality and kinship. After making a pact with him, she soon left her husband and exchanged the rights of her partnership. Did she not seek iniquity and hatred by deserting her marriage in order to find adultery? And because Saint John the Baptist consistently rebuked Herod for his unlawful marriage, saying to him: 'It is not lawful for you to have her as a wife' (Mark 6:18), as she had left her lawful husband and had come together with her brother-in-law as if by law; the adulteress was moved to the extent that she wanted to kill him. But knowing that she could not easily persuade Herod to kill John, she devised a plan by which she could accomplish this. It was Herod's birthday, which he used to celebrate with excessive luxury, as is the custom for many kings. He adorned his daughter so that she might dance a royal pledge at the king's banquet. And when she pleased Herod, who should have displeased her uncle, she offered to him, that he might ask for whatever reward he wanted for the disgrace of her dancing. She consulted her mother, by whose prompting she demanded the head of John the Baptist. Herod, being overcome because he had bound himself by an oath to give whatever the girl would ask, ordered John to be killed, and his head to be brought. When it was brought, the girl gave it to her mother, and she carried it to her own mother. Therefore, it is true that injustice and hatred are required: since that woman, unable to obtain what she wanted through a simple request, devised a scheme of deceitful fraud.

What shall I say about Judas the traitor, who sought after greed and found sacrilege, saying: What will you give me, and I will hand him over to you (Matt. XXVI, 15)? Not satisfied with looting the spoils of the poor, he reached the fullness of the gravest crimes by committing crimes, mixing the sacraments of charity with wicked acts, when he said: He whom I shall kiss, he is: hold him (Ibid., 48); so that there can be no doubt that what was said about him is true: The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit. She was giving kisses with her lips, she was pouring poison into their hearts; she was contemplating bitter punishments, she was offering a token of her favor.

Indeed, a prophecy was made about him: He did not want to understand in order to do good; for he did not sin by nature, but by his own will. In the end, he was an Apostle, he heard daily divine commands, he learned the heavenly mystery; he could have understood in order to do good, if he had wanted. He saw the paralytics healed, the blind receive sight, the dead raised; should he not have understood that it was God who could perform such things? But he did not want to understand, because he was a greedy man and, focused on money, he turned away the power of his mind from knowing the divine. For every person who indulges in wickedness does not want to understand the commandments of heaven, lest they be turned away from their vices. See that person fleeing understanding, who says: Darkness covers me, and walls surround me: who knows if the Lord sees (Ecclesiasticus 23:26) ? They do not want to seek and find, that God sees and knows all things; lest they be held back from their wrongdoing. See King Ahab seeking Naboth's vineyard; know his response: Far be it from me to give up the inheritance of my fathers (1 Kings 21:3) . Should he not have understood that he was doing what was right? But he did not want to understand in order to do good and not seek what belongs to others. Should he not have understood that Elijah served God truly, when he saw that by the word of Elijah the heavens were shut for three years and six months; and that by his prayers rain was sent down to water the dry land? But he did not want to understand, lest he condemn their unfaithfulness and follow the faith.

Moreover, he meditated wickedness in his bed, where he should have sought the truth. For in our beds, we should remorse our sins, not commit them by our very actions, as the Prophet says: 'What you utter in your hearts, and in your beds you are remorseful' (Psalm IV, 5).

He stood, he said, on a path that was not good: but he did not have hatred for wickedness. For it is not without reason that he contemplates injustice, who stands on the path of error and loves wickedness, which he ought to hate. He said more, he stood; as if he had long been in the way of wickedness, by a long-standing station. For blessed is the one who has not stood on the path of sinners, not the one who does not cease to stand on it. And therefore, the first precepts are those of the holy prophet David, to flee from impiety, not to stand in sin, to meditate on the Law; so that you may understand what is good and distinguish between what is just and unjust. Therefore, in all things, the root of procreation must be observed, so that it is not contaminated with useless juice from the beginning, and the vices of the mind are much more serious than those of the branches. Therefore, above all else, we must be careful that the use of malice does not grow in human ingenuity, and that every generation degenerates; for a bad tree produces bad fruit. For if we often do what we do not want, and cannot avoid what we hate; and we do what we hate, either from the pleasure of wickedness or by the stealth of sin: how can we avoid what we love? We are constrained and unwilling; how can we not be held voluntary? Paul scarcely extricates himself from daily errors by struggling in debate, so that, having been freed from the chains of captivity, he might be preserved by the grace of Christ; and do you think that by assisting in sins you can attain the rewards of heavenly promises? The crown is sought through struggle, not through resistance; it is obtained through endeavor, not through opposition. Moreover, the support of divine mercy should be sought for those who strive, so that the crown of righteousness may be bestowed on them according to the merits of their labors.

(Verses 6, 7.) Finally, let us consider what follows. 'O Lord,' he says, 'in heaven is your mercy, and your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgments are like the deep abyss.' Did not Paul follow this passage to say: 'Wretched man that I

am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?' But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 7:24-25). For when the human mind is troubled and we are weary from the difficulties and hardships of our struggles, we must seek the help of the Lord. Therefore, turning to the Lord, he invokes and implores Him to assist those who are laboring. Therefore, mercy must be sought from heaven, and the truth of God must be gathered from the oracles of the prophets, who, like clouds, cover the mysteries of divine knowledge. For God has placed darkness as His hiding place; so that you may first receive the rain of mystical fertility, and then, infused with heavenly dew, recognize the brightness of revealed light, so that you may say: From His fullness we have received (John 1:16). For who can easily comprehend the secrets of God, whose justice is like the mountains of God, or (as the Eagle has said) like strong mountains; because the precepts are full of strong virtue. Therefore, the Apostle, seeing that what he heard was sublime, says: O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and His ways unsearchable! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor (Romans 11:23-24)? Therefore, he compared the height of wealth to the height of mountains. Listen to which mountains. For the Son of God Himself is a great mountain (Isaiah 40:9); and therefore, ascend this mountain that proclaims the good news to Zion, so that you may be rooted and planted in Christ. The mountain is like the wisdom of God, the mountain is like righteousness, the mountain is like the knowledge of God, the mountain is like sanctification, the mountain is like redemption, the mountain is like resurrection. The Scriptures have shown us these mountains, which say: In Him you are in Christ Jesus, who has become wisdom for us from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (I Cor. I, 30). And also because the Son of God became an angel to the angels, and a prophet to the prophets; whose judgments are like an abyss. Listen to this good news: One abyss calls upon another abyss in the voice of your waterfalls (Psal. XLI, 8); that is, the scripture of the Old Testament calls upon the arrangement of the New Testament for the completion of sanctification and the fullness of grace, with a certain sound and an overflow of spiritual abundance.

(Verse 8, 9.) You will save people and animals, O Lord; for you have multiplied your mercy, O God. But the children of men will hope in the protection of your wings. They will be intoxicated with the abundance of your house, and you will give them to drink from the torrent of your pleasure. What are people and animals? Some are rational, others irrational. Rational beings are subject to judgment, while irrational beings receive mercy. Some are ruled, others are nurtured. Therefore he adds: But the sons of men will hope in the protection of your wings; that is, not the generation of vipers, but the sons of men who live in the image and likeness of God; they are not placed in pastures, but in banquets: for some are in the place of pastures, others in the privilege of sacraments. For the imperfect, there is the juice of milk; for the perfect, there is the table of refreshment, of which it is said: You have prepared a table before me (Psalm 23:5); in which there is living bread, that is, the Word of God; in which there is the oil of sanctification, with which the head of the just is anointed, and the inner sense is fortified, so that the oil of the sinner may be abolished; in which there is also a cup that intoxicates, how splendid, or how powerful! The Greek word κρατιστον can mean powerful, strong, or mighty; strong, in that it washes away vices and eliminates them. Therefore, the good drunkenness is that of a healing cup. But there is another drunkenness from an overflow of Scriptures. And there is another drunkenness through the infusion of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, those who spoke in different languages in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:13), seemed to be full of new wine to those who were listening. Therefore, the

house is the Church; abundance of the house, overflow of grace; a torrent of pleasure, the Holy Spirit. And let not the name or manner of a torrent offend you, because sometimes it may be drier or more meager, so that its streams may cease. Our own stream has ceased, the spiritual stream of floodwaters has ceased at times among the people of the Jews. What shall I say? The stream has ceased; when the sea shall have ceased, as today's reading has taught us, with the Lord saying: Behold, with my rebuke I will make the sea desolate, and I will make their rivers a wilderness, and their fish shall dry up, so that the Jews, due to the dryness of their perfidy, cannot swim. Therefore, the torrent ceased because of the sacrileges of the Synagogue; for that people was dry in faith, barren in works, captive to sins. For what would flow to those who do not drink, but defile the sacred channels, when they kill the very source itself? The good torrent, which ceased for them, so that it might abound for us, and turn away the thirst of human desire, like a torrent in the south wind. Therefore, Scripture also says: Arise, north wind, and come, south wind (Song of Songs 4:16), which is accustomed to blow upon the little trees of paradise.

We have spoken of the meaning and even of the expression, why has he said 'torrent of pleasure' instead of 'rivers of pleasure,' as if from the torrent; unless it is because he wanted to express the greed of the drinkers, as if they wanted to drink the very torrent if they could? Perhaps this is the torrent of pleasure that we read about in Genesis (Gen. II, 10), the fountain that waters paradise and is divided into four rivers that surround the whole land. For from this source flow spiritual virtues: prudence, temperance, fortitude, justice. A good fountain of grace and splendor, of the same nature, whose river is spoken of in the following passage: The streams of the river make glad the city of God (Psalm 46:5).

(Verses 10, 11.) Therefore, He fittingly substitutes: 'For with you is the fountain of life: and in your light we shall see light.' Extend your mercy to those who know you, and your righteousness to those who are upright in heart. Indeed, after the remembrance of heavenly benefits, gratitude is rightly ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ, who, as the life-giving fountain of eternity, descended to earth to water the dryness of our hearts. The same is the brightness of the glory of God the Father, and the image of his substance; and therefore in his true light, which enlightens every man that comes into this world, we shall see, he says, the Father; because God is light. It is also rightly said: In your light we shall see light; according to that: He who sees me, sees also my Father (John 14:9). Therefore, with you, O Source of life, we shall see the Father present. For just as you, being the Word of God, were with the Father in the beginning: so the Father is always with you, who are in him. For indeed in Him is present that which is. But the coming of the Lord and Savior was prophesied, who, when He was about to come into the world, said: 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:30); that is, we are one light, just as we are one name. Through the unity of light and name, we are both one; indeed, the Trinity is one in the unity of substance, but with the distinction of each person. The Trinity signifies the distinction of persons, the unity signifies the power. It can also be said of the Father: 'For with you is the fountain of life,' that is, in you from whom life proceeded, there was the Word, and He always was, because He was with you. All things were made through him, and in him was life, and he has shown himself to us, so that the hearts of men may be illuminated with the knowledge of your majesty.

Therefore, extend your mercy to those who know you. The prerogative is claimed so that those who have the merit of your knowledge may deserve mercy. Finally, we see the pursuit of knowledge supported even among the lowest of people, as the Lord says: I will remember Rahab

and Babylon among those who know me (Psalm 86:4); that is, I will remember that prostitute Rahab and that state of confusion among those who know me, or among themselves; because that prostitute acknowledged me, whom the people did not acknowledge. Among those, therefore, who wrote to me, Rahab will be remembered, so that she may obtain a worthy reward of faith. Hence, in the Gospel we hear this saying: 'The prostitutes and the tax collectors will precede you into the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. 21:31). But because we are weak in carrying out [good works], although devoted to believing [in God], may you, extend your mercy to those who believe in you, so that our deeds may correspond to both devotion and faith; and may the weakness of this body not abandon the zeal of our mind, but rather may we glory in the very temptations and weaknesses in which the Apostle gloried, saying: 'I will most gladly glory in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me' (1 Cor. 12:9).

(Verses 12, 13.) Therefore he added most beautifully, 'Let not the foot of pride come unto me, and let not the hand of sinners move me. There have they fallen, all that work iniquity. They are cast out, and could not stand.' Some above understand the torrent of your pleasures to be strength in temptations; as it is of martyrs, in whom it was pleasing unto God to exhibit to themselves the sweetness of a pleasant and acceptable contest. For if winters are taken symbolically for temptations, as the Lord admonishes us to pray that our flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath, that is, either in temptation or in idleness; in winter however the torrent swells and becomes full and enlarges itself, and doubtless the torrent may be understood as representing a more severe temptation, such as is in persecutions. And therefore, he is rightly called a glowing furnace of pleasure, because where sin of persecution overflows, so does the grace of confession.

See the virtue of prophetic distinction. Firstly, he exposed the unjust person who either in his heart or in his speech says that he sins for himself or sins against himself; for the Greek codex has ■v ■αυτ■■, which means 'in himself,' but not all [codices have this reading]. And perhaps for this reason, because the fool in his heart said that there is no God (Psalm 14:1). Lest perhaps the unjust person say within himself and sin within himself, although openly denying God is the mark of a madman; however, many people claim injustice as praise. For indeed, to seize, to harm even those who have not injured, and to deceive many is considered glorious for themselves. Therefore, first he exposed the life of the unjust, then joined the sacrament of divine knowledge; so that fearing God, we may avoid iniquity and injustice. He added a prayer, that he may deign to free his just ones from the company of the unjust; that in those who are in the world with a pure heart, divine justice may be extended, as a pious overseer; so that the invasion of sins might not creep upon us as enemies, and catch us sleeping. Therefore, we must be vigilant and always fortify the Lord's camp; for the enemy and adversary come at night, when the senses are held captive by sleep and the body is nourished by food. Let us pray that the justice of God may prevail in us, making us stronger in our weakness, so that each of us may say: When I am weak, then I am strong (II Cor. XII, 10).

Then he also prays specifically for himself, that he may teach us how we should pray to the Lord: 'Let not the foot of pride come to me', that is, let me not fall into pride. Finally, elsewhere he remembers himself, saying: 'If I have not walked in greatness' (Psalm 130:1). Here he prayed, there he fulfilled: he would not have fulfilled, if he had not prayed. Pride must be avoided, for it even trips one up in prosperity. Finally, Adam fell more heavily in paradise than if he had fallen on earth. To fall from great heights is a precipice: to slip on level ground, it is called a stumble.

Therefore, the foot of the proud errs, because it does not hold the head; for the eyes of the wise are in his head. It is not surprising, therefore, if the foot slips where the eye is not held. Let the eye go before, so that the foot may follow. For how would a traveler walk in darkness? The foot quickly stumbles in the night, if, as it were, the eye of the world, the moon, does not show the way. And you are in the night of the world, let the Church show you the way; let the sun of justice illuminate you from above, so that you may not fear falling. And because he had spoken of pride, he added: And let not the hand of sinners move me. For just as the limbs are of Christ, so the limbs are of the devil. Let not the hand of sinners move me, that is, let not their actions, which sin, move me from the station of justice. For often, when we see sinners abound in prosperous successes, we waver in our feelings, and as it were, we are torn away from the root of virtue by a kind of hand of sin. Therefore, we must be careful that the hand of the enemy does not uproot those whom the divine hand has planted in the house of God. This is beautifully said by one who is beaten by persecutors. However, those who are moved from their root, which they had already clung to in Christ, fall.

Then he added: There they have fallen, those who work iniquity. What is this 'there'? Is it where pride is, where the hands of sinners are? Is it where they stood, where they were planted; did they fall there? Is it nearby, or in the immediate vicinity, as if in the very moment, in the very place? And it seems ambiguous. But elsewhere we are taught what is there, where it is said: There are pains like those of a woman in labor (Psalm 47:8). A good pain is the one that brings forth faith, by which Christ is formed and born in the Church. And elsewhere it says: I will remember Rahab and Babylon as those who know me. Indeed, foreigners, as well as Tyre and the people of Ethiopia, were there (Psalm 86:4); that is, where they knew me, where the foundations are in holy movements, there are also foreigners; because they also believed that they should believe in me. They fell there, where they should have stood firm; for in paradise Adam fell, and Christ came to ruin, and to resurrection, so that the ruin would be for the wicked: but the resurrection for the righteous and faithful.

Finally, they were expelled; because unjust men could not stand in a holy place. Therefore, the Apostle said: And you, who stand, be careful not to fall (I Cor. X, 12). And surely he said this to the one who stood not with the body, but with faith. We can also understand in the future, there, as it is written: there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. XIII, 14); and: Naked I shall go there (Job. I, 21). What a brief conclusion at the end! 'I am not,' he says, 'proud, so that I may sin; I may not sin, so that I may not be moved, so that I may not fall; I may not fall, so that I may not be expelled, as Adam was expelled from paradise; because in him the first step of pride could not stand.' Pride cannot stand; and if it falls, it does not know how to rise again. And therefore, beautifully, he spoke in the previous passages about the proud: Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will trust in the name of our God and be magnified (Psalm XIX, 8); for this is stable, that is unfaithful. And he adds: They have been bound and have fallen; but we have risen and stood upright (Ibid. 9). And it is written in the book of the prophet Micah: Do not rejoice over me, my enemy, because I have fallen; but I will rise (Micah VII, 8). For we have fallen in this world, but in Christ we have risen: to whom be honor, glory, power, eternity both now and forever, and to all ages. Amen. On Psalm 37

Preface

All divine Scripture, whether natural, mystical, or moral. Natural in Genesis, in which it is explained how the heavens, seas, and earth were made, and how this world is structured. Mystical in Leviticus, where the priestly mystery is understood. Moral in Deuteronomy, where human life is shaped according to the precepts of the Law. Hence, three of Solomon's books seem to have been selected from many: Ecclesiastes for natural matters, Song of Songs for mystical matters, Proverbs for moral matters.

However, because the body of all the psalms is one, nothing in them is divided and distinct; but as reason presented itself, no teaching of this kind has been interrupted. For it comprehends the natural world very clearly, speaking of Angels and Virtues, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the light of the sky of skies, and the water that is above the heavens: for He Himself spoke, and they were made, He Himself commanded, and they were created. He established it forever, he set a precept, which will not pass away (Psalm 32:9 and 148:6). And he spoke of mysteries, when he wrote about hidden things, the anointed oil of sacred unction, and the completion of the Tabernacle (Psalm 88:21 and 45:5). By their manifold grace; for the Lord has spoken in many and various ways through the Prophets. For he also foretold the coming of the Son of God, the High Priest, and that he would suffer for us, and cleanse our sins with his blood, as the title 'Pro torcularibus' (Psalm 8 and others) declares; and the psalm of resurrection (Psalm 65) expressed his resurrection, and another title afterward indicated that his land is restored (Psalm 96), and also the transformation of all things in the sacraments of faith. And he wove together more about morals, and demonstrated various kinds of virtues, and gave precepts for living, by which he healed the wounds of our errors, renewed human morals, and changed our innermost feelings; as the thirty-third Psalm teaches, which even the holy Peter affixed to our hearts as a remedy in his epistle (1 Peter 3:11); and this is the one that is set before us in today's reading. For among these ethicists those are found: but that one is more extensive, which is called thirty-sixth. For, although that one is very sweet and clear, this one is even sweeter; since that one taught me to restrain my tongue from evil, this one to cease from anger, to leave behind indignation. That one taught to speak without deceit, this one taught to be gentle, who demonstrated the rewards of gentleness. What greater aids are there for the human heart than gentleness and simplicity: by which all pain of received injury is alleviated and every stain of crime is excluded? So let us apply medicine to these wounds, that we may cure ourselves; lest if we wish to say that we are able to cure others, it be said to us: Physician, heal yourself (Luke 4:23). Therefore, what is also common not only to physicians, but also to the general public; that while few may practice medicine, many may claim to know some of its remedies: or that we, even though not physicians, should offer a remedy to those in need using someone else's medicine. Let the wealthy employ a teacher, the poor a servant. Let the one who reaches the highest point take from himself; let the one who desires things more level feed himself on the slope, like a little child. Let the one who fears the river drink from the stream; and let the one who fears the deep swim to the shore. Moreover, in the higher psalm (Psalm 35), the holy David beautifully describes the life of the unjust, here the life of the just; there the unjust are exposed, here the just are established; there the unjust sins against himself, here he even takes away the sins of others. And therefore let us consider that justice is the first remedy.

Commentary

(Verse 1) He says, 'Do not envy among the envious, nor have you imitated those who do evil.' First, let us learn what it means to imitate; the power of this word is less in Latin than in Greek. For we read both good imitation and bad imitation. Finally, the Apostle says, 'It is good to imitate good always' (Galatians 4:18). And he himself said above, 'They envy you not well, but they want to exclude you so that you may imitate them' (Ibid., 17). And again, he says: Covet earnestly the best gifts (I Cor. XII, 31). And to the Romans, you have. Therefore I say, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but their fall is the salvation of the Gentiles, that they may be provoked to emulation (Rom. XI, 11). And further: For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office, if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them (Ibid., 13); that is, I may provoke my flesh. Finally, the Greek has jealousy. For even here: do not be jealous of those who do evil; do not envy those who commit lawlessness; that is, do not stir up the wicked to jealousy, because they strive not for good, but for evil.

What is it to stir up jealousy? For example, if we are able, let's open it up. There are certain intemperate women who disturb the hearts of other men's wives: when they have subjected them to their custom and shame, not satisfied to keep their own mistake a secret, they strive to publicly flaunt their disgrace before their spouses; so as to stir them up and inflame them with jealousy, seizing a certain triumph from the pain of their proven minds and the agitation. Not able to tolerate the shame of their husband's infidelity, they dissolve the bonds of marriage with satisfaction, or they argue in daily quarrels; and from competition comes discord, from disagreement comes division, whereby the entire household is disturbed. Therefore, learn from the example of a brazen woman, those are the most wicked and detestable tricks, to move one's soul with wicked jealousy: and know that jealousy is one thing, but envy is another. For this is a perverse emulation, which enters into the affection of good things: whereby also the Jew erred, who by a false and evil emulation departed from the right way of Evangelical discipline, as the Apostle says of himself (Phil. III, 6), that he persecuted the Church of Christ according to the emulation of the Law.

Therefore, although our God was frequently offended by the ungrateful desires and complaints of the Jews, he nevertheless did not abandon the people he had once chosen and elected for himself; but the insolent harlot, the Synagogue, began to provoke him to bitter jealousy, mingling herself in the sacrileges of transgression. Finally, she said to the priest Aaron: Make gods for us to worship (Exodus 32:1); and they began to worship the head of a calf. And through a great song Moses, the Lord spoke in his mouth, saying: They have provoked me to jealousy with that which is not God, they have angered me with their vanities: and I will provoke them to jealousy with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation (Deut. XXXII, 21). Behold, how the Lord condemns the harlotry of the Synagogue, in order to turn their craftiness against them; and those who had been chosen by their Lord God, they refuted with grave sacrilege, choosing gods for themselves to worship: assuming for themselves the Church of the profane, which the people of the Jews, without Law and without grace, would lament over; and to that extent, they would be more provoked to jealousy by their actions being considered more base. Before, when that people did not have the Law, they only considered themselves chosen by the Lord. But when he noticed that a people gathered from the nations, who claimed the Law of the Lord, the oracles of the prophets, and the new Testament of the Lord, then he began to be tormented with excessive affection, after he realized that he had been rejected. Lastly, if he sees

the ceremonies of the Gentiles, he is not moved; if he hears of the progress of the Church, he is tormented and tortured by miserable envy. Therefore, it is accomplished in Judea: And I will provoke them to jealousy in a nation that is not a nation.

Moreover, the more severe torture is added to this distress, namely, that sinners from among the gentiles themselves seem to be preferred, who do not even elevate the name of any tribe or nation. For every congregation is accustomed to claim the name of its own region, like the Egyptians, Ethiopians, Syrians, Jews, Arabs, who prefer the name of their own province or territory: we, being gathered from diverse peoples, cannot claim the name of a single nation; and therefore, because we did not have a name on earth, we received one from heaven, that we should be called the people of Christ. But the Gentile thinks this is foolishness, while the Jew thinks it is disgraceful. Therefore, it is true what is written, that God has avenged His own insult by seeking a Church for Himself from a non-nation, and by preferring it to a foolish nation, an ancient and royal people. And what is that foolish nation that has been preferred? Listen to him who says: 'For God has chosen the foolish of the world to put to shame the wise' (1 Corinthians 1:27). And again: 'If any among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise' (1 Corinthians 3:18). Therefore, the Lord did not bring about a sharing of envy, in order that it might not be in the form of imitation, but rather in the punishment of wickedness.

Finally, the Latin interpreter, wishing to make a distinction between the emulation of virtue and the emulation of offense, says: Are we emulating the Lord? (1 Cor. X, 20) ? That is, are we causing offense to the Lord through our emulation, by consuming things that have been sacrificed to idols; just as the Jews, when they sacrificed to idols, provoked Him? But if the intention of stirring up emulation offends among humans, and often the person who is provoked is found to be superior, it is known that the incentive of emulation is for the sake of deception; it is foolishness to provoke divine majesty and to incur the offense of emulation, when there is no difficulty in seeking revenge.

Therefore, we ought not to provide malicious opponents with stings to attack us, who, even when unprovoked, are incited by the goads of envy to harm us. Just as Cain killed his brother because his sacrifice was more acceptable than what Cain himself thought should have been offered. In this, Abel did not provoke Cain, but Cain, driven by wicked parricide, pursued the grace of preeminence. For Cain did not desire to overshadow his brother's sacrifice, but rather to preserve the discipline of sacrifice, so that he would not delay offering the first fruits through any laziness, nor violate them by appropriating them for his own use. Saul also attempted to kill David, the prophet and savior of the Israelites, who was exalted above himself in the conversation of young girls, with treacherous plots and a prepared spear; and he had almost shed the innocent blood of his own kin, if David had not evaded the blow with a twist of his bent body. How wicked was it, then, if the young girls said: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands' (1 Samuel 18:7)? And how cruel was the envy of King Saul, who turned the innocent mistake of words into the destruction of the innocent!

'Nor should you, he says, have been jealous of those who do evil. He did not repeat what he had said, but changed it: it is one thing to be covetous, another to be jealous: covetousness has cunning, jealousy has simplicity. But even prudence itself must be simple and cautious, so that it knows what to beware of. For it was not said in vain: Be wise as serpents, and simple as doves (Matt. X, 16). Therefore, spiritual wisdom should be cautious, preserving salvation, unaware of

deceit.' Spiritual simplicity must exist. However, it seems that Scripture has also made a distinction between emulation in another place, as it says: 'And Ephraim's envy shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim' (Isaiah 11:13). But elsewhere you have: 'Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church' (1 Corinthians 14:12). It uses 'emulators' for good things and imitators of good things, and 'emulator' for the crooked and envious.

(Verse 2) First, do not provoke the wicked to the malice of envy; secondly, do not imitate those who do evil. For often, when the righteous see that some have sought wealth by deceit and cunning, and have attained to honors, they desire to follow their ways with deformed envy; so that they may attain wealth and honors by similar means, or defraud young girls in contracting marriage. For what profit is it, when wealth itself and all secular glory quickly wither like hay, and like the flowers of herbs they fade away in their very beauty? All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man is like the flower of the grass. Therefore, do not greatly desire things that cannot last forever, do not be envious and deceitful; do not be contentious and argumentative in zeal. Hence, the Eagle said: Do not contend with the wicked. Symmachus said: Do not strive. Also, do not be an imitator of wickedness and deceit; but be an imitator of the apostolic doctrine, the prophetic grace, and the virtue of the saints; so that you may bear fruit and store up a harvest of goodness, like Joseph, who by the abundance of grain excluded the hunger of prolonged barrenness: like Habakkuk, who, by bringing a meal to the reapers, was lifted up by an angel and travelled along an aerial path, and upon returning to the earth, amidst the fierce roars of lions, served a sweet feast to the godly prophet.

(Verse 3.) Therefore the Prophet rightly says: Hope in the Lord, and do good; and you shall inhabit the land, and shall be fed with its riches. What is the land that he advises to inhabit, if not your soul, which you should cultivate well, frequently plowing it with spiritual plows, so that it does not become overgrown with weeds? For a good farmer works his field with daily activity and diligent care, and protects his own fields; lest a wild boar from the forest devastate them, and a cunning thief snatch away the ripe fruits. Therefore, prepare your land so that when he comes who sows the word, he may find your soul ready; lest the seed fall upon the uncultivated soil of your heart and the birds of the sky come and devour what has been sown. So, listen to what is said: 'Behold, the sower went out to sow his field.' And as he sowed, some fell beside the path, some fell on rocky ground, and some fell on good soil... What falls on good soil are those who, with a good heart, hear the word and retain it, and produce fruit through patience. May your heart be a clean world, may your soul be clean, so that you can bring the fruit of goodness, that is, spiritual grace. For goodness is the fruit of the Holy Spirit; as it is written: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22). These are the fruits we are nourished by and satisfied with their abundance. On this earth, the righteous Noah planted that fruitful vine and drank from its fruit, and his heart was freed; when he clothed himself in the garment of admirable piety, his posterity was doubled by the virtue of his own deeds. Moreover, in another place the holy prophet demonstrated to us those riches in which he was rich in Christ, and which abounded in everything that leads to eternal life. And truly, who could be richer than one who is rich in the Lord, so that he can say: I have delighted in the way of your decrees as much as in all riches (Psalm 119:14)? For what could be lacking to a man who was

enriched by heavenly oracles? And therefore, this psalm urges us to seek that eternal treasure and to find delight in its acquisition.

(Verse 4.) Therefore, he says: Delight in the Lord, and he will grant you the desires of your heart. Why did he not say 'your desires' but 'the desires of your heart'? For the desires of the external and internal man are not the same and not all of them are approved by Christ; because the law of the flesh often opposes to the rules of the spirit. But those desires that belong to the interior man, who is renewed by the Spirit, the Lord grants them to the petitioner with effect. Hence, he says elsewhere: May the Lord grant you according to your heart, and may he confirm all your desires (Psalm 19:5). He says to follow the heart, not the desire of the flesh; and he says that he should strengthen those desires which come from the deepest part of the heart, not those which are directed by the enticement and pleasures of the flesh.

(Vers. 5, 6.) Reveal your way to the Lord, and hope in Him, and He will act. And He will bring forth your righteousness like the light, and your justice like the noonday. This single verse declares what kind of person you should be. For who reveals their way, except those who confess to God, the arbiter of their hidden secrets within their heart? Reveal, blessed one, this is, open your conscience, so that it may not be burdened by the shadow or flesh of this world. For seeds, when they burst forth, if they are shaded, they become weak; exposed to the sun, they thrive. But what about the seeds themselves? The woody shade itself inhibits the young plants from reaching upward and prevents their branches from spreading out. Beautifully said: Disclose your way to the Lord, for the inclination of human nature covers our minds like a kind of veil; that we may not confess our sins to the Lord, who can heal our wounds: so that one may be ashamed to ask for medicine with his own mouth, lest his disgrace be exposed before others. Therefore, conscience presses upon itself, since it cannot hide; and it delays as long as the wound festers, so that it is revealed not by the healthiness of faith, but by the unhealable atrocity of the ulcer. 'Reveal,' he says, 'your way to the Lord'; that is, open your way, do not hide it, as Cain desired to hide; for everyone who does evil hates the light. David revealed his way, who said: 'I declare my works to the King' (Psalm 44:2). Open your mind, so that there is nothing to be afraid of being condemned. Paul also revealed: I am not aware of anything against me (I Cor. IV, 4). Let your actions, your life be such that your way may shine before your Father who is in heaven. But because the condition of every human being is subject to fragility, and it is not within our power to direct our own path at will; therefore, it says to you: Hope in the Lord, and He Himself will act; that is, to open your way, and not allow you to be such that you flee from the light while you are afraid to come forward, and love darkness so that you can hide your own wickedness, saying: Darkness covers me, who knows if the Most High sees (Eccli. XXIII, 6)? For how can one who is planning adultery, not seek out a suitable night for his temptations? And who thinks to employ a false witness to his deceit, who seeks to corrupt the judge in order to oppress the innocent, does he not explore the secret of wickedness? The thief lurks in the darkness of solitude, awaiting the shadows of the night to carry out his wickedness. Therefore, wickedness is darkness: God is light. Even if you wish to conceal your justice, God will bring it forth into the light; He does not allow judgment to remain hidden by which you have chosen what is good and rejected what is evil. Not only does your judgement shine; but it shines like midday. When the sun pours out its whole brightness, it is midday. It was midday when Joseph feasted with his brothers, not seeking revenge, but forgetting the wrong.

(Verse 7.) Be subject to the Lord and beseech Him. Not only should you be subject to God, but also beseech the Lord, so that you can fulfill your desire for submission, as it also says above: Reveal your way to the Lord and hope in Him. It is not only fitting to reveal your way; but also to hope in the Lord. However, submission should not be abject, lowly, but glorious and exalted; for he is subject to God who does the will of the Lord. Finally, who is ignorant that the wisdom of the mind is superior to the wisdom of the flesh? Indeed, the wisdom of the mind is subject to the law of God; the wisdom of the flesh is not subject. And the Apostle added: For it cannot be subject. (Rom. VIII, 7). Therefore, be subject, that is, draw near to Christ, so that you may fulfill the Law. Finally, Christ fulfilled the Law by doing the will of the Father. And therefore, the end of the Law is love, and the fullness is charity; because by loving the Father, he applied his entire affection to His will. Wherefore, for the glory of God, the Apostle said: When, however, all things shall have been subjected to Him, then shall He Himself also be subject to Him who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. XV, 28). And of Himself He saith: For my soul hath been subject to God; for from Him is my salvation (Ps. LXI, 2). Moreover, for piety's sake Joseph and Mary were subject to His parents, not indeed through infirmity, but of their own will. But the greatest glory of Christ is that He should pour Himself into the hearts of all men, so that He may bring them back from impiety and infidelity to Himself, and make them subject unto Him. But when he has subjected all things to himself, when the fullness of the Gentiles has entered, and when all Israel has been saved, and when the whole world becomes one body in Christ; then he himself will be subject, offering his gift to God the Father, and acting as the high priest of all, and as if offering his body on heavenly altars, so that faith may be the sacrifice of all. Therefore, this subjection is an act of piety, because the Lord Jesus will be subject in his body, of which we are the body and members. Therefore, let man be subject to Christ, that is, subject to the wisdom of God, subject to the word, subject to justice, subject to virtue; for all these things are Christ. Let every man submit himself to God; for he teaches not one, but all, to subject their heart, to subject their soul, to subject their flesh, so that God may be all in all. Therefore, he is subject who is full of grace, and receives the yoke of Christ, and diligently and unwaveringly carries out the commands of the Lord; but without subjection, he who proudly exalts himself in vain, inflated with the feeling of his own flesh, insolent, deviating from the humble obedience and pious observance of the servitude that we owe by right to the eternal Author of nature. Finally, whoever is without sin is subject to Christ, for he has been redeemed by the Lord; but whoever is in sin cannot be called free, but rather a slave, whom heavy chains of sin hold fast.

(Verse 7.) It follows: Do not be envious of him who is prospering on his way, doing wickedness. Clearly, here he is indicating what he previously understood: that we should not incite evil by being envious, nor imitate those who do wickedness. For it is not wickedness, but prosperous things that happen to those who do wickedness, that often tempt us to think that we should imitate them, saying that we can achieve their successes: Behold, they are sinners and abound in the world, they have obtained riches. And I said: So I have justified my heart in vain, and washed my hands among the innocent. And I was scourged all the day long (Psalm 72:12 et seq.). Therefore, if David was scourged, we must beware lest we also be scourged; and let it be said to us that riches, honors, power, seem to be arranged for this generation, as if the uncertain works of money, and the means of injustice, not as any rewards of virtue; and therefore let them come as a dream, and when you arise from the dream, let them fail you. When the athletes win, it is certain that they will be crowned, not before they win. We are in a struggle with the world. Win before the world, so that

you may seek the crown. No one is crowned before completing the contest. Those who run in a race, do they receive a prize before they have run the race? How many in the front fall at the finish line and are cheated of their speed? Are you more acceptable to God than Paul? He, the vessel of election, the teacher of the Gentiles, never dared to demand a crown for himself in this world. Finally, listen to him saying: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day (2 Timothy 4:7-8). That same Paul, caught up to the third heaven, who heard things that cannot be told, whether in the body or out of the body, he does not know, God knows, and he testified as much (2 Corinthians 12:2). So, Paul says that on that day the crown will be given to him; are you here insisting that it be given to you? Therefore, prepare yourself for the contest. An athlete does not struggle only once, nor does a soldier fight only once, in order to fulfill their duties; and for you, the struggle is not with just one passion.

(Vers. 8) If you have overcome the previous passions, anger follows; and therefore Scripture says to you: Cease from anger, and forsake indignation. There are many vices that creep in upon the foolish. Anger is a heavy passion: it often ignites the unwilling; and it drags the willing into madness, so that he may destroy whom he thought to restrain. Stirred up, he often stabs the innocent with a sword. Many have killed friends and brothers out of indignation. Therefore, the wise man says: Anger destroys even the wise (Prov. XV, 1). It is the saying of Solomon, that anger not only destroys any men from among the crowd, but even the wise themselves. And David advises the wise man, saying: Cease from anger; lest when you are inflamed by it, it does not cease until its flame consumes you. Leave, he says, indignation; that is, nature carries you away, emotions move you, someone's fault or offense provokes you to be angry; but not always, so that you do not know how to control it: leave it, set a limit to it, lest it draw you into sin. This is what he said above: Be angry, and do not sin (Psalm 4:5). For he does not encourage you to be angry, but yields to the passion for a time; however, he provides a remedy so that the force of the wound does not spread for too long. Be angry, he says, for it is of your passion. For a physician does not immediately apply medicines to weakness; if pain is burning, he applies soothing remedies to alleviate the pain; if fever is raging, he waits for the right time for a remedy and often withholds drink from those who are thirsty. He does not say: Do not be feverish when the vapors of illness are boiling; but he says: Wait, the fever will cease, the agitation will subside. So also the Prophet could not say to man, whose flesh is excited by various diseases and passions of agitation: Do not be angry; but he says: Cease from anger, and leave off indignation, lest you sin; for anger is a great instigator of sin. Another physician also says: Let not the sun set upon your anger (Ephesians 4:26); lest while you delay for a long time, that one who is accustomed to arouse the heated body with sleep should come, and stir you up, and insert thoughts into you, and immerse himself in the secrets of your heart, saying: Take revenge for your injury, recognize yourself as a man: it belongs to feminine weakness, not to take vengeance. Therefore, the servant ought to have scorned you, the brother deceived you, the friend mocked you; and yet you do not avenge your own insult? It is necessary to proscribe, it is necessary to rise with a sword, and to resolve your pain with the death of your adversary. That man was brave who killed his enemy, deservedly he is praised; because he avenged himself in such a way that another who was ignorant of it might hear, and would not dare to inflict injury on him. By these goads he is further incited, further moved; so that what is written may be fulfilled: Anger destroys even the wise.

(Verse 9.) Therefore, do not listen to him, so that you do not act wickedly. For those who act wickedly will be exterminated. Those who do not have roots will be exterminated, like vegetables or hay. Let the weak eat vegetables, but you must plant a vine in your field, establish a vineyard. And if Ahab comes to you and says, 'Give me your vineyard so that I can plant vegetables', do not agree with him, so that he does not sow perishable things by your consent and cut off eternal things. Therefore, Nabuthe is considered among the saints because he believed that the inheritance of his ancestors should not even be given to the king; and he chose to be stoned rather than give his vineyard to plunder. The inheritance of our ancestors is true faith. There arose Arians, supported by royal power, who thought that the temple of the Lord should be handed over to them, threatening harsh punishments; but far be it from the mind of the Lord's servant to be more swayed by the fear of punishment than by the beauty of piety. Perfidy did not prevail, because faith resisted. There is also a certain vineyard in the hearts of the faithful, of which Isaiah says: The beloved has become a vine in a fruitful horn (Isaiah 5:1). The Lord planted this vineyard in our hearts; and therefore we read God saying: I have planted you a fruitful vine, all true (Jeremiah 2:21). Therefore, let no one take away this vine from the field of our soul, because it is blessed. Therefore, it is said of the saints: By the fruit of wheat, wine, and oil, they have multiplied (Psalm 4:8). It is good, therefore, to have within you wine overflowing; so that wine may flow into your vessel from the vineyard of Sorech, that intoxicating cup how splendid! For the vineyard of Sorech is the vineyard of new beginnings and new righteousness. Hence it is said to us: Sing to the Lord a new song, its beginning, magnify His name from the ends of the earth (Isaiah 42:10). May this vineyard, therefore, produce grapes and not iniquity. Therefore, the vineyard of the Jews has been abandoned because they have committed iniquity, as it is written (Isaiah 5:7), and not justice. Therefore, let us bear fruit in Christ, that we may deserve to endure. For those who sustain the Lord will possess the land: certainly the land of the living. There is a certain heavenly land, which bears fruit for the heavenly beings, of which it says: I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living (Psalm XXVI, 13). This earthly land provides sustenance to the stomach with much human labor; that land of the Lord produces fruit without any effort, in which the possession of the righteous is lasting and the inheritance of a pious mind. And it says rightly: But those who sustain the Lord will possess the land by inheritance. For this is the land that does not pass away; for heaven and earth will pass away, but the words of the Lord will not pass away. And therefore neither that intelligible land, in which those who preserve the words of the Lord are, will be able to pass away from paradise. Adam was placed in this land, in order to receive the fruit of eternal life; but because he did not want to preserve the words of the Lord, he did not deserve to remain in the possession that he had received. But whoever keeps the words of the Lord confidently says: I have waited with expectation for the Lord, and he has looked upon me. (Psalm 39:2) But Adam, since he did not wait for the Lord (for how could he wait who fled and was afraid to offer himself), therefore, the Lord did not deem him worthy to see him; for the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous. But he did not want to see him to the extent that he would ask, saying: Adam, where are you (Gen. III, 9)? One who is sought is considered absent. It is faith that presents us to God, and treachery that causes the wicked to be exiled. Therefore, no one is absent from God, except the one who has made himself absent. And so He says: Let it be done to you according to your faith (Matt. IX, 29); for he who does not know, will not be known. Therefore, Adam, as a sinner, could not keep his place. He was expelled from paradise and relegated to a castle, to do penance. He received a delay, so that he would not perish completely; so that Eve

could be saved through the generation of children, the faith of holy Abel, the grace of the prophets, and the posterity of the Church.

(Verse 10.) But because he did not want to be redeemed through these means, and he believes he should persist in sin, of him the Prophet says: 'And yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: and thou shalt seek his place, and shalt not find it.' For how can he exist in the future, when the place of sin cannot endure? For this is the earth that opened its mouth to receive the blood of the innocent. And therefore in this earth is the place of sinners. The earth passes away, how then can the place of the sinner be found? I believe that the reason why God commanded there to be a firmament between the waters and the waters (Gen. I, 6) is so that He may discern sins from virtues; and the upper water, which praises the Lord, would remain free from error, while the lower water would be subject to sin. Indeed, the former sees God, but the latter does not: what is above the heavens sees Him; what is in the abyss does not. Hence it is also said: The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and trembled; the depths were troubled, the multitude of waters made a noise (Psal. LXXVI, 17). The abyss is disturbed by the deserving ones, upon which the deformed darkness lies, and therefore they cannot have peace. Hence, the legion of demons asked to be sent into the abyss, and they threw themselves into the waves with a great tumult (Matthew 8:31); in order to strangle the herd of pigs they had found. Therefore, sinners seek the abyss, where the darkness of shadows is.

(Verse 11.) But the meek shall possess the land, and shall delight in the abundance of peace. They rightfully possess the land in which God himself rests; as was revealed by the divine oracle through Isaiah, saying: Upon whom shall I rest, if not upon the humble and quiet, and those who tremble at my words (Isaiah 66:2)? Who are the meek, if not those whom no stimulus of discord agitates, no anger disturbs, no cruelty inflames with rage? And therefore, because they loved not wines, nor feasts, nor riches, but the peace of the Lord, being established in the body; for that pleasure of bodily delights, which they thought themselves to be defrauded of, that they might obtain eternal grace, they shall be delighted in the multitude of peace, which our Lord Jesus bestowed on the human race in His days; as the prophecy, which has not lied, comprehends, asserting: In His days shall justice spring up, and abundance of peace, until the moon be taken away (Psalm 71:7). Therefore, what is the peace by which the people of all the churches have multiplied, if not the peace about which the Lord said: My peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you (John 14:27)? He gave peace, who calmed the wars of the souls.

(Vers. 12, 13.) It follows: The sinner will observe the just and will gnash his teeth over him. But the Lord will deride him; for He sees that his day is coming. It is customary for one who is angry and seething to gnash his teeth: but the heart of the wicked also has its teeth, which are not accustomed to merely making noise, but to tearing. The sinner's traps, schemes, and wickedness are his teeth. Therefore, the sinner lies in wait for the just, because he envies him; for the life of the just rebukes the sinner, whom it silently condemns with greater authority than if it were to speak with a loud voice. But the righteous should not fear the clamor of the sinner, for wickedness cannot be everlasting. Temporary are the snares, but eternal are the fortresses of virtue. Death dissolves all power and deceit of the sinner.

(Verse 14.) Moreover, he adds: Behold, they have unsheathed the sword, sinners have bent their bow, to cast down the needy and the destitute. What is the sword of the sinner, if not the opposite

of the sword of the Holy Spirit? Scripture has taught me this sword; the Apostle taught it, saying that we have the breastplate of righteousness, and the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:14 et seq.). Therefore, the word of God is the sword of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, indeed, the sword of the most wicked spirit is the evil word. With this sword, the Apostle Peter struck Ananias and Sapphira with his words as if with a certain sword; with this sword, Paul took away the sight of Elymas who opposed his arguments and filled him with the darkness of blindness. Now consider to me, you sinning quarrelers, boasting in bitter insolence, and bringing forth reproaches of accusations; if you hear them, will you not say: Sinners have drawn their swords; when foul speech is brought forth from the mouth as if from a wanton sheath, which should have been restrained and hidden? Similarly as the sword is called the word of God, and the same is the speech of the sinner: so also the bow which sinners stretch, is their mind; and the arrow which they shoot, is a poisoned word. For as Christ is an arrow, who is the Word of God, of whom it is said: I have set thee as a chosen arrow (Isaiah 49:2), which is brought forth out of the quiver of God: so the arrows of the treacherous are, which being shot from a certain bow of wickedness, wound the unsuspecting innocent, unless their fiery darts are repelled by the shield of faith. And therefore, as a soldier, you must be anxious in battle; because the fight is not only against flesh and blood, but also against the spiritual wickedness that cannot be seen. May you have strong weapons from God, so that you can easily draw the arrows you want: so that the enemy cannot oppress you as a poor and unarmed person. Be strong in God, be rich in God, so that it can be said of you: The redemption of a man's soul, his riches (Prov. XIII, 8). With an abundance of the treasure of wisdom, be rich in word and good works, so that you may be fortified. Avoid the wealth of the sinner, lest they find a way to harm you. Be merciful, so that you may remain invulnerable or be able to heal yourself if you are wounded. There is also the poor person whom your adversaries want to wound, from that number of whom the Savior said: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3).

(Verse 15.) And therefore the spear of sinners will enter into their hearts, and their bow will be broken. Just as peace returns to the servants of God from those who do not receive the blessed peace, so too the wickedness of sinners, with which they try to harm the righteous, will turn back to their own destruction; so that they may be killed by their own weapons and wounds. For often the javelins are thrown back upon those who threw them. This also happened in a recent war, when the unbelievers and sacrilegious attacked someone who trusted in the Lord and tried to take away his kingdom, threatening the churches of the Lord with cruel persecutions; so that suddenly a wind arose, which stripped the shields from the hands of the unbelievers, and turned the weapons and missiles against the army of the sinner. The enemy was still missing, and now they could not withstand the battles of the winds, and they were struck by their own spears. And what is worse, those wounds were not of the body, but of the mind; for they were losing heart, as they realized they were fighting against God. So they went out as provocateurs, and from the quiver of their own hearts they brought forth poisoned arrows of treachery against the Christian people; but their impiety turned back upon their own heads. Finally, they themselves are undone by their own treachery, and the Lord has dispersed the traps prepared for the faithful; so that not only could they not harm the pious, but they were exposed by their own resources and turned their weapons against the enemy. How much better would it have been if they had not drawn their sword from its sheath, that is, if they had not uttered impious words at all? For if everyone must give an account

for idle talk, how much more will they atone for words of sacrilege with severe punishments?

You have tested us with fire, says David (Ps. XVI, 3). Therefore, we will all be tested by fire. And Ezekiel says: Behold, the Lord Almighty is coming; and who will endure the day of his coming, or who will stand when he appears to us? For he will come like the fire of a refiner and like the lye of a launderer; and he will sit refining and purifying like gold and silver: and he will purify the sons of Levi and pour them out like gold and like silver, and they will offer sacrifice to the Lord in righteousness (Malachi III, 2 and 3). Therefore, the sons of Levi will be purified by fire, by the fire of Ezekiel, by the fire of Daniel. But although they will be tested by fire, they will still say: We have passed through fire and water (Ps. 65:12). Others will remain in the fire: the fire will rain on them, like the Hebrew boys who were thrown into the fiery furnace; but the avenging fire will consume the ministers of wickedness. Woe to me if my work should burn, and I suffer loss from this labor! And if the Lord will save His servants, we will be saved by faith, yet saved as if by fire; and even if we are not consumed, still we will be burned. However, how some remain in fire, others pass through, the divine Scripture teaches us in another place. Indeed, in the Red Sea the people of the Egyptians were submerged (Exod. XIV, 22 et seq.), but the people of the Hebrews passed through; Moses passed through, Pharaoh was precipitated: for graver sins had submerged him. In this manner sacrilegious individuals will be cast into the lake of burning fire, who have hurled proud insults at God. Let us therefore follow the pillar of fire placed here, which illuminates us while we are placed in this body, and shows us the way; so that in the future the cloud may cool the heat of the night for us: that we may be able to relieve the savage fires. But let us see what the Scripture says: 'Let the Lord break the bow of the wicked. But He placed His own bow in the clouds, so that the floods would cease and peace would be restored.' Therefore, let us believe that the adversary and wicked one extends his bow in order to disturb peaceful hearts, stir up storms, and incite winds. Let us pray, then, that our Lord God dissolve the bow of wickedness; let Him be present to His poor and needy, who, out of fear of God, have led themselves to believe that wealth should not be desired, the property of the less fortunate should not be seized, and the widows should not be robbed of their inheritance left by their ancestors.

(Vers. 16.) It is better to be a little just, than to have many riches from the sins of the wicked. Therefore, riches are not condemned, but the riches of sinners; unless perhaps because a sinner said: All these things have been delivered to me, and I give them to whomever I wish (Luke 4:6). Furthermore, since riches inflame the torch of greed more, and each person desires greater things, they do not turn away from the paths of sin. Hence, the Savior said: Make friends for yourselves with the mammon of wickedness (Luke 16:9). For the census of wickedness is the one who is in the power of the devil, to whom he wants to give it. It can also be understood: It is better for the unjust to have little than for the wealthy sinners to have many riches; because there is one who is rich in words, like the philosophers of this world who discuss sacrilege, the movement of the stars, the star of Jupiter and Saturn, the generation of humans, the worship of idols, geometry, and dialectic. Therefore, philosophers are rich in speech, poor in faith, devoid of truth. And there are many simple priests of the Lord, poor in speech but exalted in abstinence and virtue. They speak deceit to many, while only a few affirm the faith; they lose their own priests daily, while this one gains the poor people for the Church, with a significant number of believers. Therefore, whoever hears these (priests) and sees the quality of their works, says: It is better to have little with righteousness, than great riches with many sins. Hence, Solomon derived that saying which

he seemingly put forth as his own: From much talking, you will not escape sin (Proverbs 10:19). Therefore dialectic flows with an abundance of words, while piety preserves the fear of God. Thus, one should be sparing in words, rich in spirit, and more inclined to fear than to boast empty words. For fear is the discipline of wisdom: loquacity is the shipwreck of innocence and virtue, and an incentive to falling and fault.

(Verse 17.) For the arms, he says, of the sinners will be broken. So that their actions cannot bring any impediment to the righteous; so that the rod of the sinners is not left over the lot of the righteous. And Paul says: May God crush Satan under your feet (Rom. XVI, 20). For if his arm has been broken, he himself will be completely crushed, and his comments will be trampled upon, like the venom of a serpent. But the Lord strengthens the righteous, with the arm of the adversary broken. And therefore the righteous says: And you have confirmed your hand upon me (Ps. 37:3). And Job says: The hand of the Lord has touched me (Job 19:21). So the Lord sent his hand upon his servant, and he broke the hand of the sinner that he had sent against him with power. Thus the devil was deceived by his own words, who said: Stretch forth your hand against him, and let us see if he will not bless you to your face (Job 2:5). For he did not dare to say curses, but he left this to be understood. God sent his hand, and Job was strengthened. He began to bless, who was believed to curse; for he heals the righteous, when the divine hand touches, it does not harm. He sent his hand, and every spot of leprosy fled; he touched the eyes of the blind, and the blindness was removed, and the light of the eyes shone forth. Therefore, always seek to be strengthened, for even you who stand, see lest you fall. We must stand in order to be strengthened by the Lord. The world is slippery, we swiftly slide. Therefore, let us pray that the Lord deems us worthy to establish and strengthen us.

(Verse 18, 19.) Do not think that the Lord does not know your way. If you are righteous, He knows. Believe what the Prophet says: The Lord knows the ways of the blameless; and their inheritance will be blameless. They will not be put to shame in times of trouble. Those who know the Lord are known by the Lord. He knows the righteous, He does not know the unjust; therefore He will say to the unjust: Depart from me, all you who practice iniquity: I do not know you (Matthew 7:23); that is, because you are unworthy of divine knowledge. I do not know you; because you yourselves desired not to know me. Your works do not know me, your deeds do not know me; even if you say that you know me, your sins convict you. Every sin is from evil: but whoever does not sin remains in me, this is written by John (1 John 3:6). What shall I say about the Lord, because he despises the wicked to know? Paul despises those who said: If anyone among you is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize what I write to you: but whoever does not recognize, shall not be recognized (1 Corinthians 14:37-38). And elsewhere it is written: The Lord knows those who are his (2 Timothy 2:19). Let us therefore be of the Lord, so that the Lord may recognize us, and let every one who invokes the name of the Lord turn away from iniquity. The Greek has: The Lord knows the days of the immaculates. For there are the days of Elijah, there are the days of Nebuchadnezzar; therefore the Gospel has: In the days of Elijah, when the heavens were closed (Luke IV, 25). It was a night for the faithless, but it was light for Elijah; the heavens were closed for the faithless, but they were open for Elijah; there was hunger for the faithless, but abundance for Elijah; for he could not hunger, to whom heavenly food was provided; nor did he hunger, who himself fed others. Therefore, for him it is a just day in darkness; because even light shines in darkness. And Joseph was in Egypt, and midday shone upon him; as it is said below: But to the sinner God said: why do

you recount my justices (Ps. XLIX, 16)? Justice is light, because you have above: And he will bring forth your justice as the light (Ps. XXXVI, 6). Therefore, you have what may shine in you, if you follow justice. The day shines for you, the night shines for you; because to the faithful even the night will be illuminated like day. Therefore, the Lord knows the just, because he enlightens every man coming into this world (John 1:9), that is, the one who lives according to the image and likeness of God; the one who recognizes himself as a human being, in order to avoid the lust of horses, the madness of wild animals, the fear of rabbits, the deceit of foxes, the rapacity of wolves; the man who acts as if he has come into this world; who is not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. So you have come, do not stay, do not cling to earthly things. In order to know that the days are good, listen to what Abraham said: . . . he saw my day, and was glad (John 8:56) . Good is the day for those who know the good Son of God, and confess the Lord. And again he warns us to be careful, because there are evil days (Ephesians 5:16) . What are evil days? Those in which evil is certainly recognized, which comes from evil. Or perhaps the days of this age are evil; because the age is in the power of the evil one. But we also read after a hundred years, the day of evil: In the evil day the Lord will deliver him (Ps. 40:2), that is, on the day of judgment, evil indeed on account of the punishments of many. For it is necessary that the unjust be tormented, and the just suffer with them; because even the angels rejoice when one sinner is saved from death. Therefore, they suffer with him when he is punished; although elsewhere we have read: The just shall rejoice when he shall see the revenge (Ps. 57:11), which I reserve for its proper place; although frequently you may have heard why he rejoices; but let us not insert one occupation into another. The Lord knows the days of the immaculate, for by the grace of His immaculate innocence and fullness, He has mercy, He does not have mercy on the erring. They do not have a day, for they flee from the light, of whom it is beautifully said: Their days pass like a shadow (Psalm 143:4). Therefore, knowledge of God is a matter of worthiness, not of vision. His eyes are light: those whom He looks upon, He illuminates; and therefore, His eyes are the days of the just.

Therefore, their inheritance will be eternal; because they sought eternal goods, not the fleeting benefits of inheritance. And they will not have anything to be ashamed of in the time of evil, that is, the celestial judgment: and in days of hunger they will be satisfied; because man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Matthew 4:4). But who is this man? I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago (whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows) was caught up to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2). Therefore, that person who is in Christ, who does not know himself to be in the flesh, who does not walk in the flesh but in the spirit; that person who is caught up not only to heaven, but even to the third heaven, is caught up to paradise, and hears secret words that are not lawful for a man to utter; who does not boast in his own virtues, but in his weaknesses: he does not live on bread alone, but on every word of God. For the Word of God is life, because the Word became flesh. Whereas the Evangelist excellently said: That which was made in him, is life. (John 1:14). The Alexandrians and Egyptians indeed read: All things were made through him, and without him, nothing was made that was made (John, 1); and with a distinction added, they subject: In him is life (John, 5). Let that distinction be preserved for the faithful: I am not afraid to read: What was made in him, is life; and the Arian has nothing to hold onto, because I do not consider his poisons, but recognize the custom of sacred reading. For He did not say: The Word was made before all beginning. He did not say: The Word was made; but if you desire to hear what He did say: The Word, He says, was with God. The Word

was with God, which worked with Him, which ruled with Him. He did not say: The Word was made; but He said: God was the Word: and God is not made, but is the Maker and Creator. Open your ears, and hear: All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing. Do you learn to be the Son, in whom the fullness of divinity is? Open your ears a little more and listen to what he says: What has been made in him is life. In him, he says, it was made: the Word of God was not made. Or if this moves you to calumny, because he said: in him it was made; do you also calumniate God the Father, because the Son of God said: But whoever does the truth comes to the light, that their works may be manifested, because they are done in God (John 3:21)? But because David said, I will confess to you, O Lord, because you have heard me, and have become my salvation (Psalm 117:21); that is, you have turned to me for salvation, you have worked for my salvation. I could use other examples, but I do not want you to believe me; lest you think these are the arguments of cleverness, not the testimonies of truth.

He himself is the thundering son, he himself who reclined on Christ's breast, he himself to whom the Lord did not keep his secrets silent, to whom Peter hinted to inquire about the Lord, and he inquired, and the Lord revealed; let him himself explain what he thought about what he said: That which was made in him is life. Therefore, listen to the interpreter, because he already guarded against your calumnies, Ariane: That which was from the beginning; and what we have heard, and seen with our eyes; what we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life, and life appeared (1 John 1:1). Therefore, the flesh that appeared in Christ, or Christ in the flesh, is our life in all things. His divinity is life; His eternity is life; His flesh is life; His passion is life. Hence Jeremiah also says: 'In His shadow we shall live' (Lamentations 4:20). The shadow of His wings, the shadow of the cross, is the shadow of His passion. His death is life; His wounds are life; His blood is life; His burial is life; His resurrection is life for all. Do you want to know that death is its own life? In death, he says, we are baptized with him... so that we may walk with him in the newness of life (Rom. VI, 3 and 4). And he himself said: Amen, amen I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit (John XII, 4 and 5). He himself, the grain, was loosened from us and died, so that he might bring forth much fruit in us. Therefore, death is the fruit of life. Whatever is done in him, is life. Flesh is made in him, is life; infancy is made in him, is life; judgment is made in him, is life; death is made in him, is life; forgiveness of sins is made in him, is life; wound is made in him, is life; illusion is made in him, is life; division is made in him, is life; burial is made in him, is life; resurrection is made in him, is life. See how great in Him there were made things which are the conversion of our life, so that what perished might be restored. At last, a sale was made in Him, it is life: a redemption was made in Him, it is life. For death He was sold by Judas, bought by the Jews for death, so that we might be redeemed by His precious blood unto life. This is the life which was made, this is the life which appeared, this is the life which we heard, this is the life which was with the Father; because He Himself, who was in the beginning, after, was born of a Virgin, so that He might be life to those who are to die.

Let us explore this proposed place. What is a human in Christ? It is being made in Christ, in whom everything is made, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created through him and for him, and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Colossians 1:16-17), that is, in his power. Therefore, a human in Christ is one who is made in his image and likeness: a human in Christ is one who is entirely in Christ. For just as God, through the

unity and fullness of divinity, the Father is the whole God in the Son, and the Son in the Father; so through intention and the affection of piety (as if for example, not for comparison), the whole man is in Christ; for whoever clings to the Lord is one spirit. Therefore, the man in Christ is not the earthly one, not the one of sin; but the man of Christ. What then moves: That which was done in him is life; if also the especially inner man, was made in him, crucified in him, renewed in him, buried in him, and buried with him, raised up in him? What moves, as I have said, is that it is written: That which was done in him, is life; when a man says: In God we will do our virtue (Psalm 59:14). If you ask what life is, if it is moved by what was done in him, understand. Indeed, life is the Church. It was done in him, in his side, Eva was resurrected in him. Eva, however, is life, that is, what was done; because Eva, who had perished, was saved through the Church, that is, through the generation of her children, as it is written (1 Timothy 2:15); because the heritage sobriety of the previous disobedient woman has repaired the offence. And even Paul himself was caught up to life, who before was a persecutor unto death.

We have wandered too long, so that we may speak about that man who delivered not only bread, but also every word of God. Let us return to the psalm: Therefore the blameless shall not be put to shame on the day of judgment, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

(Verse 20.) They are gone like smoke that is gone. The Greek 'ἐξελιπον' means, they have failed. You see someone suddenly come to power and receive honors; you regard them as lofty. You see another succeed them; don't you say about them: Where is the one who was honored and exalted? They have failed. Therefore, the Greek adds more; because where someone is believed to be honored and exalted, there they are surpassed by their own downfall; so that you may understand that the passing of rivers has passed sooner than it has come; and while you wait for what is to come, the currents have already flowed by. On the contrary, the humble and meek, while being subjected and oppressed by the rich, were exalted by their humility and suddenly shone forth. Therefore, Paul took pleasure in weaknesses, not in virtues. But let us consider, lest anyone think that he has boasted in revelations; and let us repeat them, so that he may defend himself as the teacher of humility. I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago, whether in the body I do not know, or outside of the body I do not know, God knows, who was caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor. XII, 2). He says that it was revealed to him fourteen years ago, and yet he kept and suppressed the revelation for so long; he would not have said it unless he had judged it useful for us to hear; lest we be exalted by revelations. For if Paul did not boast in such great grace, neither should we boast. Did the young man himself boast, should the old man boast? Then he could not deny being caught up to the third heaven; and yet he testified that he did not know whether he was caught up in the body or out of the body. Therefore, he does not boast about knowledge; but about ignorance, and he proclaims God's grace towards him. What belongs to knowledge, he denies; what belongs to charity, he confesses: for knowledge puffs up, but charity builds up. And again, he said of such a person who was caught up: in what way he was caught up, whether in the body or outside the body, he himself was uncertain. See the scale of wisdom. He established himself as one in Christ, and the other as himself, who says: I do not know. What is foreign, he exalts. What is his own, he humbles. And he heard, he says, unutterable words (1 Corinthians 12:4). He did not say: I heard, but he did not deny that another heard. Therefore, he preferred to indicate himself as a modest witness rather than a prophet, and he refused to appear as the arbiter of heavenly secrets. For it is the testimony of truth, not to shrink from boasting in deserved exaltation.

Therefore, it is said: 'For this I will boast; but for myself, I will not boast.' (Ibid., 5). But what is it that he says he heard, a man, and that man in Christ, which is not lawful for a man to speak? How does this agree, that it was not lawful for a man to speak, which was lawful for a man to hear? If it is not lawful for the man who heard to speak, how was he trusted to hear what was not permitted to speak? What is this difference? If it was to another man who was external, how could a man know what it was not lawful for a man to hear? It seems that the grace of speaking did not fail that man who was in Christ, to whom it did not fail; but it failed in those who were listening, because they lacked the place, the time, and the merit. For he heard it in heaven; and therefore it was judged inappropriate for him to speak on earth what he had heard in heaven; for in this very earth is such a distinction, that what is sung in one region is not sung in another, as it is written: 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?' (Psalm 136:4) Finally, the Hebrews did not sing in the land of captivity, which they were accustomed to singing in their own country. This land of captivity is different from the land of liberty; the former is a land of sin, while the latter is a land of eternal peace. The former is earthly, while the latter is heavenly. Therefore, Paul now proclaims in heaven what he could not proclaim on earth; for the secrets of wisdom are to be spoken among the perfected.

However, what does the mention of this revelation accomplish, except to teach that in revelations there should be no boasting, but in weaknesses; for weakness is both the medicine of revelation and the exercise of virtue? On the other hand, revelation is the slippery slope of pride; for the apostle Paul himself, who was caught up to the third heaven, received a thorn in the flesh, lest he should be exalted by the greatness of the revelation. Therefore, weakness comes to the rescue, lest grace should be turned into danger. Therefore, weakness is more useful than grace. This same weakness is also the workshop of virtue; as the Lord testified to the Apostle himself, because strength is perfected in weaknesses (II Cor. XII, 9). Finally, after the revelation, he asked for the remedy of health and did not obtain it; but in weakness, he did not seek a remedy, but completed his course and found the crown.

(Verse 21.) The sinner borrows and does not repay; but the righteous shows mercy and gives. This also applies to the person of Paul, because the righteous shows mercy and gives. See how he divides the Lord's words, see how he lends the Lord's silver. He received one mina and returned two; he received two and returned four; he received five and returned ten. He did not tie up in a handkerchief what he had received, but he spent it on moneylenders; and what he had spent, he received back with interest. And so he freed the one receiving from the greatest sin, lest the money of the Lord would perish with him; and he redeemed himself to be appointed over ten cities. Look in the letters for which are the ten cities that he mentions; although the apostles are not bound by a prescribed number, to whom it was said: Go throughout the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). Therefore, he distributed the money of the Lord from Jerusalem through the East, Illyricum, and Italy. And lest anyone think that he was lending his own money, he testified that it was the Lord's money, saying: But to those who are joined in marriage, I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband (1 Corinthians 7:10). And elsewhere: Do you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me? (2 Corinthians 13:3). Finally, the king himself said this, in which he represents the Lord: You should have entrusted my money to the bankers. He said, 'my money', not yours. Therefore, he shows mercy and gives. How he gives, you may hear him saying: I teach through all the churches. But the

sinner borrows and does not repay (I Cor. VII, 17). See the rich man lending, and not returning: the poor man receiving, and immediately rewarding, so that he may not be in another's debt for long. These are moral teachings.

Now behold the mystic poor, that is, the simple and God-fearing one, who hears the word of chastity and keeps it; who hears of mercy and practices it; who hears of meekness and does not become angry. But that rich one, arrogant and proud, hears indeed, but rejects the words of God; who hears of the condemnation of lust and indulges in it even more. In the end, the Church fulfills what it has received, but the Synagogue does not fulfill it. Know the Church to be freed: (Jesus) says, 'They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word' (John 17:6). And elsewhere: 'For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me' (John 16:27). Therefore, the Church returned the money of charity that it received from the Lord, but the Synagogue did not return it. Therefore, it is said of the Jews: 'If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin' (John 15:24); because they have certainly heard and not believed. Therefore, it is proven that sinners have borrowed and not paid back. Thus, the sinner is always in need, while the righteous person abounds and gives, whose conscience is rich. Therefore, the Jews became poor in their wealth: The wealthy became poor and hungry (Psalm 33:11); However, the Christians have not lacked in the wealth of their simplicity.

(Verse 22.) Therefore, the righteous is good; and for this reason, Scripture adds: For those who bless him shall possess the land; but those who curse him shall be destroyed. How does the righteous possess the land, or what land, when Scripture says: Will you alone dwell on the earth? (Isaiah 5:8) And elsewhere: Woe to those who dwell on the earth (Revelation 8:13), which is a word of rebuke and curse. Therefore, whose blessed possession is the land? Not of that which is hidden in darkness and filled with bitterness: but of that which flows with honey and milk, that is, has the grace of sweetness, and the radiance of eternal light. Receive the sweetness of good honey; indeed, above honey: Pain and groaning and sadness will flee away (Isaiah 35:10); for the sweetness of grace will exclude the bitterness of human frailty. And elsewhere: And he will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning (Revelation 21:4). They will also receive the brightness of milk. And they will not need a lamp, nor the light of the sun; for the Lord himself will illuminate them, and they will reign forever and ever. Amen (Rev. XXIV, 5).

There is also the mystical just one, who shows mercy and grants, who has given us all the words that He received from the Father, and has forgiven us the debt of our sins, and has paid for our debts with His own blood; so that we would not be in debt to another, but that the good creditor would have us in His own debt. And there is also that sinner who has gathered what he did not produce, and has borrowed what he did not possess, and does not want to give back what he received. Listen, for the devil has borrowed: 'To you,' he says, 'I will give all this power and their glory (because they have been given to me, and I give them to whom I want) if you will fall down and worship me' (Luke 4:6). Most wicked one, you have accepted for temptation, not for death; that is, you have accepted for the testing of God's servants, not for their annihilation; you have accepted for the worship of God, not for his denial; you have accepted secular things, why do you take away things that are eternal? you have accepted things of this world, why do you want to take away things that are of Christ? Give those things to whom you want, we do not envy. Why are the things we desire envied by you? You want to be worshipped, who are more wicked than all, and

yet unworthy of service yourself.

(Verse 23.) The steps of a man are established by the Lord. The Greek word διαβήματα means 'steps' or 'transitions'. And therefore it is said to you: If you pass through water, rivers will not stop you (Isaiah 43:2). Therefore, cross over, do not hesitate; like a good traveler, when he comes to a sign on the road, he does not stop, but passes through; and you are on a journey, as long as you are in this course. If Paul had stopped, he would not have completed his race. See that he does not say: And you who stand, be careful not to fall (1 Corinthians 10:12). For surely the one who passes by cannot fear to fall. I saw, he said, the wicked exalted and lifted up above the cedars of Lebanon; and I passed by, and behold, he was no more (below verse 35). Therefore, seeing the wicked exalted, who did not stand, he did not stumble: if he had stood and marveled at him, and had followed him, he would have stumbled and fallen like a wicked person. Thus, when Moses saw the bush burning but not consumed, he said: I will go and see this great sight as I pass by (Exodus III, 3). He who passes from this world sees a great sight: he who breaks the chains of this bond by which we are bound to this body sees a great sight. Moses, as it is read in Exodus, sees many miracles: not so great does another see who is not in Exodus. The same Moses passed over: the people of the fathers also passed over, for they came out of the land of captivity. Therefore, their steps were directed by the Lord, to whom by night a pillar of fire shone, and by day a cloud; so that neither the heat of the day afflicted the travelers, nor did the darkness of the night bring hindrance to those journeying. And you deserve by your deeds and prayers that your steps may be directed by the Lord, and that your feet may not be moved; for it is written: As for me, my feet were almost moved; my steps had well nigh slipped (Psalm 73:2). It is also necessary to be careful not to forsake the straight path, and not to be deceived by the byways of crooked ways; therefore it is said: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths (Isaiah 40:3). Let us therefore prepare the way for the Lord our God in our minds; let us make straight the paths of our souls, so that we may not stumble; let not our steps be poured out like the steps of Lot's wife, who looked behind her and could not keep her steps, but they were poured out, when suddenly she was turned into salt; let them not be poured out like the Egyptians, whose steps were swallowed up by the waves of the sea. Those Hebrews who were with Moses, because they sinned in the desert, fell the footprints, lest they enter the land of resurrection. Is it not also nicely said about these things, because their efforts have been wasted, the hopes of which have been dashed, their wishes have been abandoned. Consider, for example, someone who for several years has had a desire for righteousness, a commitment to chastity, an attentiveness to a more disciplined life, a devoted intention to servitude, and a diligent observance of duty; suddenly, however, they have changed, have departed from the monastery, have bid farewell to fasts, have renounced abstinence, have indulged in pleasures, and have pursued luxury. They recently left the monasteries and are now masters of luxury, spreaders of incontinence, inciters of impudence, detractors of modesty. Don't you nicely say about them: Their steps have been poured out, those whom it repented to have directed well? Therefore, they perform repentance of a new kind for virtues, and they do not act for sins. But they have gone out from us, says John, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us (I John II, 19). Therefore, they have condemned their own way, to whom it is fitting to say: O you who have forsaken the straight paths, by going into the ways of darkness; and you who rejoice in evil, and delight in wickedness, whose paths are crooked, and whose course is winding, like their slippery and winding master; why have you begun to hate the straight way, and forsaken the just counsel? (Prov. II, 13 et seq.)

Has not the Lord directed you: but the one whom the Lord directs, will desire his way, as it is written, and will delight in his paths.

Nevertheless, both can be understood: in this way there is a middle ground, namely that the person who is guided by the Lord will desire the Lord's way; because with Him as the guide, all labor is lightened, all obstacles are removed, incentives are provided: and the Lord Himself does not reject, but willingly accepts the path of the man whom He Himself has directed to virtue. Indeed, the steps of the man are beautifully said to be directed by the Lord; because it is not of one who is unwilling or running, but of one who is merciful, to keep the path without stumbling. For the one who plants and waters is nothing, but God who gives the increase. To Him alone belongs the glory of virtues.

Finally, even the righteous person sometimes falls; but if they are truly righteous, when they fall, they will not be disturbed. Whatever pertains to condition falls; what pertains to righteousness rises again: because God does not forsake the righteous, but strengthens their hand. Why did he say hand and not foot? Unless perhaps because someone who falls does not slip more with their foot, but rather a weak person is often deceived on a slippery surface or stumbles upon a rock; but understand here the fall of the righteous person, that is, of the stronger one. Finally, concerning the people who struggle, if they bend a knee or stumble with a foot, they are considered defeated; but an athlete who has skill in wrestling, and wrestles for a crown, even willingly plants a knee in order to win; and if they stumble, they are not excluded; and if someone superior to them presses upon them, while still supporting themselves with their hands, they have the right to fight; and their prize is not taken away, unless they are thrown on their belly or stretched out by a bond of the arms. Hence frequent contests arise; because there are many types of falls that are both numerous and unknown to most. For their conditions are properly called ruins, for they are called $\pi\tau\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ in Greek. Therefore, when it is squeezed and pressed, it often turns over and becomes above what it was below, and while the higher one rises, it knocks down the higher one: which the Scripture seems to signify when it says: You have turned all his bed in his sickness (Psalm 40:4). Therefore, it is said of him: When a good athlete falls, he will not be disturbed; for many want to be held back, so that they may conquer earlier, who presume about art. But even if someone, as I will use the very word, has been assigned both the first and second, he is not excluded; although it is sometimes possible for him to repair the struggle, and it often happens that he who has overcome in the second contest yields. Therefore, even if a just person has stumbled and fallen into an offense, let him not abandon the pursuit of devotion and faith, let him hold onto sobriety, let him practice repentance, let him often repair himself. Therefore, Peter asks: 'If my brother sins against me, how many times shall I forgive him? Up to seven times?' (Matthew 18:21-22). And the Lord replied: Not just seven times, but seventy-seven times. But so that you may know that we are athletes and are propelled, and others rush forward, and many are thrown down, listen to the one who says: The Lord upholds all who fall, and lifts up all who are cast down (Psalm 145:14). Therefore, David himself, or the one who spoke in the Prophet, says about himself: I was pushed hard, so that I was falling; but the Lord helped me (Psalm 118:13); for Jesus did not fall, but was pushed. For when he Himself raised the dead, how could He Himself be hindered? And indeed, when the just man falls, Scripture testifies that he can rise again, saying: Does not the one who falls, add that he may rise again; or the one who turns away, will he not return? Woe to those who turn away with shameless turning, says the Lord (Jeremiah VIII, 4 and 5).

Indeed, may the champion of Christ be inescapable and unbeatable, and glorious in every age, in every kind of virtue, as he himself says: But in all things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us (Rom. VIII, 37). What does 'in all things' mean? There are athletes who are called boys, youths, men; that is, παῖδες, φῆβοι, πῆκτοι. Scripture also recognizes these ages in wrestlers, as David says: Do not turn your face away from your servant (Psal. LXVIII, 18); and I was young, and now I am old (Later in verse 25). And John also says: I write to you, children; because you have known the Father: I write to you, young men; because you have overcome the evil one: I write to you, fathers; because you have known him who is from the beginning. (1 John 2:12 et seq.) And writing to the fathers, he designates those who are mature in the process of faith and devotion. Therefore, these are virtues, not ages of weakness; for even a child is not without virtue, who has known the Father God of virtues. From that boy, these are the boys who, before knowing how to call their father or mother, received the virtue of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria. He himself is the boy who was born to us, the son who was given to us, whose authority is upon his shoulders. He taught us that childhood is a virtue, saying: Allow the children and do not hinder them from coming to me (Luke XVIII, 16). And elsewhere: Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like this boy, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew XVIII, 3). Moreover, it is often the case that boys surpass men in physical strength. And especially if we consider the age of boyhood, a boy cannot either know all the uses or withstand the force of resistance. Nevertheless, we know that frequently boys, whom they were not able to carry, they have conquered. Such is the strength of the soul that it excludes the weakness of age.

However, as the boys are, so are the adolescents, that is, spiritual. The Scripture knows the young man Paul, now near to conversion (Acts VII, 57); it also knows Eutychus, a young man who, while listening attentively to Paul's speeches, fell asleep, fell from the third floor, and rose again (Acts XX, 9); it also knows John, the young man who reclined on Christ's chest (John XIII, 23), who was so brave that he did not fear persecution and overcame evil. Here is the boy who left his earthly father (Matthew 4:20), following the Father whom he knew to be eternal; as a young man, clothed in a linen garment, he followed the Lord during his Passion, having left behind everything that was his own (Mark 14:51); as he grew older, he came to know that the Word of God was always and forever in the beginning (John 1:1-2), and he proved it by remaining in Him.

Scripture also teaches us about spiritual men, as the prophet Agabus says: 'This man, whose belt this is, the Jews will bind in Jerusalem' (Acts 21:11). And Festus says: 'There is a certain man left by Felix in custody' (Acts 25:14). Before his passion, Paul is said to be a young man, but in his passion he is referred to as a man who has finished the race and is now close to the crown.

We have known the ages striving for faith and devotion, let us also understand the various types of individual contests. Let this also be taught to us by the content of Scripture. In this secular struggle, there are some who engage in a simple and legitimate kind of wrestling and contend only with the restraints of the body, not knowing how to strike, and are called wrestlers; others who mix the throwing of punches with the entanglement of limbs, with every right to strike themselves: these are called pammacharians, because they have power over every dispute and fight against them; others who contend against each other with gloves and whose heads are torn apart, are tormented: these are called boxers.

Paul the Apostle underwent all these struggles, as he himself demonstrates. Therefore, he says: Because our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers and authorities, and (to use a summary) against spiritual wickedness (Ephesians VI, 12). In most Latin texts, the word used is 'colluctatio', while in all Greek texts it is written as 'πύλη', which in Greek means 'wrestling' and in Latin means 'struggle'. And truly it is a struggle; because flesh and blood, and spiritual wickedness, are overcome through patient endurance and bodily self-control, and through the moderation of the mind. Anger, rage, slaughter, weapons are the devils. Also, elsewhere it signifies that when he says: In more than enough afflictions, frequently in deaths (2 Corinthians 11:23). But in Jerusalem he was struck with fists; where when the soldiers intervened, the Jews sometimes stopped striking Paul, the high priest Ananias ordered those standing by to strike him on the mouth, to which the Apostle replied: God will begin to strike you, you whitewashed wall. And do you, sitting in judgment, judge me according to the law, and order me to be struck outside the law? Surely he knew how to answer, who struck the high priest with a heavier blow; for he himself was physically struck: he reported that he was struck in the soul by Christ. Also, writing in his first letter to the Corinthians, he says: Therefore I so run, not as uncertainly: so I fight, not as one beating the air. What he said in Latin, 'I fight,' he says in Greek, πυκτεῖω. And truly, like a good athlete, he beat not the air but the aerial powers and the leaders of the Jews, because they did not have Jesus the Lord as their leader. In every struggle, therefore, the Apostle is proven, who also received the crown of completing the race. Hence, he himself says: I can do all things in him who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13). And Christ also has those who, in their youth, conquer those who are older; just as Daniel, a young boy filled with spirit, rebuked the elders of the Jews and threw them down to death. And he also has others who, before they were born, struggled in their mother's womb. Finally, Jacob supplanted his brother Esau and overcame evil; and thus he came out of the womb of his mother, showing the emblem of victory and turning the foot of the defeated elder brother. Jeremiah was sanctified and approved in the womb of his mother. John the Baptist knew that the Prince of human struggle and the rewarder of those who wrestled had not yet come, and leaping forth from the womb of his mother, he deserved the prize of devout confession. He was rightly designated for the crown even then, who before all others had offered his name to the struggle of faith in Christ and had proclaimed the virtue of his name. A good proclaimer, who stirred others to the contest. And truly a good proclaimer; who shouted with such a loud voice that the secrets of heaven echoed in response to his sound. What more can be said? He moved the earth, filled the heavens. And for this reason, He received the name of Voice, because the Sacred Word of God preceded, just as He Himself taught us, saying: I am the voice of one crying in the desert (John 1:23). Isaiah the prophet said this about Himself: He strengthened this proclamation (Isaiah 40:3). We have heard what the herald said: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight (John 1:23). This is a unique and singular voice, so resounding that it is heard by all; so sweet that it soothes the hearts of all. Therefore, the Lord strengthened these athletes to win; for He never abandons His own and leaves them behind.

(Verse 25.) And therefore the Prophet added: I was young, and I grew old: so the Latins have it; but some according to the Greeks have it: I was young, and indeed I grew old, and I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread. Clearly, for those who want to understand, the meaning is evident, that during his lifetime David did not see the righteous forsaken. But this is both a short time and incredible; for we see many righteous people in the world being abandoned by others, when they are persecuted by some of the powerful; and no one dares to approach

them, when they see them in fear or in injury. Where Job says: My brothers have gone far from me; they have ignored me more than strangers. My friends have become merciless; those who knew me have forgotten my name (Job 19:13). David also not only laments being abandoned, but also being attacked by his friends and neighbors: My friends and neighbors draw near against me, he says (Psalm 38:12). Therefore, if the righteous are found forsaken in this world, how can David say the opposite? Unless you understand that even though the righteous may be abandoned in the world, they are not abandoned by the Lord. For Job, even when he was in the dirt (Job 2:3), was not abandoned by the Lord, whom the Lord himself praised with his own voice in the council of angels, whom he allowed to be tested, so that he might be crowned; but the temptation was given to his body, and denied to his soul. Nor was David, to whom the kingdom was given to rule over the chosen people, abandoned: whom, driven away from the boundaries of his kingdom by murderous battles, he restored to the rights of victory. Likewise, Jacob, Elijah and Elisha, and John the Baptist, and others who wandered around in goat skins in deserts, and mountains, and caves, and holes in the earth, even though they seem to have endured many jeers and bitter tortures; nevertheless, they were not abandoned. Indeed, when Jacob fled with his brother and wandered alone through the desert, he fell asleep and upon waking saw a multitude of heavenly hosts. It is said: 'This place is called the camp of angels' (Genesis 32:2). It was not enough to call it a camp; but camps that would be fitting for such a multitude. Therefore, you see that he thought he was alone, and the camps of the heavenly army followed him; just as in the time of our fathers and Moses, so that they would not thirst in the desert, a rock (as it is written) followed them. For when we read in Exodus (Exod. XVII, 6) that when the people were thirsty, Moses struck the rock with his staff, and water flowed out, and the people of God drank; again we read in Leviticus, or in Numbers, that Moses again touched the rock with his staff (Num. XX, 11), and water gushed out for the fathers to drink; the Apostle has interpreted this brilliantly, saying: They drank from the rock that followed them; and the rock was Christ (I Cor. X, 4). Therefore, the Lord did not abandon those who were complaining, murmuring, and transgressing, but He followed them. What should I say about Elijah and Elisha, to whom horses and fiery chariots came from heaven as they were journeying through the desert? How was Elijah abandoned, who was invited by Christ (Matt. 17:3)? How was he abandoned on earth, but taken up to heaven? How was he needy, naked, and empty, but left the disciple with a double portion of the spirit; so that with one melody he gifted a river, made the Jordan flow backwards, fed the army of kings in the desert, and ministered to those who were thirsty? According to his will, cups flowed from the sky, and the dead rose again on earth. How was Elisha abandoned, who, surrounded by the Syrian army, was about to be taken captive to the king? But when his servant Gehazi said, 'Oh, my master, what shall we do?' Elisha replied, 'Don't be afraid, for there are more with us than with them.' And he said, 'Lord, open his eyes so that he may see.' And his eyes were opened, and he saw the mountain, full of countless horses and chariots of fire, surrounding them (2 Kings 6:16-17). Paul also, who said that he was tossed about by dangers at sea and dangers in the wilderness (2 Cor. XI, 26), nevertheless he himself testified, saying: If God is for us, who can be against us (Rom. VIII, 31)? Therefore, if he was abandoned and forsaken by men, he abounds and flourishes before God. For even Elijah was forsaken, so that he said: Lord, take my life (3 Kings XIX, 4); and yet he thrived before God, so that he was formidable in strength to those very kings.

How could a young man like David come to understand this? For young men are more concerned with temporal things than with eternal things, because youth tends towards vice. But there are

some who are old in their youth, and others who are young in their old age. Indeed, there are men whose minds are esteemed for the wisdom of the elderly, in whom old age is an untainted life, in whom gray wisdom flourishes: such was Jeremiah, who, when he mentioned his youthful age and excused himself for appearing unfit for the duty of preaching, the Lord said to him: Do not say: 'I am young'; for you shall go to all to whom I shall send you, and you shall speak (Jerem. 1, 7). So he did not consider him a young man whom he judged suitable for the grace of prophecy. Such was the young man David, who was renewed and blossomed again, as he himself said (Ps. 102:5), like the youth of an eagle. Therefore, it must be understood in this way: I was young; but sanctified, but placed as a prophet among the nations, so that I could already know the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom and consider the true rewards of justice: but I have not seen the righteous forsaken. Moreover, strengthened by experience and duty, I acquired the fruits of wisdom. The same grace seemed to stay with me in regards to justice.

We have explained, as best we can, how he said: I was young; but how he added: Indeed, I have grown old, let us consider. Youth is good, but old age is better; for whoever perseveres until the end, he will be saved. Hence, it was not said lightly of the patriarch Abraham (Gen. XXV, 8) that he was nourished in good old age. And the old John began to write the Gospel, or the Epistles, who, when he refused to write as an apostle, wrote as an elder (Epist. II and III); nor is he esteemed any less, to whom a certain swan-like grace of old age is abundant. Writing to Philemon, he says: Since you are such a person as Paul, an old man, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus, I beseech you for my son whom I have begotten in my chains, Onesimus (Philem. 9-10). Therefore, willing to do the utmost for him, he compared him to the old man Paul, not to the young man; and there he gloried in being an old man, where he is now held in chains. And see the difference; the young man is spoken of in the sufferings of another, the old man in his own (Acts VII, 57). There, like a young man, he kept the Jewish garments; here, as an old man, he took off the garments of his body. In the end, Peter is said to be an old man there, where the struggle of his passion is: 'When you were younger,' he said, 'you used to dress yourself and go wherever you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.' He said this, indicating by what kind of death he would glorify God (John 21:18). Before the contest, a young man is called a young man, but in the contest an old man, who has fulfilled every contest. Therefore, David, that warrior in his youth, says this, peaceful in his old age: 'I was young, but I do not want you to still consider me young. For indeed, I have grown old and have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread.'

What is the seed of the just? The promises were made to Abraham and his seed; not to seeds, as in many; but as in one: And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians III, 16). Hear the seed of the just. My little children, of whom I am in labor again, until Christ be formed in you (Galatians IV, 19). And now, if any one coming from the Gentiles hears our word and the Lord should vouchsafe to help him, so that Christ be formed in his soul, where the birth of faith may be carried on, Christ shall be his seed. There, in both. Therefore Abraham was both the father of a generation according to the flesh, and he who first poured forth the word of the Lord in the hearts of the just. And therefore this seed of Abraham does not require these loaves which provide bodily nourishment, because it has the bread of justice, which descends from heaven (John 8:39). For just as those who do not do the works of Abraham are denied to be his children, so are they the seed of Abraham and are received among his children who perform his work. Indeed, the seed of

Abraham was Elijah, to whom an angel provided nourishment, and he walked in the power of that food for forty days. He did not require the nourishment of this body, but the seed of Abraham, to whom bread was brought down from heaven. Finally, ravens provided him with daily feasts. Thus, he was in need of everything, having nothing of his own, and he was sent to give food to others. Indeed, the seed of Daniel, who, placed among lions, had bronze dishes filled with the meals of harvesters carried to him by the prophet Habakkuk. Therefore, this is the bread of angels, which humans have eaten; for it is written: 'Man ate the bread of angels' (Psalm 78:25). This is the bread about which David said: 'The Lord feeds me, and I lack nothing; he has placed me in a green pasture. He has led me to the water of refreshment' (Psalm 22:2). Good David taught me the bread of angels, and he himself taught me the water of refreshment. This spiritual refreshment is rest for the internal mind. Good water, which washes away sin, cleanses the inner being. Let us hear what this water is. If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me, and let them drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from within them. But he was speaking about the Spirit, whom those who were going to believe in him were about to receive. Therefore, the righteous person does not need this bread, nor water for refreshment, for the Holy Spirit is their rest and refreshment.

(Verse 26.) But how can he be in need who has mercy and lends all day? What is it that the righteous person lends? Not bronze, not iron, not lead, but silver purified by fire. He brings this to the table of the Lord, and distributes it to those who seek it: to one person, to two, to five minas daily he distributes, and it never runs out. But we have heard that lending at interest is condemned in the Law, with Moses saying: You shall not lend at interest (Deuteronomy 23:19). There is a twofold division: one of money, the other of grace. Divide both; for it is written: If you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly, you have sinned: be still (Genesis IV, 7). And you divide rightly, so as not to sin. Let Moses himself teach you to divide, who admonished to divide rightly; that you may follow what Abel did, who divided rightly: and flee from what Cain the murderer did, who did not know how to divide rightly. Therefore the Holy Spirit divides divisions, who, dividing all things, gives to each according to his will: He as He wills, you as you are able, as you are capable with your talent. Divide when the Law speaks about money, and when it speaks about grace. For it is said to you: You shall lend to nations, whose Lord demands interest: but you shall not borrow (Deuteronomy XV, 6). There is both money of interest, and grace, whose Lord demands interest; money of interest has material wealth, grace bestows faith. Lend therefore faith to nations, so that grace may abound to you: but you, do not borrow as if needy, but as if rich and wealthy, lend with interest. Peter lent, Paul lent, John the Evangelist lent, both lent, and they did not need; that is, they lent Christ's money, they did not lend money for interest. So lend, and do not cease to lend. Do you hear what Scripture says: All day long he is gracious and lends. The righteous man lends during the day, the greedy person at night; for grace is of the light, but greed is of the darkness. And therefore, the seed of the lender's faith will be in blessing, surely having the reward of blessings.

(Verses 27, 28, 29.) Turn away from evil and do good; and dwell forever. For the Lord loves justice, and will not forsake his saints: they will be preserved forever. But the wicked will be punished, and the seed of the wicked will perish. The righteous will inherit the land, and dwell forever upon it. These verses demonstrate that we belong to the Lord, and that he is the judge of our thoughts and actions, considering the merits of each individual. He does not act without

judgment, but discerns between good and evil deeds. Therefore, it must be avoided and good must be done. Do not confuse good and evil; first, you must be free from sin; then, you must bear the fruits of innocence, so that you can be eternal. Do not think that your sins go unnoticed by God; for many fall in this way. He himself sees and condemns all things, and exterminates the seed of the wicked; indeed, the seed is not of physical generation, but of internal mind and succession of impiety (Job 1:1). For certainly Job, born of the seed of Esau, is testified in the Scripture. How then did the seed of Esau perish in Job, when he was such a great man, foreseeing the coming of the Lord to the earth, who would subdue the prince of this world, the devil? Therefore, this is questioned, lest evil be transferred to future generations. Christ works this through the sacrament of baptism, so that each person may put off what they were born with and put on what they are reborn with: so that they may become heirs not of their family, but of grace; so that they may acquire for themselves an eternal dwelling place. But whoever deserves to dwell in the world of ages, he himself shall honor God in the ages of ages.

(Verse 30 and following) When he established the just moral disciplines, to teach you what kind you ought to be, and what would be the perfect form of justice; he wants his mind to rise to wisdom and theorems; and arouse his intention, so that he may look at heavenly things with an attentive heart, and revolve the divine oracles within himself, and direct his affection towards those things which please God: let him meditate on the Law, and let no commandments of the Lord escape him; let him recognize the movement of the divine Sacrament. Finally, I saw in the teachings that the holy Prophet arose: The mouth of the just man will meditate wisdom, and his tongue will speak judgment. The law of God is in his heart; the Lord will not condemn him when he is judged. Wait for the Lord and keep his way; and he will exalt you to possess the land: when sinners are destroyed, you will see. I saw the wicked man exalted and lifted up above the cedars of Lebanon; and I passed by, and behold, he was no more; and I sought him, but his place was not found. Superior moral things, these are intelligible. For what is the just mouth that will contemplate wisdom, if not the inner man? For there are two men in each person: one inner, the other outer; the inner one thinks about things of the mind, speaks about things of the mind; the outer one about things of the body. However, the coming Lord united both; and he established two in one person; so that they would not oppose each other with conflicting movements, but rather be united to each other by the unity of their wills. Therefore, the mouth of the righteous will meditate wisdom. For now even the outer man of the righteous is transformed into the discipline of the inner man, and is conformed to its nature, and performs its duties, so that the flesh may meditate on what is of the inner mind. But lest this seem incredible to you, listen to the Apostle saying (Philippians 3:21) that the Lord Jesus transfigured the body of our lowliness, so that it would be conformed to the body of his glory. Who would dare to say that the flesh, assumed from the Virgin, generated by the Spirit of God coming upon Mary, was without sin, which in no way differed from the teachings of wisdom, and was devoid of the virtues of the inner man, and could not pass into his uses; since it was above man that the sick were healed by touching it, the blind had their sight restored, and the dead were raised? Therefore, it is fittingly written: the mouth of the righteous will meditate on wisdom; because the whole man is spiritual, not earthly: for as earthly, so also are earthly; and as heavenly, so also are heavenly. Therefore, let the earthly be absent, let the heavenly remain. And so, referring to the times of the Redeemer, the Prophet meditates, saying: although one out of many, he meditates and writes. And it does not deviate from sense; for the spirits of the prophets are close to the future as well as the present. Others think that the mouth speaks instead of the

mind. But Solomon has beautifully explained this to us, saying: The account of the righteous is always wisdom; but the fool is like the moon that changes (Sirach 27:12); that is, he often varies and does not persist in his opinion, and seems to shed light in darkness but cannot hold it.

Therefore, let the meditation of wisdom always be in your heart and on your lips, and let your tongue speak judgment, may the law of your God be in your heart. Therefore, Scripture says to you: Speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you rise up (Deut. VI, 7). Let us therefore speak of the Lord Jesus; for He is Wisdom, He is the Word and the Word of God. For it is also written: Open your mouth with the word of God. He breathes it out, who resonates His words, and meditates on them. Let us always speak. When we speak of wisdom, He is: when we speak of virtue, He is: when we speak of justice, He is: when we speak of peace, He is: when we speak of truth, and life, and redemption, He is. Open your mouth to the word of God, it is written: you open, He will speak. Therefore David said: I will hear what the Lord will speak in me (Ps. LXXXIV, 9). And the Son of God Himself says: Open your mouth, and I will fill it (Ps. LXXX, 11). But not all can perceive the perfection of wisdom like Solomon; not all like Daniel. However, the spirit of wisdom is poured out on all according to their capacity, but on all who are faithful. If you believe, you have the spirit of wisdom; therefore, the Wise One says: 'I believed, therefore I spoke' (Ps. 116:10). When you believe, you will receive the grace of speaking. And the one who believes is redeemed; and the one who prays is redeemed: if they devoutly apply themselves to prayers, and are constant in prayer, let them precede the day, frequent the night, be the first to meet the morning sun, so that they may be enlightened by Christ himself before the earth by the rising of the sun; and the one who sings is redeemed; and the one who is contrite is redeemed.

Therefore, always meditate, always speak of the things of God, sitting in the house. We can take the Church as our home, we can receive an interior home within ourselves, so that we may speak within ourselves. The judges sit in Jerusalem; the seats have been set in judgment; the council of judges also sat, and the books were opened. The prophecy says: And you, with counsel, do everything (Sirach 32:24). Judge with counsel about your actions, drink wine with counsel, speak with counsel; so that you may avoid sin, lest you fall through speaking too much. Speak while you are sitting, as if you were a judge: speak on the way, so that you may never be vacant. On the way, speak if you speak in Christ, for Christ is the way. Speak to yourself on the way, speak to Christ. Listen to how you speak to them. I want, he says, men to pray in every place, lifting up pure hands without anger and argument (I Tim. II, 8). Speak, O man, while you are sleeping, so that the sleep of death does not creep upon you. Listen to how you speak while sleeping: If I give sleep to my eyes and slumber to my eyelids; until I find a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of Jacob (Ps. CXXXI, 4 and 5). Conquer nature by diligence, exclude bodily sleep. We cannot shape nature, but we can shape diligence. David was a man who indulged in some sleep during the night, but he excluded sleep by washing his bed every night and watering his couch with tears. Therefore, he was always mindful of his Lord on his bed, and he meditated on Him. He would rise early in the morning, and Christ would shine upon him in the darkness, saying: Rise, you who are sleeping (Ephesians 5:14). Not in all things is this grace, but it can be in many things with diligence. Therefore, do not expect Christ to awaken you; but rather awaken Christ. He awakens himself who thinks about him while sleeping. If you awaken him, he will also awaken you from sleep, resurrect you from death, saying to you: Rise from the dead (Ibid.). Therefore, when you

rise or when you resurrect, speak to him, so that you fulfill what you are commanded. Hear how Christ awakens you. Your soul says: The voice of my brother knocks at the door (Song of Songs, 5:2); and Christ says: Open to me, my sister, my bride. Listen to how you awaken Christ. The soul says: I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, if you awaken and revive charity (Song of Songs, 3:5). Charity is Christ. Also listen to how you speak while sleeping: I sleep, but my heart keeps watch (Song of Songs, 5:2). These things collectively: raise your mind a little higher now.

Speak while sitting in the house, in this earthly house of this habitation, which is dissolved, in which we are pilgrims from the Lord. For in this body we are placed, while we desire to put on more rather than to strip off, we are exiled from Christ, and we groan heavily. Therefore, sitting in this, confess your sins; because you sat, and did not stand, and did not say: Our feet were standing in your courts, O Jerusalem (Psalm 122:2). Speak more, and do not hide your sins; speak while sitting, so that you may hear the one speaking: 'Arise after you have sat, you who eat the bread of sorrow' (Psalm 126:2). Speak while walking on the way, that is, following the course of this life. Speak here, lest you remain silent there, as he remained silent who did not believe the angel of Christ at first; afterwards, however, when he believed, he regained his voice. Speak while sleeping and be at rest, buried in Christ; so that you may rise again with him in the newness of life. Speak even when buried in a tomb; as the souls of the saints spoke, seeking vengeance from the author of death. How long, O Lord, holy and true, will you not judge and avenge our blood (Rev. 6:10)? Speak finally when you rise; as he taught who said: I have slept and have rested and have risen; for the Lord will receive me (Psalm 3:6). And there, therefore: The mouth of the righteous will meditate on wisdom, until he reaches the higher secrets of the heavenly tabernacle, full of sacred joy and gladness; just as Scripture has taught us, with David saying: I have remembered these things, and I have poured out my soul upon myself; for I will enter into the place of the admirable tabernacle, even to the house of God. In the voice of exultation and confession the sound of feasting (Psalm 41:5). Therefore, both while sitting in this earthly house and when we go out and walk along the way, if we are worthy, we shall meet Christ when we are caught up and even speak while asleep.

Take the third lifting up, by which the soul elevates itself to justice. For there is a certain spiritual sleep to be understood, about which Solomon says: 'If you sit down, you will sit without fear; if you sleep, you will rest sweetly, and you will not fear the terror that will come upon you, nor the attacks of the wicked that will come upon you' (Prov. III, 24 et seq.). You will rest sweetly and not fear the terror or the attacks of the wicked; if your tongue speaks the judgment of God, and you always keep that before your eyes; so that you leave no place for sin, and know that the price of sin is paid by the retribution of punishment. For he himself interpreted this in the ninetieth Psalm, saying: "You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow flying by day, nor the business wandering in darkness, nor the encounter and the midday demon. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you. Only with your eyes shall you consider, and you shall see the retribution of sinners" (Psalm 90, 5 and following). For when the just person speaks of the judgment of God, or when he speaks of what is just, and is full of true judgment, he does not speak with anger, nor with the affliction of a grieving soul, nor with sorrow, nor with any passion; but he speaks with truth, he speaks with equity, so that he does not lean towards affection, but rather weighs with a true examination what he speaks: for he judges what should be said, or not proclaimed. To what is that similar: The lips of the wise are bound by understanding

(Prov. 15:7); because everything they say seems to correspond to true understanding, and by the prudence of their own understanding, they know what they ought to speak or be silent about: so that what should be kept silent is restrained by a certain confinement and binding of the lips; but in those things which ought to be spoken, the bonds of the lips are loosened. Therefore, he appropriately adds: The mouth of the righteous meditates wisdom; for through prolonged meditation, it will be able to have full judgment, which the righteous person will speak at the appropriate time; since he has seen face to face those things which are perfect. For now we cannot speak of those things which we do not comprehend. Nor did Paul presume to speak, who, caught up into paradise, heard secret things of heaven: but willing not to err in what he would say, he said: How incomprehensible are the judgments of God, and unsearchable his ways! (Rom. 11:33) But now, being freed from the body, perhaps he comprehends the kinds of unsearchable ways, and the judgments of God which are as deep as an abyss.

(Vers. 31.) Justice is still described and increased in form, as the Scripture says: The law of God is in his heart, and his steps will not be supplanted. In the heart of the righteous is the law of God. What law? Not written, but natural; for the law is not imposed on the just, but on the unjust. In his heart is the law, not superficially, as in the lips of the Jews; for it is believed in the heart for righteousness. He who believes, speaks; but he who speaks does not always believe. Finally, the people did not believe, of whom it is said: This people honors me with their lips; their heart, however, is far from me (Isaiah 29:13). Therefore, if the nations do what the law requires, they themselves are the law, knowing what they should follow or avoid. How much more faithful and just is the person who lives in the image and likeness of God, knowing how to discern the beautiful and the honorable, and using a legitimate guide of natural wisdom, so that its traces are not supplanted; just like Esau, whom his brother supplanted and made him fall due to his greed, and his traces were spilled unto death.

(Vers. 32, 33.) The more righteous someone is, the more their enemy plots against them; and therefore Scripture says: The sinner considers the just person and seeks to destroy them. But the Lord will not abandon them into their hands, nor will He condemn them when He judges. Therefore, when the sinner sees that the just person speaks in their mouth and meditates on wisdom in their heart, because they speak judgment on their tongue, because they keep the law of the Lord in their heart; the sinner tries to bring death of sin upon them, but the Lord protects them. And therefore we do not fear the snares of the sinner, for God is for us. If God is for us, who is against us? Therefore, God will not abandon his just one, nor will he condemn him when he is judged. For he is a true judge, and therefore justice cannot be in jeopardy. Hence, Aquila said: He will not condemn him when he is judged. Symmachus: He will not condemn when the just one is being judged. But because the Seventy men have thus set forth: When he shall be judged; we think that he refers to something else, because it is written: For the Lord himself shall come to judgment (Isaiah 3:14). But to what judgment? Hear him saying: Against you, you alone have I sinned, and done evil in your sight; that you may be justified in your words, and overcome when you are judged (Psalm 50:6). Therefore the Lord offers himself to be heard, that he may be judged by himself, so that he may overcome even more. How have I treated you? Hear, my people, what have I done to you? Or how have I made you weary? Answer me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery (Micah 6:3-4). And elsewhere: I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins; but you,

remember me, and let us argue our case together (Isaiah 43:25-26).

It is a serious judgement when the Lord demands to be judged by man. For what can you answer to Him, who has given you everything, who has placed you in charge of everything; who subjected the Egyptians to you, to whom you came as a guest, and afterwards drowned them in the sea. He destroyed your enemies and overthrew them, He created and established you, He redeemed you with His own blood; and yet you betray yourself to serve His enemy! He has forgiven you all your sins, and yet you commit even worse ones! He calls you, you will come to judgment, what will you answer to him, who unless he gives to you again, you are lost? And so, seeing this, the holy David, with this certain moral teaching, avoids judgment, and pleads for mercy, saying: And do not enter into judgment with your servant; for no one who lives will be justified in your sight (Ps. CXLII, 2). He confesses that he is placed in darkness like one dead of the world. Carefully, he said like one dead of the world, not dead; for those who die in Christ are not dead of the world; but those are dead of the world, who place their entire life that they lived in the world in destruction and death. And so, as if desperate for a remedy, he turns to saying: 'Hear me quickly, Lord; for my spirit has failed' (Ibid., 7). For such a judgment has failed in the offering presented to it, in which the truth should be examined rather than mercy conferred.

However, the Lord is so merciful that even though no one is justified in His sight while living (for even the most righteous person is not free from sin; or whose life is such that it is deemed worthy of God's likeness?), nevertheless, one must be made in the image and likeness of God, just as God, who is without sin, is so too the one who is in His image, must be without sin. Therefore, what punishment is worthy for someone who has lost such great grace of the Lord's work and the likeness of divine beauty? But because he is merciful, even if he subjects himself to judgment; he does not judge the just, but the unjust. He spares the just, as if they were sinning due to the fragility of their condition: he punishes the unjust, as if he detests the ungrateful. Furthermore, even if you have many works of justice, do not be impatient and arrogant, so that you do not consider the rewards of justice in this age to be demanded, or lament that any adversity has befallen you undeservedly. For as long as you live, the struggle is owed to you, not the reward.

(Verse 34.) Therefore, wait either for a helper or for the Lord as a reward: And keep His ways; that is, to wait and to keep the commandments of the one whom you think you need to wait for. Even if you are worn out, even if you are troubled, even if you lose strength due to sickness, still wait for the Lord, and your hope will not be in vain. The Lord will come and exalt you, that you may possess the land as an inheritance. It is clear that the land is superior, not this earthly valley; but that which is the promise of eternity, in which whoever is established is exalted by the Lord. But you will see when sinners perish; then indeed there will be a reward for the righteous, when judgment is made about the wicked's merits. However, sinners do not perish in the same way. They perish for you beforehand, if you do not marvel at their power and wealth: if it does not move you when you learn that they abound in honors, children, and friends. For these things are of the world, and the world is subject to worldly malice: and the prince of the world favors those who serve him, according to that: 'All these things I will give you, if you fall down and worship me' (Matth. IV, 9). What do you seek for those things to be given to you, when the very impious one who gives cannot himself abide in them for long? He himself also passes away, so how can the things he has conferred not also pass away? Just maintain a steady mind, hold on to justice, let no one sway you, and you will see that there is nothing impious.

(Verse 35.) Finally, listen to him saying: I saw the wicked one exalted and raised above the cedars of Lebanon. And I passed by, and behold, he was not. I saw him in this age, I saw with the eyes of the body; I also saw him boasting and exalting himself with his words, considering himself to be something, who is nothing. How does he exalt himself? I will set my throne above the clouds, and I will be like the Most High (Isaiah 14:14). He exalts himself so that you may see him exalted like the towering cedars of Lebanon: and they themselves are tall, and they are on the highest mountain. Therefore, those who are exalted are deservedly exalted, and the wicked, who establishes himself on that mountain about which it is written: If you have faith like a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain: Be lifted up and thrown into the sea (Matt. XVII, 19). To whom? To the devil, he says, from whom this man was possessed and oppressed, whom you marvel at being healed. Therefore, he has more love in Christ than power in the devil. You see the cedar on the highest mountain exalted; but it is broken by the wind, it is burned by fire, it is dissolved by age: so it is with the rich person in the world. It shines indeed with a certain brilliance of secular grace, like Mount Lebanon. It leans on the power of the world, rejoicing in wealth and riches. Something seems to be to you, before you say: "I will go over and see" (Exodus 3:3). For just as Moses passed over material things with his soul and mind, and saw God, so too, if you pass from here, lifting the footprint of your mind to the grace of God, you will see that He is nothing who seemed most powerful to himself in this land. Therefore, God, the Word, says to your soul, says to your mind: Come here from Lebanon, my bride, come here from Lebanon: you will pass over and go through. If you pass over worldly things, you will go through to paradise. Listen to the one passing by, Remember me, Lord, when you come into your kingdom. Listen again to the one passing through: Truly, truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.

What is: Behold, it was not. In the beginning, indeed, the Word was. And whoever sees the Word, who is a partaker of the Word, indeed he himself is; because the Word of God always is, and the speech which is from Him is not: It is and it is not; but: It is; and it remains in the one who follows God. But whoever does not know the Word, he is not, because he does not adhere to Him who said: I am who I am (Exod. III, 14). But whoever adheres to Him, is one spirit. Wherever the spirit is, there is also life. Therefore Scripture says of God: 'Who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist' (Rom. 4:17); this means, he calls the nations that did not exist as his own people; for our ancestors were chosen by God. And elsewhere it is said: 'The Lord knows those who are his' (2 Tim. 2:19); he does not know those who are not his. And Esther says: 'Do not give your scepter to those who do not exist' (Esther 14:11). Therefore, the righteous man says rightly: And I passed by, and behold he was not; that is, I saw him exalted in the world before I considered that the world is nothing. But when I passed above the world in my mind, I saw that he who was before exalted in this world was no longer. And you, if you are just, pass from present things to those things which are to come, and present things will pass away from you. Heaven and earth will pass away; but my words will not pass away (Matt. XXIV, 35). Therefore, all things pass away for the just. The wicked passes away, similar to vanity, and his days pass like a shadow. Not only do present things pass away from the just; but also when they intend to reach those things which are to come, those present things already pass away. See how present things have passed away from the just. Indeed, in the time of the prophet David, there was the Synagogue, but there was not yet the Church from the Gentiles. And he speaks of the future as if it were present, saying: Bless our God, O nations (Psalm 65:8). Furthermore, he says: God has ascended in jubilation (Psalm 47:6). The times of deceit will pass, not by age, but by mindset. And he celebrated the

resurrection of the Lord, which would come many centuries later, with devout faith, saying: Sing to our God, sing; sing to our King, sing (ibid., 7). As though it were of interest to Christ himself and the sacraments of the wedding union of the Church, it leaps and rejoices. It also expressed the reason for the celebration, saying: The Lord has reigned over all the earth (Ibid., 8). Therefore, if we pass by, and those things which are to come seem to have passed by us; just as if you pass by land while sailing, you also see it pass by, and as if it were departing from you. Often sailors, especially in a storm, flee from land; and yet when they flee from it, it seems rather to flee from the sailors. And if you flee from this world, it too will flee from you; if you pass by this earth, it too will pass by you. And you sail in this sea, and in this age you fluctuate; flee the earth, it has rocks, it has stones; as it is written: Cast stones from the path (Isaiah 62:10). If you hasten through this airy abyss to the port of divine will, you will see that all these things have passed by you. For what difference does it make whether they have passed by, or whether you judge that you have passed them by?

There is another wicked one who appears exalted and elevated above the cedars of Lebanon; but if you pass by, he will not be, nor will you find his place. See to me a Jewish scribe returning the series of the old Scriptures, but not following; you hear that he gives it back with his lips, you wonder how learned he is. You ask what he believes: he answers according to the letter, he goes through the history. He seems to you to be exalted and elevated, if you consider the letter. Pass on to spiritual understanding, because the Law is spiritual; you see that he is nothing, then you say: I saw the wicked one exalted. ...and I passed by, and behold, he was not there; and I searched for him, and the place of him was not found. I searched for him where he should have been, where life is: I did not find him. He was not there, where life was; for he was dead, and therefore the place of him was not found. For what is the place of the dead, who was not, nor ever was? For he was not, who was in the letter; for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. Therefore, I sought him, that I might find him: he did not present himself, that he might be found; that is, I wanted to convert him: he did not want to present himself to me, that he might be converted. I did what a seeker would do: he fled from that which should have returned. Finally, the soul that desires to be converted, seeks the Word; and when it finds it, it says: I have taken hold of him, and I will not let him go (Song of Solomon 3:4). That is, the Son of God, the Word of God. But the unjust person who refused to be healed, I sought him, and I did not find him; and therefore, do not imitate him.

(V. 37.) Keep innocence, and see equity. Whoever keeps innocence, sees equity; for whoever is pure sees God, whose staff is upright, and upright is his justice; to turn away from those who turn to the pursuit of wickedness. Blessed is innocence, which sees God. Finally, others have added: Keep perfection; for he is perfect who knows no evil, nor does he know deceit. Therefore, it says: Keep perfection; for there are remnants for a peaceful man. Relics are said to be from the body of the dead, from his remains. They are called relics because after the death of a person, they appear to survive; for what remains are preserved for resurrection. Indeed, it is necessary for this corruptible to put on incorruption, and for this mortal to put on immortality. Therefore, relics are more so the hope of resurrection for a person, and the faith of conversion, and the grace of love; since the wicked do not rise to judgment; but the life of the Just is known to God, and is proven by the judgment of the Lord. To this place it beautifully applies, 'According to the election of grace, the remnant has been saved.' (Rom. 11:5).

(Verse 38.) But the unjust will perish together; the remnants of the wicked will be destroyed. The remnants of the righteous are virtues; the remnants of the wicked are wickedness and the sin of treachery. They will be wiped away, so that they will not exist. The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; not from the world, not from an element. Heaven and earth will pass away. I do not entrust my salvation to heaven; because it too will pass away, for it is said of many heavens: They will perish, but you will remain. I entrust myself only to God, who remains, who can forgive sins; that He may be my protector in times of tribulation, that He may help me and deliver me, and snatch me from the sinners in the time of His judgment, and make me safe, for I have hoped in Him. In Him alone I have hoped; for He does not desire us to serve both Himself and others. He who serves Himself alone is liberated; for to Himself belongs praise, glory, and eternal power, both now and forever, and unto all ages of ages. On Psalm 38

Preface

About Repentance, I have already written two small books, and I think I should write again. First, because it is useful to ask for the forgiveness of sins daily; then because in those two books there is an exhortation to repentance and progress, if it is done; but now how repentance should be done must be expressed; for it is of no benefit to act, unless it is done as it should be. In this, the holy David proposed for us a model to follow, who seems to me to have tasted sin in order to teach how sin could be wiped away. For indeed, where did medicine arise, if not from a wound? While the earliest ages of humanity teach others what has been beneficial to themselves, and how they have healed their own wounds, they show others; practice has made the art, and illness the teacher. For it is the first and most reliable school of medicine, which experience, not conjecture, has formed. Therefore, those doctors are first called empirics from experience, and the other schools are derived from them, and they have taken some use of their virtue from it. But what is more powerful for encouraging repentance than what the holy prophet David has taught us, to repent of our sins? For who would refuse to humble themselves before God, when even the king himself humbled himself? Or who would doubt to afflict their soul, when such a great prophet has afflicted himself, paying the price of tears for the redemption of sin? And although he has spread the precepts of repentance throughout all his writings (for which of his Psalms is not a remedy for the conscience of a sinner; when elsewhere he shows how he was moved, and elsewhere how he was disturbed, so as not only to show how wounds should be healed, but also how they should be avoided, and teach us by his own example?) But who, however strong, can claim to stand, when he has fallen? Yet in the 37th psalm, he expressed a greater force of inner sorrow and lamentable lamentation.

(Verse 1.) Finally, at the beginning, the title itself reminds us that such precepts are to be formulated; for we read as follows: 'For a remembrance,' he says, 'of the sabbath day, a psalm of David.' For the definition of penance is full remembrance of sins; so that each person may chastise his sins with the scourge of daily discourse, and condemn the vices committed by himself. For we are taught as follows, with the Lord himself saying: 'Tell me your iniquities, that you may be justified.' (Isaiah 43:26). And the Apostle says: 'With the mouth confession is made unto salvation' (Rom. X, 10). But perhaps it may cause perplexity because he did not say the remembrance of sins, but of the Sabbath day, or (as another has it) of Sabbaths (Exod. XX, 8 et seq.). But what is the Sabbath, but the rest of future things, the solace of present things, by which the Law commands men's works to rest and their burdens to be put away? And what are heavier burdens

than our sins? Let these be put away on the Sabbath days, that is, in the time of this present life. For in seven days the whole week is concluded, in six days that world was formed, on the seventh day the Lord rested from his work, he who rests in our gentleness, as he himself said: On whom shall I rest, except on the humble and gentle? (Isaiah 66:2) Therefore, free yourself from every Sabbath and lighten the burden of your errors; so that you may deserve to attain the secure rest of that future Sabbath. For if you bear heavy sins here, you will not have rest there. Therefore, free your mind, reject all that burdens and oppresses your conscience, lest your flight be hindered by winter or the Sabbath: this life is one of labor, while the next is one of rest. May the completion of this present age find you lighter, so that burdened by sins you may not be unable to flee. Anticipate, so that you may take the lead. The world flees, he who is not bound by the allurements of the world, who is detached from all its concerns. Flee also the coming wrath, that is, the day of judgment. He who repents will escape; for thus did John the Baptist declare, saying: You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance (Matthew 3:7-8).

You heard today that John was baptizing in Aenon, near Salim. (John 3:23). Aenon is called the eye of punishments; Salim itself ascending; this is its interpretation. Therefore, whoever chooses to be baptized foresees punishments; and for this reason, he seeks refuge in the sacrament of baptism, so that he may lay down all sin, lest he begin to be subject to punishments. And perhaps it is he who foresees punishments who is baptized with the baptism of repentance; but truly, he who is baptized in Christ looks to the grace. Therefore the baptism of John is the eye of punishments; the baptism of Christ is the eye of graces. Although John was baptizing in Aenon, he was baptizing near the ascending; for this has the interpretation that it is called Salim himself ascending. Therefore he was next to Christ, who announced his coming. For the Son of Man who descended from heaven is also the one who ascended to heaven, in order to fulfill all things. But because such are the heavenly things, so are the heavenly ones; and he ascended to heaven, who, laying aside earthly things, is buried in Christ; so that he may rise again with Christ from the death of sin to the newness of life and the participation in inheritance; so that he may become, as it is written: the heir of God, the co-heir of Christ (Rom. 8:17).

Therefore, true medicine is to do penance: which is rightly preached when the physician comes from heaven, who does not aggravate the wounds, but heals them. A good physician, who taught us how to seek remedies for our earthly body; when the flower of healing herbs sprouted for us, which condemned sin in the flesh. Therefore, flesh became the antidote, which was previously the poison of sin: because it was the temptation of sins. Listen to how the flesh of God becomes an antidote: The Word became flesh (John 1:14); He put His hand into the den of vipers, He expelled the venom, He removed sin; that is, He condemned sin in the flesh. And in order that this may be more fully considered, let us recapitulate the very chapter of the Apostle. For it is written thus: 'God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh, that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit' (Rom. VIII, 3 et 4). Therefore the Son of God came in the likeness of sinful flesh: not of course in the likeness of flesh, who assumed true flesh; but in the likeness of sinful flesh, that is, of sinful flesh. For our flesh, the flesh tainted by sin, had been fashioned by deceit and poisoned by the venom of the serpent. Once it became subject to sin, it became the flesh of death, for it was indebted to death. Christ, in his own flesh, assumed the likeness of this condemned and

prejudiced flesh. Although he took on the natural substance of this flesh, he did not take on any contamination: he was not conceived in iniquity and born in sin. He was not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man; he was born of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin. What, then, is it? He condemned sin in the flesh, not sin in likeness of flesh, but because our sins Christ received not by use, but by quality: not by fault, but by sacrament of His mercy; and [thereby] He was made sin for us, who Himself did no sin. Indeed, also because He condemned sin in this flesh of sin, that is, in our flesh which is subject and prejudiced by this, teaching how we, being placed in the flesh, should not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit? For to walk according to the flesh is sin; for it lives by luxury, and pleasures, and debaucheries, and carnal desires, those who live according to the wisdom of the flesh; for the wisdom of the flesh is hostile to God: therefore those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Therefore sin condemns from sin those who live according to the spirit, devoting themselves completely to God, and intent on heavenly oracles: for this reason Christ came, so that he might do not his own, that is, the flesh's, will, but God's will. Therefore, if anyone follows Him, in order to do what pleases God and restrain the desires of the flesh, they are an imitator of Christ.

What we have felt, we have expressed. Whoever reads, choose what you will follow. There is no error where there is a simple affection of piety, and every faithful sentiment. Christ condemned sin by taking on the likeness of sinful flesh, in order to abolish the sins of our flesh. He condemned sin in order to crucify our sins in his own flesh; He himself became sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him, who were captive to death and prey of the serpent. Therefore, this is an act of mercy, not of judgment. Through this sin, the eternal God absolves us, who did not spare his own Son, but made him sin for us. Then Christ condemned sin in the flesh, which had a certain judgmental power and authoritative censor, hated the vices that he used to love, and detested impurity, which he considered as pleasure. He separates himself from lust, renounces desires, rejects crimes and offenses, repels greed, which effeminates the strength of the flesh. I become an imitator of Christ for you, and I myself condemn sin in the flesh. Thus, I run, he says, not as if uncertainly, thus I fight, not as one beating the air: but I chastise my body and bring it into servitude; lest when I have preached to others, I myself become reprobate (2 Cor. 9:26-27).

We have not wandered in vain, as I believe; for this also belonged to the healing of mankind. Considering this medicine, God commanded this earth to produce the healing juices of herbs and trees, by which wounds of the flesh could be treated; and in the same way, He filled the series of divine Scriptures with helpful teachings, by which the infirmity of the soul could be healed. Therefore, how serious is it that dumb animals know how to heal themselves and seek healing herbs for their wounds, without rejecting them; and yet human industry does not seek those things, for which even a physician is sent, who could demonstrate the seeds of healing in the ancient Scriptures and introduce new ones as well? How many healthy things, then, are considered harmful in passing? Let's take examples from the earth itself. The serpent nourishes poison, it has harmful bites, it wounds the flesh; but even in its venom, you will find an antidote if you seek it. Finally, its flesh is burned, from which the theriac is made, by which the power of the poison is accustomed to be dulled, so that it cannot harm. Therefore, it is not the fault of the earth that gives birth to the serpent, but rather the one who does not know how to beware of the serpent. The serpent itself can be beneficial to you if you understand; indeed, if you do not despise the advice of the physician. Learn to imitate him whom you think should be avoided. Be, he says, wise like

serpents, and innocent like doves (Matt. X, 16). Preserve your head like a serpent; and if you are torn apart in your whole body, you will revive. Your head is Christ, because he himself is the head of the man: if you keep the faith, even if you are dead like a serpent, you will rise again. Imitate the serpent, who sheds its outer skin, in order to be renewed on the inside: imitate the serpent, who vomits up its venom. Blessed are you if you vomit out your evil thoughts and cast off the poisons of your malice. It is a widely known saying, supported by the authority of writers, that a female snake, hissing at a snake approaching her in the water, agrees to mate; she, concerned for her own safety, promises with the law of her desired sexual encounter that she will use her own body if the snake vomits out its venom; and, once captured, she is ordered to obey, to lay down her weapons, and to insert her own head into its mouth; and when the custom begins to warm up, either by some force of nature or by the heat of passion, the female tightens her mouth around the head and presses the bites of desire with kisses, and thus the snake's head is severed. Will you not recognize in the nature of the serpent the mystery of faith? That serpent in paradise first provoked the woman to the crime of adultery; but when its venom was poured out into this world, the offspring of that woman, by the deceit of the parent and the many tricks of the serpent, stripped it of its weapons and cut off its head. If the poisons prevail and the sin in which the sting of death is hidden overcomes you, imitate the example of physicians so that the serpent may die for you either early or late. You shall crush its venom and break apart its body, and you shall know that it is to be tempered with healing juices; so that not only will it lose its power and poison, but it will also become a remedy for poison. However, that intelligible serpent dies for you if you die to sin, and your sins die for you. Thus its venom is crushed if your actions cause you remorse: thus its every poison is destroyed if you cover it with good deeds, and temper the committed crime with faithful confession. Listen how the virtue of the dragon itself is crushed. Crush, he says, God will crush Satan under your feet (Rom. 16:20). First crush your heart, where the dragon's lair was; so that he may not find a place to dwell: crush the flesh of the dragon: his flesh is our sins. Therefore, God says to you: The nations feast upon him (Job 40:25). And further, he says: Death goes before him: The flesh of his body cleaves to him (Job 41:13-14). For as the saints, the body and members are of Christ; so the sinners who do not forsake sin, but cleave to sin, are the body of the dragon and its members. Therefore, we feast on the body of Christ; but they feast on the body of the dragon: we feast, who strive to cleave to Christ, daily remission and forgiveness of sins; but they, who daily connect sins to sins, feast on the continuation of wickedness and crimes.

Therefore, crush those meats, and sprinkle over them the bruising of your heart; then pour Jordan's water over all those things. For the descent and ascent of Jordan is, for whoever descends into the sacred font, also ascends, seeking what is above. For he descends into the death of Christ, who is baptized in Christ, and ascends into his resurrection. But if you have already been baptized and have erred, pour the water of tears, not false but true; so that from the depths you may cry out to the Lord your God, and it may be said of you: A voice was heard in Rama, weeping and much wailing, Rachel weeping for her children, and she was unwilling to be consoled, for they are not (Jeremiah 31:15). Rachel is the Church, in which the people of God are blessed: she weeps for you, she deplores your sins, and she weeps greatly; so that she easily does not accept consolation, just as those who grieve greatly. Therefore, she did not want to be comforted; because who you were, you ceased to be. But with this perseverance of grief and weeping, let her obtain to say: My son was dead, and now he is alive again; he was lost, and now he is found (Luke 15:32). Or perhaps Rachel did not want to be comforted by the children of

Judah; because they are not the ones she had certainly conceived in order to exist. And therefore they did not receive consolation, as Herod killed the little children; because they did not believe in the coming of Jesus, fulfilling the measure of their wickedness, so as to kill the little ones and murder the Son of the Virgin. Therefore the Church of the Lord did not want to console the Jews, because they are not (believers); but in Christians who have been gathered from the nations, it feasts and rejoices; because they have become (believers), who were not (before).

Therefore you sent the water of the Jordan, the water of grace; drink this first: you sent the water of tears, the water of repentance; this is the second cup, so that you may first be restored. Drink the water from your vessels, drink the water from your tears, so that you may say: 'And my drink was mingled with weeping' (Psalm 101:10). Your weeping, therefore, is your drink; and your tears, your food. 'My tears have been my bread' (Psalm 41:4), he says. If tears are bread, you have food for the conversion of sin, according to what you read in the Gospel: 'For he to whom more is forgiven, loves more' (Luke 7:47). Where we often see some who were negligent before becoming Christians, after committing some sin, become more diligent and through repentance become perfect. Just as conversion is a remedy for sin, so is a remedy for poison. Listen to this remedy: The righteous at the beginning of speech accuses himself (Prov. XVIII, 17). The poison is sin; the remedy is the accusation of one's own crime: the poison is iniquity; confession is the remedy for the fall. And therefore true remedy from poison exists, if you confess your injustices, so that you may be justified. But now let us adore the psalm, so that it may teach us how penance should be done. And so it begins:

Commentary

(Vers. 1.) Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger; nor chasten me in your wrath. He who repents should be prepared to endure reproaches and suffer injuries; and not be disturbed if someone accuses him of his own sin. For if he himself must accuse himself, why does he not endure others accusing him? And if he should not fear being accused by a man, how much more by his Lord God, to whom we all, even in secret things, sin; since the condemnation of present things, especially the absolution of future things, is from Him. But those who are not condemned in this world, when they are not punished by men. Woe to me! if it is said of me: he has received his reward (Matthew 6:2). If a good deed is condemned by this judgment, how much more does the crime weigh down? For if mercy, thrown about with easy words, is robbed of eternal reward, how much more is the punishment of wickedness deferred by the bitter addition of interest? Therefore, he who repents should offer himself for punishment; so that he may be punished here by the Lord, and not be reserved for eternal torment: nor should he wait for the time, but rather confront divine indignation.

See that his actions agreed with David's prayers. He had offended the Lord because he had ordered the people to be numbered. He anticipated the messenger of God with his confession, acknowledging that he had sinned greatly and foolishly. Not as if he were reminding the forgetful, but as if he were urging the one who hesitated, so that he would not delay the resolution of the offense any longer. 'I have sinned greatly,' he said, 'for I have done this thing' (1 Chronicles 21:8); and now, Lord, remove the iniquity of your servant. But how sins are removed, listen to the one who says: 'Her sin is forgiven; for she has received double from the hand of the Lord for all her sins' (Isaiah 40:2). Therefore, he does not demand that the sin be completely remitted; but rather

that it be erased by a moderate solution; that is, that its memory be erased in the future. Finally, as if with the voice of an interrupter, the Lord, so that the punishment for the committed error would not be deferred, sent Nathan the prophet to him; and he came to the king and said to him: Choose what you want to happen: three years of famine over the land, or three months of fleeing from the face of your enemies and those pursuing you, or three days of death in the land. And now know, and see what I should answer to him who sent me (I Par. XXI, 11 and 12). See how God, as a teacher, moderates his anger, if we are not completely resistant to punishment; but let us request a method of alleviating, not avoiding, the penalty. He proposed three options, so that he could choose what he considered more moderate. Also, see how he provokes repentance; that we should offer ourselves to the offense: commanding the choice of punishment, so that a certain prerogative of choice is maintained in the punishment itself, and soothing the accused with this word. And David said to Nathan: I am in distress in these three, but I will fall more into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great, more than in the hands of men (1 Chronicles 21:13). Did he demand punishment for himself for the error? If he had, he would be blamed for impudence, for he would have been ungrateful for divine moderation. For a modest confession greatly supports the defendant; and the punishment we cannot avoid by defense, we lessen through shame. He chose not what was immune from punishment, but what he judged more moderately; so that he would entrust himself more to the kindness of God, who knows how to forgive, than to the power of men, who often exceed the measure of vengeance. Therefore, he has mercy on those who do not know how to err; he does not have mercy on those who are partakers of error. And the holy David's faith did not deceive him, but even in his offense, he obtained the grace of divine mercy. For he, who had determined to exercise death for three days on earth, did not allow even one day to pass by; but willingly granted a pardon until the hour of lunch, and, as I may use the word of Scripture, he repented of his wickedness (2 Samuel 24:16). See how Scripture exhorts you to not reject repentance, but to follow God, whom you ought to follow. He added well, above wickedness; because every revenge seems to be hard. Therefore even the day of judgment is called a bad day, from which blessed is the one who is freed by God; as it is written: In the bad day, the Lord will deliver him (Psalm 40:2). And the Lord said, saying, to the angel that he should spare there. Notice, however, that when the Lord wants to forgive, He gives grace and confidence to pray. And David saw the angel striking, and he said: Here I am; I have sinned, and I have done evil as a shepherd, and what have these done in this flock? Let your hand be upon me and upon the house of my father (I Chronicles 21:17). If the Lord had commanded the angel to spare, how then did the angel still strike, unless it is because the Lord, although he desires to forgive, desires to be asked for forgiveness, and in order to be asked, he acts? And no man would have seen the striking angel, unless the Lord had revealed the angel to his eyes. Hence, Elisha says: Lord, open the eyes of this boy, that he may see. And the eyes of the boy were opened, and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots all around the prophet (II Kings 6:17). Do not be moved by the lowly appearance of a servant, compared to that of prophets or kings; for the appearance of horses and chariots is lower than the holiness of angels. And perhaps it may seem difficult to some who read hastily that David, humble in heart and meek, who spared his enemies, chose the death of the people rather than his own flight or hunger on the earth. He avoided the hunger of the people because it is considered more severe than the plague, which pollutes the sky and causes death. He did not request his own flight because of this; for the prophet could intercede for the people, as it happened: the people could not intercede for the prophet. For it is written: If the people should

err, the priest shall pray for them; if the priest should err, who shall pray for him? Yet when he saw that the people were about to be killed, he offered himself to the striking angel, so that he himself would be struck instead of the people. It is even more that, not terrified by the appearance of the dead, he offered himself to the sword, rather than wishing for a discourse on the proposed condition. Therefore, he followed reason in his choice, and piety in his grief. But behold the grace of God, that he himself turned away from the intended condition. Is mercy a crime? For he threatens more and exacts less. He who keeps his promises in rewarding his rewards, in demanding punishments, violates the prescribed punishment. When he is angry with the guilty, he delays; when he takes pity, he hastens to absolve; he terrifies in order to correct; he admonishes in order to amend; he anticipates in order to forgive. Hence the Prophet also says of the Lord elsewhere: The cup in the Lord's hand is full of mixed wine. . . . but his dregs have not been poured out (Psalm 74:9). The cup is full for frightening, but it is not emptied for striking. The cup was full when death was commanded for three days, but the mercy of God intervened, the hand of the Angel held back before emptying that cup. But in order for you to know that the cup is a punishment or a sword, hear him saying: Take this cup of pure wine from my hand and make all the nations to which I send you drink from it, and they will vomit and act insane from the sight of the sword (Jeremiah 25:15-16). And it is said to Jerusalem: You have drunk the cup of wrath from the hand of the Lord; you have drunk the cup of ruin and have drained it, and there was no one to console you (Isaiah 51:17). Jerusalem has drunk the measure, which has sinned beyond measure: the Church of the Christians does not know how to drain the cup of wrath, but the anointed one has been drained: for whom Christ has emptied himself, so that he might be fragrant everywhere. This gift has been received from the hand of the Lord, but it does not know the cup of death. I choose two cups, one of death, the other of life. Christ emptied the cup of death with His blood; and He served a new cup, so that we may say: I will receive the cup of salvation (Psalm 115:13). The new cup is the Testament, which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins. This cup is poured out, and its dregs are not found, because it cleanses every offense.

We have said how the Lord bends his anger in vengeance; let us declare how he anticipates our prayers in rewarding us, and let us teach by his example. Listen to the robber saying to the Lord: Remember me, Lord, when you come into your kingdom (Luke 23:42). The Lord answered: Amen I say to you, today you shall be with me in paradise. He was still asking that he be remembered when he would come into his kingdom; and although the Lord had not yet come, he was already giving him the heavenly kingdom. How swift is mercy! Slower is the fulfillment of the prayer than the reward for the one who gives.

Therefore, David held moderation and did not ask for forgiveness, saying: Lord, do not accuse me in your anger, nor rebuke me in your fury. Fury in Greek is called θυμός, and it is the impulse of anger. This is what the Latin wanted to express: Neither in anger, nor in the very impulse of anger, do you accuse me or rebuke me. But rebuke is education. It is also said in Greek παίδευσις, about which it is said: Blessed is the man whom you have educated, O Lord (Psalm 93:13)! For indeed God is not open to passion, such as to become angry, since He is impassible; but because He vindicates, He appears to be angry. This appears to us; because we ourselves are accustomed to vindicate with emotion. However, often both men are found to vindicate without being moved; but to celebrate revenge with the utmost patience, to exercise torments. Therefore, why do you wonder in God, if you sometimes recognize this in man? We have already said that revenge is a

form of anger. Finally, it has a use, so that we may say of anyone being punished, because it falls within the scope of the laws: not because it falls within the anger of the laws, but because it falls within the severity of the laws. Thus, in the same place, it says concerning the ten plagues of the Egyptians: He sent upon them his anger by evil angels (Psalm 77:49), that is, vengeance; for the law does not know how to be angry, but it knows how to be the minister of laws. Therefore, he who is the author of laws does not know how to be angry, to whom it is a desire to instill fear, not to punish. Therefore, imitate, O rulers, the divine example; so that you may be stricter in enacting laws, and merciful in exacting punishments. Let the severity of the laws restrain audacious insolence, and let the mercy of princes withdraw the guilty from punishment. Therefore, the Prophet recognizes his own fault, sees the wounds, and demands to be healed. He who wants to be healed does not shrink from being accused, but does not want to be accused in anger, but in the word of God. The word of God is healing. For we read thus: He sent forth his Word, and healed them (Psalm 107:20). He does not want to be educated in anger, but in doctrine; so that if you ask a doctor, he does not cut your wound, but applies medicine; he urges with the remedy, but does not cut. Finally, there is pain, but not beyond the measure of pain: it bites, but does not draw blood.

(Verse 2.) And he added: Because your arrows have pierced me. He seems to be saying the same thing as the holy Job; but they are different. For he also says: The arrows of the Lord are in my body, the fury of which drinks my blood: when I begin to speak, they pierce me (Job 6:4). He complains about the wound of his body; here he deplores the wounds of his soul. And perhaps here he is repenting of sin: he pleads the cause of human weakness; and as an advocate of our frailty, he seeks the remedy of the Creator's work. Therefore he prays, and he intercedes. And for this reason, the pain of this one is more intense; because the wounds of the soul are more severe than those of the flesh. He says that the arrows of the Lord are in his own body, while this one laments those which are embedded; his blood is drunk, while this one's is spilled; he is pierced, while this one is wounded; the hand of God has touched him, while it is confirmed upon this one by the weight of the burden; he laments that his soul is filled with illusions, while this one laments his body with wounds. But the hand of God, we understand as the power of punishing. This hand punished the king of the Egyptians because of the injury to Abraham, for the attempted chastity of Sarah. This hand sank the chariots, horses, and people of the Egyptians in the deep of the Red Sea. This hand burdened the mind of king Saul, so that he hated the favor of his preserver; and for his transgression of heavenly authority, deserted by his companions and also forsaken by his sons who were killed, he turned his sword against himself, a spectacle nothing is more deformed than for a king, so that the captive old man would not live, surviving his sons and his kingdom. David, having experienced in himself and his children the one's incest, the other's parricide, lamented and wept both the disgrace of his offspring and the destruction of his piety, which is more serious for a devoted father. One of them, inflamed with desire for his sister, was driven to incest, while the other, armed with zeal for chastity, was driven to parricide. See how they have been ensnared in the most serious crimes by the closest bonds of virtue. Would that either he had not loved his sister, or this one had not sought revenge! Finally, even he himself, driven from the boundaries of his homeland by his son, fled from the enemy whom he desired to inherit: he feared to win, lest he be conquered at the expense of his piety. But perhaps someone may say: How can God's hand be in the act of murder or incest, when that work belongs to the enemy? Let us therefore understand that just as the devil wounds, the arrows of the Lord are said to wound. For we read this, that when the Lord turned to the devil in the council of the holy angels and spoke about his servant Job (Job

1:8 et seq.): that the envious one and adversary of the human race (for the praise of a lower substance is condemnation of the one who has been cast from a higher state) the devil replied, saying that Job did not worship the Lord gratuitously, who had been blessed by the will of God with abundance for all. But put forth your hand now, and touch all that he has, and see if he will not curse you to your face (Job 1:11). And God allowed the devil to have power, to stretch out his hand over all that Job possessed. After these events, when the holy Job remained unyielding in his strength, because Job was not moved by the death of his children or the loss of his possessions: the Lord again spoke to the devil, mocking him, that he had scattered all that Job had, and killed his children; yet he could not in any way move Job from his position of virtue. And he answered: Whatever a man has, he will give it for his soul. But put forth your hand, he said, and touch his flesh and bones (Job 2:4-5). And he took power again, to put his hand upon his body; but to keep his soul. And he poured out ulcers on the holy Job (Job 19:21), where is his going out from the Lord. Therefore, we understand that the hand of the Lord is said to be where the man is, the devil attacking, temptation. Indeed, Job said that the hand of the Lord is the one that touches him (Job 16:12), and he mentioned that the arrows of the Lord are the arrows of pirates. And he said, 'He has delivered me into the hands of the unjust' (ibid., 14). Therefore, he absolves himself, because when the devil wounds, the arrows belong to the Lord, who allowed the devil the power to wound. Finally, if you command that your servant be beaten, is he not considered beaten by you even if he is beaten by someone else standing by? And there is this reason; because the Lord gives power to the tempter, so that the affections of men may be tested in temptations. Therefore persecution occurs, so that faith may shine, virtue may excel, and the inner mind may be revealed to all.

Therefore, temptation pierces the innermost part of a person like an arrow, and it is like the sword of God that examines the inner thoughts. And indeed, the sword is the powerful word of God, sharper than any sharp sword, as we hear in the saying of Simeon to Mary: 'And a sword will pierce through your own soul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed' (Luke 2:35). For by the word of God, everything is revealed, in whose presence all things are naked and open. The soul itself seems to be, the innermost thoughts are revealed: and there is no creature finally, as the Scripture says (Heb. IV, 12 and 13), which hides itself from His knowledge. Therefore let us sell all things, in order to buy the word, and hide it in our hearts.

Finally, the devil himself testifies that man gives everything he has for his own soul, and does not consider that price worthy of the redemption of one soul. Why do we spare our possessions, which the devil himself deems worthless for salvation? I have said too little for salvation, he also declares that it is too little for error. Finally, he says, 'All these things I will give you, if you fall down and worship me' (Matt. IV, 9). He showed not only the riches of the world, but also honors and kingdoms. It is agreed that the devil should be worshipped; how much should a Christian offer to be resurrected with Christ? But let us send the devil away like a goat sent into the desert; for he is not a faithful advocate of the truth; although sometimes he transforms himself into an angel of light.

We have abundant testimonies from divine scriptures which teach us that nothing is more precious in a person than faith, and that there is no greater inheritance that can be offered to our salvation and soul. By faith, Abraham left his country (Gen. XII, 4 et seq.), his land, and even the neighbors whom he saw, and he followed the One whom he did not see as though he were seeing Him.

Moses also esteemed the price of his soul greater than all the riches of Egypt (Heb. XI, 26). What lofty things shall I speak of? Rahab the harlot (Joshua 2, 4 et seq.) that foreigner from another age, nevertheless thought that her soul should be redeemed not only by the contempt of all that she possessed, but also by the perils of life: she denied the spies of Joshua to her fellow citizens who were searching for them; and she chose to hide the enemies of her homeland rather than betray them, the messengers of faith. Neither the threats of her fellow citizens, nor the perils of war, nor the burning of her homeland, nor the dangers to her own people frightened her. Learn, man, learn, Christian, how you should follow the true Jesus; when a woman despised all her possessions and followed Jesus in appearance because of the similarity of their names. Therefore, Solomon wisely said: The wealth of a man is the redemption of his soul (Prov. XIII, 8). So redeem your soul. Money is cheap, but it becomes precious through faith: it is cheap when accumulated, precious when dispersed; for it is written: He scattered, he gave to the poor: his righteousness endures forever (Psal. CXI, 9).

Therefore, if you are such that you are able to despise not only all your possessions, but even your own flesh for the sake of justice, which is the most valuable possession (for a righteous person is rich), and although the rivers may enclose you on all sides, you cross over. For even if the Lord gives the power of temptation to you, He commands the devil to guard your soul himself, as it is written: 'That you may destroy the enemy and defender' (Psalm 8:3); for he tempts as an adversary, but defends as a servant. For it is written: And the unicorn will serve you (Job XXXIX, 9). He serves, indeed, who executes not what he wishes from his own will, but unwillingly obeys the imperial commands out of necessity. Consider the height of Christ, how He turned back against the devil the price of His own malice. He forces us to do what we hate: For what I wish, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do, as the Apostle said (Rom. VII, 15). The Lord repays him in the same way, as he often does not do what he wants; but he does what he hates. In conclusion, he keeps in check the soul that he wants to subdue. We condemn the corruption of the flesh, yet we follow it; like that widow who breaks her promise to her husband and then wants to remarry, which she had previously avoided (1 Timothy 5:20). He is an enemy to the saints, and a defender is employed, so that he may be punished even more; so that he who desires to harm may not dare to do so. And how much more bearable it is to love virtues, even if you cannot fulfill them, than to hate virtues, which you cannot harm.

(Verse 3.) There is no soundness in my flesh from the face of your anger. Isaiah explained this passage to us: We have sinned, and you are angry with us (Isaiah 64:5). But who can withstand the face of the Lord's anger? Perhaps he can, because the eyes of the Lord are on those who do evil (Psalm 34:17). For if the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, how can the Prophet be weakened by the face of God's anger? Therefore, consider this, which David himself said later: For you have delivered me from all my troubles; and my eye looks upon my enemies (Psalm 54:9). For just as He looks upon the good deeds of the righteous, so He also uncovers the hidden sins of the wicked. Unless, perhaps, you refer this to Christ, who was delivered from all those who oppressed Him, when He withdrew Himself from the Jewish people, who were constantly wearing Him down with sacrileges and daily impieties; and He called His enemies to His grace, whom the eye of God saw and loved. Therefore, because God is merciful, there is no reason for despair. Though He may be angered, He forgives; though He may strike, He heals; though He delivers the flesh to destruction, He saves the spirit. Therefore, do not fear the weakness of the flesh; for when

the holy one is weak, he is stronger. But what does he mean when he says, 'There is no peace in my bones because of the face of my sins'? What are these bones; are they of the soul or of the body? But the care for bodily pain would not be so great if the soul did not also suffer; for it is the desire of the holy to have the flesh scourged for the sake of the soul, just as Paul himself scourged himself lest his teaching be discredited. There are certain inner bones of man, just as there are other members, the eyes of the mind, and the nostrils; as Job said, 'The divine spirit is in my nostrils' (Job. XXVII, 3). Therefore, there are also bones by which a certain bond of charity is formed. Hence, Adam said of the partner of charity and co-heir of the grace of life: 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.' (Gen. II, 23). The Apostle, interpreting this, said: 'This is a great mystery; but I speak in Christ and in the Church.' (Ephes. V, 32). And who would doubt that the sacrament of Christ and the Church is not carnal but spiritual, since every good person is bound in that marriage not by the flesh but by the beauty of virtue? And should one love the character of morals in his wife, not mere physical satisfaction? Finally, listen, because he speaks not according to the flesh, but according to inner virtue: My mouth is not hidden, which you made in secret (Psalm 138:15). Therefore, virtue is not flesh, which knows the hidden things of God the Father.

Therefore, there is no peace for the soul with virtues, when our sins come together before our eyes and pour into our minds. And this has been well interpreted by the chosen Doctor of the Gentiles, in the second letter to the Corinthians, saying: For even when we came to Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted in all things: fights outside, fears within (II Cor. VII, 5). The sins of the Macedonians troubled them; how much more do our own sins disturb each one of us, so that there can be no rest for us? Our greatest enemy is our own guilt, which disturbs the idle, afflicts the healthy, saddens the joyful, unsettles the peaceful, agitates the meek, and awakens the sleeping. We are guilty without an accuser, tormented without a torturer, bound without chains, and sold without a seller. As Scripture says, 'You were sold for your sins' (Isaiah 50:1). These, therefore, are the sins that are always against us, as the Prophet said, 'They have sold us and hold dominion over us' (Isaiah 3:12). The servant who is sold leaves with his previous service; to migrate to another Master: we neither remove the yoke of the past nor are we bent towards new sins.

(Ver. 4.) And the Holy One groaned, saying: For my iniquities have overwhelmed my head: as a heavy burden they have been laid upon me; that is, my iniquities have surpassed my head, and they tower above me, crushing my senses; for the eyes of the wise are in their head. And therefore Nabal was a wicked and stubborn man; because his senses were obstructed by malice and wickedness. Therefore he could not accept the word of Abigail; but his heart hardened, and he lay like one infirm. But see to it that this is not the head about which the Apostle says (Colossians 2:19), for he does not hold fast to it, being inflated with the mind of the flesh. But this head is Christ; for Christ is the head of every man. This is the head which, through the joints and bands of the whole people, grows to the increase of God; for in all of us, Christ rises up through his individual members. Therefore, when our sins weigh us down, and we are depressed by the leaden weight of wickedness, let us break their chains and cast away their yoke from us, so that we can lift up the eyes of our mind and hear him saying: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you (Matthew 11:28). Finally, Egypt was burdened by greed, money troubled the markets of the Ethiopians, as it is written: Egypt toiled, the markets of the Ethiopians,

and the men of Saba, lofty men, will come over to you (Isaiah 45:14). Egypt toiled before knowing the truth: but now they no longer toil since they have turned to Christ. The willing men of Saba follow, who previously fled; for they are held by the bonds of charity, which are stronger than adamant. And beautifully it is applied to this place in Isaiah: Every head is in pain, and every heart is in sadness: from feet to head there is no wound, nor scar, nor plague with heat (Isaiah I, 5 and 6). For injustice boils, when it dominates, lifting itself up and occupying its place over our head, so that Christ the teacher of repentance does not hold him. These injustices have great power, if you consider that man of injustice, who is to come according to the works of Satan in every power, and signs, and deceitful wonders, and every kind of wickedness: whom the Apostle showed us to beware of (2 Thessalonians II, 9 and 10), because he will receive the work of error, so that the faithful may be proven, and the unfaithful may be judged.

(Verse 5.) Therefore, rightly placed under iniquities, and (what is worse) his own, he says that his scars have become corrupted and decayed from the face of his foolishness; because the remedy for lifting the burden of iniquities followed slowly. However, even Job, who with a holy razor shaved the pus from his sores, was deprived of health; and Lazarus, a poor man who lay at the rich man's gate, with dogs licking his wounds, was lifted from the stench of his scars and placed in Abraham's bosom by angels. So in the holy David there is hope for the remedy of health; for it is not fragrant ointments, but the stench of his wounds of sin that heal; and because he is afflicted and bent down by them, and not delighted. Look now at some lewd young man, and remarkably lustful, who spends his life in debauchery, lying in luxury like that rich man in fine linen and purple, and feasting splendidly every day, with wine-soaked floors beneath him, the ground covered with flowers and thorns, the dining rooms filled with the fumes of various incenses, thinking himself blessed and considering himself to smell good; even though he bears heavy and enduring wounds of his soul, and his corrupted blood flows, he does not perceive any stench from his scar. For he has obstructed his nostrils with filth, and he cannot say: The divine spirit, which is in my nostrils (Job. XXVII, 3). Therefore, that rich man could not find the remedy of salvation, but the poor man found it. Finally, one is in torment among the dead, the other in rest.

Therefore, the holy prophet David also found the remedy for eternal salvation, who confessed the wounds of his soul and spoke of his own scars having decayed from the face of his folly. But there is also a folly that brings salvation to those who believe through the foolishness of preaching. Therefore, the prophet rejects the wisdom of this world, which is not known by God, with the Gospel spirit. It covers its wounds and does not reveal them to the Lord. Therefore, better is the foolishness that has eyes to see its own wounds than wisdom that does not have them. And therefore, with the gaze of his own foolishness, such a great king admits to being afflicted by miseries; so that he may find the remedy of repentance, which Judas, who possessed a field with the wages of iniquity, could not find.

(Verse 6.) I am afflicted and bowed down by miseries until the end; I go about in sorrow all day long. Until what end does he say he is bowed down? Is it the legitimate end of repentance? Or moreover, so that we may understand it mystically, until Christ, who is the end of the Law; who allowed himself to be scourged, allowed his body to be stoned to death? But those wounds emitted no smell of repentance, but rather the fragrance of all grace. Finally, death did not consume Him, as it does with other men; rather, the fountain of eternal life gushed forth, as Scripture teaches us, saying: 'With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation' (Isaiah

12:3). Therefore, water sprang forth from His wound, so that we might drink salvation. All sinners of the earth will drink, so that they may cast off their sins. Consider each detail. Christ was afflicted with miseries in order to make blessed those who were in misery. Let no one call him who is just miserable, for he himself said: You will make no one miserable (Isaiah 33:1). He was bent down so that we could be raised up; he was sad so that we could be made joyful; as it is written: For if I cause you sorrow, who then will make me glad, unless the one who is made sad by me (2 Corinthians 2:2). Therefore, whoever is made sad by the Lord Jesus Christ, he himself makes Christ glad; and he himself is made joyful by Christ. Therefore, we also recognize that we must not be satisfied with superficiality. Let us bend until the end, that is, not only having faith in Christ, but also enduring our sufferings, and let us rejoice in our sufferings, just as Christ rejoiced in his sufferings. He took them upon himself for his servants, so let us undergo them for the Lord. This, therefore, is the end. 'I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, which is the Church, of which I have become a minister' (Colossians 1:24). We see what we must undertake, who have taken up the priestly ministry; that we ought to endure courageously not only the afflictions of the body for ourselves, but also for the Church of the Lord. But David added the afflictions of the soul.

(Verse 7, 8, 9, 10.) Finally, He Himself says: Since my soul is filled with illusions and there is no health in my body. I am bent and greatly humiliated; I roar with the groaning of my heart. And before You, all my desires and groans are not hidden. My heart is troubled, and my strength has deserted me, and the light of my eyes is not with me. Therefore, we understand that the labor of the soul is greater than that of the body. Finally, understand by what illusions the soul is filled, namely that in temptations the devil seems to mock and insult her as if she were seriously suffering. However, Symmachus says that the loins, in which the seeds of human generation are located, are the area. Therefore, the Wisdom of God commands you to have your loins girded (Luke 12:35), so that your chastity may not be dissolved. Finally, so that you may know that in the loins there are stirrings of lust, which are often stirred up by the devil; when he strives to scatter the members of Christ, and to make them the members of a harlot: Behold, he says, his strength is in his loins, and his power is in his belly (Job 40:11). In the loins of the man, semen is produced; in the womb, however, of the woman. Therefore, the devil tricks in these matters, in order to commit adultery, incest, and fornication. And thus, the one who commits fornication, sins in their own body, not outside the body. First, because the flesh becomes weak, which is dissolved by lust, and does not preserve the restraints of chastity; then, because the seeds that should be used for the purpose of procreating offspring, instead, cause contamination of the body, rather than the fruit of posterity. Hence, therefore, they are called illusions perhaps, because in these the heat of the body often deceives without the frequency of intercourse. Hence the Seventy interpret the illusions of souls, because the devil, by deceiving the affections of someone, strives in vain to exhaust his strength and empty his virtue, and dissolve his fortitude. Therefore, elsewhere it is said: And my reins have been loosened (Psalm 72:21). In this, the blessed Apostle confirms us, that we should not fear the illusions of the soul or the weakness of the flesh, because Christ is the power of both our soul and body, who cares for the sick, as a physician: He strengthens the weak, as the strength of all. Finally, even though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16).

Therefore, the holy David, exhausted and worn down by the illusions of his soul, had bowed down and humbled himself excessively. Not because he would give a place to the sins that were overwhelming him, as we have said, or yield to the enemy, who teaches him in the later verses that he should not yield, saying: How maliciously has the enemy operated against your holy ones, and those who hated you have boasted in the midst of your feast? They have set up their signs as signs; and I have not known them as being on the way above the highest point. They cut down its doors with axes, as in a forest of trees (Psalm 73:3 and following). They set up the signs of their wickedness above the highest point against my enemies (what is the highest point but your head, where your senses are, where Christ is Wisdom); I did not acknowledge, that is, I did not agree with or consent to them, and I adhered to the judgment of my own thoughts. Hence you have elsewhere: I did not acknowledge the wicked word; and: I did not recognize the wicked ones who turned away from me (Psalm 101:3-4). Finally, when Christ knows everything, he does not know sin; for he knows what is his own, that is, what belongs to virtues, not what belongs to vices. Therefore, Scripture says to you: The Lord knows those who are his (2 Timothy 2:19). But to the wicked it says: Depart from me, for I do not know you (Luke 13:27). And through Jeremiah it spoke, saying: I was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and I did not know (Jeremiah 11:19). How did he not know what he had predicted in advance? But I did not know, he said, their thoughts, their malice. I do not want to know what belongs to blood. Finally, I will not gather their assemblies about blood (Ps. 15:4); and: I blot out their iniquities, and I do not remember (Is. 43:25). I do not want to know what he will delay to come. I did not know which woods would burn, nor what is placed in a pile of woods, or straw, or hay, so that the flame may consume them more quickly with their sustenance. I want to know those things that endure, so that they may receive the reward of their labors: I want to know those things that are built above the foundation, so that they may be improved; not those things that are on the way, where passers-by may destroy them: I want to know those things that are vines, those certain trees that bear fruit, not those that are gathered into bundles and prepared for burning; that is, I am not an arbiter and associate to those things that are perishable. Therefore, it is not the association with something, but the criminal association that is at fault. But by what reason did he not know those who boast in unfruitful and fragile things? Because they overturn the faithful souls' entrances with their evil deeds and the axes of their iniquity, and they tear apart the gateways of the pious mind with cruel actions, so that Christ may not enter through them. However, each person must guard their gates and doors, so that when Christ comes and knocks, the ministering powers that go before and run ahead may say: Take up your gates, O rulers, and be lifted up, O everlasting doors (Ps. 38:7). Truly, those princes who have governed themselves well, Christ has entered into their souls. It is also similar to what Solomon said: If the spirit of one who has power rises against you, do not leave your place; for carefulness mitigates great offenses. For diligence and trust hold a higher position, while treachery holds a lower one. Therefore, let good diligence rise to you, which excludes the snares of the enemy and removes sin, so that the malice of the one who has power may not be able to harm you. The Preacher sees this wickedness under the sun, that is, in this world, from where also Scripture mentioned this place under the sun. Therefore, he saw under the sun, not above the sun, where the peace of angels is, or the holiness of heavenly powers. Or perhaps he said under the sun of iniquity; for the devil presides over wickedness, Christ over virtues. Therefore, in order to conquer the spirit possessing power, which he received for a time, David bent himself in prayer, bending his neck like a circle, and humbled himself in prayers; for the prayer of the humble

penetrates the clouds, and surpasses the heights of the elements, so that it may approach Christ. And he roared from the groan of his heart. He roars, who expresses groanings alone, not words. Therefore, this is that glorious prayer, when the Spirit intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings (Rom. VIII, 26), as the chosen vessel affirmed. This is the groaning which God does not despise, who does not despise a younger servant orphaned by his father, nor a widow, if she pours out speech.

Therefore, the Apostle of the Holy Spirit sets forth a sign of mourning before all things, as we read. Finally, let us guard the gate of our souls, so that the entrance of our confession may not be split apart by the axes of excessive talk. Let nothing unusual and arrogant come forth from our mouth; let us not lift up a light axe or a hammer, which do not enter into the Church of the Lord. Close the gate when you pray, so that an evil spirit may not enter there and extort sin, where we desire to gain the profit of piety. He who prays like this, his anguish is not hidden from the Lord. Indeed, the anguish of the holy Peter was recognized and heard when he wept bitterly. Surely, it is not the bitter tears that are mourned, but the bitter emotion that pours them out. In the treacherous Ahab, the anguish would have found grace, if not for the lingering envy that multiplied the offense. For it is not a superficial lament that is preached, but one that leads to conversion. It is written: If you lament and turn back, you will be saved.

Let us also present before the Lord all our desires: What is desire? For desire is the longing for a good thing: With desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you (Luke 22:15); and: As the deer longs for streams of water (Psalm 42:2). But I believe that one who repents, who afflicts himself, should not enumerate his own good deeds, but his committed sins. In conclusion, I think we are taught by those verses, in which it says: O God, I will recount my life to you: You have put my tears in your sight (Psalm 55:9). For it does not announce a life as innocent, where tears are shed, which usually undertake a mission for sins. Unless perhaps we understand it this way, that even if someone is innocent, they cannot be secure, having daily struggles against very serious enemies; and therefore, although this consciousness may be joyful, the battle is still lamentable. So, next to these verses, we can understand concupiscence more than desire; for the Greek word used is **■πιθυμ■α**, which means concupiscence, but desire is called **■πιθυμ■α**. But concupiscence is spoken of both in good and in evil. It longed, and my soul failed within the courts of the Lord (Ps. LXXXIII, 13), for good; but in the Law it is different: For I would not have known concupiscence, if the Law had not said: Thou shalt not covet (Rom. VII, 7), certainly for evil. Finally, let the subject teach us that, by occasion received, sin worketh every concupiscence in the affection of man through the commandment. However, we can understand it in this way: Before you I place all desire; this is to make manifest to you what I desire to obtain; so that it may seem to be referred to the order of petitions, not to vainglory. For boasting is unwelcome even in the innocent, but supplication is praiseworthy in the sinner. The Prophet also added that when his heart is troubled, his strength will abandon him. It is a great danger if the heart is agitated, for we believe in righteousness. However, just as in great dangers of illness, if pain is felt and its sensation expressed, the remedy of salvation is revealed (for it is more bearable to feel pain than to not feel pain; for feeling pain is a sign of still living, while the absence of pain is an indication of nearing death), so too does the heart demonstrate signs of salvation when it acknowledges the causes of its disturbance. Finally, David's heart was disturbed by Nabal, a wicked man, but he found grace when Abigail intervened to calm his anger and receive his blessing. However, Nabal,

with a hard and stubborn heart, could not bear his wife's words, and he was struck dumbfounded and fell into death. But what strength forsakes the Prophet? Is it of the flesh or of the mind? If it is of the flesh, then the health is not to be despaired of. For strength is perfected in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). The arbiter and combatant, who was skilled in the struggle of the mind and body, greatly debated this matter; he restrained both competitions in order to restrain the flesh; if he saw it stronger, he would not let the mind be led captive into the law of sin. Therefore, he called back the flesh, but joined strength to the mind; thus, he deserves to reach the crown. Therefore, the Prophet says this: If the strength of the flesh has left, the strength of the mind has prevailed. And if we understand that the strength of the mind has deserted, it is not surprising that in the most serious temptations, with a troubled heart, a person thinks they have been deserted by the strength of their mind. Let the Lord himself teach you, saying: My strength and my praise is the Lord (Psalm 117:14). Therefore, he was seeking the Lord, and because of this, he believed that he deserved not to be deserted, and thought that he should be sought after more often. And wherever he wavered, he thought that he had been deserted. Thus the Apostles wake him who is sleeping, not because they believed that he had fallen asleep. Thus Elisha (to use the examples of those who came before) said, 'Where is the God of Elijah?' (2 Kings 2:14) Not because he thought God was absent, but because he sought His presence in His blessings. Thus Jeremiah followed Him as a physician, saying 'Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved.' I have not labored after you. (Jeremiah 17:14) Thus the Church seeks God in the Song of Songs, and asks the daughters of Jerusalem to awaken love (Cant. 3:5). She seeks to find Him, whom she holds in her love, and never feels His absence. Therefore, David did not complain to Christ that he was deserted; but he judged that in His presence, he could not be disturbed.

Finally, so that you may know Christ more deeply, he added: And the light of my eyes is not with me. Who is the true light of all, if not Christ Jesus, of whom John says: He was the true light, which enlightens every man coming into this world (John 1:9); for he is the one who illuminates both the eyes of the body and the gaze of the mind? Let us therefore pray that he may always pour out his light upon us and always be with us, as he was with David; and for this reason, David dared to say: For with you is the fountain of life, and in your light we shall see light (Psalm 36:10). He had certainly seen a great light like a prophet: let his lamp shine for us, so that we may not go astray. And the lamp is the Word, just as the true light is the Word, which illuminates the whole world. Finally, let your Word be a lamp for my feet, O Lord (Psalm 118:15). And the prophet also sought that lamp, not a lantern. But John found and revealed that lamp, while the persecutor came and revealed the lantern; for a lantern has the light enclosed, not free. The Jew is like a lamp under a bushel, or torches under a veil, which can be seen but not seeing: but we, with the unveiled face, behold the eternal glory of the Lord, to be transformed from glory to glory by the Spirit. Therefore, a crowd of persecutors came with lanterns; and therefore their eyes could not see the light enclosed in them. They came with torches, which have more darkness in the smoke than brightness in the light. Finally, they were accustomed to burning the corpses of the dead with torches. Therefore, the Jews themselves were carrying torches, who were persecuting the author of salvation. They came with weapons, indicating by their weapons that they would die by the hand of the Romans until the destruction of the whole city and temple, who rejected the peace of the Lord.

(Verse 11, 12, 13, 14.) My friends and neighbors have approached me and stood against me. And my neighbors stood from afar. And those who sought my soul were causing violence. And those who intended harm to me spoke emptiness and deceit all day long. But I, like a deaf man, did not hear, and like a mute man who does not open his mouth. And I became like a man who does not hear and who does not have reproaches in his mouth. I see those who cleverly argue these things. To me, especially in this verse of the Lord, the following opinion seems to be held: because in the temptations of the enemy, even his own household becomes an enemy to man. Therefore, holy David confesses this purely, sincerely, and sorrowfully. For true pain is the confession of the inner heart; when all things are enumerated by which the secret depths of the mind are stung with the most bitter affection, and are exacerbated by domestic bitterness. Therefore, the Prophet laments that he is attacked by friends and neighbors, who certainly should not attack him, but rather help him. This certainly aligns with the complaint of the holy Job (Job. XVI, 2 et seq.); because he himself argued with those three consoling kings of evil, who brought him greater struggles, when they had come to console him out of friendship: which we certainly must be cautious about. For consolation should be gentle, not harsh, which would alleviate pain, temper fervor, rather than stir up agitation. Certainly let medicine itself teach us the remedies which it is accustomed to apply to severe wounds, in order to alleviate the pain. And therefore, wounds are first warmed, then they are incised, so that the hardness itself does not cause offense, and the incision does not aggravate the wound. Therefore, it is fitting for us to take great care, so that when we come to console, we do not speak easily or cursorily. Job was silent for seven days, his friends were silent, and they would not have spoken if Job had not burst out in pain. For it must be considered where to begin, so that your consolation does not offend in the very speech. Even silence itself is medicine, and being quick in speech wounds more. Why are you surprised if he wounds another, when he often wounds himself; because from excessive talking sin cannot escape? For if a doctor waits for the time of healing, so that the aids of medicine may be deferred until the diseases have settled; lest the illness, still bitter and immature, as they say, may resist the remedies of treatment, and may not be able to feel the benefit; how much more, then, it is fitting for us to inquire that medical speech may proceed from us in a timely manner, which seems not to ignite grief, but to soothe? The force of sorrow presses upon the heart of a distraught woman who has lost her husband or children through premature death. Why are you hurrying when she cannot hear you unless her grief subsides? We have often seen arguments arise from attempts at consolation. You came to grieve, not to argue. The order of conversation itself must be sought; so that you do not commit a sin before God while longing to console a person; so that when someone says to you, 'Listen to this, and to many other things that are of no benefit,' you may answer, 'Listen to those who console the afflicted'; so that you do not turn the sorrow of another into a contest of empty disputation; so that you do not approach when you ought to stay away; so that you do approach and your words are not harsher. Finally, let the holy Job teach you what is said about such things: 'Sudden and severe afflictions came upon me; robbers came at me from all sides. My brothers have left me, and they know me less than strangers do. My friends have become heartless.' (Job 19:12 et seq.) Here, therefore, is the natural sense of even the holy prophet David; to lament being attacked by friends and abandoned by those close to him. But even the mystical does not reject the emotions of devotion, as he said for the angels, who pretend to fear the Lord; that they may deliver them from the temptations which they could not bear. So how far are they who are attributed to assistance? But they do not separate themselves, but he who is pressed by

temptations thinks that they are far away, whom he desires to be closer to himself; and he thinks that they are pretending when they await the time of their emperor's command, who instructed his athlete to compete longer in order to conquer more gloriously. And it seems that this is more fitting for those who follow; because when the angels of protection relax their vigilance, the enemies lie in wait, seeking to find something harmful in his soul. Therefore, greater power is granted to them to tempt him with more severe temptation, when the guilt of the soul is found to be more serious. Hence, you have that which is said in the book of the Kings of King Ahab to Elijah: 'You have found me,' he said, when the Prophet strongly reprovved him and declared death upon him. And Elijah responded: I have found; because you have done evil in the sight of the Lord (3 Kings 21:20). Therefore, you see that it is not to be taken lightly or without harm for kings or priests to commit injustice against the prophets of God; if there are no more serious sins in which they should be accused: but where there are more serious sins, there it does not seem that priests should be spared; so that they may be corrected with just rebukes.

Nevertheless, David says in this place that they seem to have found nothing; and therefore his enemies have spoken vanity, because they have not found anything to speak the truth about. Or certainly, even though I have sinned, I was purging my sins with the pain of repentance. In this matter, they spoke deceitfully with me: to confuse me with reproach and to turn me away from conversion. And see that he may have felt this more, they sought his evils: but when they wanted to accuse, they were prevented; because he had already revealed his own wounds, being his own accuser; and therefore the force of their accusation was nullified: but their words were in vain, which could no longer harm the one who had already confessed his guilt.

Therefore, excluded from the envy of accusation, they employed deceit; so that they would rise up, he says, and insult me, in order to provoke me to some disturbance: but seeing their deceit, I feigned not to hear, like a deaf person. Consider the power of speech. He did not say that I pretended not to hear what they were saying: but he said I did not hear; and he excluded the voice of the speaker from the intention of his mind: nor did he open his mouth, like a mute. Blessed is he who can have such virtue, that when provoked, he does not become angry, and when disturbed, he does not seek revenge. The enemies do this in order to provoke anger: they curse so that we may curse; they accuse so that we may accuse in return; they insult so that they may incite us to reciprocal abuse. Hence Peter, in his letter, put it beautifully concerning the Lord Jesus: 'When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten' (1 Peter 2:23). Therefore, desiring to shape the principles of his own life in the likeness and image of the Lord, the righteous man, accused, remains silent; he forgives when he is harmed; he conceals when provoked; and he does not open his mouth. He imitates Him who, like a lamb led to the slaughter, does not open his mouth; and even though he could have something to say in response, he chooses to remain silent rather than speak. For when the Lord Jesus was truly accused, he remained silent; and when he was struck, he did not strike back. Finally, when he was struck, he replied: If I have spoken evil, testify of the evil; but if I have spoken well, why do you strike me? See how, as if truly weak and as if unable to defend himself, he spoke with a kind of childish affection: so, therefore, if you have something with which to refute the accuser, it would be better for you to remain silent; lest you reveal your agitation through the cycle of refutation. For it is better to conceal an injury than, when you expose it, seek revenge. Blessed is the dumb man, who does not know how to speak ill, from whose mouth a crime does not come out. This is truly a blessed

dumb man, who, when silent, speaks within himself. The Lord gives me the tongue of instruction, so that I may know when it is necessary for me to speak. These are the things that Zacharias spoke within himself, when he had become mute: and truly because speaking had not benefited him, in order not to speak, he became mute; and in order to speak, he was heard by Christ. Finally, he wrote that Christ heard her; and she received a voice, which Christ granted; and she received grace, which she did not have before; so that she could prophesy about him, in whose commands she did not believe before. Why am I talking about the Lord of all powers, when the woman Susanna, not troubled by the weakness of her gender, when she realized that she had been subjected to the danger of death, let out a cry? She was accused, and she remained silent: she was led to death, and she covered herself in silence, so as not to expose her modesty. However, she spoke within herself to God, who heard her more when she was silent: if she had wanted to speak, perhaps she would not have been heard. And therefore you who intended to make satisfaction for your sins to the Lord your God, purify yourself inwardly with a sincere heart and behold Him who can wash away sins. He assists you who thinks you should be accused. Finally, when David was cursed and his commander Abishai wanted to avenge the king's injury, David said to him: Let him curse, for the Lord has told him to see my humility and repay me with good for this curse (2 Samuel 16:12). Do you see, therefore, that by assisting those who revile you, you may obtain that the Lord hear you, and forgive your sin? For since you should be your own accuser, and heap up offenses, and offer yourself to punishment, how can you deny what is objected against you? Repentance seeks patience, and patience mitigates great offenses. How can you be angry with others, when you yourself are guilty in your conscience? How can you be disturbed, when you should be pitiable? He who is accused, and (what is more) by himself, ought to heal his wounds, not wound another. No one heals themselves by injuring another. Doctor, heal yourself. If a doctor, how much more should they first heal themselves! You confess your sin and declare yourself a doctor for others: although what you twist is true, it is not the right time; for to the sinner God said: Why do you recount my injustices (Ps. XLIX, 16)? You usurp for yourself to argue about the Law, when you yourself have acted against the Law (Exod. XXIII, 1). Why do you waste time with tears? Why do you listen to or speak empty words when it is written: Do not receive empty hearing; when you read in the Gospel (Matthew 12:36) that judgment must be undergone for every idle word? Even if someone else speaks, be silent; even if someone else is insulted, close your ear.

(Verse 15, 16.) David overcame his adversaries by remaining silent: and because he became like a mute, he received his voice; for when he turned to the Lord, he spoke, saying: Because I have hoped in you, Lord: you will hear me, Lord, my God. Because I have said, lest my enemies rejoice over me. Consider each detail: David was silent, the enemies spoke, they provoked him to speak. They said: Let us hear your voice. Within himself, he spoke silently: What need is there for them to hear these things, which cannot benefit them? In you, O Lord, I have hoped; to you alone I speak: you listen, who can hear. I have always asked of you, lest at any time my enemies might rejoice over me; for though I have sinned, you forgive the sin: though I have fallen, you raise me up, so that those who delight in the sins of others may not have a reason to rejoice. For we have gained more by our transgressions, since your grace makes us happier than our own innocence. We have this sentiment also in the book of the prophet Micah: Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; for though I have fallen, I will rise again (Micah 7:8). The ruin of weakness is not severe, if there is also not a desire to not rise from it. Have the will to rise, there is someone present who will make

you rise. So David said in his heart, seeking to be heard by the Lord, and that his enemies would not exult over him: also asking that he would remain steadfast in his purpose of conversion, so that his adversaries, full of pride and boasting, would not speak against him; as those who desire to insult do. Although he may be moved like a man, he declares himself prepared for punishment, so that he may even atone for his error. Even though the lashes of the Lord cease, he still remembers being afflicted by his own pain; so that he may not find fault that he condemns, which a good confession has already anticipated. This is therefore what he says: And while my feet are being shaken, they have spoken greatly of me; because they are so ready for insults and ridicule, that in the shaking of my feet they had already prepared grandiloquence; or certainly like this: While my feet are being shaken, thinking that I would fall, they have already spoken proudly and grandiloquently. But nevertheless, because he himself in the later psalms said about his own feet being almost moved (Psalm 72:2), lest any doubt arise from this, consider that here we are taught the emotion of repentance, and there the notion of his error is excluded, that riches and greater success should not move us to wickedness. However, this kind of expression is found in the divine scriptures. For example, elsewhere it says: When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream (Psalm 126:1). Although a saint wants to prove himself not in the display of words, but in the power of the spirit. The meaning should always be considered, which even frequent translation from Hebrew to Greek, from Greek to Latin, tends to weaken.

(Verse 17.) Therefore, for all these things, a beautiful remedy is prepared in the form of a whip, and it offers itself to the Lord, so that it may bear the scourges that please God. I indeed choose the holy kind of whip that David endured with composure; but he chose it because the necessity of choosing one out of three conditions was commanded. However, where it is not commanded, the servant of God is prepared for everything, whether he undergoes bodily illness or flees from the face of the enemy, or experiences the death of his sons, whom he does not fear to send ahead; because he can receive it without being dismayed. For he also knows that if he were to be punished with temporal punishment here, it could alleviate the eternal punishment of torment in the future. Therefore, he begs that his petition be accepted, and that he himself be punished in order to be accepted; for the Lord disciplines every son whom he accepts.

(Verse 18.) If you see your servant confessing his own sins and offering himself voluntarily to punishment, will you be moved, forgive him, and doubt the mercy of the Lord? The judge himself, who is not allowed to temper the sword in many cases because he serves the laws, can still grant a profit from punishments. And yet you hesitate about what you should ask from the Lord of the laws and the Author of mercy, to whom the law is a desire and the right to give. If, however, you ask for your sins to be forgiven, do not consider your honors or be ashamed of your friends, so that you do not seem to have deviated from your dignity. Friend of God, prophet of God, king chosen by God himself, and anointed to the kingdom, he willingly offered himself to the whips and was not ashamed: and are you ashamed? This modesty will not help you much when you come to the judgment of God; but you will repent of this shame when you find yourself not only in the presence of men, but also of Angels and all celestial Powers, and you begin to not deny your own sins. How will you excuse yourself when you have committed such great offenses? Do you pretend the weakness of your condition because no one is without sin? It will be answered to you: Therefore you should have repented, I had given a remedy, why did you reject it? Do you cover your shame because you are ashamed of your honors? He will say: If you are ashamed of me before your

friends, then I will be ashamed of you before my Father, who is in heaven. Learn that it is true what is written, that shame leads to sin (Sirach 4:25). David placed his sorrow before him, so that he would never forget; David declared his own wickedness; David thought about his sin, not his riches; David did not hesitate to confess his sins, lest he be ashamed in my judgment: and you were ashamed? My servant Job is not at rest today, if he has blushed for his three friends the kings; and David himself, if he were ashamed to confess his own sins. Therefore, because he did not blush to reveal his sins to me, neither will I be ashamed to reveal my secrets to him. And because neither of them was ashamed to lay the price of their actions in my power, to commit themselves to my judgment and will; I will not be ashamed to call such servants friends, who have striven to do my will. Therefore, since they were previously in mourning, now in consolation; you, however, were previously in delights, now in sufferings. There is great chaos between you, so that neither their favor can reach you, nor your punishment can reach them. Therefore, do you hear what David says? Listen, while it is allowed for you to correct and improve: if you correct here, you will find rest here. Do not let the sweet things of the world and the pleasant delights of this age please you; for they are accustomed to move the unhappy heart. He did not seek the pleasures of being in power, but rather chose the death of the righteous over the life of the wicked.

(Verses 19, 20.) My enemies, he says, are alive and they have become strong against me; and they have multiplied, those who hate me unjustly. They repay evil for good, they spoke ill of me; because I pursued justice. But how much more illustrious was he, who died daily, so that he might give life to his people: and he offered his body to the wounds of death; as he himself says: In deaths often (2 Corinthians 11:23)! For indeed death is a noble redemption of life, even of a life without color or innocence: but the outcome of death is in the hand of life. And for this reason, the Apostle preferred to die daily, in order to demonstrate the merit of his life. For it is written: Do not praise a man during his lifetime. For those who live, will die; and those who die, will rise again. Therefore, it is closer to salvation for one to die in order to rise again, than for one to live in order to die. But who is it that dies daily (Eccl. XI, 30), if not the one who carries the death of the Lord Jesus in his flesh, so that all his sins may die to Him? But the enemies of David were confirmed and multiplied in this age; but they are not a strong foundation, except for the one who is confirmed in Christ. Finally, those who hate the just one unjustly are confirmed in this age; therefore, it is not a just hatred, but an unjust one; since they unjustly hated. But see the distinction. In the latter passage it says: Those who hate me for no reason (Psalm 68:5); here it says: Those who hate me unjustly. But there, it is spoken from the person of Christ, here from his own person; where he speaks from the person of Christ, he is hated without cause: where he speaks from his own, it is unjustly. For a man may not suffer one particular wound, such as injustice, intemperance, or immodesty, but may be vulnerable to other wounds. But in Christ there could be no cause by which he could receive the wound of any sin, being free from fault, untouched by wrongdoing, and unsullied by vice. However, there are those who believe that both psalms were spoken from the perspective of Christ, who was satisfying the Father for our sins. Here, He was expressing His desire against justice, there against grace. And he adds well, to prove that he pursued unjustly: Since I have pursued justice. How great is the power of a word in the addition of one syllable, that it would deceive by saying pursued justice, not followed. For he who follows is nearer than he who follows, and closer than farther, and the succession of an heir is more than called accession.

(Verse 21.) And yet, although he follows righteousness, he does not consider it to be of his own virtue, but of heavenly grace, if he is not forsaken by Christ; and for this reason he prays more earnestly, saying: Do not forsake me, O Lord my God; do not depart from me; that is, men have forsaken me, my friends have attacked the one who is dear to them: they have not drawn near. They fled from me as though I were dead, and they abhorred me; because I desired to confess my sins to you, and to confess; because I offered myself to be wounded by your scourges; because I chose the scars of wounds over the feasts of kings, and the boasting of rulers: you alone do not forsake me, you cleave to your servant, who raises up the needy from the earth, and lifts up the poor from the dunghill. Relying on your company, I will esteem myself more highly among the surrounding peoples. Indeed, my scars have healed, but I still long for the scars of your wounds, which are covered by healed injuries, so that no wound may appear later. Good are the scars of triumphant wounds, with which the victors of this earthly combat boast. How much more glorious are the wounds which, for the sake of faith and the glory of your name, appear to be exempt! This is the scar that opens heaven, acquires a kingdom, and finds immortality. Therefore, brothers, this is the blessed wound, because blessed are those who have washed their robes in their own blood. Thus the robe began to be of glory, the flesh of death (Romans 7:24): in which even Paul himself, chosen by God, was in danger unless he had asked to be delivered from this mortal body, as we read. And therefore, as we are in this body of death, let us pray that the good and beloved physician of God does not leave us, whom even the patriarch David prayed not to be separated from. Let us entrust ourselves to Him, prepared to be treated with whatever remedy He sees fit. No one tells their own body's physician how they should be treated. The physician knows what medicine is appropriate for each wound, by which festering sores should be amputated with a knife, lest the ruin spread to the entire body. If a doctor were to say to the sick person the type of medicine by which he ought to be cured, and if the sick person despise it, the doctor leaves and abandons the sick person. See him who desires to be cured, by acquiescing to every type of doctor; pay attention to the order. He first reveals his wounds to the doctor, and says: Treat me, but I beg you not in your anger, because my weaknesses cannot endure harsh medicine. The medicine of Christ is correction; for the Lord corrects whom He wishes to convert. Therefore Paul also says to the physician: Rebuke, exhort, rebuke (2 Timothy 4:2). So, one who asks to be rebuked does not refuse to be healed; rather, he wants to be relieved of the punishment so that he may not be rebuked in anger and be taken by the force of anger. And watch the process. First, seek to be accused; afterwards, to be corrected, which is greater. Then not only confess your sins, but also list them and accuse yourself; for you do not want your faults to be hidden. For just as fevers, when they are deep-rooted, cannot be alleviated; when they break out, they bring the hope of ending: so the disease of sins, while it is concealed, grows more intense; if it is revealed through confession, it evaporates. Therefore, a righteous accuser is at the beginning of discourse, before the contagion of the ulcer spreads internally; for the memory of sins burdens the conscience unless a remedy is sought. And if the doctor delays, the sick person should offer themselves so that they may be cut as quickly as possible; just as David offered himself in the lashes of the Lord saying: Render to me double the sins, as long as these are avenged; do not abandon me, do not turn your face away from me; do not disdain and recoil from the stench of my wounds. And Job, your servant, was struck with ulcers from his feet to his head, and he found a remedy for his health; although that wound was of virtue, this one of error. They celebrated wounds that doctors could not heal. You spoke, Lord, the mysteries of your sacraments, you revealed the venom of the

serpent; and the wounds of your servant were healed by the medicine of your word alone, because you did not abandon him; and do not forsake me, Lord, do not depart from me. People have forsaken me; because my wounds disgust them, which I thought should be revealed to your mercy. They say: Leave us, for you are a sinner; depart, so that you do not defile us. But you, Lord, care and do not defile; you help and do not contaminate; for you are the God of my salvation, Lord, and your hand does not destroy, but is accustomed to heal.

We have completed the psalm, along with its interpretation, a verse which some Greek manuscripts have, but not all the Latin ones. For before the next response, the verse is, 'And they cast me forth as a dead thing abhorred'; that is, those who repaid me evil for good. But you, O Lord, do not forsake me, nor depart from me; for this follows; that is: You do not forsake the one accustomed to caring for the dead and decaying. Finally, we have this in the Gospel. For when he had come to the tomb of Lazarus, and said, 'Take away the stone,' Martha said, 'Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days.' Jesus saith to her, 'Said I not to thee, that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?' Then He cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth.' And he that had been dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes. Let us therefore also believe, that our wounds may obtain the healing medicine of salvation, and future glory.

Therefore, in prayers and supplications, when repentance is to be sought with sorrow and tears, so that we may deserve to see the glory of God. Let it not move you that grief, pain, and physical affliction are very severe passions; although they seem very severe, nevertheless such passions are unworthy of the coming glory, as the apostle Paul testifies to you (Rom. VIII, 18). Therefore, let us not be reluctant to bear lighter burdens here, so that there we may be able to obtain full praise and glory, bringing eternal rewards for temporal things through the Lord Jesus: to whom be praise, honor, glory, perpetuity from age to age, now and forever, and for all ages, Amen. On Psalm 39, Commentary On Psalm 39, Commentary. Title: For the end, a song for Idithun, of David himself.

(Preface.) In the previous psalm, the form of penitence is expressed: in this following psalm, the form of patience is signified. David wrote this psalm, and he gave it to Idithum, a man skilled in Levitical and priestly teachings, to be sung, who, before the ark of the Lord, the most skillful of all, sang the series of psalms. Therefore, because it was not Idithum who wrote this psalm, but the prophet David, and he gave it to Idithum, a skilled man in singing, to be sung, it is inscribed with this title. Moreover, there were also others in secular writings who were writing, others who were performing on stage, either songs, or comedies, or tragedies. And those indeed were demanding the Olympic crown: wherefore their writings bear witness, in the end, to the hymn **■πιν■κλον**; but David, who was not seeking these fading crowns, but that incorruptible and undefiled inheritance of heavenly rewards, desired with devout affection not a hymn of victory **■πιν■κλον**; but he wrote for the One who imparts victory to those who believe in Him, who is the end of all that we ask for with a pious mind. Whether you seek wisdom, or strive for virtue, or pursue truth, or follow the path of justice, or hope for resurrection, in all things you must follow Christ, who is the power of God and wisdom, the truth, the way, justice, and resurrection. To whom, then, do you strive, if not to the perfection of all things and the highest virtue? And therefore, it says to you: Come, follow me (Matthew 19:21); that is, so that you may deserve to attain the perfection of virtues. Therefore, whoever follows Christ must imitate Him according to their ability, so that they may contemplate His teachings and the divine examples of His actions. And therefore David meditated within himself, because he believed that Christ spoke in him, so that when others troubled him and tried

to provoke him to argument, he would endure with patience, avoiding the desire to quarrel, from which empty noise and quarrels often arise. And so, many, envying the virtues of holy David, who believed he should be led away from his purpose of gentleness and humility, frequently attacked him; and even the spiritual wickedness itself, especially those in heavenly places, against whom it is a serious struggle for the just, tried to stir up in him the ministers of their wickedness, so that amid the frequent struggles and tumult of debates, no word of offense would escape him. The holy Prophet chose to remain silent. O strong shield of careful defense, silence! O most faithful foundation of stability, in which if anyone is able to stand, they cannot fear the slippery words! For many, even with a stable heart, have fallen often due to the error of fluctuating speech. Therefore, seeing himself tempted by such snares and the empty noise of those who argue, the Prophet kept silent within himself, imposing upon himself the law of silence; and when he remained silent, his adversaries mocked him and provoked him to speak something; such are the usual disputes and speeches of insolent individuals. Answer us, if you presume to be equal: you see that you are defeated and have nothing to report; when he saw himself almost compelled to respond to the voice of insults, he called himself back, in order to speak in his heart.

(Verse 1) I said, I will guard my ways; that I may not sin with my tongue. I set a guard to my mouth, while the wicked man stood against me; that is, I proposed, confirmed, commanded myself, I spoke to my heart: I will guard my ways. If I had spoken such things to another, my speech should stand; how much more ought that which I myself established to be steadfast! If anyone deceives another, it is disgraceful; if anyone deceives a neighbor, it is serious; how much more serious, therefore, if anyone thinks that he should defraud himself of what he has promised to himself, so that he himself is considered unfaithful by his own judgment and contemptible. To whom therefore can one appear suitable, who is considered cheap by themselves? Let us therefore maintain the steadfastness of our souls; lest our lips, in their haste to speak, burst forth into offense. And Job conquered his affliction with silence, and surpassed his endurance with quietness. The flesh is not easily trusted: we would have been victorious if Eve had remained silent. Therefore, that first sin originated from the voice, and that wicked and cunning serpent tempted us beforehand by means of the voice. And I wish either Adam had been deaf or Eve had been dumb: the former, so that he wouldn't hear the voice of his wife; the latter, so that she wouldn't speak to her husband and transfer the serpent's venom into the man through the ministry of her slippery voice. Cain, too, although he violated the human nature by committing parricide and erased the impious laws of piety; yet he added sacrilege to his wickedness through his voice, denying the death of his slain brother to God. What shall I say about each one individually? The chosen people themselves, whom silent Moses opened the sea for by the command of the Lord, murmured ungratefully against the heavenly blessings, thereby incurring divine offense. Then he rejected Moses, the leader himself, and the unusual journey, and asked his brother Aaron to make gods for himself to worship.

Therefore, considering these dangers of speech, I said: 'I will guard my ways.' So what are these ways of man that must be greatly guarded against, lest they stumble upon anything more serious? Such a great Prophet prompts us to consider more carefully. His son Solomon, the insightful interpreter of his father's mind, also urges us to examine more discerningly, for he wrote: 'Three things are beyond my understanding, and a fourth I do not know.' The footprint of a flying eagle, and the track of a serpent on a rock, and the paths of a ship on the open sea, and the ways of a

man in his youth. Such is the way of an adulterous woman, who, after acting, says that she has done nothing wrong. (Prov. XXX, 18 et seq). Therefore, she said that three things were impossible for her to understand, and the fourth, that he, possessing the seal of wisdom among men, did not recognize, namely the path of a man in his youth. Therefore, how can the recognition of these things, which can be either inexplicable or difficult, be easily their custody? Hence, David himself rightfully offered not a defense of the sins of his youth, but a plea for forgetfulness. 'Do not remember,' he said, 'the sins of my youth and my ignorance' (Psalm 24:7). Therefore, it is not without reason that Solomon said he did not know what his father, in whom the greater grace of God was, testified that he did not know. And perhaps the sins of youth are attributed to the heat of the flesh, but ignorance to a slip of words, which are often poured out not according to our intention, but with a certain impetuosity and rapidity of speech; knowing this to be dangerous, the Prophet says: I believed and therefore I spoke (Psalm 115:1). Therefore, the voice is safe above the foundation of virtue; without foundation, it is slippery. Therefore, as a chosen interpreter of the divine Scriptures, he rebuked with a kind of trumpet sound: With the heart one believes unto justice; but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:10). Faith of the believers is the principal, confession is the execution.

Therefore, let us hear how the holy prophet David has set forth or for what reason he keeps his ways: 'That I sin not with my tongue,' he says. If the Prophet takes care of this, do you not take care? If he fears this, in what grace of God was he speaking, do you not fear, who do not shun words of error and take pleasure in theatrical conversations? Do you not fear, to whom it is written in the Gospel (Matthew 12:36) that you will give account for every idle word? If there is danger in idle talk, how much more in criminal talk! Not everything that is idle is criminal, but everything that is unfruitful is dangerous and to be rooted out; for every tree that does not bear fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. When the mind is disturbed, it is agitated by opposing stimuli, by those that hinder, mock, accuse; words of disturbance escape; therefore, silence is both safe and appropriate, for it preserves caution with gravity. For what are our lips but our own chains? Indeed, each person is bound by the chains of their own lips. Therefore, the wise person remains silent in time, and considers within themselves when they should speak. This is exemplified by Solomon himself: The lips of the wise are bound by understanding (Prov. 15:7). So when you see impudent mockers, a wise person keeping silent, say: This person has bound their lips with understanding; this is wisely remaining silent, lest they be bound by the chains of their own lips. He has set a guard at the entrance of his mouth, he has adorned his ears with thorns, he has put a bolt on the gates of his mouth, he keeps the treasure of his heart and the silver of his speech, so that when necessary, he may bring it forth examined and purified; lest anyone first become a thief in his heart or an agitator break in, and drag captive those to whom he may sell his wicked deeds.

Judas was contemplating selling Christ, but he was being recalled by such great grace of the Lord and certain consolations of paternal pity, by which his fury was softened: and he would not have burst forth into his wicked act, unless an adversary had sunk into his heart, because he thought he was deceiving Christ. Therefore, do not doubt that when some are troublesome to you and you wish to preserve justice, they are ministers of that most wicked sinner, who is the author of all crimes. David was seeing with prophetic eyes, he recognized his figure; therefore he remained silent, so as not to do the will of the one who desires to disturb his emotion. He suppressed his voice, closed his gates in silence, exhibited patience towards him, and kept watch over his silence;

so that the enemy does not creep in, so that no wandering and careless speech comes out from the confines of his mouth. Therefore, the one who restrains himself is stronger than one who conquers cities. Just himself is his own cloister, himself the ever-watchful guardian. When he therefore pretended to himself, he spoke in his heart: I have set a guard to my mouth, when the sinner stood against me. The enemy is always present, because he always lies in wait. Even if you do not see him, he is present: even if you do not feel him, he attacks. If you do not see, believe the one who sees: The sinner stands against me, he says. Whoever sees his own sin, also sees the sinner mocking himself in the things he has done. But whoever foresees the sinner, can avoid sin. David saw that the sinner was opposing him; when Shimei cursed and threw stones at his king, and cried out: 'Get out, you man of blood!' (2 Samuel 16:7). For David would not have been so unyielding, that he would not have been moved by the reverence for such a great king, nor feared his armed army, since one of his soldiers could have killed the reviler; but the devil had made him insane, who drove him towards death. Therefore, David fought more against the instigator than he pursued the servant. For what is great, to be vindicated, of a weak man, whom another was urging on to madness, in whose death the sinner would have had the effect of his will? The devil is overcome not by the sword, but by the word of God: therefore let the tongue of man be silent, let the Word of God speak. Finally, even Christ was silent when he stood before the judgment of Pilate, in order to give us an example of silence; for the tongue of the body is prone to error, inclined to fall. But there are those who speak when they are silent, like Moses who stood amazed and silent, to whom God said when he was silent: Why do you cry out to me? Like Susanna, who remained silent in her troubles, and the Lord heard her. So even if the word of God is in you, and you remain silent in the word of God, and silently cry out, so that you may be heard by Christ.

Therefore, meditate on the things of Christ, which the prophet David meditated upon, in which Christ spoke before in this psalm that he himself was meditating upon. For it is written: 'But as for me, when they were troubling me in some way, I clothed myself in sackcloth; and I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer shall be turned to my bosom.' (Psalm 34:13) What does 'in some way' mean? It means that at that time either an inappropriate conversation slips out or a feeling is stirred up; when either we are in some pain and sadness, or our soul becomes sick with indignation, or it is hindered by certain worries, or it is preoccupied with disputes. Who, therefore, are troublesome? First, understand about the author of sin himself and his angels; then, about those who prefer to be followers of him rather than Christ. The wife is driven, as in the case of holy Job (Job II, 10 and elsewhere): friend, as is manifested in that very book; son, like Absalom; servant, freedman, household member; because even the enemies of a man are his own household members, in order to torment him individually. Therefore, what remedy is there against such afflictions of the soul, if not patience, if not silence? And, what is more serious, he provokes you more, who has made use of your favors: and among those very individuals, he irritates you more, who owes you more; by which you are moved more by the bitterness of an ungrateful person, or the indignity of some worthless individual.

Therefore, the just man, even if his friend is insolent to him, grieves for his friend; because his friend falls for this reason, because he is driven by a tempter. If he grieves for his friend, much more for his wife, for his son: if he also experiences them insolent to himself; and if his brother vexes him, like Esau against holy Jacob, he grieves and seeks to reconcile with his brother, or to flee from his presence, as Rebecca advised, so that he would not find any opportunity for harm in

his brother's anger; and if his neighbor or household member grieves, he grieves; and if a minister or freeman or slave, he bears it patiently, and in all these things he is silent: so as not to respond to the one by whom he sees himself being driven. So let someone be reproached from the household? He grieves and keeps silent; let a freedman be reproached? He keeps silent; let a slave be reproached? He keeps silent. Thus, the one who extends the snare of his soul through the bait of his voice is defeated. Therefore, keep silent when someone unworthy is reproached; keep silent when your servant, especially your own, conducts himself shamefully; and say in your heart: I am silent. But don't you remain silent, O Lord (Psalm 34:22); and add: Do not depart from me, as the prophet David said; that is, do not abandon me in the face of my attackers alone. For he is not alone, to whom God is present. Take testimony. Behold, he says, the hour is coming, that each one of you may be dispersed in his own, and you may leave me alone; but I am not alone, since the Father is with me (John XVI, 32).

Therefore the just man remains silent against those who insult him, the just man prays. Listen to the just man praying: They were speaking ill of me in order to make me hated: but I was praying (Psalm 108:4). The just man blesses those who curse him; as the apostles did, as Paul asserts, saying: We are cursed, and we bless (1 Corinthians 4:13). The just man loves his enemies. See how he is taught to gradually ascend through each step to the increase of virtues, as the Lord says: Love your enemies (Matthew 5:44). Justus prays for those who slander him; for the Lord has commanded us, adding: Do good to those who hate you, pray for those who slander and persecute you (cf. Matthew 5:44). He is truly just in all things, he who observes and keeps these commandments. First, because he remains silent and does not respond to his enemies; then because he prays, which means he is not idle in his feelings. And he who prays, prays for good things, not for things that can harm his enemy. Therefore, it is better to pray than to remain silent. The righteous blesses those who curse him. This is even greater than praying for oneself; for he blesses himself, whom he does not fear, and even him whom he used to fear. The righteous loves his enemy. Loving is greater than blessing; because the love of the mind is greater than the grace of speech. The righteous does good to the one whose desires he hates. The righteous prays for those who slander. Good is love, and good is piety: both are of God, and both are God; because love is God, as John said in his epistle (1 John 4:16). Therefore, both have been joined together: Love your enemies... and pray for those who slander and persecute you. The fullness of the Law is charity: but the fullness of the Gospel also commands us to pray for those who slander and persecute us, so that we may ask for forgiveness for their sins; just as by divine judgment, the holy chosen Job, through his prayer, rightly wiped away the offense of those slandering kings (Job 42:8).

Therefore, even if you are weak, pray; even if you are strong, pray. Pray for yourself when you are weak, pray for your enemy when you are strong. Prayer is a good shield for weakness. You pray, and the Lord protects. Prayer is also a good shield for triumph, so that you may defend yourself against your enemy whom you are able to strike, lest they be slain by anyone, and (what is greater) by Christ, who said: 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay' (Rom. XII, 19). This is the prayer that turns into the lap of the petitioner, bearing fruit from those things which he desires to obtain; so that the gifts may flow back into his soul and mind, which he requested from the Lord; just as in the following passage the same prophet taught you, saying: 'So will I bless you in my life, and in your name I will lift up my hands.' As my soul is filled with fatness and abundance (Psalm 62:5-6).

He himself is the bosom of the soul, the secret of its prayer, the innermost receptacles of its recurring desires. Hence, the just are said to rest in Abraham's bosom, that is, in his grace, in his rest, in his tranquility, who have clothed themselves with a faith conformable to him and have performed the same will in good works (Luke 16:22). But perhaps someone may wonder, when the Lord said through the mouth of David, that he humbled his soul in fasting (Ps. 34:13); how then does David say later: If I did not feel humbly, but I exalted my soul (Ps. 130:2). But let him consider that one thing pertains to the wisdom of the mind, another to the humility of the heart: the wisdom of the mind is sublime; but the wisdom of the flesh should not be puffed up. Therefore, David humbled himself in fasting, in order to teach and correct the swelling of our flesh. The Prophet exalted his soul through the sublime grace of God; for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted (Luke 14:11). It is not only the proud who are pushed down, and the humble who are raised up with worthy rewards, as it should be understood first: but because the word of God is sharp on all sides, like a sword that is sharp on both sides, I believe it can be understood that whoever exalts himself knows how to humble himself, and whoever knows how to humble himself also knows how to exalt himself. Finally, Paul shows, saying: 'I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound' (Philippians 4:11). Therefore, David too, by not thinking humbly of Christ, exalted his soul, which the Arians humble and cast down; and by exalting his soul, he expressed with devout affection the strength of reason, the grace of faith, and the virtue of humility.

(Verse 3) Therefore, he said: I kept silent and humbled myself and remained silent before the wicked; for he knew when he should humble himself and when he should remain silent. He kept silent so that he would not contend with those who rebuked him: he humbled himself to remove the arrogance of the proud, or to teach them by his own example how they should humble themselves; he remained silent before the righteous, for a good conscience does not need the defense of words, which relies on its own testimony, being its own judge. And so the just one says: Who will contradict me, or who will resist me? (Isaiah 50:8) And Paul says: For it is a very small thing to me that I should be judged by you, or by a human court. (1 Corinthians 4:3) The just one is content with his own judgment against slanderers and sinners, but he reserves the judgment of his own merits to Christ. Therefore, he added: The one who judges me is the Lord. (Ibid., 4) He has chosen a most perfect judge, who is not deceived by any fraud, so that nothing hidden may escape him, and no slip of weak condition may offend him; one who knows how to forgive weakness. Therefore, silence is useful in all things. If you acknowledge a sin, be silent, so as not to exaggerate it by denying it; if you do not acknowledge it, be silent in the confidence of your innocence. Other people's words cannot attach blame which your own conscience does not accept.

Following: And my pain is renewed. Still in a lower degree of virtue, he brings forth these words, that the pain is renewed for himself by the objection of past sins, which seemed to have been wiped away by forgetfulness, or covered by the compensation of good deeds. Finally, in the later part as if stronger, he says: They saw me, and shook their heads (Ps. 108:25); because they threatened, and could not harm. And he added: They curse, and you bless (Ibid. 28). And because he speaks as if stronger, he disregards the injury or shame, for which the Lord's blessing would abound for all. Therefore, in this 38th psalm, as if in a kind of meditation, not yet placed in the perfection of virtue in every way, he says to himself that his pain has been renewed. For the

strongest does not know the feeling of a scar being offended, nor can he fear a wound who is stronger. In the very struggle of fighters, it is often the case that the stronger one waits to be provoked by a blow from the weaker, so that he may be provoked to retaliate more fiercely; thus, strengthened by excessive training and endurance, as if immune to pain, he cannot feel the blow, but instead laughs when struck and initiates the attack when provoked. But if the lower part, by chance, receives a blow on the covered scar of an old wound, it feels the pain renewed. So it is with one who is accused of higher sins, which he has properly grieved and mourned; in order to cover the scar of his own sins, he may apply fitting satisfaction. If one is perfect, he remains silent against those who reproach him, with no pain renewed; for even if he has sinned, he is secure because the gifts of God are without repentance; and therefore, what God has once given, He is not accustomed to undo or renew, as He Himself has said: I am, I am He who blots out iniquities, and I will not remember (Isaiah 43:25). But if one is imperfect and forgetful of heavenly precepts, the pain is repaired for him like a torn scar.

(Verse 4.) My heart burned within me, and in my meditation a fire will be kindled. More serious wounds, as we know, are healed with a caustic medicine or with the application of fire. Therefore, a wise man is his own doctor: yet even though he is a doctor, he heals his own wound. And so, if he is not fully perfected in the state of unharmed health, his heart is inflamed, he has a fever, he becomes ignited by insults. And if he remains silent, he is consumed within himself. If a stone is rubbed against a stone, it produces fire; likewise, a good conscience is ignited by a sense of shame, if the memory of one's own sins is renewed to it. And in the very meditation, the fire blazes. It is not a bad fire that burns, but does not consume. Such is the fire of God that Moses saw in the burning bush; when the bush was burning, but not consumed. Therefore, there is a fire that diminishes sin and consumes guilt with its burning. There is also a fire that is kindled by the meditations on heavenly scriptures; just like the one Jeremiah speaks of: 'And there was a fire burning in my bones (Jeremiah 20:9).' But they were conferring together, and discussing the things that had taken place. And it happened that, while they were talking and debating with one another, Jesus himself approached and began to walk with them. But their eyes were held back, so that they might not recognize him. And he said to them: 'What are these discourses that you hold with one another while you are walking, and are sad?' And one of them, whose name was Cleophas, responding, said to him: 'You alone, as a sojourner in Jerusalem, have not known the things that have happened in these days?' And he said to them: 'What things?' And they said to him: 'About Jesus of Nazareth, who was a man, a prophet, powerful in deed and word before God and all the people. And how our high priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the Redeemer of Israel. And now, aside from all this, today is the third day since these things have happened. Moreover, even some women from our group have disturbed us. They went to the tomb before sunrise, and, not finding his body, they returned, saying that they even saw a vision of Angels, who say that he is alive. And some of our people went to the tomb. And it was just as the women had said. But they did not find him.'

(Verse 5.) I have spoken in my own language: make my end known to me, O Lord, and the number of my days, that I may know what is lacking to me. A good fire, which enabled the Prophet to speak. And see that he himself is not the fire that appeared, when on the day of Pentecost, the disciples were gathered together in one place, a great force of the Holy Spirit fell upon them, and

they spoke in various tongues. For it is written: Because their tongues were seen as dispersed fire (Acts 2:3). So here is the one who said to Jeremiah: Behold, I put my words in your mouth like fire (Jerem. V, 14). And thus David also received the tongue of fire, so that he could speak with the fervor of divine knowledge: Make my end known to me, O Lord. He is not inquiring about his death (for this is not the end for one who will be resurrected), but rather about that end about which the Apostle spoke (I Cor. XV, 24 et seq.): For that end, when the Lord Jesus hands over the kingdom to God the Father, and when all Principalities and Powers are abolished, and when the last death of all humankind is destroyed, so that evil may cease and eternal goods may succeed. And therefore it is said: 'Pain, sadness, and groaning flee' (Isaiah 35:10). This was the purpose in men, as Paul says: 'And who is there to make me glad but the one who is made sad by me' (2 Corinthians 2:2)? By reproving pain, sadness, and groaning, he incited them to repentance, so that they might obtain irrevocable forgiveness and salvation, for which God would not repent. Therefore, he is the true purpose, who will not be the purpose of just one, but of all. So how did he speak of my end? But consider who is speaking. Surely a man, either one of a community of beings, or because he is described as conforming to the pattern of the universe and being trained to the perfection of a completed man. And so he added that he wanted to know the number of days that is, so that he knows what is lacking for himself. Certainly, what is lacking for perfection, not for the life of this body for which the prophet David desired to be completed, saying: Woe is me! because my sojourn is prolonged, and I have dwelt with the inhabitants of Cedar (Psal. CXIX, 5). Indeed, he wanted to know the number of days, but not also of nights. For here there are days and nights: but there, there are only days, there is perpetual and lasting light. And therefore he added: He who is, says he, not he who passes by. For heaven and earth will pass away, but faith remains, and the day of Christ; because yesterday and today he himself is, and for ages. But regard what number he seeks, take. In my Father's house, says he, there are many dwelling places (John 14:2). Therefore the Lord Jesus gives each one a place, that is, a dwelling suitable for the merits of each. For each one in its order. Therefore he went before, so that he might prepare a place in himself for those who believe. And he also said: If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also: and where I go, you know, and the way you know (John 14:3-4). Therefore, it is the way by which the risen Christ ascended. And indeed, he ascended above all the heavens to the seat of God: but men ascend from the first heaven to the second, and from there to the third, and so on through the distinctions to the seventh heaven, and those who deserve it ascend to the very expanse and summit of the heavens. If therefore the number of roads is, and the number of houses; surely the number of days is, through which one reaches the height of the sky.

(Verse 6.) Behold, you have made my days old: Another hath made my days new. If we follow the Septuagint version, we understand the old days; that is, we understand them according to the old man, who is nailed to the cross. Therefore, the old days have passed away, and the new have come. For one day is the day of man, another is the day of Christ, which Abraham saw and rejoiced; concerning which David also says: this is the day which the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it (Psalm 118:24). Therefore, on the Lord's day, the holy one rejoices in the new day, in which God the Lord has shone upon us and has given new light to those who have been reformed into a blameless and whole life. Therefore, the righteous man says confidently about the new light and grace of God (Apoc. XXI, 1, and XXII, 5): 'There will be for me a new heaven, and a new earth, and a new light. For there, neither a lamp nor the light of the sun or

moon will shine, but the Lord will enlighten upon His people.' Therefore, I have desired that, I have longed for that; and therefore, I have not sought the day of man. But if we receive the exercise of the palaestra, from the name we understand it to be full of struggle and labor; because the palaestrae are called the wrestlers in the contest, who wrestle for the crown. Therefore, because our struggle is not only against flesh and blood, but also against spiritual wickedness in heavenly things, our days, that is, of this life, are in labor and sorrow. Hence, in the following, he says: Our years will meditate like a spider: the days of our years in them are seventy years. But if among the powerful, eighty years, and the majority of them labor and pain (Psalm 89, 9 and 10). Therefore, the apostle Paul labored more abundantly than the other apostles, so that by competing legitimately, he could reach the crown he desired. But nevertheless, because the measurements of architects are said to be the footprints by which buildings are measured in order to determine the number or size of the space, as well as the location where the buildings are to be placed; and also because God, speaking through Isaiah, says: 'Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured the heavens with a span, and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Who has weighed the mountains in scales?' (Isa. XL, 12). Let us see if perhaps this meaning must be inferred from this statement, because God has knowledge of the days of all: to whom nothing is immense, who comprehends all things with a certain measure of His own knowledge, and to whom nothing is immeasurable, nothing unexamined and innumerable, who says: 'But even the hairs of your head are all numbered' (Luke XII, 7). Therefore, the Prophet says: Behold, you have known my days; my daily actions do not pass you by; you have placed my sins before your eyes: and therefore my substance is as nothing before you. For what is man, if not because you are mindful of him? Man has become like vanity. Man is in sin: and if he has any goodness and virtue, he is rightly preferred to other earthly animals, and excels in the sight of animals over which he is placed; but in the sight of God, his substance is as nothing. And elsewhere it is said: For no living man will be justified in your presence (Psalm 143:2). Which Symmachus expressed more clearly, saying: And my life is like nothing before you.

However, there are those who believe that the days are called short because Symmachus used the word *σπιθαμῆς*, which means palm. And because God measures the heavens by palm (as it is written in Isaiah XL, 12), they are considered to be called short, since the knowledge of God can be understood through measurement, as we mentioned before. But this celestial knowledge is such that everything has been made according to measure. Therefore, the days of the prophets can be understood not as short, but as great, which God measured with the palm with which he measured the heavens. For he would not call the days of his life short, who later said: Alas, my sojourning is prolonged (Psalm 119:5), unless perhaps because of the sins of men, God made the days of this life shorter, which used to extend to nine hundred and seventy years but now is confined within the cycle of one hundred years. Therefore, this should be understood: Behold, you have known my days subject to sin; for the days of this life, which are subject to sin, are brief: but the days of eternal life are without end. But certainly in this way (for it is our duty to seek the truth by argument, yours to choose what you follow): You said, so that sin would not increase, you shortened the days of human life in which we live on this earth; and yet even though the end of sins is more mature in this brief course of this life, the speed of death makes my substance as nothing before you; because although we have been made in the image and likeness of God, we are burdened by some earthly contagion in this body: which would not burden us if we were more inclined to put off the old man when we put on grace, rather than wanting to put on the old man;

the old man would also bring us less trouble if we were stripped, than if we were clothed with it. For what we strip off, we cast away; what we put on, we assume. And therefore we groan and labor, until this mortal vestment of the old man, and the result of error, is absorbed by the newness of his spiritual life; so that if many honeycombs are placed above poison, the venom of the poison is eradicated with difficulty and too late. Even water, when mingled with the gall of poison, struggles for a long time, if it does not expel it, but absorbs it. Therefore, there is laborious penance, there is sweet grace; because sin is stripped off where there is grace: it is absorbed where there is penance; it is remitted there, it is concealed here. And therefore it is written: Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered (Psalm 32:1).

(Verse 7.) And he paused for a short while, sighing over the misery of human condition; because he had said: However, all is vanity, every living person. And after a pause, with renewed spirit, he says: Although man walks in the image of God; yet he is troubled in vain: he hoards, and does not know for whom he gathers these things. See how he tempered the harshness of his statement: afterwards he completes the reasoning of his voice. He tempered it by saying: Because man walks in the image of God. Blessed is the man who walks in the likeness of God through faith; blessed is he who has faith in you; even more blessed if he does not have greed. Another good of the mind is eternal, another is the vain fire of carnal desire. Faith wages war for God; greed tempts. The latter gathers what is profitable for itself, the former what is beneficial for others. What, therefore, is so vain as to not know for whom it labors as an heir? For who knows if a son or a proper grandson will survive for himself? Often either in a will written on tombstone tablets, the heir precedes the testator with a fatal ambit, or the surviving heir absorbs the inheritance, or the luxurious person squanders it, or the most foolish person does not protect it, or the outlaw loses it. If you see someone diligently amassing wealth, say to him: Vanity disturbs him: he hoards and does not know for whom he collects. For he cannot take with him what he possesses; and when he dies, he will leave his wealth to others. The enemy frequently succeeds and is ungrateful, and the successor insults the one who has departed. The one whom he loved, this one pursues; the one whom he nurtured, this one sells.

However, the Greek does not have: In the image of God; but only: In the image. In which image then does man walk? He surely walks in the image in whose likeness he was made; that is, in the image of God. But the image of God is Christ; who is the splendor of glory, and the image of his substance. Therefore, Christ, the image of God, came to earth; so that we would no longer walk in the shadow, but in the image. For in Christ, the image, walks he who follows the Gospel. Therefore, he says to his disciple: 'Go behind me (Mark 8:33), so that you may follow me.' Therefore, the people of the Jews went astray because they walked in the shadow. Therefore, the Christian people do not go astray because they walk in the image, having the sun of righteousness shining upon them. A good image, not painted with deceitful wax, but expressed in the fullness of divinity. In this image, both the Father and the Son are seen together, because through both of them the unity of operation shines forth. Although Christ has already risen, his image is still shown to us in the Gospel (John XI, 44). I read that he raised Lazarus; and I believe it is the work of the Father and the Son. The Son called, the Father heard, and Lazarus walked. I read that even the demons confessed to him; they confessed to the Father as well, for they prayed to the Son of God; they confessed to him, too, for they were cast out by him. For it is written: But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you (Matthew XII, 27).

First, therefore, the shadow preceded, then the image, and finally the truth. The shadow is in the Law, the image in the Gospel, and the truth in the celestial. The shadow of the Gospel and the congregation of the Church is in the Law, the image of the future truth in the Gospel, and the truth in the judgment of God. Therefore, what is now celebrated in the Church was their shadow in the words of the prophets: shadow in the flood, shadow in the Red Sea; when our fathers were baptized in the cloud and in the sea: shadow in the rock that flowed with water, and the people followed. Was not that in the shadow the sacrament of this sacred mystery? Was not in the shadow the water from the rock, like blood from Christ, which followed the fleeing people, that they might drink and not thirst: that they might be redeemed and not perish? But now the shadow of night and the darkness of the Jews has departed, the day approaches for the Church. We now see the good things in an image, and we hold the goods of an image. We have seen the High Priest coming to us, we have seen and heard him offering his blood for us: we follow, as we are able, as priests; that we may offer sacrifice for the people: although weak by merit, yet honorable by sacrifice; for although Christ is not now seen offering, yet he is offered on earth when the body of Christ is offered: in fact, he himself is made manifest in us, whose word sanctifies the sacrifice which is offered. And indeed, He Himself intercedes for us with the Father; but now we do not see Him; then we shall see, when the image has passed away, the truth has come. Then, not through a mirror, but face to face, those things which are perfect will be seen.

Ascend therefore, O man, into heaven, and you will see those things whose shadow or image were here. You will see them not in part, not in riddles, but in their fullness; not in veils, but in light. You will see the true light, the eternal and everlasting High Priest; of whom you saw here images, Peter, Paul, John, James, Matthew, Thomas. You will see the perfect man, no longer in image, but in truth; for as he is heavenly, so too will he be heavenly. Certainly they themselves now have glory and beauty, now in the grace of resurrection; not in the body of death, and the deformity of corruption.

Beware of carrying the image of the earthly, where the light of the celestial is. Here, if someone has the image of a tyrant who has already been defeated, he is rightly condemned. How do you bring the image of an enemy and adversary into the city of the true emperor, unless to condemn yourself? And if you want to bring the image of the earthly, the prince of this world will contradict you and say: This image is mine, and what you offer belongs to me. What will you do when he catches you and tells you: Greed is mine, ambition is mine, wealth is mine, of which I recognize the image in you? For he is indeed an adversary and defender. And if you were like Jacob, you would say that Laban transforms himself into an angel of light: Recognize if you find anything of yours in me (Gen. XXXI, 32). Then he will search, and not finding anything, he will be confounded and depart; because you have hidden and obliterated all the images of vices. Blessed is he who can say: The prince of this world will come, and he will find nothing in me (John XIV, 30). For he seeks what is his own, not what belongs to Christ. Therefore, if you follow the things that are of Christ, do not be eager for the riches that you did not have, but increase the ones you did; and let the poor feel rich in you. Bring the needy into your house, break bread for the hungry, and clothe the naked; so that a treasure may be stored in heaven for you, which will pass with you. Christ became poor, even though he was rich, so that he may make us rich through his poverty. Therefore, do not be troubled in vain because of riches, do not be awakened from sleep, do not think about how to protect your money, how to increase your wealth, how to go out at night, how to

guard the judge's house; so that you may plunder what belongs to others, bring a lawsuit against the poor, fear the tax collector: this anxiety is pointless.

(Verse 8.) And therefore the righteous one said: And now, what is my expectation? Is it not the Lord? And my substance is before you. Our hope and patience is Christ: he himself has become our redemption, he himself is our expectation; so that we may each say: I have waited for the Lord with expectation, and he looked upon me (Psalm 39:2). Therefore, look upon us in your judgment. Let your mercy look upon us; so that we who despair of our own merit may be liberated through your mercy, in whose power is the substance of our souls and lives. And therefore we do not fear the death of the body; but rather him who has the power to either save or destroy our soul: whose substance is strength, which God has poured into human hearts to resemble his own.

(Verse 9.) Therefore, whoever possesses this substance of their soul, says: Deliver me from all my iniquities. He confesses not the falling of one sin, but prays to be absolved from all his iniquities. For he knows that unless the Lord forgives, no one can be saved, whoever is born under sin, whom the very inheritance of a guilty condition has bound to fault.

You have given me opprobrium, he says, to the foolish one. Who is foolish, if not he who commits sin and chooses evil over good? Therefore, the one who is the author of sins is even more foolish than his servant. When we sin, we are handed over to the reproach of the adversary, so that he may accuse and betray us as an enemy on the day of judgment. Therefore, let us embrace the reproach of the cross of Christ, which Moses embraced and preferred to the royal treasures of Egypt; and thus, it is not handed over to the foolish one in reproach. Others have books: Do not hand over disgrace to the foolish me. But David has that custom more, that he confesses more his own disgraces and sins, and does not blush at his own sins and disgraces, who knows in confession there is forgiveness, and in the condemnation of his sin there is justice.

(Verse 10.) Finally, from what follows, this meaning is made clear; because he adds: I was silent, and did not open my mouth; for you made me; that means, you made me a reproach to the foolish, therefore I was silent and did not open my mouth, lest I contract even greater sins. I recognized your will, that I should be ashamed for a time, and afterwards become saved by asking for forgiveness. Therefore, reproach is sometimes beneficial. For even the destruction of the flesh itself is beneficial; as the Apostle testifies, saying: I delivered him unto the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Cor. V, 5) Moreover, David himself testified that reproach is advantageous, saying to Abessam: Let Jeminaeus curse me, for the Lord has said to him: let him see my humility, and let the Lord repay me good for this curse. (II Reg. XVI, 11 and 12) And indeed the Lord saw his reproach, as he went weeping and barefoot, with his head covered; and he removed his reproach. It is clear, therefore, that when David was given into reproach, and he was humiliated, and he satisfied the Lord with bare feet, and he did not strike back at the one throwing stones, and he did not permit revenge on the one cursing, and after these things he was restored to his kingdom with full integrity; because both reproach is from the Lord, and it is more beneficial to endure reproach than to refute it. Finally, victory followed. Therefore, shame is beneficial. But what is it that he added: 'Because you made me?' Doesn't he say that he remained silent and did not open his mouth: because he knew the will of the Lord? Therefore, he patiently endured, in order to satisfy the Lord through shame for sin.

(Verse 11.) And hence he adds: Remove from me your plagues (Psalm 38:18). How does this fit together? In the previous psalm, he offered himself to the scourges, here he asks for the scourges to be removed from him; unless it is because he has already released his sins twice from the hand of the Lord, by blushing and enduring reproaches? The compunctions of his heart are both the whips of his thoughts and the rebukes. But let us see if he said this before God to be the substance of his soul; because the adversary would not attack it unless he had received power from the Lord; for what the Lord has done, he also protects. Finally, the angel is around the man, who pretends that no one can harm him. The angel does not leave unless ordered by the Lord to fight his champion. Therefore, as the substance of the Lord, he presumes that forgiveness for his own iniquities can be granted by his Creator; and therefore he asks, for he knows his Author is merciful. Then, because he has been given in disgrace, he does not resist; but he allows the sinner to oppose him, and the consciousness of his substance, which is good, remains silent, and he is able to restrain the ferocity of the body, so that virtue may succeed and guilt may be put aside. Finally, because he is made by the Lord, he confidently believes that he can be gifted with sin, he who could sustain the strength of the Lord's hand. And this is certainly the nature of good substance, even if it says that it has failed from the strength of the hand of the Lord. The strong hand strikes like ill, but heals quickly: what is strong for the wound is also strong for the remedy. Therefore, Job himself says: I will strike, and I will heal (Deut. 32:39); so that he may not remember the wound, who has escaped being healed. In conclusion, the hand of the Lord took away all things from the holy Job, and represented them all; indeed, it increased everything in abundance, so that it multiplied what was lost. Do not be disturbed that he said he failed. He who fails, rises stronger; for the Lord supports all who fall, and corrects all who are cast down. For with strength rises whoever is corrected. Paul failed in the strength of this hand. The persecutor fell, and the preacher of the Gospel rose. This is what he says: 'I have failed in the strength of your hand.'

(Verse 12.) And he added: In rebukes you have instructed man in wickedness: and you have made his soul to waste away like a spider. The Greek [version] says 'ἐν τῷ πονηρίᾳ σου', which means 'for iniquity'; and it puts the whole verse as 'ἐν τῷ ληγμοῦ σου ἐν τῷ πονηρίᾳ σου παθεῖν σου', which means 'In rebukes for iniquity you have instructed man.' Therefore the wise man said: 'Who will give me the scourge of my thoughts...' (Sirach 23:2) and 'the seal of my lips' (Sirach 22:33)? In order to mortify his own heart with his own thoughts, and to seal his own lips; by which he might diminish his former sins, and not renew them by speaking; by which he might be instructed by his own reproaches, and put on exercises of virtue. But the soul wastes away when sin is diminished: or when the soul wastes away, guilt is laid aside: it becomes clogged, when sins are accumulated. Whence the Lord says concerning sinners: My Spirit shall not remain in these men forever; for they are flesh (Gen. 6:3). And elsewhere the Scripture says: 'The heart of this people has become dull' (Acts 28:27). Therefore, Jeremiah first saw a nut-bearing staff, then a boiling pot, so that the soul of the beginning prophet might waste away; in order that guilt might depart, grace might approach. But why first the staff, then the pot? Because the one who is not corrected by the staff is thrown into the pot, so that he may burn and waste away. And therefore it is said to the prophet Ezekiel: 'Take for yourself a frying pan.' . . . and you shall bear the iniquities of the house of Israel . . . and you shall complete them, and they shall waste away, he says, in their iniquities (Ezek. 4:3 and following). And elsewhere in the same book, the Lord says: But I will make a great fire, and multiply the woods, and kindle the fire; so that the flesh melts, and the broth

decreases (Ezek. 24:9 and 10). By these testimonies it is signified that the souls of the faithless may waste away with the fire being applied; so that they may cast off the thickness of a certain carnal moisture. Therefore, the frying pan and souls of sinners are sent; so that a certain flesh of sin, which had obscured the strength of the soul and mind, may flow down; and as if by a certain right, it had infused the soul with the enticements of desires. Therefore, certain frying pans await us; therefore, let us grind up straw here, so that it becomes fine, and deposits all the hardness and greasiness of a certain carnal ploughland: which those who have luxuriated in this life endure; and they believed more in the mockery of disgrace than in any works of virtues to be practiced by themselves in the Jewish manner. For Jacob has become fat, and has grown thick, and has risen to play: whom that play has led from the truth of faith into the error of betrayal. Therefore, rightly did Paul chastise his body, lest he feed the body of sin; for by indulging, we make the members of sin, but by sobriety, the members of righteousness. Therefore, it is not nature, but fault that commits the crime. Nor let us pursue empty and futile things again, so that we may not be judged as weaving a spider's web, because sins can have no substance of perpetuity. Therefore, when you see some people striving to enlarge their possessions, to accumulate power, and to seek honors, you shall say what Isaiah said: 'They weave the spider's web in all the days of one; which cannot be long-lasting; but it is quickly torn apart, and all of its work is dissolved.' (Isaiah 59:5). For no solid foundation is placed above; but it is suspended in a vacuum. Nothing loose, nothing soft, befits a true soldier of Christ; for behold, those who are dressed in soft clothing are in the houses of kings. All cunning and industrious people seem greedy. What is more cunning, what is more diligent than a spider, which always focuses on its work day and night, and completes its attire without any expense or cost? But everything it has done is vain. Such is every man who does not establish his work on the foundation of Christ. He is vain both by night and by day, and he himself is troubled; often the very spiders in the midst of their wickedness, in the collapse of their work, throw him into confusion.

(Verse 13.) And therefore the wise person who recognizes the vanity of this world does not pray for the prolonged use of this life; but hastens to those eternal things and desires to be freed from the labor and pain of this body; as the Prophet is known to have desired, saying: Hear, O Lord, my prayer and my supplication; receive with your ears my tears. Do not ignore me, for I am a stranger and sojourner before you on earth, like all my fathers. One is a resident, another is a stranger, another is a neighbor. A resident is someone who is from a place and inhabits that place: a stranger is someone who comes from elsewhere: a neighbor is someone who temporarily dwells, and changes with the passing years. This is what David says: I am a stranger with you, while I am on earth: I am not now a resident of your paradise. From this he explains by adding: And a wanderer; like all my fathers. This was also revealed by the apostle Paul, asserting that when we are in this body, we are strangers to the Lord (II Cor. V, 7); for although faith is within us, yet we walk by faith, not by appearance, that is, not face to face, as if present; for we still walk in riddles, not in truth. Finally he added: We dare, therefore, to journey more in our body, and to draw near to the Lord. We dare because of presumption in God's faith, not because of audacity; and we agree, that is, we willingly acquiesce and desire, not depending primarily on the authority of our own judgment: we want what we desire to be true; so that we may draw near to the Lord, from whom it seems to us that the distance of the future and the present separates us. Therefore, we dare to be present; and therefore he says: We strive (Ibid., 9). You understand the word of one who is still trying to arrive, not of the one who has arrived. Therefore, in this discourse, the affect is shown,

not the effect. Finally, question the witness of his own sermon; rather, hear him doubting when he says: Therefore, we strive, whether absent or present, to please him (Ibid.): absent still by faith, present by appearance. Hence it can be understood that both here and there it pleases our judge, and we also desire it to please our redeemer of our souls. For it is necessary for us to appear before him, so that each one may attain the deserved outcome of their deeds through the examination of fate: either the just in rest, or the wicked in torment. Therefore, shed tears; for when a stranger comes to the land, he is delayed and separated from his homeland through long exile. Now consider for me that Adam, expelled from paradise, was relegated to a castle, looking back at where he had fallen, weeping abundantly; for he remembers what he has lost and where he has fallen. And let us therefore give thanks to God, who has freed us from perpetual exile, opening the door through which we may return to our homeland. Hence the Apostle presumes to say: Therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19).

(Verse 14.) Desiring to receive this, David said before Christ came to earth: Forgive me, so that I may be refreshed before I go, and I will not be anymore; that is, forgive me here, where I have sinned. Unless you forgive me here, I will not be able to find the rest of forgiveness there; for what remains bound on earth will remain bound in heaven, and what has been loosed on earth will be loosed in heaven. For the prophet and preacher foresaw, with an evangelical spirit, the indulgences of the Lord for the gathering of the Church; and the Lord revealed these things to be preached to the apostles. Indeed, this was an ancient sentiment, that whoever bound himself on earth would depart from the body as a captive. Therefore the Lord, because he was about to give judgment, granted to the apostles the power of remitting sins, to be exercised in righteousness; lest, if they were left unsolved, they should long remain secure. Finally, listen to Him saying: I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19). He says to you, I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, so that you may both loose and bind. Novatian did not hear this, but the Church of God heard it; therefore he is in a state of falling away, we are in a state of forgiveness; he is in impenitence, we are in grace. What is said to Peter, is said to the apostles. We do not exercise authority, but we serve under authority; so that when the Lord comes and finds those who should have been released still bound, he might be angered against the steward who kept bound the servants whom the Lord had ordered to be released, for he who knows his master's will and does not do it, will be beaten severely; but he who does not know and does things deserving punishment, will be beaten less severely (Luke 12:47).

Therefore, David rightly asks to be forgiven because he knew that he was not one of those who were given the priesthood according to Aaron, but it was reserved for the Gospel. Therefore, whoever is not forgiven is in exile, enduring the injustice of wandering. So forgiveness must be sought here. For it is said: Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh (Luke 6:21): this is the place where forgiveness must be sought. Let us therefore lament on earth, so that we may deserve indulgence. Unless sin is forgiven here, we will not have rest: if there is no rest, there will be no eternal life: if there is no eternal life, we will not exist. Therefore, he asks for forgiveness before he goes, so that he may be. For if forgiveness is not granted, he says, I will not be with those who deserve to ascend to paradise. But whoever is not, will be consumed with those descending into the abyss, who has been abandoned in chains and prison.

Therefore, he does not definitively say, 'I will not be'; because elsewhere he says, 'I will sing to you on the lyre, O holy God of Israel. My lips will rejoice when I sing to you, and my soul which you have redeemed' (Psalm 70:22-23). Therefore, he assumes redemption. And elsewhere, listen to him saying, 'I will please the Lord in the land of the living' (Psalm 114:9). Therefore, he assumes to please. It can also be understood in this way; because he said, 'I am a stranger with you on earth, and a sojourner, like all my fathers; and therefore forgive me, so that I may cease to be a stranger: forgive me the exile to which I have been banished.' If you forgive before I leave here, I will no longer be an exile and a stranger. For when you forgive, I will no longer be a stranger; but I will be a citizen of your holy ones. I will be with my fathers, who themselves were once strangers but are now citizens. I will be a member of God's household, so that I may not fear punishment and may deserve grace: through our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom be praise, honor, glory, eternity, with the Holy Spirit from age to age, now and forever, and for all ages to come. Amen. On Psalm 40, Commentary In the earlier psalms, he preached repentance; then he spoke about his patience and the disturbance of man. But in the thirty-ninth psalm, he announces the new Testament; for the one who repents of his sins waits. But it is not enough to wait, but to have waited; for no one will be saved unless they persevere until the end.

(Vers. 2, 3.) Therefore, he added: I have waited with expectation for the Lord. Where is this spoken, if not in the Gospel? in which the one who was awaited has already come to us: in which the shadow of the Law no longer darkens us, but the truth shines forth; because Christ has shone, who has heard the prayers of his own, and has brought us out of the pit of misery and the mud of filth; where we were already sunk in the whirlpool of our sins, and our whole being was stuck, and our spirit could not free itself, overcome by the multitude of shameful stains. Therefore, thanks be to the Lord Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, our redeemer, who came down from heaven to forgive us all our sins; that he might deliver us from the pit and mire of this world, and from a certain filthy swamp of the earth, and establish the inner footprints of our souls in his own flesh; that, strengthened in the word of God, and freed through the sufferings of the Lord's body on the cross, we may now walk not in the disgrace of shame, but in the forgiveness of sin. So, confirmed and rooted in Christ, he remembers the footsteps of his feet placed on the rock. From whence the Apostle says: 'And they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ' (1 Corinthians 10:4). The rock, because it follows the thirsty, strengthens the faltering; lest water should fail to the thirsty, a support to the faltering.

(Verse 4.) Therefore, Lord Jesus, as I awaited, you finally came, you directed my steps in the Gospel, you put into my mouth a new song, which is the New Testament. Rejoicing, we now sing a hymn to our God, because we have come to know the precepts of new virtues; that we may leave all our own things behind, following Christ, and love our enemies. We have also adopted new customs; that for those who persecute us, we may offer prayer to the Lord. Behold, we bless those who curse us. We do not boast of our works or hide our sins. We also reject the customs of the angels regarding marriage.

(Verse 5.) What more can be said? The blessed man has been made out of that miserable sinner, no longer looking back at the various vanities of this world. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity (Ecclesiastes 1:2), this whole world is. just as the wise Solomon said. For what is it but vain to follow things that cannot endure; and everything passes away like a shadow? False insanities, or the conflicts of wars, where so much blood is shed for temporary possession: or the dissensions of

theatrical contentions: or the fervent studies of the Circus: or the deadly doctrine of heretics: or the pretended actions of heavenly oracles in the manner of pseudo-prophets, consisting of arranged words. For thus says the prophet: Blessed is the man whose name of the Lord is his hope: and who does not look towards vanities and false insanities. So there are true insanities, and perhaps also of prophets who, in a state of mental excess, prophesied, filled with the Spirit of God, so that they seemed to be insane to some; while being forgetful of their own salvation, mostly naked and barefoot, like the holy Isaiah, they would run through the people, shouting not what they themselves wanted, but what they were commanded by the Lord. From these things, therefore, it is understood that the remedy of salvation has shone forth; for the one who was awaited is present.

Adam waited for him, having been cast out of paradise; that he may be freed from prolonged exile. Noah, the righteous one, waited for him, who was reserved for the future generations; that from him the seeds of righteousness may sprout in men. He himself thought him to be the author of the public salvation, who deserved to survive the flood. He himself, the prince of wisdom, who cultivated the vine and became intoxicated with its fruit. For what is the vine if not wisdom? As David, the heavenly interpreter of the oracle, revealed to us, saying: Your wife is like a flourishing vine in the sides of your house (Psalm 137:3). Therefore, because in him was the fullness of wisdom, which was expected in Christ, who, newly filled with the sacrament of wisdom, which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, hastened to bring to us an unheard-of mystery, so that he might lie naked and the cups of overflowing wisdom might pour forth: so that, having forgotten our former ways, we might rise to new customs and a new sobriety of life; whereby, through the foolishness of preaching, God might be recognized, whom this world did not know through wisdom. Finally, in that image of the sleeping and naked father, who laughed at foolishness, he is cursed: those who have worshipped have obtained the grace of blessing. And therefore, those who have believed that the death of the only-begotten Son of God, the Father and Creator of all, is to be presented as a stumbling block or reproach to our faith, are held bound by the chains of their sins to perpetual torment of curse; but those who accept it for the absolution of the whole human race are supported by the protection of eternal virtue. For the cross of Christ is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, as the Apostle said (1 Cor. I, 23 et seq.): but to us who believe in the Lord Jesus, it is the power of God and wisdom.

He was expected in Moses when he had dried up and crossed the waves of the sea, and opened a path in the waves of the sea that was impossible for human strength to open on land: the rock followed him and he plowed the waters, so that he could satisfy the innermost parts of the thirsty fathers in the middle of the desert.

He was awaited, and as Aaron, the high priest, stood in the midst of the living and the dead: and he established the serpent as the remedy for death; so that the destruction would not pass from the dead bodies to the living. For what is so fitting for Christ as to stand as an advocate before God the Father for the people, to offer his own death for all, to ward off death, and to restore life to those who are perishing?

He was expected both in Joshua the son of Nun, and he certainly came, who received both his power and his name, in order to lead the people into the land of promise, and to be truly called by the name of Jesus. He dried up the streams, turned a river into its source, set the sun still, until he

might fully complete victory in power. But he was still a figure, not the reality. Finally, the true leader of the heavenly army shone forth for him, and Joshua the son of Nun worshiped him; although he had not yet stood in bodily form, but had still come in a figure. So when did the true one arrive? Listen to what he says: I have announced and spoken: they have multiplied beyond number. You did not desire sacrifice and offering, but you perfected a body for me. Then I said, behold, I come. In the head of the book it is written about me that I should do your will: my God, I have desired it. What is clearer than the fact that with the gift of his Gospel, the true Jesus has come to us? He himself spoke, and countless peoples of believers gathered, who scarcely believed individually before. He himself came in the flesh, and the sacrifice of the Jews ceased. The offering for sin ceased, because the one who forgives sins had come. There was no need for the remedy of the Law, where the Author of the Law was present. In the head of the Book it is written about me. Surely it is written about Christ in the beginning of the Old Testament that He would come, in order to do the will of God the Father in the redemption of mankind; when it was written that He formed Eve in the likeness of the Church for the assistance of man. For what can be our protection in this weakness of the body and the disturbance of this world, except for the grace of the Church alone, by which we are redeemed, and our faith, by which we live? In the head of the Book it is written: 'Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.' Because of this, a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh (Gen. II, 23, 24). Who is this who spoke, or about whom is this mystery? Listen to the one who says: 'This is a great mystery; but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church' (Ephes. V, 32). Therefore, he also warns that a man should love his wife in this way, just as Christ loves the Church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones (Ibid., 25). Therefore, what greater salvation is there than to be with Christ and to adhere to Him in a certain unity of the body, in which there is neither any stain nor the distortion of sin?

It is written in the Book that Abel's offering pleased God, while Cain's offering displeased Him (Gen. IV, 4 and 5). Did not the Lord Jesus clearly signify that He Himself would be offered for us, in order to consecrate the grace of the new sacrifice in His passion and to abolish the ritual of the murderous people? And what is more explicit than the fact that the son was offered by the holy Patriarch and a ram was sacrificed? Does it not clearly show that the flesh of man, which is common to all earthly animals, will not be subject to the sacred wound of the passion of the only-begotten Son of God?

It is written in the head of the Book, that a man will come who will command celestial powers (Gen. XXVIII, 12). It was fulfilled, when the Lord Jesus came to earth, and angels ministered to him; as he himself deigned to say: From this you will see the heavens open, and the angels of God ascending and descending to the Son of Man (John I, 51).

It is written in the chapter of the Book: 'A lamb without blemish, perfect, mature, male, one year old, will be for you; and all the synagogue will kill him.' (Exodus 12:5). Who is this lamb, you heard him saying: 'Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sin of the world.' (John 1:29). This is he who was killed by all the people of the Jews: whom they still persecute with hostile hatred. And indeed it was necessary for him to die for all; so that through his cross there might be forgiveness of sins, and his blood might wash away the defilements of the world: but woe to those who have denied the author of their own salvation! You have made a plan, he says, but not for me (Isaiah 30:1). How could he prove patricide, if he did not approve of the plan? And yet,

what great piety! Indeed, he abhorred the plan; but if they were to turn around, he would not deny a remedy.

It is written also, not only in the head but in the whole constitution of the Law, that a man will come to preserve the human race, who would want everything that God would want. Hence you understand that it is of the same divinity, who is of the same will. Hence he also came willingly to the sacrifice of his passion, and rightly predicted: I will willingly offer sacrifice to you (Psalm 53:8). But perhaps you will say: How then did He say in the Gospel: 'Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as you will' (Matthew 26:39)? And indeed, it seems that there is a difference of wills. But we understand that one thing is expressed according to the unity of divinity, where He says: 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:30); and another thing is spoken according to the affection of the human, which implies that it should be handled with caution, and not presumed that it cannot be easily fulfilled; lest, while seeking a reward, one falls into sacrilege. Where he says: When they persecute you in this city, flee into another (Matthew X, 23). Therefore, rightly, even though he was about to undergo bodily suffering here, he began to be sad and mournful, and, having taken Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he said: My soul is sad (Matthew XXVI, 38), before he issued the command and afterwards added: Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (ibid., 41). You see him everywhere speaking as a man, praying as a man, being sad as a man, and saying as a man: My Father, if it is possible (Matthew X, 23). That which is certainly not impossible for God; but it is for man to doubt, for God to confirm. Therefore, He chose those who would be more ready, as if they were selected witnesses of His final judgment, who would acknowledge the mystery of His words. In the end, others were sleeping, while these alone kept watch with faithful minds. Hence, even through Jeremiah, before assuming a body, He Himself says: 'I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter; I did not know' (Jeremiah 11:19). What is there that Wisdom of God does not know, who is always in the secret of the Father? And therefore the Son of God explained everything, because the wisdom of God himself is the Son of God. How did he know that he was to be led like a lamb, and where he was to be led, he confesses that he did not know? Or how does he say in the earlier passage through the mouth of David: My God, my God, look upon me: why have you forsaken me? How is the Son forsaken by the Father, who says: And I am not alone; because the Father is with me? And elsewhere: I was handed over and did not come out? And elsewhere: I have risen up, and I am still with you (Psalm 138:8), unless you understand it in the sense that some people think they are abandoned by their Lord when they are in danger. Finally, listen to what follows: Far from my salvation, are the words of my sins (Psalm 22:2); that is, there are words of sins and there are the sacraments of eternal salvation. The words do not hinder the power: the divine substance is supported by its own strength. Man is seen, man is heard, God is recognized in his works. And yet about this man it is said: He is a man, and who will know him (Jerem. XVII, 9)? What is, who? Not that no one, but that rare one, that wise one; as that: Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord? Who shall be wise and understand these things (Ose. XIV, 10)? Finally elsewhere: A silly man does not know these things, and a fool does not understand them (Psal. XCI, 7). And so when you read the Gospel, know as a wise man and not as a fool what you read: let the brightness of eternal Wisdom enlighten you. Indeed, they are words; but they cleanse, and they illuminate, and they strengthen, and they give life. Therefore Peter says: Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we will not leave you. (John 6:69).

Finally, as we have mentioned, speaking in human terms, a little later he said: Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man will be handed over into the hands of sinners (Matth. XXVI, 45). And to Judas, who was kissing him, he said: Judas, with a kiss you betray the Son of Man; that is, you infuse poison with a kiss, by which the grace of charity is poured out: a kiss that is a sign of sacred peace: a kiss by which faithful friendship is confirmed: a kiss by which holy faith is marked. Therefore, do you hand over with danger this kiss, which because of the exchange of kisses you should venerate? And do you hand over the son of man, a man who descended from heaven for the salvation of mankind? For it is written: The Son of Man who is in heaven, he is the one who descended from heaven (John 3:13). You hand over the Son of Man, who made you, a sinner, an apostle. You hand over the Son of Man, who came to cleanse all sins with his blood. I do not deny the kiss: you yourself seem to be the one who violated the sanctity of the kiss. Have you not read that the wounds of a friend are more useful than the voluntary kisses of an enemy (Prov. 27:6)? And it is not without reason that Judas was struck by a weapon of such great dignity, as if he had been struck by lightning. In the end, he could not bear the patience of the Lord, who had betrayed his majesty, so much so that he himself could not wash away the guilt of such a great crime. Therefore, he left and returned the money; that is, he condemned his own greed, the author of such impiety, and repaid the price of treachery to the synagogue. The traitor is not excused, who could not find a place for repentance; but the sacrilege of the Jews is piled up, who are also accused by the words of the traitor. He acknowledged his crime, saying that he delivered innocent blood: they received the price of wickedness and pursued the prince of justice with more bitter zeal. Therefore the thief crucified is absolved to the eternal condemnation of all these; because he acknowledged Christ in his sufferings, whom these did not acknowledge in their benefits; and he confessed his sin to Christ, who knew how to forgive; because on his cross he mentally beheld the kingdom of the Lord, which Judas could not see at the supper of Christ. Therefore, the voice of the thief followed this heavenly saying: Amen, amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43). You rejoiced, O dragon, because you had stolen the apostle from Christ: you have lost more than you have taken away, for you see the thief being translated into paradise. There is no one who can be excluded, when the thief, your servant, was received; he has arrived at the place from which you yourself were cast down.

We have explained these things because of that verse, where he said, 'To do your will, O my God, I desired; that is, there is one will of divinity in me and you, Father.' And because there is one will, there is one substance; as well as inseparable majesty and power of the Trinity. But the voice of the flesh is different, yet she herself consented to the will of God, saying, 'Not what I will, but what you will.' (Mark 14:37). And elsewhere, 'If this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.' (Matthew 26:42). The common feeling is to fear death, which Christ undertook; so that he may crucify, as he was crucified, both sin and flesh; for he struggled for me, to conquer for me. Although the flesh of Christ is strong and not subject to sin; nevertheless, he assumed sins: he assumed weaknesses, although he had nothing to grieve about. Finally, listen to him saying, that he grieves for us (Isaiah 53:4) . . . until he brings forth justice in truth (Isaiah 42:4) . For he did not assume a different flesh, but this one; as the Apostle teaches, saying: For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53) . Although He was born of a Virgin and the Holy Spirit, He is nevertheless the Son of man, because the Virgin is a human. And therefore what is born of flesh is flesh: and He who is born of a human is called a human, the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Therefore, He took on this incorruptible flesh so that He could make it incorruptible, and immortal so that He could make it immortal. So if anyone follows Him, they will clothe themselves with immortality. If anyone does His will, they will not die forever; but Christ says to them: 'Today you will be with Me in paradise' (Luke 23:43). What does 'today' mean? It means that you have passed from night to light, you will be with Me in the eternal light. Do not fear the darkness, for you have been embraced by everlasting light. He also beautifully added: 'You will be with me in paradise' (Ibid.); that is, do not doubt the flesh, and you saw me in the flesh: do not be afraid, lest you also fall from paradise, as Adam fell; but hear this: as long as you are with me, you cannot fall. Flesh fell in paradise before it was taken up by Christ. You will be received where he also was received; for he did not lie when he said: 'I want them to be with me where I am' (John 17:24). The shepherd will not depart from his flocks, even though you can no longer fear the wolf in paradise, to whom it was said: I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven (Luke 10:18). Therefore, before the consummation, the adversary is cast down into fire and bound with eternal chains, so that you may no longer fear any ambushes. And when Adam fell, he was deceived by the serpent, and he was estranged from his wife. Therefore, there will no longer be marriages in paradise, but all will be without the celebration of weddings, like angels in heaven. Adam did not say to himself: You will be with me, because he knew that he would fall in order to be redeemed by Christ. Blessed is the fall that is repaired for the better. Therefore, the righteous shepherd, the good merchant, did not abandon his flock and his own merchandise. Indeed, there will still be a battle with the serpent in paradise with the angels until it is cast down, but whoever is with Christ will not be afraid. Adam was not with Christ, when he was deceived. For if he had been with Christ and had remained in his precept, he certainly could not have perished. He did not remain in Christ, because he did not remain in his word. Finally, hear, who remains in Christ. If you remain, he says, in me and my words remain in you; whatever you desire, you shall ask for, and it shall be done for you (John 15:7). And further: If you keep my commandments, you shall remain in my love (Ibid., 10). You want to know why Adam was not with Christ? The Lord said to him: Adam, where are you (Gen. III, 9)? Surely he wouldn't have said 'where are you' if he knew that Adam remained in himself. But let us hear who made him absent. They hid themselves, he says, both from the face of the Lord (Ibid., 8). Christ sees all, but whoever hides himself, is hidden; because he who is ignorant, is ignored. For the Lord knows those who are his own. He wants all those whom He has founded and created to be His own. I hope, O man, that you do not flee and do not hide yourself from Christ! He even seeks those who flee and does not want those who are hidden to perish, but he cries out saying: Adam, where are you? That is, O man, where are you? I placed you in the light, you sought darkness.

Finally, in paradise, where the day was always morning, it became evening; for all sins are dark. Therefore, you have (Ibid., 8), because they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the evening in paradise. At the same time, understand the mystery. You have erred in the morning; you will be set free in the evening. How can there be evening where Christ is? For although His throne is above the heaven of heavens, yet Christ is in His saints. So how can there be evening where God is, when God is light? Finally, while Saul was on his journey, a light shone forth when Christ appeared to him. Therefore, even though the light of God was shining, the persecutor was blinded. Why then was he blinded, if not because he did not recognize Christ? For if he had recognized the arbiter of light, he would not have lost the light of his eyes. Finally, when he recognized, he received. It is evident that he did not recognize Christ, who, upon hearing the voice

saying, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' (Acts 9:4), responded, 'Who are you, Lord?' (Ibid., 5). He would not have asked who it was, if he had known. And so the Lord, as if he did not know, says: I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you persecute. It is hard for you to kick against the goad. And he said: Lord, what should I do? See the consistency of the teachings on both sides. The doctor threatens in order to correct; he frightens in order to heal: the patient first seeks the person of the doctor, if he may presume that the doctor is capable of healing him; when he has heard the author of the medicine, he asks for the remedy, and finds salvation. Finally, as he approached, he not only expelled his blindness, but also received the light that he had not had, in order to see Christ, whom he had not seen before.

(Vers. 10, 11.) But let us examine the following verses; repeating the same verse, from which the treatise seems to be: Behold, I come to do your will: O God, I desired, and your law is in the midst of my heart. I have proclaimed your righteousness in the great assembly: behold, I will not restrain my lips, Lord, you know. I have not hidden your righteousness in my heart. Therefore, from the previous verse we understand: Behold, I come not only to do your will, but also your law is in the midst of my heart. Others have: In the midst of my belly. For the belly is both physical and mental, which conceives the seeds of sensations; about which Isaiah said: In the womb we receive, and bring forth the spirit of salvation (Isaiah 26:18). This womb also gave birth to Paul, who said: My little children, whom I travail in birth until Christ be formed in you (Galatians 4:19). Therefore, Christ is not formed in a physical womb, but in the womb of the soul. This womb the Apostle begot; as it is written: I have begotten you through the Gospel (1 Corinthians 4:15). Therefore, some people are well off: In the middle of the heart; others: In the middle of the belly; so that you may understand the interior of man's belly, which is considered to be in the middle of the heart: in which we observe the prescriptions of natural law; which is not only kept, but also made in our hearts. Hence it is written, for not only the hearers of the law are righteous in the sight of God; but also the doers of the law shall be justified (Rom. II, 13). There are indeed those who naturally do the things that are of the law; just as the nations that do not hear the law and the law is to themselves, who preserve the known precepts of the law. Therefore, just as Christ has taken on our human nature in this place, He has made Himself the representative of the gathered people, in order to say that He fulfills the law in the midst of His heart. Indeed, He has fulfilled the law of the nations which the people did not hear, so that they may recognize Christ, whom the people of the Jews, who received the law, did not receive and did not consider worthwhile to know. For it is written: 'The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know me.' (Isaiah 1:3). Therefore, the belly of the believers is where the Holy Spirit has worked and is accustomed to filling with spiritual seed; as the Lord Jesus testifies in the Gospel, saying: 'Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water' (John 7:38). These rivers are those rivers of which we read: 'The streams of the river make glad the city of God' (Psalm 46:4). Therefore, it is well said of those from whom these spiritual rivers flow: 'The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice' (Psalm 93:4). The rivers will raise their waves from the voice of the spiritual waters, which praise God above the heavens.

Whoever lifts up his voice, he can say: I have proclaimed your righteousness in the great Church. Why did he add great, except because it was not great before? What is great, except gathered from the parts of the whole world; when from the east and west, north and south, peoples of the nations are called? However, elsewhere we read of the great Church: I will confess to you, O Lord,

in the great Church: I will praise you among the heavy people (Psalm 34:18). There, therefore, is a great Church, where the people are serious; that is, not restless and mobile, who sat down to eat and drink, and rose to play. The serious people are those who keep faith with their God and who are not changed by any levity: neither do they waver and fluctuate, but are grounded in charity in Christ; so that they can say: For I am confident that neither death, nor sword, nor tribulation can separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus (Rom. VIII, 35 et seq.). But whoever proclaims in the Church with great power does not hide the justice of God in his heart; but he exalts his voice, announcing Christ. His heart does not fear preaching him before the people, nor is he ashamed of his cross; but he boasts in the passion of the Lord. He does not follow the letter of the Law, but he reveals the deep mysteries by which he reveals the glory of the Lord Jesus: whom the Law signified was to come to the Church, which is to be gathered. Therefore, faith is justice. Finally, Abraham believed in God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Behold, I will not restrain my lips, O Lord, you have known (Gen. XV, 6). Likewise elsewhere: You have perceived my sitting down and my rising up (Psalm CXXXVIII, 2). To the Father he says: I have not hidden my justice in my heart; I have spoken your truth and your salvation. This entire psalm is spoken from the perspective of Christ; therefore he says my justice, although no one can arrogantly speak of their own justice, he who believes in God confesses that his faith is considered justice for himself. He loves truth and mercy, he who proclaims true faith and forgives sins. Therefore Christ came, in order to establish faith and grant forgiveness of sins.

(Verse 15.) And because we have said that this whole psalm is from the perspective of the Savior; lest the Apollinarians say: 'Behold, you have prepared a body for me' (Psalm verse 7), but not also a soul; let them hear in the later verses of this psalm, saying: 'Let them be confounded and ashamed together, that seek after my soul, to destroy it.'

These are the things which we have considered more difficult in this psalm: the rest is straightforward and easy, and we do not think it requires interpretation; when they occur in the Treatise, we will address them more accurately in another psalm in which they seem to be repeated, with the favor of our Lord Jesus: to whom be praise, honor, glory, perpetuity from age to age, now and always, and for all ages of ages. Amen. On Psalm 41, Commentary (Verse 1) In a good order, he who said in the previous psalm: Behold, I come (Psalm 39:9); in this, he has already come and suffered. And for this reason, the fortieth psalm is inscribed, because the Lord Jesus fasted for forty days, to complete the number of man who had perished, to perfection. For just as through the desire for forbidden fruit he had lost grace, so through fasting his virtue had to be restored; that he who had perished in Adam might be restored in Christ. Therefore, in conclusion, because He is the end of our hope, we direct our efforts towards Him, we offer our prayers to Him, because He is the fullness, He is the completion of all things, He is the sum of all virtues. Therefore, to Him David; as if to Him alone, who in His flesh alone took upon Himself our sins, who alone, as the Lamb of God, took away the sin of the whole world, who alone abolished the handwriting of the decree through the shedding of His blood, and took it away from our midst, and nailed it to the cross: as if a wise man knowing how to solve the ancient sin of the world: as if redemption, how to renew man from his guilt: as if sanctification, how to sanctify him to grace. Here, therefore, is the title, this is the beginning.

(Verse 2.) Blessed is he who understands the poor and needy. Open your ears, you who begin to understand the mysteries of the Lord's passion. Therefore it is said to you: He who has ears to

hear, let him hear (Luke 8:8). Therefore, the Lord touched the ears and lips of the deaf and mute in the Gospel (Mark 7:16), so that he might know what he should hear in mystery, what he should also speak, and when he should speak. For it is not written in vain: The Lord has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary (Isaiah 50:4). Therefore, you should know what you hear, know what you should speak, know also when you should speak.

Listen then to the one saying: Blessed is he who understands the needy and the poor. Truly blessed is he who has compassion on the poor, who supplies their needs, who knows what evils poverty brings to the needy: but what does this introduction signify in the Passion of the Lord? It is indeed true that He suffered for the poor; but nevertheless He Himself rebuked Judas for saying about that ointment which Mary had poured on the feet of Christ: This could have been sold for three hundred denarii, and given to the poor (Mark 14:5). The other apostles also had the same opinion, but with a different motive: he did it out of greed, they did it out of mercy; for Judas looked out for theft, while the disciples took care of the nourishment of the poor. To all of them he replied: Let her alone, that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you have always with you, but me you do not always have (John 12:7-8).

Therefore, another blessed person must be understood here, who understands the poor. He speaks about faith here, and elsewhere about mercy. Therefore, faith comes first, mercy second. With faith, precious mercy; without faith, naked; without faith, unstable. For faith is the stable foundation of all virtues. Therefore, blessed is the one who understands the poverty and destitution of Christ, who became poor for our sake, even though he was rich: rich in the kingdom, poor in flesh; because he took on this flesh of the poor. For we have become exceedingly poor, having lost the precious garments of virtue through the deceit of the serpent, excluded from paradise, expelled from our homeland, exiled into exile, and even stripped of the covering of the body itself, which previously protected the boundaries of virtues, afterwards revealing our sins. Therefore, if he was needy and poor in flesh, surely he was also needy and poor in the suffering of this flesh. So, he did not suffer in his wealth, but in our poverty. And so, not the fullness of divinity, which dwells bodily in him, as Scripture testifies (Colossians 2:9), but the flesh suffered. Understand this, pursue this, hold onto this, lest it be said to you: He did not want to understand about the beggar and the poor man. For if you doubt here, you certainly cannot doubt in that psalm, which is spoken against the betrayal of Judah in the person of the Savior, in which he says: And he pursued the poor and needy man (Psalm 109:16). Therefore, understand the poverty of Christ, so that you may become rich; understand his weakness, so that you may receive strength; understand his cross, so that you may not be ashamed; understand his wounds, so that you may heal your own wounds; understand his death, so that you may obtain eternal life; understand his burial, so that you may find resurrection. But perhaps you will say: How can Christ be rich in poverty? Although my intelligence may fail me, divine assistance does not fail in the reading of the Scriptures, for the Apostle says: For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich he became poor for your sakes; that through his poverty you might be rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). So what is this poverty that makes us rich? Let us consider it, let us focus on the sacred Sacrament itself. What can be purer and simpler than that? No one is drenched with the blood of bulls, as the sacrifices of the Gentiles are said to be; no sinner is washed with the blood of goats and rams (for no one is purified in this way; flesh is washed, not guilt diluted), but with water, as Isaiah says

(Isaiah 12:3), with joy from the springs of the Savior; and a heavenly table is prepared before you, and what a splendid intoxicating cup it is (Psalm 22:5)! These are the riches of simplicity, in which is the precious poverty of Christ. Poverty is good in character; hence the Lord said: Blessed are the poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3). And in the Psalms we find that the Lord will save the humble in spirit (Psalm 33:19). There is also abundant poverty in humble fellowship, if faith abounds. Hence the Apostle says: And their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their simplicity (2 Cor. 8:2). But so that we may understand it also from other words of his, because he himself said that he was poor, we have it written elsewhere: I am poor and sorrowful (Ps. LXVIII, 30); that is, because he sorrows for us, as we read (Isaiah LIII, 4), for he had nothing in himself for which to sorrow. Therefore, just as he sorrows for us, as Isaiah interpreted, who saw him in the spirit: he was certainly sorrowful for us; according to which he called his soul sorrowful even unto death, yet not because of death; and he called his flesh weak, which was subject to the weakness of death; so that he might break the sting of death, by which he would free us on the day of judgment, which he rightly called evil, not superficially.

Verse 2: For thus he weaves it: In the day of evil the Lord will deliver him; for what seems bitter, tends to assign punishment to many. For the way of virtue is narrow, the path of sin is wide; therefore fewer walk in virtue, more are involved in wickedness. Hence it happens that the number of those who will receive the rewards of recompense is inferior to those who will endure the heavy burden of punishment for their serious sins. As if grieving, therefore, he spoke of the evil day of judgment. For if angels rejoice at the forgiveness of one sinner, how much more will men be tormented at the condemnation of such great men! And he grieves well for that lost sheep, which he himself carried on his shoulders and brought back to his fold. The Son of God speaks with our affection; for to us the day of judgment is bitter, which we fear. To everyone it appears evil, because it is full of terror: in which God judges not only the outward actions of man, but also the hidden thoughts: in which each person is forced to reveal what he has done, or what he has felt. Therefore, many are condemned, few are crowned. But even those who are crowned will mourn, for the righteous will be crowned: the righteous, however, regards the suffering of their brother as their own. And who am I to judge those by whom a man will be admitted to the councils of angels? Let us listen to the Lord's sentence: He says, 'The hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear the voice of the Son of Man; and those who have done good, will come forth unto the resurrection of life, but those who have done evil, unto the resurrection of condemnation' (John 5:28-29). Therefore, those who have done evil will be judged. And for this reason, a day of evil and adversity is called by the judge himself, so that you may know that he himself shows compassion for us in the Gospel, as he has shown compassion for the prophets. But we can also understand it like this: In a bad day, that is, in an evil time; for the world is situated in evil. And therefore the days of this world are evil, and its malice abounds. It is no small thing to be freed from the snares of the sinner. Whoever is freed from sin here will be freed from punishment there, and will not be able to undergo the severity of judgment.

(Verse 3) And therefore, daily vows and prayers are necessary, as well as the intercession of the high priest, of whom John the Evangelist says: We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 John 2:2). So our advocate, and the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, prays for those who understand and believe in Christ, saying: May the Lord protect him, and keep him alive, and make him blessed. May He

preserve from danger, revive as if placed in the darkness of death, and deign to make blessed by the addition of good works. And he cleanses, he says, his life on earth (Ibid). He added well, on earth; because unless he is cleansed here, he cannot be clean there. Or certainly in this way: Let him cleanse on earth. For how can someone be clean in mud; when the earth smears him? Therefore, the hand of the Lord is necessary, who made the body out of earth; so that she may deign to cleanse herself.

(Ver. 3.) And he shall not deliver him into the hands of his enemy. Who is the enemy, if not that lion who goes about roaring, seeking whom he may devour? Others have it in Greek: And he shall not deliver him to the souls of his enemies. Souls are put for hands, because the souls of enemies lie in wait for the good things of the soul, and endeavor to overthrow the just with their devices. They are also called souls for men. All the souls seventy, which went down into Egypt (Gen. 46:27). Therefore, David chose to entrust himself to the power of God rather than the snares of his enemies, who were ignorant of sparing him of their own accord.

(Verse 4.) It follows: May the Lord bring aid to him upon the bed of his suffering: you have turned all his bed in his sickness. What is the bed of suffering, if not the flesh of infirmity? And it is well called the bed of suffering, because it is the body of death, from which the Apostle begs to be liberated (Rom. VII, 24); so that he may be able to rise up as from a certain tomb, in which the sick soul lays, and as if lying down in a bed. Symmachus called it bed of misery, Aquila called it bed of misery: the Seventy translators thought it should be called bed of suffering more explicitly. Therefore, these verses should be used among those who are held back by the infirmity of the body, so that they may have the medicine of God by which they may deserve to be healed. Therefore, the bed of the soul is weak flesh, for which our soul sympathizes with its illness. If it has the Lord as its helper, it says to him: Rise, take up your bed, and go to your house (Luke 5:24). Strengthened by the word of God, the sick person rises and takes up the bed on which they were lying, and returns to their former state of health. This is to return home, in order to live in a residence of robust health. The one who lives governs: the one who governs has the favor of virtue supporting him. But the Lord also turns every bed in the weakness of the sick person, to whom he deigns to be present. What is turned, changes its state, either from health to sickness, or from sickness to health. Therefore, the one who is ill turns himself towards the remedy of health.

Thus, therefore, the Lord Jesus, although he was wounded for our sins, yet he did not remain in that weakness; but he turned himself for the better for the salvation of all. Therefore, weakness was dissolved by passion, death by resurrection. Just as he turned himself for the redemption of peoples, and did not feel the sting of death or the weakness of wounds: so he who believes in him, even if seriously ill, in order to free from death, turns to life. Therefore he assumed the weakness of all humanity in his own weakness. For he took on the weaknesses of all in his flesh, he raised himself on the cross, and he turned the weaknesses of all in the weakness of his own body. Hence Isaiah says: By his bruising we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). Wrestlers have this skill, to submit themselves to those they engage and wrestle with, so that they may appear to be able to be overcome; and suddenly when they are considered to be conquered, they throw them down, and with a certain skill they maneuver themselves to pour out over their opponent. The one who was carried falls, and he who was carrying, is found to be superior, so that he may lay low the pressing one. Therefore, in the spiritual arena, the Lord Jesus, taking up our burdens, subjected himself in that encounter of his passion. And in the appearance of weakness, so that the adversary would

judge him to be an equal to other men, whom he could easily overcome, he laid aside the weapons of divinity and assumed the cover of humanity. The tempter approached, confident in victory: he wanted to wound him with a soldier's spear in his side, considering that he could be overthrown through his side, just like Adam. But the Lord Jesus, wounded in the side, brought forth life from the wound, abolished all sin, cast down the adversary, from whom he snatched the death of the robber; and in that death, in the burial of his own body, when he was considered oppressed, he triumphed by his own power: the adversary fell, the Lord arose.

(Verse 5.) It follows: I said: Lord, have mercy on me: heal my soul, for I have sinned against you. This can be said from the perspective of King David, who, seeing in the spirit such great victory and grace of Christ, asks that in that remission of all sins he may also have mercy on himself; for even though he is bound by human laws as a king, he knows himself to be subject to God for his sins. Therefore, he confesses his sin; so that he may receive forgiveness and find the gift of general indulgence. It can also be expressed from the perspective of the Savior, who asks for God's mercy for us and said that he had sinned because he became sin for us. At the same time, he teaches us that when we are engaged in a struggle against the enemies of God, we should implore God's help: we should confess our sins, and especially when we are pressed and wearied, when we prostrate ourselves with pain and bitterness, so that we may not be seen to be silent; so that the remedy may be quickly applied to our wounds and that we may resist the adversary when healed. How can a wounded person engage in combat? From where do we learn that we are wounded by the thorns of our sins? The wound seeks a physician, and the physician demands confession.

(Verse 6.) Here the Savior begins to reveal more and more the mystery of his passion, which is without a doubt in agreement with the Gospel. For the Jews cursed him, sought his death, plotted against him, and were unable to bear the ever-increasing glory of his works. Therefore, this prophecy announces what was fulfilled in the Gospel: 'My enemies have spoken evil against me: When will he die, and his name perish?' Those who believed that the author of life could die were foolish: but their prayers were destroyed by the Church, believing that even after death, according to the condition of the body, his name would increase; and therefore it sang to Him, saying: I will remember Your name in every generation and generation (Psalm 44:18). It repeated: Your name is poured out like ointment (Song of Songs 1:3). Those who presume that you can die will die: I will not die, for I know you to be the judge of life, the author of salvation. For we know that at the time of his passion and resurrection, the disciples were gathered together in prayer; when Mary Magdalene announced to them that the Lord had risen, and when the Lord appeared to them in his resurrected body, even though the door was locked, when Thomas saw his wounds and believed. Therefore, the Jews were insulting him as if he were dead, but the Lord revealed himself to the apostles as being alive. So when the Jews were saying, 'Look, the whole world has gone after him' (John 12:19), when they were saying that he was misleading the people with his miracles, what else were they saying except, 'When will he die, and his name will perish?' And so in his passion they cried out: Take him away, take him away from the earth: crucify him, crucify him (John 19:15). What they asked for happened, he was lifted up from the earth, he rose again, ascended into heaven, and restored his kingdom over us from the seats of paradise.

(Verse 7.) The prophecy concerning the clear traitor Judas is hidden in these verses that follow: And he went out to see, speaking in vain: his heart gathered iniquity to itself. He went out and

spoke. Thus it is distinguished in Greek codices. Therefore, Judas went in seeking to betray the Savior, to see what he was doing, or what he was saying; so that he could capture Him in speech and report to the Jews. But he found nothing, for he understood nothing. Scripture says well that when someone departs from Jesus' teaching and abandons his instructions, he is not within with Jesus. He desired to enter, but he could not penetrate because his own treachery excluded him. For every unchaste person, or greedy person, or impure person (which is idolatry), does not inherit the kingdom of Christ and God. Therefore, not only was he attempting to enter and not entering, but he also desired to see and did not see. Finally, Jesus spoke in parables, but Judas did not listen. Finally, he did not see the divine mysteries; for not everyone hears the word of God, even though they appear to hear it. For if everyone heard, Jesus would not say: He who has ears to hear, let him hear (Luke VIII, 8). And because he did not listen, he could not see, and he spoke false things instead of true things, and he thought that he deceived Jesus by saying: This could have been sold, and given to the poor (Matthew XXVI, 9); when he provided for his own thefts, not for the poor, calling Jesus 'rabbi'. For how was he calling the teacher by whose instruction he was going astray; and whose heart (into which the devil had submerged himself) he was gathering to himself and increasing iniquities? For he was unrighteous to himself, unjust to himself, he was sinning against himself, who was plotting deceit within himself, who could not hide. For Jesus was not going around in circles, who was willingly being betrayed and was testifying: One of you will betray me (John 13:21). Finally, Judas confessed, saying: Am I the one, Rabbi? And the Lord said: You have said it (Matthew 26:25). And Judas did not understand it in such a way that he would be recognized. For if he had understood, he would not have betrayed. But nevertheless, he went out and spoke. A suitable verse against those who betray someone's secret. He said beautifully: He went out; for outside are wolves, outside are thieves: inside Moses in the cloud with Jesus, outside are the Jews: inside Zacharias the priest in the temple, outside is the multitude: inside the Holy Spirit in our hearts cries out to the Father, outside our adversary prowls like a lion for plunder: outside are unbelievers, inside are believers. And so God will judge those who are outside, but Christ absolves those who are inside. Therefore, Judas went out and spoke. He went out from faith, he went out from the council and number of the apostles; he went out from the banquet of Christ to the robbery of the devil; he went out from the grace of sanctification to the snare of death, he who spoke empty words to the faithless; he went out, leaving behind the mysteries of internal life; he went out, not knowing the inner teachings of Scripture. For if he had known, he would have understood the saying: Does a sleeper not add that he may rise? He would have also understood this: But you, a man of one mind, my guide and my familiar, who always took sweet foods with me, we walked in the house of the Lord with consent (Psalm 54:14-15). Therefore, he did not understand this psalm, the 118th, nor others, nor other testimonies of the Scriptures. About whom John, the good Evangelist, says, and to the rest of the unbelievers: They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would have remained with us. (1 John 2:19).

(Verse 8.) Therefore, the traitor did not remain with the apostles, who went out and whispered with the unfaithful. The divine Scripture uses this word, showing that perfidy is without authority, as it fears what it speaks and is detected. But to the faithful it is said: 'Lift up your voice with strength' (Isaiah 58:1). Behold, in this is Judas the apostle fallen, who was sent to preach the faith to the nations with a full proclamation of authority, so that he whispered to the plotters of his master, which he feared would be heard. Did he not condemn himself by his own judgment? But he was ashamed to be heard because he did not fear to do it: he was ashamed; because he was

considering evils against the author of his life, sanctification, and honor: nor did he repay grace with kindness, but he attributed evil to his benefactor for his goods; which even worldly men are accustomed to condemn: he was ashamed to be found ungrateful, he was ashamed to be seen as greedy; when he sacrificed his own salvation for money: he was ashamed to be seen as treacherous. Similarly, the Jews who opposed the master of faith were suborning false witnesses, so that they would say that he had preached that the temple of God, which Solomon built, should be destroyed; when he had actually meant the temple of his own body: 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up' (John 2:19); truly, those who were excluded from the knowledge of the celestial Word were outside.

(Verse 9.) They have set forth a wicked word against me; that is, unlawful, and contrary to law and divine right, they have proposed speech, making agreements with me about human blood, which Judas most wickedly sold: the Jews also believed that it should be bought with no less wickedness, vain men; as if to one who is sleeping, he says, it does not add that he may rise (Ibid.). Let us consider what adjection is.

It is natural for all earthly living creatures, both birds of the sky and fish of the sea, to be born and to die. But to man, whom God has made more precious than the other creatures of the earth, He has bestowed this special grace, that he may revive after death. This addition, therefore, is said for the renewal of a higher life. Finally, when the Lord had commanded Hezekiah the king, after telling him that his time of life was fulfilled, and had ordered him through Isaiah to arrange his house because he was going to die, and Hezekiah had prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly, the Lord, moved by pity, commanded him: 'Behold, I will add fifteen years to your time' (Isaiah 38:5). And elsewhere, Saint David says: '"You will add days upon days to the king's years"' (Psalm 60:7). Therefore, it is found that something can be added to man, but nothing can be added to God. For it is written: '"There is no adding or subtracting, in which all things are perfect and complete"' (Sirach 28:5). Even though Christ rose from the dead, certainly in what He assumed, He rose, in which nothing could be taken away or added to the fullness of His divinity. For God is incorporeal and immortal, whose supreme nature and plenitude of virtues is signified without any addition of flesh. But the flesh is part of the dispensation in Christ, which he took on with the title of mercy and the right of piety, in order to redeem the captive, cleanse the contaminated, and resurrect the dead. And it is rightly said: Can one who sleeps not add that he may rise again? He did not say, he does not add; but, he will not add that he may rise again; because he, as the Son of God, resurrected himself; as we have said above that he said to the Jews: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up (John 2:19). The flesh received the assumption, as if taken from man, received from the Virgin: but as if God himself worked the assumption, who rose by his own power; so that he might be the operator of his own resurrection. But in order that you may understand that both the Father and the Son, and the Son himself, have risen, acknowledge that operation to have been of divine power; because the power of the Father and Son is one, and their operation is common; since the substance of the Trinity is one and the same.

(Verse 10.) But why do I accuse others (says the Lord Jesus)? What is so surprising if the people did not recognize me and condemned me to the cross, when my apostle demanded the reward for betraying me, when my companion sold my death? Indeed, the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has greatly exceeded me in treachery. Some think that Judas should be excused because he returned the money he received as payment for betraying me, but behold,

beyond the condemnation of the Jews' unfaithfulness; for to whom more is given, more is required of him. What, he says, should I complain about others? The man of my peace, to whom I had given my peace, wanted to leave my peace, when he had handed me over to my persecutors and deceived me, in whom I had hoped. Did he not know that a traitor would arise, about whom he had previously said: 'One of you will betray me' (John 13:21)? (He said this about Judas, as it is written in the Gospel.) Of course he knew; but he said that he had hoped for a greater condemnation of him because of his faith. The eagle, relying on me, said: Symmachus placed; I trusted. For we weigh more heavily on the one in whom we say we have placed the most hope or trust; if afterwards he disappoints our hope and opinion. At the same time, it shows the extent of divine sanctification, which excludes evil and corrects corrupted nature, if a better plan is implemented. How many conversions do we know of? Zacchaeus, the tax collector, was transformed and turned away from his greedy pursuits. Afterward, he repaid his past errors fourfold, condemned his own greed, renounced his former profits, and compensated the poor if the tax collector was lacking. The thief himself changed his wickedness for a better purpose, he recognized Christ on the cross, confessed him as the Son of God, and proclaimed him king with his own voice. At that time, many of the righteous were wavering, and the apostles certainly hid themselves; even the executioner, the centurion, did not deny. What about the time of the Gospel? Rahab was a prostitute, who sustained herself through treachery and indulgence; yet when she saw the spies that Jesus had sent, she embraced faith; and in the face of impending danger, she preserved righteousness; she did not betray those received, but protected them with faithful kindness. Therefore, he says that he hoped as if he had presumed by right that, if the apostle had set aside higher things, he would pursue better things. And he, who had received the task of sanctifying others, should himself keep the grace of sanctity, and adhere to the duties of sincerity. 'Well,' he says, 'I have hoped, because God has given man the power of choice to follow what he wishes. I have placed before you good and evil. If you choose evil, it is not nature that is at fault, but the inclination of the one who chooses.' If everyone is condemned who has chosen evil, what shall we say about Judas, who betrayed the one with whom he was enjoying a delightful meal?

He who ate, he said, has enlarged supplantation above me. What is it that he added, my breads? He could have said: He who ate with me; unless you understand that which is special to Christ, that is, the heavenly food of the Word; for man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Matthew 4:4). In another place he says: You always took sweet food with me (Psalm 54:15). We use these verses well against those who believe they must be killed, with whom they seem to have feasted. The Gentiles are said to guard this, usually their enemies, even thieves; so that they spare those with whom they remember having shared a meal: even wild animals themselves become tame through the companionship of fodder. Therefore, because of this kind of affection of conviviality, if we consider the words, he did not speak of sweet food in vain. For how can sweet foods be sweet if they quickly spoil? But see that he did not speak the words of life as sweet foods. For no bitterness corrupts these foods, no taint of death contaminates them. And so he always said. For no one could always eat. However, we can always abide by the word of God, both by night and by day, if we meditate on the law of God day and night.

What is also, *ampliat*? The Greek word *μεγαλυνεν* means, to magnify. Both were explained to us by the Lord, which could move us, saying in the Gospel: 'He who eats bread with me, has lifted up his heel against me' (John 13:18). Let us consider from where this discourse was taken. 'We

were,' he says, 'unbelieving, wandering, serving desires and pleasures' (Titus 3:3). Let us admit our error, that we may be washed away. And I saw a young boy, when he had thrown down his opponent, strike him in the forehead with his heel: which was a sign because he insulted the defeated. This is what he says: He magnified the deceit against me; by this word he declared the boasting of the one insulting. Therefore, Judas also lifted his heel against Christ when he betrayed him; but he did not lift it with impunity. Yet Adam still lifts his heel, which was wounded by the serpent. And certainly Christ washed his feet. He had heard him say: The one who is bathed does not need anything except to wash his feet; but he is completely clean (John 13:10). But what grace had cleansed, treachery had defiled. Judas, therefore, lifted his heel to wound. Truly, he did not hold his head who lifted his heel upon Christ. Adam lifted himself up, this one upon Christ; and therefore the serpent wounded him more grievously than the others. He lifted his heel, who extended a deceitful kiss, with which he intended to overthrow the author; and therefore it is written in the Prophet: He has magnified a cunning device against me. Esau also said about his brother: He has tricked me twice (Gen. XXVII, 36). The one who tricks, commits deceit, in order to elude or wound his opponent. Therefore, Judas is also said to have tricked; because he inflicted a wound with his kiss, which served as a sign to the persecutors of the Savior's betrayal. He tricked, therefore, like a serpent; because a serpent injects venom with its mouth, and wounds with its fangs on the heel. And indeed, he wounded not the divinity of Christ, but the furthest part of his body, the heel. Judas also lifted up his heel like an insolent and proud wrestler, intending to strike the head of the Savior: but he could not strike the head of Christ, because the head of Christ is God. He indeed bound his own head with the twisted knot of a shameful noose, in order to deprive himself of the remedy of salvation.

See if you can fit that which the holy patriarch Jacob said in Genesis when he prophesied about his sons: 'Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel; let Dan be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider falls backward; let Dan hope for salvation from the LORD.' (Gen. XLIX, 16 et 17). We do indeed read that Samson from the tribe of Dan was a judge in Israel (Judges XIII, 25), but another one is signified here, who will arise from that tribe and afflict the people with punishments for their sacrilegious impiety. That Antichrist, who will sit in the temple as if he were God, truly has a judgment that has an interpretation; for Dan signifies judgment. And he said well, because he will judge his people, who will be subject to eternal punishment; for he who does not believe is already judged: but he who believes will not be judged; because he believes in the Son of God as the redeemer of his soul. And therefore, as a book of judgment says: He who judges me is the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:4). Therefore, he will judge the people of impiety, not the common people; for it is those who fall into the ruin of treachery that are judged, not those who rise in the freedom of faith.

Therefore, he will sit in the road and lie in wait on the path like a serpent; to wound those who pass by, and bite at our heels; for he cannot wound the soul of the faithful. On which road will he sit, and on which path; except those whom Christ the Lord, as we read, called the people of the nations to his supper saying: Go out into the roads and along the hedges, and compel them to enter; so that my house may be filled (Luke 14:23). And since it is read that Judas also surpassed Christ in deception, it seems that in this place he himself is marked, as having bitten the heel of the horse on which Christ the Lord was riding. Hence it is said: Your horses will be swift (Hab. 3:8); that is, his flesh was going to bear the sin of the whole world, so that salvation would succeed destruction,

and eternal life would succeed death. Therefore, the horse alone, which took on the sins of the whole world and carried our burdens and was not weary, was wounded. The horse was wounded, which did not know how to incline to the fury of lust. And therefore, perhaps to John the Evangelist, heaven was opened, and a white horse appeared, on which sat one with diadems on his head, and on his thigh was written a name: King of kings, and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16). It was white because it was immaculate, having known no stains of sin. For if lust is dark, sanctity shines and sparkles brightly. Thus, this horse is wounded, but not hindered. Finally, having risen from the tomb with the very wound, he ran to heaven above all angels and archangels, faster than all the heavenly host, found above even the fiery horses on which Elijah was taken up. And rightly faster, who ascended above all heavens, and above the heaven of heavens to the seat of almighty God, and sits; as Scripture teaches us, saying: You shall see the Son of man seated at the right hand of power (Mark XIV, 62). This is the horse that was shown in the likeness and presence of Machabees, which the leader of that celestial militia sat upon, shining with golden armor. He looted from Heliodorus, the plunderer of the widow's possessions, all the sacred treasures entrusted to his care, and he struck him down and defeated him, and afterwards, at the entreaties of Onias the priest, he restored them for vital use. Truly, in him the golden weapons gleamed, because he alone sat on this horse and conquered, in which no one innocent of wrongdoing escaped. Not Enoch, who was taken, so that wickedness might not change his heart: not Abraham, not Isaac, not Jacob, not Moses. For all were under sin, all were under death. Finally, death reigned from Adam to Moses. He alone is the one who did not sin: he alone is Christ who took away the sin of the world, who said to death: Where is your victory, death? Where is your sting? (I Cor. XV, 55)?

How then did Judas magnify his treachery, and the knight fell backwards? What he did to Judas, he did deceitfully; what he did to Christ, he willingly suffered. Often we see the stronger one wanting to strike; so that when he is provoked more sharply, he rises up more vehemently. Therefore, the serpent bit the horse's heel, and vomited the venom of its deceit: the knight willingly threw himself down, willingly fell; so that he could lift us up. But what does Scripture say: And the knight shall fall backwards (Gen. XLIX, 17) ? Why backwards, except to rule those following behind? Peter was going backwards, to whom he said: Go behind me (Mark 8:33). The apostles and other disciples were behind. Therefore, he fell backwards; because he saves those upon whom he falls. For everyone who falls upon this stone, he says, will be broken: but upon whomsoever he shall fall, he will cleanse him (Luke 20:18). Others have, he will winnow him; others, he will crush. For he who winnows the fruit, cleanses it from chaff; he who crushes something, reduces it to dust; so that the softness of the dust, either by a salutary cup or by any other use of medicine, may profit without any disturbance. Hence we conclude that caution must be exercised, so that anyone who has once been received through baptism by Christ may not separate himself from His body, that is, be expelled from the Church; for it is the ruin of eternal death. But the one who comes to believe in Christ, let him find his death, let his cross bear him, let the nail pierce him, let his blood be shed, let his burial cover him, let the grace of the resurrection raise him up, awaken him from sleep, vivify him from death: I say, let him be freed from the world, cleansed from sin, healed from wounds, softened from the hardness of impiety, melted into the meekness of piety, so that with a circumcised heart, he may receive that uncircumscribed and incomprehensible spirit, drink the cup of eternal salvation. The knight fell backward.

Receive and another thing, why did he fall backwards and not forward? After him everyone, no one before him. He fell therefore not for himself, but for everyone; so that by falling he might soften the hardness of our hearts. He fell upon Adam, whom he was seeking to find. He sought him in the past; so that the good shepherd could place him on his shoulders, and in his redemption carry him with himself to paradise. But perhaps you will say: Even the persecutors fell backward. For it is written (John 18:6) that the chief priests, whom the traitor Judas had brought, and the others who had come to arrest the Lord Jesus, went backward and fell to the ground. This is what I also say, because He wanted to fall upon sinners, not upon the righteous; for the righteous do not need a physician, but sinners do. If the shadow of the apostles healed, how much more does the flesh of Christ, when it touches, defend from death! Finally, he touched the leper and cleansed him immediately. So that you may know, whoever is reading, that he wanted to save even his persecutors, interrogate the witness of Christ. For when Peter accused the Jews of killing the Prince of Life, he showed them the remedy: that they should repent, have their sins forgiven, and deserve mercy. Why do you doubt that he fell in order to be resurrected, when he himself said, 'I will strike and heal' (Deuteronomy 32:39)? However, pay attention to the difference in wording. In Genesis it is said: The horseman shall fall backward, awaiting salvation from the Lord (Gen. XLIX, 17); that is, he does not turn his eyes away, his action does not turn his own mind back, he claims the prerogative of his resurrection, and resurrects himself by divine power. But here it is said: They went backward and fell to the ground (John XVIII, 6). He who is earthly falls to the ground, he who is heavenly clings to heaven. And if the body falls, virtue does not fall: nor does it focus on those things that are its own, but on those things that are always aimed upward; for it always looks to the Father, so that it may fulfill His will concerning us. If only they had not turned backwards, but instead received Christ! just as Joseph received Him and buried Him in a new tomb. He who is faithful does not fall to the earth; he who is unfaithful falls and descends to the lower parts of the earth; as it is written: They shall go down into hell while still alive (Psalm 54:16). Therefore, the persecutor falls upon the earth and descends into hell: Christ is above those who will rise again, Christ is above the rock, Christ is above the Church. Listen to how he falls upon the Church. Peter was behind, and he followed him as he was led from the Jews to the house of Caiphas, the leader of the Synagogue. He is Peter to whom He said: You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church (Matthew 16:18). Where Peter is, there is the Church; where the Church is, there is no death, but eternal life. And therefore he added: And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:18-19). Blessed Peter, to whom the gate of hell did not prevail, did not close himself off from the gate of heaven; but on the contrary, he destroyed the gates of hell and opened up the gates of heaven. Thus, being set on earth, he opened heaven and closed hell.

It may also be applicable to this place that the Samaritan did not pass by the wounded man descending from Jericho, but took care of him, healing his wounds by pouring oil and wine on them, and placed him on his own animal, and brought him to an inn. Why do you hesitate about a good horse, when you read about a good animal? When you read about that one entering Jerusalem, and many and numerous horsemen with chariots and carts? Do not be moved by what you have done: some rely on chariots, others on horses; but we rely on the name of the Lord our God. They are bound and have fallen (Psal. XIX, 8 and 9). But Elijah did not fall, he entered on a chariot; where the name of God is, no one is bound, but all are set free. In the name of our God, the poor and the rich are safe; the noble and the ignoble; the weak and the powerful. Wealth does

not prejudice faith; but we must know how to use our wealth.

(Verse 11.) And therefore, having the name of God within Himself, He says: But you, O Lord, have mercy on me, and resurrect me, and I will repay them. Certainly, He does not say this as if doubting the resurrection, who had the power to say: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will resurrect it (John 2:19); but He gives a form to man, that he may hope for mercy from God and resurrection from God. Furthermore, He does not ask to be resurrected Himself; rather, He asks to be resurrected in the place of Judas, so that the number of apostles may be complete. For indeed, because it was necessary that the son of perdition perish, so that Scripture would be fulfilled; it was fitting that the son of salvation be substituted in his place. Take a third instance. He demands to be resurrected, that is, his body: but the body of Christ is the Church. And because Judas was a figure of the faithless people of the Jews, who either bought or sold Christ for money (which those do who value money more than religion), he signifies the Church, which will rise again with favor after the destruction of the people in faith. And the Song of Songs says: If you have stirred up and revived love (Cant. II, 7) ; when seeking Christ in the young men, because Christ is love. But when He says, 'I will repay them,' we understand that those who prosper in the processes of the Church will be tormented, and then they will know what the punishment of perfidy is, when they realize the splendor of faith and grace. Or it is because the Lord is good, who could say: 'They repaid me evil for good' (Psalms 34:12). And the word 'repayment' is in the middle, either in good or in evil: He says that He will repay in good because although blindness will happen to part of Israel, when the fullness of the Gentiles enters, then all Israel will be saved by the mercy of Christ.

(Verse 12.) And he subjected: In this I have known that you desired me; for my enemy will not rejoice over me. Earlier, he spoke of his passion as a man: now he reveals his majesty, that he alone, without sin, he whom the sinner could not approach, he alone whom the Father loved as his only Son. So why did the enemy not rejoice over him? Because although he endured death for us, he also rose; and he himself triumphed over the enemy, whose victory he destroyed, and he broke the sting of death. And we, although we may be sad in this world, and in our mourning and the contrition of our hearts and souls, let our enemy rejoice; yet when we rise, we destroy his joy. And thus Micah said: Do not rejoice over me, my enemy, for I have fallen; but I shall rise (Micah 7:8). Therefore, there is resurrection because all the enemy's bonds are loosed, and every triumph is abolished.

(Verse 13, 14.) It follows: But for my innocence you have received me and have confirmed me in your sight forever. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from eternity to eternity. Let it be, let it be. The innocent harms no one, sins against no one. Therefore, without sin, without deceit, Christ is marked by the authority of divine Scripture. This is therefore declared here, where it says: But for my innocence you have received me. But what does "susceptio" signify? For we also read elsewhere: You have taken me out of the womb of my mother (Psalm 138, 13). Therefore, because the world is born from every conception of human generation, he who is born of the Spirit and the Virgin was taken by the Father; because there was no customary bodily generation to stain his origin. He was taken as he rose again; because no offense of falling tarnished him. He returned immaculate to the Father, from whom he departed immaculate; when he descended to earth. Where the Father says to him, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you' (Psalm 2:7); this means, I recognize in you the privilege of my generation, which no stain of sin could defile. You have lived among sinners, you have borne the sins of all, you have become sin for all, you have

become a curse for all; but no taint of sin could pass onto you. Thus you have lived among sinners, as if you were among angels. You made the earth to be what the heavens are; so that there you would remove sin. Today I have begotten you, in whom I am well pleased. You have proven yourself to be the Son, who fulfilled the Father's will in all things. Today I have begotten you, in whom I recognize the light of the spotless offspring. Yesterday and today you are the same, and forever. There is no night in you, for you are all day. Well confirmed in the sight of the Father, you are said to be eternal; for you are always with the Father: truly in his sight, whose splendor is glory, and the image of his substance. But just as the Father is pleased with the Son, so also the Son blesses the Father. For the Father honors the Son, and the Son honors the Father.

Blessed is the Lord God of Israel; that is, the God of a people who see, who both believe in their Lord and God. From age to age: let it be done, let it be done. In Hebrew it is said: Amen, amen; as those who have read the book written in Hebrew letters assert. In Greek, in this place, it is said γένοιτο, γένοιτο: which means, Let it be done, let it be done. This word has various meanings, sometimes as a command, sometimes as a prayer, sometimes as a confirmation of something: it is a command when the superior determines for the inferior what should be done or followed: it is a prayer, as in this: Let your will be done (Matthew 6:10); for no one commands God, but pours out a prayer: it is a confirmation when a prophet, or a priest, or a saint blesses, and the people respond: Let it be done, let it be done. Therefore, this seems to me more of a confirmation of blessing than a prayer or supplication, especially because it is a repetition of the speech itself. And it seems that the Hebrew language has changed, but the same meaning is expressed. For just as when a priest blesses, the people respond with 'amen', confirming the blessing to themselves, which the priest prays for from the Lord on behalf of the people, so in the psalm the response is: 'Let it be done, let it be done', as if saying: 'Amen, amen'. The word 'Amen', however, clearly indicates confirmation in the Gospel, where the Lord, confirming his own words, says: 'Amen, I say to you' (Matthew 19:23). But the major force is when the word is repeated; which we more frequently find in the book of the Gospel according to John; because he himself spoke especially about heavenly and profound mysteries; as it is written: Amen, amen I say to you; unless one is born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). And elsewhere: Amen, amen I say to you; if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you (John 16:23). There are plenty of examples, but if anyone seeks the rest, they will find them.

Also an indication is given of the finished book: Let it be done, let it be done. For the psalter is seen to be divided into five books. The first book is finished with this psalm, that is, the fortieth. And beautifully, up to the passion of the Savior, the fortieth psalm is included, which would give an end to the book, since the passion of the Lord is the end of Lent: so that the second book would begin with the mysteries of renewal, which book, being about lent, includes more perfect sacraments. For it foreshadows the sacraments of baptism, when it says: 'As the deer longs for the fountains of water' (Psalm 41:2); and the rest of the saints who have reached the heavenly tabernacle; and the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the grace of the Spirit was poured out in a voice of heavenly waterfalls; for the Spirit was carried by great power, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:2); and the entrance of the renewed man to the altar; and the ascent of the Savior; and the sanctification of the proposed virginity. This book ends with the seventy-first psalm, in which the peaceful kingdom of Christ is proclaimed to be spread throughout the entire

world by prophetic discourse, as well as the forgiveness of sins. After he had preceded with the blessing of the Lord, he added: And let the whole earth be filled with his glory: Let it be, let it be (Psalm 71, 19). The third book also ends with the eighty-eighth psalm; and there it says: Blessed be the Lord forever: Let it be, let it be (Psalm 88, 53). The fourth book ends with the one hundred fifth psalm, where it says: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from eternity to eternity; and let all the people say: Amen, amen (Psalm 105, 48). The fifth book also comes to an end; where the Prophet says with this word: Let every spirit praise the Lord (Psalm 150, 6). But perhaps it may again trouble you how I assert that there are five books when there is only one Psalter. But also, there is only one Gospel, and we cannot deny that there are four books. However, we have already indicated that there is one Gospel elsewhere (Book 1 in Luke, in the preface), if I am not mistaken; and if it is demanded again, we can easily explain, since the Savior has said: Amen I say to you, wherever this Gospel is preached (Matthew 26:13). And the Apostle says, 'I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ' (Galatians 1:6-7). And elsewhere he declares, 'Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you' (1 Corinthians 15:1). And you will find nowhere else four books that pertain to this Body, except the Gospel. Finally, because the psalms also form one body, Scripture says, 'On the ten-stringed harp, with the full sound of the lyre' (Psalm 92:4). But again, because there are five books, he said elsewhere: In the vessels of the Psalms (Psal. LXX, 22). But beautifully five books and one Psalter; because a man is vivified by the five exterior senses: and again that hidden man of our heart is consummated by the five spiritual senses, who alone is found rich before God by the testimony of Peter the Apostle (1 Peter 3:4). He who has, he says, ears for hearing, let him hear (Luke 8:8). You have five senses. And just as there are those who have eyes and do not see; so there are those who are thought to see more than those who do not have eyes. And so the prophets were called seers, even those who did not see with their eyes. Also that sweet fragrance, of which the Apostle said: We are the sweet fragrance of Christ to God (2 Corinthians 2:15). Therefore Job also says: And the divine Spirit, which is in my nostrils (Job 27:3). Therefore, the same fragrance of Christ is the Holy Spirit to God; because there is one fragrance of the Trinity. And there is also inner food, of which the Lord said: My food is to do the will of my Father who is in heaven (John 4:34). There is also an interior touch, by which that woman in the Gospel who had been flowing blood for twelve years touched Christ, and had not received healing from physicians; but she received it from Christ. It is a touch of faith, as often as Christ is touched. Finally, men did not see her, but Jesus saw her, and he testified that he had seen her, saying: Someone touched me; for I also knew that power had gone out from me (Luke 8:46). Knowledge of Christ is the obtaining of health. Therefore, since it is evident that man possesses ten senses, David, who both sang outwardly and inwardly, outwardly with his body and inwardly with his heart, says in the psalm: 'I will sing to you on the ten-stringed harp.' (Psalm 143:9).

Therefore, the Psalter is a person perfected in Christ; in whom, just as the threads of the strings of a harp are skillfully interwoven, so too the virtuous deeds of those who live in harmony resound, so that they can say: I will praise you, O God, on the holy harp of Israel; my lips will rejoice when I sing to you, and my soul, which you have redeemed (Psalm 70:24-25). Paul says of himself: Outside are battles, within are fears (2 Corinthians 7:5). He rejoices both inwardly and outwardly: but the former is still in the struggle, the latter in peace; because he knew that he had deserved the

redemption of his soul. The one who sings is in joy: the one who wrestles is in worry. But even Paul knew how to sing: but he still reserved himself for the right times, when he would be more fully proven, in order to sing; and therefore he said: I will pray in spirit, I will pray in mind: I will sing in spirit, I will sing in mind (I Cor. XIV, 15). And because he demonstrated the twofold duty of chanting, Scripture also teaches that there is a twofold voice, as the Prophet says: With my voice I cried out to the Lord, and my voice cried out to God, and he listened to me (Psalm 76:2). What is mine? For he could have said: I cried out to the Lord. But what is our voice? Unless it is the one that is better, which does not know how to err? For we fall into sin from excessive talking, and we cannot avoid it. That voice of the Prophet is the one that reaches God, the one that cried out to the Lord when Moses was silent. It is the same voice that Anna also cried out with in her prayers, even though she did not move the lips of her mouth, and she obtained a son, whom she had not obtained for a long time, when she cried out with the voice of her body. About this voice, the Lord said: But you, when you pray, go into your room, and closing the door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you (Matt. 6:6). What does 'will reward' mean? It means that He will grant what you pleaded for, what you prayed for. For just as sinners receive their sins doubled from the hand of the Lord, so on the contrary, the righteous receive their own requests with heartfelt affection. Listen to how they receive them. Your prayer ascends to God and descends to you. Hence, in the Psalm, we read: 'And my prayer shall turn into my bosom' (Ps. XXXIV, 13), that is, it shall bring forth fruit for the one who asks. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has revealed such great mysteries to us: from age to age, that is, from infinity to infinity: Let it be done, let it be done. On Psalm 44, Commentary (Verse 1.) The title of this psalm is: To the end, for the sons of Core, understanding. In which the mysteries of the Lord's Passion, Baptism, and entrance to the most holy altar are recounted, the holy prophet David teaches how Christ exercises his athlete, whose name is held in the contest of the saints. For just as without our effort, not by works but by faith through his grace, he has granted us forgiveness of sins and generously admitted us to seek the crown, and has not allowed our previous sins to harm us, by which we would be judged unworthy in such a great contest (for discipline of life is also sought even in those who undergo this cleansing contest), so again this psalm reminds us that many and weighty contests are set before us, so that no one is crowned except the one who has competed lawfully. Therefore, we must fight against the allurements of this flesh and the heat of the blood: we must fight against spiritual wickedness. No one has a more serious domestic adversary; no one is more harmful than that enemy to whom the power of heavenly substance supports. When I say no one, remember the divine discourse in which the Lord said: Among those born of women, no one is greater than John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11). For he who is born of a Virgin is above all. And so, we fear no one who has Christ; for if Christ is for us, who can be against us? Let us strive, therefore, to the end; that, with all things removed that fought against the will of Jesus and the Lord in our former body, we may serve with true exercises of virtue, serving our God and Lord alone. For this is the end, as it is written: Christ is the firstfruits then the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God and the Father; when he has destroyed every Principality and Power and Virtue. . . . so that death might be destroyed forever (1 Corinthians 15:23 et seq.), and we may begin to be subject to God, maintaining the heavenly kingdom within us, where it existed before the flood of sins.

Therefore, rightly so, the psalm is inscribed to the sons of Korah, so that in understanding it, not ordinary hearing but spiritual understanding may operate. Finally, Aquila placed the psalm in the

discipline. And therefore Scripture says to you: Give your heart to discipline; and prepare your ears for words of understanding (Prov. 23:12). And elsewhere: Love wisdom and discipline (Prov. 1:3). Wisdom is that which overflows with intelligence: discipline is a certain disposition of nature combined with the form of virtues, and confirmed by the judgment of the mind through the teachings of knowledge. It is also through the understanding of obscure speech and the wisdom of words, as well as the riddles of Proverbs, that Scripture teaches us. By its authority, we gather that these are the main virtues of wisdom: because wisdom always gives birth like a fruitful mother, discipline is like a strict teacher, understanding is like a diligent seeker who finds, and it searches for true justice and judgment.

Let us learn these sacred testimonies of reading. Wisdom says: I am like a fountain in paradise, I said: I will water my garden . . . and still I will pour forth doctrine like prophecy (Eccli. XXIV, 41, 42 and 46). For wisdom instills into the mind of man, good senses, as a pious mother. Also, receive the testimonies of discipline: My son, do not neglect the discipline of God, and do not be discouraged when He corrects you (Prov. III, 11 and 12); for whom God loves, He corrects. Indeed, discipline is severe in reprimanding, but sweet in correcting; so that we may not wander and go astray, but be received by Christ. For undisciplined behavior wanders, as it is written. But for the sake of preservation, discipline is established here. However, just like wisdom, discipline is called both perfect and imperfect by the same name: but when they are called without any qualification, either discipline or wisdom, they receive the definition of perfection. Therefore, undisciplined knowledge flows away, but disciplined knowledge does not flow away. The same Scripture also defines intellect, because a good intellect is for all who make use of it (Psalm CX, 10): but an intellect, since it has grace of wisdom and order of discipline in itself; surely we are taught that both wisdom and discipline are good for those who carry out their teachings in their ministries. We have spoken about the title, let us adore the psalm.

(Verse 2.) We have heard, O God, with our ears; thus Symmachus [says]: Theodotion [has] spoken in our ears; just as also the Seventy. What does he mean by saying, with our ears? And if it were not enough to say, we have heard, certainly if this had pleased [him]: With our ears we have heard, it was full. Therefore, when it is added, our [ears], what does this mean; except that you understand those [things] to be ours, which are of the mind; and those [things] to be better, than those [that are] of this body? And therefore, as it were speaking of another, the same Prophet here says: I will not fear what flesh can do unto me (Psalm 55:5). And elsewhere: I cried unto the Lord with my voice, even unto God with my voice, and He gave ear unto me (Psalm 76:2). That voice of mine which is heard by Christ is not that which resounds in public. Therefore, He does not desire as His own that which is corruptible and earthly, who remembers that he was created in the image and likeness of God. Finally, Scripture teaches us that man was first formed in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and afterwards made from clay (Genesis 2:7). Therefore, as a superior (for the superior is older), and as the ruler and governor of this corporeal soul, the power says: 'With our ears we have heard.' Who is this, if not the one of whom it is said: 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear' (Luke 8:8)? For there are those who have ears but cannot hear the mysteries, of whom Jesus speaks in the Revelation of John: 'Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons' (Revelation 22:15); for the desire for wickedness and the corrosion of money block the ear from hearing. Let us therefore consider what they say they have heard, or from whom they say they have heard. And our fathers, he said, have announced to us. Who are these fathers of ours?

The inscription says that the psalm was written by the sons of Korah, so that it may be sung by them, who had received the gift of singing and had been appointed to this office. But Korah and Dathan and Abiram, along with others who rose up against Moses and Aaron in rebellious zeal, were swallowed up by the earth in the desert and killed. With them dead, who were the other fathers of their sons who could announce the wonderful works of the Lord? For wisdom does not enter a malicious soul. If therefore fathers have not announced to their sons, much less strangers, who have avoided the offspring of traitors. So who are these fathers? See lest they are those of whom it is said: Ask your father, he himself will tell you (Deut. XXXII, 7). Ask when you read Paul: or if you do not read, and something moves you, seek in him. For he is the good father, who can teach and form in us the Lord Jesus; as he himself testified, saying: My little children, whom I bear; until Christ is formed in you (Galat. IV, 19). John the Evangelist shows you these fathers, saying: I say to you, fathers, who have known him who is from the beginning (1 John 2:13). These are the fathers, whose old age is blameless. Therefore, place your finger on your mouth in the assembly of elders, so that you may hear what is profitable for you, and may know the sacraments of eternal life: lest, being an insolent novice, you disrupt the teachers, and presume to speak before you have learned. Therefore, let us hear what these fathers have proclaimed to the children of Core.

He said: I will do a work in the days of old. Let us inquire which are those days in which God has done great and wonderful things. And the Scripture teaches us that there are some notable days in which divine deeds have shone forth: when it is said that the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. And it will be, whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Joel 2:31-32). For on this very day Christ rose from the dead, and therefore it is specifically said of him: This is the day which the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it (Psalm 118:24). Since God has made all the days, this day, however, has been given the prerogative of divine work above the others, by which all sin is taken away. But other days belong to sin. Therefore, this is the day which the sun of righteousness has illumined. For even it is accustomed to have its rising and setting. And it is written: 'In his days shall righteousness flourish' (Psalm 72:7). Therefore there are days of Christ in which righteousness has arisen: there are days of Christ in which abundance of peace has arisen: there are days of Christ in which wisdom has arisen. Hear how wisdom arises: 'If any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise' (1 Corinthians 3:18). And thus Wisdom says, which has chosen the foolishness of this world: 'The Lord created me the beginning of his ways in his works' (Proverbs 8:22). For just as in the days of King Uzziah and in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, wickedness arose and captivity reigned; so in the days of the Lord Jesus, faith arose, which spreads the splendor of its brightness and light throughout the whole world. For what days are better than those in which the vision of God has shone upon us, as Jacob said? For it is written: I have seen God face to face, and my soul has been saved. And immediately the sun arose for him (Genesis 32:30-31). Who is this sun, if not the one who made the day shine with righteousness, on which Christ was born from the Virgin? Jacob saw it in a vision and said that he has seen God: in truth, the Jews saw and did not believe. Therefore, their days were shortened, while ours were illuminated; because their days were lacking, ours were approaching. Hence, the holy David, escaping Jewish blindness, said: Do not lead me into the half of my days (Psalm 101, 25). For this day of the Lord is great and shining, not indeed by the length of time, but by the clarity of justice or grace. Therefore there are half days, in which the days are shortened by the darkness of impiety and the filth of perfidy, in which the sun sets upon the prophets (Micah 3:6), as it is

written. For just as the sun rises for the just, so it sets for the unbelievers. But this happens because the Lord says: For the sake of the elect, the days will be shortened (Matthew 24:22). And it seems contrary, unless you carefully take notice and repeat the preceding words; for the Lord says: Then if anyone says to you: Look, here is the Christ, or, Look, there he is, do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise, and they will perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if it were possible, even the elect (Ibid., 23 and 24). And so, in order that the chosen ones may not be deceived, the Lord warns what must be followed; that we may not be captivated by the words of false prophets, nor deceived by any of their miraculous actions: but then we may believe that Christ is coming, when the days of full righteousness begin to shine forth. For Christ will be revealed with the full brightness of His majesty; and just as lightning comes forth from the east and spreads its light throughout the entire world unto the west: so also will the Son of Man, coming with His angels, illuminate this world; that every man may believe and every flesh may be saved. Therefore, let us not believe in the Antichrist, about whom false prophets will say: This is Christ; for the days of treachery will be the days of the Antichrist. Let us not believe those who say: Christ is in the desert, Christ is in the inner chambers; for now all things are full of Christ, where Christ begins to approach. But when we see the deeds that Christ predicted in his Gospel, then let us believe in his coming; lest while we seek the true light, we fall into the darkness of unbelief.

Therefore, the signs of perfidy must be looked out for, by which the days are shortened and diminished. For the sun will be darkened, stars will fall, that is, the just of God; for they shine like stars in the sky. When you see these things, still believe in the delay of Christ; for where Christ is, there is a clearer faith: where Antichrist is, there are half-days; concerning which, surely David the prophet would not complain if it seemed to refer to the brevity of time; since he himself has said elsewhere: Alas for me, because my sojourning has been prolonged (Ps. 119:5)! For how could he mourn either the celestial dwelling that was delayed and settled upon, or this earthly dwelling that was limited, when he had previously asked not to be brought through the half of his days; since the brevity of days seemed to bring a shortcut to the swift course of that progression? From this it is concluded and that which he says: Honor your father and mother, so that you may be long-lived upon the earth (Exod. XX, 12); how should we understand it? For many who honor, are often quickly snatched away, so that they die in their premature age: many also who show less deference to their parents, enjoy the long-lasting rewards of old age; and unless we receive that longevity of life as a support for eternal life, the Scripture is found to be lacking aid of truth. Where the Greek expressed it more explicitly: That you may be of many days, that is, πολυμερος. For whoever diligently keeps the pious cult's duty, is alien to the darkness of night and turns in the light of days. And therefore, whoever reads Deuteronomy: Let him read it, he says, all the days of his life (Deut. XVII, 19); not only at night, but during the day; because the day shines for the reader the mysteries of truth and oracles of divine piety. Let us consider the following.

(Verse 3.) Your hand has scattered the nations and planted them: You have afflicted peoples and driven them out. Indeed, we know that the Lord has uprooted and overthrown many nations, so that the people of the Jews might find possession for themselves, the lands of which the Lord declared He would give to the descendants of Abraham. But when this psalm announces the Gospel of the Lord and the times of His coming, it does not seem to me to recount what has been done by the Jews, but rather to indicate what will happen in the future, as the people of the nations would believe. Therefore, it confirms the trust of the Church before it proclaims, and it enumerates

the victories of its piety: which did not expel nations with its arm or with its sword, and did not scatter hostile troops in battle, but peacefully and faithfully possessed the lands of its enemies without any bloodshed; for it is faith alone that fought. And therefore, it deserved triumphs that would not be recalled by treachery, but increased; because the Church of the Lord is not conquered by its persecutions, but proven. So let us understand which peoples the Church has conquered. I speak of ancient names, but new mysteries. There are the Canaanites, the Khetites, and the Amorites, the Perizzites, or the Kerethites, whose names we will explain later. However, these are not only the names of peoples; they also represent the weaknesses of human passions, the motives of sinful actions, and the disgrace of sins. Therefore, the first thing is that in Christ, man has subdued himself and conquered himself, in order to live for himself. For he lives for himself who lives for God; so that he may live the eternal life of Christ. Therefore, the people of the Church did not fight with military weapons and iron weapons, as the people of the Jews fought. The former fought in form, we fight in spirit: the former fought against foreigners, we ourselves have war within us; and therefore, we must first conquer the passions of our own bodies.

Listen to the apostle Paul fighting against the Canaanite nation: 'I see,' he says, 'a law in my flesh fighting against the law of my mind and making me a captive to the law of sin' (Romans VII, 23). Now our flesh rises up, now it falls. It lifts up the mind, it casts down the power; and where it sees itself pressed, it abandons constancy and is led to subjection under the law of sin, so that it may abandon faith, succumb to treachery, and, lacking the rule of Chastity, yield to falsehood, serve crime, and acquiesce in error; and speak bitter words for sweet, like the Amorite. For faith is sweet, but treacherous is perfidy. Therefore, Peter expressed excellently what faith is by saying: Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we believe (John VI, 69 and 70); so how can you command us to leave you? Captivated by the sweetness of heavenly words, he did not want to depart from Christ. But whoever denies Christ, he himself separates or is separated from Christ. Neither the cunning disputations of the Amorites, which through philosophy deceive some with falsehood: nor the vile rejection of the Jebusites, who submit themselves and lay down their secular course, which cannot be eternal; but falls at the gates of death, of which the exalted Prophet David rejoices (Psalm IX, 15): nor the Cineans, who are possessed by their wealth; with an insatiable covetous desire: nor the Cenezeans, who think that possession in riches is eternal, and establish their vain hope in perishable things, and boast in empty opinion: nor the Raphaim, who profess to bring medicines to others, when they cannot cure their own wounds; and therefore if anyone seeks refuge with such a physician, it is necessary that he first consume all his wealth before receiving the benefit of health; as that woman in the Gospel (Luke VIII, 43 and 44) who for twelve years could not stop the flow of carnal pleasures until she turned to Christ. For it is understood that no physician is perfect unless he has come down from heaven, of whom it is said: He sent his word and healed them (Psalm 107:20); and it is noted about him: Behold I have put my words in your mouth, and I have set you this day over nations and kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to build, and to plant (Jeremiah 1:9-10). For although God frequently spoke through the prophets, he spoke more explicitly in his Son, who, expressing all the power of the Father, said: My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me (John 7:16). Therefore, it was not Jeremiah, who took exile during the time of captivity, but the Lord Jesus eradicated from the inner depths of people's hearts the vices of the Gentiles, the perfidy of nations, and the corrupt opinions of deceitful thoughts, and completely abolished all traces of iniquity. Then He later infused faith and the discipline of self-control, so that the sacraments of virtues would not grow in

the vessel of corruption through a confusion of vices.

Hence the Apostle rightly says to you: But death reigned from Adam to Moses (Rom. 5:14). Who is Moses, if not the Law; for he is the interpreter of the Law: but the end of the Law is Christ Jesus. Therefore, sin reigned in this world, and in sin there is a severe and intolerable punishment for sin. Moses indeed taught us to lift our hands to the Lord, establishing the discipline of devout worship. He taught how Amalek, the deceitful speaker, could be overcome; so that we may lift our customs and actions to Christ, and thus be able to destroy disbelief: but if we were to abandon our soul, incline our desire, and turn away from the pursuit of self-control, so that empty persuasion overcame us; there would be no future remedy, unless Jesus, having now raised the arms of Moses, as if to raise the weakness of the Law, sustained us with His mercy. But the assistance of the Law was still weak; unless Jesus himself had come to the earth, who would take our weaknesses upon himself, whom alone our sins could not burden, nor could his hands be inclined: who humbled himself even unto death, and death on a cross, in which, stretching out his hands, he raised up the entire world that was perishing: he lifted up those who were lying down, and drew to himself the faith of all nations, saying to the man: Today you will be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43). This is therefore to uproot and plant; so that vices may be eradicated and better things may be planted in the hearts of each person. Concerning this, Moses beautifully says in the song of Exodus: Leading them and planting them on the mountain of your inheritance, in your prepared dwelling place (Exod. XV, 17); asking that the Lord may lead his people into that lofty garden of virtue and wisdom, and that they may be planted there in his works, and be instructed in the heavenly teachings, and that in it a dwelling place for his sanctification may be prepared: not by right of inheritance, nor by our own merit or contemplation, but by his grace the Lord is pleased to confer this. For how, when we could not remain, could we return there; unless we were supported by the privilege of eternal redemption?

(Verse 4.) And therefore the Prophet rightly said: 'For they did not possess the land by their sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thy arm, and the light of thy countenance; because thou wast pleased with them.' So, what land is there that is not captured by might, not possessed by sword, except the land of promise, of which the same Prophet himself said: 'I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living' (Psalm 26:13)? Therefore, his possession is not undeservedly so splendid, in which the adversities of the world do not dominate, but the eternal goods of the Lord bear fruit. And so it is not acquired by the sword, but possessed by gentleness, as the Lord Jesus testified, saying: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:4). Therefore, let no one be contentious, arrogant, or proud; but meek and humble in heart, who claims nothing for himself but refers everything to grace: let him not boast in his own strength, but believe that he is protected by the right hand of God, saying: The right hand of the Lord has done mightily, the right hand of the Lord has exalted me (Psalm 118:16). Also, the sword of God should be remembered as being saved, and also being illuminated by the face of the omnipotent God, in whom Christ is protector, right hand, defender, and sword. Hence, Simeon said to Mary: And a sword shall pierce your own soul (Luke 2:35). For the sword is the Word of God, which passes through even the divisions of the soul and thoughts, sharper than any sword, so that no hidden knowledge may escape it. Christ is also the radiance of the Father's glory, and therefore he says: Whoever sees me, sees the Father (John 14:9); as the splendor of his glory, and the image of his substance. Therefore, all things should rightly be

referred to him. Moses himself, Aaron himself, and even the Fathers themselves consecrated everything they had done, so that they might triumph over their enemies. For it was not in his own confidence that Joshua said, 'Sun, stand still over Gibeon' (Joshua 10:12), but because he presumed in Christ, whom he recognized as the leader of the heavenly army, and he worshipped him humbly. Therefore, he deserved to eradicate wild nations and to lead the people of the Fathers into the promised land; because he attributed nothing to his own works, believing that the works of men are unworthy of such heavenly glory, which the Lord established to be conferred more out of his mercy than for the contemplation of our deeds, on those who believe in him. And so Abraham eagerly believed in God, so that he might find the grace of justification with him, which he would place as the reward of his work; for the gifts of the giver are more abundant than the wages of the worker. Therefore, the Lord responded to those who envied the equality of the reward: 'Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' (Matthew 20:15) Our fathers, as close relatives and heirs of the patriarchs, planted in the land of promise, did not claim this by their own merits. Therefore, neither did Moses bring them in, so that it might not be considered to be of the Law, but of grace; for the Law examines merits, but grace regards faith. Hence, following the faith of the fathers, the Apostle excellently says: 'So then neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase' (1 Corinthians 3:7). For it was not Joshua, who brought them in, nor he who planted them; but God, who gave increase to the people, has the principality of glory. And let it not move you because it was said above: Your hand has destroyed the nations, and you have planted them (Psalm 43:3). For from this you gather that not everyone who plants or waters gives increase, but whoever can give increase, can also plant; just as it is said that the Lord planted the nations. For He Himself planted, who gave the fruit of His planting; but in those who by faith in Christ deserved to please the Lord, to whom alone it is said by the Father God: You are my Son, in you I am well pleased (Mark 1:11). Therefore, those who are participants in Christ receive the grace of pleasing Him. And beautifully He says: 'It pleased you in them;' so that it may seem that distance is preserved by right. For rightly God is pleased in the Son; because He is equal to the Father and is not found lacking in any way, because He pleases by divine right of nature and unity of substance. And rightly the Father is pleased in the Son; because the Father is honored in the Son, just as in the Father is the Son. But in us, God is pleased; because He himself has given to us, so that we may be able to please Him. But even this gift, given specifically to man, Scripture teaches us not to use arrogantly. For it is fitting that those whom He made in His own likeness should please God and that those who were created in His image should possess the privilege of heavenly grace. Therefore, God is pleased with His own image, and He is pleased with those who resemble Him. In them, He bestows His gift and His grace, which will be revealed in its perfection when that perfect state arrives. For when it is revealed who we truly are, we will be like Him, as it is written (1 John 3:2).

(v. 5) Therefore, those who presume not in their own strength, that is, in their own works, but in the grace of God; believing that it is not their own actions that justify each individual, but rather ready faith, say to the Lord: You are my King and my God, who commands the salvation of Jacob. It is not a casual statement to say: You are my King. Not just anyone says this, but rather someone in whom God is King. And where God reigns, sin does not reign; for God does not share His kingdom with evil. But who says 'my God,' except the one who exhibits to him a fullness of reverence and affectionate piety? For it is rightly said, 'I am your God.' Moreover, when Thomas himself touched

with his own hand the side of Christ and found indisputable proof of the resurrection, he answered: 'My Lord and my God' (John 20:28). Lord, because he redeemed his servants; God, because he not only rose again, but also raised himself up. But God has entrusted salutations to Jacob; because in every prayer there is salvation: in every dwelling there is also salvation: salvation in the ministries of angels, who are appointed for the protection of human beings. Therefore, by the command of God, salvation is bestowed upon man, not by his own operation. For God preferred that salvation should be sought for by man through faith rather than works, lest anyone should boast in his deeds and incur sin. But whoever boasts in the Lord acquires the fruit of piety and avoids the crime of boasting.

(Verse 6.) Therefore, this is the one who can say: 'We will crush our enemies with your horn.' What does it mean to crush with a horn? The Lord has given horns to many animals so that they can defend themselves against attacks from wild beasts. Therefore, the ox often resists the lion and crushes the bear; even the timid deer defends itself with its horns. The ram also fights off wolves with its horns. Therefore, animals that have horns are said to crush with them. But man does not have horns. So how does he fan? From where? See what the Scripture says: 'In you,' it says, 'we will fan our enemies with horns.' You are our horn, Lord Jesus; and thus, just as we do not rely on our own strength, we also do not have the power to fan with our own horns, but in Christ. For faith has its own horns, which it borrows from Christ. Indeed, we do not read in vain in the blessings of Moses: 'May he come over the head of Joseph like the vision in the burning bush, glorified among his brothers as the firstborn: the beauty of his appearance is like a bull, his horns like the horns of a unicorn; in them, he will fan the nations together to the ends of the earth.' These are the ten thousand of Ephraim, and these are the thousands of Manasseh (Deut. XXXIII, 16 and 17). Who was seen in the bush by Moses, if not the firstborn Son of God, who said: I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob (Exod. III, 6). Therefore, he appeared in human form; because he was coming to be seen by all. Therefore, the bush was burning, and yet not consumed; because he arranged to burn up in the fire of self-discipline the earth which was generating thorns and thistles for us, instead of wasting it away in the agony of death. Where the Prophet says: Burn my kidneys and my heart (Psalm XXV, 2). Therefore, he revealed a certain indication of future corporeal splendor, by which this flesh would shine through resurrection. For what did the harmless fire signify, if not the lights of those who rise again? Hence the Apostle presumes to say, as one star differs from another in brightness, so does the resurrection of the dead (I Cor. XV, 41 and 42). Therefore, he says, let it come upon the head of Joseph; to exalt the head of his people: let it also come upon the crown; to walk upon the crown of hair, cutting off the excesses of sins, sanctifying the ornaments of virtues.

He was glorified among his brothers; as he himself says: I will proclaim your name to my brothers (Psalm 21:23). What greater glory is there than to pour forth the knowledge of divinity into the hearts of nations? Joseph saw in a vision that his brothers would bow down to him, and even the sun and moon with the stars. That bundle of his is understood as a figure of the flesh; for all flesh is grass. Our flesh received this grass, so that it might bring forth its own wheat and the fruit of resurrection. Do you seek evidence? Listen to him saying about himself: Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit (John 12:21). Furthermore, so you know that Moses speaks about the Son of God, he says: He was glorified among his brothers as the firstborn (Deuteronomy 33:17). Indeed, Joseph was not the firstborn

among the sons of Jacob, but Reuben was; for Joseph came after many. But he is called the firstborn, who was to come and gather the peoples of the nations.

Hence Scripture rightly says: 'The beauty of its bulls' (ibid.). For just as a bull leads a herd, so Christ led the people of the nations to the Church, and brought them into pasture; so that he could say: 'He has placed me in a pasture where there is grazing; beside refreshing water he has set me' (Psalm 22:2-3). The herds followed this bull's beauty according to the limits of our frailty, so that they could obtain eternal life. This bull has bellowed, and death has fled. The lion roars, and who does not fear? Truly the greatest victim is a bull; as we gather testimonies from adversaries (Virg. lib. II Georg.). For what victim is greater than the one that cleansed the sin of the whole world with its own blood? Listen, for even the holy Prophet Jacob speaks of the bull himself; when he revealed the passion of the Lord, whom the Jews later persecuted. In his fury, he says, they have struck down the bull (Gen. XLIX, 6). And to make it clear that he was speaking about the Jews, he added: 'I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel' (Ibid., 7). Here is the man who wrestled with Jacob, and touched his thigh, by which touch the nerve of the Patriarch was stunned: signifying that from his succession according to the flesh, he himself would come who would be undermined by the Jewish people in the passion of his body. Not understanding this mystery, they decided not to eat the nerve, sons of Israel. And therefore they deceived themselves of the redemption of the sacred blood, also rejecting the benefits of the saving passion, so that they would not deserve eternal life; for it is written: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you will not have life in yourselves. But whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood, will have eternal life (John 6:54-55). Take another thing. What is a nerve, but that by which the whole body is connected? The Church of Christ is the body, which is bound together by the bond of charity. What else did the Jews break in Christ, except the bond of charity? Peter is rightly chosen as a priest; he bound himself with the triple spirit of divine charity.

Receive still, that Moses himself signified. He added: Horns of a unicorn, the horns of it: in them the nations shall be scattered (Deut. XXXIII, 17). But do not fear because he scatters; for he has said: I will strike and I will heal (Deut. XXXII, 39). Good horns, with which he encloses the circle of the earth: good horns, with which he scatters our adversary the lion: good horns, with which he makes us unable to fear the horns of the adversary; for even Satan has his horns, as Daniel testifies, saying: I saw and that horn, which made war with the holy ones: and it prevailed against them until the Ancient of Days came (Dan. VII, 21 and 22). This is the Ancient of Days. For who is the unicorn, if not the only begotten Son of God, and the only Word of God, which was in the beginning with the Father? This Word has mortified and vivified the people of the Gentiles with its horn; so that there may be ten thousand Ephraims unto the ends of the earth, and unto a thousand Manassehs: in order that the people of the nations, who would believe in him and fill the whole world, might believe also afterwards the people of the Jews, turned from oblivion to grace. For he who converts to Christ so late has forgotten his own salvation. Therefore, Saul among thousands, David among ten thousands; because he is harsh with few, gentle with many.

However, I do not deny, if anyone interprets it as if it were said to Joseph: His firstborn bull is his glory (Deut. 33:17); and thus he thinks it should be distinguished, because he gave horns to his holy ones: For he exalted the horn of his people (Psalm 148:14). And Anna, the mother of the prophet Samuel, says: My heart rejoices in the Lord; my horn is exalted in my God (1 Samuel 2:1). Certainly, Joseph also had spiritual horns in the Lord. So let Joseph be accepted insofar as he is a

figure of Christ, to whom it is said, 'Joseph, my son, has been made great, my younger son, return to me' (Gen. XLIX, 22). For it is not Joseph who returns to Jacob, but Christ who has been resurrected from the dead returns to the Father God; as it is written: 'His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it' (Psal. XVIII, 7). Let it be understood, however, that in the case of Joseph, 'Return to me' means that the people return to the land of the Canaanites, in which the patriarchs had previously dwelled. Where Isaac says to Jacob: 'You shall not take a wife from the daughters of the Canaanites' (Gen. XXVIII, 1); and he sends him to Mesopotamia to find a wife for himself there. Did the lords of the arrows plot against him? Was he blessed throughout the whole world solely because of the blessing of his mother's womb, and not the Lord Jesus, whom the Virgin bore? And therefore, he is blessed not only above men, but also above angels and archangels, and above all the heights of the heavenly powers; as the Scripture testifies, saying: 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord: The Lord God has shone upon us' (Psal. CXVII, 26 and 27): For the Lord God himself is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords in those things which are held in heaven.' Because of these horns of the Lord Jesus, and of David singing with the sound of the horn trumpet (Psalm 97:6), it is heard from Christ: and Moses taught (Numbers 10:10) that the rituals of sacrifices are to be celebrated with the sound of the trumpet; as it is also written: Trumpet at the beginning of the month (Psalm 80:4). Who is this for, if not for us? For the ancients used to observe the months from the beginning of the moon. But the Church is the moon, which is exalted with spiritual and Evangelical preaching in abundance of peace, as the Prophet said (Psalm 71:7). Therefore, in Christ, we will scatter our enemies like chaff. And in His name let us reject those who rise up against us. What is a name except that by which each individual is properly identified, which is not common with others? For man is a common noun; unless you add the one who is called, it cannot be defined. Therefore, a name is the uniqueness of each individual, by which it can be understood. Hence, I believe that when Moses desired to know the proper name of God, and something about Him that was not common with the celestial powers, he asked, 'What is your name?' (Exod. III, 13). Finally, God, knowing his mind, did not respond with a name, but with a matter; that is to say, he expressed a thing, not a designation, by saying: I am what I am (Ibid., 14); for nothing is so proper to God as to always exist. Therefore, because they deny that Christ is coeternal with the Father, let them see that they deny God, whose property it is to always exist and never not to have existed. By this knowledge of divine property, Moses wanted to reject those rising up against him: or, as Aquila and Symmachus said, to trample on those resisting him like serpents and scorpions, which the Lord also says in the Gospel (Luke 10:19) must be crushed under our spiritual footsteps, so that they cannot hinder our path leading to the secrets of paradise. Therefore, we have within us the desire for divine knowledge: we have the Word of God, which is the name of the Father. This is truly the property of God, because He is the Father of Christ: and therefore He comes in the name of the Father, who came to do the will of the Father. And so He says: I came in the name of the Father, and you did not receive Me: if another comes in his own name, you will receive him (John 5:4); indicating that the Jews would believe in the Antichrist, who they refused to believe in Christ. Therefore, those who believe in Christ do not trust in their bow or sword, but place their hope of victory in his name.

(Verse 7.) And therefore he says: I will not hope in my bow: and my sword will not save me. But if hope is to be placed in a bow, surely hope is to be placed in the bow of God, which he placed in the clouds; so that the human race would cease to fear the flood. This bow protects us, with which bow he also hurls arrows, with which he strikes our enemies and adversaries.

(Vers. 8, 9.) And he says: For you have saved us from those who afflict us: and you have confounded those who hate us. In God we shall praise all day long: and in your name we shall confess forever. Listen to how he delivers us; for the arrows that he shoots from heaven penetrate the innermost parts of our land; so that all earthly movement may perish and be at rest, as he says later: You have shot forth judgment from heaven: the earth trembled and was still (Psalm 75:9). So we are set free when hostile and opposing powers are confounded; when the wisdom of this fleshly nature is put to shame by heavenly commands and is confounded by the blush of its own sins; when the adulterer is consumed by the flames of his own lust and the fire of his insane love; when the greedy person is consumed by the ardor of immoderate desire, desiring more the more he seizes what belongs to others; when the drunkard is consumed by drunkenness, and the criminal is confounded by his wickedness, both being greatly confounded here; but much more will they be confounded when they see the saints of the Lord rising again, and that Gospel saying of the Lord will be fulfilled: Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall rise, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (John 5:28-29). So when they have begun to be raised up to everlasting confusion, the holy one of the Lord says: In God we will be praised all day long; and in your name we will confess forever. The wealthy man is praised for his riches, the luxurious man for his feasts, the adulterer for his nights, the powerful man for this life which has nights; but the holy one will be praised not in this life, but in God; he who has strived to please the Lord in all things, who can say: The Lord is my strength and my praise (Psalm 117:14). He will be praised all day long; because he acted honorably and did not hide his deeds and crimes, but revealed them to the eternal king, walking in the light, not in darkness and secrets. Therefore, the Apostle says: Let us walk honorably in the daylight (Rom. XIII, 13); that is, not in gluttony and carousing, not in bed chambers and immorality, in which a wicked person thinks he is hidden by walls, so that he can escape the knowledge of God; for before God, the shameful deeds of all are uncovered, and the hidden sins of humanity cannot escape divine knowledge. Therefore, the saint will be praised in the future; for he sought not the praise of the present, but the grace of the future.

However, consider the distance. Here, while he is in the Lord, he is praised: there, he will be praised in the Lord, and for a short time he will receive the reward of eternity. But the eagle has said: In the Lord we will glory all day long. Symmachus says: We will sing a hymn to God all day long. The agreement of all is such that we never cease in the praises of God, whether by singing a hymn or by singing the divine glory in all moments. For whoever sings a hymn, does so with a pure heart and spiritually, and excludes all kinds of human passions; so that he is not hindered in his duty by any sadness, by the bitterness of any pain, so that his feelings are not aroused: but by singing a hymn to God, he remains immovable and irrevocable; just like David himself who says: I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise is always in my mouth (Psalm 33:2); and like Job, who, after losing his sons, having all his possessions taken away and destroyed, says: The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. ... blessed be the name of the Lord (Job 1:21) .

(Verse 10.) But now you have rejected and disgraced us. And God will not go forward with our powers. For even the holy David says in another place: For the Lord will not reject his people (Psalm 94:14); how can he say here: You have rejected us; especially when he speaks of the people, to whom he enumerates no small tokens of their own virtue? For it is not insignificant to say that storms and various temptations have come upon them, and they have forgotten their Lord

God, and have acted unjustly in his testament (Verse 19 below), and the other things that follow. And furthermore, the holy Apostle interprets (Rom. X), and says that the Lord has not rejected his people to the extent that he made it speak: 'All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people' (Isa. LXV, 2). Supported by the authority of this word, he says: I say, therefore: Has God rejected his inheritance? By no means. For I too am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom. XI, 1). God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. But it can be said in this place that he did not reject the people because the remnant chosen by grace was saved. And it seems that in a few cases he did not reject the people; although not the whole people, he rejected many of them. Hence, he added by stating God's response, that he has not only preserved a few people, but also left for himself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal (ibid., 4). Truly, this saying was spoken by the Apostle according to the Gospel; for the Lord had gone to the Gentiles: but divine response refers to a time of zealous, still fervent faith; when even the grace of the prophets overflowed to the people of the Jews. Therefore, if during the time of Elijah the Lord denied having rejected the people; much more so during the time of David, or the sons of Korah, when the faith of the chosen people still shone forth.

However, let us also examine the holy David himself, how the Lord did not reject his people. For since he is a God who draws near, not one who distances Himself, as the scripture of the old Testament says (Jeremiah 23:23); certainly, He who draws near does not reject. For it is a characteristic of divine mercy that there is no one for whom there is cause for death, and He considers all to be redeemable. But see that it is not he who distances himself from the Lord who is rejected, as David says: For behold, those who distance themselves from You will perish: You have destroyed everyone who commits adultery with You (Psalm 73:27). What is happening, they fornicate without you? Because they mock their own depravity, they leave you and stray from your teachings. Ultimately, elsewhere it is written: But God shall judge adulterers and will disperse them from Himself (Hebrews 13:4). Therefore, you have rejected, that is, by alienating yourself, you have lost them. Therefore, whoever separates themselves from the Lord, they shall be separated from the Lord; and whoever does not know the Lord, the Lord will not know them; and whoever is ignorant, they shall be ignored; as the Lord Himself said: Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity, I do not know you (Matthew 7:23). For he does not consider it worthy to know the ministers of injustice and the authors of iniquity. Therefore, the sinner is not repelled; because he repels himself. Thus, he says in this manner: But now you have repelled and confused us.

However, the verse that follows explains how God repels. For He says, 'You will not progress, God, in our virtues.' When God does not assist, He seems to repel. For each one who does not feel the help of divinity to be conferred upon them, they think themselves rejected and abandoned. But what does it mean when it says, 'You will not progress, God?' And what does it mean when God is sometimes said to progress, or to go out, or to rise, or to descend? For God does not move corporeally, nor does He exit from any place, nor does He pass to another, who is above all things; nor does He truly rise, as if He were lying in some bed, or sitting physically in some seat; but these things are said so that you may understand when and to whom the words "to go out" and "to rise" are spoken. For we read in this very psalm: Rise up, why do you sleep, O Lord? (Psalm 44:23) And it should be considered lest it seem that God is sleeping due to our unworthy actions; as we read in the Gospel, when the apostles were still imperfect, that Jesus Christ was sleeping

(Matthew 8:24). But when they were struck with fear of shipwreck and dread, they awakened Christ who was sleeping (Ibid., 25). Therefore, the Lord Jesus sleeps with the faithless, and watches with the faithful.

Finally, even the faithful person enters into God, and it seems that God departs from the negligent. Certainly, the Lord attracts those who are imperfect and still weak to Himself; as you have read the saying: Draw us, we will run after the scent of your ointments (Song of Songs 1:3). But truly, Moses, who was already stronger and chosen by the Lord, is mentioned as ascending and entering into his Lord God, as it is written: Because Moses ascended the mountain, and the mountain was surrounded by light, and the majesty of the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, and it was covered by a cloud for six days; and on the seventh day, the Lord called Moses from the midst of the cloud. But the appearance of the majesty of the Lord was like a burning fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the children of Israel. And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud (Exodus 24:15 and following). Just as Moses entered into the cloud here, where he was first called to the mountain by the Lord, so in later times, when he himself entered into his tabernacle, a pillar of cloud would descend to him and stand at the door of the tabernacle; and all the people would stand and worship, each at the door of his own tabernacle. But the Lord was in the cloud; for he had placed darkness as his hiding place (Exodus 33:9 and 10). So that you may know, however, that it is said concerning the Lord: 'And the Lord spoke, saying to Moses' (Exodus 33:1). Moreover, the fact that the tent of Moses is mentioned as being placed outside the camp in order to meet God does not seem to be contradictory; for whoever seeks God enters as if into God, and with their whole mind enters into knowledge of Him.

Therefore, the just one enters to the Lord; just as Moses entered into the cloud: and in the cloud is God. Finally: Behold, the Lord comes in a light cloud (Isaiah XIX, 1). And in the Gospel it is written: But when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee (Matthew VI, 6). Therefore, God is inside, as if in your own chamber. Also, hear in another place, that God is inside. Behold, he says, the Lord will go forth from his place, and will come down and ascend upon the high places of the earth, and the mountains will be moved under him, and the valleys will melt (Micah 1:3-4). Scripture says this: and already then it signified that he would forsake the people of Judah and pass over to the Gentiles. Finally, we find it expressed in this psalm, when David says: And he himself, like a bridegroom coming forth from his chamber, rejoiced as a giant to run his course (Psalm 19:6).

Therefore, we find that God goes forth from certain species or enters into them; just as the Lord Jesus says that He comes to the man who fears Him. 'Behold,' He says, 'I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me' (Rev. 3:20). Therefore, we have said these things because the Prophet says: 'You have rejected us, and will not go forth, O God, with our armies'.

However, let us also take this into consideration: that God made progress in the virtues of the Jews when Joshua, the leader of the heavenly army, worshipped him. And so, without using weapons, he conquered and destroyed the city of Jericho, which had very strong walls. For when God made progress in the virtues of his servants, victory followed. For an angel made progress toward Hezekiah's prayers and struck down countless armies of the Assyrians. But sometimes the

Lord abandons those whom He wishes to be crowned in battle, as if for a time; so that they may conquer with faith, and devotion may not be weakened by success and prosperity. Finally, often those who have fallen in the course of prosperity and the enjoyment of good fortune are corrected by adversity. Therefore, we frequently find that the Jews, after experiencing victory, have fallen, and after being subjected to servitude, have been corrected; because they have caused God to return to them through prayers and lamentations. And hence also what was said according to the human, and the human affection, is not opposed to this sentence; because the Lord said: God, my God, look upon me; why have you forsaken me (Psalms 21:2)? Not that the Lord was forsaken, who also said elsewhere: I am not alone, because the Father is with me (John 16:32); but because according to the flesh of man and his affection, which is placed in a grave struggle, he seems forsaken by the Lord. Finally, Scripture says not in vain (Luke IV, 13), because after the first temptation the devil departed from him until a time, that is, until the contest; for when the great contest of the sacred passion came, the adversary again succeeded in his temptations: but when a man is as though in doubt, he thinks that he has been deserted by his God. But we understand this according to the affectation of the flesh; for a man seems to himself to be forsaken, whose process Christ accomplished in his body: so also by his divinity he knew that he was never forsaken by the Father; for he himself said: I am in the Father, and the Father in me (John XIV, 10), and only he did not abandon himself.

(Verse 11.) He also added this verse: 'You have turned us back from the enemy.' It is not good for one who turns back, because no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62). Finally, Lot's wife, because she looked back, could not reach the top of the mountain, that is, she could not attain higher things; but she was turned into salt, which quickly dissolves and cannot have lasting use. So are those who follow temporal things, and do not follow eternal things; and they are deceived by their own foolishness, and they cannot have the grace of things to come. However, there are those who forget the things that are above, and they reach back to previous things in order to be able to obtain reward. And it is said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan' (Mark 8:33), so that he may be provoked to something better. And in the order of numbers, the one who comes after Christ is prior. Therefore, we are ahead of our enemies, because they afflict us and they persecute us. You wanted us to look back and reflect, in order to reach higher, always keeping ahead, pursuing our enemies and desiring to surpass them.

Finally, Theodotion has it this way, just as the Seventy men; that is, how this verse is translated. Aquila has: You have turned us back from the oppressor. Symmachus: You have set us as the last ones against every adversary. What are contrary to us, except the pleasures of this age, and full of delights and lasciviousness, and what are incentives to luxury? Lot's wife was deceived; because she had behind her the luxury of the Sodomites, and the allurements of that region. Where have you been deceived? Because you looked back. And so, do not look back at your enemies, for God has placed you as the last in the world. Or: Whoever makes themselves the lowest, does not turn back; but always looks forward. But in order for you to know who your enemies are, listen to what is said: Listen, Israel What is it that you are in the land of your enemies You are defiled with the dead (Baruch 3: 9, 10, and 11)? But who is your enemy and adversary, other than the prince of this world and his companions, who persecuted the Lord Jesus even to the cross, ignorant of his power? For if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of majesty. Therefore, even though you are the last, do not follow your enemies; but follow the Lord Jesus and

his cross with joy, and persist in his footsteps. For whoever follows Christ does not look back; that is, to the luxuries and enticements of sin; and therefore, he can say with the saints: Our heart has not turned back (Psalm 44:19). Hence it is understood that even one who is first among his enemies becomes the last and the least in his heart if he looks back at them and focuses more on carnal desires than spiritual ones. The one who is the last can also be the first in heart; if he considers the things that are in heaven, and not the things that are on earth. Listen, because the last one in the world is among the first with Christ. I think that God shows us, the apostles, as the last ones, as if destined to death; so that we may be a spectacle to this world, both to angels and to humans (1 Corinthians 4:9). He called himself the last, and yet showed that he was also the first, when he said: But our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20).

(Verse 12.) It follows: And those who hated us plundered for themselves. You have given us as sheep for food; and you have scattered us among nations. Perhaps you wonder why those who speak, as we have said, have the greatest constancy of faith in later times, say here that they were plundered by those who hated them: but do not let these things frighten you. For many are plundered here; and yet their merits cannot be separated from Christ. The apostles were taken away, they were beaten with rods, they were thrown into prison, they were separated from one another, and yet they remained with Christ: in fact, by the very fact that they were taken away by the faithless, their merits increased, and grace was increased in heaven. For not immediately is one who is plundered by humans also conquered. See the apostle Paul rejoicing in his dangers: see his glory, that he was let down through a window in a basket. See how the holy Jeremiah, the holy Ezekiel, the holy Daniel, when led into captivity and plundered by the Assyrians, nevertheless endured no captivity of their own faith; nor did they transgress the Testament of the Lord, who kept even in captivity the divine precepts of the law, nor did they think that anything contrary to the institution of their ancestors should be appropriated from the forbidden foods.

Therefore, Theodotion said well: And those who hated us exulted over us; for the insult of enemies does not bring harm to good minds, nor does the plunder of enemies. And for this reason, the saint says, who is certain that plunder cannot harm him: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress? and so on: But in all these things we overcome and conquer through him who loved us: knowing that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor Principalities, nor present things, nor future things so that we may be separated from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. VIII, 35 et seq.). Therefore, whoever is such, is not separated from Christ. Hence, even if he is physically torn apart, he is still spiritually free: and he is not only not subject to being torn apart, but he even seeks out praiseworthy plunder; just like those of whom it is written: From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful people lay hold of it (Matthew XI, 12). Victor is therefore the one who, being placed in earthly captivity, does not know how to be a captive to treachery; not only does he not steal what is excellent, but he himself steals what is eternal.

There are also those who become sheep of the pasture. Our Lord Jesus Christ is good because he became the lamb of our feast. Do you ask how he became so? Listen to the one saying: Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed (I Cor. V, 7). And consider how our ancestors, in the form of sheep being torn apart, ate the lamb, signifying the passion of the Lord Jesus, whose sacrament we partake of daily. Therefore, through this very lamb, flocks of pastures were made, as the Eagle said: or, flocks for food, as Theodotion spoke: or, grazing for those who eat, as Symmachus said.

But a good feast is not only not to be feared by the saints, but also desirable. For otherwise, one cannot enter the kingdom of heaven; as the Lord himself said: Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have eternal life (John 6:54). It is therefore proven that our Lord is the food, the feast, or the nourishment of those who eat; as he himself says: I am the living bread that came down from heaven (Ibid., 51). And so that you may know that all these things were done for our sake, from the time he descended, the holy one says: We are all one bread (I Cor. X, 17). Therefore, let us not be afraid, for we have become sheep of the food. For just as the flesh and blood of the Lord redeemed us, so too did Peter endure many things for the Church. The holy apostle Paul and the other apostles also endured many things; they were beaten with rods, stoned, thrown into prison. For it was through endurance of injuries and the experience of dangers that the people of the Lord were established, and the Church attained growth; while others hastened to martyrdom, seeing that through those sufferings nothing had been lacking in the virtues of the apostles; but also because of this brief life, immortality was sought by them. Which is also shown by the following verse, because they said: And among the nations you scattered us. Similarly, Theodotion said: But Eagle and Symmachus: Among the nations, or among the nations you scattered us. For the holy apostles were sent to the nations, and they were scattered among the nations, just as the holy prophets, of whom we have spoken above; so that through that scattering, the fruits might grow in abundance. For just as our Lord Jesus Christ fell like a grain into the earth, and he died, in order to bring forth much fruit: so too the holy apostles were scattered, in order to bring forth good seed among the nations; so that the fruit of the nations might sprout forth in their likeness. Finally, the Scripture says that the Lord said: 'I have sent you in order that you may go and bear much fruit, and that your fruit may remain' (John 15:16). Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ became like a seed, as it was said to Abraham: 'And to your seed' (Genesis 17:8), which is Christ. Christ is the seed of all. And for this reason, he allowed himself to fall and be scattered, in order to transform our humble body to be like his glorious body. Therefore, this saving seed sprouted for all men, and from it, in the likeness of Himself, were formed as it were the seeds of the holy apostles, sent through various places and dispersed, so that the peoples gathered in the field of the Church might shine forth with diverse fruits throughout the entire world. Therefore, these dispersals are called, just as in later times David also says the same thing: 'The Lord building up Jerusalem, and gathering together the dispersed of Israel' (Psalm 146:2). For they were scattered in order to produce new fruits, and afterward they were brought into the storehouses of the Church like new wheat.

However, this dispersal does not occur in lower things; that is, not on earth, but in heaven. Finally, the precepts of the Law confirm this, by which the Lord says: If your dispersal will be from the highest heaven even to the highest heaven, from there I will gather you, says the Lord (Deut. XXX, 4). What is the dispersal from the highest heaven even to the highest heaven? Who is this great one, who could be so widely spread? If it is a human, they are born on earth: they begin not from the highest, but from the lowest. If these things move and disturb you, return to the words of that holy prophet, and listen to who he is, the one who has made such fertile fields on this earth that their fruits reach the heavenly abodes. He is the bridegroom who, like a giant, runs through this entire path, impassable for others, passable for himself. And from him, the path began to be passable for mortals, although they would have to ascend. However, he himself alone would descend first, so that later his saints would deserve to ascend. Therefore, listen how the dissemination has been from the highest heaven to the highest heaven. From the highest heaven,

it is said, came its going forth, and its circuit extends to the highest heaven (Psalm XVIII, 7). To whom can this be attributed? Moses barely ascended to the top of Mount Sinai, and this was because he was called by the Lord and was encouraged by a heavenly voice. Who could descend from the highest heaven except Christ, who both descended to the earth and remained in heaven? For no one ascends to heaven, except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven (John 3:13). Therefore, you see that when he both descended and ascended, he himself was and remained in heaven. For he himself said: I fill heaven and earth, says the Lord (Jeremiah 23:24). He is the one who is in heaven. This is enough to be said about the dispersal.

Moreover, what He says, 'You have tested us,' although it differs in wording, agrees in meaning. For just as those who have been scattered have been proven, so also those who have been tested have deserved to come to the test. For just as wheat, when it is winnowed and separated from the chaff, is clean, if it has not been winnowed, it cannot be clean; but the chaff remains compact and mixed together: so also a person, unless he has been winnowed by temptations, cannot separate fragile things, like chaff, from himself. Also to Peter it is said: Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. (Luke 22:31-32). See what he saith, and understand. Peter is sifted, that he may be compelled to deny Christ. He fell into temptations, and spake as it were full of chaff: but he spake with the word, that his love might be more firmly grounded. Finally he wept, and washed away his chaff, and by those temptations deserved that Christ should intercede for him. How much greater is the protection than the temptation of that disturbance? And so he acquired more than he suffered; for he acquired Christ as his protector. However, the adversary is forced to tempt the holy ones of the Lord to their own losses. For while he tempts, he makes them better; so that the one who is tempted can also instruct others, who seemed weak to himself. Finally, Peter is placed in charge of the Church, after he was tempted by the devil. Therefore, by this it signifies that the Lord knows what it is that afterwards he chose him as shepherd of his flock. For to him he said: But you, once converted, strengthen your brothers (ibid., 32). Therefore, the holy apostle Peter turned to good fruit, and he was threshed like wheat, so that he himself would be one bread with the saints of the Lord, which would be our nourishment. For as we read about the actions of Peter, we come to know the teachings of Peter, and it becomes the nourishment for our eternal life and salvation.

(Verse 13.) You have sold your people without price, he said. It seems that buying and selling is a kind of equal contract: but nevertheless, if you consider the feelings of the buyer and the seller, each one sells himself cheaper and buys things that please him. For example, besides those people who engage in the business of selling slaves, no one easily sells unless it is someone whom they dislike, and whom they consider unfit for their use. And again, each person desires to buy someone whom they judge to be suitable for their utility or service. But even those who engage in the buying and selling of slaves regard their own profit; indeed, they value the slaves they sell so cheaply that they are even worth less to them than money: and often they prefer to keep those whom they have considered more capable for their business than to sell them. So God therefore sold to a lower price, He bought at a higher price. He sold the people of the Jews, not by the harshness of God, but by their own fault; to whom it is rightly said: Behold, you have been sold by your sins, and I have dismissed your mother because of your iniquities (Isaiah 50:1). Thus, the people of the Jews, sold in this manner, were bought by the Christian people: the former sold by sin, the latter bought by blood. Hence Peter says: You were bought with a price, not with

corruptible silver or gold. . . . but with precious blood (1 Peter 1:18-19). Who is the precious blood, if not the blood of that immaculate Lamb, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ? Therefore, without price is the Jewish people, but precious is the Christian people. The former has no price, because it has sin; the latter is valued, to whom sin is forgiven. Hence it is rightly said to the sons of the Church: You were bought at a price, do not become slaves of men (1 Corinthians 7:23). If you are told, do not become a servant of men, and lose your own freedom; much more are you told, do not become a servant of sin. And again, do not become a servant of the serpent, the enemy and adversary: but serve only the Lord, who redeemed you with his own love; for he is the redemption of his own servants.

Therefore, the Lord does not sell a good servant, but only a bad one. For although Joseph was sold, the Prophet did not say: Joseph was sold by the Lord; but: Joseph was sold into slavery (Psal. 104:17), whom his own brothers sold: whom the Lord, however, redeemed from slavery in the likeness of his own passion, and restored to grace. So, his brothers sold him and took the money: but the Lord not only set him free, but also enriched him with dignity. But the scripture shows that there was a figure of the Lord Jesus in it, which says: My son, zeal has consumed me . . . return to me (Gen. XLIX, 22). And elsewhere: The firstborn of his bull is his glory (Deut. XXXIII, 17); because God the Father has exalted the horn of his Christ.

Therefore, whoever is sold is worthless and without price; as if he were not more, than if he were. Hence, even the Eagle said: You have given up your people, so that they should not be. And Symmachus: You have given up your people without substance. For there are not those who are rejected by Christ: but there are those who are chosen by the Lord; because the Lord has called those things that are not as things that are: and the chosen nations of the Gentiles have been called; so that the perfidy of the Jews might be destroyed. Therefore, that people was handed over into nothingness; because they were sold by their sin; for they have no substance of guilt.

Therefore I think it is said: And there was not a multitude in their commutations; that is, he dispersed us freely among the nations. For you do not receive anything in exchange, so that you may deliver the soul of a man; for nothing is more pleasing to you than the conversion of the soul. But if it refuses to be converted, it betrays itself to nothingness; so that it may be enslaved to sin and crime. Therefore, you have sold the degenerate people without price and without exchange. Hence, in the later passage he says: For there is no commutation for them (Psalm 54:20). Why is there no change for them? Because, he says, they did not fear God. (Ibid.)

However, the reason why the people of error did not have a change of understanding is this: because a person cannot redeem their soul with silver, gold, or possessions. For what exchange will they give for their soul, since those things are temporary or perishable, while the soul remains either for reward or punishment? However, that exchange was not even for the impious, which will happen in the resurrection, as the Apostle says: We will all rise again, but not all of us will be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51). It can also be understood thus, that although few of the redeemed deserved to be changed, like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the change itself did not come to all. There is also this, that there is not a multitude in the changes of grave sins; according to what is written, that the sins of some men are manifest, going before unto judgment: but some also follow after (1 Timothy 5:24). Those sins that are grave and manifest go before, and are undoubtedly submerged: but those that are lighter are often relieved by good works. For blessed are those

whose sins are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. But where sin abounds, no exchange of good works is revoked.

Therefore, even if someone is redeemed from the people of the Jews, they are not redeemed because they had a high value of themselves, nor because they had a great number in their exchange, but they are redeemed freely; as the Apostle teaches, saying: The remnant chosen by grace have been saved (Rom. XI, 5). Where there is grace, it is not by merit of works, nor by justification of virtues, but by the generosity of the giver, and by the choice of the redeemer; as Scripture also teaches you, with the apostle Paul saying: But if it is by grace, it is no longer by works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace (Ibid., 6). What then is it that Israel was seeking, but did not obtain? The reason why they did not obtain it is because they sought it by works, not by faith. They were looking for justification based on their own efforts and boasting in their works. But they did not bring forth faith and did not recognize God's grace. And so, the chosen ones obtained what they were seeking, because they listened to the calling and received the coming of Christ.

(Verse 14.) Therefore, deservedly in the person of that people it is said: You have made us a reproach to our neighbors, a laughingstock and a mockery to those around us. Who are these neighbors, and how they seem to belong to the vicinity of the people of Israel, is not easily discerned; if a spiritual vicinity is sought, having a certain light of knowledge to investigate the mystery of Christ: especially since in the very book of Solomon, which is called Ecclesiastes, we have learned that the more wisdom is sought, the deeper it is judged. For it is written: I said, I will seek wisdom, and she has been far off from me, greater than it was; and in deepness who shall find her? (Ecclesiastes 7:24-25). Hence, doubt arises in me to search into the mysteries of the Scripture divinely breathed, and to examine its teachings, which he was able to do fittingly, who spoke wisdom among the perfect. I see the perfect ones, and I justly call them perfect, since I see you have trained faculties for the discernment of good and evil; yet even he himself who knew how to receive solid food, sought for assistances, that the word of the Lord might run swiftly in him (2 Thessalonians 3:1). Nor could he even use this without prayer, so that his praise would be pleasing to God (Ps. 146:1); for it is not the assertion of one who uses, but of one who prays.

However, let us not seem to have completely escaped, let us consider who were the neighboring tribes of the Jews. For let us recount the old, the Philistines were considered neighbors to the tribe of Judah: and on the other side, the tribe of Reuben approached. Likewise, the Ammonites were in the wilderness, and those who were in the territories of Tyre and Sidon were connected to Galilee; that is, the tribe of Zebulun and the tribe of Naphtali, which were in Galilee; as Isaiah said: Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, by way of the sea beyond the Jordan (Isaiah 9:1). Where can someone gather what special virtue belonged to each individual tribe, so that they could be joined with certain neighboring tribes; so that gradually even knowledge of celestial sacraments could be infused into the nations? This can certainly be understood from that Canaanite woman who came out from her own territory to meet the Lord Jesus passing by, and having set aside her idols, worshipped the true author of salvation: to whom our Lord Jesus Christ gave testimony that her faith was great. Indeed, the grace of the Gospel was shining brightly, as was the light of the majestic presence. However, because she went out willingly and sought mercy, and confessed the Lord with humble voice, and persevered in her own clamor of request, this woman of such kind received a significant privilege. She was the first to go out from the nations of the Gentiles and, through her persistent supplication, deserved to bear witness to the greatness of the Lord. In fact,

in this matter I have observed that some people have had doubts about what he means when he says, 'I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matt. 15:24), as if the Lord seems to have sought the nobility of the chosen race to save souls, who came to redeem everyone. But he deigned to show the purpose, which he did not want to refute those whom he had chosen first; and yet he sought to recall the straying and wandering ones with a certain paternal affection. But when they themselves had abandoned their true author, knowing themselves to be the God of mountains, not of valleys, and the kingdom of heaven not despised by those who compel, but gradually turned towards the gentiles; so that both the affection of the nations would be proven greater, and the stubbornness of those condemned by their own merit.

What then does he mean when he says: It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs (Matt. XV, 26)? Indeed, he called the Israelites, that is, the people of Judah, the children; but he called the people of the nations the little dogs. So what then? Is it the rich or nobles who are more worthy to receive the heavenly sacraments, and not those who strive more fervently to attain knowledge of the heavenly mystery with a pious mind? And if anyone among the Israelites is lax and negligent, or stubborn, and rejects the words of God: but the Canaanite who eagerly desires to concentrate his mind on acquiring the sacraments; is he more deserving to be preferred than the one who shows zeal, rather than the one who shows diligence? Not at all. And therefore it is necessary to carefully consider what he meant when he said: 'It is not right to take the bread of the children and throw it to the dogs,' to which the Canaanite woman replied: 'Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table' (Ibid., 27); he praised her earnestness and humility, which did not presume to claim deep wisdom for herself from the beginning, even though she had already come from the borders of Tyre and Sidon: but she believed that she could gather some crumbs of the saving word that fell from their master's table. For whoever diligently and subtly examines the words of Scripture, is accustomed to reach the depth of mysteries. Therefore, it is said to him: Great is your faith: let it be done to you as you wish (Ibid., 28); that is, let the door of the word be opened to you, and let the healing mystery of eternal life shine forth.

Therefore, let the one who is near, go out and desire to see Christ, and cry out in prayer; just as that Canaanite woman went out from her borders, saw Christ, and cried out with constant voice, so that she might obtain his mercy. Therefore, let the believing Canaanite be a reproach to the Jew, because he himself did not believe: and let him grieve and be mocked by those who are around, and let him groan. And this prophecy seems to be about the nations that will believe, especially when the following things show this, because it says: You have made us like the nations, a shaking of the head among the peoples; because the salvation of the nations is the result of the transgression of the Jews; and the things that happened to them in figure, we have learned have come to our understanding, as the Apostle testifies (I Cor. X, 11). And truly they have been put to shame among the nations; because the nations have preferred the shame of the Lord's cross to all worldly wealth. But whoever considered that cross as a reproach, and as if shunned a reproach, truly remained in perpetual reproach. However, because they do not seem according to the flesh to be Israelites, who could say: We have not acted unjustly in the Testament of the Lord (Below, verse 19): nor has their heart turned back from the Lord; see lest they remember themselves as having been placed in a circle of illusion and mockery, of whom the Lord says: Many calves have surrounded me (Psalm 22:13). For persecutors have surrounded him, when according to the counsel of his own will he underwent suffering. Hence elsewhere it says: They surrounded me on

every side, but in the name of the Lord I have taken vengeance on them (Psalm 117:11). Therefore, it is better to tread the straight path, on which evildoers cannot walk. They quickly fall because they do not walk in the right direction. Hence, when they wanted to apprehend Jesus the Lord, when he looked at them, they fell. Therefore, for those who are accustomed to walk around, the Lord has appointed an angel to drive away enemies who lie in wait behind. Thus, the angel of the Lord surrounds and protects those who fear Him. For the wicked walk around, as it is written (Psalm 11:9). Therefore, observe the difference. The wicked walk around, but the angel surrounds those who do not walk around; and therefore, he surrounds in order to rescue the righteous from the snares of their persecutors. The spiritual Israelites therefore seem to be those who speak these things, because they have been subjected to the temptations of the world and have been a reproach to their neighbors; that is, those who did not inhabit their homeland of Jerusalem. They were also subject to spiritual illusions and powers, against which the righteous are accustomed to struggle. Finally, let history teach you that the Jews who were taken to Babylon, although they seemed to be subjected because of their sins, were nevertheless much better off than the Gentiles. For the worst were those around them who insulted them, while they themselves were burdened with serious sins.

Therefore, the first understanding to be applied is that of the captive fathers, whom the Assyrians insulted, mocking them in Babylon: over whom that most wicked king Nebuchadnezzar ruled. The second understanding should be referred to higher things, because the cruelest king is the devil himself: he is the Assyrian Nebuchadnezzar, who is accustomed to laying snares for the good, in order to lead them into sin through the allurements of the flesh. Therefore, pay attention to this king in the place where the Apostle says: I see a law in my members against the law of my mind, leading me captive to the law of sin (Rom. 7:23); that is, in that law of carnal allurements. The lion is an adversary, who attacks the vulnerable and wearies the just. Hence the eagle beautifully put it: You have placed contempt and pomp upon those who are in our midst. Thus they were considered despicable, who have become a spectacle to this world, both to angels and to humans; for even though they do not sin against God in the Testament, nor are they swayed by the allurements of the flesh from the Lord; yet they seem to be carried about and despised as if in some kind of parade: since sinners are accustomed to insulting the humility of the just; so that they may consider the cross of the Lord-Savior a reproach, and the humility of the just. Finally, as if on a theater stage, the Apostle says: 'I am pleased with insults, with hardships, with persecutions, with difficulties' (2 Corinthians 12:10). In these things, he finds pleasure, considering everything that belongs to the world as a loss, in order to gain Christ, seeking only life and death: for him, to live is Christ and to die is gain, so that he may be found in Christ.

(Verse 15.) Furthermore, these Israelites add, saying: You have made us a proverb among the nations, a shaking of the head among the peoples. To which nations have you made us, if not to those who do not believe? For the things that happened to the Jews have been made in the likeness of a figure, so that it became a type and figure of the destruction of the Jews, and from that likeness, through a proverb, we seek a solution to our present [situation], so that we may be able to avoid their examples. Then, because all Jewish matters are like parables; that is, like images needing interpretation. Finally, the Lord spoke to the Jews in parables, so that the ignorant would not understand, but the wise would understand; as the Apostles understood and asked the Lord about what they were moved by. However, the Jews neither understood, nor desired to learn

what they did not understand.

Take this parable. Abraham therefore had two sons: one by a slave woman, and one by a free woman (Gal. IV, 22). The Jew did not understand this except according to the literal sense. He did not know which of the two sons would inherit the father's estate; because he was inclined to the flesh. The parable needed an explanation. The Doctor of the Gentiles came, and the faith of the nations, and he understood that those two women are two Testaments: one from Mount Sinai, which brought forth the people of the Jews in servitude, which is Hagar (Ibid., 24). And therefore Sinai, because it signifies the measurement through interpretation: and the measurement of the Law is, but grace is superabundant. Sinai is also called wages, and it is suitable for the Jewish people, who sought to justify themselves by the wages of works, which they preferred to the grace of faith. Therefore, what was under the Law, Jerusalem served with her children: but what is above, Jerusalem is free. And therefore Sarah, who is called the principal, has freedom; because her prince is just and blameless. Therefore, from the two Testaments there are two peoples: one of the Jews, the other of the nations that believed in Christ. The Jews, who did not believe, are in bondage; he himself was born according to the flesh, because he interpreted the divine Scripture according to the flesh and according to the letter, not according to the spirit. But he who was born of the free woman is through the promise; that is, the one whom the promise is based on faith, he is the son of the Church, holding the freedom of grace for whom the Church says: 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son Isaac' (Gen. XXI, 16). And the Apostle says: Therefore, brethren, we are not the handmaids of the son, but free (Galatians 4:31). This is therefore the solution; because what the Jew did not know, the faith of the gentiles has solved, infused in the minds of the nations by the teacher Paul. Therefore, their deeds are a parable for us. But the Lord also said: I became a parable to them; those who sit at the gate were working against me (Psalm 68:12 and 13). He became a parable; for you say, he said, 'Physician, heal yourself' (Luke 4:23). He became a parable; for he rebuked those sitting at the gate; for at the end, we should not be idle, but active. Therefore it is written: see to it that your flight does not happen in winter or on the Sabbath (Matthew 24:20); that is, not in leisure, but in business. Therefore, the blind Jews were sitting; because they were unable to stand, they did not know the true courts of Jerusalem; for if they had known that Jerusalem, they would have sought it. So, these weary ones were sitting at the gate. Not only did they sit, but they also hated the Lord who rebuked them at the gates. For at the gate was the one who was about to undergo the passion of his own body, through which he would depart from the earth and return to heaven. He was at the gate when he said: Walk while you have the light (John 12:35). What then is this: 'I have become to them as a parable' (Psalm 68:12), unless because the end of the Law is Christ, and His death has revealed the mysteries of the prophets; and those things which were previously unknown to the Jews when they were prophesied, have now been manifested through the achievement of the Lord's Passion? 'I have become to them as a parable,' because He presented Himself to them as humble, offering Himself to them, not avoiding their seditions, and leading them to the time of His favor; that He might die for all men, and by His blood the human race might be purified.

Likewise, it is written in the parable: You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain (Deut. XXV, 4). The Apostle explains this parable, saying: Does God take care for oxen? Or does he say it for our sake? For our sake, it was written. Who plows, except in hope of sharing in the crop? (I

Cor. IX, 9 et 10). So, as good farmers, where our earthly land has been plowed because of hope, let us sow not carnal but spiritual things: because corruption comes from carnal things, and eternal life is acquired from spiritual things. Therefore, the type and figure of the deeds of our ancestors are known to us. The written law is like a figure written in our hearts, so that for us it is a certain image of things to come, not the truth itself. Therefore, the law is like a figure to us: the Gospel is like the light and seal of truth.

Therefore, in the parable, the Lord showed Himself to the Jews: but they did not understand the parable; because they did not receive the physician who would heal the souls of the laboring and absolve them from every sickness and inequality of infirmity. He also became a parable, because He took on flesh, which the Jews crucified, not understanding the spiritual parable. For they did not understand to the extent that when they crucified the author of life, and saw the Savior's flesh hanging on the cross, they nodded their heads. For if they had understood, certainly they would not have insulted, but groaned. And yet the motion of the head itself yielded to them in likeness; so that it did not signify what they were feeling, but what they were declaring as mysteries. For they, insulting the Lord according to the common practice, moved their head; just as those who desire to insult the just, if perhaps they see them wearied in this world, move their head. This agitation of the head has a twofold interpretation. For those who move their head seem to be reproachful according to the authority of Scripture, as Matthew says: 'Those who passed by blasphemed the Lord Jesus, moving their heads' (Matt. 27:39). And Mark: 'Those who passed by' (Mark 15:29). But the reason why those who pass by are considered reproachful is taught by the Prophet himself, who says about the vineyard of Sabaoth: 'All who pass by plunder it' (Psalm 79:13). Finally, the following verse signifies this: 'The wild boar out of the wood hath rooted it up, and the wild beasts of the field have devoured it' (Ps. 79:14). And in the later part it says: 'Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the LORD be upon you' (Ps. 129:8); for whoever passes by and does not stand in the house of the LORD does not give his blessing. Therefore, the Jews shook their head at the Lord Jesus, so that they might pass by him, who could not have the firm and sure foundation of faith. But they moved their heads, whose head should have been Christ, whom they should not have moved and cast down by the perfidy of the Jews. But because the members did not suffer themselves to be Christ's, therefore their head was not Christ. The Law was not their head either, for they were stripped of it and by the Law of the nations. The word of God was not their head for they had lost the prophets and did not have the apostles. Let this be said about this reprehensible shaking of the head. However, even a mild concussion is to be condemned: it is reprehensible for the Jews, but commendable for the people of the nations. For what is the head, if not the place where the senses reside? Indeed, the eyes of the wise are in their head; they must be moved, that is, the senses of your mind, so that they do not become sluggish due to any dullness. Therefore, move your prudence, move your wisdom, move your thoughts through the comparison of heavenly words, and through the discussion of prophetic words, so that you do not sin against the Testament of God, but rather may your faith be strong. For there are heretics who move their senses, in order to arouse disbelief, not faith. But now it must be said more explicitly about the shaking of the head itself, which is placed in the likeness of the people. Who is the head of the people other than Christ? For the head of a woman is the man, and the head of a man is Christ. But even the Law is the head of a woman in an intelligible sense. Finally, under the Law, the people of the Jews are like a woman under a man; because Law is called νόμος in Greek; and therefore the Synagogue is joined to the Law as to a male, but to the physical Law, not the spiritual

one; that is, to the rite of the Jewish Law, to which it is bound by the chains of marriage, unknowing the legitimate sacraments. But if the law, that is, the embodiment of the law, is dead; then the people, like a widow, may lawfully marry a second husband, who has risen from the dead. This woman is also the head of the Gospel. Hence, some mystically interpreted that, after the Jewish rite has been put to death, they wanted her to marry the Gospel as a brother of the deceased, because the law had announced the Gospel. Therefore, the first husband is the law, and the second husband is the sacraments of the Gospel. For there are, as it were, two marriages, there are two Testaments. One marriage is the old Testament, which is dissolved by the death of the previous husband. And therefore that woman to whom the Law is dead rightly enters into a second marriage, that is, the new Testament. Thus, through two brothers, one is joined, to whom the former sins die, and the better sacraments are renewed afterwards. This the Apostle clearly explained to us, saying: For the woman who is under a man, while the man is alive, is bound by the law; that is, by the law of her husband, so that she owes him chastity: But if her husband dies, she is released from the law of the husband; that is, so that she may marry whomever she wishes, as long as her husband is dead; because while the husband is alive, he says, she will be called an adulteress if she is joined to another man: But if her husband dies, she is freed from the law of the husband, so that she is not an adulteress, if she is with another man (Rom. VII, 2 and 3). This sacrament also pertains to Christ and the Church, as he demonstrated elsewhere because it is a great sacrament (Ephesians 5:32). He also did not overlook this, saying: Therefore, my brothers, you also have been made dead to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, who has been raised from the dead (Romans 7:4). How have you been made dead to the Law unless that the shadow of the Law may die for you when you approach the heavenly sacraments? For you should not approach the Gospel in any other way, unless freed from the impediments of bodily interpretation. Moreover, it is adultery to mix truth with falsehood: but spiritual chastity, if your soul, stripped of all hindrances of erroneous knowledge, approaches the word of God without blemish. Therefore, just as Christ is the head of the Church, so the Law is the head of the Synagogue; that is to say, for those who are under the Law, for whom the Apostle made himself under the Law, although he was not under the Law; in order to benefit those who are under the Law. And again, he became a teacher of the Gentiles, as if he himself were without the Law; in order to win over those who were without the Law to Christ. But he said beautifully that without the Law of God, he would not exist, and he would remain in the Law of Christ (1 Corinthians, IX, 21). But the head of the Synagogue was not from the beginning; for Christ was the head of the old Synagogue, which Moses founded and established. Finally, listen to him saying that it was founded by the word of the Lord. By faith, he said, Moses, when he had become great, denied that he was the king's grandson. For he preferred to sympathize with the afflicted rather than to enjoy temporary pleasures; and he valued greater riches and preferred them to the treasures of Egypt, which were a reproach to Christ. For he looked at the reward of God's promises (Heb. XI, 24 et seq.), which is the grace of resurrection. But when the Word of God died for the unbelievers because of the treachery of the Jews, and was expelled from the hearts of the Jews, the spiritual understanding of the law died, and the Synagogue entered into a carnal ritual and a perfidious observance. But that was not the sobriety of spiritual marriage, but the adultery of chastity. Therefore, the Synagogue could not be free, for she had married wrongly and did not believe in the future resurrection of Christ. Hence, the Church married her well, to whom Christ, according to the sacramental dispensation, died according to the flesh, so that the Jewish soul that

was previously bound by sin would be absolved from the bond of transgressions through the death of Christ. A woman is not permitted to marry another man, unless her husband is dead; that is, unless she has been freed from the bond of lawful love. But if her husband is dead, she is free.

Indeed, he was bound by the Law to marry his deceased brother's wife; if the husband left no offspring (Deuteronomy 25:5). This bond was more a result of the letter of the law than of spiritual grace. Ultimately, it was at the will of the deceased brother whether or not he wanted his wife to be taken by his brother to raise up offspring for him. Therefore, he was commanded to loosen his sandal, to indicate that he was stripped of the bond of their union, which he had demonstrated to be foreign to his own preference. For it is written, that a man was loosing his shoe and giving it to his neighbor, saying: This shall be a testimony in Israel. And his neighbor said: Take, and acquire it for yourself. And he was loosing his shoe. The bystanders also said: May the Lord give you a wife, who may enter into your house, as Rachel and Leah, who both built the house of Israel, and may they do power in Ephrata (Ruth 4:7, 8, 11). But this was binding upon the Jew by the interpretation of the letter. But it was a figure, because Christ was to come into the world, who would raise up the seed of the dead people. Justly a brother: because it was said: I will declare your name to my brethren (Psalm 21:23); and: Whose are the fathers, and from whom Christ according to the flesh (Romans 9:5). Or because the Gospel would work the restoration of the dead Law in future generations; so that the seed which the Law had not left, the content of the Gospel might raise up. No wonder, therefore, if they have moved their head by a wrong interpretation; so that they themselves would disturb the wisdom, the author of their salvation: or certainly by moving their head, the cause of the head's disturbance would not be insignificant; but for the people. This disturbance of the head happened: since their sound went forth into all the earth; so that the whole earth would become the Lord's, and the kingdom of the Lord would be among the nations. Hence, it also says in the following: The Lord reigns, let the people be angry: who sits upon the Cherubim, let the earth be moved (Psalm 98:1). What the eagle beautifully interpreted, so as to say '■λ■λαγμα', is the transmutation, which is from place to place, from Judea to the nations of the world. This can clearly be shown from the reading that is in the Gospel, as to how the Law has been moved, as the Scripture says: 'the scribes and Pharisees sit on the chair of Moses.' Therefore, all that they tell you, observe and do, but do not do according to their works, for they say and do not do. But they tie up heavy burdens and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others. (Matthew 23:2 et seq.)

What is it, the scribes sit; unless because it is written? Hence, even in Greek, they are called γραμματε■ς, scribes, who follow the interpretation of letters, not the understanding of the spirit; for the letter kills. Therefore, following the killing letter, and resonating with the same appellation, they are scribes: but the Pharisees, that is, those who are divided from the unity of truth, are also scribes; for "phar" means division. But the Pharisees divide the words of the Law in this way, so that they resonate and meditate on them; but they do not see the spiritual mysteries of the Law and the sacraments. For if the Law is spiritual, surely the precepts of the Law are spiritual, and its works are spiritual. Therefore, those who teach what Moses wrote bind heavy burdens to the physical aspects of the Law (for the things that are contrary to the yoke of Christ are heavy), and through their misguided doctrine, they impose heavy burdens on the ears of those who listen, which they themselves do not even want to move, so that they may be moved from the physical

aspects of the Law to the spiritual words of Scripture. For it must be understood that they do not want to move those things by their own finger; that is, they do not transfer themselves to spiritual understanding with a small point and moment. Hence also is that which is written: But if I by the finger of God cast out devils (Luke 11:20). What the finger is, the Scripture itself interprets, which says in another Gospel book: But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils (Matthew 12:28). Therefore the finger of God is the Spirit of God; for God is a Spirit, and has nothing corporal in His substance, but is entirely Spirit. Therefore, by the Spirit of God, he casts out the demon, he who casts out by the finger of God. Hence, even the holy David says: 'For I will see your heavens, the works of your fingers' (Psalm 8:4). That is to say, the works of your Spirit are the heavens, as it is also written: 'By the word of the Lord the heavens were made firm, and by the breath of his mouth all their host' (Psalm 33:6). To conclude the argument, the scribes and Pharisees have no relevance to the inner person, who is made in the image and likeness of God; so in what he thinks and meditates, he should think more about spiritual things than about carnal things. Therefore, they try to refer everything to that external, earthly person: and that is why all their works are such that they seem good to people; not to please the Father, who sees in secret. They are indeed afraid to reveal their works.

This, therefore, is the shaking of the head that has been made among the people; or, as Aquila and Symmachus said, among the nations; for all nations have moved their head, in order to interpret the Law spiritually. Let no one think that they can be saved according to the letter of the Law; for the letter of the Law brings a curse: the Spirit brings a blessing. No one can be justified by the works of the Law; for all who are under the letter are under a curse. Therefore, let all flee from the curse of the Law, and let them take refuge in the grace of blessing; so that they may have the blessing in heavenly things, in Christ Jesus, who died for us, so that faith may pass on to the Gentiles: who, though he was a man before the Synagogue, did not abandon it, and he redeemed us; for he did not abandon it, so that the remnant may be saved: he redeemed us by choosing the peoples of the nations. Therefore, this election of the Gentiles is the salvation of the Jews; for the remnant was saved not by their own works, but by the election of grace. Therefore, it is the grace of Christ that both redeemed us and revived the remains. However, a commotion of the head was made among the Gentiles: but from this commotion, the Jews bore the grace of significant change, and their remains were saved.

(Verse 16.) It follows: All day my modesty is against me: and the shame of my face covered me. What is it that sometimes in the person of one, sometimes in the person of many, this psalm is said here? For from the beginning it began with many, as it is: O God, we have heard with our ears, and the rest that follow (Above, verse 2 et seq.). Then he says: You are my king, and my God. Again: In you we will vanquish our enemies. And afterwards: For I do not hope in my bow; and: In God we will be praised all day; and: All day long my shame is against me. What does this change, which is frequently repeated in the psalms, mean; as it says in Psalm 108: Do not keep silent, O God of my praise, for the mouth of the sinner and the mouth of the deceitful one are open against me. Does this apply to one person or to many? They have spoken against me with a deceitful tongue. ...and they have set hatred in place of my love (Ibid., 3 and 5). Then of one: Appoint him a sinner (Ibid., 6). This seems in the 108th Psalm to be referring one thing to the Jewish people, another to the traitor Judas. When spoken in the plural, it refers to the people; when spoken in the singular, it refers to Judas. Likewise, we can say that when spoken in the

plural, it refers to the saints; when spoken in the singular, it refers to our Lord Jesus Christ; because it can be understood as speaking for many in the Prophet, and speaking for himself. And therefore he said: My shame is against me; which is called 'ἐντροπή' But 'ἐντροπή' is when someone wants to instill shame in someone, so that they may change their purpose, as it is written: 'Come down from the cross, and we will believe in you: He trusts in God, let God deliver him now' (Matthew 27:42-43). But he beautifully says: All day; because the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ brought light to the world. Therefore, the Day of the Incarnation is the same of which the Lord says: 'Walk while you have the light' (John 12:35); and: 'Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day' (John 8:56). Therefore, this bashfulness contains confusion within itself. Hence also Symmachus says: All day long, he says, my confusion is against me. But what is the confusion of Christ, if not the cross; on which he hung naked? And rightly so, all day long; for from the moment he was affixed to the cross, darkness occurred until the ninth hour, and after the ninth hour, light shone until evening. This day is the first of three. However, the chorus of the saints can speak both in the plural about themselves, and singularly; for the chorus has the nature of a single person, but it consists of multiple individuals; just as it is written: This people honors me with their lips; but their heart is far from me (Isaiah 29:13). But what is the confusion that covered the Lord Jesus, when sins cause confusion; for they are the ones that cover the sinner: but if he does not commit sin, does this mean that he does not commit sin? But just as there is a confusion that leads to sin, so there is a confusion that abolishes sin; such is the confusion of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which sins are cleansed. There is also every good confusion that you endure for the sake of Christ's name, and it is exceedingly glorious; for example, if in persecution the law is that a Christian be beaten, lose dignity, be deprived of privilege, and be led into chains. This confusion, though it does not have privilege, has the glory of a pious confession. And it is also the confusion of Christ, as he himself says: Whoever is ashamed of me before men, I will also be ashamed of him before my Father who is in heaven (Matthew X, 33). Therefore, a good confusion. However, for many, this confusion of Christ is bitter; that is, for those who do not believe, it is unpleasant, but for those who believe, it is joyful.

(Verse 17.) So if you want, understand the confusion of Christ in his cross, which seemed to be a confusion to the Jews who insulted him; as if Christ would be ashamed in the work in which he was working for public salvation; or even this confusion, which seemed to be thrown at him, by the voice of the reproachful and reviling person; by the face of the enemy and persecutor. For he was ashamed that his chosen people had fallen in this way, and he was confounded in them before the Father, whose end had come; for the Father was present to the Son, from whom the Son can never be separated. And therefore the Father was listening to him saying to the Jews: Behold, your house will be left deserted to you (Matth. XXIII, 38). But there are those who even boast in their confusion; just like those of whom the Apostle says: Their glory is in their shame (Philippians 3:19); their glory is contrary to the glory of Christ, who embraced the cross and did not shy away from shame. We should not fear this confusion, nor avoid it out of fear or disdain; lest it bring sin upon us, which can bring the grace of life. For there is also glory in confusion, like when you encounter many pagans or philosophers, and they throw the cross of Christ at you, and you cannot respond with words, and no one hears the words of salvation you are declaring, that is confusion; but it comes from the voice of reproach and opposition, from the face of the enemy and persecutor. And therefore do not respond foolishly to his foolishness: be like a mute and silent man, and as if not hearing the words of those who insult and slander; not because you are unable

to respond, but because you should not respond. For there is a time for everything: a time to be silent, and a time to speak. It is necessary to be silent when you do not find a ready listener: it is necessary to speak when the Lord grants the tongue of instruction; so that your speech may have an effect on the emotions of those who hear. But how can he listen to you who speaks against you, because he does not want to hear your beneficial speech? Or how can he acquiesce to you, who is a persecutor and wants to seek revenge on you? Or, as Aquila and Symmachus said, how can he avenge and punish you, because it seems that the inheritance of Christ has been transferred to the Gentiles? Therefore, this confusion is far from the confusion and disgrace of the sinner. For the conscience of that person is enlightened, who has not forgotten his God; their conscience is confused, whose mind is clouded and disturbed by the memory of their sins.

(Verses 18, 19, 20.) And therefore, being well aware, they say: All these things have come upon us, and we have not forgotten you, and we have not acted unjustly in your covenant. And our hearts have not turned back, and you have turned our paths from your way. The last verse seems to not agree with the previous ones. For how have those who have been overtaken by no forgetfulness of divinity, no consciousness of injustice, and no negligence turned aside? But if you consider that the righteous person barely escapes, you will understand without a doubt that even they sometimes falter in their footsteps, and the author of their downfall seems to be God; for the righteous themselves often suffer temptations, so that they may be tested and trained by them. But who is so strong that they are not moved at all by temptation, unless the Lord, their helper, comes to their aid? Even the prophet David himself was troubled, for he said in his abundance: I shall not be moved forever. (Psalm 29:7). But who is that person whom neither the place of affliction, nor the corruption of the earth can move? When the divine sentence has not exempted anyone who is immune from the exercise and fatigue of this earth, to whom it was said: Cursed is the ground in all your works . . . thorns and thistles it shall bring forth (Gen. III, 7, 18). Indeed, Paul himself, a chosen vessel of the Lord, absolved from the curse of the old sentence by the passion of the Lord Jesus, nonetheless deeply lamented being led captive under the law of sin, and found no one except Christ from whom he could be set free: when the law of his body and the shadow of death oppressed him.

We have stated the idea: but it is necessary for us to consider more explicitly which place is the source of affliction. Whether it is this world, which is placed in evil: or truly our flesh, in which our soul is humbled, while it descends into the fellowship of this flesh: or the adversities with which we are exercised, being constituted in this body, in which we groan burdened; which we do not want to be stripped of, but clothed with? For it is a heavy labor while we wait for this mortal (body) to be swallowed up by life, from which we must strip ourselves; for it is stripped with less labor than it is swallowed up. See to it that this variety does not strip itself, and expect to be absorbed by life. Grace strips, penitence absorbs: sublimity strips the mind, diligence absorbs. How, then, can you doubt that this place of affliction exists, when the body is a place of death, in which even the shadow of death covers us? And therefore, we must always turn to that light, which is the word of God; so that we may know how to direct the paths of our souls and the footsteps of our inner mind, so that the light of our souls may dispel the bodily darkness.

However, the beautiful interpretation of Aquila teaches us how we should understand the place of affliction when he says: For you have humbled us in the place of the sirens. So that it is not the flesh that is at fault, or nature, but those things that have made the flesh corruptible. Finally, the

divine Scripture made mention of the sirens a second time (Isaiah XIII, 21) and a third time (Micah I, 9), and the history of the Gentiles reports that they were certain maidens who, with the sweetness of their own voices, the enchantments of their singing, and the desire to be heard, enticed sailors sailing toward the shore: and it is said that the ancient tradition handed down to posterity that they used to make shipwreck in a rocky place when they followed the allurements of the voice (Homer, Odyssey). But the interpretation of these things is this: the pleasure of the voice, and a certain flattery. And so, the pleasure of the world delights us with a certain carnal flattery in order to deceive. Therefore, there was no fault in that place, but the sweet sound that made the roughness of the shore not be avoided: likewise, there is no fault in the flesh; but those things by which the flesh is tempted and tossed. Finally, the sea, if the storm is absent, is calm: if the tempest rages, it is dangerous. And the opinion of the seventy men seems to agree with these sentiments, as they say that it is written: 'For you have humbled us'. The testimonies of this interpretation are to be sought from divine Scriptures. For it is written in Deuteronomy: 'If you go forth to battle against your enemies, and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands, and you take their spoils, and in the spoil you see a good-looking woman, and you desire her and will lie with her' (Deut. XXI, 10 and 11). And below: If you do not want her afterwards, you shall dismiss her free... because you have humiliated her (Ibid., 14). Therefore, you see that she has been humiliated not by her own nature, but by the one who has taken away her integrity of modesty. Humiliation, therefore, is the work by which this flesh, become the body of sin, is both the place and cause of affliction. Again elsewhere: If a virgin is betrothed to a man and another man finds her sleeping with her in the city, both of them shall be brought to the gate of their city and stoned to death: and the young woman shall die because she did not cry out in the city or call for help. And the man, he says, because he has humiliated the woman of his neighbor (Deut. XXII, 23 and 24). And here is the same reason for this discourse, that it may be said that she was humiliated by her corruptor. You also have a third testimony about this matter, and more if you seek. However, listen to the same book: If anyone finds a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her by force, and is found, the one who lay with her shall give to the father of the young woman fifty denarii, and she shall be his wife, because he has humiliated her. He shall not be able to divorce her all his life, because he has humiliated her (Ibid., 28, and 29). The same argument is repeated so that you understand that it is not the condition of the flesh that seems to humble us, but rather guilt.

However, we cannot deny that the flesh is humbled and weakened in its very nature, by its very allurements, and by its own fragility which is exposed to error. Although it was not deceived by a mediocre serpent, it had, nevertheless, a considerable grace before sin was found in it: Adam was in the sight of God, he flourished in paradise, he shone with heavenly grace, and he spoke with God. Have you ever read about him being humbled before, except after the transgression had humbled him? The heritage of which defect he transmitted to us; so that, being placed in this body, we do not want to wander away from the body, and to be present to God. And therefore we humble our soul which strives to lift itself up to God: but this corruptible body weighs down the soul, and earthly dwellings prevail, so that the devoted mind frequently leans towards the world, and cannot subject itself to God, because the wisdom of the flesh is ignorant of the submission of itself, which involves our desire.

Saying these things about us, what can we say about the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ? Who certainly took on the truth of this flesh and therefore humbled himself even to death, death on a

cross (Phil. 2:8). Pay careful attention and consider each thing. See that he willingly took on this form of our body and the servitude of your obedience, being made in the likeness of men: not in the likeness of flesh, but in the likeness of sinful men; for every man is under sin. Therefore, he was found in the likeness of a man; as it is written of him: And he is a man, and who will know him (Jerem. XVII, 9)? Man according to the flesh, but beyond man according to his work. As a man, he humbled himself (Phil. II, 8); because God came to them who had been humbled, to set them free. Therefore, he humbled himself for us. Therefore, his body is not a body of death; indeed, it is a body of life: nor his flesh, a shadow of death; indeed, it is the brightness of glory: nor in him is there a place of affliction; indeed, in that body there is grace and consolation for all. He humbled himself so that you may learn what humility is. Finally, listen to him saying: Learn from me because I am gentle and humble in heart (Matthew 11:29). He humbled himself so that you may be exalted; for whoever humbles himself will be exalted. But not all who are humble will be exalted; for many are humbled by their own wrongdoing to their downfall. The Lord humbled himself even to death; so that he may be exalted from the gates of death.

Behold, see the grace of Christ, see His blessings. After Christ came, this flesh, which was the shadow of death, began to shine through the grace of the Lord and have its own light; hence it is said: The lamp of your body is your eye (Matthew 6:22). But see of which eye it is said; not the outer one, but the inner one: If your eye is single, your whole body will be full of light (ibid.) Indeed, the eye is internal, which illuminates the whole body of a person. The eye is also internal, which removes blindness from the whole body; for it is written: But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be in darkness (Ibid., 23). You see in one person where darkness is born, where light arises. Therefore, you are to yourself either darkness or light. Darkness is the corruption, the darkness of sins; light is innocence. Therefore, you are to yourself either the author of injustice or of grace: divine operation does not err. The light is within you; because your infancy is innocent. The mind of man is pure before the slippery adolescence, and the error of youth. Therefore, you have made darkness for yourself instead of light. Ultimately, the same eye, that is, the sense of man, is dark in the sinner, bright in the innocent. And let us not overlook what Symmachus says: You have afflicted us in a deserted place. Therefore we are afflicted because at times we are deprived of heavenly protection, and this region is under a curse, or on the slippery slope of secular matters. Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ had not yet blessed his land; and therefore they labored, not directing the gaze of their spiritual eyes towards the light of his mercy. And then because the pleasure and delight of the world frequently creep in (Hom., Odys., M). Where we must not bind ourselves and be bound by the chains of that man, nor close our ears with wax: but turn away whenever someone thinks that something contrary or adverse to our benefit is to be criticized; lest in that conversation the shadow of death covers us: and if something of that sort is put forth, nevertheless we must insert the word of God, which illuminates the eyes of our mind with the brilliance of debate.

(Verses 21, 22.) It follows: If we have forgotten the name of our God, and if we have stretched out our hands to foreign gods. Will not God require these things? The eagle will investigate them, he said. Will Symmachus find them? For he knows the secrets of the heart. For your sake we are being put to death all day long: we are reckoned as sheep for slaughter. What does it mean when it says: God will require it? As if God does not require it, he is ignorant: and thus God will require your forgetfulness which has crept in, in order to remove every trace of it. And so Aquila said: He

will investigate these things. For certainly one who knows the hidden secrets of the heart, how does he seek, to whom even the things that are internal are manifest? Indeed, before God the conscience of each person reveals itself, and the thought of a person either condemns or clears them. Finally, Aquila said the visions of the heart because he sees our heart, and every thought of our heart is readily available to God, and the image of our thoughts shines before Him. Aquila said it well: In you we die, because to die in Christ is both difficult and glorious; and in him dies the one who is crowned with a sacred passion for his name. But why are you surprised that this verse, which seeks God, reveals the secrets of the heart; when elsewhere you read that God is the searcher of hearts? Why are you also surprised if the majesty of the divine substance cannot be explained by our words, as the Apostle says: Do not judge before the time, until the Lord comes who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts; and then praise will come to each person from God? We often read the darkness of the heart in the place of crime; in fact, almost everywhere. Therefore, see to it that those things are not hidden darkness, which are the hidden things of the heart; and for this reason they have received the name of darkness, because they are not detected by others, but they remain concealed. And for this reason, it is said that the Lord on the day of judgment will bring to light the hidden things of darkness; because the heart of each person will be revealed, which was hidden before: indeed known only to Christ, who, knowing the grace of His judgment, says: There is nothing hidden that will not be revealed (Matthew 10:26).

However, there are many things that we suppress out of modesty and keep silently in ourselves in order to fulfill the heavenly commandment, so that we do not seem to boast about things that are ours and begin to lose the fruit of them by making them known. However, there are secrets of wisdom that the apostle Paul heard when he was caught up in paradise. And because it was not permissible for a man to speak of them, he kept them to himself. Not because he envied others the use or favor of them, but because it was not lawful for a man to speak, perhaps it would not have been beneficial for a man to hear. These things the Lord will enlighten at the time when the time for enlightening these secrets arrives. See also in the Gospel, where it is said: 'There is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be made known' (Ibid.). However, this supports the higher interpretation, that both refer to good things; for it is written: 'The Lord knows those who are his' (2 Timothy 2:19). Therefore, he knows his own, and he knows those who know God; but he is unaware of those who are ignorant of God; for the one who is ignorant will himself be ignorant. Therefore, the Lord recognizes those things that are good: those things that are full of divine knowledge, those things that are hidden wisdom, the Lord knows them. But he detests those things that are full of wickedness and sin.

Finally, if you consider the character of those individuals whom no forgetfulness of divine worship separated, who stretched out their hands to a foreign god and refused to open their souls, you will understand that in their hidden works there were no crimes, but rather things that belonged to innocence. For they were afflicted by death for the sake of the worship of God, and all day long they were engaged in death, just as Paul also was engaged, who says: 'I die daily by your glory' (1 Corinthians 15:31). And truly, Paul died daily according to the flesh, in fastings, in shipwrecks, in various dangers, in miseries: but he did not completely die. His outer man died, but his inner man was renewed: and therefore he did not fail, even though he was pressed by so many dangers; because although his outer man was corrupted, his inner man was renewed day by day; because

the faith and grace of each person illuminates his day's work. Where Paul the Apostle did not know night; because the one who is renewed is always in the light. Do you not see in the light, the one who contains the love of Christ within himself? And therefore, being secure in sacrifice, he does not shy away from hardship: neither any persecution, nor hunger, nor sword can separate him from Christ the Lord, whom the bonds of divine love bind.

(Verse 23.) Meanwhile, however, the human mind is disturbed even in good works and is shaken by temptations. Yet it is also the way of the righteous to ask for help when they see themselves being tempted; just as the apostles did in the Gospel (Matthew 8:25) when Jesus was sleeping in the boat, fearing the stormy waves, they woke up the Lord Jesus to drive away their fear. Don't the holy apostles seem to have said these verses to you: Arise, why do You sleep, Lord? Arise, and do not repel until the end. Certainly, although in appearance the letter may seem different, the meaning agrees. And truly, even though our Lord Jesus Christ was arranged in a body, he did not sleep in such a way that he was unaware of the storm of the sea and the rising tempest of the winds, as the knowledge of it exceeded the depth of sleep. He slept in body, but was watchful in his power. And that arrangement was such that the Son of God, the Word of God, ascended into the boat; his disciples also ascended together: whom he did not allow to be remiss and negligent, as if secure from the presence and favor of the Lord, he composed himself in the sleep of the body. Therefore, in that dream-like appearance, by sleeping on this earth, He was showing the Word of God to His apostles. Yet His power and providence were awake, which stirred up a storm in the sea, so that the ship was nearly engulfed by the rising waves: by this, the disciples, troubled by the storm, would be able to determine whether they were being supported by a helpful plan or whether they were exceeding the remedy. But for those for whom Jesus was not sleeping, faith was awake: and therefore, when they arose, they awakened the Lord Jesus, saying: Lord, save us, we are perishing (Matthew 8:25).

See if also that differs from the Gospel, which we read about Jonah (Jonah, 1:5), who was sleeping in the belly of the ship and snoring: in which a figure of the sacred passion preceded. For just as Jonah was sleeping in the ship and snoring, feeling secure as if he did not fear being caught; so our Lord Jesus Christ, who fulfilled that figure with the sacrament of his death, slept in the ship during the time of the Gospel: and just as he was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights; so the Son of Man was in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights in the passion of his own body. When he had awakened himself from death, and had relaxed the sleep of his body, in order to rise again for the salvation of all, he visited his Disciples. This is therefore the true Jonah, who offered his soul as redemption for us. Therefore he was lifted up and sent into the sea, so that he might be received and devoured by the whale, in whose belly he might empty his bowels. Concerning this whale it is said, listen to Job saying: 'Who, he says, can deliver the great whale captive?' (Job 3). Who is this? Surely you know, when you have read that our Lord Jesus Christ led captivity captive; for having defeated the adversary and enemy, we who were captives have begun to possess freedom through Christ (Ephesians 4:8).

Finally, the very speech of Saint Jonah teaches that the mysteries of the Lord's Passion are to be understood, when he says: 'I cried out to my Lord in my distress, and he heard me from the belly of Sheol (Jonah 2:3).' Do you see that he said Sheol, not the sea? For the Lord descended not into the sea, but into Sheol, so that those who were in the depths might be released from eternal bondage. Indeed, many of them also rose from the dead. Now, what were the rivers that

surrounded Jonah, or from which abyss did Jonah say: 'The depths closed in around me, seaweed was wrapped around my head; I sank down to the very roots of the mountains, I went down to the land whose bars closed behind me forever (Ibid., 6-7)'? Certainly this does not fit with Jonah's story, and it is appropriate. But the Son of God descended into the cracks of the mountains, when he descended into the tomb; for Joseph himself, as the Gospel teaches (Matthew 27:60), placed him in his new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock, and rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb. Finally, in another book it says: He placed him, it says, in a hewn tomb, in which no one had yet been placed (John 19:41). But who is there, who with a voice of praise and confession has offered a sacrifice to the Lord; except the Prince of all priests, who both made vows for all and fulfilled them? For he alone had the power of accomplishing what he had intended. For as Jonah was sent into the sea, and the sea was calmed by his presence; so our Lord Jesus Christ came into this world, to reconcile the world, and to bring peace to all things, whether earthly or heavenly. Therefore, he redeemed all mankind by his adventure; and he incited them to the worship of God through his deeds, when he raised the dead, healed the sick, and instilled the fear of God in human hearts. He is the one who sacrificed a saving sacrifice to the Lord for us, and offered worthy offerings of our conversion to God; he is the one who slept and woke up.

Therefore, care must be taken not to sleep among sinners; for he seems to sleep to those among whom he does not rise, and whom he repels to the end. But who is it who is repelled, unless he who is a wanderer from the Lord, because he does not wander from the body? For how can those who are in the flesh please God? And therefore, let us not be in the flesh, but in spirit: let us cleave to the Lord Jesus, who in the eighty-eighth psalm says that he was repelled for us. But you have cast off and rejected, you have been angry with your anointed one. You have renounced the covenant with your servant and have defiled his crown in the dust. You have broken through all his walls and reduced his strongholds to ruins. All who pass by have plundered him; he has become the scorn of his neighbors. You have exalted the right hand of his foes; you have made all his enemies rejoice. You have turned back the edge of his sword and have not supported him in battle. You have put an end to his splendor and cast his throne to the ground. You have cut short the days of his youth; you have covered him with a mantle of shame. How long, Lord? Will you hide yourself forever? How long will your wrath burn like fire? Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all humanity! Who can live and not see death, or who can escape the power of the grave? Lord, where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David?

(Verse 24.) It follows: Why do you turn your face away? We think that God turns his face away from us when we are in any afflictions; so that darkness is poured out on our feelings, by which we are hindered from drinking in the brightness of truth with our eyes. For if God attends to our nature, and deigns to visit our mind, let us be certain that no thing can cast a shadow over us. For if the face of a man shines more than the other parts of the body, and whoever we look at, we either recognize an unknown person or recognize a known person, whom our sight does not allow to be hidden; how much more does the face of God, whom he gazes upon, illuminate! About which as his other things are; and also this is a notable saying of the holy Apostle, who is truly the interpreter of Christ, so that he may infuse him into our minds with a more fitting meaning and language; where he says: For God, who said, Let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Cor. IV,

6). Therefore, where Christ is shining in us, we have heard. For He is the eternal radiance of souls, which the Father sent to the earth so that, illuminated by His countenance, we may be able to gaze upon eternal and heavenly things, who previously were held in earthly darkness. Why should I speak about Christ when even the Apostle Peter said to that man born crippled from his mother's womb, 'Look at us' (Acts 3:4); and he looked at Peter and was illuminated by the grace of faith? For he would not have received the remedy of health, unless he had faithfully believed. Therefore, when there was such glory in the apostles, Zacchaeus, hearing that the Lord Jesus was passing by, climbed up into a tree; because he was small and unable to see him in the crowd. He saw Christ, and found light. He saw him, and returned what he had previously taken from others. Therefore, they rightly say: Why do you turn your face away? Or perhaps for this reason it is said that his advent kept delaying, because he was making the desire for Christ grow. For he himself is the face of the Father, who is the image and glory of God. Certainly, if we do not receive this sacrament of his incarnation, they rightly use that saying, the saints saying: 'Why do you turn your face away?' that is: 'Even if you turn away, Lord, your face from us, the light of your face is still sealed in us, Lord.' We hold it in our hearts, and it shines with intimate affection; for no one can stand, if you turn your face away. For all things wait upon you to give them food in due season. You give it to them, and they gather it: when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. But if you turn away your face, they shall be troubled: you will take away their breath, and they shall fail, and shall return to their dust. You will send forth your spirit, and they shall be created: and you shall renew the face of the earth (Psalm 103, 27 et seq.). Do you recognize the food that God provides for mankind? He himself is the food which our Lord, the only-begotten Son, feasts upon according to the will of the Father; as he himself says: 'My food is to do the will of my Father, who is in heaven.' (John 4:34). This food is beneficial to us, and all things of God are beneficial.

You hear certain members of God, recognize their virtues. For his hand, indeed, is the fullness of goodness: his face is the enlightenment of the mind. And therefore let us always hope in him, direct our prayers and all our endeavors towards him: let us not despair, even if we cannot see him corporally; for Moses did not despair, to whom it was said: You cannot see my face; for man shall not see my face and live. And he added: Behold, there is a place with me, you shall stand on the rock: and when my glory passes by, I will put you in a cave of the rock, and cover you with my hand, until I pass by; and I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back parts: but you shall not be able to see my face. Therefore, the face of God does not appear to be from man. Yet there is a place where God shows himself through faith to man. This place is with God, and therefore if we stand on the rock, that is, in the conscience of this flesh, and in the firmness of faith; although we cannot see the fullness of it, we will draw as much as we can, like remnants of its light. For even Moses did not see the entire fullness of his divinity, which dwells bodily in Christ: but he saw the latter things of Christ, he saw his splendor as a man, he saw the glory of his passion, through which he opened the heavenly kingdom to us.

However, Eagle: Why do you hide your face, he set; but also the others, which seems to agree with the words of Moses, who says: Show yourself to me (Exodus XXXIII, 13), as if he were saying: Do not hide your face from me, but rather show it to one who desires to see. And he added: Forget, he said, our poverty and our tribulation. About what poverty does the holy Prophet say that it has come into forgetfulness of God? Or what is this poverty, over which our God and Lord complains that it has fallen out of memory? This poverty is not idle; unless perhaps it has

what it is accustomed to have, a protector God and a rewarder. For if there is a poverty for which the kingdom of heaven is open, rightly do they consider that their poverty has fallen out of divine senses, who wept over their humiliated soul in the dust, and said that their belly clings to the earth. But those who cling to the earth, seem to be deprived of divine protection. So, listen to what this poverty is: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3). Therefore, if blessed poverty is the one that opens up heaven, let us neglect these earthly riches and avoid material excess. Let us follow in the footsteps of the apostles, before whose feet each person would contribute from the price of their own land, so that it would be distributed to the poor. Therefore, these holy men had begun to practice this evangelical poverty long before; and that is why they said: You will forget our poverty. This is similar to that apostolic saying: Behold, we have left everything and followed you (Matthew 19:27). Poverty, therefore, is a good thing that comes from piety and is embraced through the exercise of virtues.

They lament not only their poverty but also their tribulation having come into oblivion of God. Good are the tribulations that are proper to the righteous, who endure them not for their own merits but for piety's sake: in which the righteous is not worn down but enlarged, as the holy Prophet declares, saying: In tribulation thou hast enlarged me (Psalm 4:2). And the Lord Jesus Himself says: In my distress I called upon the Lord, and He heard me and brought me into a large place (Psalm 118:5). He enlarged the holy apostle Paul when He took away the light of his eyes; for in this way he confessed Christ, whom he had previously denied. Therefore, he deserved to be a vessel of election. Finally, so that you may know that the Lord Jesus enlarged Paul, listen to the Apostle himself saying: 'Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians, our heart is enlarged' (2 Corinthians 6:11). Therefore, open your mouth, confess Christ; for He is fullness: where there is fullness, there is also width. And like a good teacher who would wish to have equal disciples, he also encouraged us to expand, saying: Expand yourselves also (II Cor. VI, 13). But when God expands somewhere in tribulation; then the breadth of the heart will become like the innumerable sand of the sea. What is this breadth? Listen to the holy Solomon saying: I wished, and understanding was given to me; and I called upon, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me (Wisdom 7:7). For in order to receive wisdom from God, he asked not for riches, nor nobility, nor power; but he asked for wisdom, and in that he found all that he did not even ask for. Where the Scripture says that such was the breadth of his heart, as the innumerable sand of the sea (3 Kings 4:29). Hence, to perceive this breadth, he says, knowing about himself: In the breadth of your heart, describe it (Proverbs 7:3). And therefore, let the one who has wisdom not hold it in secret, not for a moment; but let him proclaim it with authority, everywhere that he feels it.

However, Symmachus regarded affliction as tribulation. Whether it be affliction or tribulation, it is necessary for us to remain in the Lord and not depart from Him; for with the Lord as our leader and helper, we can endure any struggle courageously. But if we neglect the Lord and distance ourselves from Him, we create a stronger adversary for ourselves. On Psalm 46

Preface

(Verse 1.) The title of this psalm is inscribed as follows: To the end, for the sons of Korah, for hidden things, a psalm of David himself. What does 'for hidden things' mean? It means that David had knowledge of hidden things through the revelation of the Lord Jesus, as the holy Prophet also mentions in the fiftieth psalm, saying: 'You have revealed to me the uncertain and hidden things of

your wisdom' (Psalm 50:8). But what these hidden things are, we learn in the holy Gospel, where the Son of God says that the mysteries of wisdom are hidden from the wise and revealed to the little ones (Matthew 11:25). These are those things, if I am not mistaken, which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have they entered into the heart of man: which the Lord has prepared for those who love Him. Therefore, let us hide the secrets of wisdom in the hidden depths of our hearts, and not disclose them rashly to anyone; unless it be to companions of the sacraments, whom the Lord has called to his grace, for he desires to be sought in secret; for he alone knows the hidden and secret things.

Finally, the Lord Jesus himself wanted to go up the mountain to receive the Law, only with Moses, but not without Jesus. He also revealed the glory of his resurrection to Peter, John, and James alone out of the whole number of disciples (Matthew 17:1). Thus, he wanted his hidden mystery to be a secret, and he frequently warned them not to easily announce what they had seen so that no weaker person would encounter a stumbling block and would not be able to draw the power of the sacraments with a wavering mind. Finally, Peter himself did not know what to say, who believed that three tabernacles should be made for the Lord and his servants. Then he could not endure the brightness of the glory of the transfiguring Lord: but he fell to the ground, James and John the sons of thunder fell, and a cloud covered them; and they could not rise until Jesus came, touched them, and commanded them to rise and to cast away fear. Therefore, they entered into the cloud, so that they might know hidden and secret things; and there they heard the voice of God saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: him, listen to. What is this, This is my beloved son? This is, do not be mistaken, Simon, that you think the Son of God is to be compared to the servants: This is my Son; not the son of Moses, not the son of Elijah; although the one opened the sea, the other closed the sky. For in the word of the Lord, both have overcome the nature of the elements: but they provided a ministry, he is the one who solidified the waters, closed the sky with dryness, and when he wanted to, he turned it into rain. Where the testimony of the resurrection is accepted, the ministries of the servants are present; where the glory of the risen Lord is shown, the splendor is hidden from the servants. For the rising sun covers the very spheres of the stars, and all their lights disappear beneath the worldly sun. So how could the carnal stars be seen under the eternal sun of righteousness and that divine radiance? Where, then, are those lights that were shining before your eyes with a certain miracle? Darkness is all things in comparison to eternal light. Others hasten to please God in their ministries: He alone is the true and eternal light, in whom the Father is pleased, or in whom it is pleasing to me; may whatever He has done be mine, and may whatever I have done be considered the work of the Son. Hear Himself saying: I and the Father are one (John X, 30). He did not say: I and Moses are one. He did not say that He and Elijah have any share in divine glory. What three tabernacles do you prepare? This tabernacle does not have its place on earth, but in heaven. The apostles heard and fell down in fear and confusion. The Lord came and lifted them up, and commanded them not to tell anyone what they had seen.

Therefore, keep your secrets hidden for this person to whom David entrusted his secrets, saying: Cleanse me, O Lord, from my hidden sins (Psalm XVIII, 13). The receptacles in which the hidden mysteries of piety are found must be cleansed. And therefore, it is said to you: Drink water from your vessels and from the fountains of your wells... and let your waters overflow in the streets, so that you may be cleansed by a flowing fountain (Proverbs V, 15 and 16). Therefore, it is said to

you: Let your wine vats overflow (Proverbs III, 10). Therefore it is said: In tribulation you have called upon me, and I have delivered you; I have heard you in the hidden tempest: I have tested you at the water of contradiction (Psalm 80:8). For there is a certain fierce storm within the hearts in times of trouble, when there are external battles and internal fears. The water of contradiction is when our thoughts fluctuate like the heat of a bitter salt, and they are not calmed by any stable definition in the depths of our minds. Then the storm in secret, then the water of contradiction, which can only be calmed by the word of Christ, by which he forgives our sins, as he himself deigned to say: 'Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you' (John 15:3). Speak, Lord Jesus: your word is medicine, your word is light, your word is the cleansing of our pollution, your word is a fountain. You speak, and guilt is washed away. And because the word of God is spoken of in reference to the hiddenness of the storm and the water of contradiction, everything has been done for us. He became flesh in order to preserve flesh; he became water in order to temper the water of contradiction with his grace and remove the bitterness of impiety. And so it is written: The word is high, deep in the heart of man (Prov. 20:5). Somewhere there is a word, elsewhere there is again counsel; for there is good counsel where there is the word of God, which is good. And that is why the Law says to you: Pay attention to yourself, lest an evil word be in your heart (Deut. XV, 9); and Jesus says: Why do you think evil things in your hearts (Matth. IX, 4)? For God sent His Word to heal man, not to destroy him. This Word is medicine, not punishment. Let this Word be in your heart and on your lips: let this Word be in secret where the devil lies in wait: let the Word enter, let the devil exit. For if the devil creeps in, Christ withdraws; just as He withdrew from Judas after the devil immersed himself in his heart. And so you should say: Cleanse me, Lord, from my hidden sins, lest the devil lie in wait in hidden places, like a lion in its den. But if you faithfully and piously keep Christ's secrets, the devil will not find a place to ambush. Therefore, in the ninth psalm, David, writing about the secret sacraments of the Lord, which are the conversion of sinners, the calling of the Gentiles, the kingdom of God, the preparation of the heart, the judgment of the poor, and the nourishment of the needy, says that the adversary must be exterminated from the secrets and hidden places of your heart, so that he does not sit in secret with the desire to kill the innocent. Therefore, it is said to you: Enter into your room, and with the door closed, pray to your Father in secret (Matt. VI, 6). Let your prayer descend there, where the one who searches the hidden things may hear it: there let him find your patience, either for the purpose of concealing an offense or avoiding boasting; for a wise man conceals his own offense. There is the hiding place of wisdom; for he has set darkness as his hiding place (Psalm XVII, 12). The wicked shall seek me, and shall not find me (Prov. I, 28).

Therefore Abraham dug a well, so that he could find water: therefore Isaac dug a well: therefore the Lord Jesus sat at the well; and there was the well of Jacob. He sat at the well, so that you might seek. There is a well where Christ is. The well is for those who seek the overflowing water; through which all the sins of the flesh may be washed away or the fires extinguished. Therefore, this is the height of the wisdom and knowledge of God; that the evil may not find it, the good may seek it, and they may engage in the pursuit and meditation of acquiring it. Do you want to know how true it is? Listen to the words of wisdom itself: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you (Luke XI, 9). Therefore, knock on the door; for Christ is the door: knock on the door of the Word; so that the mystery of Christ may be opened to you for speaking, and hidden treasures of wisdom in Christ may be found. In Him is our wisdom, in Him our life is hidden; as Paul affirms (Colossians III, 3), who was caught up to the third heaven to hear

what is not permitted for a man to speak. How much hidden knowledge there is! It is allowed for a man to know, but not to speak. To know is life, to speak is death.

Therefore, the knowledgeable ones understand that the purpose of hidden things, which is called $\sigma\kappa\omicron\pi\tau\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ in Greek, is this: so that even the unworthy may not grasp the discipline of wisdom, and those who desire it may strive to attain the knowledge of divine sacraments through the merits of life and faith, and they sweat through daily exercises in order to merit the fruit of their intention. Let us read the ninth psalm and the forty-fifth more carefully, so that we may comprehend the hidden wisdom in faithful understanding. For they alone have surpassed others in regards to hidden matters. But now we worship the psalm.

Commentary

Our God is our refuge and strength. What does 'our' mean? It means the ones who believe in you. Similarly in another place: O Lord, you have become our refuge (Psalm 89:1). To us, the ones who believe, not the unbelievers; to us, the ones who seek, not those who flee from the truth. For only someone who puts their hope for salvation in the protection of God alone can say this. Therefore, you have become our refuge, our refuge and strength, who we are from the peoples of the nations. The Jews rejected you, the Jews received you not; and for this reason you turned to the Gentiles, you called us, and became our refuge, and you are our strength. Do you want to know what has been said about us who are from the Gentiles? The cross of the Lord is an offense to the Jews, foolishness to the Greeks; but to us, it is the power and wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:18). And further: But by him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God (ibid., 30). Certainly, Paul did not speak about the Jews or the Gentiles, but about those who were converted to the Lord Jesus and preached the author of their salvation. So, have you taken refuge in Christ? Do not abandon the foundation, do not forsake your confirmer; so that he who has received you may himself protect you, and as a faithful merchant of our souls, recognize his own reward.

(Verse 2.) Helper in tribulations which have found us too much. He responded very well to both, so that in the tribulations which have found us too much, and helper too much can be understood. For as much as greater the tribulations may be, so much greater and more intense aids are necessary for us. And therefore, it often happens that in more serious and harsh battles we are crowned: because through more frequent tears, groans, and prayers, we obtain the eternal help of divinity.

(Verse 3.) From which it happens that we do not fear, when our land is troubled and mountains are moved; for if God is for us, who can be against us? We cannot fear the weaknesses of this flesh, which is broken by fear and dread, inflamed by desires, softened by indulgence, weakened by pleasures, vaporized by fevers, tormented by pain, and exhausted by afflictions. Or when those mountains are moved into the heart of the sea, of which the Savior said: If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will not only do what is done to the fig tree; but even if you say to this mountain: Be lifted up and thrown into the sea; it will be nothing impossible for you (Matthew 21:21). This mountain sent itself into the heart of Judah, and it troubled his mind with a heavy storm, agitating it with various waves of passions. For just as the soul is compared to the fertility of the land, abundant in good works and the fruits of devotion and faith, like the scent of Jacob, like the scent of a full field; so too is his soul portrayed by the turbulence of the stormy sea, which cannot be at peace and is stirred up by bitter thoughts. Finally, even with his kiss, the Lord Jesus did not temper the bitterness of Judas the betrayer. The traitor received a kiss, poured out poison,

inflicted death: whose sting indeed Christ blunted, but the traitor alone did not escape. And to make this kind of mountain manifest to us, also elsewhere when he had commanded a demon to come out of a man, and the apostles asked why they themselves could not cast it out, he said: This kind cannot be driven out except by prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:20). And he added: If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, hand-signifying which mountain that would be, which perfect faith could transfer. For perfect faith is compared to a grain of mustard seed, as the Apostle says: If I have all faith, so that I could move mountains, but do not have charity, it profits me nothing (I Cor. XIII, 2).

(Verse 4.) There are also those who distinguish it thus: And the mountains are moved; so that it follows: The waters sounded in the recesses of the sea, and its waters were troubled: the mountains were troubled by its strength. Not good are the waters that sound, and are troubled, and cannot give drink. Better are those that pass through; as it is written: The waters shall pass through the midst of the mountains, and all the beasts of the field shall drink thereof: the wild asses shall expect in their thirst (Psalm 103:10-11). Finally, when the legion of demons requested and received the power to enter into pigs, with great force it threw itself into the sea (Luke 8:32): and those waters of its flock were disturbed by their precipitous descent. Elsewhere also the same prophet David has thus written: The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and were afraid (Psalm 76:17); that is, the good virtues, which are peaceful with the knowledge of the heavenly Word, are not terrible with noise and tumult. But what does it say about wicked virtues? And the depths are troubled, a multitude of the sound of waters (Ibid., 17 and 18). The depths do not see God, and therefore they are always subject to disturbances. And it explained what the depths are. A multitude, it says, of the sound of waters. For even that beast, the Antichrist, ascended from the depths, in order to fight against Elijah and Enoch, and John, who were sent to the earth for the testimony of the Lord Jesus, as we read in the Apocalypse of John: to whom was given a mouth speaking great things, so that it might sound forth against God full of the blasphemies and sacrileges of fury (Apoc. XIII, 5 and following).

Therefore, the waters rumbled, that is, the unclean spirits, when they were disturbed, seeing the works of God, fearing judgment as the approach of the coming of the Lord of salvation. The waters also rumbled and were disturbed in the passion of the Lord. Therefore it is said: Why do the nations rage, and the peoples meditate on vain things (Ps. II, 1)? And elsewhere the Scripture says: Their memory has perished with noise (Ps. IX, 8). The devil seeks noise, Christ seeks silence. Finally, just as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth (Isaiah 53:7). And elsewhere: He will not cry out or raise his voice, nor make his voice heard in the street (Isaiah 42:2-3)... until he brings forth justice to victory (Matthew 12:19-20). What is this if not victory over the serpent? In this strength of the Son of God, the mountains were shaken; when the devil and his servants saw the dead rising. These are the mountains that are disturbed: those mountains that are transferred into paradise, of which it is said: Today you will be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43). And another to whom it is said: So I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me (John 21:23). And Enoch who was taken up; so that the wickedness of the world would not be changed.

After the passion of the Lord, what else should follow except that a river flowed from the body of the Lord: when water and blood flowed from His side, which rejoiced the souls of all; for by that river, the sin of the whole world was washed away. There is also a river that flowed from Eden and

went around the whole earth, the Word of God by which the intelligible paradise is watered, and every soul is called to the grace of Christ, as the Word of God Himself says: If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. To whom I shall give the water of life, rivers of living water shall flow from his belly (John 7:38-39). For from that one Word of God flow the four rivers of prudence and fortitude, temperance and justice. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another faith in the same Spirit, to another the grace of healings in one Spirit, to another the working of miracles... For the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one as He desires (1 Corinthians 12:9ff). These are the impetuosity of the river, when it flows into the favor of the ministry of operation and virtue through spontaneous division.

Therefore, that city through which God dwells is irrigated by the waters of the heavenly river; and the tabernacle of the Most High is sanctified, every soul that is inhabited by Christ; or that body which the Virgin generated, of whom the angel Gabriel said: And what will be born of you will be called the Holy Son of the living God (Luke 1:35). A good tabernacle, which no sins could overshadow. An admirable temple of God, and a heavenly hall, which could not be corrupted when it was loosed, but within three days it rose again, resurrected by the same one who seemed dead. It is no wonder, when God was in the midst of his city, that he was not moved, either because the Son of God was not moved by the fall of any sin or stumbled by the offense of any error, or wavered by the impulse of bodily temptation; or because he did not leave his soul by the grace of God, but remained inseparable in it, which remained immaculate from all the pollution of sin. Hence, the Son of God said to the Father: You will not abandon my soul to hell (Psalm 16:10). Therefore, because sin did not reside in him in the flesh, he said divinely: I am in the Father and the Father is in me (John 14:10). And elsewhere: I was handed over and did not go out (Psalm 87:9). He did not go out from him, to whom he later said: I have risen and I am still with you (Psalm 138:18). But when someone sins more gravely, God is moved in him, so that he may pass from him. Hence, he was seen walking with Adam who sinned, and standing with Stephen; because the former fell into transgression, the latter was crowned in martyrdom. And in the book of Zachariah it is written: The Lord walked in the turmoil of His wrath (Zach. IX, 14). Similarly, it is said in the Gospel to the Jews: Behold, your house will be left to you desolate (Matth. XXIII, 38). For the Lord has forsaken the Jews, and immediately the ruin of the Synagogue followed. If Christ had not forsaken it, the final destruction would never have followed. Therefore, we have opened what was said: God will not be moved in its midst.

It follows: God will help her at dawn. By this it is signified that the morning resurrection brings us the assistance of heavenly help, which drives away the night and restores the day, as the Scripture says: Arise, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine upon you (Ephesians 5:14). But consider the mystery. Christ suffered in the evening; therefore, according to the Law, the great Passover is celebrated in the evening (Exodus 12:6). He rose in the morning; for it is written: Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the entrance (John 20:1). At evening the world is set, with the light fading; for this whole world was in darkness, and would have been wrapped in even greater depths of darkness, had not Christ come to us from heaven as eternal light, to restore the times of innocence to the human race. Therefore, the Lord Jesus suffered and with his own blood forgave our sins, a purer light shone on our conscience, and the day of spiritual grace shone forth. Hence the Apostle says: The night is gone, the day has drawn near (Rom. XIII, 12).

Therefore, we have woken up and will no longer sleep. We put on the garment of light, not returning to the dark attire of conversation and worldly desires. We bid farewell to feasts and pleasures that belong to the night and choose sobriety, through which Jacob found the primacy he did not possess.

It is found in other codices as well: God will help her with his countenance. What this also signifies, let the Prophet himself teach us. For he himself said later on: Show your face, and we shall be saved (Psalm 79:4). Therefore, the appearance of God is our salvation, and in his countenance is our assistance. The divine Scripture declares how great this power is, which God showed by regarding the gifts of Abel, but he did not regard the gifts of Cain (Genesis 4:4-5); and therefore Cain was sorrowful, because he knew that his sacrifice was displeasing to God, while his brother's pleased Him. And that which is chanted today in the responsory of the psalm contributes greatly to our assertion: I have waited for the Lord, and he has looked upon me (Psalm 39:2). He who the Lord looks upon, he saves. Finally, in the passion of the Lord, when Peter wavered in speech but not in mind (although Peter's wavering speech is more faithful than the teaching of many), Christ looked upon him, and Peter wept; by this, he washed away his own error. Thus, whoever he appeared to deny with his voice, he confessed with tears. The nations were troubled, the kingdoms were shaken: the Most High gave his voice, and the earth moved. At the coming of the Lord, the opposing powers with their legion were troubled, commanded to leave human bodies, and pleaded to be sent into the pigs. With the wicked powers troubled, the worshippers of idols had to be troubled as well, and the kingdom of sin had to be shaken. For it was a heavy kingdom that had subjected the minds of all sinners to itself in heavy servitude; for whoever commits sin is a slave to sin. But the kingdom of sin is the kingdom of death, which prevailed for a long time throughout the world. Hence the Apostle says: But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin, in the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the future (Rom. 5:14). Truth has come, the figure has ceased: life has come, the kingdom of death has disappeared: the forgiveness of sins has come, and the bonds of sin have been loosened. Even lighter offenses were bound by the bonds of death in the past, but after the coming of the Lord, even more serious sins have been forgiven. Therefore, the kingdoms of spiritual wickedness, which are in the heavens, were inclined; because the worship of idols, and the enticement of sin, began to diminish by the preaching of the Gospel doctrine. The perfidy was inclined after faith began to reign in the hearts of the nations. The kingdoms of sin are inclined, as it is read: Let not sin reign in your mortal body (Rom. VI, 12). All the kingdoms of perfidy were inclined by the voice of the Lord, saying: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you (Matt. XI, 28). The Most High gave this voice, and all the peoples of the nations followed him, fleeing the harsh kingdoms of sin, and the everlasting horror of death, and the intolerable servitude of all crimes; when he promised rest to the weary, forgiveness to captives, and freedom to the enslaved; and, shaking off the iron yoke of the Babylonian king, he would place his sweet yoke on the necks of the faithful; so that the empty necks of the pagans would not be bound again by the chains of their wickedness. For indeed Christ frees those whom He binds, and He releases those whom He restrains. Furthermore, whoever is called a servant by the Lord is a freedman of the Lord; and whoever is called a freedman is a servant of Christ. Therefore, in his chains, Paul boasts, saying: Paul, a prisoner of Jesus (Ephesians 3:1). What is an insult under others, is glory under Christ. The Lord gave His voice in His passion, and all the elements trembled, the whole earth was shaken (Psalm 23:1); so that the rites of the Gentiles would be dissolved, and the land of the Lord

and its fullness would be established, as it is written; the forerunners of the faith, and the sacrificial ceremony of impiety, were put to an end, and the practice of devotion and the study of piety were abolished. The Lord gives His voice daily, and it resounds in the hearts of each individual; so that all earthly things depart from one who believes well with affection, and all the inner senses of their souls are moved from error, from the corruption of luxury and dissolution, to the knowledge of heavenly sacraments, and the pursuit of chastity; from wickedness to virtuous confession.

(Verse 8.) Therefore, he says that those who are on earth were moved, either because all men were on earth, in whom there was earthly corruption; because they did not know how to raise and lift up the eyes of their minds to the sublime grace of heaven; nor could they say: God of hosts is with us; with whom there was only the instigator of downfall, and the author of error. But after the voice of the Lord resounded in the Gospel, the Prophet dares to say: God of hosts is with us. He speaks well; God of hosts is with us; he who believes that the Virgin received and gave birth. We dare to say as well; God of hosts is with us; after Emmanuel, that is, God began to be with us. Wherever Emmanuel is, there is God of hosts with us. Our God Jacob is our protector. Therefore, let us imitate the patriarch Jacob, his fragrance, his virtue, his labor. Just as we must do the works of Abraham in order to be rightly called his children, so too must we undergo the exertions and struggles of the holy Jacob, so that the God of Jacob may be believed to be our God. For if we do not recognize in ourselves the zeal for his works and faith, either because we cannot equal him or because we underestimate the efforts of his work and faith, how will God, as if he were Jacob, deign to help us?

(v. 9) While he was saying these things, behold, through the Holy Spirit, a present image of future things was infused into him; and seeing, from the heavy disturbance of wars, peace spread throughout the whole world in the coming of the Savior Lord, he cries out to all, saying: Come and see the works of the Lord, which He has placed as prodigies upon the earth. Come, it pertains to the congregation: See, it pertains to intention, and the desire to know the truth. See, he says, the works of the Lord full of miracles, in which are the signs of great powers. Finally, τέρματα is said in Greek, admiranda is said in Latin. Therefore, do not receive the works of the Lord as if they were of prodigious horror, but as if they were full of admiration. He has set them splendidly upon the earth; that is, in the earth.

(Verse 10.) Removing wars up to the ends of the earth, he will shatter and break the bow: and he will burn shields with fire. And truly before the Roman empire spread, not only were the kings of individual cities fighting against it; but the Romans themselves were frequently worn down by civil wars. Marius fought against Cinna. On both sides Roman blood was spilled. Sulla rose up, and as the victorious Marius again stirred up civil wars. Lepidus and Sertorius presented themselves as rebels against the Roman Empire. Caesar pursued Pompey and incited the fury of the Gauls against the Roman army. After defeating the elder Pompey, he conquered the younger Pompey in the regions of Spain. Shall I speak of the Triumvirs who turned from enemies to friends, and from friends to hostile uprisings: even the seas stained with the blood of Romans in the Battle of Actium? And so it happened that, weary of civil wars, the Roman Empire was transferred to Julius Augustus; and thus internal conflicts were pacified. However, this achieved the result that the apostles were rightly sent throughout the whole world, with the Lord Jesus saying: Go and teach all nations (Matthew 28:19). Indeed, even kingdoms closed off by barbaric mountains opened to them, such as India to Thomas and Persia to Matthew. But nevertheless, as they travelled through

more and more regions of the earth, at the dawn of the Church the power of the Roman Empire spread throughout the entire world and brought together the minds of dissenters and the divisions of lands through the gift of peace. All men have learned to live under one empire of the earth, to confess the empire of one almighty God with faithful speech.

Therefore, he has taken away wars even to the ends of the earth; which fact is not doubtful. But see that wars of weakness may not have taken away, which are in the hearts of the wavering. For whoever has passed over earthly things, no longer says: Outside are battles, inside are fears (2 Corinthians 7:5); but he says: But our behavior is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). Therefore, pass through the world, so that you may begin to be above the world; for *περὶ* is to pass over or, to speak more clearly, to cross over. Therefore the Lord abolished the wars which were causing us spiritual wickedness: and having defeated the devil, he left his peace to us. He broke the bow from which the fiery arrows of the enemy were scattered: and he burned the shields of treachery with fire, so that the shield of faith might remain inviolable.

(Verse 11.) 'Vacate, inquit, et videte, quia ego sum Dominus.' Vox Domini post bella sedata: Vacate, ut nulla animarum sit occupatio; ne offusio saecularium perturbationum internae oculum mentis obducat. Vacate, inquit, ab erroribus, vacate a perturbationibus, vacate a peccatis; quia omnis qui peccat, non vidit Deum, nec cognovit eum (I Joan. III, 6) ; sicut in Epistola sua dixit Joannes Evangelista.' Therefore, leave the pursuit of knowledge of divinity: do not be occupied with earthly works. Therefore, the king of Egypt commanded an increase in the number of bricks and other burdens on the Israelites; so that they would not recognize God and devote themselves to sacred worship, Moses and Aaron were offended by the voice of the holy ones, who said: Let the people of God go, that we may go and serve the Lord our God (Exod. 5:6ff).

I will be exalted among the nations, and I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord was exalted in the highest, that is, in the angels and archangels, in the patriarchs and prophets, who perceived lofty things about Him and did not compare Him to earthly images and idols. But He was not exalted among the peoples of the nations, who seemed to seek their God in caves and dens. Finally, Mary Magdalene is reproached for weeping for Christ as if He were dead, and searching for Him as if He were buried in the tomb. Wherefore, Christ said to her: Mary, why do you weep? Whom are you seeking? (John 20:15) Is it not the one who can be taken away? She heard his voice and recognized him, and she wanted to touch him; and the Lord said: Do not touch me (Ibid., 17), for you think that I am dead. I am going to the Father. Are you astonished that you did not find him in the tomb, whom the heavens await? Or perhaps it is reprov'd, because only perfect faith touches Christ; just as the woman with an issue of blood touched him with faith. Then the Master said: 'Someone touched me; I feel power going out from me' (Luke 8:46). With these words, she recognized in herself that she had been healed by the power that had gone out from him; and immediately she confessed within herself that she had touched the Lord. Then the Lord said: 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace' (Ibid., 48). But the Lord was exalted on earth, as he himself said: 'When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself' (John 12:32). Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

(Verse 12.) And he repeats, saying: God of hosts is with us, our refuge is the God of Jacob. Repetition is confirmation. Or because not only when he was born of the Virgin, did God become with us; but also after the resurrection, he himself said: Behold I am with you. . . . even to the

consummation of the world (Matt. XXVIII, 20). To whom is honor and glory, perpetuity from ages, and now, and always, and forever and ever. Amen. On Psalm 48, Commentary (Verse 1.) This is the title: A psalm of a song for the sons of Korah, the second of the Sabbath (Psalm 42 et seq.). The good sons of Korah, already approved in previous psalms, because they composed a spiritual psalter in themselves with appropriate thoughts and reflections suitable for the study of virtues, and, being vigilant, they were worthy to draw the secrets of heavenly mysteries for the knowledge of divinity. And so, since they had received the duty and office of singing the psalms before the ark of the Lord daily, the chosen ones seem to have been appointed to sing the psalm of the canticle especially on the second Sabbath. For it seemed fitting to those to whom it was committed, that they should sing with their own voice the ascension of the Lord rising from the depths; it was necessary for them to celebrate the day of the resurrection itself with their own gift and ministry. For what is the second Sabbath, if not the Sunday which follows the Sabbath? But this day of the Sabbath was later in the order of days, prior in sanctification of the Law. But when the end of the Law came, which is Christ Jesus (for Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes) and through his resurrection he sanctified the eighth day: the first became the same as the eighth, and the eighth became the same as the first: having privilege in the order of numbers, and sanctity in the resurrection of the Lord. Hence, we also read in the Gospel 'second-first' Sabbath (Luke 6:1), which is said in Latin 'secundo-primum'. For when the Lord's day began to excel, on which the Lord rose again, the first day of the week, which was the first day, began to be considered the second. For the first rest ceased, the second followed. Therefore, the Apostle also wrote to the Hebrews, saying: There remains, therefore, a rest for the people of God on the next day. Let us therefore hasten to enter into that rest (Heb. IV, 8, 9 and 11).

Therefore true rest is now not in the cessation of work, but in the time of resurrection. And so those who observed the solemnity of the Sabbath according to the Law, called it the one Sabbath, as if there were only one Sabbath and not another. But we who have embraced the spiritual observance and desire to shape our military service in the likeness and rest of God, and to display our ministry in that heavenly city where there is not an example or a shadow, but truth, we call it the first Sabbath, as it is written: 'Now late on the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week' (Matt. XXVIII, 1). But nothing is more beautiful, nothing is more expressive. Before the resurrection, he called it the Sabbath, after the resurrection, he named it the first Sabbath. John the Evangelist also says: On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early in the morning, while it was still dark (John 20:1). Darkness for a time, light in grace. But they express it more clearly according to the Gospel, as if the veil had been thrown off. Now David, under the Law, observed the proper measure of the appointed song and did not suppress the mystery, so as to indicate the second day of the week, the Lord's day; thus he believed that the order of numbers was observed among the Jews, and recognized the revelation of the spiritual sacrament. Therefore, let us listen to what he says, who sings to God on the second day of the sabbath.

(Verse 2.) 'Great,' he says, 'is the Lord and highly to be praised, in the city of our God, in his holy place. Therefore, is not God great and praiseworthy everywhere? Indeed, he is great and mighty everywhere; but the narrow mind cannot comprehend the greatness of his divine power and grace. However, the closer our knowledge is to God, the more excellent his majesty appears to us. Finally, Thomas, who previously said: 'Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will not believe' (John 20:25); where he put his finger and recognized the

evidence of his resurrection, marveling within himself at the grace of God: 'My Lord and my God,' he said (Ibid., 28). Then, therefore, he confessed most fully his divinity and dominion, where he did not doubt that he had risen from the dead. Finally, in Zion it is fitting to sing a hymn to God, and a vow is fulfilled to him in Jerusalem. So what is surprising if in the heavenly city, and in that supreme and ethereal place, his power is preached more vehemently?

(Verse 3.) He added: Spreading joy to the whole earth. And truly he is called great, who has spread joy over this earth where the seeds of intolerable sins once sprouted, where there was sorrow and mourning and groaning, he has spread joy throughout the whole world. Therefore, the conscience of mankind, which previously mourned, submerged in the depths of their sins, now rejoices, freed from the fear of all sins through the mercy of Christ and the remission of all sins. Therefore, it is fitting, as we have understood it, that we say; but because we find in some old copies: 'Shall I rejoice with all the earth?'. This means in Latin 'a good root rejoicing of the whole earth': we perceive the same sense; because the divine gifts of God the Father are praised in us, who has given us a rejoicing rooted in goodness, namely Jesus Christ, the true and most fruitful vine, from which celestial sacraments flow; in which there is everlasting and enduring joy, so that all sin may be washed away and the inner conscience may be cleansed: and we know that the phrase is appropriate; because we rejoice with a well-rooted joy, we who rejoice in Christ. For the joy of the world is temporary, but the joy of those who rejoice in the Lord is everlasting.

(Verse 4.) Mount Zion, the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God will be known in her palaces, when He shall take her. Why there is rejoicing in all the earth is clearly expressed; because the Lord Jesus has gathered to Himself the Church from sinners. Therefore, those who were on the sides of the north, that is, the companions and adherents of the devil, to whom it is said: Arise, north wind, and come, south wind (Song of Solomon 4:16); have become faithful to Christ. For it is of them that it is said: Those who trust in the Lord, as Mount Zion (Psalm 124:1). Therefore, Mount Zion has become through the grace of Christ and the sacrament of baptism. The harsh wind of the north is comprehensible, which previously moved the most severe storms and tempests with human passions: it began to lose its own (power), which afflicted strangers. It had overthrown the entire nation of the Jews, it held all nations bound by its own authority, they were its sides; that is, they aspired with it. For just as we call the guards and companions of a prince his sides, and just as a woman is the side of a man, because she is joined to him in obedient companionship, so the sides were the devils, who did his will. Therefore, now they are the mountain of Zion, who gaze upon the eternal God, and they direct their attention day and night. See for me that Paul, when he was persecuting the Church of the Lord, was the side of the north: now see, when it is read in the Church, that the mountain is the watchtower, through which we know and see the glory of Christ. And because the Greek word for mountains is ■πη, see how the hills of Christ's servants are. The hills are around him (Ibid., 2); in them is the Church of the Lord, which is the city of the great King. Also, because the Lord suffered in Venerarius according to the direction of the heavens; which was a place on the north side. But there is also Mount Zion, there is Jerusalem which is on earth.

See that this is not also understood, that the congregation of the people of God, which was connected to the north by fault, has become the Church of Christ by grace; so that now it is called not Synagogue, but the Church of Christ. And because the remnants of the Jews have been saved by the election of grace, in them God is known, in Peter, Paul, John, James, who are weighty and

lofty men as foundations and summits of the Church. Like firm foundations, which no strong blasts of the north wind have shaken; but they have kept the foundation of faith immovable, so that the whole Church would not totter: like lofty summits, which have raised the peak of its turrets with the strength of their virtue. For just as the builder is known in his works, and the architect in his buildings; so even if you do not hear the name, you can still recognize the artist from the quality of the works (and what wonder is it with human things, when we understand the invisible things of the eternal Creator through the things that have been made, even though He is not seen by us), thus God is recognized as the inhabitant of lofty and great houses (which houses we are, if we firmly hold onto the foundation of liberty and glory until the end), as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. For he himself, the true God, who established such men by the training of his precepts. Therefore, just as he demonstrated himself to be God to them forever, so, he says, when he receives the city of the great King, he will infuse the reception of his knowledge with its steps: so that they may become teachable of God, who have both heard his command and thought it should be carried out; lest they degenerate from the house built by him on the firmness of the rock.

(Vers. 5, 6.) This, he says, seeing, the kings of the earth are gathered together, and have passed into one. They, seeing then, were amazed. The good kings who can provide rulers of their own bodies, flowing from the very origin and institution of the patriarch Abraham, who taught that sin can be overcome. Therefore the true king, who did not know how to be guilty of wickedness, in whom the allure of fault and error could not reign. Hence it is also said to this kind of man by the sons of Heth: You are a king from God to us (Gen. 23:6). Therefore, the kings of the earth, who ruled over the flesh, gathered together; so that they would be one in heart and one in spirit, as we read: 'For the multitude of believers had one soul and one heart, and there was no separation among them' (Acts 4:32). These are the ones who passed into one not so much a location, but into the same affection and purpose. For it is said, 'Pass over, sit down' (Luke 17:7). For it is not of moderate virtue to pass from the wicked to the honorable, from the earthly to the eternal, and to change the habit of a carnal life, to abolish all its customs, to assume new manners, and to twist the entire state of the old conversation. And it is rightly said to him: If you pass through water, I am with you (Isaiah 43:2). God is with the one who passes, not with the one who stays behind. So those who were previously at odds with themselves, when they came together in harmony of mind and purpose, and peace was restored which made them one, and enmities were dissolved by the destruction of the middle wall of partition in their flesh: they were amazed, either at the one who is distinguished in his steps, or at men being converted in such a way; that those who previously served the devil, now serve the Lord Jesus with the righteousness of duty. And because the kings of their bodies, having experienced a significant amount of labor within themselves (for it is not easy or mediocre to conquer the mind, to cut off desires, to tame the lasciviousness of the flesh, to turn away from lust, which even resisted Paul, so that it would bind him as a captive to the law of sin) just as they marveled at the grace in those who had advanced in virtue, so too they were moved so that no one would fall back into vices, having been cast down from the higher peak of virtues. For human condition is inclined and changeable in either direction; so that wherever it intends, it inclines and tends either towards the pursuits of virtues, or towards the allurements of vices. And for this reason they were greatly moved with affection; so that a trembling seized them from fear, considering that which is written: For in the places of the wicked the just shall groan (Prov. 28:28). Finally, see for yourself Peter weeping bitterly, because error had come upon him;

and how the weakness of his body had bent the strength of his mind: and deservedly reproached by Christ for presuming constancy, and not considering the frailty of his nature. And indeed here he corrected the error through grace; but Judas remained in his crime, persevered in his groaning. He was righteous when he was connected with the number of the apostles: but because he was tripped up by the devil, he now laments and groans in wicked places; which shows that from grace he fell back into punishment. Therefore, such men as Judas, the betrayer, or Saul, who was called by the Lord his God to the kingdom, even strong men trembled when they fell.

(Vers. 7.) Finally, considering how the struggle would come to an end, how great the tribulations of the righteous, how great the anxieties, what kind of adversary, how great the fight of long labor, how great the bitterness of the appointed terror, what bonds of self-restraint, what scourges of conscience, they were greatly disturbed; lest anyone yield to such great labors of a stricter life, or to sorrows. For there are indeed bitter and heavy sorrows there; that is, in the Church, in that city of the great King, there are sorrows, like those of a woman in childbirth, until Christ is formed in us. For even Paul was not without pain when he saw a slower progress in the foolish Galatians in his teaching. And so he said: My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you (Galatians 4:19). The Lord also testifies in the Gospel that the pains of childbirth are severe; as He says: When a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a human being has been born into the world (John 16:21). Therefore, it is a great labor to acquire Christ for oneself; lest, without a guide, one wavers like a ship in the turbulent waves of this world. Finally, the apostles were sad when Christ reminded them that he would return to the Father, for they thought that they would be left without a leader. Christ is joy. He is the child whom he himself gave birth to, who received the spirit of salvation in the womb of his mind. The one who brings forth and nourishes rejoices; the one who gives birth is shaken and pierced.

It is good that you both give birth to him and nourish him. Do not cook a lamb in its mother's milk (Exod. XXIII, 19), so that it may not be said to you: Woe to those who are pregnant and nursing (Matth. XXIV, 19). For Christ was born of Mary, so that you may acknowledge him, as the ox acknowledged its owner, and know that he created you and possessed your ancestors. Do not nourish him as though he were a little child, but rather as though he were the true and perfect God to be worshipped, known from the true and perfect God. Thus the Magus worshiped him, so as not to cook a lamb in the milk of his mother; but as if he were worshiping the eternal God. Finally, in order to find him, he looked up at the sky. Therefore, he did not seek on earth the one whom a shining star showed from heaven. That is why Mary did not give birth to him, but bore him, because she knew that the Lord and the Savior were to be born from her, as she herself testifies, saying: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior (Luke 1:46-47). Therefore there are pains like those of a woman in labor. The pain is like that of giving birth, the pain is like that of breastfeeding, which you must have in perfect form from the beginning.

(Verse 8.) And therefore many are severely troubled, as the verse signifies, which follows: With a vehement spirit you will crush the ships of Tarshish. For while the servants of God desire to reach the perfection of faith, they mortify their bodies, correcting them more strictly, and reducing them to the service of servitude, so that they may not be rejected who have already been proven. And they do this with a strong and vehement Holy Spirit. For the Spirit is a spirit of counsel and power, so that by excessive abstinence they may weaken their bodies, by which they empty themselves of all

its pleasures; so that it may be said to them: Strengthen yourselves, weak hands, and feeble knees (Isaiah 35:3). For when someone is released from this earthly structure, then they rise stronger to eternal life. I would be lying, unless Scripture supports it, which says: 'To be released and to be with Christ is much better' (Philippians 1:23). What is released begins to be with Christ. And elsewhere: 'The time of my release is at hand' (2 Timothy 4:6). Therefore, whoever has contemplated dissolving themselves through abstinence will not be afraid of the day of their passion. And rightly does he call the Holy Spirit a strong wind, about to speak of ships. He says that ships are bodies that are being moved by the restless waves of various passions, and they are quickly sunk unless they have a pilot. Hence he also says elsewhere: Those who go down to the sea in ships (Ps. CVI, 23). But they navigate well, who carry the cross of Christ as a tree in the ships, and from there they explore the blasts of the winds, so that they may direct their bodies towards the grace of the Holy Spirit, safe and secure on the Lord's wood; nor do they allow their ships to wander with the restless waves over the seas, but they strive towards the port of salvation and the completion of their course by directing it; so that they may gain a faithful station, from which they can repair their courses that have been dissolved in the resurrection, where they cannot fear shipwreck. And therefore let us consider this grace carefully, let us be its spies, let us explore it, so that our bodies may become ships of Tharsis. For the flesh is brought into servitude when we strive for the grace of God, so that we may follow what is bitter for a time, such as fasting, not what is sweet and voluntary. Tharsis, therefore, is the lookout of grace, the intelligible city, like the superior Zion. Jonas hastened towards it. Scripture says of it that Josaphat was allied with Uzziah the king, and it pleased them to make ships and go to him in Tharsis. But because he allied himself with the wicked, a prophet was sent to him, who told him: The Lord has destroyed your work, and your ships have been broken, and they could not go to Tarshish (2 Chronicles 20:35-37). This signifies that the bodies of those who transgress God's commandments cannot attain the completion of grace. However, to Solomon, being a wise and peaceful man, ships from Tarshish came with gold and silver, and ivory tusks, without any offense, and he himself sent them there. For he had with King Hiram a spiritual commerce of sacred negotiation and a mutual affection of harmonious grace. Therefore, those who possess royal authority use these ships to restrain physical violence, seeing that they have been transformed from corruptible into incorruptible, shining with the highest light of grace from their blemishes, renewed from their dissolution and decay, living from the dead, rising from the buried. They commemorate these things in public discourse.

(Verse 9.) As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God hath founded it for ever. We have heard, we have seen, outside the city, in the city, whose God is eternal light, the day shines without the worldly sun, the moon is not sought after: its foundation is not temporal, but eternal.

(Verse 10.) He says, "We have received, O God, your mercy in the midst of your temple." If it is said about the Son of God, we understand the temple in this way, according as he himself said about his body, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). Truly, the body of Christ is the temple of God, in which is the purification of our sins. Truly, that flesh is the temple of God in which there could be no contamination of sin; but for the sin of the whole world, it was itself the sacrifice. Truly that flesh was the temple of God, in which the image of God shone forth, and in bodily form the fullness of divinity dwelled; for Christ himself is the fullness. Therefore,

it is said to him: We have received, O God, your mercy in the midst of your temple. What does this mean, except what he said: There stands one among you whom you do not know (John 1:26); that is, he is in your midst, and he is not seen? But if it is referred to the Father, what does it mean: In the midst of your temple; except that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself?

Therefore, in that temple we received, he says, your mercy; that is, the Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us. Just as Christ is redemption, so is mercy. But what greater mercy than that he offered himself to be immolated for our sins; to cleanse the world with his own blood, which sin could not be abolished in any other way? For if the Apostle said of holy men: You are the temple of God, and the Holy Spirit dwells in you (1 Cor. 3:16); how much more can I say that the flesh of the Lord Jesus is the Temple of God, who is always read as being full of the Holy Spirit, and he himself testifies, saying: I feel virtue has gone out from me (Luke 8:46); which virtue healed all bitter wounds. And that can also be understood what he said, that he took upon himself the mercy of God with the people in the midst of his temple; for he himself founded his Church, and propagated it forever; for he truly bestowed this grace upon his people with his only-begotten Son, whom he also showed to be the builder, saying: He will build me a city (Isaiah 45:13); which, spread throughout the whole world, made the whole earth full of his praise and name. For as it is written: The earth is full of his praise (Habakkuk 3:3); so it is written: He has been given a name above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus is in the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

(Verse 11.) Hence the Prophet said correctly: According to your name, O God, so is your praise to the ends of the earth: your right hand is full of justice. It is not surprising that the right hand of God is full of justice, for he is the right hand of God. Moreover, the power of God is the same as the justice of God; so, by knowing that he is full of the justice of God, you should understand that he possesses the fullness of justice that the Father has; and by understanding that the power and justice of God the Father and the wisdom are read, you should not perceive anything different in him from the divine majesty; instead, you should recognize that he has received everything from the Father, and that the Son is the splendor of all the Father's glory, and the exact representation of his essence: he has expressed the Father in such a way that the whole Father is in him, just as the whole Son is in the Father.

(Verse 12.) And because the Prophet saw in spirit that the praises of Christ should be proclaimed throughout the earth, he exhorts us to joy and worship of His name as a kind of conclusion to the discourse he began, saying: Let Mount Zion rejoice; that is, those who trust in the Lord, as he subsequently interpreted, saying: They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, etc. (Psalm 124:1). The Lord Jesus Himself, who is the mountain and height of His Church, which contemplates Christ with its whole affection, rejoices in its faith and devotion which have pleased God, for the faithless have been rejected. Therefore, this can also be understood devoutly, since he himself is the highest mountain above all, onto which he is commanded to ascend who preaches the faith, with the Scripture saying: 'Ascend to the high mountain, you who preach good news to Zion' (Isaiah 40:9).

Let the souls confessing to You rejoice, he says. They themselves are the daughters of that Judea in which God is well known. For that Judea, which is in the flesh or in writing, did not know the

Lord. For if she had known, she would have also received him. But she did not know him, whom she did not receive, and she rejected his judgments: about which he reminds them that they do not originate from Father Abraham, but from the seed of the devil, because every sin is the seed of the enemy. However, the daughters of confession do not commit sin, but they overshadow. Therefore blessed are those whose sins are forgiven. And rightly will the daughters of confession rejoice because of the judgments of the Lord, when they have come to know His judgments and ways, which in this age are inscrutable and unsearchable to men: and when they have begun to behold the truth face to face, then those things which now appear inscrutable, they will comprehend, and they will rejoice in their understanding.

(Verse 13.) Surround, he says, Zion, and embrace her: narrate in her towers. Those who understand Zion, surround her, and embrace her with their senses; so that they may hold onto her and not let her go, lest the discipline of virtue may be taken away from them. Therefore, she says in the Canticles: I have taken hold of him, and I will not let him go (Cant. III, 4); she who sought the wisdom of God, and embraced the justice of God with the arms of charity, and with certain arms of faith and devotion; for he himself is the embrace of a pious mind. Therefore, let us also comprehend as much as we can the internal mysteries of truth, and let us write them down and engrave them in our senses, and the power of the heavenly oracle: which, in order to attain, that skilled Moses ascended, in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, unto the mountain and entered into the cloud; so that he may know the hidden and secret things, with Jesus as his companion; for no one can understand uncertain wisdom and hidden things without the true Jesus. And thus in the form of Jesus of Nave, the true Savior, his coming was signified, through whom all the teachable ones of God would be made, who would open the Law and reveal the Gospel.

Therefore, those who surround Zion with their prudence, and embrace understanding as they ascend its towers, reveal from above what must be done or guarded against by those who cannot ascend its towers. For the city of God is fortified; and elsewhere the Lord says: 'Behold, I have painted your walls, O Jerusalem.' (Isaiah 49:16) It is marked with towers that the adversary may be detected if he should approach. He has his armies, which he is accustomed to gain possession of the souls of God, to bring forth machines; so that he may be able to overcome fortified towers. But you, he says, preach about the towers; for there is abundance in the towers of Jerusalem. Preach righteousness, warn of the watchfulness; for wisdom is sung in the end, and is preached in the highest walls. And elsewhere he says again: I have set watchmen on your walls, they will not keep silent day or night to the end (Isaiah 62:6). Therefore, narrate without interruption, without end. The adversary is awake, prowling, and with savage rage seeks whom he may devour. Therefore, the Lord must always be praised, who crushes the teeth of lions and breaks their jaws, so that they cannot harm us.

(Verse 14, 15.) He says, 'Set your hearts on his power,' that is, to understand his power; and distribute his steps, so that you may recount them to another generation. For this is God, our God forever and ever; he will rule us forever. The Greek word 'βύπερις' means high and towering houses; hence, when the Prophet spoke of the city of God and its inhabitants, he said, 'Distribute its steps,' that is, its lofty and sublime dwellings in the heavens. It teaches that the order of merits must be observed. For each person is in their own order (John XIV, 2). Therefore, the Lord says to the Disciples that He is going and preparing dwellings; so that each person may obtain dwellings suitable for the account of their merits, in which they may enjoy eternal rest.

There are also lofty and profound teachings, in which are hidden the mysteries of piety and the principles of heavenly discourse. Divide these, he says, and distribute them according to the capacity of each individual, as much as each person can comprehend with their own intellect. For Paul did not argue the same things to everyone. To some, he preached nothing but Christ Jesus, and him crucified, not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and power; but to the mature, he spoke wisdom; for the whole populace cannot grasp the wisdom hidden in mystery.

Therefore, Christ hid it so that fools may not understand it, and the wise may seek it more earnestly; and they may proclaim it to the next generation, which would be more perfect in spirit by virtue; because the previous generation, due to its weak faith, could not understand the sacraments of perfect wisdom. And therefore, it sought a sign and rejected the truth; when in fact, it is not the truth of the sign, but the sign of the truth. Hence, the Lord responded to him: An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign; and a sign shall not be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah (Matthew 12:39). To argue against the perfidy of the Jews, the example of Jonah is brought forth; because the people of Nineveh believed the sign, and thought they should follow the preaching of Jonah, who had been in the belly of the whale: but the Jews did not believe even after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, who rose from the heart of the earth after three days, and lives and reigns forever. Amen. On Psalm 49, Commentary On the Psalm XLVIII, Commentary. The title of this is: To the end, for the sons of Kore, a Psalm of David.

(Verses 1, 2.) Listen to these things, all you nations; listen with your ears, all you who inhabit the earth. In the very beginning, we recognize the voice of the Lord calling the nations to the Church for salvation; so that they may renounce error, follow truth, and acknowledge the gift of pious worship. But because the hearts of the human race were infected by the poisons of the serpent's venom, and their conscience, being subject to sin, despaired of forgiveness and could not call itself back, He promises a remedy, freely offering indulgence through the abundance of His own mercy; so that the guilty one may not fear, but rather rejoice in being aware that he renders the service of slavery to a good master, who knows how to forgive sins and honor virtues. Finally, with the same series of calling, the Lord also urges us in the Gospel, saying: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart (Matthew 11:28-29). Then he mentions that his yoke is easy, and his burden is light; for whoever despairs of the medicine will not be able to be cured. And therefore gentleness is pleasing to all, which heals the wounds of inward souls.

Therefore, he came to the sick, coming as a doctor, who would cure our serious ulcers; he presents remedies, so that people may see and come together with diligent faithfulness for the cure of salvation. Thus, that woman in the Gospel deserved health, who suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years. She heard that the doctor had come and hastened to touch, saying: If I touch his garment, I will be saved (Matthew 9:20-21). She said this within herself, and Christ heard it: and she touched the garment, and power came forth from the Savior, which cured the sick, strengthened the weak, stopped the flow, and demonstrated piety. Likewise, here also, He calls all people to the fountain of wisdom and prudence: He promises redemption to all, so that no one may be afraid, no one may despair, where no one is excluded; but every soul is invited to grace, so that it may be redeemed from sin without cost, and may obtain the fruit of eternal life.

Here is the meaning of the psalm, which we will arrange in its proper order, when we have explained the power and quality of the previous words. For the nations are commanded to listen, and the inhabitants of the earth to perceive with their ears. Surely it is the world of the earth, of which it was said above: The Lord's is the earth and its fullness: the world and those who dwell in it. He himself has founded it upon the seas: and has prepared it upon the rivers. (Psalm 24:1-2) What the Greeks call 'ο■κουμ■νην' is the inhabited world because it is inhabited by Christ, as he himself said: 'For I will dwell in them'; for he dwells in order to fill what appeared empty. What, therefore, is 'ο■κουμ■νην'; if not the holy Church, the temple of God, and the dwelling place of Christ? The Latins also fittingly, though using a different language, called it the orbis terrae, for just as the wheel rolls in a circle without any obstacle to its course, so the lives of the saints, who are inhabited by the Spirit, revolve in a circle.

Therefore, the Church is founded in tribulations, in storms and tempests, in worries and sorrows, and is prepared in adverse circumstances and in rivers. In which rivers? Hear the one who says: The rivers lifted up their voice (Psalm 93:3). Hear also in the Gospel: Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture says, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive (John 7:38-39). Therefore the Church is prepared in these rivers, in which the grace of God flows. These are the rivers that receive the word of God with their ears and speak; so they pour the word into the hearts of each individual. And so the Scripture makes a distinction by saying: Listen to these things, all nations: hear with your ears, all who dwell on the earth. Everyone can hear, but not everyone can perceive with their ears, unless they are the chosen ones of God. And so the Savior says: Who has ears to hear, let him hear (Luke 8:8). He speaks of those spiritual ears of the inner man, whose nostrils we also read, as Job says: The divine spirit is in my nostrils (Job 27:3). Not all men have these ears and these nostrils. For the form of the body is one thing, the grace of the spirit another. The spiritual man hears and judges all things, but the animal man does not perceive what belongs to the Spirit of God. For the former is earthly, the latter heavenly.

(Verse 3.) And so he added: Both those born of the earth and of men: both rich and poor, in order to call everyone. Who is born of the earth, if not the son of man? Who is spiritual, if not the Son of God? The former is conceived from blood and generated through the pleasure of flesh and man; the latter is born from God. One is rich in every word and knowledge; the other is poor, yet rich in grace, because he cried out in poverty and the Lord heard him. On the contrary, both the rich are in pride and the poor are in humility. All are called to the Church, so that all may be redeemed by Christ. The sick find a doctor; the healthy acquire wisdom; the captive redeems, the free rewards. The divine Scripture builds up everyone. In it, each person finds what heals their wounds or confirms their merits. But at the same time, the calling of the rich and the poor together provokes us to a certain humility and equality, so that the rich does not scorn the poor and the poor does not envy the rich. Rather, both are united by the same grace, because the Lord became poor, though he was rich, so that he could be the Savior of both the poor and the rich.

(Verse 4.) And it weaves together: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be understanding. Truly all are called, because the fountain of wisdom abounds for all, and it cannot be compared to a monetary treasure, which is declared more precious than all treasures. Therefore, neither the rich turn away, nor the poor are excluded; for wisdom does not discriminate based on wealth, but on desires. He is more suitable who is more passionate, and closest in

discipline. But if the meditation of the heart speaks of prudence, how much more perfect is doctrine! Then we are admonished not to give forth a tumultuous speech but, through the exercise of meditation, to examine in the balance of our inner mind what is to be said. For it is written elsewhere: A deceitful balance is not good (Prov. 20:23).

(Verse 5.) I will incline my ear to a proverb: I will open my proposition in the psaltery. An attentive listener understands, and bends his ear to comprehend the figures of the parables. The Savior Himself calls His ear, which He has for hearing. The Lord also opens His closed proposition; when He has found a fitting instrument and a chosen vessel, which He calls a psaltery: of which Paul, the sweet chant of grace, produced a melody by all his strings sounding together, with the inner string struck by the plectrum of the Holy Spirit, and the outer one being plucked, so that both tongue and mind could pray. And so he says: I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the mind: I will sing with the spirit, I will sing also with the mind (I Cor. XIV, 15). Therefore, Christ promises such a man long before, through whom He would reveal hidden things and open the mysteries of prophetic speech veiled in darkness. The psaltery is good, when it agrees with the life of faith, and it is a flesh of the soul, the will aspiring to virtue. This is the sweet psaltery, where the discipline of living is melodious; that what is written may be fulfilled: The tongue of the mute shall be clear (Isaiah XXXIII, 6).

(Verse 6.) It follows: Why should I fear in the day of evil? The wickedness of my heel surrounds me. This means that when my mouth speaks wisdom, and the meditation of my heart provides prudence, I am afraid of what I can do on the day of judgment; unless perhaps the wickedness of my heel needs to be washed away. (Compare Augustine, Against Julian, Book 1, Chapter 3). Our wickedness is one thing, the wickedness of our heels is another, in which Adam was wounded by the tooth of the serpent, and he left behind to his human descendants an inherited liability through his own wound, so that we all limp because of that wound. Where the Lord washed the feet of the disciples, so that he might wash away the poison of the serpent: and Peter is reprovved because he made excuses, not wanting the Lord to wash his feet. Therefore it was said to him: Unless I wash your feet, you will not have a share with me (John 13:8). When he heard this, he offered not only his feet, but also his hands to be washed. To whom the Lord responded: He who is bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet: but he is clean overall (Ibid., 10).

Therefore David says: My iniquities have overwhelmed my head (Psalm 38:5); he who knew himself to be conceived in iniquity and born in sin from his mother. But the Lord, who had no sins of his own and did not know his own iniquities, says: The iniquity of my heel will surround me; that is, the iniquity of Adam, not mine. But that cannot be a terror to me; for on the day of judgment, our own sins, not the crimes of others, will be punished in us. Hence I think that the slipperiness of the heel in committing wrongdoing is more culpable than the guilt of any offense we have committed. And rightly the Lord, who has taken on everything for our sake, says: 'Let us wash our feet, so that we may remove the slipperiness of the heel; may this be a trustworthy foundation for virtues, and may no one falter due to the error of their father, who is prepared to stand by his own purpose: and may no one fear the slippery inheritance, who desires to hold onto the path of virtue.' Therefore, the iniquity of our heel is the transgression of Adam, through which he fell into contempt and disregard for heavenly commandments.

There is also the wickedness of the heel, the betrayal of Judas must be considered. The heel, because it is written: 'He who eats bread with me, lifts his heel against me' (Psalm 38:12). And there he said 'his heel', and here he said 'my heel'. His heel, because Christ is without wickedness, but this is the wickedness of the traitor: my heel, as Christ calls Judas the last part of his body, of which we are the body and members. The apostles are the more excellent and active members of Christ: Judas is the heel, like the farthest part of the body that is subject to the serpent, and is open to injury. First, therefore, the heel of Adam, second the heel of Judas. The former was the downfall of the whole inheritance, the latter of the traitor alone, who could not entangle the inheritance; for we are now not of the flesh, but of the Redeemer's inheritance, as the Scripture says: The inheritance is for those who believe in the Lord (Isaiah 54:17).

There is also that wickedness of his heel, which surrounded Christ: 'They surrounded me, they surrounded me,' he says, 'and in the name of the Lord I avenged myself upon them.' (Psalm 117:11) His heel is the Synagogue, the beauty and glory of his face is the Church; as it is written: 'The Lord has reigned, he has put on beauty.' (Psalm 92:1)

(Verse 7.) Therefore, they are the heel of whom it is said: Those who trust in their own strength, and those who boast in the abundance of their riches. The rich have become poor and hungry (Psalm 33:11). This is said of the Jews. But also, all those who live in luxury and do not submit to Christ are the heel. But these are general things that are widely known. However, he specifically spoke of Judas, the traitor, who seemed strong and rich in the glory of his apostleship.

(Vers. 8, 9.) Finally, the sermon about the Passion of the Lord is woven together. The brother does not redeem, a man will redeem; nor will he give his propitiation to God, and the price of redeeming his soul; that is, why should I fear daily evils? For what can harm me, who not only do not need a redeemer, but I myself am the redeemer of all? Shall I make others free, and tremble for myself? Behold, I will make all things new, which are above the affection of mere brotherhood and piety. The brother who cannot redeem himself from the same mother's womb due to the weakness of his nature, will be redeemed by man. But that man of whom it is written: 'The Lord will send a man who will save them' (Isaiah 19:20); who himself said: 'You seek to kill Me, a man who has spoken the truth to you' (John 8:40). But even though he is a man, who will know him? Why will no one know him? For just as there is one God, so there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. He is the only one who redeemed man, overcoming his brothers with compassion; for he poured out his own blood for others, which no one can offer for his brother. Therefore, he did not spare his own body in order to redeem us from sin: and he gave himself as redemption for all; as the true witness, the apostle Paul, affirmed, saying: I speak the truth, I do not lie (Rom. IX, 1). But why will he alone redeem here? Because no one can equal him in piety, to the extent that he would lay down his life for his slaves; no one in integrity; for all are under sin, all subject to the fall of Adam. Only the Redeemer is chosen, who cannot be subject to the old sin. Therefore, let us understand through the man, the Lord Jesus, who assumed human condition, that he crucified the sin of all in his flesh, and erased the handwriting of all with his own blood. But perhaps you will say: How can it be denied that the brother will be redeemed, when he himself said: I will tell your name to my brothers (Ps. 21:23) ? But not as a brother to us, but as Christ Jesus, in whom God was; he forgave our sins. For it is written: God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor. 5:19) . In that Christ Jesus, of whom it is only said: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14) . Therefore, he dwelt in us not as a brother, but as a Lord, when he dwelt in flesh.

Therefore, since he reconciled the world to God, certainly he himself did not need reconciliation. For how could he propitiate God for his own sin, when he knew no sins? Lastly, when the Jews asked for a didrachma, which was given for sin according to the Law, he said to Peter: Simon, do the kings of the earth take tribute or taxes from their own sons, or from strangers? Peter answered: from strangers. To whom the Lord said: Therefore the sons are free. But lest we give them offense . . . cast a hook, and take up the fish that first comes up; and when you have opened its mouth, you shall find a piece of money: that take, and give it for me and for you (Matthew 17:24 et seq.). It shows that he does not need to offer propitiation for his sins; for he was not a slave of sin, but was free from every error as the Son of God. For the son, being free, is a slave in debt. Therefore, that free person is free from all and does not pay the price of redemption for his own soul, the price of whose blood could abound to redeem all the sins of the whole world. Rightly, therefore, he sets others free, who owes nothing for himself.

(Verse 10.) I will add more. Not only should Christ not pay the price for His own redemption or atonement for sin, but also if you consider any faithful person, it can be understood that they should not seek their own atonement; for Christ is the atonement for all, and He is the redemption of all. For if the blood of any person is sufficient for their own redemption, when Christ has shed His own blood for the redemption of all? Is there, therefore, anyone's blood that can be compared to the blood of Christ? Or is there any man so powerful that he can offer a propitiation for himself beyond the propitiation that Christ offered in himself, who alone reconciled the world to God through his blood? What greater sacrifice, what more excellent offering, what better advocate than the one who became a plea for the sins of all and gave his life for our redemption? Therefore, the propitiation or redemption of individuals is not sought; for the price of all is the blood of Christ, by which the Lord Jesus redeemed us, who alone reconciled the Father: and he labored until the end; because he himself undertook our labor, saying: Come to me, all you who labor... and I will refresh you (Matthew 11:28). See the one laboring: I have labored groaning, my throat has become hoarse (Psalm 69:4). And elsewhere: Issachar desired what is good, resting among the strong. And below: He placed his shoulder to the work, and became a farmer (Gen. XLIX, 14 and 15). Therefore, man will no longer offer his propitiation or redemption; for he has been once cleansed of sin by the blood of Christ. However, he will labor to keep the commandments of living and not deviate from heavenly mandates. While he lives, let him be in labor and persevere in it, so that he may live until the end, lest he himself die a death, since he has already been redeemed from death.

(V. 11.) But whoever keeps the commandments of life will not see destruction, when they see those who appeared to be the most wise and prudent in this world dying. This specifically applies to the scribes and Pharisees, who claim seats of authority in the synagogues, as if they were the rulers of wisdom. They truly labor in vain, thinking that they will be set free by a silver coin, while they despise the spiritual price of their soul and reject the unique sacrifice of the Lord's body through an empty interpretation of the Law, refusing the sacrament of baptism. For the blood of goats and bulls can never take away sins; but it is the blood of Christ that redeems us all, as prefigured in Leviticus. It is not by the payment of a didrachma, but by the price of His blood alone that we are set free.

Therefore, let us be teachable by God, so that none of us may experience eternal damnation on that day when the wise of this world or the leaders of the Jews will be condemned to everlasting

death, while the foolish and the stupid perish together. They are not the same. The foolish one is he who understands nothing and comprehends folly; the stupid one is he who understands wrongly. The stupid one says there is no God. Just as the wicked one, not because he is ignorant of justice, but because of the wickedness of his own heart, commits unjust deeds: he is also called wicked because he wants to destroy goodness through his malice, not because he is unaware of goodness. Therefore, when the foolish and ignorant perish, they leave behind their riches to strangers; for they cannot find a deserving and rightful heir to their folly and wickedness. For the rightful heirs say: 'Because we are children of God.' But if we are children, then we are also heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified together (Rom. VIII, 16 and 17). Therefore, the foolish do not have riches, because they do not have an inheritance. They do not have untrustworthy wealth, nor possessions; for to the faithful, the whole world is a possession. They do not have inheritance, for the inheritance is only for those who believe in the Lord. But they have their own wealth. Therefore, the greedy person says: I have no place to gather my fruits (Luke 12:17); for the true fruits, but the fruits of the greedy person, is money. And the Lord says to the greedy person: Go, sell your possessions . . . and come; follow me (Matthew 19:21). For an inherited estate is not a perfect good, but these are ill-gotten gains that are acquired through some profit. Sell, he says, what you think is yours; even though they are not yours, because they pass to others just like a river: and follow me, so that you may recognize the immortal good. Therefore, the wise are led to destruction, to whom God hides the things that He revealed to little ones. They will perish together, and in the same place there will be both the fool and the ignorant, and they will leave their wealth to strangers; because wickedness does not find a legitimate successor.

(Verse 12.) And their graves shall be their houses forever, their dwelling places to all generations. They have named lands after themselves. Everywhere Scripture considers graves as worthless, compared to those who are degenerate and greedy for this life. Their throat is an open sepulcher (Psalms 5:11). Therefore, they live for the present and not for eternity; their graves are their houses. For the houses of the righteous are not on earth, but in heaven, as the Apostle taught, saying: But our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). It is our home, which is the house of Christ. Therefore, Scripture says: 'And Moses indeed was faithful over his whole house as a servant, to bear witness to those things which were to be spoken: but Christ as the Son in his own house' (Heb. III, 5 et 6). Hence, for the pious, the Church is their home, and heaven is their homeland. Therefore, the just man says: 'I am a stranger with you and a sojourner, as all my fathers were' (Psal. XXXVIII, 13). For the indulgent, their home is a tomb. Indeed, they live as if in a tomb, those who can say: 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die' (Isaiah 22:13), having no view of resurrection before their eyes. Therefore, they adhere and cling to their own tombs, because they did not believe that they could be raised. Therefore, their dwelling is in their own burial place, and their tent is in the earthly generation and progeny; they leave worms as heirs to their body, so that only their memory remains here, and cannot pass into eternity.

Finally, their names are written in their own lands; because their works are corruptible and earthly. And therefore their names are written where they preferred to live. But to those who have elevated their works, it is said to them: Do not rejoice, because demons are subject to you; but rejoice, because your names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20). Hence, let us understand that the Lord does not accuse them in vain, who built themselves tombs or adorned the tombs of the prophets

(Matthew 23:28). For the Jews are condemned, who offered earthly consolations, not eternal rewards, to the prophets they had killed. Therefore, he prohibits his disciple from burying his father (Matthew 8:22) because he should be continuously focused on the eternal Father. And it is written in the book of Isaiah: 'What, you ask, have you built and torn down your tomb for yourself?' (Isaiah 22:16) And Mary is criticized for seeking Christ in the tomb. Leave the tombs which they left, who, hearing the voice of the Lord, rose from the graves in His passion. Do not dwell among the dead, who are alive. Hear the voice of Jesus, the one who resurrects: Rise, you who sleep, and rise from the dead; so that the light of Christ may be poured out upon you (Ephesians 5:14). The other light is His Holy Spirit, which shone like fire upon the holy apostles in the dispersion of tongues.

(Verses 13, 14.) It follows: When a man is honored, he does not understand; he is compared to the beasts that are without understanding; and he becomes like them. This is their way, it becomes a stumbling block to them; and afterwards they will please with their mouth. Because the man did not understand, when he was honored (and honor consists in this, that he was made in the image of God, he became capable of reason), he was compared to the beasts, which do not have understanding; but he who understood, is compared to the angels. And therefore, here he is magnified by the clarity of good works: he is esteemed like a horse neighing at the filthiness of living, which brings stumbling blocks to those who live in wickedness and obscenity. For the foolishness of a man contaminates his ways. But such men live according to their own desires, which create stumbling blocks, and they will please themselves with their mouth, but not in their heart. For they are not good, of whom it is said: They blessed with their mouth, and cursed with their heart (Psalm 62:5). And it is also a response to those who have written in their books as follows: And afterwards, they will bless with their mouth. For your word is near, and it should be in your mouth and in your heart.

(Verse 15.) As sheep are led down to hell: death shall feed on them. And the just shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their help shall decay in hell, from their glory. Christ who did not wish to feed them, shall feed them with death. Who then would abandon the good shepherd, who lays down his own life for his sheep, because the care of his flock belongs to him? Or who would choose the hired death, which is repaid with the reward of the worst deeds? At the same time, know, O man, that Christ is the true shepherd, who feeds his own unto life. Death has entered, which leads strangers to ruin, and devours those whom it can prevail against because of their wickedness. While it is permitted to exert power and accumulate wealth in this life, so as to boast over others at home: in the resurrection there will be servitude, when the morning light shines upon the righteous: whose figure is that the lord Jacob is placed before his brother. And so, a miserable servitude, that at the time when others are called to the glory of splendor and light, the glory of these people fades and is consumed in the darkness of hell. And rightly it is said about them: They were expelled from their honor and glory; for this glory is temporal. But God will free, he says, my soul from the hand of hell; when he shall take it. He says this well, who knew that his soul was not to be abandoned in hell. For he descended, in order to set free the captives from the jaws of hell, not to remain captive among them.

(Verse 17.) Therefore, since these things that are in this world cannot pass with us; therefore it is said to you: Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, and when the glory of his house is multiplied. Because when he dies, he will not take everything with him, nor will the glory of his house descend with him. Do not be afraid of riches, and the power of the rich, and the worldly

glory; for those things are transient, and they depart more quickly than they came. This world is a dream: you wake up, and it disappears; for whoever can sleep off the intoxication of this world and assume the sobriety of virtue, despises these things and considers money worthless. And do not be afraid when you hear of the multiplied glory of some powerful person's house. Look carefully, and it is empty, having nothing in itself of the fullness of faith. And what shall I say about the world? It was completely empty before Christ filled it with believers. And so it is written: He will judge among the nations, he will fill ruins (Psalm 109:6). For what else was there in this world before, except the ruin of faithlessness? What is ruin? Listen to him saying: Where there is ruin, there also are eagles (Matthew 24:28); that is, where there is ruin, there is also resurrection. Ruin is emptiness of stability; resurrection is fullness of life. And so, that ruin of Adam emptied us, but the grace of Christ filled us. That is why he emptied himself; so that he could fill us, and dwell in the flesh of man, the fullness of power. Know what is ruin. While a person is alive, they are infused with spirit: when they have died, surely the spirit of this vital life is empty. The loss of spiritual grace makes it even more empty, which grace is accustomed to filling; so that we can say: For we have all received from his fullness, and grace for grace (John 1:16). It is said of another: I have labored in vain (Isaiah 49:4): but the righteous are like the fragrance of a full field.

(Verse 18.) But what is not empty, that which is worldly and secular; when he rightly said, who with sober virtue despised this world: naked I was born, naked I will die (Job 1:21)? Can anyone take with them what they possess? This person leaves behind everything, enters the tomb alone, and his rich tomb is empty, which the earth itself couldn't contain. Hence it is said: Will you alone dwell on the earth? Does the glory of his house or wealth descend into that tomb (Isaiah 5:8)? See the power of Scripture. The glory of the world does not descend with the sinner, but the glory of virtue ascends with the innocent. And to put it more succinctly, the glory of a man will ascend with the one ascending; it will not descend with the one descending. That which is of grace and virtue will ascend. One ascends to paradise, one descends to hell. Descending, it says, the living descend into hell (Psalm 54:16). Therefore, Lazarus, the poor man, was lifted up by angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man, who lived in luxury, lifted up his eyes in hell and begged Abraham to send the poor man to him, so that he could touch his tongue with his finger, and thus find some relief in the midst of the great burning. See this poor man, abundantly blessed with all good things, surrounded by the blissful rest of the holy Patriarchs. See this empty man, who seemed to abound in everything in this world, whose soul was blessed in his life: but now, in death, he is tormented and without strength (Luke 16:22 and following).

(Verse 19.) Hence it follows beautifully: For his soul will be blessed in his own life: he will give thanks to you when you do good to him. They will bless him, he says, with an earthly blessing. Foolish men, who consider the present, not the future. His followers and sycophants will bless him. He himself also considers himself blessed if he seizes some desired field. He confesses to God when good things succeed for him in this world; but when adverse things happen, he curses with an impious mouth. Therefore he says this, because the secular man does not give thanks when placed in poverty and adversity; but the just man, on the other hand, blesses the Lord with grateful affection in difficulties. Lastly, the devil says to God: What is surprising, if Job blesses you? He has everything in abundance. But send, he says, your hand, and touch what he possesses, let us see if he will bless you to your face (Job 1:11). And the Lord gave him the power to take away those things that belonged to this world; he would pour out the ulcerous severity of his flesh.

Nevertheless, Job blessed saying: The Lord gave, the Lord took away... blessed be the name of the Lord (Ibid., 21).

(Verses 20, 21.) He shall go on to his fathers' generation: he shall never see light. When a man is in honor, yet does not understand, he is compared to the senseless beasts and becomes like them. Therefore, it is said, he shall go on to his fathers' generation. The Lord declared, saying: You are of your father the devil (John 8:44). There are also those fathers of whom it is said: Let the dead bury their own dead (Matthew 8:22). Therefore, the Moabites were forbidden to enter the Church of the Lord for three or four generations (Deut. 23:3), so that their children, due to the sins of their fathers, would enter into the same generation whose deeds and customs they imitated. Hence it is written: The children of adulterers will come to a complete end (Wisdom 3:16). Therefore, whoever does not follow the Father who is in heaven, but instead follows the earthly corruption, enters into the lineage of an earthly father. For as earthly, so are the earthly ones; so that his earthly life is without rest after death. He will not see eternal light forever; because he sought after worldly things. However, he who has followed Christ's glory, who has desired that light which enlightens every person coming into this world, will find and see eternal light; because Christ has redeemed him from death.

Then therefore he will think with himself, that when he was in honor, he did not understand; and therefore he will be similar to the beasts, who ought to be similar to the angels, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: to whom is honor, glory, perpetuity from ages, and now, and always, and unto all ages of ages. Amen. On Psalm 62, Commentary On the Psalm LXI, Commentary. Title: To the end, for Idithun, a Psalm by David himself. In this treatise on the psalm, Blessed Ambrose strongly reproaches the unfaithfulness and impiety of the tyrant Maximus, who dared to deceive and kill his lord Emperor Gratian through fraud and deceit. He declares that the emperor dwells in the Lord's sanctuary and rests on his mountain.

(Verse 1.) It is the unquestioned custom of all of us to hurry toward the end, and we want to know the sum of what we have read or seen and heard. Hence the title itself does not allow us to be idle, nor does it let the indication of common desire pass by our resting ears. For among other things, although it shines forth even in other things, in this kind of psalm a divine oracle shines forth. Hence let us consider more diligently what the end is; for the end is called τέλος, and the sum of the thing we want to explain. Christ is called the end because he is the end of the Law; as it is written: Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom. X, 4). He is also called the end because he is the beginning and the end. Therefore, those psalms which are titled: To the end; are either about Christ or are of Christ himself: about Christ, when he is proclaimed; of Christ himself, when he proclaims himself, and promises to come to the earth and deigns to reveal to us the future passion of his own body. And so they are inscribed on the title themselves, as if truly David, the ministries of the prophetic mouth of the Lord, are assigned through him, by whom the office of the human voice reproved the heavenly and divine sentence resounded. And rightly, the introduction is given for Idithun, who was a prophet, and sang the psalms with his six sons, as if a certain preface; because it was fitting for him to prophesy, who, being appointed in the ministry of singing, spoke divine oracles with a human voice. And because the passion of the Lord's body was to be undertaken for the purpose of abolishing the error of the whole world, although the diligence of the person whose name it is was approved, it expressed a more commendable education of the people. And so, we hear him speaking.

(Verse 2) Will not my soul be subject to God? Our Lord Jesus, taking on the flesh of man in order to cleanse it in himself, first had to abolish the contamination of ancient sin. For because guilt had crept in through disobedience, while divine commands were transgressed, he had to reform obedience above all, in order to exclude the seedbed of error. For the sin had originated from there: and therefore, like a good physician, he had to first cut off the roots of the ulcer, so that the healing remedy of medicines could be felt by the mouth of the wound. For in vain have you healed the scar if the inner infections spread; rather the wound worsens if it is closed on the outside, while the virus boils within. For what good is it to forgive sin if the desire for sinning remains? This was not healing the scar, but rather closing it off. Therefore, He wanted to cleanse the wound in order to heal the desire; so that no trace of disobedience would remain. He Himself took on obedience, in order to impart it to us. For it was necessary that just as many were made sinners through the disobedience of one man, so also many would be made righteous through the obedience of one man.

Hence, it greatly indicates an error on their part who assert that the flesh of man was assumed by Christ but deny the affect: and, on the contrary, go against the counsel of our Lord Jesus, who take away man from man; for man cannot exist without the affect. For the flesh, without the affect, is immune to both reward and fault. Therefore, it was necessary for it to assume and heal that from whence the fault had flowed; so that it might close the source of the error and the gates of a certain breaking forth of sin. Where could I recognize the Lord Jesus today, whose flesh I do not see, but read about his suffering? Where, I ask, could I recognize him as a man; unless he had hungered, unless he had thirsted, unless he had wept, unless he had said: My soul is sorrowful even unto death (Matthew 26:38)? Finally, it is written: He is a man, and who will know him (Jeremiah 17:9)? But a man is recognized by these things, who is esteemed above men by divine works. And so, he himself wanted to be believed as a man, even though he was God; so that he might call himself a man, saying: Why do you seek to kill me, a man who has spoken the truth to you (John 8:40)? Not only a man, but also the Son of Man, as he says: Who do men say that the Son of Man is (Matthew 16:13)? Therefore, he was declared to hold the highest faith, who both knew the Son of God and did not deny being a man. Therefore, he is both one, inseparable in number, and recognizable in the distinction of his works, not in the variety of his person. For it is not one from the Father and another from Mary, but he who was from the Father took flesh from the Virgin: he assumed our affections from our mother, in order to take upon himself our weaknesses. Hence the Prophet says: 'Surely he has borne our griefs' (Isaiah 53:4). How could he suffer with my pain if he did not assume my flesh? He says, 'He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief' (ibid., 3). And so He was weakened like a man, He suffered like a man; and we considered Him to be a man acquainted with sorrows: but He, like a conqueror of weaknesses, not conquered by weaknesses, grieved for us, not for Himself; and He was weakened not because of His own, but because of our sins, in order to heal us with His bruises. What indeed is man in affliction, and knowing how to bear infirmity; unless he had compassion for afflictions? Or how would He know how to bear infirmity, if He had excluded the sense of weakness? For what we carry, we endure as a burden. He therefore took on our sins, so that he might carry them; he also took on them, so that he might cleanse them. Finally, it is written: And he himself cleansed their sins. Therefore, he will possess many through inheritance, and will divide the spoils of the strong. There is indeed a greater triumph where the internal mind is cleansed. Therefore, what he carries pertains to remission; what he cleanses, to correction. He therefore took on our compassion, he

also took on our submission. For whatever subjects all things to itself, is its own: what is subject, is ours. Therefore he says: Will not my soul be subject to God? Soul, he says, is subject, not divinity; subject soul, not the power of God. For the power of God is not subject to power; but it uses the unity and partnership of power. That is subject, which is often changed by the frailty of human condition, not that which cannot be changed. The soul sympathizes with the flesh, and the flesh with the soul, which are joined together in a certain union. That which is sad is subject; for it is written: My soul is sorrowful even unto death. That which is subject is what is assumed, not born of God the Father: although this subjection is not in the nature of weakness, but in the exercise of virtue; rather a temporary dispensation than a perpetual enslavement. Hence he also says: Will not my soul be subject to God?

Why did he say he would be, if the subjection is eternal? But because the Son of God who was speaking is eternal, and yet he took on a soul in time; therefore, he speaks of the future subjection of his soul. Through this obedience, through this humility; which, however, were not undertaken due to weakness of power, but for the purpose of teaching discipline. For the Lord Jesus Himself, when he was in the form of God, did not consider robbery to be equal with God; but he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man: he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death (Philippians 2:6-8). As the Apostle says, not desiring to declare a perpetual and everlasting subjection, but to explain the temporal subjection that He assumed with flesh and laid down with the servitude of His own body. Similarly, it is written in Hebrews: For when He presented an example, saying, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek,' Paul added the following: In the days of His flesh, He offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from what He suffered and, once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:6-10). Therefore, the Apostle clearly proclaims that this obedience and humility were not of divinity, but of the flesh. For what is learned is temporal. Therefore, as a man, He learned obedience from what He suffered, so that He may be perfected in the flesh and through the obedience, the cause of eternal salvation may be transmitted to us. For it was through the inheritance of disobedience that the first Adam, who became the cause of death, came into existence.

Therefore, subjecting the authority of human virtue is a diminution of power, not divine. For if they say that the Son is lesser and unequal to the Father because he was subject to God the Father, does that mean that the mother is also lesser because she was subject to the father? It is written about Joseph and Mary: 'And he was subject to them' (Luke 2:51). But piety is not a detriment to us, but an increase, through which the Lord Jesus has infused faith and grace in all of us, so that he may make us faithful in spirit and subject to God the Father. And therefore, with a new and profound purpose, the Apostle says that he himself will be subject to the Father in us, when in all there is the fullness of faith and a certain unity of devotion. For now, as long as we disagree in our opinions, we in a way diminish the kingdom of Christ; because not all things have yet been subjected to Him, whose kingdom is unity. But when all things are subjected to Him, then He Himself will also be subject to Him who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28); as it is written. Now indeed he is above all in power, but it is necessary for him

to be in all things by will: for he desires, when he has knowledge of all things in us, that they be full of himself and empty of sins. Therefore he is not yet subject to the Father; because Christ is not yet all things and in all things: but when Christ is all things and in all things, then God will be all things and in all things. From this it is understood that the kingdom of the Father and the Son is one, and also of the Holy Spirit; because whoever receives the Son, receives also the Father, receives also the Holy Spirit; for there is one power, one grace, one operation of the Trinity. And the Lord rightly added: For from him is my salvation. As if to say: Do not be troubled because I said that my soul will be subject to God. The soul will be subject, which is a part of you: but my salvation is from him; that is, because I am always from the Father and in the Father. For I came from the Father into this world: although you see a man, believe that he is the Son of God. But when the Paraclete whom I will send to you from my Father comes, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from my Father, he will bear witness about me (John 15:26). And the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Spirit proceeds from Him. Therefore, there is no doubt about the unity of divinity. And so, David desired that this salvation of God be given to us; for He himself is the eternal life, if we know both the true God the Father and the Son, who came for our certain salvation. But He did not consider equality with God to be robbery. He separates the assertion of His divinity and represents the role of human dispensation.

Therefore he added immediately: For indeed he is my God, my helper, my defender: I shall not be moved any longer. These things, of course, are spoken as if by a man; because in God we ought to place our hope, we are not easily shaken: although in what he said, I shall not be moved any longer; he shows himself to have the divine insignia of power. For elsewhere you have him saying: Yet once more I will shake the earth (Haggai 2:7). He shook it with the flood, when all flesh perished except that which was in Noah's ark: he shook it when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by sacred fire. These are signs of divine wrath. But because the Lord chose to save the human race rather than destroy it, he will no longer be moved to anger, for he came to show mercy: he came to redeem us with his blood, not to spill ours. He came to offer himself for us, like a good merchant preserving his own merchandise through the suffering of his own body.

(Verse 4.) And when He said this, He lifted up His eyes and saw both the persecutors from this side and the spiritual wickednesses gathering together on the other side, and He said: How long will you rush upon man, killing all, that is, why do you hasten to destroy the human race? Do you not know that I have come for the redemption of all? I have offered myself for all, that I might protect all by my offering. Therefore, we accept man either for the entire human multitude, or if we accept him for one, we understand him as the same person. You rush upon man, but because you cannot rush upon God above; just as it says elsewhere: Why do you seek to kill me, a man? (John 8:40). For divinity could not be subject to death, but human nature was. So if you rush upon me and want to arrest me, why do you want to kill those who are with me? It is enough for you to have the one you seek. I do not seek a partner in suffering, for I do not need the help of anyone for the salvation of all. I do not require an envoy, nor do I send a messenger; but I myself have presented myself as a messenger to those who do not seek me: I have surrendered myself to those who do not apprehend me, in order to free those who had been trapped in the snares of death. So you rush in as if to an inclined wall and a shaken wall, unaware that I came not to tilt the wall or shake the wall, but to dissolve. For I came to bring peace, to make both one; and by dissolving the middle wall of the partition that separated flesh and soul, so that they could not feel as one: and therefore

the flesh resisted the soul, and could not be subject to its authority; because it could not obey its commands due to the obstacle of the wall.

Therefore, the law of the flesh was opposed to the law of the mind. This wall of ancient enmities, like a barrier, the Lord Jesus removed and made the meetings of the mind and the flesh accessible; so that, coming together as one, they would pursue that which was beneficial to both. Therefore, the wall is a certain height of sins. Hence, Paul says to the high priest of the Jews: God will begin to strike you, you whitewashed wall (Acts 23:3); for the wall is built of mud and cement. Hence the Egyptians built cities when the Jews were forced to make bricks. In Egypt, clay was made, and the people of God worked sin there. Therefore, God groaned, therefore He was heard and freed from sin. Therefore, the Law was given, the promised grace; so that the Law would cut sin in part, and grace would give everything.

(Verse 5.) And when these things were brought to us, when these things were endured for us, we rejected his price. Hence he says: Yet they thought to reject my price; when Judas, the betrayer, returned the price, the Jews refused to put it in the treasury, saying: It is not lawful for us to put it in the treasury, for it is the price of blood (Matth. XXVII, 6). Here the betrayer is condemned by his own judgement, who returned the price he received, weak as a witness to holy office, but strong as a witness to his crime. For each person is a more severe accuser of oneself, and carries within themselves an inexcusable sentence. The leaders of the synagogue condemn themselves by their own judgment. They claim that the price of blood they have given is the cause of accusation, and they accuse themselves of restoring it. For if it should not have been received, it should not have been paid. And I wish they had either not given it, or because they had given it, had not received it. For they have rejected what they did not want to put in a chest, and instead they bought a field with it for the burial of foreigners. Therefore, deservedly the Gentiles, for whom the burial of Him who was bought by the death of Christ has profited, are no longer strangers and foreigners: but have become citizens of the saints, and domestics of God; because they are buried with the Son of God: but the Jews who rejected the price of His passion, wander away from Christ. It is more tolerable for them, even in this, as a traitor, that they confess their error: but they aggravate their crime by making excuses. For confession is more modest after the offense. Therefore, they shamelessly rejected the confession of the common sacrilege, saying, 'What does it matter to us? You seem (to be)'. For what did the traitor say, except this: 'I have sinned in handing over innocent blood'? The crime of the one who hands over, how could it not be a sin for the one who receives it? Since evil is connected to evil, so that they would wickedly kill the one whom they had wickedly acquired.

I ran, he said, in thirst. Indeed, it is true that our Lord Jesus thirsted. Blessed is the Lord's thirst; for he thirsted for us, especially in his passion. Finally, he said: I thirst (John 19:28). So he was thirsty when from his side he poured out the streams of living water to quench the thirst of all. Finally, it is written: Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water (John 7:38). But in Greek, it is in the middle, because it signifies both singular and plural number. Therefore I also ran; and they ran, as we can understand from the Greek. Now we have explained what it means to run, namely, to hasten to receive the thirst of all, so that I may satisfy all with the abundance of the everlasting fountain (for whoever I give water to will not thirst, neither now, nor in the future, as it was said to the Samaritan woman); now let us explain what it means: They ran in thirst. This means that they hastened to dry up the living fountain of their own disbelief, denying it eternal moisture; just as the Lord himself

says: They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have made for themselves broken cisterns. It is not surprising that they were thirsty, who could not hold the water of the eternal fountain through the leaks of their slippery treachery. Therefore, they were thirsty because they deprived themselves of the spiritual drink, which they had drawn from the giving rock. Hence, Symmachus also says: 'They blessed their own deceit,' that is, they found pleasure in falsehood, when they presented falsities as truths. Every lie has thirst, truth has abundance, which persists forever. And how quickly he proved, that they ran in falsehood! With their mouth, he said, they blessed, and with their heart, they cursed. Miserable thirst of traitors, who held one thing in their heart and spoke another with their mouth. But where faith overflows with abundance, it is believed in the heart for righteousness, and confession is made with the mouth for salvation. However, the series of the Passion shows how they blessed with their mouth and cursed with their heart, when they said: Let him come down from the cross and we will believe in him (Matthew 15:32). Fools! He rose from the dead, and they did not believe; how then would they have believed if He had descended from the cross? He hoped in the Lord, let Him deliver him; let Him save him, since He desires him (Psalm 22:9); for those who were mocking rather than wishing were saying these things, and they were asking whether He was the Son of God, speaking with peaceful words but thinking in their hearts of sacrilegious accusation. But these are mystical, let us come to the moral. Indeed, since Christ is desired not once, He was desired once in His body which He received in the Virgin, He is desired frequently in that body which is the Church; for we are the body of Christ and its members. He is also desired in each of His holy and innocent ones who have dedicated themselves to the Lord.

We remember someone (Gratian commands) recently desired by everyone, abandoned and betrayed by his own: who, once placed on the platform of power, suddenly lacking the obedience he had inherited from those very people, began to be pressed upon, with death approaching, with no helper, no longer with any ally of his own, no companion. What else can he say, except that what he had received from the very person to whom he had devoted himself: Shall not my soul be subject to God? This is what you are pursuing; why are you going mad; why are you insulting? You can kill the flesh, but you cannot kill the soul. You can take away the life of the body, but you cannot extinguish its merit. For it is written: Do not fear those who can kill the flesh, but cannot kill the soul; but rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell (Matthew 10:28). Therefore, the soul that is subject to God is not subject to human power; for it hopes for the fruit of eternal life from Him, and the help of perpetual salvation. Therefore, the one to whom I have surrendered myself will defend and save me from being killed, and will resurrect the dead, and will avenge the one who has been killed. The righteous has been taken away, so that wickedness does not change his heart. Therefore, this death is more of an escape from sin than a loss for the one who is dying. For He Himself is my God, my helper, my defender; I shall not be moved. Those who waver are shaken, because they flow away from the certain position of their integrity and innocence. Once placed upon the rock of Christ, one should not have a slippery footprint, but should maintain the firmness of their own condition. Hence, one is said to be immovable, who keeps an immovable will, and carries out some intention with a faithful intent of the mind. For we also read the unchangeable will of God, as you have in Hebrews: In which God, being willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed an oath. (Hebrews 6:17). Therefore, the unchangeable will of God is rightly not moved by the allurements of any sin. But men are changeable, prone to sinning, and easy to wander. In fact, it is said of the

Jews: And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads. (Matthew 27:39). And the Lord himself says in the psalm: All who saw me, despised me: they spoke with their lips and shook their heads (Ps. XXI, 8). Christ is the head of all. Therefore, it is better for Christ to remain in us, than for any disturbance of ours to shake him. Hence the Jews, shaking their heads, said: Take away from the earth such a man (Act. XXII, 22). The Gerasenes begged him to depart from their borders (Luke, VIII, 37): but the Church held onto him and did not let him go. Therefore, she who held him possesses: those who moved cannot possess. But the evangelist rightly says that when passing by, they moved their heads (Matthew 27:39): passing by, not standing. We stand in holy courts, we pass by in streets. The priest passed by, the Levite passed by; he stood, who cared for the inflicted wounds. And therefore, those who were passing by did not say: 'The Lord's blessing be upon you, we bless you from the house of the Lord' (Psalm 128:8); for those who bless are standing, not passing by. And finally, they pass by the vineyard whose protective walls have been torn down, and they vandalize it, not staying there. As they pass by, they hiss, just as we read in the Lamentations of Jeremiah: 'All who pass by on the road hold their hands against you; they hiss and shake their heads at Daughter Jerusalem' (Lam. 2:15). Therefore, the priest could not be crowned, he could not be promoted, because they passed by, and they passed by like a shadow. However, Stephen was crowned with martyrdom because he saw the Lord Jesus standing, immovable, not passing by. Therefore, Stephen, being firm in faith, saw Christ being firm: he was not moved by any fear of death. Stephen did not move, Christ did not move. The sons of the betrayer were moved, of whom it is said: Let his sons be moved and beg (Psalm 108:10). For he who is moved needs a physician. The helpless sinner is rich, the just man is rich; for he who always seeks the Lord is never lacking in goodness. And because of this, the saying came about, which he said: 'I shall not be moved anymore'; which shows that to be moved towards fault, David himself declares, saying: 'He has set my soul unto life, and has not allowed my feet to be moved' (Psalm 65:9). Therefore, to the holy one, it is said by the Lord our God: 'But you stand here with me' (Deuteronomy 5:31); for whoever is close to God cannot be near to a fall. For every fault has the habit of throwing the mind off its place like an opponent's attack, and moving it from its proper state, which seems to be drawn either from an enemy or from a struggle. Anger disturbs, desire inflames, envy incites, greed tortures, fear overthrows, grief afflicts. And it has been said by the Lord Jesus to Peter: Come behind me (Mark 8:33). He did not say: Come behind (for he said this to the devil alone) but: Come behind me; for there is no going back for the one who is after Christ. But because Peter was erring, as the Lord himself says to him: Because you do not understand the things of God, but the things of men (Mark 8:33); therefore come after me, so that you may begin to perceive not human, but divine things. So here the just one must be taken from the earth, saying: I will not be moved anymore. For it is far better to be dissolved and to be with Christ (Philippians 1:23). For the person who has begun to be with Christ will not be able to err, because death is not the end of nature for the just, but of sin.

Meanwhile, among the voices, he suddenly sees the pursuing troops, and being in danger himself, he is not concerned about himself; but about those whom he wanted to free, he says: How long will you rush upon a man, killing everyone (above, verse 4)? If you seek me, why do you want to kill others? I offer myself for many; because for all, only he himself could offer himself, who is the author of all things. Therefore, the follower of Him whom he was following says (John 18:8-9): If you seek me, let these go away; so that the word which Jesus said may be fulfilled: For I have not lost any of them except one (for this sentence of the Lord is recorded in another book); however,

he who perished more by his own will than by my severity, says, was punished. And when I offer myself willingly, you rush upon me and attack me like a leaning wall and a tottering fence (Psalm verse 4); that is, the apex of the noble seat once august, and the strong wall of the empire once surrounding the entire Roman world, like a leaning wall or a crumbling wall. But be this as it may, they sought my death, they sought my destruction, saying: Let us take away the just one, let us take away the merciful one; for he is burdensome to us even to behold. And they thought it necessary to wound my reputation, to harm my chastity with false accusations; for this is what they: They planned to reject my worth; for our worth is purity, which separates us from animals and unites us with angels. Our worth is mercy, which, when bestowed upon the needy, redeems us from death. Our price is the faith, which has acquired all men, deceived and oppressed by the error and servitude of the Gentiles, to Christ. Our price is good reputation; for the worth of each of us is valued by the series of our merits. Our price is cleanliness and simplicity; for it is written: The possession of the upright is precious (Prov. XII, 27); for nothing is more precious than a simple man. Hence the Apostle beautifully said: He abounded, he said, in the riches of his simplicity (II Cor. VIII, 2). For what is richer than simplicity? It is like a good father who has enough for himself, content with his own purity, not seeking what is another's, nor gnawing at it; but he fashions others about himself. Indeed, simplicity believes every word, and does not often change itself into various arts; unlike cunning, which, in order to be cautious, fears everything and does not trust itself with its own plans: it turns its own opinions. However, simplicity does not know how to fear anything new. Therefore, they attempted to reject the value of the just in this kind; although it can also be understood that they were receiving its gold in their hands, they were repelling it from their innermost hearts, clinging to the prey and denying faith. And he says: I ran in thirst; because he sought faith, and could not find it, deserted by his companions, abandoned by his own. Thus we read in the Gospel that the Lord Jesus both hungered and thirsted (Matthew 4:2 and John 19:28); when he hungered, it seemed he thirsted for our faith, he thirsted for our deeds, he seemed to seek what is alien. Or, if we refer it to the thirst of the body, how great an indignity he speaks of: I ran in thirst? That is: I thirsted, while others belched out my wine; and from that high seat of power and royal wealth, I was led down to the lowest depths of thirst and plebeian wretchedness. And because the Greek word **■δραμον** means both 'I ran' in the singular and 'they ran' in the plural, it can also be understood in this way: They ran with thirst, their throats being parched from excessive heat of my blood. Just as there is a thirst for faith, there is also a thirst for unfaithfulness. The righteous thirsts for that, who says: My soul thirsts for you, O God (Psalm 42:3). The wicked thirsts for that, whose tongue has withered from thirst. How much did that person thirst who, while sitting at a banquet, sought to plot the death of an innocent guest of Augustus, at meals and drinks? Did it not seem to you, impious one, that while you were eating, you were preparing a slaughter, because human bones crackled under your teeth? When you drank wine and contemplated murder, as you poured the innocent one's blood into those cups? Indeed, someone was not only far from imitation, but also from divine reading, so that it would not come to your mind that verse from the Psalms: But you, man of like soul with me, my guide and my familiar friend, who together with me didst get sweet sustenance (Ps. 54:14-15). And that other, of whom the Lord Jesus himself speaks in the Gospel: He who eats bread with me, shall lift up his heel against me.

What should I do to you, Ephraim; what should I do to you, Judah (Hos. VI, 4)? You have left us many heirs of your betrayal and deceit; for this can also be directed to the betrayer Judas through apostrophe. You have betrayed life, kingdom, and the Lord. But Jesus the Lord is betrayed once in

himself, often in his servants. For whatever you have done to the least of these, you have done to me, he says (Matt. XXV, 40). You have accepted the entrusted chests and money of the poor, he has taken the entrusted provinces for himself. You, the apostle, received honor; he, the soldier, obtained dignity; and the other, the administrator, acquired power. I enumerate his honors in order to magnify his crime. Both of you violated the fellowship of the banquet: you, however, arose from the banquet to treachery, he to murder; that is, you, though in wickedness, are more cautious, for you denied what you believed to be the death that you were about to inflict on the Lord whom you were betraying, and you rejected the payment; so that the reward of the crime of parricide might not seem to remain with you. He not only held onto the money that was given, but he also extorted money that was not offered for his act of treachery. Not only was he not deceived by someone else's lie, but he deceived others with his own lie in order to kill. And when that person refused the banquet, who saw himself to be destroyed, this person offered a pledge; lest any part of his crime be lost to him. Finally, the money of the previous traitor was used for the burial of foreigners: this person denied complete burial to his own leader. And there was not lacking someone who washed his hands saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man (Matthew 27, 24); in which Pilate did not cleanse himself, but polluted himself: and got entangled, did not disentangle himself. For although there is no weight in the judgments of the lost, there is nevertheless a greater bond in confessions. For he does not absolve the just by a sentence not his own, but by his own life: the unjust more vehemently bind themselves with their own words, who cannot bind others. Yet, lest it should seem that this man also lacked his own confession, he swore in order to commit perjury. He washed his hands when he touched the Gospel: so that no example would be lacking. He washed his hands with water, in order to defile more quickly with the blood of the innocent. Nor was Herod absent, whom the other Pilate believed he would please if he had destined the captured prince. What shall I also say, that he also put on a stained garment to mock: afterwards he was clothed in a royal robe to die; so that he would not appear to have lost the due honor? For although he perished by his crime, he still retained the right of the power granted to him, even when dead, from those very people by whom it was denied, either by service or consent. A funeral procession was added to this great crime; but the one who impatiently lamented those things, having learned what was being prepared, rightly rebuked the proud conqueror, saying that such things were not inflicted upon tyrants, but rather upon kings. Thus, terrified by the horror of the crime, he put aside the preparations for the most wicked crime. Nor was he lacking a petitioner for burial, although that Joseph who was called just was lacking. But Maximus, much more cruel, far denied it, because Pilate himself could not take it away. In which the humanity of the murderer was lacking, yet grace was not lacking to the innocent: and with patience assumed for a time, revenge was temporarily postponed.

(Verse 6, 7.) Therefore he says: Nevertheless, my soul is subject to God; for from him comes my endurance. For he is my God and my savior, my protector, I will not depart. This means, has the denial of burial for my body taken away the eternal dwelling of rest from me? I have my dwelling place in the tabernacle of the Lord, and I will rest on his holy mountain. I will not depart through human wickedness; for I have been welcomed by the favor of the Lord; for neither death, nor the sword, nor tribulation can separate me from the love of Christ. For it is not the innocent who leave the tents of the righteous, but the sinner. The heirs of Judah the traitor migrate, of whom and their likes it is rightly said: Let his children be unsettled and beg; let them be cast out from their dwellings (Ps. 108, 10).

What is well and truly attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ, who, when he descended into the earth to be crucified, to be buried; did not depart from the Father, but remained in the Father. I was handed over, and did not go out (Ps. LXXXVII, 9). Nor did he lay aside what he was, but preserved it: nor did he cease to be in the form of God, but persevered: not changing the glory of God by assuming a body, but by remaining, he acquired triumph, and lost no power. Where He Himself says: 'From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power' (Mark 14:62).

(Verse 9.) He addresses the assembled nations and the individuals acquired for the Father, with his own blood, urging them to faith, saying: Have hope in him, all the assemblies of my people; that is, not only Israel, but all, he says: not only the remnants, but also the fullness of the nations: not only the Gentiles, but also Israel; for when the fullness of the Gentiles enters, then all Israel will be saved. Who can comprehend divine mysteries? Their multitude is so great that rightfully Paul admires and rightfully says: O the depth of the riches of wisdom and knowledge of God (Rom. XI, 33)! The nations were rejected so that Israel might be chosen; Israel then became blind because of the calling of the nations, and the remaining blind Israelites were saved according to the election of grace, after the fullness of the nations had come in. Thus, the fault of Israel benefited the nations: the faith of the nations freed the people of Israel.

Pour out, he says, your hearts before him. Whoever puts on faith must first take off deceit, empty his heart of every stain of wickedness; so that his heart may become capable of spiritual grace. Therefore the Apostle says: Be renewed in the spirit of your mind (Ephesians IV, 23). For when old wickedness is poured out, new grace is received, by which each person is renewed. Therefore the Son of God says: Pour out your hearts before him; because he knew that the Father would say: I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh (Joel II, 28). There is also that tradition, that we should seem to pour out our heart when we open to someone all our thoughts and the desires of our heart. Therefore, let us cast our thoughts upon God, and let us believe that nothing can be hidden from Him. We pour out our heart before Him, when we unburden human disputes.

(Verse 10.) However, the vain sons of men: the deceitful sons of men weigh out in balances to deceive. If the vain sons of men and the deceitful sons of men can be sons of God, who were not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man; but were born of God. For the sons of men seem to themselves to weigh equity and with the severity of harsh judgment examine justice, harsh to others, lenient to themselves, wicked in deeds, censorious in speech. Where Solomon says: 'An abomination to the Lord is a double weight, and a deceitful scale is not good' (Prov. XX, 23). In this, he signifies those who meditate on robbery with insatiable hearts, and present a facade of sobriety. Such are the scribes of the Jews, who impose heavy burdens of stricter observance on others, not having a right yoke for their own souls; but being bent by inclined iniquity: they themselves are the deserters of their own precepts. Therefore, avarice is found to be like the root of all vices, which is the head of iniquity and the fuel: which a man, renouncing the world and buried with Christ through the sacrament of baptism, who has died to the world, ought to avoid and flee from.

(Verse 11.) Do not, he says, hope in wickedness, and do not covet robbery: if riches flow, do not set your heart on them. You see that they abound, but you do not see that they overflow? You are born naked, you will die naked. What do you seek to receive that you cannot take with you? The flowing things are the ones you marvel at: how they come, they also pass and recede. Only the

Jordan river turned back, into which you descended: it reminds you to return to the very source and origin of nature, which brought you forth naked, unadorned with clothing; that you may learn not to seek excess. What you are ashamed of, being naked, is taught by fault, not by nature. For there would be no shame in the genitals if there were no fault. For no other animals dress to cover themselves, nor do they dress to protect themselves. Everything is sufficiently guarded by the covering of its own nature. But while we seek superfluous things, we have lost the covering of nature, we have lost common right. And therefore in this psalm is ascribed teachable instruction; because either Judith, or himself by her name, he instructed, by spiritual exercise, in undergoing temptations, so that when someone is in distress, he may submit himself to God; and if he has sinned before, may cease from sinning and not be moved by recurring error.

(Verse 12.) God spoke once, I heard these two things. God spoke once, and more was heard; because he did not speak by means of letters and syllables. He spoke in enigmas, he spoke through visions, he spoke through the divisions of grace, he spoke through the Spirit of each individual. But we speak many things, and are hardly heard. God spoke once in the Law, he spoke the same things again in the Gospel. Or perhaps, as I think, because he spoke in many ways through the prophets, but finally he spoke through his Son. He spoke once, when he spoke in the Son; and they also heard those things which were not heard before by those to whom he had spoken through the prophets. Therefore, he spoke once in the new Testament, and the old Testament was heard, which was not heard before; because the Lord himself said of the people of the Jews: They will see, and not see: they will hear, and not hear (Mark 4:12). They will hear with their bodily ears, but they will not hear with the hearing of the mind.

Therefore, to us, that is, to the Church, He spoke once, and there were two things heard; for we have heard and understood what they did not understand, who have read: those who have heard have not heard. For Christ alone opened the human ear to the knowledge of mysteries; He alone unlocked the seal of the books, and unraveled the enigmas of the prophets.

(Vers. 13.) Therefore, He Himself will render to each one according to his works, in which He also includes the quality of the works; so that He may either restore the rewards of many and better ones according to the merits of individuals, or, on the other hand, burden us by both the number and severity of our merits. The first part of the fourteenth book of Tomi.

Commentary on Luke

The Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke, Comprised in Ten Books, by Saint Ambrose of Milan, Bishop.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Prologue
- Book One • (Chap. I. — Vers. 1)
- (Vers. 2.)
- (Vers. 3)
- (Vers. 5, 6) • (Vers. 8, 9, 10.)
- (Vers. 11.) • (Vers. 13, 14.)
- (Vers. 15.)
- (Vers. 15.)
- (Vers. 16.)
- (Vers. 17.) • (Vers. 18, 19, 20.)
- (Vers. 22.) • (Vers. 24, 25.)
- Book Two • (Vers. 26, 27.) • (Vers. 28, 29.) • (Vers. 30, 31, 32.)
- (Vers. 34.)
- (Vers. 36.) • (Vers. 39, 40.)
- (Vers. 41.) • (Vers. 42, 43.) • (Vers. 44, 45.)
- (Vers. 56.) • (Vers. 60, 64.)
- (Vers. 67.)
- (Vers. 76.) • (Chap. II. — Vers. 1.)
- (Vers. 2.)
- (Vers. 6, 7.)
- (Vers. 9.) • (Vers. 13, 14.) • (Vers. 15, 16.)

- (Vers. 19.)
- (Vers. 25.)
- (Vers. 29.)
- (Vers. 35.)
- (Vers. 42.)
- (Vers. 49.)
- (Vers. 51.) • (Chap. III. — Vers. 2.)
- (Vers. 4.)
- (Vers. 7, 8.)
- (Vers. 9.) • (Vers. 15, 16.)
- (Vers. 17.) • (Vers. 21, 22.)
- Book Three
- (Vers. 23.)
- Book Four • (Chap. IV. — Vers. 1.)
- (Vers. 2.)
- (Vers. 3.)
- (Vers. 4.)
- (Vers. 9.)
- (Vers. 5.)
- (Vers. 13.)
- (Vers. 14.)
- (Vers. 18.)
- (Vers. 24.)
- (Vers. 25.)
- (Vers. 27.) • (Vers. 28, 29.) • (Vers. 33, 38.) • (Chap. V. — Vers. 3.)
- (Vers. 5.)
- (Vers. 8.)
- Book Five • (Vers. 12, 13.)
- (Vers. 13.) • (Vers. 18, 19.)

- (Vers. 20.)
- (Vers. 23.)
- (Vers. 30.)
- (Vers. 31.)
- (Vers. 35.)
- (Vers. 36.)
- (Vers. 37.) • (Chap. VI. — Vers. 1.)
- (Vers. 12.)
- (Vers. 13.)
- (Vers. 17.) • (Vers. 20, 21, 22.)
- (Vers. 24.)
- (Vers. 26.) • (Vers. 12-14.)
- (Vers. 19.)
- (Vers. 22.)
- (Vers. 23.)
- (Vers. 24.) • (Vers. 24, 25.)
- (Vers. 25.)
- (Vers. 26.)
- (Vers. 28.)
- Book Six • (Vers. 29, 30.)
- (Vers. 32.)
- (Vers. 37.)
- (Vers. 44.)
- (Vers. 45.)
- (Vers. 41.) • (Chap. VIII. — Vers. 21.)
- (Vers. 24.)
- (Vers. 27.)
- (Vers. 34.)
- (Vers. 37.)

- (Vers. 44.)
- (Vers. 46.)
- (Vers. 49.) • (Chap. IX. — Vers. 5.)
- (Vers. 13.)
- (Vers. 20.)
- (Vers. 22.)
- Book Seven
- (Vers. 27)
- (Vers. 31.)
- (Vers. 34.)
- (Vers. 35.)
- (Vers. 36.)
- (Vers. 58.)
- (Vers. 48.)
- (Vers. 50)
- (Vers. 60.) • (Chap. X. — Vers. 3.)
- (Vers. 4.)
- (Vers. 4.)
- (Vers 30.)
- (Vers. 34.)
- (Vers. 35.)
- (Vers. 35.) • (Chap. XI. — Vers. 5.)
- (Vers. 17.)
- (Vers. 20)
- (Vers. 24) • (Vers. 29, 30.)
- (Vers. 33.)
- (Vers. 39.)
- (Vers. 41.) • (Chap. XII. — Vers. 6, 7.) • (Vers. 9, 10.) • (Vers. 13, 14.) • (Vers. 22, 23.) • (Vers. 27, 28.) • (Vers. 49, 50.) • (Vers. 51-53.) • (Vers. 58, 59.)

- (Vers. 6.)
- (Vers. 7.)
- (Vers. 8.) • (Vers. 10, 11.)
- (Vers. 15.) • (Vers. 18, 19.)
- (Vers. 21.) • (Chap. XV. — Vers. 4.) • (Vers. 11, 12.)
- (Vers. 13.)
- (Vers. 14.)
- (Vers. 15.)
- (Vers. 16.)
- (Vers. 17.)
- (Vers. 18.)
- (Vers. 19.)
- (Vers. 24.)
- (Vers. 31.) • (Chap. XVI. — Vers. 13.)
- (Vers. 9.)
- (Vers. 12.)
- Book Eight
- (Vers. 16.)
- (Vers. 18.)
- (Vers. 19.)
- (Vers. 4.)
- (Vers. 6.) • (Vers. 31, 32.)
- (Vers. 27.)
- (Vers. 34.)
- (Vers. 35.)
- (Vers. 36)
- (Vers. 37) • (Chap. XVIII. — Vers. 16.) • (Vers. 18, 19.)
- (Vers. 25.)
- (Vers. 20.)

- (Vers. 35.) • (Chap. XIX. — Vers. 2.)
- (Vers. 4.)
- Book Nine • (Vers. 29, 30.)
- (Vers. 40.) • (Chap. XX. — Vers. 9.)
- (Vers. 24.)
- (Vers. 28.)
- Book Ten • (Chap. XXI. Vers. 6.)
- (Vers. 9.)
- (Vers. 20.)
- (Vers. 23.)
- (Vers. 25.) • (Vers. 26, 27.) • (Vers. 29, 30.) • (Chap. XXII. — Vers. 10.)
- (Vers. 29.)
- (Vers. 36.) • (Vers. 42, 43.)
- (Vers. 42.)
- (Vers. 48.) • (Vers. 54, 55.)
- (Vers. 11.)
- (Vers. 43.)
- (Vers. 46.)

Prologue We think that the style of the Book of the Gospels, which the holy Luke arranged in a more complete way with a certain distinction of the Lord's events, should be explained first; for he is a historian. Indeed, the divine Scripture empties the discipline of worldly wisdom, because it is more adorned with the ambit of words than supported by the reason of things: yet if someone seeks in divine Scriptures even those things which they consider marvelous, he will find them. For philosophers considered three things to be the most excellent in this world, namely that wisdom can be of three kinds: natural, moral, and rational. These three things we can also observe in the Old Testament. For what else do those three wells signify, of which one is the well of Vision, another of Abundance, and the third of the Oath, if not that these three virtues were present in the Patriarchs? The well of Vision is rational, because reason sharpens the vision of the mind and purifies the gaze of the soul. The ethical wellspring of Abundance; because as the extraneous elements recede, whose defects are symbolized by the appearance of the body, Isaac discovers the living essence of the mind. For the virtues of goodness flow forth in a pure manner, and goodness itself abundantly benefits others while being more restricted to itself. The third wellspring is that of the Oath, which is the natural wisdom that encompasses things that are beyond or outside of nature. For what is affirmed and sworn as if under the testimony of God, also embraces the divine, since the Lord of nature is invoked as a witness of faith. What's more, the three books

of Solomon, one of Proverbs, another of Ecclesiastes, and the third of Song of Songs; unless these three show us that the holy Solomon was a wise man? He wrote about rational and ethical matters in Proverbs, about natural matters in Ecclesiastes; for Vanity of vanities, all is vanity (Eccles. I, 2), that which is established in this world, is subject to Vanity (Rom. VIII, 20): but about moral and rational matters in Song of Songs; because when the love of the heavenly Word is poured into our souls, and the rational mind is connected by a certain holy association; wonderful mysteries are revealed. The Evangelists also, whom you think lacked wisdom, although they are filled with various kinds, each excels in a different kind. For true wisdom is found in the book of the Evangelist John. For no one, I dare say, has seen the majesty of God with such sublimity of wisdom, and has revealed it to us in our own language. He surpasses the clouds, he surpasses the Powers of heaven, he surpasses the Angels, and he found the Word in the beginning and saw the Word with God. But who pursued each individual more morally than the holy Matthew, who gave us the precepts of living? What could be more reasonable than that admirable conjunction, which the holy Mark immediately considered should be placed at the beginning? Look, he said, I send my angel (Mark 1:2-3): and, the voice of one crying in the wilderness; in order to arouse admiration and to teach that man should please in humility, abstinence, and faith, just as that holy John the Baptist ascended to immortality by these steps, in clothing, food, and message. But indeed, Saint Luke, as if a certain historian, maintained a particular order, and revealed to us many miracles of the deeds of the Lord: thus, however, that the entire virtues of wisdom of this Gospel were encompassed in the history. For what is more excellent for natural wisdom than that he preserved that the Holy Spirit was also the creator of the Lord's incarnation (Luke 1:35)? Therefore, he teaches natural things if he creates spirits. And thus David, teaching natural wisdom, says: Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created (Psalm 103:20). He teaches moral values in the same book, as he teaches me about the virtues: how I should love my enemy (Luke 6:27 et seq.): how I should not retaliate or strike back at someone who hits me: how I should do good, give things in return with no hope of getting them back, or receiving a reward or payment. For rewards are more easily obtained by those who do not expect them. He also taught practical wisdom when I read, because whoever is faithful in little things will also be faithful in greater things (Luke 16:10). What more can I say about the natural things that the virtues of the heavens move? (Luke 21:26) The Lord is the only begotten Son of God, in whose passion darkness came over the land during the day, the earth was obscured, and the sun fled. (Luke 23:44)

Therefore, true wisdom possesses the spiritual principality that worldly prudence falsely claims for itself, especially since, boldly, our faith itself, the very mystery of the Trinity, cannot exist without this triple wisdom; unless we believe both in the Father who naturally begot our Redeemer for us, and in the ethical Son who, being obedient to the Father even unto death as a human, redeemed us; and in the rational Spirit who has infused into human hearts the knowledge of worshipping divinity and governing life. And let no one think that we have made a distinction of power or virtue, since this false accusation can even be made against Paul. For he did not make a distinction when he said, 'There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of ministries, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all' (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). For he works all things and in all people, just as you have elsewhere, 'In all and in everything Christ' (Colossians 3:11). The Holy Spirit also operates, for the same Spirit operates all things, dividing to each according as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:11). Therefore, there is no difference in operations, no distinction, whether in the Father, or in the Son, or in the Holy

Spirit; there is no second fullness of power to any.

Therefore, when we read these things, let us consider diligently, so that they can shine more brightly to us in the very places. For whoever seeks, will find: and to him who knocks, it shall be opened (Matthew 7:8). Diligence opens the door of truth to oneself, and therefore let us obey the heavenly commandments. For it was not said to man in vain, what was not said to any other living creatures: In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread (Genesis 3:19). For to these animals, which are by nature irrational, it is commanded by God to provide food from the earth, but to man alone, that which he has received as rational, is commanded to exercise, and the course of life is prescribed in labor. For whoever is not content with the food of other animals, for whom it is not enough to have fruit-bearing trees provided for everyone's sustenance, but seeks the delights of various lavish feasts, summons delights from lands across the sea, sweeps delights from the waves, should not refuse to undergo the brief toil required for eternal life if he seeks sustenance through labor. Therefore, if anyone, coming into the contests of these sacred debates, divests himself of this life by exposing it to the danger of error and, naked of evil, like an athlete anointed with spiritual oil, embraces the contests of truth, undoubtedly he will obtain the eternal rewards of sacred crowns. For the labor of the good is a noble fruit: and the more contests, the more excellent the crown of virtues. But let us return to the point. For in a historical style we have said that this book of the Gospel is composed. Finally, in describing things rather than expressing precepts, we see that more effort has been devoted to comparison with others. And the Evangelist himself took the beginning in a historical manner: There was, he says, in the days of King Herod of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias (Luke 1:5), and he pursues that story with full narration. Moreover, those who have interpreted the four forms of animals revealed in the Apocalypse (Rev. 4:7) as representing the four Gospel books, consider this book to be symbolized by the calf; for the calf is a priestly victim. And it is fitting that this Gospel book be represented by the calf, since it began with the priests and was completed in the calf, who, taking on the sins of all, was sacrificed for the life of the whole world; for that calf is priestly. For both the calf and the priest are the same: the priest, because he is our mediator; for we have him as our advocate with the Father: the calf, because it washes us with its own blood, and redeems us. And it is fitting that since we have said that the book of the Gospel according to Matthew is moral, this kind of opinion should not be omitted; for morals are properly called human.

However, most people believe that our Lord himself is portrayed in the four Gospels in the form of four animal figures, which are proven to be the same man, the same lion, the same calf, and the same eagle. Man, because he is born of Mary; lion, because he is strong; calf, because he is a sacrifice; eagle, because he is resurrection. And so in each of the books, the form of the animals is portrayed, so that the series of each book seems to correspond to the nature, virtue, grace, or miracle of the figures. Although all things may be in all, nevertheless there is a certain fullness of the individual virtues in each. One (Matthew) described the birth of man more fully, and also taught the character of man with more abundant precepts. Another (Mark) began with the expression of divine power, that the King from the King, the strong from the strong, the true from the true, by virtue disdain death. A third (Luke) introduced the priestly sacrifice, and elaborated the very immolation of the calf with a fuller style. The fourth [Evangelist] expressed more fully than the others the divine miracles of the resurrection. Therefore, [Christ is] one in all things, and one in all, as it is written (Colossians 3:11): not different in individuals, but true in all. But now we worship the

very word of the Gospel.

Book One (Chap. I. — Vers. 1) (Chapter 1, Verse 1) For many have tried to arrange the narration of events.

Most of our people, just like the ancient Jews, are formed and influenced by similar causes and examples, and they arrive at similar outcomes. They begin and end in harmony: For just as many in that divine people prophesied by the infused Spirit, while others promised to prophesy and abandoned their profession with lies (Jeremiah 28:1), they were pseudo-prophets rather than true prophets, like Ananias son of Azor. But the people had the grace to discern spirits, so that they could determine who should be included among the number of prophets and distinguish those whom, like a skilled money changer, they should disapprove of and whose corrupt material would tarnish instead of reflecting the true splendor of light. Likewise, even now in the New Testament, many have attempted to write Gospels that have not been approved by skilled money changers. However, they considered that only one thing should be understood from all this, which is divided into four books. And there is indeed another Gospel, which is said to have been written by the twelve. Basilides also dared to write a Gospel, which is called the Gospel according to Basilides. There is also another Gospel, which is written according to Thomas. I am familiar with another writing according to Matthew. We read some things (Dist. 37, cap. Legimus aliqua), so that they may not be read; we read, so that we may not be ignorant; we read not to hold onto them, but to reject them, and to know what these magnificent ones exalt their hearts in. But the Church, although it has the four Gospels, abounds throughout the entire world with evangelists: heresies, on the other hand, although they have many things, they do not have one thing. For many have made the attempt, but they are deprived of the grace of God. Moreover, many have also brought together into one those things from the four books of the Gospel which they considered to be consistent with their poisonous assertions. Thus, the Church, which has one Gospel, teaches one God: but those who assert a different God of the Old Testament and a different one of the New, have made not one God, but many, out of many Gospels.

Since many, he says, attempted. Certainly those attempted who were unable to fulfill. Therefore, even Saint Luke testifies with a more abundant testimony, saying that many have attempted. For he who attempted to arrange, attempted with his own labor, and did not fulfill. For without effort, the gifts and grace of God are, which, when they have poured themselves out, usually irrigate; so that it does not need, but rather overflows, the talent of the writer. Matthew did not attempt, Mark did not attempt, John did not attempt, Luke did not attempt: but with the divine Spirit providing abundance of words and all things, they began and completed without any effort. And for this reason he says:

Since many have attempted to organize the narration of things that are complete in us or that abound in us. For what overflows does not fail anyone: and when the faith is proven by the effects, the outcome reveals it. Therefore, the Gospel is complete and overflows to all the faithful throughout the whole world, and it irrigates the minds of all and strengthens their spirit. Therefore, being founded on the rock, and those who have embraced the fullness of faith and the firmness of constancy rightly say: Those things which are complete in us; since they discern the true and the false not by signs and wonders, but by the true word, who describe the saving deeds of the Lord or who direct their minds to His marvelous works. For what could be more reasonable than to believe

that those deeds that are above human nature are of a superior nature; and yet when you read those things that are moral, do you believe that they are the passions of the body? Thus, our faith is based on the word and reason, not on signs.

(Vers. 2.) (Verse 2.) As they have handed down, he said, to us who saw from the beginning ourselves, and were ministers of the Word. This expression does not fit, so that we may believe it to be more of a ministry of the word seen than heard. But because it signifies not a proleptic verb, but a substantial Verb that was made flesh and dwelt among us, let us understand not a common word, but that heavenly one to which the Apostles ministered. And yet it is read in Exodus, because the people saw the voice of the Lord (Exod. XX, 18): and surely the voice is not seen but heard. For what is a voice, if not a sound that is not seen by the eyes, but perceived by the ears? Indeed, Moses wanted to declare with his highest genius that the voice appears to be of God; it appears to the inner eye of the mind; but in the Gospel, it is not the voice, but that which is more excellent than the voice, it is the Word that appears. And so the holy Evangelist John says: That which was, he says, from the beginning, what we have heard, and what we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life: and the life appeared, and we saw, and we bear witness, and we announce to you the life which was with the Father, and appeared to us (1 John 1:1-2). Therefore, you see that the Word of God was both seen by the apostles and heard. For they not only saw the Lord according to the body, but also according to the Word; for they saw the Word, who, along with Moses and Elijah, saw the glory of the Word. (See Augustine, Epistle 148, al. 111). For these people saw Jesus, who saw Him in His glory; others did not see Him, who could only see His body; for Jesus is not seen with bodily eyes, but with spiritual eyes.

Finally, the Jews did not see Him because they did not see Him in the spirit. For Abraham saw Him; as it is written: Abraham saw My day and rejoiced (John 8:56). Therefore, Abraham saw Him, who did not see the Lord in the body, but who saw in the spirit, saw in the body. But whoever saw in the body and did not see in the spirit, did not see in the body what he saw. Isaiah saw Him; and because he saw in the spirit, he also saw in the body. Finally, He had neither appearance nor beauty, as it is written, (Isaiah 53:2). The Jews did not see Him; for their foolishness had blinded them. He Himself also testifies that He cannot be seen by the Jews, saying: Blind leaders, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel (Matthew 23:24). Pilate did not see Him; nor did those who cried out: Crucify Him, crucify Him (John 19:6); for if they had seen Him, they would never have crucified the Lord of majesty. Therefore, whoever has seen God has seen Emmanuel, that is, has seen God with us; but whoever has not seen God with us could not have seen the one whom the virgin gave birth to. Finally, those who have not believed in the Son of God have not believed in the Son of the virgin.

7. So what is it to see God? Don't ask me, ask the Gospel, ask the Lord Himself, rather, listen to His teaching: Philip, whoever sees me, sees the Father who sent me. How can you say: Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me (John 14:9-10)? Certainly, a body is not seen in a body, nor is a spirit seen in a spirit: but only the Father is seen in the Son, or the Son is seen in the Father. For they are not seen to be dissimilar in dissimilar things: but where there is unity of operation and virtue, both the Son is seen in the Father, and the Father is seen in the Son. 'The works that I do,' he says, 'and he does' (John 5:19). In the works of the Father, Jesus is seen; in the works of the Son, the Father is perceived. He saw Jesus who witnessed that miracle (John 2:9), that is, he saw water turned into wine; which no one could do

except the Lord of the world who can change the elements. I see Jesus, when I read that he anointed the eyes of the blind man with mud and restored his sight. I recognize him as the one who formed man out of clay and breathed into him the breath of life and the light of vision (Gen. II, 7). I see Jesus, when he forgives sins; for no one can forgive sins except God alone (Mark II, 6 and 7). I see Jesus, when he raises Lazarus; and those who see haven't seen (John XI, 44). I see Jesus, I also see the Father, when I raise my eyes to heaven, turn to the seas, and gaze upon the earth; for his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made (Rom. I, 20).

8. As they have handed down to us, who from the beginning saw and were ministers of the Word. Twin virtues are in the perfect man, that both intent and action may be present. Therefore, the holy Evangelist attributes both virtues to the apostles; for he says that they not only saw, but also ministered to the Word. The intent of vision is the ministry of action; but the end of intent is action: the beginning of action is intent. And, using the example of the apostles themselves, the intent is what Peter and Andrew, having heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'I will make you fishers of men' (Matthew 4:19), immediately leaving their net without any delay, followed the Word. But action does not immediately follow intention; nor is there even action yet, but only intention when Peter says: Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you. (John 13:37) For it was the intention of the passion, but the action had not yet occurred; although there was already action in fasting, in watchings, in contempt of bodily pleasures; for this is the action of a Christian. For in all things, both intention and action do not occur simultaneously; but when it is the action of one thing, it is still the intention of another. For Peter himself had endured many apostolic virtues; but later, when the Lord said to him, 'Follow me' (John 21:22), he took up his cross and followed the Word, and underwent the action of suffering. However, in Peter, Andrew, John, and the other apostles, there was both equality of intention and action.

9. However, sometimes there is more in intention than in action, or more in action than in intention; as we see in the Gospel between the holy Mary and Martha there was a difference. For she heard one thing: she hurried about the ministry, which she stood and said: Lord, it does not bother you that my sister has left me alone to serve? Therefore, tell her to help me. And the Lord said to her: Martha, Martha. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken from her (Luke 10:40-42). Therefore, in one aspect there was the study of intention, in the other the ministry of action: yet both aspects were supplied with the study of each virtue. For if Martha had not heard the Word, she would not have undertaken the ministry, which is an indication of intention; and Mary, on the other hand, brought back from them both the excellence of virtue in such a way that she anointed the feet of Jesus, wiped them with her hair, and filled the whole house with the fragrance of her faith (John 12:3). There is also sometimes the greatest intention, but a futile action; as if someone intends to practice medicine, and after learning all the principles of healing, does not carry out their duties: and so it happens that because the action is futile, the intention is also futile. There is also sometimes a more fruitful action, but a less intent; as if someone receives the sacraments of baptism for salvation, and does not want to focus their mind on learning the precepts of various virtues, it often happens that they lose the fruit of their action due to carelessness of intention. Therefore, the fullness of both virtues must be sought, which the apostles were able to attain, about whom it is said: those who saw from the beginning and were ministers of the Word; so that through what they saw, the intention of divine knowledge may be understood: through what they

were ministers, their action may be declared.

(Vers. 3)

(Verse 3) 'It seemed good to me also,' he said.

It is possible that what one declares to be true is not just his own opinion. For it is not only by the will of man that something is seen, but as it pleased Him who speaks in me, Christ. He works so that what is good may also seem good to us; for whoever He has mercy on, He also calls (II Cor. XIII, 3). And therefore, someone who follows Christ can, when asked why he wanted to become a Christian, respond: It seemed right to me. When he says this, he does not deny that it is seen by God; for the will of humans is prepared by God. For as God is honored by the holy, it is by the grace of God. Finally, many wanted to write the Gospel: but only four, who deserved divine grace, were received.

It seemed, he said, that having followed from the beginning, I diligently arranged everything in order.

11. No one doubts that this Gospel book is more extensive than the others. Not because it includes things that are false, but because it claims those things that are true. Indeed, it has obtained testimony from the holy apostle Paul for its diligence. For he praises Luke as follows: 'Whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches' (2 Corinthians 8:18). And truly praiseworthy is he who has earned praise from such a great teacher of the Gentiles. Therefore, he says that he has achieved not a few things, but all things, and having achieved all things, he deemed it necessary to write not all things, but things from among all things. For he did not write everything, but he accomplished everything; because, he says, those things which Jesus did, if they were written down, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books. For he purposely omitted even those things which were written by others, so that the diverse grace in the Gospel might shine forth, and certain individual books might excel in their own particular mysteries and deeds of miracles. For the soldiers of Christ divided the garments of the Lord among themselves, which will be explained more fully in its proper place. (Later in book 10, chapters 23 and 34).

Now, it is written that the Gospel is addressed to Theophilus, that is, to him whom God loves. If you love God, it is written to you; if it is written to you, accept the gift of the Evangelist: diligently keep the pledge of a friend in the innermost part of your soul. Guard the valuable deposit through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (2 Timothy 1:14): examine it frequently, discuss it often. Faith is owed to the pledge first: diligence follows faith; lest moths or rust destroy the entrusted pledges. For whatever has been entrusted to you can be consumed: the Gospel cannot be consumed. The Gospel is a good pledge: but beware that neither moth nor rust consumes it in your mind. Moth consumes it if you believe what you read well, poorly.

13. The tinea is heretical, the tinea is Photinus, the tinea is yours Arrius. He tears the garment, who separates from God the Word. Photinus tears the garment, when he reads: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1). For the garment is whole if you read: And the Word was God (ibid.). He tears the garment who separates from God Christ. He tears the garment who reads: And this is eternal life; that they may know you, the only true God (John 17:3); unless he also knows Christ. For it is not only eternal life to truly know the

Father as the true God, but also to know Christ as the true God, true from true, God from God, is eternal life. It is a sin to know Christ without faith in His divinity or the sacrament of His body. It is a sin of Arius, a sin of Sabellius. The spirit of the wavering suffers from these sins, the spirit that does not believe that the Father and the Son are one in divinity. He divides what is written: 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:30), dividing them into separate substances. It suffers this moth-like spirit, who does not believe that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh: and he himself is the moth; he is indeed the antichrist. But those who are of God, hold the faith; and therefore they cannot suffer the moth, which divides the garment. For everything that is divided among itself, like the kingdom of Satan, cannot be everlasting.

14. There is also rust of the mind, when the keenness of religious intention is covered with the filth of worldly desires, or when the purity of faith is discolored by the cloud of treachery. Rust of the mind is a familiarity with worldly things; rust of the mind is carelessness; rust of the mind is ambition for positions, if in them the highest hope of present life is placed. And therefore, being turned toward divine things, let us sharpen our intellect, exercise our emotions; so that we may always be able to have that sword, which the Lord commands to be bought with a sold garment, (Luke 22:36), prepared and shining as if hidden in the sheath of the mind. For spiritual and strong weapons must always be present for the soldiers of Christ in order to destroy fortifications; lest, when the heavenly leader of the army comes, being offended by the state of our weapons, he separates us from the fellowship of his legions.

(Vers. 5, 6)

(Vers. 5, 6) There was, he said, in the days of Herod, king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

15. The divine Scripture teaches us that not only the virtues of those who are worthy of praise, but also parents should be praised; so that, like an inherited legacy of unblemished purity, they surpass those whom we desire to praise. For what other purpose does the holy Evangelist have in this place, if not to ennoble the parents of St. John the Baptist through miracles, character, calling, and suffering? Similarly, the mother of the holy Samuel, Anna, is praised; thus Isaac received nobility of piety from his parents, which he bequeathed to his descendants. So Zacharias, not only a priest, but also from the division of Abijah, that is, noble among the higher families. And his wife, he said, is of the daughters of Aaron. Therefore, not only does the nobility of St. John the Baptist extend from his parents, but also from his ancestors; he is not exalted by secular power, but venerable by the succession of religion. For such ancestors were necessary to herald the coming of Christ; so that the faith of the Lord's advent would not appear to be suddenly conceived, but received from his ancestors and infused by the right of nature itself.

17. 'Both,' he said, 'were just, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. What do those who, seeking solace for their sins, think that a man cannot exist without frequent sins, and use the verse; for it is written in Job: No one is clean of filth, even if his life is only one day on earth, his months are countless from him (Job. XIV, 4 and 5)? To which it must be answered, first let them define what it means for a man to be without sin: whether he has never sinned at all, or whether he has ceased to sin?' For if they think that to be without sin is to cease

from sinning, I agree; For all have sinned and need the glory of God (Romans III, 23). But if anyone corrects his old error and transforms himself into that quality of life where he refrains from sinning, they deny that he abstains from transgressions, I cannot agree with their opinion; for we read: For so the Lord loved the Church...that He might present it to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it may be holy and immaculate (Ephesians V, 25 and 27). For when the Church is gathered from the Gentiles, that is, from sinners, how can it be immaculate from the defiled; unless first, through the grace of God, it is cleansed from sin: then, through the quality of not sinning, it abstains from sins? Thus, it is not immaculate from the beginning; for this is impossible for human nature: but through the grace of God and its own quality, because it no longer sins, it becomes as if it were immaculate.

18. And he did not say in vain that the just walk before God, observing the commandments and justifications of the Lord: in whom he comprehends the omnipotent Father and the Son. The Son is the one who gave the law, prescribed the commandments, as the holy evangelist Luke also declares (Luke 6:47). And rightly so, before God are the just; for not everyone who is just before men is just before God. People see differently than God: people see the face, God sees the heart. And therefore it is possible that someone, by affecting popular praise with pretended goodness, may seem just to me: but he is not just before God, if justice is not formed from the simplicity of the mind, but is simulated by flattery; for hidden in it, a person will not be able to perceive. Therefore, perfect praise is to be just before God. Hence the Apostle says: Whose praise, he says, is not from men, but from God (Romans 2:29). Truly blessed is the one who is just in the sight of God. Blessed is the one of whom the Lord deigns to say: Behold a true Israelite, in whom there is no deceit (John 1:47); for a true Israelite is one who sees God, and knows that he is seen by God, and he reveals the secrets of his heart. Only the one who is approved by him is truly perfect, for he cannot be deceived. For the judgments of the Lord are true (Psalm 19:9), but the judgments of men are often mistaken; so that the unjust often attribute the grace of justice to themselves and persecute the just out of hatred or defame them with lies. However, the Lord knows the ways of the blameless (Psalm 37:18); He does not commend the sinner, nor does He condemn the praiseworthy sinner, but He judges each person according to the measure of their merits. For He is the judge of both the mind and the action. Indeed, the divine judgments measure the merit of the righteous based on the habit of the mind, not on the outcome of their deeds. For often a good intention is deformed by a reprehensible outcome, or an evil thought is concealed by the beauty of an action. But also what good you may do, if you think evil, cannot be justified by divine judgment. For it is written: You shall pursue what is just justly (Deut. XVI, 20). For unless it were possible to do what is just unjustly, it would never have been said: You shall pursue what is just justly. And certainly the Savior himself taught us that it is possible to do what is just unjustly, saying: When you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you. And, When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites (Matth. VI, 2 et 5). It is good to be merciful, it is good to pray. But it can be done unjustly if someone gives to a poor person for the sake of boasting, so as to appear to others.

19. Therefore the holy Evangelist not only says that the righteous are justified before God and walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord, but also says that they walk without complaint. This wonderfully agrees with the prophetic saying, which the holy Solomon used in Proverbs, saying: Always provide good things before God and before men (Prov. III, 4). Therefore, there is no complaint where both the goodness of the mind and the action agree. And

often righteousness, being tougher, provokes complaints from people.

20. But pay close attention to how fitting the distinction and order of words is. In walking, he says, in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord. For the commandment comes first, and the justification is second. So when we obey the heavenly commandments, we walk in the commandments of the Lord; when we judge, and judge appropriately, we seem to hold on to the justifications of the Lord.

Therefore, a complete praise is one that encompasses lineage, character, duty, action, and judgment. Lineage in ancestors, character in fairness, duty in priesthood, action in command, judgment in justification.

(Vers. 8, 9, 10.)

(Verses 8, 9, 10.) Now it happened that while Zacharias was performing his priestly duties in the order of his division before the Lord God, according to the custom of the priesthood, it was his turn to enter the temple of the Lord and offer incense. And the whole congregation of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

Here the holy Zacharias seems to be designated as the high priest; because, as it is read concerning the former tabernacle into which the priests always entered, accomplishing the ministries, not only for one year did they enter into the temple: but in the second (one) the singular high priest (entered) once in the year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and the people's sins (Heb. X, 6 and 7). This is that high priest who is still sought by lot; because he is still truly unknown: for he who is chosen by lot is not comprehended by human judgment. So, that [priest] was sought, and another [priest] was represented. That [priest] was sought as the true priest forever, of whom it is said: 'You are a priest forever' (Psalm 110:4); who would reconcile the Father God to the human race, not with the blood of sacrifices, but with his own blood. But back then, blood was poured out in appearance, and in appearance the priest was ordained. Now, because the truth has come, let us leave behind appearances and follow the truth. And back then, there were changes, but now there is perpetuity. So he was, and certainly he was whose offices were also being carried out.

23. Therefore, by lot it was designated that the priest should enter into the temple. So, if no witness could be brought in the type, what else was being signified except that he would become a priest, whose sacrifice was not common with the others: who finally would not sacrifice for us in material temples, but would cleanse our sins in the temple of his body. Therefore, the priest was sought by lot. Perhaps for this reason, even the soldiers cast lots for the clothing of the Lord (John 19:24), so that since the Lord was preparing to offer a sacrifice for us in his own temple, they would also fulfill the command of the Law regarding the casting of lots around him. For this reason he says: I have not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). Certainly, he was the one who was expected in the Old Testament, and appeared as the chosen one by God's command. Finally, the lot fell on the apostle Matthew (Acts 1:26), so that the selection of the apostles would not seem to differ from the command of the old law.

(Vers. 11.)

(v. 11) And there appeared to him an Angel of the Lord standing at the right side of the altar of incense.

24. The angel does not seem to appear in the temple without reason; for the arrival of the true Priest was already being announced, and the heavenly sacrifice was being prepared, in which the angels would minister. And it is said to have appeared well to him who suddenly caught sight of him. And this is especially true of angels or of God, as divine Scripture is accustomed to hold that which cannot be foreseen is said to appear; for you have it thus: God appeared to Abraham by the oak of Mamre. For he who is not present before, but suddenly appears in sight, is said to appear. For sensible things do not appear in a similar way, both in him whose will it is to appear and in him whose nature it is not to appear, to appear is of the will. For if he does not will, he does not appear; if he wills, he appears. For God appeared to Abraham, because he willed it; to others, because he did not will it, he did not appear. It was also seen by Stephen, when he was being stoned by the people, that the heavens were opened; Jesus was also seen standing at the right hand of God; and he was not seen by the people. Isaiah saw the Lord of hosts, but another could not see; because to whom it pleased, appeared (Isaiah 6:1).

25. And what shall we say about human beings, when we have also read about the celestial virtues and powers themselves, because no one has ever seen God (John 1:18)? And he added that beyond the celestial powers is the Only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has explained (Ibid.). Therefore, it must be agreed that if no one has ever seen God the Father, the Son was seen in the Old Testament; and let the heretics cease to attribute to him a beginning from the Virgin, who was seen before he was born of the Virgin: otherwise, it cannot be denied, either the Father, or the Son, or certainly the Holy Spirit, if indeed there is a vision of the Holy Spirit, is seen in the form that the will has chosen, not formed by nature; since we have also heard that the Spirit was seen in the form of a dove. And therefore, no one has ever seen God; because no one has perceived the fullness of divinity that dwells in God, no one comprehends it with the mind or the eyes. For it is seen in reference to both. Finally, when it is added: The only begotten Son himself has explained, it is more of a vision of the mind rather than of the eyes; for the appearance is seen, but the power is narrated: the former is comprehended by the eyes, while the latter is understood by the mind.

26. But what shall I say about the Trinity? When He willed, the Seraphim appeared, and only Isaiah heard His voice (Isa. VI, 6). An angel appeared, and now he is present, but he is not seen; nor is it within our power to see, but within his power to appear. Nevertheless, though the power of seeing is not ours, the grace of deserving to see is, so that we may be able to see. And therefore, whoever had the grace, obtained the abundance: we do not deserve abundance, because we do not have the grace of seeing God.

27. And what wonder if in the present age, unless He wishes, the Lord is not seen? Even in the resurrection itself, it is not easy to see God, except for those who have a clean heart. And therefore He says: Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God (Matt. 5:8). How many blessed ones He had already counted, and yet He had not promised them the ability to see God! Therefore, if those who have a clean heart shall see God, surely others shall not see Him. For neither will the unworthy see God, nor can one who does not want to see God see Him. God is not seen in a place, but is seen by the heart of the world; God is not sought with bodily eyes, nor is He

bounded by sight, nor is He grasped by touch, nor is He heard by speech, nor is He perceived by smell. And when He is thought to be absent, He is seen; and when He is present, He is not seen. Indeed, not all the apostles saw Christ; and therefore it is said: For so long I am with you, and you have not known me (John 14:9)! For whoever knows the breadth, and length, and height, and depth, and surpassing knowledge of the love of Christ, sees both Christ and the Father. For we no longer know Christ according to the flesh, but according to the spirit; for the spirit of Christ our Lord appeared before us, who is worthy to fill us with his mercy unto the fullness of God, so that he may be seen by us. Therefore, the angel appeared to Zacharias on the right side of the altar of incense, because he appeared when he willed, and did not appear as long as he did not will. But he appeared at the right side of the altar of incense; for he bore the emblem of divine mercy: for the Lord is at my right hand, that I may not be moved. (Psalm 15:8). And elsewhere: The Lord is your protector, your right hand. (Psalm 120:5). And I wish that when we, too, approach the altars and offer sacrifice, an angel would assist us, or rather, present himself to be seen. Do not doubt that an angel will assist, when Christ himself is present, when Christ is sacrificed. For indeed Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5:7). And do not fear that your heart will be troubled by the sight of angels (for we are disturbed and estranged from our own affection when we are dazzled by the encounter with a higher power), for the same angel who appears to us can strengthen us, just as he confirmed Zachariah's troubled mind, saying:

(Vers. 13, 14.)

Do not be afraid, Zachariah, for behold your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John, and it will be joy to you, and many will rejoice at his birth.

29. Full and overflowing are divine blessings: not restricted in number, but accumulated in an abundant heap of good things; so that here there is first the fruit of prayer, then the barrenness of a wife, then the joy of many, and the greatness of virtue. The promise of the Most High is also given to the prophet: indeed, to remove any doubt, the very word for the future is designated. Therefore, with such overflowing blessings beyond expectation, silence is the punishment of disbelief not undeservedly: which we will explain in the following. But there is solemn joy in the birth of saints; for a saint is not only a blessing to the parents, but also the salvation of many. Therefore, we are reminded in this place to rejoice in the generation of saints.

30. Parents should be reminded to give thanks not only for the birth, but also for the merits of their children; for it is not a small gift from God to give children as propagators of the race, heirs of succession. By the law of Jacob, there is joy in the generation of twelve sons (Gen. 49:28). The son is given to Abraham (Gen. 21:2). Zacharias is heard. Therefore, the divine gift is the fertility of the parent. Let fathers give thanks, because they have begotten; let sons give thanks, because they have been born; let mothers give thanks, because they are honored with the rewards of marriage; for the children are the rewards of their military service. The earth rejoices in the praise of God because it is cultivated; the world rejoices because it is known; the Church rejoices because the number of the devout people is increased. In the beginning (Gen. II, 24), the union of marriage was immediately joined by the command of God, so that heresy could be destroyed. For God approved of marriage in this way, that He might unite; He rewarded it in such a way that to those to whom sterility had denied children, divine mercy might grant them.

(Vers. 15.)

And he will be great before the Lord.

31. Here, not the size of the body, but the greatness of the soul is declared. The magnitude of the soul is in the presence of the Lord, the magnitude of virtue: there is also the smallness of the soul, and the youthfulness of virtue. For we count the ages of the soul and body together, not according to the measure of time, but according to the quality of virtue; so that that man may be called perfect, who lacks the errors of childhood, and does not feel the slippery nature of the mind in the maturity of youth: but he may be called small, who seems not to have made any progress in virtue yet. Where is that in Jeremiah, when the Lord showed mercy to Ephraim who was weeping and praying for his own sins: 'Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight?' (Jeremiah 31:20) For if he had not been a child in whom I delight, he would never have sinned. And rightly did he say both 'in whom I delight' and 'child'; for he is a child who does not sin: 'Behold, my servant whom I have chosen' (Isaiah 43:10). Therefore, he sinned through his delight, being so formed by the Lord that he knew not of error. Therefore, even if the boy had not been in pleasure and if he had advanced in age to become a complete man of virtue, he would never have stumbled; so that he would not have to seek forgiveness for his sins, when he should rather hope for rewards for his merits. What our Lord also seems to express in the Gospel, when he says: Do not despise one of these little ones (Matthew 18:10). But let more be preserved for their proper place. Therefore, the little one is opposed to the great. And if, according to the Apostle, a little child is under the elements: For when we were children, we were under the elements of this world (Galatians IV, 10): therefore, the great one is above the elements of the world.

Therefore, John will be great not in the virtue of the body, but in the greatness of the soul. Ultimately, he did not propagate the boundaries of any empire, nor did he prefer any triumphs of war; but what is more, preaching in the desert, he suppressed the delights of men and the indulgence of the body with great virtue of the soul. Therefore, small in the world, great in spirit. Ultimately, like a great person, he did not change his steadfastness of conviction in the desire to live, captivated by the allurements of life.

(Vers. 15.)

(Verse 15) And, he said, he will still be filled with the Holy Spirit even in his mother's womb.

33. There is no doubt that this promise was true, for the holy John, while still in his mother's womb, recognized and received the grace of the Holy Spirit. For when neither his father nor his mother had yet done anything remarkable, he leaped in his mother's womb and announced the coming of the Lord to his mother. Thus you have what happened when the mother of the Lord came to Elizabeth, as she said: 'Behold, as soon as the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.' (Luke 1:44) For he did not yet have the spirit of life, but the spirit of grace. Indeed, in other instances we were able to anticipate the grace of sanctification preceding the living substance, as the Lord says: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations (Jeremiah 1:5). For another is the spirit of this life, another the spirit of grace: the former begins at birth, ends at death; the latter is not bound by times or ages, is not extinguished by death, is not expelled from the womb of its mother. Finally, the holy Mary, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied (Luke 1:46,

below); and Elisha, after his death, raised the lifeless body of a man by touching it (2 Kings 13:21); and Samuel, according to the testimony of Scripture, did not keep silent about the future after his death (1 Samuel 28:17 and following).

34. And, he says, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. For to whom the Spirit of grace is present, nothing is lacking. And to whom the Holy Spirit is poured out, there is the fullness of great virtues. Finally, (Vers. 16.) (Verse 16) He said, 'He will convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.'

35. We do not need testimony that Saint John converted the hearts of many, in which the prophetic Scriptures and the Gospel support us. For the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight (Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:6); and the frequented baptisms of the people declare that the converted people have made significant progress; because when John is believed, Christ is believed. For he preached not about himself, but about the Lord as the precursor of Christ. Et ideo (Vers. 17.) (Verse 17.) He will go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah.

36. Well, these things are connected; for the spirit is never without virtue, nor is virtue without the spirit. And therefore, perhaps in the spirit and virtue of Elijah; for the holy Elijah had great power and grace: the power to turn the hearts of the people to faith from wickedness, the power of abstinence and patience, and the spirit of prophecy. In the wilderness, Elijah; in the wilderness, John: the former was fed by ravens, the latter in the bushes; and while he trampled on all the allurements of pleasure, he preferred frugality and despised luxury: he did not seek the favor of King Ahab, but spurned Herod's favor; he divided the Jordan, he turned it into a saving bath: he dwells on earth with the Lord, he appears in glory with the Lord: he is the precursor of the first advent of the Lord, he is the precursor of the second advent of the Lord: after three years of drought, he watered the earth with rain, and after three years he poured the rain of faith on the ground of our bodies. You wonder what the three-year period is? Here, He says, there are three years, from which I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I do not find it (Luke 13:7); for a mystical number was expected, so that salvation would be given to the people. One year is in the Patriarchs: moreover, in regard to men the year's yield was then, such as it had not been after on earth. Another in Moses and the rest of the prophets. The third in the coming of the Lord and Savior: Here, He says, is the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of retribution (Luke 4:19). And that father of the family who planted a vineyard, not once but often sent forth the collectors of fruit: first the slaves, second other slaves, but third he sent his own son (Matt. XXI, 33 et seq.).

37. So John came in the spirit and power of Elijah. For one cannot be without the other, as is also found in the following, when it is said: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you (Luke 1:35). But perhaps this seems to be above us and above the apostles. For even he, under Elijah, the course of the divided river of the flowing waters turned back to the source of the river, as the Scripture says: The Jordan turned back (Psalm 114:5), signifies the future mysteries of the saving washing, through which, in the beginnings of their nature, those who have been baptized as infants are reformed from evil. Moreover, in addition to the power given to his apostles, the Lord himself promised that the power of the Holy Spirit should be attributed to them, saying: 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you' (Acts 1:8). Then, in the following passage, it is said: 'Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a

mighty rushing wind' (Acts 2:2). Indeed, a great force, because by the Spirit of his mouth all their power is (Psalm 32:6). And that is the power which the apostles received from the Holy Spirit.

38. Moreover, the holy John will also go before the face of the Lord, who was born as a forerunner and died as a forerunner. And perhaps this mystery is celebrated in our life today. For a certain power of John goes before our souls when we prepare to believe in Christ, so that the ways of our souls may appear to our faith, and from the twisted path of this life, he may make straight pathways for our journey, so that we may not stumble in the winding of error; by which every valley of virtue in our soul may be filled with fruits, and all the height of worldly merits may prostrate itself to the Lord in greater humility, knowing that nothing can be lofty that is fragile.

(Vers. 18, 19, 20.)

(Verse 18, 19, 20.) And Zacharias said to the angel, \"How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.\" And the angel answered him, \"I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.\\

39. The incredulity of the priest is condemned by silence, and the faith of the prophets is proven by an oracle. Cry out, he says. And I said: What shall I cry out? All flesh is grass (Isaiah XL, 6). You see the command of the one who orders, the obedience of the one who obeys, the affection of the one who questions, the response of the one who obeys. For he believed, who asked what he should cry out: and because he believed, he prophesied. But Zacharias, who did not believe, could not speak: but (Vers. 22.) (Verse 22.) He was nodding to them and remained mute.

40. It is not the mystery of only one, nor the silence of only one. The priest is silent, the prophet is silent. Unless I am mistaken, in one person the voice of the whole people has become mute: because in one person the entire people spoke to the Lord through Moses. The cessation of sacred things, and the silence of the prophets, the silence of the prophet, and the silence of the priest. 'I will take away', it says, 'the mighty power, the prophet, and the counselor' (Isaiah 3:1-2). And truly, he took away the prophets, from whom he took away the word that used to speak in the prophets. And truly, he took away virtue from those from whom the power of God departed. He took away their counselor, who was declared to be the Angel of great counsel. He took away the voice; for the voice of the Word is not the voice itself. For unless that Word operates in us, there is no sound of the voice. John is the voice; for the voice is that of one crying in the wilderness (Luke 3:4): Christ is the Word, this Word operates; and therefore, where it ceased to operate, immediately mute, lacking the spirit, as if a certain language of the soul, it was silenced. For the Word of God has passed over to us, and within us, it does not remain silent. Finally, a Jew cannot say what a Christian can say: because you seek a proof of the one who speaks in me, Christ (II Cor. XIII, 3). And he himself was nodding to them. So Zacharias remained mute and was nodding to them. What is a nod, if not a certain non-verbal bodily gesture, attempting to indicate, yet not expressing, the will? A certain silent speech of the dying, with the voice suppressed by the last death? Does it not seem to you that the Jewish people are like this, so irrational that they cannot give an account of their actions? When they are at the final moment of their vital hope, they have lost the voice they had, which the unsteady movement of the body wishes to explain, not the word? Therefore, the mute people are without reason, without speech. For why does it seem to

you that someone is more mute who does not know the sound than one who does not know the mystery? And indeed, there is a voice of works and a cry of faith, as it is written: The blood of your brother cries out to me (Gen. IV, 10). And he who cries out, cries out in his heart all day long. So, he who has lost the cry of the heart, has also lost the tongue. For he who does not hold the distinction of faith, how can he hold the words? And indeed, before, Moses had said that he could not speak (Exod. IV, 10): but afterward, when he spoke, he received the word and brought forth the clarity of good works. Therefore, just as Moses was a symbol of the people and a symbol of the Law, so too did Zacharias remain silent.

42. Therefore, it must be considered how each thing comes together. The Word in the womb. The Law in silence, called John, and Zacharias speaks. The Word is revealed, the Law is completed, but the completion of the Law is the explanation of the Word: And therefore, whoever speaks the Word, speaks; even if they had not spoken before. Zacharias is ordered to be silent by the angel, the voice of the Jews is suppressed by the angel. For this is not a human, but a divine command; that one should not speak to God, who does not believe in Christ. And therefore we believe, so that we may speak. Let the Jew believe so that he may be able to speak. Let us speak in the spirit of mysteries, let us understand the reason for the ancient sacrifices, the enigmas of the prophets. He is silent who does not understand the Law, he is silent who does not understand the Divine sequence of the Scriptures. For our voice is our faith, and therefore I prefer to speak five words in the Church with my mind, in order to instruct others, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue... For tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers (I Cor, XIV, 19 and 22): but prophecy is for believers, not for unbelievers.

(Vers. 24, 25.)

(Verse 24, 25.) After those days, Elizabeth his wife conceived, and hid herself five months, saying: Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he hath had regard to take away my reproach among men.

Great care is given to modesty by the saints, so that often shame is in their very desires; as we observe in this place the holy Elizabeth, who desired to have children and concealed herself for five months. What is the reason for this concealment, if not modesty? For there is a prescribed age for everyone's duty: and what is fitting at one time is not fitting at another; the change of age often changes the nature of an action. There are also certain times prescribed for marriage itself, when it is appropriate to devote oneself to having children: while the years are youthful, while there is hope of receiving children; while there is a need for procreation in the example, there is also a need for union in marriage. But when the mature age of old age has succeeded, and the age is more skilled in governing children than in creating them, it is modest to bear the signs of lawful intercourse, and to be burdened by the weight of another's age, and the womb swells not with its own offspring but with the fruit of someone else's time. For elderly people are concluded from their very age, and are restrained from engaging in the works of marriage by a sense of modesty. Indeed, young people themselves often cite the desires of their children and think that the heat of age, and the desire for offspring, excuses them. How much more shameful it is for the elderly, which is a matter of modesty for young people to confess? Moreover, even young people, who restrain their hearts with sober fear of the divine, often renounce the works of youth after having produced offspring. And why is it surprising that men, if even animals in some way speak by

means of a mute operation, show not a desire for mating but a desire for procreation? For once they have felt a heavy abdomen and have received semen in the genitalia, they no longer indulge in intercourse or the lasciviousness of a lover, but rather assume the care of a parent. But indeed, men spare neither the conceived nor God: they defile the former and infuriate the latter. Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you: and in your mother's womb I sanctified you (Jeremiah 1:5). To curb your impudence, you are warned of the hands of your Creator forming you in the womb. He works, and you defile the sacred secret of the womb with incestuous lust? Either imitate a beast or fear God. And what of beasts? The very earth often rests from the work of procreation: and if it is frequently occupied by the thoughtless seed thrown about by impatient humans, the farmer punishes their impudence and changes fertility into sterility. So, for certain creatures, the sense of shame in not ceasing to reproduce is inherent in their very nature, both in the case of tame animals and in the case of wild animals.

45. Therefore, rightly, even Saint Elizabeth blushed with grace, although she did not acknowledge guilt. For although she had conceived by a man (for it is not right to believe otherwise about the birth of a human being), nevertheless her childbirth blushed in its maturity. And again, she rejoiced at having been freed from shame; for it is a shame for women to not have the rewards of marriage, of which this alone is the cause of marrying. Therefore, this shame, removed by her own modesty, comforts her, that modesty I mentioned, which embarrassed her on account of her age. From this, it can be understood that they were no longer joining together in conjugal intercourse; for what does not blush at an old person having intercourse, would not blush at giving birth; and yet, it blushes at the burden of being a parent, as long as it does not know the mystery of religion.

46. She who was hiding herself, because she had conceived a son, began to boast because she was giving birth to a prophet. And she who was ashamed before, now gives blessings; and she who was doubtful before, is strengthened. Behold, she says, how the voice of your greeting has become in my ears, the baby in my womb rejoiced with joy. Therefore, she cried out with a loud voice when she sensed the coming of the Lord; because she believed in the religious birth. For there was no cause for shame, when she bore a prophet, not acquiring faith in the generation by pretense.

Book Two

(Vers. 26, 27.)

(Verse 26, 27) At that time, the angel Gabriel was sent by the Lord into the city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Truly, divine mysteries are hidden and it is not easily within the grasp of humans to know the plan of God, as the prophecy says. However, we can understand from other events and the teachings of our Lord that it was part of a deeper plan that she, who was betrothed to a man, would bear the Lord. But why was this fulfilled before she was betrothed? Perhaps so that it would not be said that she had conceived out of wedlock. And the Scripture rightly placed both conditions: that she should be betrothed and a virgin. A virgin, so that she might appear free from man's companionship; betrothed, so that she might not incur the disgrace of a rashly violated virginity, and be thought to bring the mark of corruption upon a chaste conception. But the Lord preferred

that some should doubt the origin of His birth rather than doubt the honor of His mother, for He knew that the modesty of a virgin is tender and a good name is easily tarnished. He did not think it necessary to confirm the faith in His birth by subjecting His mother to dishonor. Therefore, the holy Virgin Mary is preserved in both her purity of modesty and her inviolable reputation of virginity; for it is necessary for the saints to have testimony from those who are outside: nor is it proper for a veil of excuse to be left for virgin women who are living with a suspicious reputation, lest even the mother of the Lord appear to be dishonored. But what could be attributed to the Jews, what to Herod, if they seemed to have persecuted ones born from adultery? And yet, as he himself said: I have not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:18); if it seemed that he had begun with an injustice against the Law, when the offspring of an unmarried woman is condemned by the Law (Deuteronomy 23:17)? Moreover, a wealthier witness of decency, the husband, is called upon, who could both grieve the injustice and avenge the disgrace, if he did not acknowledge the sacrament. Moreover, the credibility of Mary's words is further confirmed, and the motive for falsehood is eliminated. It would seem that being pregnant without being married, she wanted to cover up the blame with a lie. However, she had a reason to lie because she was not yet married, whereas married women have the reward of marriage and the blessing of childbirth.

Also, there is a significant reason why the virginity of Mary could deceive the prince of the world: when he saw her betrothed to a man, he could not suspect that she would have a child. The plan to deceive the prince of the world is confirmed by the words of the Lord Himself, when the apostles are commanded to be silent about Christ (Matthew 16:20), when the healed are forbidden to boast about the cure (Matthew 8:4), when the demons are ordered to keep silent about the Son of God (Luke 4:35). The plan of the fallen, as I said, was to be the ruler of the world, and even the Apostle declared, saying: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew. For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (I Cor. II, 7 and 8), that is, they would not have caused me, the Lord, to be redeemed by death. Therefore, he deceived for us, he deceived in order to conquer, he deceived the devil when he was tempted, when he was prayed to, when he was called the Son of God, so that he would not confess his own divinity anywhere. But nevertheless, the prince of this world was more deceived; for the devil, although he sometimes doubted, as when he said: 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down' (Matt. IV, 6); yet he later recognized and departed from him. The demons also acknowledged, saying: 'We know who thou art, Jesus, the Son of God. Why art thou come hither before the time to torment us?' (Matt. VIII, 29) And therefore they knew that he had come, because they had foreknowledge of his coming. But the princes of this world did not know, which we can prove with even greater evidence than the testimony of the Apostles. For if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of Majesty. The malice of demons can easily detect even hidden things: but those who are occupied with worldly vanities cannot know divine things. But the Evangelists divided it well among themselves, so that the holy Matthew would indicate that Joseph was warned by an angel to take Mary as his wife (Matt. 1:20): Luke, on the other hand, would give testimony that they had not come to an agreement; this Mary herself would confess, when she says to the angel: How shall this be done, because I do not know man? (Luke 1:34). And the holy Luke himself declared the virgin saying: And the name of the Virgin is Mary. And the prophet taught, saying: Behold, a virgin shall conceive (Isaiah 7:14). And Joseph, who saw that she was pregnant and did not know her, wanted to divorce her (Matt. 1:19). And the Lord Himself, while hanging on the cross, revealed it, when He said to the mother: Woman, behold your

son. Then to the disciple: Behold your mother (John 19:26-27). Both the disciple and the Mother testified, because from that hour the disciple took her into his own (ibid., 27). Surely, if it had been appropriate, she would never have left her own husband, nor would a righteous man have allowed her to depart from him. But how did the Lord command divorce, since it is his opinion that no one should divorce their wife except for the cause of fornication (Matthew 5:32)?

However, the holy Matthew taught beautifully what the righteous man should do if he discovers the dishonor of his wife, that he should strive to be free from murder and chaste from adultery: For he who joins himself to a prostitute is one body (1 Corinthians 6:16). Therefore, everywhere in Joseph the grace and person of the righteous man are preserved, that he may be adorned as a witness; for the mouth of the righteous does not know falsehood, and his tongue speaks justice, his judgment speaks the truth. And do not let it bother you that Scripture often speaks of a spouse; for it is not the taking away of virginity, but the testament of marriage and the celebration of the wedding that is being declared. In fact, no one dismisses what they have not received; and therefore, whoever wanted to dismiss, admitted to having received it.

6. Moreover, it should not be moved simultaneously as the Evangelist says: He did not know her until she gave birth to a son (Mat. 1:25); for that is a phrase of Scripture, as you have in another place: Until you grow old, I am (Isaiah 46:4). Did God cease to exist after their old age? And in the Psalm: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet (Psalm 110:1). Will He not sit thereafter? And since he who argues a case thinks it is enough to state the cause, he does not require redundancy; for it is enough for him to establish the cause he has undertaken, and postpone the incidental matters. Therefore he who undertook to prove the mystery of the Incarnation in its incorrupt state, did not think it necessary to pursue at length the testimony of the Virgin Mary's virginity, lest he should be thought to be a defender rather than an assertor of the mystery. Certainly, when Joseph had made lawful the marriage he was about to contract, he sufficiently showed that the temple of the Holy Ghost, the abode of the mystery, the mother of the Lord could not have been violated.

7. We have learned the series of truth, we have learned the counsel: let us also learn the mystery. Well betrothed, but a virgin; for she is a type of the Church, which is immaculate, but married. The virgin conceives us by the Spirit, the virgin gives birth to us without groaning. And therefore perhaps holy Mary is married to one, filled by another; for indeed individual Churches and souls are filled by the Spirit and grace; yet they are joined to the outward appearance of a temporal priest.

(Vers. 28, 29.)

(Verse 28, 29.) And the angel went in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

8. Learn the virgin in morals, learn the virgin in modesty, learn the virgin in prayer, learn the virgin in mystery. To tremble is for virgins, and to fear the approach of every man, to fear the speech of every man. Let women learn to imitate the purpose of modesty. Alone in the inner chambers, where no man could see, only the angel would find her: alone without a companion, alone without a witness; lest she be corrupted by any improper speech, she is greeted by the angel. Learn, O

virgin, to avoid lascivious words: even Mary feared the greeting of the angel.

However, he said, thinking, what kind of greeting this was.

9. And therefore with modesty, because she was afraid; with prudence, because she marveled at the new formula of blessing, which had nowhere been read, nowhere before discovered. This greeting was preserved for Mary alone. For she alone is said to be full of grace, who alone attained grace which no other deserved, so that she might be filled with grace by the author. Therefore, Mary was ashamed, Elizabeth was also ashamed; and therefore let us understand what difference there is between the modesty of a woman and the modesty of a virgin. For that reason she blushed, for this reason out of modesty: in a woman, a measure of shame is applied, in a virgin, the grace of shame is increased.

(Vers. 30, 31, 32.)

(Verse 30, 31, 32.) And the angel said to her: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great.

Indeed, it is said also about John by an angel, because he will be great (Luke 1:15): but he is great as a man, whereas this one is great as God; For the Lord is great, and exceedingly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable (Psalm 145:3). And truly, he is great; for among those born of women, there is no one greater than the prophet John the Baptist (Luke 7:28). However, he has someone greater; for he who is lesser in the kingdom of God is greater than him (ibid). But John is great; but in the presence of the Lord he is great. And John does not drink wine and strong drink, he eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners. Let him accumulate merit through abstinence, to whom nature has no power: but Christ, to whom it was natural to forgive sins, why would he reject those whom he could make better than the abstinent?

11. At the same time, he does not disdain the mystical meal of those to whom he will give the sacrament. Here, therefore, he eats, there he fasts: the type of both people fasts in him, is nourished in this. But Christ also fasted, so that you would not deviate from the precept: he ate with sinners, so that you would see the grace, acknowledge the power. Therefore, John is great, but his greatness has a beginning, has an end: but the Lord Jesus is the same beginning as well as end, the same first and last (1 Tim. 6:16) . Nothing before the first, nothing after the last.

12. And let not the custom of human generation lead you to vice, so that you think that he is not the first, because he is a son. Follow the Scriptures, so that you may not err. He is called the First Son. It is also written that the Father alone, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in inaccessible light; as you have read: To the immortal and invisible God (1 Tim. 1:17): but neither first before the Father, nor alone without the Son. If you deny one, you establish the other, follow both and confirm both. He did not say: I am before, and I am after, but: I am the first, and I am the last (Rev. 1:17 and 22:13). The Son is the first, and therefore coeternal; for he has a Father, with whom he is eternal. I dare to say. The Son is the first, but he is not alone; and I say it well, and I say it with devotion. Why do you raise your ears to impiety, heretics? You have fallen into the snares you set. The Son is the first, and he is not alone: first, because he is always with the Father; not alone, because he is never without the Father. Not I say this, but He himself said it: And I am not alone, because the Father is with me (John 16:32). The Father alone, because He is

one God: the Father alone, because He is the sole divinity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: and what is one, is alone. The Father alone, the Son alone, and the Holy Spirit alone; for neither is the Son the Father, nor the Father the Son, nor is the Holy Spirit the Son. Another Father, another Son, another Holy Spirit; for we read: I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate (John 14:16). The Father alone, because He is one God, from whom all things; the Son alone, because He is one Lord, through whom all things. Only divinity makes, generation and testifies to the Father and the Son, so that the Son is nowhere without the Father, nor does the Father appear to be without the Son. Therefore, not alone, because not alone immortal; not alone inhabiting inaccessible light; because no one has ever seen God, except the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18), who sits at the right hand of the Father. And hence some dare to say that the light that the Father dwells in is inaccessible. Is the light better than the Father? But what inaccessible light is there for someone to whom the Father is not inaccessible? And He Himself is the true light and the begetter of eternal light, of whom it is said: He was the true light that enlightens every person coming into this world (John 1:9). See if that inaccessible light in which the Father dwells is also inhabited by the Son because the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father.

13. Therefore, God is great; for the power of God is poured out widely, and the magnitude of celestial substance extends widely. The Trinity has nothing specified, nothing limited, nothing measured, nothing defined. It is not enclosed by place, comprehended by opinion, concluded by estimation, or varied by age. Indeed, the Lord Jesus has given greatness to human beings: 'Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world' (Psalm 19:4); not to the boundary of the world, not to the boundaries of heaven, not beyond the heavens. But indeed, in the Lord Jesus, all things were created in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible... and He Himself is before all things, and in Him all things hold together (Colossians 1:16-17). Look to the sky, Jesus is there; gaze upon the earth, Jesus is present. Ascend to heaven with a word, descend to hell with a word, Jesus is present. For if you ascend to heaven, Jesus is there; if you descend to hell, He is present. Today as I speak, He is with me, in this moment, within this instant. And if a Christian now speaks in Armenia, Jesus is present: For no one says 'Lord Jesus' except in the Holy Spirit (I Cor. XII, 3). If you dwell in the depths, you will also see Jesus working there; for it is written: Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' that is, to bring Christ down; or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' that is, to bring Christ up from the dead (Rom. X, 6 and 7). So where is the one who has filled the heavens, the abyss, and the earth? Therefore, blessed is the great one whose virtue has filled the world, who is everywhere, and will always be; for his kingdom will have no end.

(Vers. 34.)

(Verse 34.) But Mary said to the angel: How will this happen, since I do not know man?

14. It seems that Mary did not believe here, unless you pay careful attention; for it is not right for the chosen one to be seen as unbelieving in conceiving the only-begotten Son of God. But in what way could it happen (although the prerogative of the mother is preserved, to whom it certainly had to be deferred to a greater extent: but as a greater prerogative, a greater faith should also have been reserved for her), therefore in what way could it happen, that Zacharias, who did not believe, was condemned to silence: but Mary, if she had not believed, would be exalted by the infusion of

the Holy Spirit? But Mary neither should not believe, nor should she rashly usurp: not believe the angel, usurp divine things. For it was not easy to know the mystery hidden in God from the ages, which even the higher Powers could not know. And yet she did not refuse faith, did not reject the duty: but she adjusted her emotions, promised obedience. For when she says: How will this be done? she did not doubt the outcome, but sought the quality of the effect itself.

15. How much more temperate is this response, than the words of the priest? He says this: How will this be done? He replied: How should I know that? He now discusses this matter: he still doubts about the message. He denies that he believes, who denies that he knows; and as if he seeks another author of faith: he professes to do these things, and does not doubt that it should be done, he inquires how it can be done; for you have it like this: How will this be done; since I do not know a man? An incredible and unheard-of generation had to be heard of in order to believe it. To give birth as a virgin is a sign of divine mystery, not a human one. Finally, he said, receive this sign: Behold, a virgin in the womb will conceive and bear a son (Isaiah 7:14). Mary had read this, therefore she believed it would happen. But how it would happen, she had not read; for it had not been revealed to the prophets how it would happen or by what means. For the mystery of such a great command was not from a human being, but it was to be proclaimed by the mouth of an angel. Today it is heard for the first time: The Holy Spirit will come upon you. And it is heard, and it is believed. Finally:

(Vers. 36.)

(Verse 36) Behold, she said, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word.

16. See the humility, see the devotion. She declares herself the handmaid of the Lord, who is chosen as a mother: and she is not lifted up by the sudden promise. By declaring herself a handmaid, she claimed no prerogative to such great grace, which would make her do what she was commanded. For she who was to give birth to the meek and lowly one, ought herself to have humility. Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word. You have obedience, you see a vow. Behold the handmaid of the Lord; it is the preparation of her office; let it be done to me according to your word, the vow is conceived.

17. How quickly, then, did Mary believe in this unequal conception! For what is more unequal than the Holy Spirit and a body? What is more unheard of than a pregnant virgin, against the law, against custom, against modesty, whose care is dearer to her than her own virginity? But Zechariah did not believe, not because of an unequal condition, but because of his old age; for the condition was fitting. The birth of a child is a normal occurrence from a man and a woman: and it should not be considered incredible where nature agrees. For while age belongs to nature, nature does not belong to age, so it often happens that age hinders nature. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable for a lesser cause to give way to a greater cause, and for the higher prerogative of nature to exclude the use of the lower age. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Abraham and Sarah conceived a son in old age, and Joseph was a son of old age. And if Sarah is rebuked for laughing (Gen. 18:13), it is even more just to condemn one who did not believe either the oracle or the example. However, when Mary says, 'How will this be, since I have not known a man?' (Luke 1:34), she does not seem to doubt the fact, but to inquire about the quality of the fact. For it is clear that she believed it must be done, and she asked how it would be done. Hence, she deserved to

hear, 'Blessed are you who believed' (Luke 1:45). And truly blessed is she, who is more excellent than the priest; when the priest denied, the virgin corrected the mistake. It is not surprising that the Lord, who was to redeem the world, began his work with Mary; so that she, through whom salvation was being prepared for all, would be the first to receive the fruit of salvation from the pledge.

18. And he inquired well how it would be done; for he had read that a virgin would conceive, but he had not read how she would conceive. He had read, as I said: Behold, a virgin shall conceive in her womb (Isaiah 7:14): but how she would conceive, an angel first spoke in the Gospel.

(Vers. 39, 40.)

(Verse 39, 40.) But Mary, rising up in those days, went with haste into the hill country, into a city of Judah, and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth.

19. It is the duty of all those who demand faith to provide faith. And therefore the angel, when he came to announce in secret, announced the conception of the elderly and sterile woman to the virgin Mary, so that he might assert that with God all things are possible. When Mary heard this, she did not respond as one incredulous of the prophecy, nor as one uncertain of the message, nor as one doubting the example: but rather as one joyful for the desire fulfilled, as one devoted to her duty, as one eager for the joy, she hastened to the mountains. For how could he be filled with God, if he did not strive eagerly for higher things? The grace of the Holy Spirit does not know slow efforts.

Learn, you holy women, the diligence that you ought to show to pregnant relatives. Mary, who used to dwell alone in the innermost rooms, was not delayed by the public shame of her virginity, nor by the harshness of the mountains, nor by the length of the journey due to duty. The mountain-dwelling virgin, with haste and mindful of her duty, forgetful of injuries, with passion in her heart, not because of her gender, left her home and set out.

Learn, young women, not to run around in other people's houses, not to linger in the streets, not to engage in public conversations. Mary was serious at home, but quick in public. She stayed at her relative's house for three months. Indeed, she who had come for duty, clung to her duty. Therefore, she stayed for three months, not because she was delighted by someone else's house, but because she disliked being seen in public more frequently.

22. You have learned, young women, the modesty of Mary: learn humility. The near one comes to the neighbor, the younger to the older: not only does she come, but she also greets first; for it is fitting that the purer the virgin, the more humble she is. Let her know how to show honor to her elders. Let her be the mistress of humility, in which is the profession of chastity. It is also the cause of piety, it is also the rule of doctrine. For it must be understood that the superior comes to the inferior, so that the inferior may be helped: Mary to Elizabeth, Christ to John. Finally, also afterwards, in order to sanctify the baptism of John, the Lord came to the baptism. The rapid arrival of Mary also declares the benefits of the Lord's presence.

(Vers. 41.)

(Verse 41.) For when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

23. See the distinction and the properties of each word. Elizabeth heard the voice first, but John sensed the grace first: she heard it according to the order of nature, he rejoiced according to the reason of mystery: she heard it for Mary, he sensed the coming of the Lord: a woman of a woman, and a pledge of a pledge. The former speak of grace, the latter work within, and they worship at the maternal beginnings of piety; by a double miracle they prophesy, the mothers by the spirit of little ones. The infant rejoiced, and the mother was filled. The mother was not filled before the son, but when the son was filled with the Holy Spirit, he also filled the mother. John rejoiced, and the spirit of Mary rejoiced. While John was rejoicing, Elizabeth was filled: but we know that Mary's spirit rejoiced, not that her spirit was filled; for the incomprehensible (God) was working in the mother in an incomprehensible way. And she was filled after conception, while Mary was filled before conception.

(Vers. 42, 43.) (Verse 42, 43) Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me? The Holy Spirit knows his own word and never forgets it. And prophecy is fulfilled not only by miracles, but also by the accuracy of its words. Who is this fruit of the womb, if not the one of whom it is said: Behold, the inheritance of the Lord are his sons, the reward is the fruit of the womb (Psalm 126:3)? That is, the sons are the inheritance of the Lord, who are the reward, the fruit of him who came forth from the womb of Mary. He himself is the fruit of the womb, the flower of the root, of which Isaiah prophesied well, saying: There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root (Isaiah 11:1); for the root is the family of the Jews, the rod is Mary, the flower is Christ of Mary: who, like the fruit of a good tree, now flourishes, now bears fruit in us by the progress of our virtue, now is restored by the resurrection of the body. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

25. He does not say this as if he were ignorant; for he knows the grace and operation of the Holy Spirit, that the mother of the Prophet is greeted by the mother of the Lord for the progress of her pledge of salvation: but he speaks as if he knows that this is not a merit of human nature, but a gift of divine grace, saying: Why is this granted to me? That is, what good has happened to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? I do not recognize my own worthiness. Why is this granted to me, by what righteousness, by what deeds, by what merits? These are uncommon duties for women: That the mother of my Lord should come to me. I feel a miracle, I understand a mystery: the mother of my Lord, pregnant by the Word, is full of God.

(Vers. 44, 45.)

(Verse 44, 45.) For behold, as soon as the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed.

26. You see that Mary did not hesitate, but believed; and therefore she obtained the fruit of faith. Blessed, he says, are you who believed. But blessed are you also, who have heard and believed; for whatever the soul believes, it conceives and gives birth to the Word of God, and recognizes His works. Let the soul of Mary be in each one of us, so that we may magnify the Lord. Let the spirit of Mary be in each one of us, so that we may rejoice in God. If according to the flesh she is the one mother of Christ, yet according to faith Christ is the fruit of all. Indeed, the soul receives the Word of God, but only if it is immaculate and free from vices, preserving chastity with unblemished modesty.

27. Therefore, whatever kind of soul she could have been, she magnifies the Lord, just as the soul of Mary magnified the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced in God her Savior. For the Lord is magnified, as it is written elsewhere in the law: Magnify the Lord with me (Psalm 33:44); not that anything can be added to the Lord by the human voice, but because he is magnified in us. For Christ is the image of God; and therefore, if the soul does anything just or religious, it magnifies that image of God, after whose likeness it was created. And thus, while she magnifies him, she becomes more sublime by a certain participation in his greatness; so that she appears to express that image of splendid colors of good deeds, and a certain emulation of virtue in herself. But the soul of Mary magnifies the Lord, and her spirit rejoices in God; because both her soul and spirit, devoted to the Father and the Son, with a pious affection, worship one God from whom all things, and one Lord through whom all things.

28. The better the person, the fuller the prophecy, follows Mary. It does not seem idle that Elizabeth prophesies before John and Mary before the generation of the Lord; for the beginnings of human salvation are already taking root. For just as sin began with women, so too are good things initiated by women; so that even women, laying aside feminine works, may renounce weakness and, like Mary who knows no error, imitate chastity with devoted zeal.

(Vers. 56.)

(Verse 56) But Mary stayed with her for three months, and then returned to her own home.

29. Holy Mary was well prepared, and performed her duty, and kept the mystical number. For it is not only because of familiarity that she stayed for a long time, but also because of the great progress of such a prophet. For if such great progress occurred at the first encounter, so that the infant in the womb leaped for joy at the greeting of Mary, and the mother of the child was filled with the Holy Spirit, how much presence do we think Holy Mary added with the use of such a long time? However, Mary stayed with her for three months. And so he was conceived, and like a good athlete, he was exercised in the womb of his mother, the prophet. For his power was being prepared for the struggle. Finally, Mary remained until Elizabeth's time of giving birth was complete. And if you carefully consider, you will find this nowhere except in the generation of the righteous. Finally, the days were fulfilled for Mary to give birth; the time was fulfilled for Elizabeth to give birth; the time of life was fulfilled when the holy men departed from this course of life. The righteous have fullness of life, but the days of the wicked are empty.

30. Therefore, Elizabeth gave birth to a son, and the neighbors rejoiced. The edition of the saints has the joy of many, because it is a common good; for justice is a common virtue. And therefore, in the birth of the just, a sign of future life is anticipated, and the grace of future virtue is prefigured by the exultation of the neighbors. But the time when the Prophet was in the womb is described beautifully; lest the presence of Mary be silent: but the time of infancy is kept silent, because the presence of the Lord is confirmed in the mother's womb, who knew not the impediments of infancy. And therefore in the Gospel we read nothing more about him except his birth, his oracle, the exultation in the womb, and the voice in the desert. For he did not experience any age of infancy, who, being placed in the womb of his mother above nature, above age, began from the measure of the perfect age of the fullness of Christ.

(Vers. 60, 64.)

(Verse 60, 64.) And his mother answered and said: No, but he shall be called John. And they said to her: There is no one of your kindred who is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying: John is his name. And they all marveled. And immediately his mouth was opened, and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God.

31. The holy Evangelist thought it necessary to be sent before, because many thought that the infant should be called by his father's name Zacharias; so that you may understand that it was not the name of any degenerate person that the mother disliked, but rather the name infused by the Holy Spirit which had been announced by the angel beforehand to Zacharias. And indeed, he, being mute, was unable to communicate the name of the son to his wife; but through the prophecy of Elizabeth, he learned what he had not learned from his husband: his name is John, she said, which means, we do not impose a name on him, who has already received a name from God. It has its own name which we have known, not chosen. The saints have this merit, that they receive their name from God. Thus Jacob is called Israel (Gen. XXXII, 28), because he saw God. Thus our Lord Jesus was named before he was born: not by an angel, but by the Father. For it will be revealed, he says, that my son Jesus will be with those who will rejoice with him, who have been left behind for four hundred years. And after these years, my son Christ Jesus will die. . . and the age shall be transformed (IV Esdras VII, 28-30). You see angels announcing what they have heard, not what they have invented. Do not be surprised if a woman declares a name she has not heard; when the Holy Spirit, who had been sent by the Angel, revealed it to her. The Lord could not ignore the prophesying that had foretold Christ.

32. And it is well added that no one in his kindred was called by this name; so that you may understand that the name is not of his lineage, but of the prophet. Zechariah is also questioned by a sign, but because his unbelief had taken away both speech and hearing, which he could not do with his voice, he spoke with his hand and in writing; for he wrote, saying: His name is John. And this name is not imposed, but foreshadowed: and rightly immediately his tongue was loosed; because while unbelief had bound it, faith unbound it. Let us also believe, so that we may speak, that our language, which is bound by the chains of unbelief, may be freed by the voice of reason. Let us write with the spirit of mystery, if we wish to speak: let us write the foretelling of Christ not on stone tablets, but on the tablets of our fleshly hearts. For whoever speaks of John, prophesies of Christ. Let us speak of John, let us speak of Christ, so that our own mouth may also be opened, which in the priest of such great irrational manner, held back the reins of wavering faith, like a bridle on a wandering horse.

(Vers. 67.)

(Verse 67.) And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying.

See how good God is, and how easy he is to forgive sins: he not only restores what has been taken away, but also grants unexpected favors. He, who was silent for a long time, now prophesies; for this is the greatest grace of God, that those who denied him now confess. Therefore, let no one doubt, let no one who is aware of their past sins despair of divine rewards. The Lord knows how to change his sentence, if you know how to amend your offense (On Penance, Distinction 1, Chapter The Lord knows).

(Vers. 76.)

(Verse 76.) And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High.

34. Beautifully, when he prophesied about the Lord, he turned his words to the prophets, in order to show that this is also a gift of the Lord; so that, when publicly enumerating his own blessings, he would not seem ungrateful for having remained silent about the blessings he had received, which he recognized in his son. But perhaps some may consider it an irrational excess of the mind that he speaks to an infant for eight days. But if we hold to the truth, we understand without a doubt that the child born could hear the voice of his father, who heard the greeting of Mary before he was born. The prophet knew that the other ears of the prophet, which are opened by the Spirit of God, not by the age of the body. He had the sense of understanding, which had the capacity for rejoicing.

35. At the same time, note how few things Elizabeth prophesied, compared to how many Zechariah prophesied; and both spoke under the influence of the Holy Spirit. But the practice is observed that a woman should strive to learn more about divine matters than to teach. We do not easily find anyone who prophesied more abundantly than the mother of the Lord. The very prophetess Mary, the sister of Aaron, quickly concluded the words of the song (Exod. XV: 20 and 21)! And when she spoke at length with her brother, she did not escape the punishment of her speech (Num. XII: 1 and following).

(Chap. II. — Vers. 1.)

Now it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be registered.

36. Concerning the birth of the Savior, we do not think it irrelevant to inquire into the time of His birth. For what does the secular profession have to do with the birth of the Lord, unless we also note that this too is a divine mystery? For while the secular profession is maintained, the spiritual is fulfilled, not to be spoken of as belonging to an earthly king, but to heaven. This profession is a profession of faith; for with the old census of the Synagogue abolished, a new census was being prepared for the Church, which would not exact tributes but take them away, and spiritually the people were already giving Christ names according to the pattern. Not here are the spaces of lands, but of minds and souls: nor are boundaries described, but extended: nor is any age distinguished, but all are included; for no one is exempt from this census, because every age is generous to Christ, whom wandering children confess with martyrdom, whom those placed within the womb bear witness to with exultation. In this census, nothing is to be feared as terrible, nothing as harsh, nothing as sad; only faith marks each individual. Do you think the censors hear the voice of Christ? They are ordered to judge without rods: to seek the people not with fear, but with grace: to hide the sword, not to possess gold (Matt. X, 9 and 10). With such censors the world is acquired.

Finally, so that you may know that the census does not belong to Augustus, but to Christ, the whole world is commanded to profess it. When Christ is born, everyone confesses; when the world comes to an end, everyone is in danger. Who, therefore, could demand the profession of the whole world except the one who held the authority over the whole world? For the earth does not belong to Augustus, but to the Lord, and all its fullness, the world and all those who dwell in it

(Psalm 24:1). Augustus did not rule, nor did he rule over the Armenians: Christ ruled. Indeed, they accepted the censor of Christ, who revealed the martyrs of Christ. And perhaps for this reason they conquer us, as they teach through their presence, because while they confessed him by offering their blood, the Arians posed a question of his nature to him.

(Vers. 2.)

(Verse 2.) 'This,' he said, 'is the first profession made.'

Moreover, many historical accounts speak of most parts of the world having already been described. This, therefore, is the first profession of the mind: one that all profess, because no one is exempt, not by a crier's summons, but by a prophet who predicted long ago: All people, applaud with your hands; shout for joy to God with cries of gladness, for the Lord is most high, awesome, the great king over all the earth (Psalm 47:2-3). Lastly, so that you may know the census of righteousness, Joseph and Mary come to him, that is, the righteous and the virgin: the one who would keep the Word, the one who would give birth. Where do the righteous and the virgin prophesy, unless where Christ is born? For every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God (1 John 4:2). But where does Christ, according to a higher reason, come into being, if not in your heart and in your breast? For the Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (Romans 10:8).

Moreover, it is beautiful that he also added the name of the governor in order to designate the sequence of time. He said, 'In the time of the governor of Syria, Quirinius, this first census took place.' So that it may seem as if the Evangelist assigned this book the name of a certain consul, for example. For if consuls are assigned to purchase records, how much more should the time of redemption of all be assigned? Therefore, you have everything that is usually found in contracts: the name of the one holding power, the date, the place, and the reason. Tests are also accustomed to be offered: Christ also used these for His birth and generation according to the flesh, who signed the Gospel, saying: You will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8)

(Vers. 6, 7.)

And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

40. Saint Luke briefly explained how, when, and where Christ was born according to the flesh. But if you inquire about His heavenly generation, read the Gospel of Saint John, who began in the celestial realm and descended to the earthly realm. There you will find information about when He was, how He was, what He was, what He did, what He was doing, where He was, where He came, how He came, when He came, and why He came. In the beginning, it says, there was the Word (John 1:1); you have when it was: And the Word was with God; you have how it was. You also have what it was: And God, it says, was the Word. What did it do: All things were made through Him (ibid., 3). What was it doing: It was the true light that enlightens every man coming into this world (ibid., 9). And where was it: It was in this world (ibid., 10). Where did it come: It came to its own (ibid., 11). How did he come, The Word was made flesh (ibid., 14). When he came, John bears witness about him, saying: This is the one of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks before me because he was before me (ibid., 30). The reason why he came, John himself testifies.

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (Ibid., 29). Therefore, if we know both of his genealogies, and the gift of each, and the cause for which he came, that by taking on himself the sins of the perishing world he might abolish the stain of sin and death in all, which he could not be conquered by: it follows that now also the holy evangelist Luke must teach us, and show us the ways of the Lord according to the growing flesh.

41. And no one should be moved by the fact that we have said that the infancy of John was passed over, but we assert that the infancy of Christ is described. For it is not for everyone to say, 'I have become weak to the weak, that I may gain the weak': 'I have become all things to all people' (1 Corinthians 9:22). Nor can it be said of anyone else in this way, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities' (Isaiah 53:5). Therefore, He was a little child, an infant, so that you, a man, may become perfect; He was wrapped in swaddling clothes, so that you may be freed from the snares of death; He was in a manger, so that you may be on the altar; He was on earth, so that you may be in heaven; He had no other place in that inn, so that you may have many mansions in heavenly seats. He, being rich, became poor for your sake, so that through His poverty, you may be enriched (II Cor. VIII, 9). Therefore, my poverty is my inheritance, and the weakness of the Lord is my strength. He chose to be needy so that he might abound in all things. My tears washed away the sins of that infant crying, and my tears cleansed those sins. Therefore, Lord Jesus, I owe more to your injuries for which I was redeemed than to my deeds for which I was created. It would have been of no use to be born unless it was profitable to be redeemed.

42. But no one should include the entirety of divinity within the confines of bodily form. The nature of the flesh is different from the glory of divinity. Because of you, there is weakness and power within itself; because of you, there is lack and abundance within itself. Do not judge based on what you see, but rather recognize what you have been redeemed for. You see it in rags, but it is in heaven and you cannot see it. You hear the cries of an infant, but you do not hear the mooing of the Lord recognizing his ox. For the ox has recognized its owner, and the donkey the manger of its Lord (Isaiah 1:3). Or rather, I should say the feeding trough, as the one translating has written; for there is no difference in word with me that is not also a difference in meaning. For if that orator of theirs (Demost. Orat. pro Ctesiph.) who follows the trappings of words denies that the fortunes of Greece are placed in this or that word; but he thinks the thing itself should be considered: if the philosophers themselves, those who spend their whole days in disputation, have made less use of Latin and accepted words; so that they would use their own: how much more should we neglect words, look at the mysteries, by which the cheapness of speech is overcome, because the wonders of divine works have shone forth, not adorned by any beautiful speeches, but by the light of their own truth? Finally, they fed that irrational donkey not with fake delicacies, but with the juice of natural nourishment in holy feeders.

43. This is the Lord, this is the manger in which the divine mystery is revealed to us: the irrational nations, living within the confines of the manger like cattle, feeding on the abundance of sacred nourishment. Therefore, the donkey, a species indeed, recognized the manger of her Lord and said: The Lord feeds me, and nothing shall be lacking (Psalm 22:2). Is God proven by mediocre signs, that angels minister, that the Magi adore, that the martyrs confess? He is poured forth from the womb, but shines from heaven; He lies in an earthly inn, but flourishes with heavenly light. The married woman gives birth, but the virgin conceives; The married woman conceives, but the virgin

brings forth. For the holy Matthew has taught us a profound mystery, which the holy Luke, because it had already been fully explained, thought it should be kept silent, believing himself to be rich enough if he claimed the manger of the Lord for himself among all others.

So, these Magi from the East, following for such a long distance that little one, whom you consider to be insignificant because you are unfaithful, come and worship, and call him king, and confess that he will rise again, offering gold, frankincense, and myrrh from their treasures (Matthew II, 1ff). What are these gifts of true faith? Gold for the king, frankincense for God, myrrh for the dead; for the insignia of a king are one thing, for a divine sacrifice are another, for an honor in burial that does not corrupt the body of the deceased but preserves it are another. Furthermore, let us also, brothers, present such gifts from our treasures that we hear and read about: For we have a treasure in earthen vessels (2 Corinthians 4:7). Therefore, if you should not assess yourself based on what you are, but on Christ, how much more should you not assess yourself based on Christ, but on Christ.

45. Therefore the Magi offer gifts from their treasures. Do you want to know how great their merit is? They appear as a star: and where Herod is, they do not appear: where Christ is, they appear again, and show the way. Therefore this star is the way, and Christ is the way; because according to the mystery of the Incarnation Christ is the star: For a star shall rise out of Jacob, and a man shall rise out of Israel (Numbers 24:17). In conclusion, where Christ is, there is also the star; for He Himself is a bright and morning star. Therefore, he himself marks himself with his own light.

46. Take another example. The Magi came by one way, and returned by another; for those who had seen Christ had understood Him, and were better than when they came. There are indeed two ways: one leads to destruction, the other leads to the kingdom. The former is the way of sinners, which leads to Herod; the latter is the way of Christ, which leads back to the homeland; for here is a temporary sojourn, as it is written: My soul has been much a sojourner (Psalm 119:6). Therefore, let us beware of Herod, the earthly ruler for a time, so that we may obtain the eternal dwelling of our heavenly homeland.

47. Not only have these rewards been offered to the chosen ones, but also to everyone; because all things, and in all things Christ (Colossians 3:11). For you see that Abraham believed God not in vain, either among the Chaldeans, who are considered more skilled in numbers, or among the magi, who, although they dedicate themselves to the study of reconciling divinity through magical arts, believed in the birth of the Lord on earth; not, I say, in vain, but so that a testimony of the holy religion could be derived from opposing nations and an example of divine fear.

48. But who are these Magi, if not those who, as a certain history teaches, are descended from Balaam, from whom it was prophesied: A star shall come forth from Jacob? Therefore, these are no less heirs of faith than of succession. He saw the star in the spirit, they saw with their eyes and believed. They saw a new star, which had not been seen by any creature in the world. They saw a new creature, and not only on earth, but also in heaven, they sought the grace of the new man, as Moses prophetically stated: A star shall come forth from Jacob, and a man shall rise up from Israel. And they recognized this to be the star, which signifies man and God. They adored the child; certainly they would not have adored if they had believed only in the child. The wise man therefore understands his own arts to cease, do you not understand your gifts have come? He acknowledges another, do you not recognize the promise? He believes against himself, do you not

think you should have faith in yourself?

49. Therefore, the magi announce the birth of the king: Herod is disturbed, he gathers the scribes and chief priests, and he asks where Christ is to be born. The magi only announce the king: Herod seeks Christ. Therefore, he confesses the king about whom he asks. Then, when it is asked where he is to be born, it is certainly shown that it has been foretold; for he could not be asked, who had not been announced. Oh foolish Jews, you do not believe that he has come, whom you see: you do not believe that he has come, whom you say is to come! He says, 'Tell me, so that I may come and worship the child' (Matt. 2:8). Indeed, Herod plots, but he does not deny God, whom he mentions to be adored. Then he orders the killing of the infants (ibid., 16). To whom else but God was such a victim owed? Though lacking in understanding, infancy confesses the God for whom it is destroyed. These few things we have offered from Matthew, so that it may be clear that the time of infancy was not devoid of divine works. But if the age of the flesh was idle in work, surely God was the one who exercised the age of the flesh in divine works: who also made the shepherds in that region stay awake, keeping watch over their flock at night.

See the beginning of the rising Church: Christ is born, and the shepherds have begun to watch, who gather the flocks of the nations, living like sheep in the court of the Lord, so that they may not suffer attacks from spiritual beasts in the dark shadows of the night. And the shepherds watch well, whom the good shepherd instructs. Therefore, the flock is the people, the night is the world, and the shepherds are the priests. Or perhaps also: let him be a shepherd, to whom it is said: Be watchful, and strengthen (Rev. 3:2); because the Lord has not only ordained bishops to protect the flock, but has also appointed angels.

(Vers. 9.)

(Verse 9) Behold, the angel of the Lord stood before them.

See how divine providence strengthens faith: the angel instructs Mary, the angel instructs Joseph, the angel instructs the shepherds. It is not enough to send once; for every word stands on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

(Vers. 13, 14.)

(Verse 13, 14.) And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

52. The army of angels is rightly called, who followed the leader of the army. To whom, then, should the angels give praise, if not to their Lord, as it is written: Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the highest. Praise him, all his angels (Psalm 148:1-2)? Thus, the prophecy is fulfilled. The Lord is praised from the heavens, and he appears on earth. Concerning whom, Saint Mark says that He was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered to Him (Mark 1:13); so that in the one you may recognize the sign of mercy, and in the other the manifestation of divine power. What you suffer belongs to you, what is preached by angels belongs to them. And they say:

(Vers. 15, 16.)

(Verses 15, 16.) Let us go to Bethlehem and see this Word that has been fulfilled, as the Lord has shown us. And they came quickly.

53. You see the shepherds hasten; for no one seeks Christ with laziness. You see the shepherds believed the angel: and you, believe in the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, the angels, the prophets, and the apostles. See how carefully the Scripture assigns importance to the words of each: They hasten, it says, to see the Word. For when the flesh of the Lord is seen, the Word is seen, which is the Son. Let this be no small example of faith for you, nor a lowly profession for the shepherds. Certainly, the more esteemed for prudence, the more precious for faith. The Lord did not seek out crowds of wise men in the gymnasiums, but rather the simple people, who had heard about adorning themselves with trinkets but did not know how to apply makeup. Simplicity is sought after, not ambition. And do not think that the words of the prophets are to be despised as worthless: even Mary gathers faith from the shepherds; through the shepherds, the people are gathered together in reverence for God; for they were amazed by what the shepherds said about them.

(Vers. 19.)

(Verse 19). But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.

54. Let us learn from the Holy Virgin in all things chastity, who was as modest in speech as in body, and who argued for the truths of faith in her heart. If Mary learns from the shepherds, why do you refuse to learn from the priests? If Mary remains silent before the apostolic precepts, why do you desire to teach rather than to learn after the apostolic precepts? Learn that vice is a characteristic of the person, not the gender; for gender is holy. Finally, Mary did not receive the commandment, but she set an example.

55. Therefore, the boy is circumcised. Who is that boy, if not the one of whom it is said: A child is born to us, a son is given to us (Isa. IX, 6)? For he became under the Law, in order to benefit those who were under the Law.

56. However, it is situated in Jerusalem. What it means to be positioned in Jerusalem for the Lord, I would say, if I had not already spoken about it in the commentaries of Isaiah. For he who is circumcised of sins was judged worthy by the Lord's gaze; for the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous (Psalm 33:16). You see that the entire series of the old law was a type of things to come; for even circumcision signifies the cleansing of sins. But since human weakness is entangled in inextricable vices with a certain inclination to sin, the future purification of the entire guilt was prefigured by the age of the eighth day of circumcision; for this is what was said: 'Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord' (Exodus 13:2); for in the words of the Law, the birth of the Virgin was promised. And truly holy, because immaculate. Indeed, the very one who is marked by the Law, the words repeated by the Angel declare: For what will be born, he says, will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). For he did not reveal the secret of the virgin's womb to a man's seed: but the immaculate seed was poured into the inviolable womb by the Holy Spirit. For only the Lord Jesus, who is holy in all things conceived of a woman, did not experience the corruption of earthly contamination, and he expelled it with heavenly majesty.

57. For if we follow the letter, how does it not escape notice that every male saint, although he might have been most wicked, is considered holy? Was Ahab holy? Were the false prophets who, at Elijah's prayers, the avenger of heavenly injury, were consumed by fire, holy? But he was holy, by whom the precepts of the divine law were marked as a figure of a future mystery, because he

alone, by whom the genital secret of the Holy Church's virgin was opened for the purpose of producing the people of God of Immaculate Fertility. Therefore, He alone opened His own womb. It is not surprising; for He who had said to the prophet, 'Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; and before you were born, I sanctified you' (Jeremiah 1:5). Therefore, He who sanctified another's womb, so that a prophet would be born, is the one who opened His mother's womb; that He might come forth immaculate.

(Vers. 25.)

(Verse 25) And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. And this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.

58. Not only from angels and prophets, from pastors and parents, but also from elders and the righteous, the generation of the Lord receives testimony. Every age, and both sexes, and the miracles of events confirm faith. A virgin gives birth, a barren woman bears, a mute speaks, Elizabeth prophesies, a wise man worships, a closed womb rejoices, a widow confesses, a righteous person waits. And truly righteous, who sought not his own, but the grace of the people: desiring to be freed himself from the bonds of bodily frailty, but awaiting to see the promised one; for he knew that blessed are the eyes that saw him.

(Vers. 29.)

(Verse 29.) Now, he said, dismiss your servant.

59. See the just one enclosed like in the prison of a bodily mass wanting to be dissolved, so that he may begin to be with Christ; for to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, is much better. But whoever wants to be dismissed, let him come to the temple, let him come to Jerusalem, let him wait for the Christ of the Lord, let him receive in his hands the Word of God, let him embrace with certain arms of his faith. Then he will be dismissed, so that he may not see death, who has seen life.

You see mercy poured out by the Lord's generation on all, and prophecy denied to unbelievers, not to the righteous. Behold, even Simeon prophesied that the Lord Jesus Christ has come for the ruin and resurrection of many, in order to discern the merits of the righteous and the wicked, and as a true and just judge, to either decree punishment or rewards according to the quality of our deeds.

(Vers. 35.)

(Verse 35.) And, he said, a sword will pierce your own soul as well.

61. Neither letter nor history teaches that Mary passed from this life by the bodily suffering of death; for it was not the soul, but the body, that was pierced by the material sword. And therefore, the prudence of Mary shows her to be not unaware of the heavenly mystery. For the living word of God, and sharp and piercing with every sharpest sword, penetrates even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and searches the thoughts and secret intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12); for all things are naked and open to the Son of God, to whom the secrets of consciences do not deceive.

62. Therefore Simeon prophetized, the Virgin had prophesied, the one united in marriage had prophesied, and so too should the widow; so that neither the profession nor the sex may be lacking. And for this reason Anna is introduced with both the wages of widowhood and the character of such; so that she may be truly believed to have been worthy to announce the redeemer of all. Since we have described her merits elsewhere, when we exhorted widows, in this place as we hasten to other matters, we do not think it necessary to repeat. However, she spent eighty-four years of widowhood not idly; because both seven decades and two forties seem to represent a sacred number.

(Vers. 42.)

(Verse 42.) And when those twelve years had passed.

63. In the twelfth year, as we read, the beginning of the Lord's discussion is taken; for here the number of evangelizers who were to preach the faith was owed. Nor is it unimportant that, mindful of his earthly parents, who were certainly filled with the wisdom and grace of God according to the flesh, he is found in the temple after three days; so that he might provide evidence that after three days of his triumphant passion on the heavenly throne, and with divine honor, he would offer himself as resurrected for our faith, who was believed to be dead.

(Vers. 49.)

(Verse 49.) What is it that you were seeking from me? Did you not know that I must be in my father's own house?

There are two generations in Christ: one is paternal, the other maternal. The paternal one is more divine, while the maternal one descends into our labor and use. And therefore, what is done above nature, above age, above custom, should not be attributed to human virtues, but should be referred to divine powers. Elsewhere, the mother impels him to a mystery; here the mother is accused because he still requires what is human. But when she is described here as twelve years old, there she is taught to have disciples; you see the mother having learned from the Son, in order to demand from the stronger one the mystery, which she marveled at in the younger one.

(Vers. 51.)

(Verse 51.) And he came to Nazareth, and he was subject to them.

65. For what teacher of virtue would not fulfill the duty of piety? And we wonder if he defers to the Father, who submits to the mother? This subjection is not one of weakness, but of piety; even if a serpent, released from its savage hiding places, raises its deceitful head and spews venom from its chest. When he says he was sent as the Son (John 8:29), he calls the Father greater; in order to say that the Son is imperfect, who is able to have someone greater; in order to assert that he is in need of others' help, does he also need human assistance; in order to serve under the authority of a mother? He showed deference to a man, he showed deference to a maidservant (for she herself says: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord'), he showed deference to a pretending father: and do you wonder if he showed deference to God? Is it devotion to show deference to a man, weakness to show deference to God? Consider from human things what is due to divine, and recognize what love is owed to a father. The Father honors the Son, do you not want the Son to honor the Father? The Father declares, in the voice of heaven, that he is pleased with the Son, do

you not want the Son, clothed in the garment of human flesh, speaking with a human voice and human affection, to say that the Father is greater? For if the Lord is great and exceedingly praiseworthy, and His greatness has no end (Psalm 164:3), certainly a greatness that has no end does not have any increase. But why should I not receive with reverent ears the Son obedient to the Father in taking on a body, when I reverently receive the Father deferent to the Son?

66. Rather learn the teachings of your own benefit, and recognize the examples of piety. Learn what you owe to your parents, since you read that the Father and the Son do not differ in will, work, or time, although they are two in person and one in power. And certainly that heavenly Father has not experienced the labor of childbirth: you owe your mother the injury of modesty, the loss of virginity, the danger of childbirth, the long sufferings of a mother, the long trials of a mother, to whom in the very fruits of her desires there is even greater danger: and when she has brought forth what she wished, she is delivered from childbirth, not from fear. Why should I speak to anxious fathers about the progress of their sons and the multiplied resources for others, and the seeds of the farmer that will benefit future generations? Shouldn't at least some gratitude be repaid for these services? Why does the impious father's life seem longer and the community's inheritance seem narrower, when Christ does not reject coheirs?

(Chap. III. — Vers. 2.)

(Chapter 3, Verse 2) The word of the Lord came to John, son of Zechariah, in the wilderness.

67. The Son of God, about to gather the Church, works beforehand in a servant. And for this reason, the holy Luke rightly said that the word of the Lord came upon John, the son of Zechariah, in the desert, so that the Church did not begin from man, but from the Word. For she herself is the desert, because she is more fruitful than the one who has a husband (Isaiah 54:1). Finally, she is called: Rejoice, O barren one (Ibid.), and Exult, O desert (Isaiah 52:9), because she was not yet cultivated by the labors of any gathered people, nor did those trees, which were unable to bear fruit, yet bear the pinnacle of their merits. He had not yet come who would say: 'But I am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of the Lord' (Psalm 51:10). The heavenly vine did not yet supply fruit from its branches, through the transmission of certain words. And so, the word came to pass, that which was previously barren produced fruit for us on the earth. The word came to pass, and the voice followed; for the word operates within first, and the function of the voice follows. Hence, David also says: 'I believed, therefore I spoke' (Psalm 116:10). He believed first, so that he could speak.

Now it came to pass, as the word went out, that John the Baptist was preaching repentance. And for this reason, many consider John the Baptist to be a foreshadowing of the Law; for while the Law could denounce sin, it could not grant forgiveness. For the Law turns those who follow the ways of the Gentiles away from error and restrains them from crime; it exhorts them to repentance, that they may obtain grace. But the Law and the Prophets were until John (Luke 16:16): John, however, was the precursor of Christ. So the Law is a foreshadowing of both the Church and of grace in the Sacrament of Penance. Thus, Saint Luke makes use of brevity in order to declare John as a prophet, saying that the word of the Lord had come upon him: he would not add anything else; for he who abounds in the word of God has no need of his own testimony. He said one thing, and declared everything.

69. However, Saint Matthew and Mark wished to declare the Prophet by clothing, belt, and food; because he had clothing made of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey (Matth. III, 4; Marc. I, 6). For the precursor of Christ would not allow the impure remnants of beasts to perish: also indicating by the very sign of clothing that Christ would come, who, receiving the sins of unclean gentility, adorned with bestiality and filth for the deformity of our merits, would strip oneself of the garment of our flesh in that trophy of the cross. But what does the wearing of a leather belt signify, except that the flesh which used to weigh down the mind before the coming of the Lord, now, after his coming, has become not an obstacle but a belt? Just as it is written of David: 'On the willows . . . we hung up our harps' (Psalm 136:2); and as it is written of the Apostle: 'We have no confidence in the flesh, but we have confidence in the Spirit' (Philippians 3:3). We have no confidence in pleasures, but we have confidence in passions; that is, let fervent love burn in our spirit, and let us be prepared for the performance of every heavenly command, with the devotion of our mind and the readiness of our body.

71. Food is also the prophetic indicator of duty and the messenger of mystery. For what could be more idle as a human duty than to seek locusts, and what could be more full as a prophet's mystery? For the more useless they are for fruit, the more inactive for use, the more fleeting to touch, the more erratic in their movements, the more shrill in their sound, locusts are all the more fittingly applied to the people's Gentile figure, who without any fruit of their labor, without any benefit from their work, without seriousness, without a voice, would emit the sound of complaint and be ignorant of the word of life. Therefore, this people is the food of the prophets; for the larger the number of the people gathered, the more abundant is the use of the prophetic mouth. The grace of the Church is also prefigured in wild honey, not found in the hive of the Jewish people's law, but diffused in the fields and leaves of the forest of the Gentiles, as it is written: We found it in the fields of the forest (Psalm 131, 6).

72. And indeed here the wild honey was eaten, announcing that the people were to be saturated with honey from the rock, as it is written: And he filled them with honey out of the rock (Psalm 80:17). Likewise, the ravens fed the prophet Elijah with food brought from afar and with profitable drink in the wilderness, in order to show that the nations, once disgusting and squalid in the color of their sins, who used to seek their food beforehand from foul corpses, would now provide imported nourishment to the prophets. For the food of the prophets is the effect of divine will, as the Lord himself declared, saying: My food is to do the will of him who sent me (John 4:34).

(Vers. 4.)

A voice crying out in the wilderness.

73. The voice of John the Baptist is well spoken of. For when John himself was asked, 'What do you say about yourself?' he replied, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness' (John 1:22-23). And therefore he said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me, because he was before me' (Ibid., 30); for the voice precedes the inferior, but the Word follows, which excels. Therefore he also wanted to be baptized by John, because in men the Word is consecrated by the voice of the teacher. Therefore perhaps Zacharias received the voice, because he spoke with a voice.'

(Vers. 7, 8.)

(Vers. 7, 8.) Generation of vipers, who has shown you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance. And do not begin to say, 'Our father is Abraham.' But I tell you, that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones.

Indeed, the malice of the Jews seems to be blamed because, with the various poisonous venom of their harmful minds, they engage in serpentine deceptions and earthly dwellings, rather than seeking any divine mystery of knowledge. But when it is said, 'Who has shown you to flee from the coming wrath?', it is shown that they have been infused with the mercy of God's wisdom, so that they may bear the repentance of their sins, fearing the future terror of judgment with providential devotion. Therefore, the comparison of vipers is to be referred to generation, not succession. But perhaps they show natural prudence, who see what is profitable and ask for it willingly, but still do not leave what is harmful. And therefore they are reminded to lay claim to the clarity of their work rather than the nobility of their lineage; for there is no prerogative in succession, unless inheritance is guaranteed by faith, which God's will revealed in prophetic speech to be transferred to the gentile peoples, saying: God is able to raise up children of Abraham from these stones. For although God can transform and change different natures, yet because to me mystery is more beneficial than miracle, in the prediction of Christ I should recognize nothing more than the edification of the rising Church; which, built not with rocky stones but with living stones, has risen as a dwelling place of God and the pinnacle of the temple through the conversion of our souls. For indeed God was preparing to soften the hardness of our minds and to stir up the worshippers of religion by means of stumbling blocks. For what else were they considered but stones, who served stones, similar indeed to those who made them? Therefore, it is prophesied that faith is to be poured into the stony hearts of the Gentiles, and the oracles promise future sons of Abraham through faith, to whom a certain insensible, irrational use of a stony mind had become ingrained. For if he compared men, firm in faith, strengthened by living stones, with the strength of the apostolic teaching, as it is written: 'And you as living stones are built up into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices' (1 Peter 2:5), here men seem to be compared more exaltedly with prophetic voice to stones, who had lost the sense of the human mind to such an extent that while they think some divine reason is present in stones, they themselves are transformed not by the use of the body but by the condition of the mind into the nature of stones. Finally, flowing from the succession of Abraham according to the flesh and being called the princes of Sodom (Isaiah 1:10), and being whitewashed tombs (Matthew 23:27), in this way, their likeness claims more of a privilege of character than the order of their ancestors (Acts 23:3). Moreover, in order for you to know that humans are compared to stones, the Prophet also compares humans to trees, subjecting them.

(Vers. 9.)

(Verse 9.) For now the axe is laid at the root of the trees.

76. However, the reason for this change is as follows: through this process of comparison, it is understood that a certain person has become more compassionate. For those who were previously deformed for use, naked for ornament, sterile for fruit, irrational for progress, are now being formed into the shape of trees, which, by a certain rational gift of nature, are beautiful for use, delightful to behold, bountiful in fruit, rising with their tops, spreading with their branches, filled with fruit, and clothed with leaves. And if only we could imitate the use of fruitful trees, and as our

merits grow, being founded on the long-rooted humility, let us raise ourselves from the ground to the heights, adorned with the appearance of fruitful works; lest the Gospel axe of the farmer cut off the wild root. Woe is me, if I do not evangelize (I Cor. IX, 16). But that voice is apostolic. Woe is me, if I do not mourn sins, woe is me, if I do not rise in the middle of the night to confess to you; woe is me, if I deceive my neighbor; woe is me, if I do not speak the truth. The axe is laid at the root, let it bear fruit, it who can receive grace, who owes penance. The Lord is present, seeking fruit, to make the fruitful alive, to rebuke the barren. Three years have passed since it came, and it could not find fruit among the Jews: may it find it in us. He will command the unfruitful to be cut down, lest they occupy the land. But the one who still does not have fruit, let him strive to bring it forth in the future. That good tiller of the field may intercede for us the unfruitful, the fruitless; that space may be given, patience may be deferred; lest perhaps we too may be able to bear some fruit for God.

77. Saint John the Baptist assigns to each kind of people a suitable answer, one for all (Dist. 86, cap. In singulis): thus to tax collectors, not to demand more than prescribed; to soldiers, not to commit calumny, not to seek plunder; teaching therefore the established pay of the military; lest while expenses are sought, the plunderer may thrive. But these and other precepts of duties are specific to each person: mercy is a common practice, therefore a common precept; necessary for all duties, for all ages, and to be carried out by all. Neither the tax collector, nor the soldier, nor the farmer or city-dweller, rich or poor, all are admonished together, to contribute to the one in need. For mercy is the fullness of virtues. And therefore, the perfect form of virtue is proposed to all; that they may not spare their clothes and food. However, the measure of mercy itself is preserved according to the possibility of human condition; so that each one does not take away everything for themselves: but shares what they have with the poor.

(Vers. 15, 16.)

(Verse 15, 16.) But while the people were in expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying: 'I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'

78. Therefore John saw the hidden things of the heart. But let us consider whose grace this is. However, just as the hidden things of the heart are made known to the prophets, Paul shows, saying: The hidden things of his heart will also become manifest: and falling on his face, he will adore God, pronouncing that truly God is among you (I Cor. XIV, 25). Therefore, it is the gift of God that reveals, not the power of man, who is aided more by divine grace than by natural insight. But what profit is there in this Jewish thinking, unless it be proven that Christ came according to the Scriptures? For he was the one who was expected; and certainly the one who was expected, not the one who was not expected, has come. But what could be more foolish than that the one who is esteemed in another is not believed to exist in himself? They thought he would come through a woman, but they do not believe that he came through a virgin. What more worthy generation is there for God according to the flesh than for the immaculate Son of God to preserve the purity of his immaculate generation even in assuming a body? And certainly the sign of the divine advent is established in the birth of a virgin, not in a married woman.

79. 'I baptize you with water,' he says, 'but he who works with a visible office has proven not to be Christ.' For as man subsists from two natures, that is, from a soul and a body, the visible mystery is consecrated through visible things, and the invisible mystery through invisible things. For the body is washed by water, and the sins of the soul are cleansed by the spirit. We do one thing, we call upon another; yet also in the very font, the sanctification of the divinity aspires. For not every washing is with water, but these cannot be divided from one another, and therefore the baptism of repentance was one thing, the baptism of grace another. Both of these things, from both [of us]; because since the sins of the mind and body are common, the purification also ought to be common. And well did Saint John understand and indicate what they were thinking in their hearts, and as if he did not understand, declining the envy of majesty, he declared not by word, but by deed, that he was not Christ. For the work of man is to bear the repentance of sins; the gift of God is to fulfill the grace of the mystery. But he came stronger than me.

80. He did not make a comparison so as to declare himself stronger than Christ (for there could be no comparison between the Son of God and a man), but because there are many who are strong; for even the devil is strong: 'No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man' (Mark 3:27). Therefore, there are many who are strong, but no one stronger than Christ. In fact, he did not make the comparison to the point of adding: 'I am not worthy to carry his sandals,' revealing the grace of the Gospel conferred on the apostles, who are shod with the Gospel.

However, it seems that for this reason he is saying this, because John often took on the role of the Jewish people. Hence, they refer to this when he says: 'He must increase, but I must decrease' (John 3:30), which means that the Jewish people should become smaller and the Christian people should grow in Christ. Ultimately, Moses also took on the role of the people, but he did not wear the Lord's footwear, but his own. And these people may be wearing shoes that are not their own, but he is commanded to take off the footwear of his own feet (Exodus 3:5), so that the steps and thoughts of his mind, freed from bodily ties, may walk the spiritual path. But the apostles had laid aside their sandals, when they were sent out without sandals, without staff, without bag, without belt; but they did not immediately carry the Lord's sandals. Perhaps they began to carry them after the resurrection; for before, they were forbidden to tell anyone about the Lord's deeds. Lastly, it is said afterwards: Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel (Mark 16:15); so that, carrying the mark of the Gospel proclamation, they may spread throughout the world the whole series of deeds performed by the Lord. Therefore, the nuptial shoes are a preaching of the Gospel. But we will explain something more opportune about this in other places (Inf. cap. X).

(Vers. 17.)

(Verse 17) He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire: having his winnowing fork in his hand, he will clear his threshing floor and gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

82. Having a fan in hand. The Lord is declared to have the right of distinguishing merits by the indication of the fan; because while the wheat is winnowed in the threshing floor, the full grains, fruitful as if by a certain breath of air, are separated from the empty ones. Therefore, by this comparison, it is shown that the Lord on the day of judgment will distinguish solid merits and the fruits of virtue from empty boasting and the unfruitfulness of deeds; he will place men of higher

merit in the celestial dwelling. For he himself is a more perfect fruit, who has deserved to be conformed to him, who like a grain of wheat fell, so as to bring forth many fruits in us, despised by the chaff, not friendly to empty merits. And therefore, before him a fire will burn, not harmful by its own nature; as, one who burns up the evils of wickedness, accumulates the splendor of goodness.

(Vers. 21, 22.)

(Verse 21, 22.) And it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Therefore, the Lord was baptized not because He desired to be cleansed, but to cleanse the waters; so that those who were washed by the flesh of Christ, which did not know sin, might have the right of baptism. And therefore, whoever comes to the washing of Christ, lays aside sins. However, in those things which have been said by others, the holy evangelist Luke has taken a summary, and it is more to be understood that the Lord was baptized by John, than he explicitly states. But the reason for the Lord's baptism, the Lord Himself declares, saying: Permit it just now; for thus it is proper for us to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15).

84. Therefore, since God has granted such great favor for the building of His Church, that the Son of God, after the patriarchs, prophets, and angels, would descend and come to the baptismal font, do we not truly and divinely know the saying about the Church: Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain (Psalm 127:1)? It is not surprising if a man cannot build, who cannot guard: Unless the Lord guards the city, those who guard it stay awake in vain (ibid.). This is about a certain psalm. However, I dare to say that a person cannot embark on a journey unless they have the Lord going before them. Hence it is written: After the Lord your God you shall walk (Deuteronomy XIII, 4); and, The ways of a man are directed by the Lord (Proverbs XX, 24). Finally, that person is more perfect who understands that they cannot walk without the Lord: Teach me your ways, he says (Psalm XXIV, 4). And to come to the historical account (for we should not only draw from a mere recital of events, but also refer our actions for emulating the writers), the people went forth from Egypt, not knowing the way that would lead to the holy land. God sent a pillar of fire by night so that the people could find their way. He also sent a pillar of cloud by day so that they would not turn to the left or to the right. But you are not such a person, deserving of a pillar of fire. You do not have Moses, nor do you receive a sign. Now, after the coming of the Lord, faith is required, and signs are hidden. Fear God and rely on the Lord, for the Lord sends His angels to surround those who fear Him and He will protect them. You see, therefore, that the power of the Lord cooperates with human endeavors everywhere; so that no one can build without the Lord, no one can guard without the Lord, no one can begin anything without the Lord (Confessions of Saint Augustine, Book of Grace of Christ, Chapter 44). And for this reason, according to the Apostle: Whether you eat or drink or do anything else, do all for the glory of God, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 10:31). In two other letters: elsewhere in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17); elsewhere he commanded you to do all for the glory of God; so that you may know that the Father and the Son have the same glory and the same power: and they do not differ in any way regarding their divinity, just as they do not differ in the protection they provide for us. Therefore, David taught me that no one builds a house without the Lord, and guards the city

(Psalm 126:1).

85. Moses also taught me that no one but God made the world: In the beginning God created heaven and earth (Gen. I, 1). He also taught that God made man by his own work; and he did not do it in vain: God formed man from the dust of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life (Gen. II, 7); so that you may observe in the act of God some kind of bodily operation with regard to the building of man. He also taught that God made woman: For God sent a deep sleep upon Adam, and when he was asleep, he took one of his ribs, and filled it with flesh: and the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman (Ibid., 21 and 22). Not in vain, as I have said, does Moses introduce God working with certain physical hands around Adam and Eve. God commanded the world to be made, and it was made, and the Scripture indicates that the work of the world was completed with one word: man is approached, and the Prophet of God himself has endeavored to show you the very hands of God laboring.

86. Moreover, I do not understand anything in these writings, than that the works of God compel me to read. The Apostle comes to my aid and reveals what I did not understand: 'Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man' (Genesis, 23). He proclaims to me with the divine spirit, saying: 'This is a great mystery' (Ephesians 5:32). What is this mystery? It is that the two shall become one flesh; and 'a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife' (Ephesians 5:31); and 'we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones' (Ephesians 5:30). Who is that man for whom a woman leaves her parents? The Church, which is gathered from the peoples of the Gentiles, leaves her parents, to whom it is prophetically said: Forget your people and your father's house (Psalm 44:11). For which man, unless perhaps him of whom John says: After me comes a man who has been made before me (John 1:27)? From whose side, while he was sleeping, God took a rib; for he is the one who slept, and rested, and rose again; for the Lord has received him. What is this side unless it is virtue? For then, when the soldier pierced his side, immediately water and blood came out, which were poured out for the life of the world (John 19:34). This life of the world is the side of Christ: this side is the second Adam. For the first Adam became a living soul, the last Adam became a life-giving spirit: the last Adam is Christ, and the side of Christ is the life of the Church. Therefore, we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. And perhaps this is the rib of which it is said: I feel virtue going out from me (Luke 8:46). This is the rib that came out of Christ, nor did it diminish his body; for it is not a bodily rib but a spiritual one; and the spirit itself is not divided, but it divides to each one as it wills. This is the mother of all the living, Eve. For if you understand that the living seek among the dead, you understand that those who are without Christ are dead, who are not partakers of life; for indeed not to be partakers of Christ is not to be partakers of life, since Christ is life. Therefore, the mother of the living is the Church, which God built on the very high corner stone of Christ Jesus, in whom the entire structure, being fit together, grows into a temple of God.

87. Therefore let God come, let him build a woman, indeed an assistant to Adam, but truly of Christ. Not because Christ requires assistance, but because we seek and desire to come to the grace of Christ through the Church. And now it is being built, and now it is being formed, and now the woman is being fashioned, and now she is being created. And therefore the Scripture has used a new word; because we are being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20). And now a spiritual house rises up in the holy priesthood. Come, Lord God,

build this woman, build the city; let your servant come, for I believe when you say: He himself will build the city for me (Isaiah 45:13).

88. Behold the mother of all, behold the spiritual home, behold the city that will live forever; for it knows not death. For she is the city of Jerusalem, which now appears on earth, but will be taken up above Elijah; for Elijah was alone. She will be carried over Enoch, whose death is not found. For he was taken away, lest his heart be changed by wickedness: but she is loved by Christ as a glorious, holy, unblemished bride. And how much better it is for the whole body to be assumed, than for one to be assumed? For this is the hope of the Church. It will surely be taken up, assumed, and transferred to heaven. Behold, Elias was taken up in a fiery chariot: so too will the Church be taken up. Do you not believe me? Believe even Paul, in whom Christ spoke: We shall be caught up, he says, in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord (I Thes. IV, 16).

89. Therefore, many are sent to build this, patriarchs are sent, prophets are sent, Gabriel the archangel is sent, innumerable angels are directed, and the multitude of the heavenly host praises God; because the building of this city is approaching. Many are sent to it, but Christ alone builds it, but he is not alone; for the Father is present. And if he builds alone, he does not however alone take advantage of the grace of such a building. It is written about the temple, which Solomon built, in which there was a representation of the Church, because there were seventy thousand who carried burdens on their shoulders, and eighty thousand stonecutters, and three thousand six hundred overseers of the work (2 Chronicles 2:2). Let those angels come, let those stonecutters come, let the excess stones of ours be cut, let the rough ones be smoothed. Let those who carry burdens also come; for it is written: They will be carried on shoulders (Isaiah 49:22).

90. So he came to John, because you have learned the rest. He came to John's baptism: but John's baptism was for the repentance of sins (Matt. III, 13). And therefore John prohibits him, saying: I should be baptized by you, and you come to me (Ibid., 14)? Why do you come to me, who has no sin? For he who is to be baptized by me is the one who has sin: but why does someone who has not committed sin seek the washing of repentance? Without delay, he said, it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness while the Church is being built. What is righteousness, if not mercy? For he scattered, he gave to the poor; his righteousness endures forever. He gave to me, a poor man, he showed me kindness that I did not have before. Therefore, his righteousness endures forever. What is righteousness, if not that you begin by doing what you want others to do, and urge others by your example? What is justice, if not that he who assumed flesh would not exclude the sense or ministry of flesh as if he were God, but rather that as a man he would conquer the flesh, so as to teach me how to conquer myself? For he has taught me by what means I am able to bury the filth of the flesh, which is weighed down by earthly vices, with my sins, and to renew it with virtues.

91. Oh, truly divine providence in humility itself! For the lower the humility, the more divine the providence. God reveals Himself in the bitterness of His injuries, and He proves Himself through the use of His remedies, even though He needs no remedies. For what is more divine than to call upon the people so that no one shall refuse the bath of grace, when Christ Himself did not refuse the bath of repentance? Let no one say that he is free from sin, when Christ came as a remedy for sins. If Christ washed for us, rather he washed us in his body, how much more should we wash

away our own sins? Therefore, by what work, by what mystery does God prove this more than by this (although God is in all things); when throughout the whole world, where the condition of the human race is spread, through the divisions and regions of separation, in one moment, in one body, God abolished the deceit of the ancient error and poured out the grace of the heavenly kingdom. For one person plunged, but he lifted up everyone: one person descended, so that we all might ascend, one person took on the sins of all, so that in him all sins might die. Therefore, purify yourselves, as the apostle says (James, IV, 8), because he purified himself for us, who had no need of purification. This is about us.

92. Now let us consider the mystery of the Trinity. We say there is one God, but we confess the Father and the Son as God. For it is written: You shall love the Lord your God and serve him alone (Deut. X, 20), and the Son denied that he is alone, saying: But I am not alone, for the Father is with me (John XVI, 32). And now he is not alone; for the Father testifies that he is present. The Holy Spirit is also present; for the Trinity can never be separated from itself. Finally, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove. So how do heretics say that He alone is in heaven, who is not alone on earth? Let us ponder the mystery: why like a dove? Grace requires the simplicity of the dove, so that we may be as simple as doves. Grace requires the peace of the dove, which in ancient times, as a type, brought to that ark alone which was immune to the flood (Gen. VIII, 11). He taught me what kind of dove that was, who has now deigned to come down in the form of a dove. He taught that in that branch, in that ark, there was a type of the peace of the Church, which the Holy Spirit brings fruitful peace to his Church amidst the floods of the world. David also taught, who, perceiving the sacrament of baptism with prophetic spirit, says: Who will give me wings like a dove? (Psalm 54:7)

93. Therefore the Holy Spirit comes, but behold the mystery. He comes to Christ. For everything was made through him... and in him it stands (Colossians 1:16-17). But see the benevolent Lord, who subjected himself to insults alone, sought not grace alone. And where did he build the Church? I will ask, he says, the Father and he will give you another Paraclete, so that he may be with you forever, the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him nor recognize him (John 14:16-17). He has shown himself clearly in his body, since the substance of divinity is not seen.

94. We have seen the Spirit, but in bodily form: let us also see the Father. But because we cannot see him, let us hear him. For God is present, he will not abandon his temple. He wants every soul to be built up: he wants to shape it for salvation: he wants to transfer living stones from earth to heaven. He loves his temple: and let us love him. If we love God, we will keep his commandments. If we love him, let us know him. For whoever says that they know him, but does not keep his commandments, is a liar (1 John 2:4). For how can one love God, who does not love the truth, since God is truth? Let us then listen to the Father; for the Father is invisible: but the Son is also invisible according to his divinity; for no one has ever seen God. Therefore, since the Son is God, yet he is not seen as God the Son; but he desired to show himself in a body: and because the Father did not take on a body, he wanted to prove to us that he is present in the Son, saying: You are my Son, in you I am well pleased. If you want to learn that the Son is always present with the Father, read the voice of the Son saying: If I ascend into heaven, you are there: if I descend into hell, you are there (Psalm 138:8). If you seek the testimony of the Father, you have heard from John. Therefore, believe in him to whom Christ, believing he should be baptized, entrusted

himself, to whom the Father entrusted the Son with a heavenly voice, saying: This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3:17).

95. Where are the Arians, who do not believe in the Son, in whom the Father is pleased? I do not say this, nor has anyone else spoken; for God does not speak through man, nor through angels, nor through archangels, but the voice sent from heaven by the Father has spoken. Then elsewhere the same Father repeats, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: listen to him (Matthew 17:5), surely listen to him saying: I and the Father are one (John 10:30). Therefore, whoever does not believe in the Son does not believe in the Father. He is a witness about the Son: if there is doubt about the Son, the testimony of the Father is not believed. Then he says: In whom I am well pleased; he praises not something foreign in the Son, but his own. For what does it mean to say: In whom I am well pleased, if not because everything that the Son has, the Father also has: just as what belongs to the Father belongs to the Son? The Son said: Everything that the Father has, belongs to me (John 16:15); for the power of the undivided divinity does not separate between the Father and the Son, but both share one power with the Father and the Son. Let us believe in the Father, whose voice the elements have resounded: let us believe in the Father, to whose voice the elements have shown obedience. The world believed in the elements, let it believe in humans: it believed in lifeless beings, let it believe in the living: it believed in the mute, let it believe in the speaking: it believed in those who lack sense, let it believe in those who, having obtained sense, recognize God.

Book Three (Vers. 23.) (Verse 23) And Jesus himself was about thirty years old, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph.

1. In speaking about the generations, some of which we see in the Gospel according to Matthew, or in this interpretation that we have in our hands, there is a difference; because it is not credible that holy men who oppose each other could have said, especially about the deeds of the Lord and Savior, with as much effort as possible, without showing any discrepancies. And first of all, no one should be moved by the fact that it is written thus: Who was supposed to be the son of Joseph. For he was rightly supposed, not by nature, but because Mary, who was betrothed to her husband Joseph, had given birth to him; thus you have: Is not this the son of Joseph the carpenter (Matt. XIII, 55)? We have already said by what means through a virgin; we have also said by what means through a betrothed woman, and why the Lord Savior chose to be born at the time of the census; it does not seem out of place to explain by what means he had a carpenter as his father. For this reason, by means of this type, the Father who is the creator of all things demonstrates that he himself is the Father, according to what is written: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' (Gen. 1:1). For although human things cannot be compared to divine things, nevertheless the type is complete in that the Father of Christ works with fire and the Spirit, and like a good craftsman, he surrounds our vices, quickly bringing the axe to bear on unfruitful trees, skillfully pruning the insignificant, preserving lofty things at the summit, softening the rigid spirit of the mind with fire, and forming the entire human race into various uses with the diverse quality of ministries. But why is the genealogy of Joseph described rather than Mary's, when Mary gave birth to Christ by the Holy Spirit, and Joseph seems to be unrelated to the lineage of the Lord? We might doubt this, unless the custom of Scripture, which always seeks the origin of men, instructs us. For you have this: Perez was the son of Judah, the prince of the Tribe. He begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Aram, and Aram begot Amminadab, and Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon

begot Salmon, and Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed, and Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David (Matt. 1:3 et seq.). For indeed the person of a man is sought after, who also asserts the dignity of his kind in the Senate and the other assemblies of the states. But how ugly it would be if, the origin of man being left behind, the origin of woman were sought after, so that he who did not have a father would be proclaimed to all the peoples of the world?

4. But also elsewhere let us show that the course of generation is different; so that here too the Evangelists may not seem to disagree, who have followed the old order. For you have it thus: There was a certain man of Arath, and his name was Elcana, the son of Hieremiel, the son of Heli, the son of Ozi, from Mount Ephraim (1 Samuel 1:1). You see both the description of origin from fathers to sons, and from sons to fathers, connected in the old way. You see everywhere that family is traced through the generations of men. Do not be surprised that Matthew traces the genealogy from Abraham to Joseph, and Luke from Joseph to Adam, and follows the order of generations to God. Do not be surprised that the origin of Joseph is described. For being born according to the flesh, he had to follow the custom of the flesh, and whoever comes into the world must be described according to the customs of the world; especially since in the origin of Joseph is also the origin of Mary. For when Joseph was a righteous man, he certainly took a wife from his own tribe and country: and as a righteous man, he could not do anything contrary to what was prescribed by the Law. For it is thus, that each one of the sons of Israel will cling to the inheritance of their tribe, and they will not pass from tribe to tribe. And every daughter who has an inheritance among the tribes of the sons of Israel, will be a wife to one of the people, and from the tribe of her father, from the people of her tribe (Num. XXXVI, 6-8). Therefore, Joseph also went up from the house and country of David (Luke II, 4 and 5), in order to be registered with Mary, his wife. She belongs to the same house and country, and she brings forth the profession from the same tribe and country, certainly designating herself to be of the same tribe and country.

5. Elizabeth is also related to Mary (Luke 1:36): first, because all Jews are related, as the Apostle taught, saying, For I could wish that I myself were accursed . . . for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites (Romans 9:3-4). Therefore, they are related because both of them were Israelites; they are also related because both of them were from the tribe of Judah. You have learned about Mary from the tribe of Judah, now learn about Elizabeth as well. But when Mary rose in those days, she went with haste into the hill country, to a town of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah (Luke 1:39-40). For just as Moses commanded each tribe to dwell in its own area (Numbers 2:2), surely Mary, when she stayed in the town of Judah, was also in the tribe of Judah; especially since Elizabeth and Zechariah were from the lineage of priests, whose portion is God. How beautiful it is that, while Mary proclaimed the coming of Christ, she herself gave birth to Christ, and the other, filled with the Holy Spirit, conceived by the Holy Spirit, prophesied. According to the flesh, they seem to have been relatives, who in the spiritual bond were not lacking according to God. But if the man is the head of the woman according to the holy Apostle (Ephesians 5:23), and they are two in one flesh according to divine law (Genesis 2:24): surely those who were one flesh and one spirit, how could it have happened that they appeared to have a divided homeland and tribe? Also, it is added that even the Angel Gabriel had foretold about the Lord that God would give Him the throne of David His father (Luke 1:32). Therefore, it is certain that Mary also descended from David's lineage. At the same time, we also learn that it does not matter in which order the series of generations is expressed, since the path is

accessible from here and there.

6. However, why the holy Matthew started enumerating the genealogy of Christ from Abraham, while the holy Luke traced it from Christ up to God, seems to be in need of explanation. But first, why the holy Matthew, when he started with Abraham, placed the title 'The book of the genealogy of Abraham,' and why he specifically mentioned these two, David and Abraham, I believe should not be overlooked. For indeed, the most faithful authors of the race are not chosen in vain; so that we may understand that in the very generation of the flesh, a spiritual succession is required more. For these two men are the ones to whom the divine promises have flowed.

7. Prior to Moses' law and before the Jewish people, Abraham, leaving behind his own possessions and knowing God, earned the testimony of faith; for he believed in God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Gen. XV, 6): who also received an oracle from God, saying to him: Get out of your country, from your family, and from your father's house, and go to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. XII, 1-3). Therefore, you see that the gatherings of the nations and the sacred assembly of the Church are first promised by divine oracle. And for this reason, the author of the race had to be designated, who first deserved the covenant of restoring the Church.

8. David also is rightly declared the author of the race; for when he received the answer by an oath, that of his body Christ was to be born, he said, as it is written, 'The Lord swore unto David truth and it will not repent Him: of the fruit of your body will I set upon your throne' (Ps. CXXXI, 11). And elsewhere: 'Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David; his seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me' (Ps. LXXXVIII, 36-38). And in Chronicles: And when your days are fulfilled and you sleep with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you (1 Chronicles 17:11-13). Also, the Lord God revealed the generation of the Lord through Isaiah, saying: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding (Isaiah 11:1-2). And below: And there shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise up to rule the Gentiles, in him the Gentiles shall hope (Ibid., 10). And elsewhere: For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace. His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace: he shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom (Isaiah 9:6). In which, according to the interpretation of Aquila, we have seen the promise fulfilled, not as regarding a man, but as regarding one who would transcend man. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom.

9. All things come together concerning Christ, evidenced by clear oracles, and the fruit of divine power cannot be derived from the favor of Solomon, who was the son of David, whose end is undoubtedly known. For the end of Solomon's kingdom and peace is demonstrated by the readings of the Kingdoms. Christ is one, whose kingdom has no end. Furthermore, Solomon ruled over no nations, but Christ gathered the Church from all nations. Lastly, while David was still alive, Solomon was born and attained the kingdom. But the one who is promised is shown to rise after the death of David, as you have: 'When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for Me, and I will establish his throne forever' (1 Chronicles 17:11-12). Did Solomon reign forever, who only reigned for forty years? I will be, he says, a father to him, and he will be to me a son (Ibid., 13). Who is this proper Son of God, except the one to whom it is said: You are my Son, this day I have begotten you (Psalm 2:7)? And, I will not scatter my mercy away from him... and I will keep him faithful in my house, and in his kingdom forever (Paradise 17:13-14). But indeed, we know from the series of divine readings that Solomon perhaps erred so gravely in order to prevent humans from erring, and that the promised future would be believed to have come to him. For he built a temple for the idol of Astarte because of his love for a woman, and the Lord was angry with Solomon (3 Kings 11:4 et seq.). Therefore, if Solomon began to reign while David was still alive (for when it was reported to David that Solomon was reigning, King David worshipped in his bedchamber and said: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has given me today one sitting on my throne, and my eyes see) - if he erred, if he offended, you see that the promised succession established Christ.

10. And for this reason the evangelist selected these two authors of the genealogy: one who received the promise from the congregation of peoples, and another who obtained the oracle concerning the generation of Christ. And for this reason, although he is later in the order of succession, he is described as prior to Abraham in the generation of the Lord, because it is greater to have received the promise from Christ than from the Church, since the Church itself is through Christ. Therefore, one is the prince of the generation according to the flesh, the other is the prince of the generation according to the spirit: one according to the grace of the seed, the other according to the faith of the peoples; for the one who saves is more powerful than the one who is saved. And therefore David is called the son: The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David (Matthew 1:1). For in the first place, the son should be called to whom a son was promised; although the Apostle also says that Christ was promised to Abraham: For the promises were made to Abraham and his seed. It does not say: And to seeds, as if in many, but as in one: And to your seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:16); so that to one the property of generation may be attributed and to the other the principality. He was announced, that Jesus would be called his son: to this one, as though a chief, the prerogative of the family and of the nations is preserved; so that from Abraham the beginning of the Lord's generation might flow forth. For he who is the author of faith ought also to assert the author of the divine generation in Scripture.

11. And so Luke thought that the origin of Christ should be referred to God; that the true generator of Christ is God, either according to true generation as Father, or according to the regeneration of the mystical offering as author. And therefore, he did not begin to describe his generation from the beginning, but later he explained his baptism, desiring to demonstrate that God is the author of all through baptism, and he also affirmed that Christ originated from God in the order of succession:

weaving together everything, he showed that the Son of God is demonstrated both according to nature, grace, and flesh. But what clearer sign of the divine generation than that, when about to speak of the generation itself, he prefaces the speaking of the Father himself: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Luke 3:22).

12. Here too some people like to insert questions, because Matthew enumerated forty-two generations from Abraham to Christ, while Luke enumerated fifty; and because Matthew described the descent of the generation through other individuals, and Luke through others. In this you can now prove what we have said, that although Matthew wove in other ancestors of the Lord's lineage, and Luke wove in others in the order of the generation, both of them indicated Abraham and David as the remaining authors of the lineage.

13. But in truth, while Matthew thought the lineage was to be traced through Solomon, Luke seems to show the royal and priestly family of Christ through Nathan. This does not mean that one is truer than the other, but rather that both harmonize with equal faith and truth. For Christ's family was truly both royal and priestly according to the flesh: a king from kings, a priest from priests, although the oracle is not spoken of physical things but of heavenly things; for the king rejoices in the power of God, to whom judgment is given by the Father of kings, and the priest is forever, according to what is written: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4). Therefore both of them held true; so that Matthew would prove the lineage traced through kings, and Luke by tracing the series of the divine lineage passed down to Christ through priests, would declare the holiness of that lineage itself. At the same time, in this also the figure of a calf is signified, because it believes that the priestly mystery should be preserved everywhere.

14. And do not be surprised if there are more successions from Abraham to Christ according to Luke, but fewer according to Matthew; for you admit that the generation has passed through other individuals: for it is possible that some may have lived a long life, while men of another generation may have died at a young age; for we see many old men living with their grandsons, while other men die immediately after having sons.

15. We also note that St. Matthew records that Jacob, who was the father of Joseph, mentioned that his son was Mathan (Matt. 1:15), while Luke describes Joseph, to whom Mary was betrothed, as the son of Heli, and Heli as the son of Melchi (Luke 3:24). How can one person have two fathers, namely Heli and Jacob? How can there also be two paternal grandfathers, Mathan and Melchi? But if you truly inquire, you will find that according to the prescription of the old law, two brothers had different sons by one wife who was a uterine sister (Deut. 25:5) (Euseb. Caes. Eccl. hist. lib. I, c. 7). For it is reported that Mathan, who married into the family of Solomon, begot Jacob as his son, and after his wife's death, he married Melchi's wife, from whom was begotten Heli. Again, when Heli died without children, he married his brother's wife and begot Joseph, who is called the son of Jacob according to the Law; for according to the ancient custom of the Law, a brother would raise up offspring for his deceased brother. Thus, he was called the son of two, not begotten by both, but because according to his genealogy he belonged to one, and according to the Law he was made the son of the other. The people of the Jews did not understand in what way, with this law, the perpetuity of the death of the seed was promised to us: but, taking it according to the letter, they corrupted the grace of the oracle. For there was another brother who would raise up the seed of the dead brothers, not a brother according to the carnal birth, but

according to the purity of grace. And therefore perhaps, the Brother does not redeem, a man will redeem (Psalm 48:8); because that brother was not a blood brother, but the Lord and mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus, propagated the grace of resurrection. Although there may be another interpretation of this verse, which we will mention later (Enarr. in Psal. XLVIII).

16. However, it does not seem absurd that Saint Matthew thought that the holy generations, to be divided into fourteen, were to be divided into twice the mystical number, from Abraham to David, from David to the Babylonian exile, from the Babylonian exile to Christ, in which he also clearly indicated the cycle of changes. For from Abraham until David the Hebrew people existed without kings; for the just kingdom began with David. Then the whole lineage of the Hebrews was led by kings until the exile, and the kingdom remained intact until their exile. But after the transmigration towards the setting sun, the fallen nobility withered away. However, the mystical numbers are evident in the fifty successions that Abraham believed should be woven together by Lucas. For both the tenth and the seventh are mystical numbers, and both repeated three times signify a mystery. And Pentecost, followed by Lucas, and Tesseracost, followed by Matthew, revealed more than enough of the mystical number.

17. Many people also wonder why Matthew thought it necessary to include the mention of the notorious woman Tamar in the genealogy of Jesus. Why did Ruth, and also the woman who was Uriah's wife and went on to marry David after he had killed her husband, why did they both get mentioned, when there is no mention of the holy women Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel. It goes like this: Abraham fathered Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers. Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar (Matthew 1:2-3). Therefore, it seems necessary to mention the name of this woman evangelist, about whom it appears we must now discuss separately.

18. Firstly, if you consider the truth, this woman was not as famous as she was just. For she did not seek the temporary use of lust, but rather desired the honor of succession. It was shameful not to have children, which was also punished by the authority of civil laws. Judas had promised her to his son, and the engagement of marriage had been delayed for a long time. The betrothed died before fulfilling his promise. Before the coming of Christ, she had not yet experienced the grace of virginity or widowhood. Feeling sorry for himself for remaining without children, he devised a plan out of a desire for offspring, and he surpassed Judas in cunning; he offered himself to him, adorned, after he learned of his wife's death. You can see that the life of a woman is approved, because she did not steal another's bed, she was not adorned with the dress of a prostitute as if she were a prostitute; for she did not capture wandering lust, but after being deceived for a long time by her father-in-law's promises, she wanted to obtain the fruit of inheritance from the family she had chosen by turning the deception. Who, therefore, is purer? She who awaited the promised one for so long, or he who could not bear the love offered? She who did not reject the family of her betrothed, or he who thought of her as a prostitute? She who did not allow the hour of union to those who wished, or he who, having begun with the desire for error, completed the grace of succession by the chastity of a woman? She who did not have children, and feared that the time of conception would be excluded by the delay of marriage, or he who preferred the seriousness of a mature woman to the age of a younger one? Finally, he himself confessed, saying: Tamar is more justified than I; for this reason I did not give her to my son Shelah (Gen, XXXVIII, 26). And so she wanted to experience the exactor of her own chastity. Finally, she never experienced another man, she took the garment of widowhood from intercourse: this impatient man of only one hour,

who had spent years in the chastity of a girl, expelled mourning, changed clothes, shaved her head, left the funeral pyre, and ascended the bed of the lover.

19. But we do not defend her in such a way as to accuse him: rather, we excuse both; not ourselves, but the mystery that the union of the two expressed; for the woman gave birth to Phares and Zaram, she gave birth to twins. Therefore, Matthew marked both not in vain, when he only sought to mention Phares: for Phares begot Esrom, Esrom begot Aram (Matt. 1:3): and then each in order. But why, when Isaac begot two, Jacob begot more, does Scripture only mention the ones that were demanded by the succession of the Lord, and yet mention both of these, unless it is because there is a mystery in both?

20. We have discussed the moral aspect, because he did not engage in the work of the prostitute, but chose the gifts of fertility: let us discuss the historical aspect and investigate the mystical. For what he received, the ring and necklace, and the staff, cannot be without mystery. It is not a trivial person who deserves to receive an ornament, a seal, power: the seal of deeds, the ornament of the heart, the emblem of royal freedom. Therefore, to begin the story, when Tamar conceived, you read that one of the twins put out his hand, which the midwife caught and tied a scarlet thread around, saying, "This one shall come out first" (Gen. XXXVIII, 28). But when the boy drew back his hand into his mother's womb, his brother immediately came out. Then the midwife said, 'What a breach you have made for yourself!' So she named him Phares. Afterward his brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zara.' (Genesis 38:29-30). Do you see how many enigmatic mysteries are revealed? The hand extended, the scarlet thread tied, the hand withdrawn, the midwife's dual voice, the fact that one came out before the other, one breached while the other cut through the barrier.

21. But why did one send forth the hand from the womb, while the other preceded with the genitals? Is it not because through the mystery of twins the twofold life of peoples is portrayed: one according to the Law, the other according to faith; one according to the letter, the other according to grace? Grace is prior to the Law; faith is prior to the letter. And therefore, the type of grace sent forth the hand first; because the acts of grace preceded, which were in Job, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who lived by faith without the Law: For Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:6). Melchizedek also showed the grace of the holy sacrifice as a prefiguration (Gen. XIV, 18); for the holy patriarchs, preceding the Law, freed from the constraints of commandments, shone forth with a free and similar grace of the Gospel.

22. He is the younger brother of these; second in the order of piety; for the first is among the patriarchs, the second among the kings and priests. Both lives are according to God; for even those who served in the religious and pious army according to the law of Moses, are not devoid of grace and honor: but the first fruit of piety is in the founders, rather than in the heirs. For Zara is the first, which in interpretation means the east; for the light of true piety is the splendor of the rising sun, certainly of Him who said: My name is East; of whom the first ray of light shone in the patriarchs (Zacch. VI, 12). For at the beginning of their own lives, they advanced in this age, in whose hands also our own actions, as if the figure of a fuller body, which we were still held in the womb of nature generating, came before. But the observance of the Law is like a middle hedge, and in a certain way the life of our ancestors seems to be cut off, from which the midwife, perhaps justice, who received us released from the womb of our natural mother, is said to have spoken:

This one will go forth first. And truly that order of piety was wonderful, not from Moses, nor from any man, nor through man, but implemented by a certain gift of wisdom pouring itself out freely.

23. Therefore, the first discipline of piety according to the Gospel: because we believe in the cross and blood of Christ, which Abraham saw the day of and rejoiced (John 8:56); whose grace Noah foresaw prefigured in the type of the Church, with spiritual understanding; whose place Isaac did not refuse in sacrifice (Genesis 22:10); whom Jacob worshipped when he wrestled with him (Genesis 32:25); whose prophet Isaiah saw the redness of garments (for according to the Gospel, the life of prophets is also) (Isaiah 63:2); in whose blood, amidst the destruction of the world, the prostitute Rahab indicated, by a mystery, the future emblem of salvation for the public Church (Joshua 2:1); a Church that does not refuse the union of many strangers and, the more closely joined to many, is the more chaste: an immaculate virgin, without wrinkle, whole in modesty, lowly in love, chaste in prostitution, widowed yet barren, fruitful in virginity. The prostitute, because she is frequently visited by many lovers with the allure of affection, and without the pollution of offense: For he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body (I Cor. VI, 16). The barren widow, who does not know how to bear children in the absence of a husband: the man comes and begets this people and this tribe. The fruitful virgin, who has brought forth this multitude with the fruit of love, without the use of lust.

24. But let us return to history: what do the words of the midwife saying, 'He will come out first,' mean? Was it not because he bore the image of the one who, though born later in body, being first in virtue and truth, claimed the chief place for himself? Hence also John said, 'There comes after me a man who has been made before me' (John 1:17). What does it mean that he bound a red cloth in his hand, except that he was a figure of the one who, by the sign of his cross and shedding of his blood, illuminated the act of human redemption? Therefore, after he withdrew his hand, as if a fence had been made by cutting, his brother came out, whom the Apostle referred to as the middle wall or barrier (Ephesians 2:14), and he himself received his name from the cutting; for Phares means division: hence they were called Pharisees, because they separated themselves from the associations of many. However, it would have been happier and much better if the fence had not been cut, but had remained one and undivided. What could have happened if he, who sent his earlier life to ruin, that is, showed his actions, had followed the military life that came after. For it would have been much better if the circumcised people had wanted to imitate the life of their ancestors; for thus there would have been one fence, one barrier, one structure of the past and the future. But because the weakness of the latter life could not fulfill the actions of the former, without a doubt, the fence or barrier, which had been built according to God, was like a middle wall placed in between; so that that fence, that is, the continual and continuous construction of good morals, would be broken. For a boundary surrounds a fruitful field and keeps out the incursions of thieves. It sets apart what is cultivated from what is abandoned. Likewise, a wall encloses a house. If this wall remains, the house is safe. Finally, 'I will remove its wall,' says the Lord, 'and it will be a source of plunder.' (Isaiah 5:5).

25. I wish that this may be the intact wall of our house, the spiritual house that is within us, for it cannot be built by man, but by the living God, who says: 'I have surrounded the wall' (Isaiah 5:2). Therefore, those who have lost the wall have also lost salvation. Therefore, let the wall remain, let this hedge remain. Do you want to know how useful the hedge is? Hedge your ears with thorns and thistles, and do not listen to wicked language (Sirach 28:28). Indeed, this protects you from

guilt.

Therefore, the Lord Jesus, who later came into the world in the flesh, restoring the ancient fortification and renewing us to the actions and ancient simplicity of faith. Hence, concerning him, the prophet said: You will be called the builder of the wall. For he removed the obstacle that divided the unity of mind and body, and the sequence of simple life; and he himself became our peace, who made both one and broke down the middle wall of the enclosure. The Apostle exposes that the enmities are in the flesh (Ephesians 2:14). Therefore, the Lord has borne these enmities and has restored peace, and he has abolished the law of commandments in decrees; in order to create two in one new man: in whom he signifies not only the external and the internal, but also the Jew and the Greek, so that Christ would be all in all. For the Lord of the Sabbath has removed the superstition of the corporal Sabbath, and as if through a medium he has broken down the wall of the Law: which prohibited us from the piety that is according to God due to the difficulty of the decrees, since it was not easy or possible for the Gentiles to serve God according to the Law of Moses, since the empty superstition of the Jews called back the pure affection of the nations from undertaking the observance. What then? Useless law? God forbid: but useful for the unbelievers, necessary for the weak, which restrains the slippery and wandering by the severity of salutary precepts, and concludes them with the attentiveness of observances. But the Law is good, because it is spiritual. Therefore, it is not good for those who do not consider it spiritual: those who, having become small in mind and humble, could not see the majesty of Christ, who is above the Law. Indeed, just as the sublime Isaiah, looking beyond that wall, saw the glory of God (Isaiah 6:1), which appears on the mountains, not on the hills.

27. Therefore the Church teaches us in the Song of Songs, that this wall could not stand against our Lord Jesus Christ, nor against the one who followed Christ, saying: The voice of my brother: behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills. My brother is like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of Bethel. Behold, he stands behind our wall, looking through the windows, peering through the lattice. My brother answered and said to me: Rise up, come, my neighbor, my beautiful one, my dove; for behold, winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard (Song of Songs 2:8-12). Flowers, apostles: the time of harvest is the fruit of Christ: the voice of the turtledove, the voice of the Church. Therefore, the Son of God, after seeing that earthly men were not walking towards heavenly things and were confined by physical constraints (for there was no one who did good, not even one), deigned to come down to earth himself; in order to remove that wall of the Law, that is, a certain burden and the superstition of the physical mind, which was weighing down and overshadowing the hearts of the people. Therefore, a wall is better than a fence. Finally, the wall is not a good one, it is not painted. This was not said without purpose to the high priests, because it was protecting the obstacles of the middle wall (Acts 23:3), which the Lord Jesus abolished like a hard military service, in order to give a clearer observance of religion; so that now not only one Jewish race, enclosed as it were by a certain physical prescription of the Law, but all nations would be called to the worship of God through the Gospel.

28. Therefore, there are two sets of twin lives, two sets of twin struggles; so that the first is better than the one that follows. And therefore what is better has been reformed. But who would deny that the Gospel surpasses the Law? However, the Law is good if you raise the mind above the literal sense: for the letter kills. (2 Corinthians 3:6) But what would this history of grace have if we

did not see the light of such a great mystery? For the holy Apostle has taught us to seek the secret of truth in the simplicity of history, and to interpret certain discussions that are not intelligible according to the letter, writing: Tell me, you who read the Law, have you not heard the Law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman, and one by a free woman: but he who was born of the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but he who was born of the free woman was born according to the promise. Now these things are said by way of allegory. For these are the two covenants (Galatians 4:21-24). And further: But the Jerusalem above is free (ibid., 4:26).

Therefore, let us strive with the sublimity of our minds towards that which the middle wall could not cut or divide. For according to the corporeal understanding, that wall of the old Testament has been removed: the slave woman has been expelled, the free woman is held. We are free from the free woman; for the Church is free, the Synagogue has been expelled. For the people of the Jews were serving, the yoke of servitude has been removed, which was repressing the necks of our souls; so that we could no longer look beyond the wall of the previous life. We have a good and light yoke, which lifts up more than it weighs down those who have it, with the bonds of peace and grace. This is the Lord, whose type went before in Zara; for the Lord Jesus, according to the flesh, was not only born of a woman, but also under the Law, so that he might redeem those who were under the Law with the price of his blood. Therefore, his figure went before in the hand of that Zara, in order to promise us that he was coming, who would restore to us the use of the old life, and reform the liberty which he had given at first to that Adam, in the last Adam; so that now the human race might be without the yoke of the law.

30. Therefore, if we acknowledge that Tamar is described in the genealogies on account of a mystery in the Lord's generations, we must also certainly not consider Ruth to be overlooked for the same reason: about whom the holy Apostle seems to have had an understanding, when he foresaw through the Spirit that the calling of the Gentiles was to be celebrated by the Gospel, saying that the Law is not made for the just, but for the unjust (1 Timothy 1:9). For how did Ruth, being a foreigner, marry a Jew? And by what reasoning did the evangelist think that the mention of a union should be made in the birth of Christ, which was forbidden by the series of laws? Therefore, did the Savior not originate from a legitimate generation (Deut. XXIII, 3)? It seems to be contrary unless we adhere to the apostolic belief, for the law was not established for the righteous, but for the unrighteous. And since she is a foreigner and a Moabite (especially since the law of Moses prohibited these marriages, and the Moabites were excluded from the Church; for it is written: Moabites shall not enter the Church of the Lord even to the third and fourth generation, and forever), how then did she enter into the Church if not because she was holy and blameless in her conduct, above the law? For if the Law was given to the impious and sinners, certainly Ruth, who surpassed the definition of the Law, and entered into the Church, and became an Israelite, and deserved to be counted among the greater ones of the Lord's family, because of the choice of her mind and not her body, is a great example for us, because in her the figure of our entrance into the Church of the Lord, who are gathered from the nations, preceded. Let us therefore imitate her; so that because she deserved this prerogative of being admitted into her society by her manners, as history teaches: we also, because of the choice of our manners, may be counted among the Church of the Lord, with the support of our merits. For when the Israelites were afflicted by famine in the earlier days of the Judges, a man named Elimelech from the city of Bethlehem in Judah,

where Christ was born, went to live in the land of Moab with his wife and two sons. His sons took Moabite wives, one named Orpah and the other named Ruth, and they lived there for about ten years before they died. But after her husband and sons died, the woman, left alone and without her own family, heard that God had visited Israel and she decided to return home. She urged her daughters-in-law to go back to their families as well. One concession: but Ruth stayed with her mother-in-law. When her mother-in-law said to her, 'Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; go back with her,' Ruth replied, 'Do not press me to leave you and to turn back from following you. Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried.' (Ruth 1:15, 17). And so the two arrived at Bethlehem. Therefore, when Boaz, the great-grandfather of David, learned of these customs, as well as the respect towards the mother-in-law, the devotion towards the deceased, and the religiousness towards God, according to the law of Moses, in order to raise up the offspring of the deceased, he chose her as his wife.

32. But it is worth noting that in a field full of harvest, she found sheaves, as it is written (Ruth 2:17), gathering them and reserving them for her mother-in-law. And she did not go after a young man, but followed a mature man, for which she deserved to hear: 'You are a woman of virtue', or 'Because you have done your mercy last, greater than the first' (Ruth 3:10). For the last mercy gathered by the Church surpasses the previous one. What we say briefly here, because we have set out more fully in the books that I have written about Faith (Book III on Faith to Gratian, ch. 5). But he who was far off has approached; because he who was nearest has distanced himself, and the neighbor's sandal he acquired by receiving the woman. For it was customary that he who was nearest, if he did not want to take his kinswoman as a wife, would loosen his sandal and give her to others (Ruth 4:7): in which there is not a small mystery, because the one who took an alien woman as a representative received the ability to proclaim the gospel.

33. Finally, the blessing of the elders testifies to these marriage in the type, saying: May the Lord give you a woman who enters your house, like Rachel and Leah, who built the house of Israel, and may you have power in Ephrathah. And may your name be in Bethlehem, and may your house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bore to Judah. May the Lord give you descendants through this young woman. And Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife (cf. Ruth 4:11-13), and she bore Obed, the father of Jesse, the grandfather of David. Therefore, Saint Matthew rightly mentioned in the Gospel that the Lord Himself, the author of the gathering of the gentiles, took on the generation of foreigners according to the flesh, so that even then there would be an indication that this generation would produce a caller of the gentiles, whom we all, gathered from foreigners, would follow, leaving behind our ancestral ways and saying to the one who would call us to the worship of God, for example, to Paul or to any bishop: Your people shall be my people, and your God my God (Ruth 1:16). Therefore, Ruth, like Leah and Rachel, forgetting her own people and her father's house, breaking the bond of the Law, entered into the Church. But he who does not accept the Church takes off his sandal. And it is said to Moses: Take off the sandals from your feet (Exod. III, 5); so that he himself may not be believed to be the spouse of the Church. Only he who is the true spouse does not take off. And therefore John says: Whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie. Therefore, this is a symbol, and he built the house of Israel.

35. But the higher expression of the mystery declares how the mention of His Lordly descent is to be inserted, when it is prophesied that Christ would be born of His lineage in Ephrathah, where it is

said: The Lord will give you strength in Ephrathah, and let His name be in Bethlehem (Ruth 4:11). For what is strength, if not that which gathered together the peoples of the Gentiles through Christ? And what is His name, if not the name of Bethlehem, the birthplace of the Lord according to the flesh? Therefore, through the prophet it was said: 'And you, Bethlehem of Judea, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel' (Micah 5:2). Thus, we see the story, customs, and mystery of women fitting together.

Nevertheless, I do not reject defending Tamar and Ruth, who were also counted among the sinners in the lineage of the Lord: of whom, desiring to avoid their mention, the holy Luke held a different order of successions: nor did he think it necessary to mention Ahaz, Jehoiakim, or finally the wife of Uriah; in order to declare the unstained line of the priestly lineage. But just as their plan stands firm, so too does the plan of Saint Matthew not deviate from the justice of reason. For when he proclaimed the Lord to be born according to the flesh, who would take upon himself the sins of all, subject to insults, subjected to suffering; he did not even think it necessary to assert that he himself was exempt from the stain of original sin, so that he would not refuse the injury inflicted by a tainted origin: at the same time, so that the Church would not be ashamed to gather sinners, since the Lord was born of sinners. Finally, so that he would also initiate the benefit of redemption from his own ancestors; lest anyone think that the stain of his origin could be an impediment to virtue: and so that he would not boast insolently of the nobility of his own race, nor be more ashamed of the crimes of his parents, to whom the ability to cover up their origin was given by the flower of virtue.

37. But is it true that the holy David, even though many things were prefigured in him mysteriously, is not superior because he recognized himself as a human and believed that the sin committed with the taking of Uriah's wife should be washed away by tears of repentance, showing us that no one should trust in their own virtue? For we have a great adversary who cannot be overcome by us without the favor of God. And often you will find that serious sins were committed by illustrious and blessed men, as if to show that they have been subject to temptation as humans, lest they be regarded as more than human in their outstanding virtues. For if David, when lifted up in presumption of his own virtue, had said, 'If I have repaid those who did me evil' (Psalm 7:5), and elsewhere, 'But I said in my abundance, I shall never be moved' (Psalm 29:7), immediately he remembered that he had suffered the punishment of his arrogance, saying, 'You turned your face away from me, and I became troubled' (ibid., 8). If the author of this arrogance, being of the lineage of the Lord, experienced offense, how much more should we other sinners, who have no claim to the prerogative of merit, fear the rock of arrogance, in which the shipwreck of goods occurs, especially since such a great man is both our teacher and the example, who thought it necessary to sing a kind of apology to appease the Lord in his later years, saying, 'O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, neither are my eyes exalted' (Psalm 130:1), and 'The Lord is at my right hand, so that I may not be shaken' (Psalm 16:8); for he knew when he trusted himself that he had fallen. Finally, he pointed out that there is nothing else in man except that he knows God. For you have: What is man, that you are mindful of him: or the son of man, that you visit him? (Psalm 143:3) Therefore, if David condemns pride, he embraces humility, and rightly in the story of Uriah's wife, he adopts this lesson of aspiring to humility. And yet, if Solomon, the peaceable one, was born from her, let us see whether perhaps it is a mystery that, with him removed from the midst, who before his marriage claimed the people of the nations for himself, the Church has married another

man, namely David. For David has been called Christ, adopted into the name of his ancestor, as it is written: I have found David my servant (Psalm 88:21); to whom the Church has been married, which, filled with the seed of the Word and the Spirit of God, has brought forth the body of Christ, namely the Christian people. Therefore, the woman who is bound by law while her husband is alive is also considered dead to her husband, so that she would not be an adulteress if she were to be with another man. Thus, there is a mystery in the symbol and sin in the story: guilt through man, sacraments through the word. Since we have discussed this story more fully elsewhere, it seems necessary to pass over it here. And rightly so, Saint David wrote a mystical psalm about this story, the fiftieth, in reference to the marriage of Bathsheba, saying: Cleanse me exceedingly from my injustice, and cleanse me from my sin (Psalm 50:4). If a friend of God acknowledges his own iniquity and his sinfulness obstructs his merits, and if he finally confesses to God that he has sinned, why should you be ashamed of confessing a crime when the commentary on the crime, not the confession, leads to shame?

Therefore, since David did not omit the story of Bathsheba in his Psalms, in order to teach us either a mystery or an act of perfect repentance, we rightly see it not omitted even in the generations of the Lord, because David himself, who took her as his wife, is claimed to be a predecessor of the Lord's generation according to the flesh. The special merit of which, as we have said, the Church saw arise in this mystery, and received the oracle that Christ would be born from his lineage. For one thing pertains to the Church, which is said: Behold, we have heard of it in Ephrata: we have found it in the fields of the forest (Psalm 131:6). For another thing specifically pertains to the espousal of the Lord's body, which is revealed by a most clear oracle, when it is said: I will set upon your throne from the fruit of your womb (Ibid., 11). However, do not be negligent of such a great promise; for it has not been given without definition. But if you keep the testament, and observe the testimonies of the Lord, which he promises to have spoken in the Gospel, the abundance of the eternal seat will also be open to you. These are about the wife of Uriah. But it is well known about Ahab, whose wife was Jezebel (3 Kings 16:31); and about Jechoniah, of whom Jeremiah is a reliable witness, that he was guilty of a great crime: even his name was taken away from him. And for this reason, the one who is called Joachim in the Books of the Kings (4 Kings 24:1) is named Jechoniah by Jeremiah, who says, 'Jechoniah is a despised vessel, he is of no use.' Because of this, he himself was cast aside, along with his offspring. Earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord, write down this man as disinherited; for no one from his offspring will sit on the throne of David, ruling as prince in Judah (Jeremiah 22:28-30). During his reign, the Babylonians devastated Judah, and no one from his descendants could ever again hold the kingdom in Judah. After the people were released from captivity, they were under priests and tetrarchs. Even until the generation of Christ, tetrarchs remained, not even preserving the royal dignity of their lineage, as history teaches. For it is reported by those who either argued, or simply taught, or truly asserted, to us, that Idumean robbers entered the city of Ascalon in Palestine, and seized Antipater, a certain son of Herod the Hierodulus, from the temple of Apollo which was near the walls, and took him captive among others, whom his father could not redeem due to poverty. Therefore, having been imbued with the teachings and mysteries of the Jews, he formed a friendship with Hyrcanus, the king of Judea, whom he directed as his representative to Pompey: and because he obtained the favor of the mission, he sought a part of the kingdom through that gratitude. But when Antipater was killed due to envy of his good fortune, his son Herod was later instructed to reign over the Jews under the *senatus consultum* of Antonius. This Herod and others

were tetrarchs. We think that this should be transferred from the Greek histories in order to make it clear that Herod, with no affinity to the Jewish race, sought his kingdom through deceitful means. Finally, aware of his own ignoble birth, so that no investigation about his ancient lineage would be raised by his descendants, he burned their records, thinking that if he removed the evidence from the public, he would not be able to prove without any other testimonies that he did not come from the lineage of the patriarchs or the ancient converts. But as most human cares are, this could not prejudice the pursuit and investigation of truth.

42. However, lest we think that He can prejudice us, who we say is true and of royal descent, Christ, and through true and noble kings the race of the Lord was acted. But where an adulterous offspring affected the kingdom, it preserved the succession of its nobility, not of power, but of the order of generation. Yet we have not received Christ as king according to the honor of the world. Therefore, how then shall I set the fruit of your womb upon your throne? (Psalm CXXXI, 11)? And how does the angel say of Him that the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign in the house of Jacob (Luke 1:32)? How is He promised to reign but not shown? Or how is it said through the prophet that no one will reign from the seed of Jehoiachin? For if Christ reigns, but Christ is from the seed of Jehoiachin, then the prophet lied, and the oracles lied. But there it is not denied that there will be future descendants from the seed of Jehoiachin, and therefore Christ is from his seed. And that Christ reigned is not against the prophecy; for He did not reign with worldly honor, nor did He sit on the throne of Jehoiachin, but He reigned on the throne of David. 43. But when Jechoniah himself sat on the seat of David, how is it possible that what was said is fulfilled, that the descendants of David would not sit on Jechoniah's seat, since it seems that the same seat belonged to both of them? Therefore, we cannot deny that we also had the seat of David, although it was not the same seat that Christ, whom Jechoniah sat on; in fact, no one else from the lineage of David could sit on his seat, except Christ; because his seed is not eternal in anyone else, but in Christ, as God himself swore, saying: Once I have sworn in my holiness, I will not lie to David; his seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me (Psalm 89:36-38). So who does he say here? Certainly not Solomon, not Rehoboam, not Nathan, but the one of whom alone it can be said: I will stretch out my hand upon the sea, and my right hand upon the rivers. He himself will call me, 'You are my Father' (cf. Psalm 89:26-27); and I will establish his seed forever, and his throne as the days of heaven (cf. Psalm 89:30). Certainly Solomon did not sit on this throne, nor Rehoboam, nor Jehoiachin. Do you want to know who did sit on it? Here is what the angel said to Mary: Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:31-32). If you do not believe the angel, at least believe the Lord himself when he says: You say that I am a king (John 18:37). Therefore, was he also lying when he said he would reign, who did not reign on earth? How is the Scripture resolved, which says he will reign, yet does not establish his reign? In the midst of the debate, we have come to a deadlock, stuck in a whirlpool of truth. Let us then turn to Christ, let us ask Him, let Him answer. Let us consult the Scriptures. We find that the kingdom of the Lord is not of this world, for He Himself said, 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 18:36). He who says that His kingdom is not of this world shows that it is above the world. Thus His kingdom both was and was not: it was not in this age, it was above the age. Therefore, there was another true kingdom of David, which only Christ received; and there was another seed of David, which

abides forever, from which Christ alone was born, who alone is the true son of David, whose name alone he also received, as it is written: 'I have found David my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him.' (Psalm 88:21). Certainly, these things are said not about the prophet David, but about the Lord; for it is written: 'I have found help upon a mighty one, and have exalted one chosen out of my people.' (Ibid., 20). For only Christ is powerful, only Christ is chosen. For the seed of the saints is greater in faith than in generation. And therefore the Apostle says: For if those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. (Galatians 3:7).

45. Moreover, we believe that it should not be overlooked that from the time of David until Jechoniah, that is, until the captivity, when there were seventeen kings of Judah, holy Matthew records fourteen generations; and again from Jechoniah until Joseph, when there are separately counted twelve generations, he mentions that fourteen generations have been described. For this is how it goes: All the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to Christ, fourteen generations (Matt. 1:17). And first it is necessary to know, as we have already said, that there can be multiple successions and fewer generations. For some can live longer and generate later, or certainly not exist at all for generations. Therefore, the times of generations are not the same as the times of kings. Hence, Matthew passed over those whom he did not consider to belong to the generation. For if it were his intention to describe successions, we could reasonably ask why, when it is consistent with the books of Kings and Chronicles, he states that after Joram, Ochozias reigned, and Jodam, and Amasias, but Amasias was succeeded by Ozias. Saint Matthew skipped over those three kings, Ochozias, Jodam, and Amasias, and added Josaphat after Joram. (2 Kings 8:22 and onwards; 2 Chronicles 22:1 and onwards). But, he did not subject him in the succession of kings, but in the generation. Finally, he mentioned that he was the recorder of the generations: it could have happened that Joram fathered children later, and Josaphat took the kingdom later; and thus Joram succeeded his father, whom he did not succeed in power, in the generation.

46. And indeed, if you carefully observe, the Evangelist seems to have counted twelve generations after Jechoniah, and here too you will be able to find a reason for fourteen generations. You will be able to find a reason for twelve generations. For twelve are counted up to Joseph, not up to Christ. The thirteenth is Christ. But it does not matter whether the lie is in two generations or in one. Yet, even here, you will not find any blind cliff or shipwreck of truth. The history indicates that there were two Joachims, that is, two Jehoiachins: one before the exile, and the other generated during the exile, that is, the father and the son. Therefore, the father is counted among the earlier generations, who succeeded Josiah; the son among the later generations, who succeeded his father, that is, the grandson of Josiah. The books of the Kings also indicate that there were two kingdoms. For it is written: 'And Pharaoh commanded over Israel, with Joachim the son of Josiah reigning in Judah in place of his father Josiah; and he changed the name Joachim when he began to reign, and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem' (2 Kings 23:34-36). To whom Joachim subjected: And the rest of the words of Joachim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of words, and in the days of those who reigned in Judah? And Joachim slept with his fathers; and Joachim his son reigned in his stead Joachim was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem: his mother's name was Mesola And all that he did was done before the Lord's eyes, and he did it: and in his days Nebuchadnezzar, the

king of Babylon, came up into Jerusalem (2 Kings 24:5 et seq.). Therefore, you see that there was another son of Josiah, another grandson: that son to whom Jeremiah gave the name, and this grandson who was called by his father's name. And the holy Matthew wanted to differ from the Prophets, so that he would not call him Joachim, but Jechoniah. At the same time, as we have said above, he showed a greater fruit of divine piety, if the Lord did not seek nobility of lineage in all: but he wanted to be born fittingly from captives and sinners, who came to preach forgiveness to captives. Therefore, one Gospel writer did not omit the other, but both were indicated; each of them being called Jechonias. Thus, by adding the younger Jechonias, fourteen generations are counted. Therefore, that is what Matthew said.

However, Luke, because he could not comprehend all the sons of Jacob, so as not to appear to stray beyond the generations with an unnecessary series; although he deemed that the names of the patriarchs should not be passed over in other cases, that is, the far posterior ones, but should be chosen above the rest, Joseph, Judah, Simeon, and Levi (Luke 3:30). For we know that there were four generations of virtues in those of whom these men are descendants. In Judah, that is, in the upper one, it was prophesied through the figure of Judah that the mystery of the passion would take place on the Lord's Day (Gen. XLIX, 11): in Joseph, the example of chastity preceding (Gen. XXXIX, 7): in Simeon, the avenging of an affronted honor (Gen. XXXIV, 25): in Levi, the office of the priest (Num. III, 6). We also see the dignity of prophecy expressed through Nathan (II Sam. XII, 1), so that because Christ Jesus is one who encompasses everything, he would precede in each of the greater ranks of virtues with various differences.

48. The commemoration of Noah, a righteous man, should also not be omitted among the generations of the Lord's Day; so that since he was born as the builder of the Church, he may seem to have preceded the author of his own generation, who had established it beforehand in a type (Gen. VI, 14). For what shall I say about Methuselah, whose years are counted beyond the flood (Gen. V, 27); so that since Christ alone is he, whose life did not experience any age, he would also seem not to have experienced the floods in his forebears. But is not Enoch a clear indication of the Lord's mercy and divinity; for he did not experience death, and he returned to heaven, of which kind the author was taken up to heaven? Therefore it is evident that Christ could have chosen not to die, but He did not want to, so that His death would benefit us. And indeed, Enoch was taken up so that wickedness would not change his heart; but the Lord, whom the wickedness of the world could not change, returned to the majesty of His own nature from where He had come. Indeed, the murderer of his brother is silent; for it was not reasonable that he who had killed his brother should be counted among the authors of the Lord, since this one had saved slaves in order to honor them with the name of brother: he did not save them, nor did he spare his brother. But neither is it without purpose that Seth was not passed over, whom Adam conceived in the later generation; so that when there are two generations of people, the Lord Jesus Christ might be marked as being counted in the later generation rather than the earlier one.

49. Now since Adam himself, according to the Apostle's teaching (Rom. V. 14), received a foreshadowing of Christ, what could be more fitting than that the most holy generation should begin with the Son of God and proceed to the Son of God: the created preceding in figure, so that the begotten might follow in truth: made in the image going before, for whom the image of God would descend? And if we examine the mystery of the first error, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, with the devil deceiving and Eve persuading, he tasted it; so that he, before knowing evil,

might choose good, and, following the advice of the Church, might reject the treachery of the serpent, according to what is written: "For before the child knows how to choose the good or the evil, he will not believe in evil in order to choose what is good. And, before he knows how to call his father or mother, he will receive the power of Damascus, and the spoils of Samaria (Isaiah 8:4). For this is the child whose cradle the Magi brought back with eastern spoils (Matthew 2:11); because the unbelieving nation, before Christ, offered triumphal gifts to the Lord, already having changed their faith from the idols' spoils.

50. Brother, I thought I should explain these things to you more extensively about the birth of Christ, so that no one, reading the Gospel with less attentive mind, would be in any way confused. The holy evangelists, in their haste to move on to greater miracles and more divine deeds of the Lord, thought it necessary to touch on these things briefly rather than expanding on them extensively. Following their example of those who think it sufficient to point out certain familiar routes and paths to those who are unaware, by gathering the paths of the spiritual journey, I will see whether we strive towards the secrets of the mysteries with a second outcome of truth and certainly a religious guidance of faith: fearing that, when someone reads these things, they would handle things that are difficult for a child, as the saying goes, not knowing how to wield strong weapons in their infancy, and that they would feel more injury from ignorance than salvation from reading. For their weapons harm the weak, and one who does not know how to wield them cannot use them well. And therefore, a perfect man is required for faith, in whom infancy does not crawl on the ground of knowledge, nor does a certain weakness stumble in the age lacking senses of mystical understanding, which, having lost the strength of youth, does not seek the crown of glorious struggle, and like an aging eagle, which had been accustomed to snatch rabbits or geese with its feet, now seeks the featherless offspring of smaller birds, who are unable to provide a more substantial food.

Book Four Certainly, I think that we have not made an absurd work concerning the generation of the Lord: certainly, it was not fruitless to dwell on the ancestors of the Lord for a longer time. For if those who prepare to cross the great sea by coastal navigation, seeking a shorter path, frequently visit the fields and cities located on the shore, avoiding the weakness of trust, how much more ought we, in such a deep longing for not the elements, but the celestial events, to choose the closer harbors and to frequently love excursions! No one, tired of long navigation, can endure the vomit of disgust. Certainly if anyone has seen the dangers of a treacherous boat, like a frequent port of books, it is allowed to take off the sails of the ears and set the anchor of reading. It does not seem to have abandoned the ship, but to have completed the journey, which descends into the port. And in many places, the very beauty of the location may invite passers-by. For if that Ulysses, as the stories go (although the Prophet also said, 'The daughters of the Sirens shall dwell there' - Isaiah 13:21 - even if the prophet had not said it, no one would rightly criticize; since both the giants and the valley of the Titans are mentioned in Scripture), if therefore they were able to hold back Ulysses himself, after ten years of exile and ten years of wandering, hastening to his homeland, with the sweetness of the lotus fruit; if the gardens of Alcinous delayed him; if finally the Sirens, with the allure of their singing voice, had almost led him to that famous shipwreck of pleasure, were it not for the wax inserted to close the ears of his companions against the alluring sound of their song, how much more will religious men be delighted by the admiration of celestial works! And here, now, not the sweetness of berries is to be tasted, but that bread which

descended from heaven: not the gardens of Alcinous are to be observed, but the sacraments of Christ. For he who is weak, let him eat vegetables (Rom. XIV, 2). Therefore, the ears are not to be closed, but to be opened: so that the voice of Christ can be heard, which whoever receives, will not fear shipwreck. Not to be bound, like Ulysses, with physical chains to a tree, but the soul must be bound to the wood of the cross with spiritual bonds; lest it be moved by the allurements of excess and turn the course of nature into the danger of pleasure. For in poetic fictions a story is colored; for example, some girls are said to have lived on a rocky shore of the sea: if they had diverted any ships due to the sweetness of their voices, they would have been led into hidden shallows and deceived by an untrustworthy landing, and would have met a miserable fate of shipwreck. This composition is painted with a certain appearance and an ambitious comparison; so that the sea, the voice, the women, and the shallow shores are imagined. But why is the sea more treacherous than the age, so untrustworthy, so changeable, so deep, so tempestuous with the blasts of unclean spirits? What does the figure of girls mean, if not the allure of emasculated pleasure, which weakens the steadfastness of a captivated mind? And what are those reefs, if not the cliffs of our salvation? For nothing is as blind as the danger of worldly sweetness: while it soothes the soul, it overwhelms life and strikes the sense of the mind against certain bodily reefs.

4. Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ, by His fasting and solitude in the face of the allurements of pleasure, and by allowing Himself to be tempted by the devil, truly teaches us all to overcome. Let us therefore take note that the Evangelist, guided by the Lord, has described three things that are not without purpose. These three things are of great benefit to human salvation: sacrament, solitude, and fasting. For no one is crowned unless they have fought lawfully (2 Timothy 2:5), and no one is admitted to the contest of virtue unless they have first been cleansed of all the stains of sins and consecrated by the gift of heavenly grace.

5. Therefore the Lord came to the bath, so that by the grace of the mystery he might be proven to us both by sight and by feeling. And since the Law is proclaimed by witnesses in heaven and on earth, so that you might believe that the hidden mystery of divinity is more to be believed in God than the Law: now heaven is not called as a witness, but it serves as a witness when the voice of God is carried from heaven. At the same time, lest you stumble upon the mystery of faith with a doubtful mind, the invisible things are visibly shown to you working.

6. The Lord came to the bath; for everything has been done for you. To those who were under the Law, he seemed as if subject to the Law, though he himself was not under the Law, he was circumcised; so that he might profit those who were under the Law: he associated with those who were without the Law in common fellowship; so that he might gain those who were living without the Law. He became weak for the weak through the suffering of his body; so that he might profit the weak. In the end, he became all things to all people, poor to the poor, rich to the rich, weeping to those who weep, hungry to those who hunger, thirsty to those who thirst, overflowing to those who abound. He is in prison with the poor, he weeps with Mary, he feasts with the apostles, he thirsts with the Samaritan woman: he is hungry in the desert; so that the food of the first man, which he tasted by his transgression, might be satisfied by the fasting of the Lord. Adam, in our danger, broke the hunger for the knowledge of good and evil; this one took on hunger for our benefit.

(Chap. IV. — Vers. 1.)

(Chapter 4, Verse 1) Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

7. It is fitting to recall how Adam, the first man, was expelled from paradise into the desert (Gen. III, 24), in order to observe how the second Adam returned from the desert to paradise. For you should see how through his knots the prejudices are dissolved, and through his divine benefits they are reformed. From the virgin earth Adam (Gen. II, 7), Christ from the virgin: the former made in the image of God (Gen. I, 27), the latter the image of God: the former placed above all irrational animals (Ibid., 28), the latter preceded by all living creatures. Through a woman came folly, through a virgin came wisdom. Death came through a tree, life through a cross. He who was naked of spiritual things covered himself with the leaves of trees; he who was naked of worldly things did not desire the clothing of the body. Adam was in the desert, Christ was in the desert; for he knew where he could find the condemned one, whom he would recall from error to paradise. But since he, clothed in worldly garments, could not return, neither can he be an inhabitant of paradise unless he is naked of guilt; he put off the old man, he put on the new; so that, since divine decrees cannot be revoked, the person rather than the sentence might be changed. But he who lost his way in Paradise without a guide, just as he could repeat a lost journey from the desert without a guide, where there are many temptations, difficult effort towards virtue, and easy fall into error: since the nature of virtue is the same as that of the woods; just as if they still rise up from earthly things to heavenly things, while their tender age grows with leaves, they can easily be cut down or burned by a cruel venomous creature; but if they have deeply rooted themselves and have been lifted up by the height of their branches, a strong tree is in vain tried by the bites of wild beasts, or by the arms of peasants, or by the blasts of different winds.

9. Therefore, who would oppose the leader against so many allurements of the world, against so many cunning devices of the devil; when he knew that for us there is first a struggle against flesh and blood, then against powers, against rulers of this dark world, against spiritual wickedness in high places? Would he oppose an angel? But even he fell, and legions of angels could scarcely help each individual. Would he direct a seraph? But even he descended to the earth in the midst of a people with impure lips, and with only one prophet's lips, touched with a coal, he was cleansed (Isaiah 6:6-7). Another leader had to be sought, whom we would all follow. Who could be such a leader, who would benefit everyone, except the one who is above all? Who would establish me above the world, except the one who is greater than the world? Who could be such a leader, who could rule male and female, Jew and Greek, Barbarian and Scythian, slave and free with one command; except the one who is everything and in all things, Christ alone?

10. For in every direction we are ensnared. There are snares in the body, snares in the Law, snares in the wings of the temples, snares in the corners of the walls stretched out by the devil. There are snares in the philosophers, snares in desires; for the eye of a harlot is a snare for the sinner: there are snares in money, snares in religion, snares in the pursuit of chastity. For in brief moments the human mind is inclined, and it is frequently impelled here and there by the cunning persuader. The devil sees a religious man, venerating God respectfully, and valuing what is sacred, incapable of any injury. In religion itself, he undermines him, making him not believe that the Son of God truly took on our flesh, this body of ours, this fragility of our members; even though there was certainly passion of the body, his divinity remained immune to injury. Thus, fault is made concerning religion; indeed, anyone who denies that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is not of God

(2 John 7). He sees a man of intact and untarnished chastity, and urges that he condemns marriage; so that he may be expelled from the Church, and separated from the chaste body by the pursuit of chastity. Another hears that there is One God from whom are all things, whom he adores and venerates (1 Cor. 8:6). The devil plots against him, closing his ears so that he may not hear that there is One God through whom are all things (ibid.): thus, excessive piety compels him to be impious; while he separates the Father from the Son, he confuses the Father and the Son, and thinks that one person is, not authority. Therefore, while he does not know the measure of faith, he incurs the torment of infidelity.

11. How then will we avoid these snares, so that we can say: 'Our soul was like a bird delivered from the snare of the hunters: the snare has been broken, and we have been set free' (Psalm 123:7)? David does not say: 'I broke the snare'; David did not dare to say this, but rather: 'Our help is in the name of the Lord' (ibid., 8), to show from where the snare would be broken, to prophesy that the one who would come into this life would break the snare prepared by the devil in deceit.

12. But the noose could not have been better used, unless it had shown some prey to the devil; so that while he hastens to the prey, he himself would be caught in his own snares, and I could say: They prepared snares for my feet, and they themselves fell into them (Psalm 56:7). What could the prey be, if not the body? Therefore, it was necessary for this deceit to be done by the devil, so that the Lord Jesus would take on a body, and this corruptible body, a weak body; so that He would be crucified out of weakness. For if it were a spiritual body, He would not have said: 'The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak' (Matthew 26:41). Therefore, hear both voices: the willing spirit and the weak flesh. 'Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me' (Ibid., 39): this is the voice of the flesh. But not what I want, but what you want: you have the devotion of the spirit and the strength. Why do you reject the grace of the Lord? It is by His grace that He has taken on my body, it is by His grace that He has endured my injuries and weaknesses, which the nature of God certainly could not feel, since even the nature of man has learned to despise or endure them. And therefore let us follow Christ, as it is written: After the Lord your God shall you walk, and to Him alone shall you cleave (Deut. X, 20, and XIII, 4). Whom shall I cleave to, if not to Christ, as Paul said: He who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit (I Cor. VI, 17)? Therefore, let us follow His footsteps, so that we may return from the desert to paradise.

13. And see by which routes we shall be brought back. Now in the desert Christ is, he acts as a man, he instructs, informs, exercises, anoints with spiritual oil: where he sees one more robust, he leads through cultivated and fruitful fields, when the Jews complained (Matthew XII, 2) that his disciples plucked ears of corn on the Sabbath day (for he had already placed his apostles in a cultivated and fruitful field); afterwards he established them in paradise at the time of his passion; for you have it this way: When Jesus had spoken these things, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into which he entered, he and his disciples (John XVIII, 1). For the fertile field teaches that a garden is better, as the Prophet says in the Song of Songs: My sister, my bride, is a enclosed garden, a enclosed garden, a sealed fountain, your shoots are a paradise (Song of Songs 4:12-13). For it is the pure and immaculate virginity of the soul, which is not led astray by any terror of punishment, nor by any siren calls of worldly pleasure, nor by any love of life. Finally, the Evangelist testifies that man is called back by the power of the Lord, above all others, who alone quotes the Lord saying to the thief: Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise (Luke 23:43).

14. Therefore, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, was led into the desert: by plan, in order to provoke the devil; for unless he had fought, that one would not have conquered me: by mystery, in order to free Adam from exile; by example, in order to show us that the devil envies those who strive for better things; and then it is all the more necessary to be cautious, lest the weakness of the mind forsake the grace of the mystery.

(Vers. 2.)

Forty days.

15. You recognize the mystical number. For you remember that the waters of the abyss were poured out for so many days (Gen. VII, 12), and so many days of fasting sanctified the prophet, the mercy of the clearer sky was withdrawn (III Reg. XIX, 8). For so many days of fasting the holy Moses obtained the perception of the Law (Exod. XXXIV, 28). For so many years, the fathers who dwelled in the wilderness obtained the bread of angels and the grace of celestial nourishment (Num. XIV, 32): and not before the time of the mystical number was fulfilled did they deserve to enter the land of promise. Until the day of the Lord's fasting opens to us the entrance into the Gospel. Therefore, if anyone desires to obtain the glory of the Gospel and the fruit of the resurrection, they should not be a transgressor of the mystical fast; for both Moses in the Law, and Christ in his Gospel, prescribed that it is a faithful contest of virtue.

16. But what does it mean that the Evangelist indicated that the Lord was hungry, when we do not see any such expression of fasting concerning Moses and Elijah? Is the patience of men stronger than God? But he, who could not endure to be hungry for forty days, showed that he hungered not for food of the body, but for salvation: at the same time, he provoked his adversary, already fearing him, who had been wounded by a fast of forty days. And therefore, the hunger of the Lord is a holy deceit; so that, in the very thing in which the devil, now fearing greater things, was taking precautions, being deceived under the appearance of hunger, he might tempt the man, so that the triumph might not be hindered. At the same time, learn this mystery: that the work of the Holy Spirit was a divine judgment, so that Christ would offer himself to be pursued by the devil.

(Vers. 3.)

(Verse 3) But the devil said to him: If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.

17. We are taught that there are three principal weapons of the devil, with which he is accustomed to arm himself to wound the mind of man: one is gluttony, another is boasting, and the third is ambition. Now, he began where he has already conquered. And therefore, I begin to conquer in Christ, where I was conquered in Adam; if indeed Christ is to me the image of the Father, the example of virtue. Let us therefore learn to beware of gluttony, to beware of luxury, because it is the weapon of the devil. The snare is set when the royal feast is prepared, which often inclines the constancy of the mind. For not only when we hear the words of the devil, but also when we see his forces, we must avoid the snare. Therefore, you have learned the weapon of the devil, take the shield of faith and the breastplate of abstinence.

18. But what does he mean by such a beginning of speech: If you are the Son of God; unless because he had known that the Son of God would come? But he did not think that he had come

through this weakness of the body. It is one thing to explore, another to tempt; and he professes to believe in God, and he tries to deceive man.

19. But see the weapons of Christ with which He conquered for you, not for Himself. For He who showed that by the power of His majesty stones could be turned into bread by the transmutation of another nature, teaches you that nothing is to be done at the discretion of the devil, nor by the contemplation of declaring virtue. Learn at the same time in the very temptation the cunning of the devil as an artist. He tempts in this way, so that he may explore: he explores in this way, so that he may tempt. But the Lord deceives in such a way that He may conquer: He still conquers in such a way that He may deceive. For if she had changed her nature, she would have betrayed her Creator. Therefore, she responded in the middle, saying:

(Vers. 4.)

(Verse 4.) It is written that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

You see by what kind of armor he defends himself against the onslaught of spiritual wickedness, how he is surrounded and protected against the snares of gluttony? For he does not use his power as God (for what would it profit me), but he calls upon the common help of a man; so that being intent on the divine food of reading, he neglects the hunger of the body and acquires nourishment of the heavenly Word. Moses, being intent on this, did not desire bread; Elijah, being intent on this, did not feel the hunger of prolonged fasting. For one who follows the Word, cannot desire earthly bread, since he receives the substance of heavenly bread; for it is certain that God grants divine things to human beings, and spiritual things to corporeal ones. And therefore, one who desires true life should seek that bread which strengthens human hearts through imperceptible substance. At the same time, when he says, 'Man does not live by bread alone,' he shows that he himself, as a human being, was tempted, that is, our assumption, not his divinity.

21. It follows the weapon of boasting, by which one is inclined to go astray; because while people desire to boast of the glory of their virtue, they depart from the place of their merits and station.

(Vers. 9.)

(Verse 9.) And he led him, he said, into Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple.

Indeed, it is such boasting that while each individual thinks they are ascending to higher things, they are actually being forced down to lower things by the presumption of their accomplishments. And he said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down.'

Truly a diabolical voice, which strives to bring down the mind of man from a higher level of merits. For what is more characteristic of the devil than to persuade each individual to cast themselves downward?

24. Learn, therefore, to conquer the devil yourself. The spirit is at work in you, follow the spirit: do not let the allure of the flesh bring you back, filled with the spirit learn to despise pleasures. Fast, if you want to conquer. It follows that, through a man, the devil may think to tempt you: Christ, as the stronger, is tempted face to face, you through a man. And that word of the devil is, when a man says: You are strong, eat and drink, and the same in the morning. Do not trust yourself, do not be ashamed to need protections, which Christ did not need; and yet he did not neglect them, in order

to teach you, saying: Take heed lest your hearts be weighed down with debauchery and drunkenness (Luke 21:34). Paul was not ashamed, who said: Surely, not as beating the air (1 Cor. IX, 26). The Apostle did not beat the air indeed: but he fought against the powers of the air. But I chastise my body, he says, and bring it into subjection; lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (Ibid., 27).

25. At the same time, the devil points to his own weakness and wickedness; because the devil can harm no one unless he sends himself. For he who, having abandoned heavenly things, chooses earthly things, runs headlong into a voluntary precipice of life. At the same time, since the devil saw that his weapon was dull, he began to judge more than man, who had subjected all men to his own power. But the Lord again did not think that even those things which were prophesied about him should be done at the discretion of the devil: but, preserved by the authority of his own divinity, he countered his cunning; so that he who had put forward the example of the Scriptures would be overcome by examples from the Scriptures. For God has the power to conquer, who conquers me.

26. Learn here also that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, and often prepares a snare for the faithful from the very divine Scriptures themselves. He makes heretics thus, he tears apart the faith thus, he attacks the rights of piety thus. Therefore let not the heretic capture you; for he can bring forth some examples from the Scriptures, nor should he assume for himself that he appears learned. The devil also uses testimonies of the Scriptures not to teach, but to circumscribe and deceive. He knew someone devoted to religion, distinguished by virtues, powerful in signs and works: he sets a trap for his boasting, inflating such a man with pride; so that he does not trust in piety, but in boasting; he does not attribute to God, but arrogates to himself. And therefore the apostles commanded the demons not in their own name, but in the name of Christ; so that they would not seem to claim anything for themselves. Thus Peter heals the paralytic, saying: In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk (Acts 3:6). Also learn to avoid boasting about Paul. I know, he said, a man, whether in the body, or outside the body I do not know, God knows, because he was caught up into paradise and heard ineffable words, which it is not lawful for a man to speak. For suchlike I will glory, but for myself I will not glory, except in my infirmities (2 Corinthians XII, 3-5).

27. Therefore, this devil, since he sensed strength, pretends to have arrogance, which also deceives the strong. But the Lord replied to him: You shall not tempt the Lord your God. In this, you recognize both the Lord and the God Christ: both the Father and the Son of the same power, according to what is written: I and the Father are one (John 10:30). And therefore, if the devil claims to be one, oppose him because it is written: I and the Father are one. And distinguish the One, so that you may not discern power: distinguish the One, so that you may not separate the Father and the Son.

(Vers. 5.)

(Verse 5.) And the devil led him again to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in an instant.

28. In a moment of time, worldly and earthly things are shown to be good. For it is not so much the speed of appearance that is indicated, as the transient fragility of power is expressed; for in a moment all those things pass away, and often the honor of the world departs before it even

comes. For what can be lasting of the world, when the very ages themselves are not lasting? Here we are taught to despise the empty gusts of ambition, because all worldly dignity is subject to diabolical power: meant for use, and empty of fruit.

29. But how does the devil have power here, when elsewhere it is written that All power comes from God (Rom. XIII, 1)? Can someone serve two masters or receive power from two? Is it therefore contradictory? No. But see that everything is from God; for the world is not without God; for And the world was made by Him (John I, 10): but although it was made by God, its works are evil, for the world is placed in the evil one; and the order of the world is from God, but the works of the world are from the evil one (John V, 19). So too the order of powers is from God: the evil ambition for power. Finally: There is no power except from God: those things however that exist are ordered from God (Rom. XIII, 1); not given, but ordered: and, Whoever resists the power, resists the ordination of God (Ibid., 2). Here too, although the devil may claim to give himself power, he does not deny that all those things are allowed to him for a time. Therefore, the one who permitted, ordained: and it is not the power that is evil, but the one who misuses power. Finally, can you not fear power? Do good, and you will have praise from it (Ibid., 3). Therefore, it is not power that is evil, but ambition. Finally, to such an extent is the ordering of power from God; that he is a minister of God, who makes good use of power: it is, he says, a minister of God for you unto good (Ibid., 4). Therefore, there is no fault in the office, but in the minister: nor can the ordering of God displease, but the action of the administrator. For as we derive an example from the heavenly to the earthly, the emperor gives honor, and it is received with praise. But if someone has made bad use of honor, it is not the fault of the emperor, but of the judge. They have their own crimes, not because power implicates everyone, but because of their own malice.

30. So, what then? Is it good to use power, to pursue honor? It is good if it is bestowed, not taken away. However, distinguish this very good itself. For one person is good in this age, another person is the use of perfect virtue; for it is good to be occupied with the study of divine things, impeded by no occupations. For although there are many good things, there is only one eternal life: And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent (John 17:3). And so the greatest fruit of eternal life, and the only God who rewards eternal life, is. Let us adore God alone, our Lord, and let us serve Him alone, so that He alone may reward us with the greatest fruit. Let us flee from all things that are subject to the power of the devil, so that he, like an evil tyrant, does not use the cruelty of his power against those whom he finds within his kingdom.

Therefore, power does not belong to the devil, but is nevertheless subject to the snares of the devil. However, the bad ordering of powers does not come from the fact that powers are subject to evil. It is good to seek God, but certain twists and errors can creep into one's search. For if an inquisitor turns to sacrilege through a harsh interpretation, the offense of the seeker is worsened, compared to if they had not sought at all. However, the blame lies not with the search, but with the seeker, and not with the search being subject to evil, but with the seeker's desires. But if he who seeks God is often tempted because of the fragility of the flesh and the narrowness of the mind, how much more so is he who seeks the world! And by this very factor, ambition is more pernicious, because it is a deceptive reconciler of dignities; and often it makes those who are not pleased by any vices, whom no luxury was able to move, no greed to overthrow, into criminals. For it has the charm of the courtroom, the wickedness of the household: and in order to dominate others, it first

serves. He bends in compliance, in order to be honored; and while he desires to be higher, with feigned humility, he becomes lower and more lenient; for in power itself, what excels is foreign; for he rules by laws, but serves himself.

Someone may say that only the one who does evil is afraid; however, the one who sails the sea is more afraid. And, on the contrary, standing in a stationary position on land, one does not usually fear shipwreck; but if they board a moving element, they become more subject to frequent dangers. Therefore, flee from the sea of the world, and you will not fear shipwreck. And even if the blasts of winds whip the tops of trees frequently, as long as the roots are solid, there is no downfall. But in the raging winds of the sea, although it is not the shipwreck of all, it is the danger of all. For in this way, in the face of the spiritual winds of wickedness, no one is safe on land or at sea, and ships of Tharsis are often destroyed by violent winds. This has a moral significance.

33. Moreover, with regard to the mystical order, you see the bonds of ancient error released from their traces; so that firstly, the snare of gluttony, secondly, the snare of ease, and thirdly, the snare of ambition would be dissolved. For Adam was seduced by food: and by transgressing the command of the forbidden tree, he also incurred the crime of reckless ambition, while desiring to be like God. Therefore, the Lord first released the bonds of the old injustice; so that with the yoke of captivity cast off, we might learn to conquer sins with the help of Scripture.

34. But if the Lord Jesus did not desire his own possessions, why do you seek what is another's? If the creator of all things, by the virtue of embracing poverty, disregarded glory, why do you despise what you were born into and desire what is not owed to you? Why do you pursue things that cannot endure for your use but will endure for your punishment? Beware of snares, beware of deceit. And precisely because the cunning devil shakes the whole world by his deceit in order to overthrow man, let him engage in the allurements of the whole age, his flattery must be more guarded against by you. He had not inflected the grace of Eve or forsaken the commandments: but the alluring ambition of promised honor deceived him. If he had desired only to worship the Lord, he would not have sought inappropriate things. And therefore, the remedy is given so that you may blunt the weapon of ambition, let us serve only the Lord; for religious devotion lacks ambition.

(Vers. 13.)

(Verse 13) And when every temptation had been completed, the devil departed from him for a time.

35. These three types of vices are shown to be the sources of almost all crimes. For Scripture would not have called every temptation complete unless all the matter of sins was included in these three, the seeds of which must be avoided at their very origin. Therefore, the end of temptations is the end of desires; for the causes of temptations are the causes of desires. And the causes of desires are pleasure of the flesh, the appearance of glory, and the yearning for power. How religious it seems not to refuse the company of Christian women! But there is frequent temptation from it. If the devil sees you attentive to God, he suggests deceiving you: but even if you presume with good intentions, beware of temptation, knowing human nature. These three, if you remember, Paul also prescribes to be avoided, identifying them as three kinds of sins, from which the book of righteousness expects a crown. For we were not, he says, in a word of flattery,

nor in occasion of covetousness, God is witness, nor seeking glory from men (I Thess. II, 5 and 6); and therefore he conquered the devil, and sought the crown.

You see, therefore, that the devil himself is not obstinate in his resistance, but usually gives way to true virtue. And even if he does not cease to envy, he still fears to persist; because he more often avoids being defeated. Therefore, having heard the name of God, he withdrew, saying, 'For now, but I will come back later, not to tempt, but to openly fight.'

Therefore, divine Scripture teaches you that your struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces. You see the magnificence of the Christian man who fights against the rulers of the world: although he is on earth, he prevails against the spiritual wickedness in heavenly places with the strength of his soul. For we do not strive for earthly things in order to fight on earth; rather, spiritual obstacles must first be overcome in pursuit of the spiritual rewards of the Kingdom of God and the inheritance of Christ. The crown is proposed, the battles must be undertaken. No one can be crowned unless they have won: no one can win unless they have fought before. The greater the labor, the greater the fruit of the crown itself: For the way that leads to life is narrow and difficult . . . but the way that leads to death is broad and spacious (Matthew 7:14 and 13). Therefore, we should by no means fear temptation; for it is the cause of victory and the material of triumphs.

38. That wealthy person, who did not experience temptation in this world, is in hell: that poor person Lazarus, who was afflicted and worn down by poverty and sickness, to the point that his sores were licked by dogs, in the misery of this life sought the crown of eternal glory. Many are the tribulations, not of just anyone, but of the righteous. Indeed, those whom the Lord loves, he often chastises. Peter was tempted to deny: he denied, so that he might weep (Luke 22:57 et seq.). And what shall I say about the others? Indeed, Job was tested by God: but although he was tested, he was not victorious (Job 1:12 and 2:6). Devotion was proven; however, it did not have the reward of virtue. And therefore, he is offered to be tempted, so that he might be made more glorious.

39. It also matters with respect to that contest that you should look at the steps. The devil does not have just one weapon, he frequents arrows; in order to conquer either by reward or by weariness. At first he wounds with desire, second with piety, third with health; for he fights both the mind and body with sores. Moreover, the very diversity of temptations is according to the diversity of those contending. The rich man is pressed by the loss of covetousness, the father by the expenditure of his children, the man by sorrows, the body by sores. How great these weapons are! From where the Lord did not want to have what he would lose; and therefore the poor man came here, so that the devil would not have what he would take away. Do you want to know how true this is? Listen to the Lord himself saying: The prince of this world comes, and he found nothing in me (John 14:30). He also did not want to be the father of a few, so that he would be the father of all. But in vain he was afflicted with the ulcers of the body, who despised all the sufferings of the body: at the same time to show us that victory, once the enemy of the body was driven away, would belong to him. But that one, as if a man, is tempted by his own, while this one by public things: to the former, his patrimony is taken away, to the latter, the kingdom of the world is offered. Nor is the whole devil without deceit, who fears to provoke the Son of God: he tempts him with insults, this one with rewards. The former, as if a servant, says: The Lord gave, the Lord took away (Job 1:21): the latter, aware of his own nature and disposition, laughs to see himself offered to himself. And to

return to that, one message comes after another (Ibid., 14 and following): wounds are repeated; yet the strong athlete is not disturbed in mind. The snare of the first deception is applied by a woman: this one, being born of a virgin not subject to error, did not have. Friends are applied who oppress the reluctant with wicked advice. But in all that happened to him, Job did not sin with his lips in the sight of God.

40. For what he cursed the day, saying: Let that day perish wherein I was born (Job 3:3); and further: And let him curse that day who curses the day, who has the power to crush the great sea monster (Ibid., 3:8). This pertains to prophecy; because our Lord Jesus Christ, like a mighty sea monster of this tempestuous age, has crushed the devil, and desires the day of his carnal generation to perish, so that his day may be counted in regeneration. Let the secular day perish, he says, so that the spiritual day may arise. Therefore, in temptation, the holy Job spoke of mysteries; for he who conquers the world, sees Christ. So let us not fear temptations, but rather let us glory in temptations, saying: When we are weak, then we are strong; for then the crown of righteousness is bestowed (II Cor. XII, 10). But that may perhaps be more applicable to Paul; however, we, because there are many crowns, should hope for whichever one. In this world, the laurel is a crown, the shield is a crown. But for you, the crown of delights is set before you: For the crown of delights shall overshadow you (Prov. IV, 9). And elsewhere: He will surround you with the shield of his good will (Psalm 5:13). Glory and honor also the Lord, whom he loved, he has crowned (Psalm 8:6). Therefore, whoever wants to give a crown, suggests temptations. And if ever you are tempted, know that a crown is prepared. Take away the struggles of the martyrs, you have borne the crowns; take away the tortures, you have borne the beatitudes.

42. Is not the temptation of Joseph the consecration of his virtue? Is not the injustice of the prison the crown of his chastity? How could he have attained a share in the kingdom of Egypt unless he had been sold by his brothers? This was done by God's appointment, that he might show himself just, as he said: "This is how it shall happen today, that a great people shall be fed" (Genesis 50:20). Therefore, we ought not to fear the temptations of the world as evils, since they are compared to good rewards; but rather we should pray, considering the nature of human condition, that we may undergo those temptations which we are able to bear.

(Vers. 14.)

(Verse 14) And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.

43. This prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in this place, saying: The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, along with the people who dwell by the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light (Isaiah 9:1-2). For who is the great light but Christ, who enlightens every person coming into the world?

44. (Verse 17.) Then he took the book, in order to show that he himself is the one who spoke in the Prophets: and to remove the sacrileges of the faithless, who say that there is one God of the Old Testament and another of the New; or who say that the beginning of Christ is from a virgin: for how could he begin from a virgin, he who spoke before the virgin?

(Vers. 18.)

(Verse 18) The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.

45. You see the Trinity coeternal and perfect. The Scripture speaks of Jesus as both God and man, complete in both aspects: it speaks of God as the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is shown to be a cooperator when, in the form of a dove, he descended upon Christ; when the Son of God was baptized in the river, the Father spoke from heaven. Therefore, what greater testimony do we seek than the fact that the one who spoke in the Prophets, signed it with his own voice? He is anointed with spiritual oil and heavenly power, so that he may water the poverty of human condition with the treasure of resurrection, turn away the captivity of the mind, enlighten the blindness of souls, proclaim the year of the Lord spread through eternal times, which does not know how to return to the cycle of labor, and grant mankind the continuation of fruits and tranquility. And he so humbled himself to all obeisances, that he did not even despise the duty of the reader: but we, the impious ones, who denied the faith of divinity to be collected by the contemplation of his body's miracles.

(Vers. 24.)

(Verse 24.) Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.

46. It is betrayed not insignificantly by envy, which, forgetting civic charity, bends the causes of love into bitter hatred. At the same time, by this example and also by a divine oracle, it is declared that in vain you expect the help of heavenly mercy if you envy the fruits of another's virtue; for the Lord despises the envious, and he turns away the miracles of his power from those who pursue divine benefits in others. Indeed, the actions of the Lord's Sunday flesh are an example of divinity: and through them the invisible things of him are demonstrated to us through visible things.

Therefore, the Savior excuses that he has not worked any miracles of virtue in his own country, so that no one might think that he should have a lower affection for his country. For he could not fail to love his fellow citizens, since he loved all. But those who envy have cast themselves out, through their lack of love for their country. For love does not envy... does not boast (I Corinthians 13:4). However, the homeland is not devoid of divine blessings. For what greater miracle is there than that Christ was born in her? Therefore, see what evil envy brings. A homeland is judged unworthy because of envy, where a citizen works, which was worthy for the birth of the Son of God.

(Vers. 25.)

(Verse 25) Truly I say to you: There were many widows in the days of Elijah.

48. Not because there were days of Elias, but in which Elias worked: or because he made days for those who saw the light of spiritual grace in his works, and turned to the Lord. And therefore the heavens were opened to those who saw eternal and divine mysteries: they were closed when there was hunger; because there was no abundance of knowing divinity. But we have written more about this when we were writing about widows (Book on Widows).

(Vers. 27.)

(Verse 27.) And there were many lepers in Judea in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them were cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.

49. Clearly this speech informs us of the saving Word of the Lord, and encourages us to study the venerable divinity, which no one is shown to be healed from, and those afflicted with the disease of

the body are freed from the blemishes, except those who have devoted themselves to religious duty. For divine blessings are not bestowed upon those who sleep, but upon those who observe. And by a fitting example of comparison, the arrogance of the citizens is refuted by the envious, and it is taught that the Lord's deed is in agreement with the ancient Scriptures, which we also read in the books of Kings, that the Gentile man Naaman, freed from the blemishes of leprosy by the prophetic oracle, devoured many of the Jews with leprosy of both body and mind (2 Kings 5:14). Indeed, history relates that those four who were the first to approach the king of Syria's camp due to the pressing famine were lepers (2 Kings 7:3). So why did he not care for his brothers, not care for his fellow citizens, not heal his prophet companions? He healed those who were strangers, healed those who did not have adherence to the Law and participation in religion. Why? Because medicine is a matter of will, not of race; and the divine gift is chosen by wishes, not conferred by the right of nature. Learn, Christian, to ask what you desire to obtain: fastidious men do not follow the progress of heavenly rewards.

50. But although a simple explanation informs the moral sense; grace is not hidden from the mystery. For just as the later things are derived from the earlier, so the earlier things are confirmed by the later (Book of Widows). For we have said in another book, that in the widow to whom Elias was sent, the type of the Church is anticipated. The people agree with the Church, so that they may follow. That people gathered from foreigners, that people previously leprous, that people previously spotted before being baptized in the mystical river, the same after the sacrament of baptism, cleansed of the blemishes of body and mind, no longer lepers, but began to be an immaculate virgin without wrinkle. Therefore Naaman rightly appears great in the sight of his Lord, and is described as admirable in appearance; for in his case the future salvation of the Gentiles is declared, who, having come under the power of the enemy as a captive, with the advice of a young girl whose strength of the citizens had been broken, was informed to hope for salvation from the prophet (2 Kings 5:2), not by the command of an earthly king, but by the liberality of divine mercy, he is healed.

51. Why is one commanded to be submerged in the mystic number? Why is the river Jordan chosen? Isn't it true that the good rivers of Abana and Pharpar in Damascus are preferred over the Jordan (Ibid., 12)? But in anger, He preferred these; meditating, He chose Jordan. For anger does not know mystery, faith knows. Learn the grace of saving baptism: one who was submerged as a leper emerges as faithful. Learn to recognize the spiritual sacraments: bodily healing is sought, spiritual transformation is acquired. The flesh is washed, the affections are washed. For I see that not only the leprosy of the body, but also that of the mind, has been cleansed; since, after baptism, the filth of former error being washed away, he denies that he will offer sacrifices to foreign gods, which he had promised to the Lord.

52. Also learn the appropriate precepts of virtue: he who refuses rewards has proven his faith. Learn from both the teaching and the deeds what you should follow. You have the commandment of the Lord, the example of the prophet, to receive freely, to give freely: not to sell the ministry, but to offer it (Matthew 10:8). For the grace of God is not assessed by a price, nor is profit sought in the sacraments, but obedience to the priest.

53. However, it is not enough if you do not seek profit for yourself: your hands must also be restrained for the sake of your family. And we do not demand only this, that you alone keep

yourself chaste and undefiled. For the Apostle did not say, 'yourself alone' but 'keep yourself chaste' (I Tim. V, 22). Therefore, not only your chastity from these kinds of business dealings is sought, but also the chastity of your household. For it is necessary that a blameless priest be appointed to his own household, having obedient children, with all chastity. But if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for the Church of God? Therefore, instruct your family, encourage them, and watch over them. And if a servant deceives you (for I do not consider human ability), let him be rejected as an example of prophecy. Quickly, a shameful leprosy follows a wicked reward, and ill-gotten money stains both the body and the soul. You have received, it says, money, and you will possess from it land, vineyards, olive groves, and flocks. And Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and your descendants forever. You see that the succession of the doer is damned by the heir. For the guilt of the sold mystery is inexpiable, and the heavenly punishment of grace passes to future generations. Finally, the Moabites and others will not enter into the Church of God until the third and fourth generation (Deut. XXIII, 3): that is, until (to interpret it more simply) the succession of the guilt of the doers of many generations is abolished.

54. But when those who have erred in the error of idolatry against God seem to be punished unto the fourth generation: surely, the sentence by which the offspring of Gehazi is condemned by prophetic authority forever for the desire of possession seems to be harsh, especially since our Lord Jesus Christ has granted forgiveness of sins to all through the regeneration of baptism; unless you understand it as the seed of vices rather than of lineage. For just as those who are children of the promise are regarded as good seed, so also those who are children of error are regarded as bad seed. For even the Jews, not by the succession of the flesh but by their crimes, are children of the devil. Therefore, all the greedy, all the covetous, possess leprosy along with their riches; and with ill-gotten wages, they have accumulated not so much an inheritance of wealth as a treasury of crimes, deserving eternal punishment and short-lived gain. For since riches are temporary, the punishment is eternal; because neither the greedy, nor the drunkard, nor the idolater will inherit the kingdom of God.

(Vers. 28, 29.)

(Verse 28, 29.) And all in the synagogue were filled with anger when they heard these things: and they rose up and drove him out of the city.

55. The sacrileges of the Jews, which the Lord had predicted much earlier through the prophet, and which he had declared in a verse from the Psalms what he would suffer in his body, saying: 'They repaid me evil for good' (Psalm 35:12), he teaches in the Gospel to have been fulfilled. For when he himself was spreading benefits among the people, they were inflicting injuries upon him. It is not surprising that they lost salvation, who expelled the Savior from their own borders. For the Lord is merciful, and he who had taught by his example that his apostles should become all things to all men, neither rejects the willing nor binds the unwilling, neither resists those who reject nor fails to attend to those who ask. So the people of Gerasa could not endure his powers and he left them as if they were weak and ungrateful.

56. At the same time, understand that it was not out of necessity, but a voluntary passion of the body: not taken by the Jews, but offered by himself. For indeed, when he wants, he is captured; when he wants, he escapes; when he wants, he is suspended; when he wants, he is not held. And here, he had climbed to the brow of the mountain to be thrown down, and behold, in the midst of

them, with their minds suddenly changed or astounded, he descends; for the hour of his passion had not yet come. He preferred even to heal the Jews rather than to destroy them; so that they would cease to want what they could not fulfill with the fruitless outcome of their fury. Therefore, you see here both the divine work that he performed and the human will that he was subject to. For just as he could be held by a few, who is not held by the people? But he did not want to become a sacrilege of many; so that he could direct the blame of the cross to the authors and provoke envy; and he would be crucified by a few, but endure for the whole world.

(Vers. 33, 38.)

(Verse 33, 38.) And in the synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit. And below: But rising from the synagogue, he entered the house of Simon and Andrew. And Simon's mother-in-law was held by a great fever.

57. See the kindness of the Lord and Savior: not moved by anger, not offended by wickedness, not violated by injustice, he does not abandon the Jews; indeed, he, forgetting the injury, remembering the kindness, now by teaching, now by liberating, now by healing, soothes the hearts of the faithless people. And well did the holy Luke precede by mentioning the man freed from the unclean spirit, and he added the healing of the woman. For the Lord came to heal both sexes: and the one who was created first should have been healed first; nor should those sins be overlooked which were committed more out of the fickleness of the soul than out of wickedness.

58. (Verse 31.) The Sabbath signifies the beginning of the works of the Lord's healing; as a new creature begins where the old one ceases: not to be under the Law but to indicate above the Law in the very beginning: not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. For the world was not made through the Law, but through the Word, as we read: By the Word of the Lord the heavens were established (Psalm 32:6). Therefore, the Law is not dissolved but fulfilled, so that the renewal of fallen man may occur. And the Apostle also says: 'Putting off the old man...put on the new, which is created according to Christ' (Ephesians 4:22 and 24; Colossians 3:9 and 10). And He well began (His works) on the Sabbath day, in order to show that He Himself was the Creator; Who wove His works into one another, and proceeded from the work which He had begun to do: as a builder who undertakes to repair a house, begins not from the foundation, but from the roof to remove the decay: so in that case, He applies His hand again to it where He had left it off at first.

59. Then he begins with lesser things in order to reach greater things. To free people from demons is possible by the word of God; to command the resurrection of the dead is the power of God alone.

Verse 34. And it should not move anyone that the name of Jesus of Nazareth is mentioned by the devil in this book for the first time. For Christ did not receive his name from him, since an angel from heaven brought it to the Virgin (Luke 1:31). It is of this impudence that he first claims something among humans and presents it as something new to humans, in order to instill terror of his power. Finally, in Genesis, he first called God to man; thus you have it: And the serpent said to the woman: Did God indeed say, 'You shall not eat from any tree'? (Genesis 3:1). Both, therefore, were deceived by the devil and healed by Christ.

61. Follow the rest, and learn the mysteries of the Gospel reading, and recognize in the salvation sacrament of the public health of two. For as in Adam all die: so also in Christ all will be made alive

(I Cor. XV, 22). Who is that one who in the Synagogue had the spirit of an unclean demon, except the Jewish people, who, bound with serpentine spirals and entangled with the snares of the devil, defiled the pretended cleanliness of the body with the filthiness of the inner mind? And well: In the synagogue there was a man who had an unclean spirit because he had lost the Holy Spirit. For the devil had entered, from where Christ had gone out. At the same time, the nature of the devil is shown to be not evil, his works wicked. For he who confesses the Lord through a superior nature denies Him through his works. And in this appears their wickedness and the wickedness of the Jews, that they so deluded the people with the madness of their blind minds, that the people deny Him whom the demons confess. Oh, the worst inheritance of the teacher of the disciples! He tempts the Lord with words, they with actions: he says, 'Throw yourself down' (Luke 4:9 above); they try to throw others down.

62. If we consider these things with a higher understanding, we must understand the health of the mind and body, so that the mind, which was troubled by the tricks of the serpent, may be set free. For the soul is never conquered by the body unless it is first tempted by the devil. For when the soul acts upon the body, enlivens it, and governs it, how could it be dragged captive into the snares of the devil unless it itself were bound by the chains of some higher power? In conclusion, Eve did not hunger until she was tempted by the cunning of the serpent; and therefore, the medicine of salvation should first work against the very author of sin.

63. Moreover, that woman, the mother-in-law of Simon and Andrew, was also wasted away by various fevers of crimes and was burning with insatiable passions of different desires. And I would not say that the fever of love was any less than the fever of heat. So, one [fever] afflicts the soul, the other inflames the body. For our fever is avarice, our fever is lust; because desires are inflamed. Hence the Apostle says: If they do not contain themselves, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn. (1 Corinthians 7:9) Our fever is lust, our fever is ambition, our fever is anger. Although these may be vices of the body, they still entangle fire in the bones, disturb the mind, soul, and senses. This primary temptation is stirred by the devil's art. Indeed, a fertile field, clothing, jewelry, the serpent's sweet words are enticing. For the sake of honors, the height of powers, the sweetness of feasts, the beauty of a prostitute is a snare of the devil, and like a kind of spiritual wickedness, he entices with seductive words that quickly soften the mind with the ease of a certain feminine levity, and also throws one's mind from its position. For the soul desires the beauty of a woman not before the eye of the body. Finally, what you have not seen, you will not love; but when the flesh desires, even the constancy of a compassionate soul weakens, and the mind is bent by the companionship of love (for two are one flesh) and thus death creeps in with the effect of wickedness, the devil tempting, the flesh persuading.

However, the mind is more vehement than the fever of the body: and therefore, for the pleasure of the mind, the health of the body is often disregarded, and it is not abstained from dangers. Hence it does not seem out of place to repeat how Theotimus, suffering from a serious eye ailment and loving his wife, being prohibited by the doctor from engaging in sexual activity, unable to control his desire and driven by the impetuosity of lust, was unable to moderate himself. Understanding and knowing that he would lose his eyes, before he met with his wife, in the very heat of fervent desire and the preparations of habit, he said, Farewell, dear light. Thus when fever is hotter, it is more severe and hastens and inflames. But when someone returns from madness, then the inner sight of conscience is opened, and repentance follows, and each person is ashamed of their

shameful deeds. Then God is feared, and the sinner desires to hide but cannot. Then the flesh is accused, the devil is accused. The former is like a pimp of vices, the latter like the author of error. Deformity is revealed; for every secret is bare before God, and not even the leaves of His fig tree, that is, the cover of the body, or the boasting of worldly secrets, can conceal the shame of sins. And each person, conscious of divine sin, fears the judgment in their mind, saying: 'The mountains will fall on me, in which will I hide myself, in the crevices of the rocks, when the earth is shattered?' Then the flesh generates thorns and thistles in the mind, that is, the bites of cares and the heat of anxieties, which the soul itself has surrounded itself with through the desire of the flesh. For indeed, the soul is attached to bodily pleasures like keys, and once it has adhered to earthly desires, it is difficult for it to return to the heights from which it descended without the favor of God. For she is now held captive by the chains of her actions, and subject to the enticements of worldly pleasures.

Therefore, the Lord came to save Adam and Eve: one of whom was made in the image of God, and the other, receiving the power of her man, as long as she was subject to the stronger, they both had one pleasing will in one Godly spirit: and placed in the paradise of God, they worked with heavenly food for their sustenance. But afterwards, when the flesh began to persuade them otherwise, and they started to not obey their own law, they became exiles from paradise and fell into this lower and submerged place of sin by their own fault. And let no one think it incongruous, if Adam and Eve are considered in the image of soul and body; since they are considered in the image of the Church and of Christ. For when the Apostle says that two are in one flesh, he added: This is a great mystery: but I speak in Christ and in the Church (Ephesians 5:32). In which, therefore, of the most high God, in that much more can our souls be a mystery.

67. But he is stuck, attached, captured, and overwhelmed by bodily fevers; he weakens with compassion for the suffering of the flesh. A doctor must be sought. But who is this great person who heals the wounds of a wounded mind? Who is this great person who can help others when he himself cannot? Who can give life to others when he cannot avoid death himself? For all have died in Adam; because through one man sin entered into this world, and through sin death: and thus death has passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned (I Cor. XV, 12). Therefore, death is the fault of all. (See Augustine, Book I against Julian of Pelagius, Chapter 3). In the end, saints were sent, prophets were also sent, to speak divine oracles, but they could not accomplish anything. Let us seek, therefore, a doctor among the angels or archangels. But how can they provide me with protection against sin when the archangel himself could not refrain from sin? How can an angel bring me back to paradise when Satan himself and his angels are unable to preserve the place they received?

(Chap. V. — Vers. 3.)

(Chapter 5 - Verse 3) And getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land.

68. When the Lord had generously bestowed various kinds of healings on many people, he did not begin to be hindered by the crowd's desire for healing, either by time or place. Evening fell, and they followed him; he came across a lake, and they pressed upon him. And so he got into Peter's boat. This is the same boat that, according to Matthew, was tossed by the waves (Matt. VIII, 24), and according to Luke, was filled with fish; so that you may recognize both the beginnings of the

struggling Church and its later abundance; for the fish are those who navigate this life. Here Christ still sleeps for the disciples, but here he commands. For he sleeps for the fearful, he stays awake for the perfect. But how Christ sleeps, you have heard him say in the Prophet: I have slept, and my heart has stayed awake (Cant. V, 2).

69. And Saint Matthew rightly considered it necessary to not omit the demonstration of eternal power, where he commands the winds (Matt. VIII, 26). For it is not human teaching, as you have heard the Jews say, to command spirits with a word (Luke IV, 36): but it is a sign of celestial majesty. That the troubled sea is calmed, and the elements obey the command of the divine voice, and even the insensible things perceive the sense of obedience; the mystery of divine grace is revealed. When the waves of the world calm down, the unclean spirit is quieted by the word; one is not rejected by the other, but both are celebrated. You have a miracle in the elements, you have evidence in the mysteries.

Therefore, because Saint Matthew had mentioned that boat, Saint Luke chose it for himself, in which Peter was fishing. It is not troubled by the fact that it belongs to Peter, but it is troubled by the fact that it belongs to Judas. Although many disciples had merits there, still the faithlessness of the traitor was troubling it. In both cases, it is Peter who is troubled: but the one who is firm in his own merits is troubled by those of others. Therefore, let us beware of the faithless one, let us beware of the traitor; lest through one person, many people be tossed by waves. Therefore, this ship in which prudence navigates is not disturbed, treachery is absent, faith breathes. For how could it be disturbed, when he who is in charge, in whom the foundation of the Church is, is present? There, therefore, is turmoil where there is little faith; here is security where there is perfect love.

71. (Verse 4) Finally, although others are commanded to loosen their nets, only Peter is told: 'Cast into the deep,' that is, into the depths of discussions. For what is so deep as to see the heights of riches, to know the Son of God, and to assume the profession of divine generation? Although the human mind may not be able to fully comprehend through rational investigation, faith embraces fullness. For even though I am not allowed to know the manner in which he was born, I am not allowed to be ignorant that he was born. I am ignorant of the series of generation, but I acknowledge the authority of generation. We did not witness the Son of God being born from the Father: but we did witness the Son of God being called by the Father. If we do not believe in God, in whom do we believe? For everything we believe, we either believe through seeing or hearing: sight is often deceived, but hearing is in faith. Does the person asserting something need to be refuted? If good men were saying it, we would consider it wrong not to believe: God asserts, the Son proves, the sun, fleeing, admits, the trembling earth bears witness. In this lofty discussion, the Church is led by Peter; so that from here it may see the rising Son of God, and from there the Holy Spirit flowing forth.

72. But what are the nets of the apostles that are ordered to be loosened, if not the entanglements of words, and as it were certain folds of speech, and recesses of disputations, which do not allow those whom they have taken, to escape? And the apostolic instruments of fishing are indeed nets, which do not destroy those caught, but preserve them, and bring them from the deep to the light: they lead those who are wavering from the lowest things to the highest.

There is another apostolic way of fishing (24, q. 1, c. Est aliud), in which the Lord commands Peter alone to fish, saying: 'Cast the hook, and take the fish that first comes up' (Matthew XVII, 26). It is indeed a great and spiritual lesson (11, q. 1, c. Magnum quidem) that Christian men are taught to be subject to higher powers, so that no one may think that the constitution of an earthly king can be dissolved. For if the Son of God pays tribute, who are you, who do not think it should be paid? And he paid tribute, even though he possessed nothing: but you, who pursue the profit of the world, why do you not recognize the service of the world? Why do you carry yourself above the world with a certain arrogance of mind, when you are subjected to the miserable desire of the world?

Therefore, the didrachma is paid, which was the price of our redemption and body, promised in the Law and fulfilled in the Gospel, not in vain found in the mouth of a fish: For by your words you will be justified (Matt. XII, 37). Indeed, our confession is the price of immortality for us; for as it is written: With the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. X, 10).

75. And perhaps this fish is the first martyr, having a didrachma in its mouth, which is the price of the census. Our didrachma is Christ. Therefore, that first martyr, namely Stephen, had a treasure in his mouth when he spoke of Christ in his passion. But let us return to the proposed place, and let us learn apostolic humility.

(Vers. 5.) (Verse 5.) Teacher, he said, we worked all night and caught nothing: but at your word, I will let down the nets. And I, Lord, know that night is for me when you do not command. No one has yet given their name, I still have the night. I threw out the spear of my voice, and yet I have caught nothing. I sent during the day, I wait for you to command: in your word I will let down the nets. O empty presumption, O fruitful humility! Those who had caught nothing before, in the word of the Lord conclude a great multitude of fish. This is not the work of human eloquence, but the gift of divine calling. The arguments of men yield: the common people trust in their faith.

77. (Verse 6, 7.) The nets are torn, but the fish does not escape. The companions are called for help, who were in another boat. What is that other boat, if not perhaps Judea, from which John and James are chosen? For Judea became his sanctification (Psalm 113:2). Therefore, these people gathered from the synagogue to Peter's boat, that is, to the Church, in order to fill both boats. For everyone bows in the name of Jesus, whether Jew or Greek: Christ is everything and in everyone (Colossians 3:11). But I suspect that this abundance is dangerous, lest the ships be almost sunk by their own fullness; for it is necessary that there be heresies, in order to prove the good.

78. However, we can also understand another Church, the ship of another; for from one many Churches are derived. Behold another care of Peter, whose own prey is already suspected. But the perfect one knows how to save the hidden, who knows how to capture the scattered. Those whom he captures in word, he believes in the Word: he denies his own prey, he denies his own duty.

(Vers. 8.) (Vrs. 8.) Depart from me, Lord; for I am a sinful man. For divine gifts were admired; and the more he deserved, the less he presumed. Say also: Depart from me, Lord; for I am a sinner; so that the Lord may answer you; Do not fear. Confess your sin to the forgiving Lord. Do not fear to offer even what is yours to the Lord; for what is his he has granted to us. He does not envy, he

does not take away, he does not steal. You see how good the Lord is, who grants so much to humans; so that they may have the power to give life.

Book Five

(Vers. 12, 13.)

(Verse 12, 13) And it came to pass, when he was in one of the cities, behold, a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean.

1. When a leper is cleansed in a good place, a specific location is not expressed, in order to show that it was not just one people of a particular city, but all peoples who were healed. This is also well according to Luke in the fourth sign, from when the Lord came to Capernaum, he was healed; for if He illuminated the fourth day with the sun (Gen. 1, 14), and made it brighter than the other days, when the elements of the world were shining forth: and we ought to consider this work as clearer. And according to Matthew, this is the first person healed by the Lord after the blessings (Matt. 8:3); so that because the Lord had said: I have not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17); he who was excluded from the Law (Lev. 13:3), presuming to be cleansed by the power of the Lord, would judge that grace is not from the Law, but above the Law, which could wash away the leper's blemish. But just as in the Lord the authority of power is declared, so in him the constancy of faith is declared. He falls on his face, which is an act of humility and modesty; so that each one may be ashamed of the stains on his life: but modesty did not suppress his confession. He showed the wound and demanded a remedy: and the confession itself is full of religion and faith. If you wish, he said, you can make me clean. He attributed the power to the will of the Lord: but he did not doubt the will of the Lord as one who is incredulous of piety, but as one who is conscious of his own depravity, he did not presume. To a certain morally upright person, the Lord responded with holiness: I want you to be cleansed.

(Vers. 13.) (Verse 13) And immediately his leprosy departed from him. For there is no middle ground between the work of God and the commandment; for in the commandment is the work. Indeed, he spoke and they were made (Psalm 32:9). You see, therefore, that it cannot be doubted that the will of God is power. Therefore, if his will is power, those who affirm the Trinity of one will also affirm the unity of power. Thus, immediately the leprosy departed, so that you may understand the compassion of the healer, who added truth to the work.

4. Finally, the Lord had pity on him according to Mark (Mark 1:41): which is beautifully put. And the evangelists have put many such things, who wanted to establish us in both faith, describing signs of virtue for faith, and expressing the works of virtue for imitation. Therefore, He touches without disdain, and commands without hesitation; for this is an indication of power, because as if having the power to heal, and the authority to command, He does not reject the testimony of His works. I wish, therefore he speaks because of Photinus, he commands because of Arius, he touches because of Manichaeus.

5. And not only the leprosy of one person is cured, but of all to whom it is said: 'Now you are clean because of the word which I have spoken to you' (John 15:3). Therefore, if the remedy for leprosy is the word, certainly the leprosy of the mind is contempt for the word. But so that leprosy cannot pass on to the physician, each person should avoid boasting by following the example of the

humility of the Lord. For why is it commanded that no one should speak, except to teach not our public benefits, but our hardships; so that we not only abstain from the reward of money, but also of gratitude? Perhaps also the reason for that silence is the command, because he believed that those who had faith based on spontaneity were better than those who believed in expected benefits.

However, according to the Law, it is commanded for one to offer oneself to the priest, not to bring another person; but to offer oneself as a spiritual sacrifice to God, so that through the knowledge of faith and the discipline of wisdom, the offering may be pleasing to God, with the stains of past actions cleansed away. For every victim will be seasoned with salt (Mark 9:49). Therefore, Paul also says: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God (Romans 12:1).

7. At the same time the wonderful deed which he worked by the mere fact that he was besought to do it. If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. I will, he said, be thou made clean. Thou hast the will, thou hast also the effect of piety. And stretching forth his hand, he touched him. (Leviticus 13:3). The law forbids the touching of lepers: but he who is the Lord of the law does not obey the law, but makes the law. He did not, therefore, touch, because without touch he could not make him clean: but to show that he was not subject to the law, nor feared the contagion, like men: but because he could not be contaminated, who cleansed others: so, on the other hand, the leprosy was driven away by the touch of the Lord, which used to defile the toucher.

8. (Verse 14.) However, he is commanded to show himself to the priest and offer for his cleansing, so that while he offers himself to the priest, the priest may understand that he, being cured, was cared for not by the order of the Law, but by the grace of God above the Law; and while he commands the cleansed person to offer the sacrifice according to the precept of Moses, the Lord shows that he does not abolish the Law, but fulfills it; for in walking according to the Law, he seems to heal those whom the remedies of the Law were not able to heal. And he added: As Moses commanded; for the Law is spiritual (Rom. VII, 14); and therefore it seems that he commanded a spiritual sacrifice.

9. Finally he added: In order to be a testimony to you, that is, if you believe in God, if the leprosy of impiety departs, if the priest is knowledgeable about hidden things, if he is a pure and faithful witness: from this, that priest can be seen more clearly to whom secrets do not escape, to whom it is said: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 109:4).

(Vers. 18, 19.)

(Verse 18, 19.) And behold, some men carrying a man on a bed who was paralyzed, and seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; and not finding a way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his bed into the middle, in front of Jesus.

10. The remedy of this paralytic is neither useless nor limited, when the Lord is said to have prayed not for the sake of assistance, but as an example; for he gave an example to be imitated, not sought after for the sake of obtaining a favor. And the remedy of this paralytic is described as gathering together doctors of the Law from all Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem, among the other remedies for the weak. First of all, as we have said before, each sick person must use those

who are to be prayed for the preservation of salvation, through whom the broken bonds of our life and the crippled steps of our actions may be restored by the medicine of the heavenly word. Therefore, there are some monitors of the mind who raise the soul of man, even when it is numbed by the weakness of the external body, towards higher things. By the support of these monitors, it is easy to both raise oneself up and humble oneself, before Jesus, worthy of the sight of the Lord. For the Lord looks upon humility: 'For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden' (Luke 1:48).

(Vers. 20.) (Verse 20) He said that he saw the faith of those people. The Lord is great, who forgives some by merit and forgives others by testing others. Why does a man not have worth as a colleague with you, since a servant has both the right to intervene and the right to request from the Lord? Learn to forgive, you who judge: learn to obtain, you who are sick. If you doubt the forgiveness of serious sins, call upon the intercessors, call upon the Church which prays for you, by whose intercession the Lord may forgive that which He could deny you. And although we should not overlook the credibility of the history, so that we believe that the body of that paralytic was truly healed, nevertheless let us consider the health of the inner man, to whom sins are forgiven, which, as the Jews assert, can only be granted by the Lord alone. They confess that he is God and reveal their own unfaithfulness in their judgment, so that they deny the work and reject the person. Therefore, the Son of God receives testimony from both his works and his voice does not need verification; for unfaithfulness can confess but cannot believe. Therefore, the testimony is not lacking for divinity, faith is lacking for salvation. For it is stronger evidence of faith when it is confessed unwillingly; and it is more harmful to sin when it is denied and those who deny it are refuted by their own assertions. So great is the foolishness of the unbelieving crowd that, even though it confesses that only God can forgive sins, it does not believe that God forgives sins. But the Lord, desiring to save sinners, reveals himself to be God through his knowledge of hidden things and adds wonder to his deeds.

(Vers. 23.)

(Verse 23.) Which is easier to say: 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say: 'Rise up and walk'?

13. In this place He shows the full appearance of resurrection, who heals the wounds of the mind and body, forgives the sins of the souls, and excludes the weakness of the flesh; for this is to have the whole man cured. Although, therefore, it is great to forgive sins unto men (for who can forgive sins except God only, who also grants the power of forgiving to those to whom He grants the power of forgiving); yet it is much more divine to give resurrection to bodies; since the Lord Himself is resurrection.

14. (Verse 24.) This bed which is commanded to be lifted up, what else is it, if not that the human body is commanded to be lifted up? He himself is the one who is washed by David every night, as we read: I will wash my bed every night; with my tears I will water my couch (Psalm 6:7). This is the bed of sorrow, on which our soul lay in heavy anguish of conscience. But if anyone behaves according to Christ's commandments, it is no longer a bed of sorrow, but of rest. For indeed by the mercy of the Lord, what was once death has begun to be rest: he who for us turned the sleep of death into the favor of pleasure. Not only to relieve the bed, but also to return to his own home, that is, to go back to paradise; for that is the true home, which first received mankind: not lost by right, but by deceit. Therefore, the home is rightly restored, since he came who would abolish the

bond of deceit, restore righteousness.

15. (Verse 25.) And without any delay, a moment of healing arrives: it is the moment of the words and remedies. The unbelievers watch in astonishment as he rises, and marvel as he departs, choosing to fear the miracles of the divine work rather than believe. For if they had believed, they would surely not have feared, but rather loved; for perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). And so, because they did not love, they slandered. But to those who slandered, he says: Why do you think evil in your hearts? (Luke 5:22). Who says this? The high priest. He saw leprosy in the hearts of the Jews and showed them to be worse than the leper. He commanded himself to be cleansed to the priest: he rejects them; lest their leprosy also contaminate others.

16. (Verse 27.) The mystical calling of the tax collector follows, whom he commands to follow not with the steps of the body, but with the affection of the mind. Therefore, he, first turning from greedy earnings, harsh labors, and the profits of sailors' dangers, being called by the word, abandoned his own things, which he was seizing from others: and leaving that cheap seat, he walks in the whole footsteps of the Lord in his mind. He also presents the display of a great feast; for whoever receives Christ in their inner dwelling, is nourished with the greatest delights of overflowing pleasures. Therefore the Lord willingly enters and reclines with affection in the one who believes.

17. But again the envy of the treacherous is kindled, and the future punishment is foreshadowed. For while the faithful feast and recline in the kingdom of heaven, empty malice torments them. At the same time, it is shown how great is the difference between the adversaries of Law and grace, for those who follow the Law suffer eternal hunger of the mind; but those who receive the word in the depths of their soul, nourished by the abundance of heavenly food and the richness of the source, cannot hunger or thirst. And so those who were fasting in their spirit murmured, saying:

(Vers. 30.)

(Verse 30) Why does he eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?

18. That voice is deceitful. Finally, the serpent emitted this first voice, saying to Eve: What did God indeed say? You shall not eat from every tree (Gen. III. 1). Therefore, those who say: What indeed does it mean that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners? Thus, the poisons of her father are spreading, who say: By no means eat from every tree. From where the Lord, by eating with sinners, does not prohibit us from entering into a feast, even with the Gentiles, saying:

(Vers. 31.)

(Verse 31) Those who are healthy do not need a doctor; but those who are unwell do.

19. A new medicine a new master has brought. It did not sprout from the earth; for every creature of this creation is ignorant. Come, all who have fallen into the various passions of sins, to use this foreign medicine by which the poison of the serpent is expelled: which not only removes the scar of passions, but also cuts off the cause of the dire wound. This medicine does not induce hunger, but supplies food to the soul: For the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon' (Luke 7:34); and therefore our mind is not fasting: those who lack Christ and the abundance of good merits fast. But verily, the one whose virtue is sufficient for his will, who receives Christ into his home, offers a great feast, that is, a spiritual feast of good works, by which

the rich people lack, and the poor are feasted. And therefore, he says, the children of the bridegroom cannot fast, as long as the bridegroom is with them.

(Vers. 35.)

(Verse 35) But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them.

20. Who are those days in which Christ is taken away from us, especially when he himself said: I will be with you until the end of the world (Matthew XXVIII, 20): he himself said: I will not leave you orphans (John XIV, 18)? For it is certain that if he leaves us, we cannot be saved. No one can take Christ away from you, unless you take yourself away from him. Let not your boasting take you away, let not your arrogance take you away, nor presume upon the Law; for he came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

21. So how then did the Lord love righteousness, and David did not see the righteous abandoned (Psal. 10:8)? Or what is this fairness of God if the just are abandoned and the sinner is included (Psal. 36:25), unless you understand that he calls those just who presume from the Law and do not seek the grace of the Gospel? But no one is justified by the Law, but is redeemed by grace. Therefore, there is righteousness in the Law, but righteousness is not through the Law; for the same Apostle says: A Hebrew of Hebrews, according to the Law a Pharisee, according to the righteousness which is in the Law, walking without blame (Philip. 3:5-6), who boasts of the Law: What was profit to me, he says, I considered these things loss on account of Christ (Philip. 9:7), that is, I have rejected the righteousness and glory of the Law; for the righteousness of the Law is empty without Christ, because Christ is the fulfillment of the Law. And therefore, though justice is in the Law, it is not by the Law: For if justice is by the Law, then Christ died in vain (Galatians 2:21); for Christ died, that he might fulfill justice. Finally, to John who said: I have need to be baptized by you, and you come to me, he answered: Allow it now; for thus it befits us to fulfill all justice (Matthew 3:14-15). Therefore, Christ did not die in vain: but he died for us; that the righteous might shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. But not the just Jews, of whom it is said: 'When you see the just entering into the kingdom of heaven' (Luke 13:28). These are the just who do not retaliate when struck and who love their enemy.

22. (Verse 32.) If we do not understand it thus, the opposite is found: I did not come to call the righteous. But he does not call those who claim to be righteous: For they are ignorant of God and seek to establish their own righteousness, they are not subject to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3). Therefore, usurpers of righteousness are not called to grace; for if grace comes from repentance, surely one who despises repentance rejects grace. Those who claim to be sanctified are thirsty, but the bridegroom will be taken away from them. However, Caiaphas did not take Christ away from us, nor did Pilate, and we cannot fast; for we have Christ, and we eat his flesh and drink his blood. For how can someone appear to fast, who is not hungry? For how can someone appear to fast, who is not thirsty? But how can someone be thirsty, who drinks Christ; since he himself said: Whoever drinks of the water that I will give, will never be thirsty (John 4:13)? Indeed, the following also declares with reference to the fasting of the soul.

(Vers. 36.)

(Verse 36) For he also spoke a parable to them: No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old garment.

23. He had said that the sons of the bridegroom, that is, the sons of the Word, who were received into the right of divine generation through the regeneration of baptism, cannot fast as long as the bridegroom is with them. Surely, not this fasting is referred to, by which the flesh is weakened, and carnal sensuality is chastised; for this fasting commends us. For, just as he forbade his disciples to fast here, when the Lord himself was fasting (Luke IV, 2); when finally he said that the most wicked spirits can only be vanquished by fasting and prayers (Matthew XVII, 21)? Finally, in this place the Apostle also called fasting an old garment, which he considered should be cast off, saying: Strip off the old man with his deeds; and put on him who is renewed in the sanctification of baptism (Colossians III, 9 and 10). Therefore, in the same manner, the order of precepts agrees, so that we do not mix the actions of the old and new man; when the former operates the external bodily works of the flesh, and the latter, who is reborn, should not have the multicolored appearance of past and new deeds, but should imitate Christ with a single-minded devotion, to whom he was reborn in the cleansing bath. Therefore, let the disguises of the mind, which displease the spouse, be absent; for they displease the one who does not have the bridal garment. But what can please the spouse, except peace of mind, purity of heart, and love of the mind?

24. The Lord Jesus, the good bridegroom, initiated a new nature through this birth. He is released from the corruptibility of the flesh that is betrothed to Him; He does not require mortal children, He does not take pleasure in the sorrows of Eve, He does not require a man subject to fault, He does not require the inheritance of a condemned father. For He saw the ulcers of the flesh, which He previously coveted; He realized that true beauty does not have the deformity of vices. And so, what do you need with such a bridegroom, woman? Search diligently, and in every body you will find a scar. Know another bridegroom, who is surrounded by light, whose appearance cannot perish. Take him in your mind, consecrate him in your temple, take him in your body, as it is written: 'Take the Lord in your body' (I Cor. VI, 20). Enter the chambers of this one, behold the strange beauty of this one, put on this one, see him at the right hand of the Father, and rejoice that you have such a bridegroom: he will clothe you with blessing, so that no harm may come from the tear of sin.

25. Therefore we guard the garment which the Lord vested us in, emerging from the sacred font. The garment is quickly torn if the deeds do not match; it is quickly worn away by the worms of the flesh, and stained by the error of the old man. Therefore, here we are commanded to join the new with the old; however, in the Apostle we are also forbidden to clothe the old with the new, but to cast off the old and put on the new; so that stripped, we may not be found naked (2 Cor. 5:2-4). For we are stripped in order to put on better things; we are laid bare, however, when the clothing is taken away from us through the deceit of others, not by our own will.

(Vers. 37.)

(Verse 37.) And no one puts new wine into old wineskins.

26. The fragility of the human condition is revealed when our bodies are compared to the remains of dead animals. And oh, that we could fulfill the use of both good wineskins, so that we may preserve the sacrament that we have received! Industry alleviates injury, if new wines are believed in with renewed wineskins. And therefore, we must always keep these wineskins full; for emptiness is quickly consumed by moth and rust, while grace preserves the full ones.

27. But these precepts suit well with this work: for it is the sixth work, by which a new light form is depicted (Luke 5:27). On the sixth day, however, man was made (Genesis 1:26): therefore, in the sixth work of Christ, the old is reformed into a new creature, and a certain foreign form. And therefore, as a new creature, it presents a feast to Christ; inasmuch as Christ would delight in it, and he himself would deserve to have a share of delight with Christ. Therefore, the Lord gave these instructions for teaching; for I now follow joyfully, eagerly, and exultantly, saying: I no longer bear the name Levin, I no longer carry Levin. I have shed Levin after putting on Christ. I hate my old way of life, I flee from my previous life; I follow only you, Lord Jesus, who heals my wounds. For who can separate me from the love of God, which is in you? Is it trouble, or distress, or hunger? I am bound by the key of faith and bound by the sweet chains of love. I will hold onto every commandment of yours like an engraved branding iron. And if the branding iron burns, it still consumes the putrefaction of the flesh, so that the infection does not spread to what is alive. And if it bites like a medicine, it still removes the defect of the wound. Therefore, Lord Jesus, with your powerful sword, remove from me the decay of my sins: while you have me bound with the chains of love, cut away whatever is faulty. Come quickly, cutting through hidden and latent things, and various passions: open the wound, so that the harmful humor does not spread. Cleanse everything that is foul with a foreign bath. Hear me, earthly men, who carry drunken thoughts of your sins. And I, Levis, was wounded by such passions. I found a doctor who dwells in heaven, and spreads remedies on earth. He alone can heal my wounds, who does not know his own: he can take away the pain of the heart, and the paleness of the soul, who knows hidden things.

(Chap. VI. — Vers. 1.)

(Chapter 6, Verse 1) Now it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

28. And not only in the understanding of words, but also in the use itself and the appearance of gestures, the Lord Jesus begins to strip man of the old observation of the Law and clothe him in the new garment of grace. Therefore, He now leads him through the sown fields on the Sabbath, that is, He brings him close to fruitful things. What the Sabbath signifies, what the field signifies, what the ears of grain signify, is not a trivial mystery. For this whole world is a field: the field represents the fertility of the human race in the cultivation of saints; the ears of grain represent the fruits of the Church in the field, which the apostles nourished by exercising their works, and which nourish us by their progress.

29. Therefore, the fertile field of virtues was standing, with the sprouting ears, by which our fruits of merit are compared; for they wither either with rain, or are parched by the sun, or are moistened by showers, or are destroyed by storms, or are stored away by the reapers in the granaries of the fortunate. Therefore, the earth had already received the word of God, and had brought forth rich offspring from the heavenly seed. The disciples were hungry for the salvation of mankind, and like fruits from the buds of their minds, they revealed to the light of faith through the miracles of their glorious works. But the Jews thought that it was not allowed on the Sabbath, but Christ was designating the rest of the Law as the gift of new grace, the work of grace.

30. And I believe that this is not without mystery, since the sabbaths were purely observed by the Evangelist Matthew (Matt. 12:1) and Mark (Mark 2:23), because the sabbaths are perpetual feasts

of eternal resurrection. Either in this world, therefore, we observe the feasts and abstain from the superstitions of the Jews, or in the future we celebrate perpetual feasts ourselves, when we will eat the good things of the earth, as it is written: They shall eat, but you shall hunger (Isaiah 63:13).

31. However, according to Luke, he said 'the second first' instead of 'the first second' on the Sabbath, for it is written, 'the second first' in the sense that what excels should be preferred. It is called 'second' because it preceded the first according to the Law, in which the punishment was also prescribed (Exodus 31:14) for anyone who works. It is called 'first' because that Sabbath, which was the first, was abolished according to the Law, and this first was made which is established as second. For although it is permitted to work on the Sabbath, and there is no punishment for the one who works; the Sabbath is nevertheless from the Law which has been dissolved, and its name did not remain; but nevertheless it was first in order, this first in duty; and not therefore any less because it is second; for even Adam was first, and not to be compared with the second Adam: For the first Adam became a living soul, the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. . . . And the first man was of the earth, made of clay; the second man is from heaven, heavenly (I Cor. XV, 45 and 47). Indeed, the second is preferred over the first; for the former is the cause of death, while the latter is the cause of life. Thus, the second Sabbath is called as such; second according to number, first according to the grace of operation; for it is better to have a Sabbath with impunity than with prescribed punishment. The First Law, according to the Gospel; yet, fear is inferior to grace. Or perhaps, the first is here in the predestination of counsel, and the second in the sanction of decree.

32. (Verse 3.) But the Lord also demonstrates in the Law a type of the future in this place, and he rebukes the defenders of the Law for not knowing what the Law is, citing the example of David, when he and his companions were hungry, entering into the house of God and taking the bread of the Presence and eating it, and giving it to those who were with him (1 Samuel 21:1 et seq.). A great and truly prophetic example, by which solid usefulness is presented to us to be followed, not empty things of the Law. Then because David, fleeing with his companions from the face of King Saul, was prefigured here in the Law as Christ, who would hide as the ruler of the world with the apostles.

33. However, how did that observer of the Law and defender of the bread both eat and give to those who were with him, whom it was not permitted to eat except only for the priests, unless he was showing through that figure that the priestly food would come into use for the people? Whether because we all must imitate the priestly life: or because all the children of the Church are priests; for we are anointed into the holy priesthood, offering ourselves as spiritual sacrifices to God.

Therefore, I have already read that the teachings of Christ overflow, not abolishing the Law, but fulfilling it, for he does not abolish the Sabbath. For if the Sabbath was made for the sake of humanity, and the well-being of humanity required that a hungry person who had been deprived of the fruits of the earth for a long time should avoid fasting for an old hunger, then certainly the Law is not abolished, but fulfilled. Therefore, how is it that the Lord is accused of a crime for which a servant is not held responsible?

35. But what is more evident in this story, which runs throughout? David entered the house of Achimelech the priest: but not with the intention of danger of death, he refuses the host, nor does

the holy soul of the priest avoid the exile (I Reg. XXI, 1). Such is the grace of hospitality, that we willingly transfer foreign dangers onto ourselves.

36. But this in moral history, in the mystery of prophecy, is true, that priests excluded David, who was truly religious in the hospitality of his mind, from the destiny of future death. And not only is Christ taught to find the hospitality in the house of every prophet, but also, in a figure, to take the spoils and weapons of spiritual wickedness; for he who receives Christ as a guest disarms the formidable Goliath with his own weapons.

37. What is clearer than this, that in the house of Achimelech David asks for five loaves of bread, and takes one (cf. 1 Samuel 21:3-6): indicating by this type that now not five books, but the body of Christ, is prepared as food for the faithful; so that Christ might assume a body, lest any of the faithful should hunger? Nor is Doeg the figure lacking, who was the keeper of the mules (cf. 1 Samuel 21:7); because no one else except the keeper of an unfruitful flock of Judah could fulfill the type of a betrayer.

Now that which Saul persecuted Achimelech's entire household, except for Abiathar the high priest, when he sought David's reception (1 Samuel 22:20), shows us by prophecy that no one can harm the true high priest, who is Christ alone.

39. (Verse 7.) From here the Lord Jesus goes on to other things. For he who had determined to save the whole man, ran through each member, so that he might truly say: You are angry with me, who have made the whole man sound on the Sabbath. (John 7:23). Therefore, in this place, that hand which Adam stretched out, and plucked the forbidden fruit from the tree (Genesis 3:6), was irrigated with the juices of good deeds, so that what had withered because of sin might be healed by good works. In which Christ rebukes the Jews who violated the precepts of the Law with evil interpretations, thinking that even good works should be avoided on the Sabbath, when the Law prefigured the form of things to come: in which surely the Sabbath will be a rest for evil deeds, not good ones. For although worldly works may rest, it is not idle to rest in the praise of good works for God.

40. (Verse 10.) So you have heard the words of the Lord saying: 'Extend your hand.' This is a common and general medicine. And you, who think that you have a healthy hand, beware of greed, beware of sacrilege. Extend it frequently, extend it to that poor person who pleads to you: extend it to help your neighbor, to provide assistance to widows, to rescue those who suffer from unjust injury that you see. Extend it to God for your sins. In this way the hand is extended, in this way it is healed. Just as Jeroboam's hand contracted when he sacrificed to idols, and again when he prayed to God, it extended (3 Kings 13:4 and 6).

(Vers. 12.) (Verse 12) And it came to pass in those days, he went out to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in the prayers of God. Not everyone who prays, ascends the mountain (for there is a prayer that leads to sin), but rather the one who prays well, progressing from earthly things to higher things, ascends the top of the court. But the one who is preoccupied with the riches of the world or with honor does not ascend the mountain: the one who desires the rights of another's property does not ascend the mountain. He ascends who seeks God, he ascends who asks for the help of the Lord in his journey. All the great, all the sublime, ascend the mountain; for not to everyone does the prophet say: Ascend to the high mountain, you who proclaim Zion: lift up your

voice with strength, you who proclaim Jerusalem (Isaiah XL, 9). You shall ascend this mountain not with many physical steps, but with higher deeds. Follow Christ, so that you yourself may become a mountain: For mountains surround it (Psalm CXXIV, 2). Search in the Gospel, you will find only the disciples ascending the mountain with the Lord.

42. Therefore the Lord prays not so that he may be obeyed, but so that he may obtain for me; for even though the Father has put everything in the power of the Son, nevertheless the Son thinks that he should pray to the Father for us, in order to fill the form of a human being; because he is our advocate. Do not open your ears to deceitful thoughts, so that you may think that the Son prays as if he were weak, so that he may obtain that which he cannot fulfill as the author of power. The master of obedience teaches us by the example of his precepts. We have an Advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1). If He is an Advocate, He must intercede for my sins. Therefore, He pleads not as weak, but as pious. Do you want to know that He can do everything He wants? He is both an Advocate and a Judge. In the former, He carries out the duty of mercy, in the latter, the authority of power.

43. And he was, he says, spending the night in prayer to God. A vision is given to you, a form is prescribed that you should strive to imitate. For what should you do for your own salvation, when Christ spends the night in prayer for you? What is it fitting for you to do, when you want to undertake some duty of piety; when Christ, who is going to send the apostles, first prayed, and prayed alone? And nowhere else, if I am not mistaken, is he found to have prayed with the apostles: everywhere he pleads alone. For the plans of God do not embrace human desires, nor can anyone share in Christ's inner thoughts. Do you want to know if he prayed for me, not for himself?

(Vers. 13.)

(Ver. 13.) He called, he said, his disciples, and he chose twelve of them:

44. Those whom He destined as sowers of the faith to propagate the aid of salvation throughout the world, He chose not any wise men, not any rich men, not any noble men, but fishermen and tax collectors, whom He directed; lest it appear that He drew anyone to His grace by human wisdom, by riches, or by the authority of power and nobility, so that the reason for truth might prevail, not for the sake of dispute.

45. (Verse 16.) Therefore, Judas was chosen not out of imprudence, but out of providence. How great is the truth, which not even the adversary's minister can weaken! How great is the morality of the Lord, who preferred his judgment to be in danger among us rather than his affection! For he had taken on the frailty of man, and therefore he did not refuse these parts of human weakness. He wanted to be deserted, he wanted to be betrayed, he wanted to be handed over by his apostle, so that you, deserted by your partner, betrayed by your partner, may moderately bear your judgment of having erred, and your kindness being lost.

(Vers. 17.)

(Verse 17) And he went down, he said, with them, and stood in a level place.

46. Pay attention to everything carefully, how both with the apostles he goes up and comes down to the crowds. For how can the crowd see Christ unless he is humble? He does not go up to lofty

places, he does not ascend to the heights. Finally, where he comes down, he finds the weak; for the weak cannot be in high places. Likewise, Matthew also teaches (Matthew 8:1) that the sick are healed in lower places; for each one is healed first, so that gradually, as virtues advance, he could ascend the mountain. And therefore it heals each individual in lower things, that is, it calls back from desire, it averts the harm of blindness. It descends to our wounds, so that by some kind of use and abundance of itself, it makes us capable of heavenly nature. And indeed it healed these, but it left them in lower things. But seeing the crowds, as you have read, he went up the mountain. And when he had sat down, his disciples came to him (Matt. 5:1). For he was about to proclaim the good news and ready to dispense the blessings from the treasury of divinity, he begins to become more sublime. And although he stood in humility here, he still lifted his eyes high. For even when he raised Lazarus, he groaned in spirit (John 11:33); and likewise he lifted up his head when he forgave the sins of the adulterous woman (John 8:10). For what is it to lift up the eyes, except to open the inner light?

48. Finally, the holy Matthew says: 'He opened his mouth' (Matt. 5:2), namely, he revealed the treasures of wisdom and knowledge of God, hidden in the innermost sanctuary of his temple. He opened his mouth: therefore you too open your mouth, but first implore that it be opened. For if Paul implores help in the opening of his mouth, much more is it fitting for you to implore. He also shows you the key of knowledge, by which you ought to open your mouth, saying through the Prophet: 'Open your mouth for the word of God' (Prov. 31:9). The word of God is the key of your mouth: the key of knowledge is the key of your mouth, by which the chains of silence are loosened, and the locks of ignorance are opened.

(Vers. 20, 21, 22.)

(Verse 20, 21, 22.) Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst now, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are those who weep now, for they shall laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you.

49. Only four beatitudes were placed by Saint Luke on the Lord's Day, but eight were placed by Saint Matthew (Matt. 5:3, et seq.): yet in those eight, the four are found, and in those four, the eight. For he embraced the four as cardinal virtues; that other writer reserved the mystic number in those eight. For the eighth, many psalms are written (Ps. 6:1, and 11:1), and you receive the command to give a part of those eight, perhaps in blessings (Eccles. 11:2); for just as the eighth is the perfection of our hope, so it is the highest virtue in the eighth. But first, let us examine what is more important. Blessed are the poor; for yours is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3). Both evangelists placed this as the first blessing. For it is the first in order and is a parent and source of virtues: because whoever despises worldly things, he himself will merit eternal things; and nobody can attain the merit of the heavenly kingdom, who, being possessed by worldly desires, does not have the ability to emerge.

51. Second Blessing: Blessed are the meek, he says. Third, Blessed are those who mourn. Fourth, Blessed are those who hunger. Fifth, Blessed are the merciful. Sixth, Blessed are the pure in heart. Seventh, Blessed are the peacemakers (Ibid., 4-9). And indeed, the seventh is good; for on that day God rested from all the works of the world (Gen. II, 2); for it is a day of rest and peace. Eighth, Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (Matth. V, 10).

52. Come, Lord Jesus, teach us the order of your beatitudes; for you did not speak without order, first the poor in spirit are blessed, second the meek are blessed, and third those who mourn. For although I know something, yet I know in part. For if Paul knew in part (1 Cor. 13:9), how much can I know? As much as life, as much also I am lower in word; for life demands and acquires word: but word without life is not the word of God. How much wiser than me is Paul! He boasts in dangers (2 Corinthians XII, 5 and 7), I in successes: he boasts because he is not lifted up by revelations; if any revelations were to happen to me, I would boast. But nevertheless, God can raise up men from stones, and bring forth a word from the closed, elicit a voice from the mute. If He opened the eyes of a donkey, so it could see an angel (Numbers XXII, 27); He is also capable of opening our eyes, so we can behold the mystery of God.

53. Blessed are the poor, he says. Not all the poor are blessed; for poverty is in the middle: both the good and the bad can be poor. Unless perhaps that poor person must be understood as blessed, whom the Prophet described, saying: For it is better to be a poor righteous person than a lying rich person (Prov. XIX, 1). Blessed is the poor person who cried out, and the Lord heard him: poor in crime, poor in vices, poor in whom the prince of the world found nothing: the poor person was envious of that poor person, who, although rich, became poor for our sake. Where Matthew fully revealed, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit (Matt. V, 3); for the one who is poor in spirit is not inflated, is not exalted in his fleshly mind.

54. Therefore, the first blessing is this: when I have put away all sin, and stripped away all evil, and am content with simplicity, deprived of evil things, it remains that I also temper my character. For what good is it for me to abstain from worldly things, unless I am meek and gentle? For the one who follows the right path, surely follows him who says: Learn from me because I am meek and humble in heart (Matthew 11:29). Therefore, put aside what is wicked, rid yourself of vices according to good poverty, moderate your affection so that you do not become angry, or at least when you are angry, do not sin, according to what is written: Be angry, and do not sin (Psalm 4:5). For it is praiseworthy to control one's impulses with reason: it is considered no less virtuous to restrain anger and suppress indignation than to not become angry at all; often, the former is seen as more difficult but the latter as weaker.

55. When you do this, remember that you are a sinner; lament your sins, lament your offenses. And the third blessing is for those who weep over their sins; for it is the Trinity that forgives sins. Therefore, wash yourself with your tears, and cleanse yourself with your weeping. If you weep for yourself, no one else will weep for you; for if Saul had wept over his sins, Samuel would not have wept for him (I Samuel 15:35). Each person has their own dead to weep for. We are dead when we sin, when we fill ourselves with the bones of the dead. Bad speech is dead that comes out of the mouth; for it comes out of an evil sepulcher: But the sepulcher is open to their throat (Psalms 5:11). Therefore, the Apostle says: Be imitators of me (1 Corinthians 4:16). He wants us to remember our sins. Paul had nothing to mourn, since he believed in Christ, and yet he wept for the past, saying: For I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God (1 Corinthians 15:9). Therefore, that sinner before faith, but we still sin after faith. Let the sinner weep and confess, so that he may become righteous: for the righteous is his own accuser (Prov. XVIII, 17).

56. Therefore, let us follow the order, for it is written: 'Order charity in me' (Song of Songs II, 4). I have abandoned sin, moderated my behavior, mourned my transgressions: now I begin to hunger and thirst for justice. For when a person is in serious illness, they do not hunger, because the pain of sickness excludes hunger. But what is this hunger for justice? Who are these loaves that the righteous hunger for? Lest perhaps those loaves are the ones of which it is said: 'I was young, and I have grown old, and I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread' (Psalm XXXVI, 25). The one who is hungry certainly seeks an increase in strength. But what is a greater growth in virtue than the standard of justice?

57. Post these words: Blessed are the merciful, for mercy shall follow after justice. Hence it is said: He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his justice remaineth forever. But even he who shows mercy to others loses his reward unless he does it with a pure heart; for if he seeks vainglory, there is no fruit. Cleanse therefore the secrets of your heart; and if you diligently purify your inner self, have compassion on those who are attacked, and understand how many people, how many of your brethren, seek your help. But unless you first cleanse your inner self from all stain of sin, so that dissensions and contentions may not arise from your own emotions, you cannot bring healing to others. Therefore, begin peace with yourself; so that when you yourself are peaceful, you may bring peace to others. For how can you cleanse the hearts of others, unless you have first cleansed your own?

Therefore, you have profited for others, you have provided help for many; hurry, strive towards the end. Although there were many outcomes in life, only one was fitting for the Lord; for what was born according to the flesh, it was necessary to die according to the flesh. He chose to suffer in order to die for us; and you say about all that the Lord has repaid you: 'I will take the cup of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord' (Psalm 115:13), that is, suffering. Therefore, he also said to those who desired to sit at his right or left hand: 'Can you drink the cup that I am about to drink?' (Matthew 20:22). It leads you all the way to the end, it follows you all the way to martyrdom, and it establishes the palm of happiness.

60. Therefore, see the order. It is necessary for you to become poor in spirit; for humility of spirit is the riches of virtues. Unless you are poor, you cannot be meek. He who is meek can lament present things; he who laments lower things can desire better things; he who seeks higher things avoids lower things; so that he may also be helped by higher things; he who has mercy cleanses his heart. For what is it to cleanse the soul, if not to remove the filth of death? For almsgiving delivers from death (Tob. IV, 11); but patience is the perfection of charity. But whoever suffers persecution, being tested in the final struggle, is crowned when he has competed lawfully. Some consider these to be the steps of virtues, by which we can ascend from the lowest to the highest.

61. Finally, just as there are increments in virtues, there are also increments in rewards; for it is greater to be the Son of God than to possess the earth and merit consolation. But because the first reward is the kingdom of heaven, and the last reward is the kingdom of heaven, is the reward equal for beginners and the perfect? Perhaps we are being taught mystically that the first kingdom of heaven is that apostolic saying: To be dissolved and to be with Christ (Philip. I, 23). You have the first kingdom, when the saints are taken up in the clouds to meet Christ in the air; for many of the sleeping will rise; these to eternal life, those to disgrace. Therefore, the first kingdom of heaven is proposed to the saints in the forgiveness of the body; the second kingdom of heaven is to be

with Christ after the resurrection. When you are in the kingdom of heaven, then there is a progression of mansions; although it is one kingdom, there are different merits in the kingdom of heaven. After the resurrection, you will begin to possess your land, freed from death. For he to whom it is said, 'You are dust, and to dust you shall return' (Gen. III, 19), does not possess his land; for one cannot be a possessor who does not reap fruit. Therefore, being freed through the Lord's cross (if, indeed, you are found within the yoke of the Lord), you will find consolation in that very possession: consolation is followed by delight, and divine mercy follows delight. But he who the Lord pities and calls; who is called, sees the one calling; he who sees God is assumed into the right of divine generation: and then finally, as if a son of God, he delights in the riches of the heavenly kingdom. Therefore, he begins, here he is filled. For even within this world, there are many in the Roman Empire; but those who are closer to the emperor obtain greater favor of the empire.

62. Now let us speak about how in the four blessings, Saint Luke included eight blessings. And indeed, we know that there are four cardinal virtues: temperance, justice, prudence, and fortitude. Whoever is poor in spirit is not greedy. Whoever weeps does not boast; instead, they are gentle and peaceful. Whoever mourns is humbled. Whoever is just does not withhold what they know is given to everyone for common use. Whoever shows mercy gives from their own resources. He who gives his own, does not seek others', nor does he plot deceit against his neighbor.

Therefore, virtues are connected and intertwined with each other; so that one who possesses one seems to possess many: and one virtue is fitting for the holy ones, but a more abundant virtue has a more abundant reward. How great is Abraham's hospitality! How great is his humility! How great is his sanctity, that he would save his brother's son from his enemy! And how great is his abstinence, that he would not seek anything from the spoils! But because he displayed faith, he merited the leadership in faith above all others. Therefore, there are more rewards for each person, because there are more incentives for virtues; but what is more abundant in merit, is also more abundant in reward.

64. Blessed are the poor in spirit. You have temperance, which abstains from sin, treads upon the world, and does not seek earthly pleasures.

65. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst; for he who hungers, has compassion on the hungry, by showing compassion he gives, by giving he becomes just; for his Justice endures forever (Psalm 111, 9). Therefore, in Matthew, we understand hunger and thirst as spiritual, in which the food of justice is desired or the drink; because virtue is like a certain matter of virtues, that the just one excels himself to the inferiors, excludes deceit, and seeks the truth.

Blessed are you who now weep, for you will laugh. You have the wisdom to weep for things that pass away, and to seek those things that are eternal; to mourn for worldly things that contradict themselves: to seek the God of peace, who chooses foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and who destroys things that are not, so that those that are, may obtain.

67. (Verse 23.) Blessed are you when people hate you. You have strength, but not the kind that is bought with hatred from crime; rather, endure persecution for the sake of faith; for in this way the crown of suffering is attained, if you disregard the favor of men and follow the divine. Finally, in order for you to know that the consummation of strength is passion: According to this, he says,

their fathers did to the prophets; for the Jews persecuted the prophets even to the death of the body. It is also to conquer the anger of fortitude and to restrain indignation; and through this, fortitude strengthens the mind and body, and does not allow them to be disturbed by any fear or pain; which, like perverse interpreters, we are often overcome by.

Therefore, temperance has the cleanliness of the heart and mind, justice has mercy, prudence has peace, and fortitude has gentleness.

(Vers. 24.)

(Verse 24) Woe to you rich, who have your consolation!

69. Although there are many temptations of vice in monetary wealth, most are also incentives for virtues. Although virtue does not require support and the giving of a poor person is more commendable than the generosity of a rich person, it is not those who have wealth but those who do not know how to use it that are condemned by the authority of divine judgment. For just as that poor person is more praiseworthy who gives with a ready affection and is not hindered by the obstacles of impending poverty, and does not consider himself poor because he has what is enough for nature, so this rich person is more criminal who should have expressed gratitude to God for what he received and should not hide the income given for common use and should not bury it in hoarded treasures. Therefore, it is not the census but the intention behind the crime that matters. And although throughout their whole lives, those who are under custody seek to guard their ill-gotten wealth with anxious fear, since there is no graver punishment than losing the gains of their successors, nevertheless, because the desires and cravings of greed are nourished by a certain empty pleasure: those who have found solace in the present life have lost eternal reward.

Yet here we can understand the rich people of the Jews, or heretics, or certainly the philosophers of the world, who, delighted with the abundance of words and a certain inheritance of ambitious eloquence, surpassed the simplicity of true faith and accumulated useless treasures. Doesn't it seem to you that someone is a heretic, when you hear him disputing about the generation of the Lord according to the usage of the world, rich in words, but poor in strength? He thinks that he has riches in this present time, but in the future he will recognize the poverty of his faith; and he will know that the food of his unfaithfulness, which he has belched forth in this present age, will be punished with eternal fasting of faith, and he will understand the cause of such great punishment. And there will come a time when those who now laugh at our words will mourn. To these, it will be said well:

(Vers. 26.) (Verse 26.) Woe to you when all men speak well of you! Does it not seem to you that these are the ones who, not long ago in the council of Ariminum, as authors of treacherous apostasy, lost the grace of God while following the favor of the emperor? Those who seek to please the powerful have subjected themselves to a perpetual curse.

72. Therefore, the holy Matthew incited the people to virtue and faith by the rewards: he also deterred them from crimes and sins by the threat of future punishments. He did not come to the place of blessings until he had advanced through the enumeration of many heavenly deeds, not in vain, so that he might teach the people, strengthened by divine miracles, to progress beyond the path of the Law and to follow in the footsteps of virtue. It is necessary to be cautious there, where the hearts of the weak people still wavered: here, virtue was to be aroused by the sound of the

trumpet. This book teaches what is revealed in the prefaces and what is expounded in the course of the discourse. There, those who are weak are still nourished with a certain milk of the Law, and therefore are led through the path of the Law to grace: they hear what the Law is, so that by following the Law, they may go beyond the Law. Here, the more firmly established Church is not nourished with milk, but is nourished with food; for charity is a stronger food. Finally, among the three greatest virtues, faith, hope, and charity, charity is the greatest.

73. (V. 27.) Therefore, charity is ordained when it is said: Love your enemies, so that what is spoken in the Church may be fulfilled, which was said before: Ordain in me charity (Song of Solomon 2:4); For charity is ordained when the precepts of charity are formed. See how it begins from higher things and rejects the Law behind the blessings of the Gospel. The Law commands the cycle of vengeance (Exodus 21:24); The Gospel imparts charity in enmities, kindness in hatred, blessings in curses, help to persecutors, patience to the hungry, and the grace of reward. How much more perfect is the athlete who does not feel injury!

74. (Verse 31.) And so that the Lord may not appear to dissolve the Law, He keeps the principle of reciprocity in benefits, which He neglects in injuries. But nevertheless, by saying: As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them likewise, the reciprocity itself is more abundant when actions are equal to desires. For virtue does not know the measure of grace: nor is it satisfied to return what it has received, it desires to multiply what it has taken: so that it may not be inferior in bestowing kindness, even if it is equal in duty. For it is not only the quantity, but also the order and timing, that determine the value of benefits; for in equal benefaction, the one who begins first is considered prior; for the one who begins the act of kindness is the benefactor, and the one who returns it is the debtor. Therefore, the priority of benefaction is a different kind of benefit; for if someone returns the money, they do not pay back the favor, and they remain a debtor of favor, even if they no longer owe money: why do we think that the return of a favor can void gratitude, when its repayment is more a testimony of acknowledgement than an absolution?

75. (Verse 32.) Therefore, the Christian is imbued with a good example; so that not content with natural law, he seeks the grace of God. For if love is common to all, even sinners, then a profession of higher rank should also have a more abundant zeal for virtue, so that he may love even those who do not love him. For although no merits exclude the use of love, they do not exclude the virtue of love. Just as in the one who loves you, it is shameful not to return the favor; and through the love of gratitude, love for the person grows in you whom you did not previously love: so also in the one who does not love, you must love virtue; so that while you love virtue, you may begin to love the person whom you do not love: since rare and temporary rewards are for lovers, eternal rewards are for virtue. But what is so surprising as to offer the other cheek to one who strikes the jaw? Does not every impulse of indignation break, is not anger appeased? Does not patience bring it about that, after your assailant has struck you, you strike him more with your own remorse? Thus you will both repel injury and seek favor. And often the greatest causes for love arise when patience is offered to insolence, when kindness is returned for injury. Indeed, as I remember hearing, we think that philosophy expresses this idea in that one raised eyebrow; that is, justice seems to have divided itself into three parts: one for God, which is called piety; another for parents, or the rest of the human race; and the third for the dead, so that due rites may be performed for them. But indeed, the Lord Jesus, having surpassed the oracle of the Law and the pinnacle of philosophy, extended the duty of piety even to those who had wounded him. For if an

enemy who has fought with you in war and with weapons, having laid down his arms, obtains mercy for his own salvation, and this usually happens either by contemplating nature or by the right of war itself, so that life is granted to the conquered: how much more should it be extended with a better view of religion! For when the desire for preservation of health does not move the warrior, what should move the soldier of peace?

Therefore, that apostolic teaching, because love is patient, is kind, does not envy, does not boast... is perfected in these precepts. If it is patient, it must endure the one who strikes it: if it is kind, it must not respond to curses: if it does not seek what is its own, it must not resist the one who takes it away: if it does not envy, it must not hate the enemy. And yet the Apostles have an abundance of divine precepts of piety; for it is greater to give than to yield: it is greater to love enemies than not to envy them. All of this the Lord both said and did. When He was cursed, He did not curse in return; when He was struck, He did not strike back; when He was stripped, He did not resist; when He was crucified, He asked forgiveness for His persecutors, saying: Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23:34). He defended his accusers from the accusation. They prepared the cross for Him, and He repaid them with salvation and grace.

78. (Verse 35.) And yet, since the very pursuit of virtues becomes sluggish without reward, and He has set before us both an example and a promised reward from heaven, promising that we shall be the sons of God, if we are imitators of Him. For he who hastens to the reward ought not to despise the example, because the more excellent the reward, the more strenuous the duty. But what a reward is the mercy that is obtained through the right of divine adoption! Therefore, follow mercy, so that you may deserve grace.

79. (Verse 36.) The kindness of God extends widely: it rains on the ungrateful, the earth does not withhold its abundant produce from the wicked. The same sun of the world equally illuminates the sacrilegious and the religious. Or, to understand these things mystically, the Lord watered the people of the Jews with rains and shone with the rays of the eternal sun, even though they did not deserve it. But since they were soaked with worldly dew, the Church of God is admitted to the heavenly light, yet in such a way that the prerogative of mercy is preserved for them also if they believe.

He added, do not judge hastily, lest being conscious of your own guilt, you are forced to pass judgment on another.

81. (Verse 44.) It is also a great discipline not to seek fruitful things from unfruitful ones, nor to expect the produce of fertility from uncultivated ones. For to each one, their cultivation gives fruit. In the thorns of this world, that fig cannot be found which, because it is better with fruitful fruits, is well suited to the appearance of resurrection for it is written: They put forth their green figs (Song of Songs 2:13); which immature, useless, and perishable fruit preceded in the Synagogue: or because our life is immature in the body, mature in the resurrection. And therefore, we must distance ourselves from secular worries, which gnaw at the soul and burn the mind, so that we may attain the ripe fruits of diligent cultivation, which cannot be found in the uncultivated parts of this world. For figs are not gathered from thorns, nor grapes from thistles. One is concerned with the world and resurrection, the other with the soul and body: either because no one acquires the fruit of their soul's sins, which, like a grape close to the ground, rots in the higher realms; or because no one can escape the damnation of the flesh, except for those whom Christ has

redeemed, who hung on the cross like a grape. Therefore, let us distance ourselves from that flesh, which is commanded to bring forth thorns for the condemned man (Gen. III, 18), let us raise our spiritual eyes, let us stretch out our hands; so that we may be able to harvest Christ.

82. (Verse 46.) But it teaches that the foundation of all things is the obedience of virtues to heavenly precepts, through which our house cannot be shaken by the flood of pleasures, the assault of spiritual wickedness, the worldly rain, or the foggy disputes of heretics.

83. (Chapter VII - Verse 1) And when he had finished giving these instructions, he teaches his disciples to follow the example of their teachers. For immediately the servant of a Gentile centurion is offered to the Lord to be healed, in whom the people of the nations, who were held captive by the bonds of earthly servitude and tormented by deadly passions, are expressed to be healed by the grace of the Lord. But what he said about the servant dying did not deceive the Evangelist; for he would indeed have died if he had not been healed by Christ. Therefore, he fulfilled the commandment with heavenly love, who loved his enemies in this way: that he might rescue them from death and bring them into the hope of eternal salvation.

84. (Verse 6.) But how remarkable is the humility of the divine that the Lord of heaven did not scorn to visit the servant of a centurion! Faith shines forth in works, but humanity operates more in emotions. He certainly did not do this because he could not care for him in his absence, but to give you a form to imitate in humility, by teaching you to be submissive to those who are lower and deferential to those who are higher. Finally, in another place, he says: Go, your son lives (John 4:50); so that you may know both the power of divinity and the grace of humility. He did not want to continue there, lest he appear to have bestowed his riches more on his adopted son: he himself went ahead, lest he appear to have despised the lowly status of a centurion's servant; for we are all one in Christ, slave and free.

85. But see the faith as a prerogative of medicine. Also note that even among the pagan people there is insight into the mystery. The Lord continues: the centurion is excused, with his military command, due to his humbleness, and he shows reverence, and he is quick to have faith and honor. And Luke also mentions that friends were sent by the centurion to meet Jesus; so that his presence would not burden the dignity of the Lord, and to show respect for his duty. Haec moraliter. But the people of the nations wished for the mystic one, whom the Jewish people crucified, to remain uninjured by injustice; and as for faith, they believed in the word, that is, in the power of God, and expected that healing would be given to people by Christ. But as for the mystery, they saw that Christ was not yet penetrable in the hearts of the still pagan people. And therefore, because he had not yet washed away the stains of past thoughts, he considered himself to be burdened rather than helped by the Lord's favor. So that widow of Sarepta considered herself unworthy of prophetic hospitality (III Kings 17:18). And for this reason the Lord preferred faithfulness of the Gentiles in that one.

87. (Verse 9.) And indeed, if you read it thus: In no one have I found such great faith in Israel, the understanding is simple and easy. But if you read it according to the Greeks: Nor in Israel have I found such great faith, this faith is even preferred to the chosen and to those who see God.

88. (Verse 10.) But consider the economy: the faith of the master is proven, and the health of the servants is strengthened. Therefore, the merit of the master can help the servants not only by the

merit of faith, but also by the zeal of discipline. Also, observe another aspect of the Lord's humility: He does not promise, but He acts; for although He had not yet commanded healing, the servants who were sent found the servant boy in good health.

(Vers. 12-14.)

(Verses 12-14.) When he was approaching the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then he came forward and touched the coffin.

89. And this place is overflowing with both forms of grace, so that we may believe in the quickening divine mercy of the widow's mother through her lamentation, especially her who is broken by the toil or death of her only son; yet, the merit of the widow's sorrow is won over by the mass of funeral rites; and this widow, surrounded by the multitude of peoples, seems to be more than a woman, who has deserved to obtain the resurrection of her only young son through her tears; because the holy Church calls the younger people away from the pomp of the funeral and the ultimate rest of their graves back to life by contemplating tears; for they are forbidden to weep, since resurrection is owed to them.

90. He, who indeed was dead in the tomb, was carried to the grave with four material elements; but he had hope of rising again, because he was carried on wood. And although this did not benefit us before; yet after Jesus touched it, it began to advance towards life; so that it would be a sign of salvation to the people to be given back through the instrument of the cross. Therefore, upon hearing the word of God, those harsh carriers of that funeral stood still, who were pressing the human body, weighed down by the deadly flow of material nature. For what else do we lie lifeless, as if in a kind of bier, that is, the instrument of our final burial, when either the fire of excessive desire burns, or cold sweat overflows, or the strength of our souls is maintained by a sluggish state of the body, or our spirit, solidified by vice, nourishes the mind void of pure light? These are the bearers of our funeral. But although the hope of life has been abolished for all by the finality of death, and the bodies of the deceased lie nearby in the tomb; nevertheless, by the word of God, the corpses that are about to die rise again, the voice returns, the son is returned to his mother, he is called back from the tomb, he is snatched away from the sepulcher. What is your tomb, if not evil morals? Your tomb is deceit, your sepulcher is your throat: For their throat is an open sepulcher (Psalm V, 11), from which dead words are uttered. From this tomb Christ liberates you, from this mound you will arise, if you listen to the word of God.

92. And if it is a grave sin that you cannot wash away with the tears of your repentance, let the mother Church weep for you, who intervenes as a widowed mother for each one as if for a single son; she sympathizes with a spiritual sorrow of nature when she sees her children urged towards death by deadly vices. We are her own flesh and blood; for there are also spiritual organs, which Paul says he has, saying: So, brother, let me have joy of you in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord (Philem. 20). Therefore, we are the organs of the Church; since we are the members of its body, of its flesh, and of its bones. Let the pious mother grieve, let the crowd assist: not only the crowd, but also let the good parent grieve with compassion. Now you will rise from the dead, now you will be freed from the tomb: your funeral attendants will stand, you will begin to speak the words of life, everyone will fear; for many will be corrected by the example of one. They will also

praise God, who has granted us such remedies to avoid death.

(Vers. 19.)

(Verse 19.) And John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to Jesus, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'

93. The understanding is not simple in simple words; otherwise, the present conflicts with the past. For how can John, whom he knew in the past by the revelation of God the Father, not know him here? How can he recognize someone there whom he did not know before, and not recognize someone here whom he already knew? 'I did not know him,' he says, 'but the one who sent me to baptize told me: 'On whomever you see the Spirit descending' (John 1:33).' And he believed what was said, and recognized what was shown, and worshipped what was baptized, and prophesied about what was coming. Finally, he said, 'I saw and testified that this is the chosen one of God' (Ibid., 34). So, how could such a great prophet be mistaken, that he would not believe that the one about whom he had said, 'Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world' (Ibid., 29), was still the Son of God? For it is either insolence to attribute divinity to someone you do not know, or it is perfidy to doubt the Son of God. Therefore, there is no suspicion of such a great error falling upon that Prophet.

Therefore, if the form of simple intelligence conflicts, we should seek a spiritual figure. And because we have already said above (in Luke, chapter 3) that John is a type of the Law, which was a precursor of Christ, it is right that the Law, which held captive the hearts of the faithless as if in eternal prisons, was physically enclosed, with its fertile entrails of punishments and doors of madness restrained, would not be able to bring about the complete fulfillment of the testimony of the Lord's dispensation without the consent of the Gospel. Indeed, the Law prophesied the grace of baptism through the cloud and the sea in Exodus; it foreshadowed spiritual food in the lamb (Exodus 12:3); it designated an everlasting fountain in the rock (Exodus 17:6); it revealed the forgiveness of sins in Leviticus (Leviticus 25:10); it announced the kingdom of heaven in the Psalms; it most clearly declared the promised land in Joshua.

95. All these things are in agreement with the testimony of John as well: but nevertheless, they are suppressed by the tyrannical powers of this world, so that the light of the Lord's resurrection may not be shed abroad. Therefore John sends his disciples to Christ, so that they may attain the fullness of knowledge; for Christ is the fulfillment of the Law: so that, since often words are empty without actions, and faith is more fully shown by the witness of deeds than by promises of words, which were then wavering in the hearts of the Jews as if sealed up by the Law, it might be revealed by the very spectacle of the Lord's cross and the full testimony of his resurrection.

96. And perhaps these disciples are two peoples, one of whom believed from the Jews, the other from the Gentiles, who believed because they heard. Therefore, they wanted to see because of that: But blessed are your eyes that see, and your ears that hear (Matt. 13:16) . But we also saw in John: we perceived with our own eyes in the apostles: and we examined with our own hands the fingers of Thomas. For what was from the beginning, what we heard, and what we saw, we perceived with our own eyes, and our hands examined the Word of life, and life appeared (1 John 1:1-2) . When did he appear? When did we see. He did not appear like this before he was seen. Thanks therefore to the Lord, who was crucified for our faith, was crucified for our desires. My

mind is fixed on that crucifix.

Therefore, those who study the Old Testament now, before they are acquainted with the Gospel, and read certain traces of the Lord's body, think that He is about to come, and they inquire whether He Himself is Christ the Son of God, who is to come. And when they read the passages where He spoke with Abraham (Gen. 18:20ff. and 22:1), or when He showed himself as the leader of the heavenly army (Jos. 5:14), they say, for sure: Are you the one who is to come, or shall we expect another? But when they come to the Gospel, and know that the blind are enlightened, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised, then they say: We have seen him, and with our own eyes we have beheld him, and we have inserted our fingers into the wounds of his nails. For it seems to us that we have seen whom we have read about, that we have looked upon him hanging, and, with the Spirit of the Church searching, have felt his wounds; for if demons are cast out by the finger of God, faith is also found by the finger of the Church. Perhaps, in a certain part of the operation of our body, we all seem to have investigated the sequence of the Lord's Passion; for faith reaches from a few to many. Therefore, the law announces the coming of Christ: the scripture of the Gospel confirms that he has come.

98. Moreover, some also understand about John himself in this way: that he was such a great prophet that he recognized and announced the future remission of sins, but not as someone who doubted, but rather as a devout prophet who believed that he would come, but did not believe that he would die. Therefore, he doubted not in terms of faith, but in terms of piety. Peter also doubted, saying: 'Be merciful to yourself, Lord, this will not happen' (Matthew 16:22). He, the leader of faith (to whom Christ had not yet called himself the Son of God, yet he believed in him regarding the death of Christ), did not believe in Christ. The feeling of piety is not a lapse in devotion. Finally, elsewhere he refuses to have his feet washed where he does not recognize the mystery, while burdened with the duty to the Lord (John 13:8). Therefore, the holy ones did not believe in Christ about to die: For what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, God has prepared these for those who love him (1 Corinthians 2:9). Therefore, the lapse of love does not hinder the faith of the religious.

99. Finally, the Lord, knowing that no one can fully believe without the Gospel; because as faith begins from the old Testament, so it is fulfilled in the new: when asked about himself, he did not sign with words but with deeds.

(Vers. 22.)

(Verse 22.) Go, he says, and report to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised, the poor have the good news preached to them.

Certainly a full testimony by which the Prophet recognized the Lord; for it was prophesied about him, not about another: because the Lord gives food to the hungry, the Lord lifts up the oppressed, the Lord sets free the prisoners, the Lord enlightens the blind, the Lord loves the righteous, the Lord watches over strangers, he will take care of the orphan and the widow, and he will exterminate the way of sinners (Psalm 145:8-9). He who does these things, says the Prophet, will reign forever (Psalm 145:10). Therefore, these are not the signs of human, but of divine power: to open the darkness of perpetual night for the blind, to heal the wounds of eyes with poured light, to

insinuate sound into the ears of the deaf, to rejoin loosened and broken limbs with firm joints, and to recall the dead back to the light with a renewed vigor for living.

101. These things happened before the Gospel, either rarely or not at all. Tobias received his sight (Tob. 11:12), he is one example; and yet it was an angel who provided the remedy, not a man. Elijah raised the dead: he, however, prayed and wept (3 Kings 17:20); Jesus commanded. Elisha cleansed the leper (4 Kings 5:14); yet there the authority of the command did not prevail, but it was a figure of the mystery. The flour did not run out for the hungry widow, multiplying itself according to the prophet's instructions (3 Kings 17:16); but that same flour, or rather the same species of the sacrament, was also preserved as a prefiguration. But still, those are small examples of the testimony of the Lord: the fullness of faith, the crucifixion of the Lord, his death, and burial. And so, after saying those things, she added:

(Vers. 23.)

(Verse 23) Blessed, he said, is the one who has not been scandalized by me.

Indeed, the cross could also cause scandal to the chosen ones, but no testimony is greater to the divine person: there is nothing that seems more beyond human than to offer oneself entirely for the world; this is fully declared by the Lord alone. Finally, he was designated by John in this way: Behold the Lamb of God: behold him who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). But this is not answered to those two men, disciples of John, but to all of us; so that we may believe in Christ if the actions are consistent. For there will come someone who will claim this name for himself, whom you cannot distinguish from a human by mere designation; nevertheless, you can discern him by the consideration of his actions.

(Vers. 24.)

(Verse 24) What did you go out to the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

103. When he had forewarned the disciples of John that they should believe in the Lord's cross, as they were returning, he turned to the crowds and began to provoke the poor to virtue; so that they, exalted in heart, unstable in mind, weak in counsel, might prefer things that are beautiful but fleeting to things that are useful and eternal. But instead they should take up the cross with a humble spirit rather than extol the decorations of this world; and as if they were blessed in their poverty, willingly exchange the life of the body for immortal glory. Therefore, it is not in vain that the persona of Saint John is praised here, who, disregarding idleness, did not change the form of justice for the fear of death, but rather preferred the love of life.

104. 'What,' he said, 'did you go out into the wilderness to see? The world seems to be compared to a desert, still uncultivated, still barren, still infertile, into which the Lord denies that we should go forth, so that we might consider the men inflated in mind and empty in internal virtue, and boasting with fragile worldly glory, as a certain example and image for us to imitate: those who are subject to the storms of this world, stirred by the unstable life, and rightly compared to a reed; in whom there is no fruit of solid righteousness; who, covered with lengthy robes, entangled with knots, resound with empty noise of their mouth, with no benefit to themselves, with frequent stumbling, internally empty, externally appearing beautiful.' We are reeds, rooted in no more stable nature. And if a light breeze of favorable success blows, we beat the nearby ones with a wandering

motion: unable to support, eager to harm. Reeds love rivers, and we delight in the flowing and transient world.

However, if someone uproots this reed from the earth and plants it in the garden, and removes any excess, stripping off the old man with his actions, and tempers himself with the handwriting of a fast-writing scribe, it begins not to be a reed, but a pen, which imprints the precepts of celestial Scriptures in the depths of the mind, and inscribes them on the tablets of the heart. Concerning this pen, you have what is said: My tongue is the pen of a fast-writing scribe (Psalm 45:2), which some want to refer to Christ. Therefore, in one place both the word and the pen, and the scribe are read. The word, because it sprang forth from the mysterious birth of the Father: 'My heart hath uttered a good word' (Psalm xlv, 1). The pen, because the flesh of Christ expressed the line of paternal will, and fulfilled the divine commandments by the outpouring of sacred blood. The scribe, because with his pen he revealed to us the mysteries of the paternal disposition through a certain distinctness, either of the Old and New Testament, or of divinity and flesh.

106. Imitate this pen according to the temperament of your flesh. And dip your pen, that is, your flesh, not in ink, but in the spirit of the living God, so that what you write may be eternal. With such a pen, Paul wrote that letter, of which he said: 'You are our letter . . . written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God' (2 Corinthians 3:2-3). Dip your flesh in the blood of Christ, as it is written: 'That your foot may be dipped in blood' (Psalm 68:24). And so, let the imprint of your soul and the step of your mind be marked with unwavering confession of the crucifixion of the Lord. Immerse your flesh in the blood of Christ, if you want to wash away vices, erase sins, and bear the death of Christ in your own flesh, as the Apostle says: Carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus Christ (II Cor. IV, 10). Do not be inclined towards earthly things, lest you break your reed. And therefore, concerning Christ, who had no need to bow to earthly things, it was prophesied: A bruised reed shall he not break (Isaiah XLII, 3); for he strengthened the flesh which sins had bruised, by the power of the resurrection. The good reed of the flesh of Christ, which nailed the head of the serpent of the devil, and the enticing baits of worldly desires to the gibbet of the cross.

(Vers. 24, 25.)

(Verse 24, 25.) But what did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing?

107. This is not the Lord's conversation about clothing; although the excessive concern for clothing often feminizes many, who cannot bear the weight of wool as if it were a burden, they sweep silk clothing on the ground with their footsteps, and by habit they make the garment a burden. But nevertheless, here it seems to signify other clothing, and unless I am mistaken, the human bodies with which our soul is clothed. In fact, even Joseph's robe was stained with the appearance of the Lord's body (Gen. XXXVII, 31). And the Apostle says: Stripping himself of flesh, he led all principalities and powers (Colossians II, 15). What else does he show, except that the body was like clothing, from which the Lord stripped himself in his passion, so that divinity remained free and immune to injury? Therefore, this whole passage encourages us prophetically by example to embrace the virtue of undergoing suffering. Finally, he added:

(Vers. 25.)

(Verse 25) Behold those who are in precious garments are in the houses of kings.

There are also soft garments of delightful deeds and manners: for which reason the Apostle exhorts us (Colossians 3:9-10) to strip off the old man with his deeds and put on the new, in which there is no sweet allurements or playfulness of lasciviousness, but rather the use of labor and its fruits; because the delicate care of the body, luxury, and the desire for indulgence will not in any way be received by the heavenly court, to which the ascent is made by the hard and laborious steps of virtue. Indeed, those who are dissolved by the flowing pleasures, exiles from the heavenly kingdom, grow old within the dwellings of this world, whom it is certain are the rulers of this world and inhabitants of darkness. For these are kings (Ephesians 6:12), because they dominate with a certain secular power, they have received the imitators of their works.

(Vers. 26.)

(Verse 26.) But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet is here.

109. Therefore, how did they desire to see John in the desert, who was confined in prison? The Lord proposes him as an example for us to imitate, who prepared the way not only for the Lord's birth according to the order of the flesh and the message of faith, but also by a certain precursor of his glorious suffering. Truly a greater prophet, in whom the end of the prophets is found. A greater prophet, because many desired to see the one whom he prophesied, whom he saw, whom he baptized.

110. But is not even He greater, of whom Moses said: 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet' (Deut. xviii, 15)? And of whom it is said: 'And every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from the people' (ibid., 19)? If, then, Christ is a prophet, how is He greater than all? Do we deny that Christ is a prophet? Nay, we confess Him to be the Lord of the prophets. But I assert that John is a prophet, and I say that he is greater than all, but only among them that are born of women, not among those that are born of a virgin. For indeed he was greater than those with whom he could be equal by the lot of birth. That nature is different from this, and cannot be compared with human generations. There can be no comparison between man and God; each person is preferred to their own. In fact, to such an extent could there be no comparison between John and the Son of God; that he is even considered inferior to the angels.

(Vers. 28.) (Verse 28.) For whoever is lesser in the kingdom of heaven, he is greater than that. For since he had said 'angel' he is preeminent among men; and because he had declared that he is superior among those born of women, therefore he added: for the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he; so that you may know that angels must be yielded to. Moreover, John is rightly preferred to his equals, from whose days the kingdom of heaven is forced. This expression seems somewhat obscure, and therefore we thought it should be derived from another book of the Gospel. For if we follow the letter, the lower is necessarily compelled by the higher: but the kingdom of heaven surpasses human things. But when certain things are said to become denser through compression, it is not absurd that the kingdom is compelled when it is frequented by many. And they forcibly take it (Ibid.). If we repeat that of the Lord which is written, with the Son of God saying: The kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21); we observe that the heavenly kingdom is established within us, since Christ has rejected the kingdom of the worldly ruler and has driven away secular delights, and reigns within the secret depths of our souls. Therefore, the desire is brought to the human mind, which, being enticed by various allurements, avoids labor

and seeks pleasure; when either restrained by the fear of punishment or enticed by reward, it strives to surpass itself: and as if its labors had been exhausted, it sought to snatch away the palm which, to the dismay of many opponents, was taken away from it, and it sought to claim it. For we snatch the palm of salvation from this world, and, like sentinels on guard, we gather the fruits, surrounded by lurking serpents, with unceasing effort; yet in such a way that it is not a stealthy theft, but a triumphant plunder. There is also another kind of plunder, when we plunder what has been taken from others. However, we do not labor to understand who those plunderers are, since we have learned that we are descended from the breed of the rapacious wolf, Benjamin (Gen. 49:27). John had preceded in order to justify the Jewish people; the Lord Himself had come to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; He had appointed the apostles to establish the faith of the Jewish people either by argument or by signs and miracles. But when they rejected the gifts offered to them, the tax collectors and sinners began to believe in God and to enter the faith. Therefore, in his apostolic preaching, the kingdom of heaven is proclaimed, and it is strengthened by the faithful people's desire.

113. She destroys the kingdom that was laboring under a flow of blood (Luke 8:44); for when the Lord went to the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, he secretly touched her and she tasted the remedy of health. She destroys the kingdom of the Canaanite woman, who, having gone out from her own borders, cried out, saying: Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David: my daughter is severely possessed by a demon (Matthew 15:22). Truly, this woman has compelled the kingdom, persistent in her prayers, wise in her responses, faithful in her words. He recalls the one passing by, asks the one remaining silent, worships the one making excuses, bows to the one denying. Does it not seem to you that he snatches away, when he elicits what is denied, snatches away what is reserved for others? For the Lord had denied that the bread of the children should be given to the dogs: but she consented, and by consenting she snatched away, saying: 'Certainly, Lord; for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.' (ibid. 27).

114. Have you learned how the heavenly kingdom is taken by force? Let us also strive, let us also seize it; for no one eats the Passover unless he hastens to do so (Exodus 12:11). But what is this that takes the kingdom? Not wickedness, not lust, not pleasure, but that which is spoken of: Your faith is great; let it be done for you as you wish (Matthew 15:28). Behold, she took it by force, she obtained what she desired; what she asked for, she compelled. She also took it by force, that widow who, by praying frequently, if not because of her innocence, at least because of her persistence in being heard, extorted it (Luke 18:3).

Therefore, the Church snatches the kingdom from the Synagogue. My kingdom is Christ: I snatch him away from the Jews sent under the Law, born in the Law, nourished according to the Law: so that he may save me who was without the Law. Christ is snatched away, promised to some, predestined to others: Christ is snatched away, born to some, supported by others: Christ is snatched away, killed by some, buried by us: Christ is snatched away by the schemers, snatched away by the sleepers. You have where they themselves confessed to have taken us while we were sleeping, saying: Say that his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept (Matthew 28:13). Therefore arise, you who sleep; lest you also, while sleeping, lose Christ. Arise, you who sleep, and arise from the dead (Ephesians 5:14). Do you see that the dead are asleep? And therefore we do not envy others, but take care of ourselves; for the dead could not save the living.

116. Let those who have slept, or even those who have lost Christ, rise up, whether late or early. Christ is not lost in such a way that he does not return, if, indeed, he is sought after. Rather, he returns to those who are vigilant and is present to those who rise up. In fact, he is present to all, for he is always everywhere, he who fills all things. He does not fail anyone, we are the ones who fail. I say again, he does not fail anyone, he overflows for all. For sin abounded, so that grace might overflow. Christ is grace, Christ is life, Christ is Resurrection. Therefore, whoever rises, finds him to be present.

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is taken by force, when Christ is denied by his own and worshiped by the gentiles; it is taken when it is rejected by them and revered by us; it is taken when it is not acknowledged through inheritance, but acquired through adoption.

Book Six

(Vers. 29, 30.) (Verse 29, 30.) And all the people, hearing and the tax collectors justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John: but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized. In the Gospel of Luke, it is revealed with special additions what Saint Matthew had left somewhat obscure in more general terms. For he says: 'And wisdom is justified by her children' (Matthew 11:19). Here we see what that wisdom is: he says that they have justified God. Therefore, God is wisdom, because the Son of God is wisdom: wisdom by nature, not by progress. The power of God the Father is one wisdom, and the power of the soul is another wisdom: the former is begotten, the latter is created. There is one wisdom that is the author of works, and another that is the work itself; for it is a wise work to understand wisely, and to feel actively. These are the gifts of nature: but the one who works is not a creature, but a creator, that is, not a gift of nature, but a bestower of nature.

Therefore, God Himself is justified through baptism, as humans justify themselves by confessing their own sins, as it is written: 'Declare your iniquities, so that you may be justified' (Isaiah 43:26). He is justified in this, because He is not refuted by stubbornness, but His gift is acknowledged through His righteousness: 'The LORD is righteous, and He loves righteousness' (Psalm 11:8). Therefore, the justification of God is seen in this, that it appears not to unworthy and guilty ones, but to innocent ones made clean through washing and that His gifts have been transferred to the righteous. Let us justify the Lord, so that we may be justified by the Lord.

3. Let us inquire more diligently what it means to justify God. The Apostle says: Let God be true, but every man a liar, as it is written: That thou mayest be justified in thy words, and mayest overcome when thou art judged (Rom. III, 4). David also says: To thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before thee; that thou mayest be justified in thy words, and mayest overcome when thou art judged (Psal. L, 6). Therefore, he who sins and confesses his sin to God justifies God by yielding to Him who overcomes, and hopes for grace from Him. Therefore, in baptism God is justified, in which there is confession and forgiveness of sins.

4. Therefore we do not despise God's plan like the Pharisees. God's plan is in the baptism of John: who then would doubt that God's plan is in the cleansing of Christ? This is the plan that the Angel of great counsel found, which no one knew: For who has known the mind of the Lord (Rom. XI, 34)? No one despises the plan of man, who can refute the plan of God? Therefore, let us justify the mother as children, let us follow the mother. We know that a mother offers herself at risk for

her children. By the counsel of the mother of wisdom, let us obey the command of the mother.

(Vers. 32.)

(Verse 32.) We sang to you, and you did not dance: we lamented, and you did not weep.

Even though these may not seem unsuitable for the role of children who engage in light physical activity due to their immaturity in more serious matters, I presume that they can be interpreted in a deeper sense because they appear to be Jews who did not believe in the psalms at first, nor in the later prophetic laments: provoked by the psalms to rewards, and recalled from error by the laments. David sang, that we may hang up our harps on the willows. He himself sang, and danced before the ark of the Lord, not for lasciviousness, but for religious devotion (2 Samuel 6:14). Therefore, it is not the movements of the actor's undulating body in leaps, but the energetic mind and the religious agility of the body that are portrayed. However, the correction that followed was not in triumphs or in the downfall of the Jews, who, provoked by the gifts of divine indulgence, should have eased their minds, lifted their bodies, abandoned earthly things, and sought heavenly things, and, worn down by the injuries of captivity, bewailed the sin that was the cause of the offense.

6. (Verse 35.) Therefore Wisdom is justified by all her children. Well by all, because justice is preserved around all, so that the reception of the faithful may be, and the rejection of the unfaithful. From which the majority of Greeks have it thus: Wisdom is justified by all her works; that is, the work of justice is to preserve the measure around the merit of each individual.

7. Therefore he says well: We have sung to you, and you have not danced (Exodus 15:1). Moses sang indeed when he made the waves subside in the Red Sea for the crossing of the Jews, the water stood up, and it submerged the horses of the Egyptians and their riders. Isaiah sang the song of his beloved vineyard, indicating that the people, who had previously been fruitful with abundant virtues, would become rough with wickedness (Isaiah 5:1). The Hebrews sang when their feet were moistened by the touch of the roasting flame, both inside and outside, while everything else was burning; however, the fire alone licked them harmlessly and did not burn them (Daniel 3:24). Habakkuk also, with a learned song, comforted the public sorrow, and prophesied that the passion of the Lord would be sweet to the faithful (Habakkuk 3:2). Therefore, the prophets sang with spiritual melodies, resulting in public words of salvation. The prophets wept with mournful dirges, soothing the hard hearts of the Jews.

Scripture has taught us to sing seriously and to sing spiritually (Psal. 46:8). It has also taught us to dance wisely, as the Lord said to Ezekiel: 'Clap your hands and stamp your feet' (Ezek. 6:11); for God, the judge of morals, does not require the loose movements of a dancer, or indecent noises from men, or the applause of women, in order to lead a prophet into the mockery of actors and the softness of women. The revealed mysteries of the resurrection do not fit well with the shameful actions of dancing. It is healthy for there to be a certain applause for good actions and deeds, whose sound spreads in all directions and results in the glory of well-done things. And honorable dancing, in which the soul rejoices, and the body is uplifted by good works, when we hang our musical instruments on the willow trees.

Therefore, the prophet is commanded to clap his hands and strike his foot; he is commanded to sing praises because he already saw the wedding of the bridegroom, in which the Church is

espoused and Christ is loved. And good is the wedding when the soul is betrothed to the Spirit by the Word made flesh. In these wedding festivities, the prophet David wanted us to play, he invited us to them because he was joining his descendants; and therefore, happier than the others, as if placed in the very act of the wedding, he exhorts us to the celebration of the festive gift, saying: Rejoice in God, our helper, sing joyfully to God, Jacob. Take up the psalm, and give the timbrel, the pleasant psaltery with the harp (Psalm 80:2-3). Do you not recognize the certain act of the prophet dancing? Finally, elsewhere: I will sing to you on the harp, O Holy Israel. My lips will rejoice when I sing to you, and my soul which you have redeemed (Psalm 69:22-23). Do you hear the voices of those playing the harp, do you hear the sounds of those dancing? Believe it to be a wedding.

10. Take also your lyre, so that the struck chords of the interior veins make the sound of a good work. Take your psaltery, so that the harmony of your words and deeds may sing together. Take the timbrel, so that the instrument of your body may modulate the inner spirit, and let the sweetness of your behavior be expressed in your actions. Thus the prophet sang, when he said: Come here from Lebanon, my bride, come here from Lebanon (Song of Songs 4:8).

11. This song was sung by the boys, but they were not heard. Which boys? Of whom it is said: Behold I, and the boys whom you have given me (Isaiah VIII, 18). But this song was not sung in the marketplace, nor in the streets, but in Jerusalem; for it is the Lord's forum, in which the laws of heavenly precepts are established.

(Vers. 37.)

(Verse 37.) And behold, a woman who was a sinner in the city.

12. At this point, many seem to have a scruple and raise questions as to whether the two Evangelists appear to have disagreed about faith, or whether they wanted to indicate some diversity in the diversity of their words as a mystery. For you have in the Gospel according to Matthew that Jesus, when he had come to Bethany, into the house of Simon the leper, a woman approached him with an alabaster jar of precious ointment, and while he was reclining, she poured it on his head (Matthew 26:6-7). Then there: the Pharisee says within himself that if he were a prophet, he would know the sinner and should avoid her ointment (Ibid., 8). There the disciples complain about the spilled ointment. Therefore, both must be explained, but the one that is first in the order of the writings should also receive the first order of interpretation.

13. Therefore, the Lord Jesus came into the house of Simon the leper. It is clear that the stewardship does not shy away from the leper, does not avoid the unclean, in order to be able to remove the stains from the human body. But the house of the leper was in Bethany, which is called the house of obedience by interpretation. Therefore, all of Bethany is the portion of the house of Simon. Does it not seem to you that Bethany is a clean place, in which we must offer the service of obedience, but the house of Simon the leper is like the earth, which is a portion of the world? But the prince of this age is a certain leper named Simon. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ came from those higher places into this world and descended to the earth. He was not in this world, but by obedient piety, he was sent into this world. He himself says: As you sent me into this world (John 6:57). Therefore, this woman heard that Christ had come, she entered the house of Simon; for this woman could not have been healed unless Christ had come to the earth. And

perhaps for this reason it also enters the house of Simon, because it has the appearance of a higher soul, namely, the Church, which descends to earth in order to gather the people to itself with a good fragrance.

14. (Verse 38.) Therefore, Saint Matthew introduces this woman pouring ointment on Christ's head (Matthew 26:7): and perhaps he did not want to say she was a sinner, as the sinner according to Luke poured ointment on Christ's feet. Therefore, it is possible that they are not the same, so that the evangelists do not seem to contradict each other. It is also possible that the question is resolved by the difference in merit and time, so that the former is still a sinner, while the latter is more perfect. For although the Church or the soul does not change its person, it does change its progress. Therefore, if you determine that the soul approaches God faithfully, not with shameful and obscene sins, but serving God's Word devoutly, having the confidence of immaculate chastity, you notice that it ascends to the head of Christ (and the head of Christ is God (I Cor. XI, 3)) and spreads the fragrance of its merits: for we are the good fragrance of Christ to God (II Cor. II, 15). For indeed, the good honours God, like a fragrant odor, the life of the righteous.

15. If you understand these things, you will see that this woman is very blessed, wherever this Gospel is proclaimed, her name is mentioned, and her memory will never fade away (Matthew 26:13); for she poured perfume on the head of Christ, the sweet fragrance of good morals and righteous deeds. Whoever approaches the head cannot be elevated; just as the one who is empty and swollen with the mind of carnal desires, and does not hold the head. But whoever does not hold the head of Christ should hold the feet; because the one body, joined and supplied, grows for the increase of God (Colossians 2:19).

16. The other person or departure is near to us. For we have not yet renounced our sins. Where are our tears, where are the sighs, where are the weepings? Come, let us worship and prostrate ourselves before God, and let us weep before our Lord, who made us (Psalm 94:6); so that at least we may come to the feet of Jesus. For we cannot yet come to the head, because the sinner is at the feet, the righteous at the head.

17. She has, however, the ointment which she sinned. Grant me and you also, after sin, repentance. Wherever you have heard that a righteous person has come either to the house of the unworthy or to the house of the Pharisee, strive: snatch away hospitality, snatch away the kingdom of heaven: For from the days of John the Baptist . . . the kingdom of heaven is forced, and those who force it lay hold of it (Matthew 11:12). Wherever you hear the name of Christ, hasten: knowing that Jesus has entered into the inner house of anyone, hurry there yourself. When you find wisdom, when you find justice residing in someone's innermost being, run to their feet, that is, seek the highest part of wisdom. Do not disdain their feet: that fringe touched them, and it was healed (Luke 8:44). Confess your sins with tears, and let that heavenly justice speak of you as well:

(Vers. 44.) (Verse 44.) She washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. And perhaps for this reason Christ did not wash his feet, so that we may wash them with our tears. Good tears, which can not only wash away our sin, but also water the heavenly Footprint of the Word, so that his steps may abound in us. Good tears, in which there is not only the redemption of sinners, but also the refreshment of the righteous, for the righteous voice says: My tears have been my bread day and night (Psalm 42:4).

19. And if you cannot approach the head of Christ, let Christ touch your head with His feet. And His garment heals, and His feet heal. Spread out your hair, lay down before Him all the dignities of your body. Not insignificant are the hairs that can wipe the feet of Christ. This is testified by him, who as long as he had hair, could not be conquered (Jud. XVI, 5 et seq.). Finally, it is not proper for a woman with her head uncovered to pray (I Cor. XI, 5). May she indeed have hairs with which she may surround Christ's footsteps, with which she may wipe her own locks of beauty and the feet of wisdom; so that at least the last drops of divine virtue may moisten them, she may fix her kisses on the feet of justice. This is not a minor merit, of which Wisdom can say:

(Vers. 45.)

(Verse 45.) Since I entered, he has not stopped kissing my feet.

20. So that he may know nothing except to speak wisdom, so that he may know nothing except to love justice, so that he may know nothing except to practice chastity, so that he may know nothing except to embrace purity. For a kiss is the sign of mutual love: a kiss is the pledge of charity.

21. (Vers. 46.) Blessed is he who can and desires to anoint the feet of Christ: for Simon had not yet anointed them. But more blessed is she who anointed them with ointment; for she spreads the various sweet fragrances of many flowers collected into one. And perhaps no one else can bear this ointment except the Church alone, which has countless flowers of different scents: which rightly receives the appearance of a sinner, since Christ also assumed the form of a sinner.

22. (Verse 47.) And therefore no one can love as much as she who loves in many. Neither Peter himself who said: Lord, you know that I love you (John 21:17). Nor Peter himself who was grieved because he was asked: Do you love me (ibid.)? For what was obvious, he did not want to be sought as if unknown. Therefore not even Peter himself, because he loved the Church in Peter. Nor Paul himself, because Paul is also his portion. And you, love very much, so that much may be pardoned to you. Paul has sinned greatly, who was also a persecutor: but he has loved greatly, who has persevered even to martyrdom. Many sins have been forgiven him; because he also loved greatly, who did not spare his own blood for the sake of God's name.

23. (Verse 39) Look at the economy: in the house of the Pharisee, the sinful woman is glorified, in the house of the Law and the Prophets, not the Pharisee, but the Church is justified; for the Pharisee did not believe, he believed these things. Finally, he said: If this man were a prophet, he would surely know who and what kind of woman is touching him. But the house of the Law is Judea, which is not written in stones, but on the tablets of the heart. In this the Church is now justified by a greater Law; for the Law of sins does not know forgiveness; the Law does not have the mystery by which hidden things are cleansed; and therefore what is lacking in the Law is completed in the Gospel.

(Vers. 41.)

(Verse 41.) "Two," he said, "were debtors to a certain moneylender: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

24. Who are these two debtors, if not two peoples: one from the Jews, the other from the nations, both subject to that heavenly treasurer, the moneylender? One, he says, owed five hundred denarii, the other fifty. This denarius is not insignificant, for on it the image of the king is formed,

who bears the trophy of the emperor. We owe this moneylender not material wealth, but the scales of merits, the weight of virtues: the value of which is measured by the gravity of merit, the appearance of justice, and the sound of confession. Woe is me if I do not have what I have received: either because it is difficult for anyone to be able to repay this whole debt to the lender, woe is me if I do not ask: Grant me the debt (Matthew 6:12)! For the Lord did not teach us to pray in such a way that we ask to have our debts forgiven, unless he knew that there would be some suitable debtors who find it difficult.

25. But who is this people which owes more, if not us, to whom more has been entrusted? To them the sayings of God have been entrusted, to us the birth of the Virgin has been entrusted. You have the talent of the Virgin's birth: you have the hundredth fruit of faith. Emmanuel, God, has been entrusted to us; the cross, death, resurrection of the Lord have been entrusted. And if Christ suffered for all, He suffered especially for us because He suffered for the Church. Therefore, there is no doubt that the one who has received more should owe more. And perhaps, in the eyes of people, the one who owes more may offend more. But by the mercy of the Lord, the situation is changed so that the one who owes more may love more, if he attains grace. For both the one who gives grace and the one who receives it have it. And in having it, he pays off what he owes. For both by giving, it is held, and by having, it is repaid.

26. And therefore, since there is nothing that we can offer to God worthily, (for what can we offer for the injury of the assumed flesh? what for the beatings? what for the cross, death, burial?) woe is me if I do not love! I dare to say: Peter did not repay, and therefore he loved more. Did Paul not repay? He did indeed repay death for death, but he did not repay other things; because he owed much. Hear him saying himself that he did not repay: Who has first given to him and will be repaid (Rom. XI, 34)? We give back the cross for the cross, the funeral for the funeral. Do we not also give back what we have through it, and by it, and in it, all things? Therefore, let us give back love for the debt, charity for the gift, grace for the price of blood; for he loves more who is given more.

27. But let us return to that earlier matter, the plan of which the apostles still do not understand, hidden from ages in God: For who has known the mind of the Lord (Ibid.)? Therefore, the disciples complained because a woman poured ointment on his head, and they were saying: Why was this wasted? For it could have been sold for a high price and given to the poor (Matthew 26:8). What displeased Christ in their words, you will not be able to understand unless you perceive the mystery; the aroma of ointment is that of a luxurious man, or rather not a man. Certainly, even those who are lazy tend to anoint themselves, not to pour out. So then, what was displeasing because it was said: This could have been sold for a price, and given to the poor (Matthew 25:40)? Certainly, he himself had said before: Whatever you did to one of the least of these, you did it to me. But he himself offered his own death for the poor.

28. Therefore, it is not a simple matter; and therefore the Word of God responded to them: Why are you bothering this woman? You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me (Matthew XXVI, 10 and 11) . Therefore, you always have the poor with you, and therefore do good. Should you then delay helping the poor; because they are always with you, as the Prophet says to you: Do not say to the poor Tomorrow I will give (Proverbs III, 28) ? But he spoke only of mercy: but here he preferred the faith of mercy, which at that time has merit, if it is accompanied by faith. For she poured this perfume on my body, and did it for my burial. (Matt.

XXVI, 12). Therefore the Lord loved not the ointment, but charity; he received not the faith, but humility.

29. And if you desire grace, increase charity: send into the body of Jesus faith in the resurrection, the fragrance of the Church, the ointment of common charity; and thus, progressing, you will give to the poor. That money will benefit you more if you do not give it as if you were rich, but as if you were giving it for the sake of Christ's future: if you give it to the poor, you will bring it to Christ. Therefore, do not only receive ointment poured on your head literally: for the letter kills (2 Corinthians 3:6); but according to the spirit, for the spirit is life.

30. Therefore, what is the ointment of this woman? Who can hear this? Who has such ears, that he can grasp the word spoken by Jesus, which he received from the Father, rather, who himself is the Word, and can comprehend such a great depth of mystery? And the disciples understand in part, even if they do not understand the whole. Hence, some think that the disciples should have bought the faith of the Gentiles with the price of the ointment, which was owed only by the price of the Lord's blood; which seems plausible. Finally, John the Evangelist mentions in his narrative that the ointment of Judas Iscariot was valued at three hundred denarii, as you have: For it could have been sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor (John 12:5). However, the three hundred pieces of silver indicate the emblem of the cross, but the Lord prefers not the superficial knowledge of the mystery, but rather to bury the faith of believers in himself.

31. However, we understand from the words of the other apostles that Judas is condemned for his greed, who preferred money to the Lord's burial, who, although he felt remorse for his betrayal, went astray with such a costly sale: he wanted to be valued cheaply, like Christ, so that he could be purchased by everyone and not deter any poor person. 'Freely you have received, freely give' (Matthew 10:8). He does not seek money for the sake of wealth, but for the sake of grace. He redeemed us with his precious blood, he did not sell us. About which we would speak more fully, if we did not recall elsewhere the treatise by ourselves (Book 3, On the Holy Spirit, chapter 18).

Therefore, according to the words of the Lord, in whom the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (Col. II, 3), which no one could foresee, I must work for his burial; so that his flesh, having rested, is believed to have seen no corruption: and let the death of his body fill our home with the scent of himself, so that we may believe that he entrusted his spirit into the hands of the Father, and that divinity, separated from death, did not undergo the participation of bodily passions.

33. Understand how the body of the Son is anointed with ointment. That body is what has been taken off, not what has been lost. The Scriptures are the traditions of that body. The Church is the body of that body. We are the fragrance of his body; and therefore it is fitting that we adorn the death of his body. Although he does not require our adornment, the poor require it. I will adorn his body if I become a preacher of his words and am able to open the mystery of the cross to the Gentiles. He adorned the one who said: Because we preach Christ crucified, to Jews indeed a scandal, and to Gentiles foolishness: but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God (I Cor. I, 23 and 24). The cross is adorned, when that which is considered foolish through ignorance is esteemed wiser through the Gospel; so that we can teach how the opposing power is destroyed through the Lord's cross. I sent ointment into the Lord's body, which was thought to be dead, and it begins to breathe.

34. Therefore, let each person worship by buying with their own labor, and by the effort of virtues, a jar of ointment, not some cheap and common one, but a precious ointment of a jar, and a pounded ointment. For if someone gathers flowers of faith and preaches Jesus Christ crucified to the whole Church, which is the body of Christ, dead to the world and resting in God, they pour out the ointment of their faith. The whole house of the Lord begins to smell of passion: it begins to smell of death: it begins to smell of resurrection; so that each person may say from this number of the sacred people: But far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:14). The Spirit is breathing, the ointment is fragrant on the body, if anyone can (and I wish I could) speak confidently: But to me the world has been crucified (Ibid.). Not loving riches, not loving the honors of the world, not loving what is one's own, but what is of Jesus Christ: not loving what is seen, but what is not seen: not desiring life, but desiring to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, the world has been crucified. For this is to take up the cross and follow Christ; so that we may die and be buried with Him; so that we may be able to smell the ointment that this woman sent into His burial. This ointment is not mediocre, by which the name of Christ is spread far and wide. Hence it is also prophesied: Your name is like an outpoured ointment (Song of Songs 1:2). Therefore, it is outpoured so that it may emit a greater fragrance of faith.

35. Therefore, from this woman, we understand what the Apostle meant: Sin abounded, so that grace might also abound (Rom. V, 20). For if sin did not abound in this woman, grace would not abound either; for she recognized sin and brought forth grace. And therefore, the Law is necessary; for through the Law, I recognized sin. If there had been no Law, sin would have been concealed. By recognizing sin, I seek forgiveness. Therefore, through the Law, I acknowledge the different kinds of sins and also the crime of transgression, I run to repentance, and obtain grace. Law therefore is the author of good, which directs towards grace.

(Chap. VIII. — Vers. 21.)

(Chapter 8, Verse 21) My mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.

36. The moral teacher who offers himself as an example to others, is both the teacher and the executor of his own precepts. For, in order to prescribe to others that one must not leave his father and mother, unless he wishes to be unworthy of the Son of God, he himself first submits to this judgment: not because he rejects the duties of maternal piety (for it is commanded in Exodus XX, 'Whoever does not honor his father or mother, let him die the death'), but because he recognizes that he owes more to paternal mysteries than to maternal affections. However, parents are not rejected unjustly, but they are taught that the bond of the mind is more sacred than the bond of the body.

Therefore, those who were seeking to see Christ should not have been standing outside: for the word is near you, and in your heart (Rom. X, 8). Therefore, the word is inside, the light is inside. Hence, he also says: Approach the Lord, and be illuminated (Psal. XXXIII, 6). For if those standing outside do not recognize their own parents, and perhaps do not recognize the example for our sake: then how will we be recognized if we stand outside? And let no one think that there is any offense to piety when the commandment of the Law is fulfilled: for if a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh, correctly, this sacrament is celebrated in Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:31-32). And therefore, parents could not be preferred to one's own body. Therefore, here the mother is not denied (as some

heretics baselessly assert) who is also recognized from the cross (John 19:26), but is preferred to the bodily relationship according to the prescribed form of celestial matters. It is also worth understanding, because it demonstrates through the example of the parents to the Jews, from whom Christ came in the flesh, that the Church which believed is to be preferred.

39. Therefore, the one who understood himself to have come to the earth on account of the divine mystery, and to have joined the assembly of the Church, ascended the ship and left his parents. For no one can navigate this world without Christ, since even those whom the Lord accompanies are often disturbed by the storm of worldly temptations. And the economy is preserved in the apostles, so that you may understand that no one can depart from this course of life without temptation, for temptation is the exercise of faith.

Therefore, we are subject to the storms of spiritual evil: but like vigilant sailors, we rouse the helmsman. However, they themselves are also in danger. Therefore, who should we seek as a helmsman? Certainly, one who does not serve, but commands the winds, about whom it is written:

(Vers. 24.)

(Verse 24) But he, rising up, rebuked the wind.

What is rising? For it was at rest: but it was at rest with the sleep of the body, while it engaged in the mystery of divinity; for where there is wisdom, where there is word, nothing is done without word, nothing without prudence.

Above, you have that he spent the night in prayer (Luke 6:12): how could he sleep in the storm? But the confidence of his power is expressed, because while everyone else was afraid, he alone slept fearlessly. Therefore, he is not a partner in nature who is not a partner in danger. And if the body sleeps, divinity works, faith works. Finally, he says: O you of little faith, why do you doubt (Matthew 8:26)? And those who feared in the presence of Christ are rightly criticized, since certainly anyone who adheres to Him cannot perish.

Therefore, he confirmed the faith and repelled the tranquility. He commanded the wind to cease, not the north wind, not the south wind, but surely that wind to which the angel Michael said in the Epistle of Jude: 'May the Lord command you' (Jude IX). Therefore, even Saint Matthew said: 'He commanded the wind and the sea' (Matthew VIII, 26). And may he deign to restrain his harsh gusts in us; so that the tranquility rejected by the fluctuating life may remove the fear of shipwreck! And even if it does not sleep with the sleep of its body, let us be careful that the sleep of our body does not sleep and rest for us.

44. And since what we have discussed in the previous passage is enough, now we have come to know that in the book according to Matthew, two men possessed by demons in the region of the Gerasenes encountered Christ (Ibid., 28), but here the holy Luke introduces only one, who is also described as naked (for anyone who has lost the covering of their nature and virtue is naked), I think it is not to be overlooked but rather must be investigated why the evangelists seem to disagree on the number. And indeed, although the number may differ, the mystery remains the same; for that man who had a demon is a symbol of the Gentile people, covered in vices, naked with error, openly guilty. These two also symbolize the Gentile people; for when Noah fathered three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen. 9:18), only the family of Shem was chosen by God.

From these two different nations, peoples sprang forth, one cursed because he did not cover his father's nakedness; the other blessed because, though facing away, he did not draw in the shame of his naked parent, but rather covered his father with piety and thus averted the curse of their shared lineage.

(Vers. 27.)

(Verse 27.) He says that he lived for many years.

45. Indeed, he who was tormented from the flood until the coming of the Lord, breaking the chains of nature with wild madness. And not without reason did the holy Matthew indicate that those spirits dwelt in the tombs (Matt. VIII, 28), since such souls seem to dwell in certain burial mounds. For what else are the bodies of the faithless, if not the burial places of the dead, in which the words of God do not dwell? Therefore, he wandered in deserted places, barren of spiritual virtues; a fugitive from the Law, separated from the prophets, removed from grace.

46. (Vers. 30-33.) For it was not by one demon, but by the attack of the whole legion, that she was troubled; and when she saw the Lord and knew that at the time of the Lord's coming she would be cast into the depths, she began to pray that she might receive the opportunity to enter into the pigs. And first we must note the mercy of the Lord, that he does not condemn anyone beforehand, but each one is the author of his own punishment. The demons are not sent into the pigs, but they themselves request it; because they cannot bear the brightness of heavenly light, just as those whose eyes hurt cannot bear the rays of the sun; but they choose the darkness and abandon the shining. Therefore let the demons flee from the splendor of eternal light, and let them fear the torments that are due to them at the appointed time, not foreseeing what is to come, but remembering what has been prophesied; for Zacharias said: And it shall be in that day, saith the Lord, that I will destroy the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered ... and I will take away the unclean spirit out of the land (Zach. XIII, 2). Therefore we are taught that they will not always remain; so that their wickedness may not be perpetuated among men. Therefore, fearing that punishment, they say: You came... to destroy us (Matthew VIII, 29). But because they still want to exist, already departing from men, for whom they know that punishment must be undergone, they ask to be sent into pigs. Who are these pigs, if not perhaps those about whom it has been said: Do not give what is holy to dogs, nor cast pearls before swine; lest they trample them under their feet (Matth. VII, 6)? Namely, those who, devoid of the use of voice and reason, have defiled the ornaments of virtues with the dirty actions of their sinful life. They rush headlong; for they are not recalled by contemplation of any merit, but, as if pushed down from higher things to lower things by the downward slope of wickedness, they are suffocated in the waters, like strangled creatures amidst the waves of this world, their breath being cut off; for there can be no vital intercourse of the spirit in those who are carried back and forth here and there by the fluid heat of pleasures.

We see, therefore, that man himself is the cause of his own suffering. For unless someone had lived like a pig, the devil could not have gained power over him; or if he had gained power, it would not have been to destroy him, but to test him. Or perhaps, because after the coming of the Lord he could no longer corrupt the good, he seeks the destruction of not all men, but only the weak; so that a thief does not lay a trap for armed men, but for the unarmed; and he harasses the weak with insults, knowing that he can be either worn down by the strong or condemned by the powerful.

49. But someone may say: why is this allowed by God for the devil? But I say, so that the good may be tested, and the wicked may be punished; for this is the punishment of sin. Finally, it is written that the Lord sends fever, and trembling, and evil spirits, and blindness, and all scourges, according to the merits of sins (Deuteronomy 28:59ff). But let us return to the reading.

(Vers. 34.)

(Verse 34) They saw, says he, this shepherd's magicians, and they fled.

50. For neither can the professors of philosophy, nor the leaders of the Synagogue, provide a remedy for dying peoples. Christ alone is the one who takes away the sins of the people, if, however, they do not refuse the patience of being healed. Moreover, he does not deign to care for those who are unwilling, and quickly abandons the sick, whom he sees to be a burden to his presence, like the people of Gerasa, who, when they went out of the city in which the appearance of a Synagogue seems to exist, were begging him to depart.

(Vers. 37.) (Verse 37) Because they were greatly afraid; For a weak mind does not grasp the word of God, nor can it bear the weight of wisdom; it weakens and dissolves. And therefore he was no longer bothersome: but He ascended and returned: He ascended indeed from the lower to the higher, from the Synagogue namely to the Church. He returned through the sea, as he says here: or as Matthew through the strait (Matth. IX, 1); for there is a great strait between us and them. Therefore, no one transitions from the Church to the Synagogue without danger to salvation. But even he who desires to transition from the Synagogue to the Church, let him take up his cross, so that he may escape the danger.

53. But why is the one who has been freed not received, but rather considered to return home, unless it is to avoid boasting and to serve as an example to the unbelievers, since that home is a natural inn? And therefore, the one who has obtained the remedy of health is commanded to return from graves and tombs to that spiritual home, so that it may become a temple of God, in which the tomb of the mind was.

(Verse 41, 42.) And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the synagogue; and he fell at Jesus' feet, begging him to come into his house; for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying.

54. As we have said, Christ had left into the Gerasene Synagogue; and whom his own had not received, we received as strangers, we received whom we were expecting. Therefore, he was absent from those from whom he was expected for a long time; nor did he disdain to return to them, if asked. For this man, the leader of the Synagogue, whose daughter was the only one, was praying for the remedy of the perishing Synagogue, which was being pressed to death; because it was being abandoned by Christ. Whom do we think the leader of the Synagogue to be, if not the Law, by whose contemplation the Lord did not completely abandon the Synagogue, but reserved the medicine of salvation for those who believe? Therefore, as the Son of God hastened to save the sons of Israel, the holy Church, gathered from the Gentiles, who were perishing in the downfall of their lower sins, snatched away health prepared for others by faith.

55. Morally, we thought it sufficient to explain this place; and therefore we do not retract what has been said, but briefly wanted to touch upon the mystical meaning. Was it not done in this way, that

when the Word of God came to the Jews, it was accepted by the Gentiles, and first believed in by those who did not believe in the Law, that they might receive grace?

56. (Verse 43.) For just as she who had spent all her substance on physicians, so the congregation of nations had lost all the gifts of nature, and had wasted its vital inheritance, holy, modest, religious, more prompt in faith, more hesitant in shame; for to recognize weakness is the mark of modesty and faith, not to despair of forgiveness. Therefore, she touched the fringe with modesty, approached with faith, believed with religious devotion, and the wise woman knew herself to be healed. Thus the holy people of the nations, which believed in God, blushed at sin in order to abandon it: it brought faith in order to believe; it showed devotion in order to pray; it gained wisdom in order to feel its own health; it took confidence in order to confess what it had stolen.

(Vers. 44.)

(Verse 44.) He approached from behind.

57. But why does Christ touch backward? Is it because it is written: You shall walk after the Lord your God (Deut. XIII, 4)? What also does it mean that the daughter of the prince, who was twelve years old, was dying, and that this woman had a flow of blood for twelve years; except that it may be understood that as long as the Synagogue existed, the Church labored? Her weakness is the power of this woman, because salvation came to the Gentiles through their fault (Rom. XI, 11); and the completion of that [Synagogue], the beginning of this [Church], not the beginning of nature, but of salvation: For blindness in part has come to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles should enter (Ibid., 25). Therefore, the synagogue is older in appearance of health than the Church; because as long as the former believed, the latter did not believe, and it languished in various bodily and mental sufferings that cannot be healed. It heard that the Jewish people were sick, it began to hope for a remedy for its own salvation: it knew that the time had come when the physician would come from heaven, so it rose up to meet the Word, and it saw that it was being oppressed by crowds; for those who oppress do not believe, but those who touch believe. Christ is touched by faith, Christ is seen by faith: he is not touched by the body, he is not comprehended by the eyes; for he does not see, who does not see while seeing; nor does he hear, who does not understand what he hears; nor does he touch, who does not touch faithfully. Finally, to express the faith of the one touching, he says:

(Vers. 46.)

(Verse 46.) Someone touched me; for I felt power go out from me.

58. It is evident proof that wisdom, enclosed within the confines of the human condition and imprisoned within the body, is limited: it is not captured by bodily limitations, nor is it confined, but its eternal power surpasses the boundaries of our mediocrity. For the liberation of the people of the nations does not come through human effort, but rather it is the gift of God, the gathering of nations, which even in a short moment of faith inclines towards eternal mercy. Now if we consider how great our faith is, and understand how great the Son of God is, we see that in comparison we only touch the fringe, but we are unable to touch the higher parts of his garment. Therefore, if we also want to be healed, let us touch the fringe of Christ with faith.

59. He is not hidden from whoever touches the fringe, he who touches the back; for God does not need eyes to see, nor does he feel corporeally, but he has knowledge of all things within himself. Therefore, blessed is he who touches even the farthest part of the Word; for who can comprehend the whole? But let us return to that which is still sick, lest through our delay in dwelling with Christ for a long time, it be believed to have died:

(Vers. 49.) (Verse 49.) They came, he said, the servants saying to the ruler: Do not trouble him, your daughter is dead. And first let us consider that in order to raise the dead, he took care to create a hemorrhage to establish faith. And so that you may know, for example, blood flow was halted when it was sought, and what was sought was healed. In the same way, temporal resurrection is celebrated in the Lord's passion, so that the eternal resurrection may also be believed. In the same way, Mary, about to give birth, is indicated as barren, so that she may be believed to conceive as a virgin. Finally, Elizabeth heard that she would give birth and did not doubt her own ability to conceive.

61. The servants came, saying to the master: Do not trouble him. Even these unbelievers in the resurrection, which Jesus predicted in the Law, fulfilled in the Gospel. Therefore, when he came into the house, he chose a few witnesses of the future resurrection; for resurrection was not immediately believed by many. Finally, with the Lord saying:

(Verse 52, 53.) The girl is not dead, but sleeping. They mocked him, he said.

62. For whoever does not believe scoffs. Therefore let those who believe in the dead, flee from their dead: where there is faith in the resurrection, there is not the appearance of death, but of rest. Nor does what Matthew says seem strange, that there were flute players in the ruler's house, and a crowd making a commotion (Matthew 9:23): either because in ancient times flute players seemed to be employed to kindle and arouse mourning, or because the synagogue could not grasp the spiritual joy of the Law and the letter's melody.

63. (Verses 54-56.) So, holding the girl's hand, Jesus healed her and commanded that she be given something to eat. This is a testimony of life, so that it may be believed not to be a ghost but the truth. Blessed is the one whose hand is held by wisdom. May it also hold my actions, hold the hand of justice, hold the Word of God, lead me into its innermost chambers, turn away the spirit of error, convert to salvation, and command me to be given something to eat! For the heavenly bread is the Word of God. Hence also that wisdom which filled the holy altars of the divine body and blood with nourishments: Come, he says, eat my bread and drink the wine which I have mixed for you (Proverbs 9:5).

64. But what is the cause of such great diversity? Above, a widow's son is raised publicly (Luke 7:12), here several judges are removed. But I suppose that even in this the compassion of the Lord is shown, because the mother of the only begotten Son would not tolerate delay, and therefore, so that she would not be further burdened, maturity is added. It is also a wise arrangement, that in the son of a widow the Church would quickly believe, in the daughter of the archisynagogue the Jews would indeed believe, but fewer out of many.

(Chap. IX. — Vers. 5.)

(Chapter 9, verse 5) And whoever does not receive you, when you leave that city, shake off even the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.

65. The person who preaches the kingdom of God is described by the precepts of the Gospel: that he be without staff, without bag, without sandals, without bread, without money (Verse 3), that is, not seeking the support of worldly means, but dedicated to faith, and the less he desires temporal things, the more he hopes that they can be provided for him. Those who want to discuss this can derive the following principles from it: that this place seems to form only a spiritual disposition, that it appears to have shed a certain kind of clothing, not only rejecting power and despising wealth, but also renouncing the allurements of the flesh.

66. To them is first given the general command of peace and steadfastness (Verse 4); that they may bring peace, maintain steadfastness, and uphold the rights of hospitable relationships; warning against wandering through houses, preaching the kingdom of heaven, and disregarding the inviolable rights of hospitality. But if they are not received, they are to shake off the dust and leave the city. In order that not only peace be provided to guests, but also that any earthly shadows of offenses of levity be removed, after the footsteps of apostolic preaching have been received, the guests should be taught a not insignificant reward of kindness in hospitality. And according to the Gospel of Matthew, it is decreed that the house that the apostles enter be read (Matthew 10:12), so that there is no lack of reason to change the bond of hospitality and violate it. However, the same caution is not given to the recipient of hospitality, so that while a guest is chosen, hospitality itself is not diminished.

67. But this form of the precept is venerable, as it were, in the very letter of the religious observance: the heavenly meaning also appears thus. For when a house is chosen, a worthy guest is sought. Let us therefore see lest perhaps the Church and Christ be preferred. For what house is more worthy of the entrance of apostolic preaching than the holy Church (24, quaest. 1, cap. Quae dignior)? Or who seems more worthy to be preferred to all than Christ, who used to wash the feet of His guests, and does not allow those who defile His house to dwell in it, but deigns in the remaining time to cleanse the processes, although they may be stained by a previous way of life? Therefore, this is the only one whom no one should forsake, no one should change. To whom it is rightly said: Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we believe in you (John 6:69-70). You see the executor of heavenly commandments: because he did not change his dwelling, he earned the heavenly fellowship of consecration.

68. Therefore, trust is entrusted primarily to the Church, in which if Christ is the inhabitant, without a doubt it must be read. But if the faithless people or the heretical teacher defiles the dwelling, the communion of heretics is to be avoided, and the synagogue is to be fled. The dust of your feet must be shaken off, lest the footprint of your mind be polluted by the cracks of faithlessness, like dry and sandy ground. For just as the Gospel preacher must take upon himself the bodily infirmities of the faithful people, and alleviate and abolish empty deeds like dust, according to what is written: Who is weak, and I am not weak (II Cor. XI, 29)? Therefore, if there is any Church that rejects the faith and does not possess the foundations of apostolic preaching, it must be abandoned in order to prevent it from spreading any stain of unfaithfulness. This is also clearly affirmed by the Apostle when he says: Avoid a heretical man after the first . . . correction (Titus 3:10).

(Vers. 13.)

(Verse 13.) And he said to them: Give them something to eat. But they said: We have no more than five loaves.

69. (Verse 8). What is the reason that, while the passion of John is described in the later part, he is already shown as dead in the words of Herod? Lest, perhaps, it is because after the decline of the Law, the Evangelical food begins to feed the hungry hearts of the people? Finally, after she who received the symbol of the Church was healed from the flow of blood, after the apostles were destined to preach the kingdom of God, the nourishment of heavenly grace is imparted. But pay attention to whom it is shared with. Not to those who are idle, not to those who reside in the city as if in a synagogue or in secular dignity, but to those who seek Christ in the desert; for those who do not despise, they are received by Christ, and the Word of God speaks with them not about secular matters, but about the kingdom of God. And if anyone bears the bodily wounds of passion, he willingly provide them with his medicine.

Therefore, it followed that those whom he had healed from the pain of wounds, he also freed from fasting by means of spiritual nourishment. Thus, no one receives the food of Christ unless they have been healed beforehand. And those who are called to the banquet are healed first by being called. If someone was lame, they received the ability to walk in order to come. If someone was deprived of the light of their eyes, they could not enter the Lord's house unless the light was restored.

71. Therefore, everywhere the order of the mystery is preserved; so that first through the remission of sins medicine is given to wounds, afterwards the nourishment of the heavenly table abounds: although this crowd is not yet refreshed by stronger food, nor do the hearts of stronger faith feed on the body and blood of Christ while fasting. By milk, he says, I have given you drink, not food; for you were not yet able, but even now you are not yet able (I Cor. III, 2). In the manner of milk, there are five loaves. However, the food is the more solid body of Christ, the drink is the more fervent blood of the Lord. We do not immediately eat everything at once, nor do we drink everything. This is the first thing, he says, drink (Isaiah IX, 1). So there is a first, and there is also a second thing that you drink. There is a first thing that you eat, and there is also a second, and a third. The first five loaves are the first, the second seven, the third is the body of Christ itself.

72. Therefore, let us never abandon such a Lord, who is willing to provide nourishment for each of us according to our abilities; so that neither a strong food overwhelms the weak, nor meager food fails to satisfy the strong: For whoever is weak, let him eat vegetables (Rom. XIV, 2). And he who seems to have escaped the snares of weakness, let him eat of these five loaves and two fish. Certainly, if he fears to seek stronger food, let him himself leave behind all his things and hasten to the word of God. While beginning to hear, he begins to hunger. The apostles begin to see him hungry. And if they still do not understand what he is hungry for, Christ understands. He knows that he is not hungry for worldly food, but for the food of Christ. Let him say: I do not want to send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way (Matthew XV, 32). The good Lord demands studies, and gives strength.

73. I wish, Lord Jesus, that you would not send away these fasting people with empty stomachs, but that you would nourish them with abundant food from yourself; so that they may not fear

weakness from fasting, but rather become stronger through your sustenance. I beg you, also say about us: I do not want to send them away fasting! And tell me the reason why you do not want to send them away fasting; indeed, you have already said that if you send someone away fasting, he will fail on the way, that is, he will fail either in the course of this life, or before he reaches the end of the journey, before he reaches the Father, and understand that Christ is from the Father, understand that Christ is from heaven, and understand that Christ who descends is the same as the one who ascends; so that, perhaps, when he learns that he is born of a Virgin, he may begin to estimate not the power of God, but the essence of man. Therefore, he said, lest they fail.

(Ibid.) They said to Him: We have no more than five loaves, and two fishes; unless perhaps we should go and buy food for all this multitude.

74. The apostles had not yet understood that the food of the believing people was not for sale. Christ knew, he knew that we should rather be redeemed: he freely gives his own feast. Therefore, the disciples did not yet have the food that could redeem us. However, they already had the food that could satisfy us: they had the food that could strengthen us: For bread strengthens the heart of man (Psalm 103:16). Therefore, may the Lord have mercy, so that no one may fail on the way. Therefore, if anyone fails, they do not fail through the Lord Jesus, but through themselves; and you have nothing to ascribe to the Lord, for he prevails even when he is judged. What can you say to the one who bestowed upon you all the foundations of virtue? Did he not beget you, did he not nourish you? His food is power, his food is strength. But if you have lost the virtue that you received through your own negligence, it is not the celestial nourishment that failed you, but the defenses of your own mind. Finally, the Lord rains upon both the just and the unjust, and feeds both the unjust and the just.

75. Did not the holy Elias, when he was exhausted on the journey, walk forty days, and the angel gave him food (3 Kings 19:8)? But if Jesus feeds you, and you keep the food received, you will walk not forty days and forty nights, but (I dare say, relying on examples from Scripture) forty years; and you will go out from the borders of Egypt until you reach the land flowing with milk and honey, which the Lord swore to give to our fathers. The virtue of this land must be sought by you, which is possessed by the meek. I do not mean that land which is dry, but that land which is nourished by the food of Christ, which is under the rule of the eternal king and is frequented by the inhabitants of the saints.

76. Therefore, the Lord Jesus divides the food. And indeed, He wants to give to everyone, He denies no one, for He is the steward of all; but when He breaks the bread and gives it to the disciples, if you do not extend your hands to receive food for yourself, you will go hungry on the journey; and you will not be able to blame Him, who has mercy and divides. But He divides for those who also remain with Him in the desert, who do not leave on the first, second, or third day. For you have it elsewhere: I have compassion on this crowd; for it is already three days that they continue with me (Matt. 15:32). How great is the dignity, how great is the humanity inspired by him in people! He does not want to send them away hungry, he does not want them to faint on the way.

77. Therefore, do not desert the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when you are rebuked by Him. Do not weary yourself now, lest you weary yourself later. For what will you answer Him, or how will you defend yourself, if you lose the strength that He provides? You cannot say that He did

not give you food, for He gives to all. You cannot say that He did not want to do you good, for He placed before you good and evil; so that your good may not be a matter of necessity, but of free will. For there is a great difference between someone who does something unwillingly out of necessity, and someone who freely chooses what is good: For if I do this unwillingly, I have been entrusted with a stewardship; if willingly, I have a reward (1 Corinthians 9:17). Therefore, let us consider that we will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and if our work is burned up, we will have nothing to excuse ourselves. For it is written through the prophet: 'My people, what have I done to you?' Or in what way have I been a burden to you? Answer me (Mich. VI, 3). And he who has failed on the way will say: In what way have you failed on the way? Have I not broken bread? Have I not blessed? Have I not commanded it to be given? But why did you not want to receive?

78. How many of the present will also fail on the way, and after these conversations, which, although they are ours, nevertheless because no one speaks the Lord Jesus except in the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3), the loaves must be valued: how many, I say, will fail, and will go away fornicating on the transverse paths of the nations! And I wish it were one, and not many! But Jesus is not the author of failure, even if anyone fails; for he distributes to all who follow, whether there are five thousand or four thousand.

79. Not a useless number, not a useless order, not useless leftovers of those who ate. For why are more, that is, five thousand five with fewer bread loaves, that is, with a smaller number satisfied: but fewer, who are four thousand seven with more bread loaves, that is, with a bigger number are fed? For if we only follow the miracle that has been done, it seems more divine that the lesser amount has abounded for more. So why has what is less been added to what is more, as if it were superior? For we read in Matthew 14:19 that he fed five thousand men with five loaves of bread, and afterward in Matthew 15:36 we read that he fed four thousand men with seven loaves of bread. Let us therefore seek the mystery that he performs with this miracle. So it seems that those five thousand have received from Christ, who is still in a bodily state, as it were, bodily nourishment, close to the body's senses; but the four thousand, though they are still in the body and in this world which consists of four elements, are not referred to in vain as having received the mystical food of rest; for now they are being made equal to the world, surpassing the world to come. For although they are in this world, they are not within the world to which the nourishment of mystical rest is imparted; for the world was made in six days, and on the seventh day He rested and sanctified it. Beyond the world, therefore, is rest; beyond the world is also the fruit of rest. Finally, blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God (Matthew 5:9). For since God is above the world, no one can see God unless they first transcend the world with a spiritual gaze. The seventh blessing of the peacemakers: also for them, four thousand fragments of loaves remain (Matthew 15:37). This bread is not ordinary bread, but the bread of the sabbath, the bread sanctified, the bread of rest. And perhaps if you have sensibly eaten the first five loaves, I will dare and say, after the five loaves and the third seven you will no longer eat bread on the earth: but above the earth you will eat eight loaves, just as those that are in the heavens. For just as the seven loaves are loaves of rest: so the eight loaves are loaves of resurrection. Therefore, those who are nourished by the seven loaves persevered for three days, and perhaps they achieved complete faith and steadfastness in the future resurrection. Finally, the voice of the saints is: For three days we shall walk, that we may feast the Lord our God (Exod. V, 3). But that is a matter for another time.

81. Therefore, Saint John taught me something about the five loaves of bread which I did not know, which Saint Matthew did not teach, which Saint Luke did not teach (for different graces were imparted to each); he taught, I say, that those five loaves were made of barley (John 6:9); and therefore we did not say incorrectly that this food is suitable for the body. Why barley first? Because first one is nourished with milk, then with solid food when one comes to faith; for we were not yet able to, and perhaps many of us still cannot. For when there are contentions and dissensions among us, are we not fleshly and walk according to man? Each food is adapted to its own virtues; and from there, first barley, then wheat is given to us for nourishment (3 Kings 17:13). But even more so, just as to Elijah, from the inner parts of the wheat, a bread made of fine flour is served, which sinners cannot consume.

82. Not only is there a difference in the bread and the numbers, but also in the way of reclining: some recline on hay, while others recline on the ground. There are over five thousand reclining on hay, and over four thousand reclining on the ground. It is more comfortable to recline on the ground than on hay; those whose bodily senses are still active prefer softer things, and therefore recline on hay: For all flesh is hay (Isaiah 40:6); but those who recline on the ground enjoy the food of grace, which produces wheat and wine and oil. They recline, those recline; for there is a certain greater rest for the one reclining. There, two fish, here without number; hence many have thought that the grace of the seven-fold Spirit, defined in loaves, is also to be understood as a figure in the fish of the two-fold Testament.

83. Therefore, it is not displeasing to estimate that four thousand, collected from the four parts of the world in which the Church is represented, partake of the food of greater grace, as it is written: \"For they will come from the East and the West and the North and the South, and will recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven\" (Matth. VIII, 11). Hence, here thanks are given to the Father by Christ; for not in vain is there only a blessing here, but also an action of gratitude. For the Church, indeed, her Lord used to give thanks to the Father; because what he hid from the wise, he revealed to the little ones. Therefore, blessing upon us who are lesser: thanksgiving upon those who have triumphed over the infirmities of their bodies with sacred sufferings. Now, we have already tasted of that for the higher ones, because when fifty were commanded to recline, even though a sacred number was specified; nevertheless, it seems that here is a people more foundational to the Church, who recline without a specified number.

84. It is also mystical that both the people who eat are satisfied, and the apostles who serve; for even in fullness, the sign of perpetual hunger is revealed; because the one who receives the food of Christ will not hunger: and in the ministry of the apostles, the future division of the Lord's body and blood is foreshadowed. Now, that divine thing, just as five loaves overflowed for five thousand people; for it is clear that the people are satisfied not with a small, but with multiplied food.

You would see that by an incomprehensible irrigation among the dividing hands, which they had not broken, particles would bear fruit, and the untouched fragments of the ones breaking would creep in spontaneously. Whoever reads these things, just as a judge marvels at the courses of waters, and is amazed at the continuous flow of clear springs: when even bread overflows, and the irrigated abundance of a denser nature overflows. Therefore, these things were done so that we would also perceive those things which we do not perceive. He clearly indicated that they also considered the author and creator of all material nature, which is not (as the philosophers would

have it) discovered but made, providing the flowing courses for the generation of all things.

86. Indeed, it is strange that whatever you draw from rivers is not noticed as a loss: whatever you take from springs is repaired by a kind of usurious flow. But even if nothing goes away from rivers, it still seems that nothing is added: and as flowing waters are seen to increase when the sources are full, so when the currents diminish, they are revealed. But truly, this bread that Jesus breaks is mystically the word of God and a discourse about Christ, which, while it is divided, is increased; for from a few words, it provided abundant nourishment for all the people. He gave us words like bread, which, when they are tasted by our mouth, are multiplied. Moreover, this bread, in an incredible manner, while it is broken, while it is divided, while it is eaten, increases without any diminution of its substance.

87. And do not doubt that both in the hands of those who serve and in the mouths of those who eat, it grows; since everywhere the testimony of our work is added to the foundation of faith. Thus in the wedding at Cana, the water is changed into wine by the hands of the servants, and those who had filled the jars with water, drew out wine that they had not brought (John II, 5 and following). Grasp, if you can, such marvels of things. Here, as people eat, the fragments increase at their own expense, and more remains are collected from five loaves than the total amount; there, the elements are transformed into another appearance, and nature does not allow for its own deficiencies, nor does it recognize its own origins, yet it recognizes its proper use. Indeed, the nature of changed wine is even better than that of natural wine; because it is in the discretion of the Creator both to assign whatever uses He desires to natures and to impart whatever natures He desires to the act of generating. Consider the great works He produces: while the water-bearer pours in water, the infused aroma intoxicates, the changed color informs, and the tasted flavor also enhances faith.

88. Let the pagans compare, if they please, their fictitious deeds of their gods with the true benefits of Christ. They say that their stories included a certain king who turned everything he touched into gold. But even the feasts themselves were unnatural; for the serving utensils became stiff when touched by their fingers, and the food made a cracking noise in their mouths, causing wounds rather than nourishment. The drink remained stuck in their throats, neither going down easily nor coming back up. Such worthy blessings to be desired, such worthy gifts to be prayed for, such worthy generosity to be bestowed! Such are the benefits of idols, that although they appear to be helpful, they actually do more harm; but indeed, the gifts of Christ seem small, and yet they are the greatest. In short, they are not bestowed on one person, but on the people; for even the food of those who ate it increased in their mouths, and it seemed to be bodily nourishment, but it was taken for eternal salvation.

89. Why does it exceed by five thousand men, and fall short by four thousand? Because those four thousand were with Christ for three days; and therefore they received more heavenly food.

90. And the things that remain are not collected in vain from the crowd, for the divine things can be found more easily among the chosen than among the common people. I hope that I have the chance to hear: Collect the things that remain! If I hear and do, I will have many things that the crowd couldn't have, I will have many things that even boys and women couldn't have. Blessed is he who can collect what remains, even for the learned ones.

91. Let us see how he gathers [these statements]. The Law says: You shall not commit adultery (Exod. XX, 14). Christ breaks this bread, divides this word, not adding from elsewhere, but dividing from his own [teaching]: Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matth. V, 28). You have a fragment from his [teaching]. He added: If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out (Ibid., 29). You have another [teaching]. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off (Ibid., 30); and, Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery (Luc., XVI, 19). You see from one how many fragments. Moses says that Abraham had two sons, one from a slave woman, and one from a free woman (Galatians IV, 22). Paul said: These are two Covenants (Ibid., 24). He divides this word, and finds the mystery. Blessed therefore is the one who gathers, what Christ divides. But in what way did Christ fill twelve baskets, except to fulfill that saying of the Jewish people: 'For his hands served in the basket' (Psalm 80:7): This means, the people who used to gather mud in baskets, now through the cross of Christ works for the nourishment of heavenly life; and it collects the food of faith where there was once the filth of Gentile infidelity. And is this the gift of a few? No, it is for all. For through the twelve baskets, it overflows as the foundation of each tribe of faith: For bread strengthens the heart of man (Psalm 103:16).

(Vers. 20.)

(Verse 20) But he said to them, 'Who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

93. Nor is the opinion of the crowds idle, because some thought that Elijah would come, others that John, whom they knew had been beheaded, or one of the earlier prophets had risen. But to seek this is beyond us: it belongs to one knowledge, to another prudence. For if for the apostle Paul it is enough to know nothing except Christ Jesus, and him crucified (2 Corinthians 2:2), what more can I desire to know than Christ? For in this name is expressed both the divinity and the incarnation, and there is faith in the passion. And therefore, although the other apostles know, Peter, however, responded above the others: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). He encompasses everything, both nature and name, in which the highest virtues are expressed. Shall we also engage in questions about the generation of God, when Paul judged that he knew nothing except Christ Jesus, and him crucified; and Peter believed that nothing more than the Son of God was to be confessed? We are amazed by the contemplation of human frailty, both when and how it was born, and how great it is. Paul knew that in these things, the question was more of a stumbling block than a source of edification; and therefore he judged that he knew nothing except Jesus Christ. Peter knew that in the Son of God, all things are: For the Father has given all things to the Son (John 13:3). If he has given all things, he has poured out eternity and majesty. But where do I go further? The end of my faith is Christ, the end of my faith is the Son of God. It is not permitted for me to know the succession of generations; it is not, however, permitted to be ignorant of the faith of generations.

94. Therefore believe as Peter believed, so that you may be blessed, so that you may deserve to hear: For it was not flesh and blood that revealed it to you, but my Father who is in heaven (Matthew 16:17). For flesh and blood cannot reveal anything except what is earthly: but he who speaks the mysteries with the spirit is founded not on the authority of flesh and blood, but on divine inspiration. Therefore, do not acquiesce to flesh and blood; lest you receive teachings from flesh

and blood, and you yourself become flesh and blood. For he who is joined to the flesh, is flesh: and he who is joined to God, is one spirit (I Cor. VI, 17). My spirit shall not remain in these men forever, because they are flesh (Gen. VI, 3).

95. But I wish that those who hear are not flesh and blood, but are able to say individually, removed from the desires of flesh and blood: I will not fear what flesh can do to me. (Psalms 55:5) For whoever conquers the flesh is the foundation of the Church: if he cannot equal Peter, he can imitate him; for God's gifts are great, who not only restored to us what was ours, but also granted what is His own.

However, it is important to understand what they themselves believed, apart from the opinion of the crowd, namely either Elijah, or Jeremiah, or John the Baptist. Perhaps Elijah, because he was taken up to heaven. But Elijah is not the Christ: he is taken up, while the Christ returns. Elijah, I say, is taken up, while the Christ did not consider himself equal to God in robbery: Elijah is vindicated by fire, while the Christ preferred to heal his persecutors rather than destroy them. But why did they think Jeremiah? Perhaps because he was sanctified in his mother's womb. But this is not Jeremiah: he was sanctified, this one sanctifies: his sanctification began from the body, this one is holy from the holy. Why did the people think that even John, unless perhaps because he, being in his mother's womb, felt the presence of the Lord? But this is not John: he worshipped in the womb, this one was worshipped: he baptized in water, Christ in the Spirit: he advised repentance, this one forgave sins.

97. And therefore Peter did not wait for the people's opinion, but spoke out his own, saying: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God (John VIII, 12). He is always and never began to be, and will never cease to be. But the grace of Christ is great, who gave to his disciples almost all of his own titles. I am, he said, the light of the world (Matthew V, 14): and yet he conferred the name upon his disciples, saying: You are the light of the world. I am the living bread (John VI, 1); and, we all are one bread... (1 Corinthians X, 17). I am the true vine (John XV, 1). And to you, he says: I planted you as a fruitful vine, all true (Jeremiah II, 21). Christ is the rock: for they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ (1 Corinthians X, 4): he also did not deny his disciple the grace of this name (Matthew XVI, 18); so that he himself may be Peter, having the solidity of constancy and the firmness of faith from the rock.

98. Therefore, strive to be a rock yourself. Thus, seek the rock not outside you, but within you. Your rock is your actions, your rock is your mind. Upon this rock, your house is built, so that no spiritual wickedness can shake it. Your rock is your faith, the foundation of the Church is faith. If you are a rock, you will be in the Church, for the Church is built upon the rock. If you are in the Church, the gates of hell will not prevail against you. The gates of hell, the gates of death are: but the gates of death, the gates of the Church cannot be.

99. But what are the gates of death, that is, the gates of hell, if not each individual sin? If you have committed fornication, you have entered the gates of death. If you have violated faith, you have penetrated the gates of hell. If you have committed mortal sin, you have entered the gates of death. But God is powerful, who can exalt you from the gates of death, so that you may proclaim all His praises in the gates of the daughter of Zion. The gates of the Church, however, are the gates of chastity, the gates of justice, which the righteous are accustomed to enter, saying: Open to me the gates of justice and I will enter and confess to the Lord (Ps. 117:19). But as the gate of

death is, so also is the gate of hell; and so also is the gate of justice, the gate of God. For this gate of the Lord, the just shall enter by it (ibid., 20). Therefore, flee the persistence of offenses, lest the gates of hell prevail against you; for if sin has dominion over you, the gate of death will prevail. Therefore, flee contentions, dissensions, clamor, and the tumult of discord; lest you fall into the entrance of the gates of death. For the Lord Jesus Christ did not desire to be preached first, lest any clamor should arise. He admonished his disciples not to tell anyone about this, because

(Vers. 22.)

(Verse 22.) The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the chief priests, and elders, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day rise again.

100. And perhaps for this reason the Lord added this, because He knew that the disciples would find it difficult to believe in His passion and resurrection. And therefore, He preferred to be the witness of His passion and resurrection, so that faith would arise from deeds, not from discordant hearing. Therefore, Christ did not want to boast, but rather chose to appear ignoble, so that He could undergo the passion. And you, who were born in ignoble circumstances, do you boast? You must walk the same path that Christ walked. This is his recognition, this is his imitation, through ignobility and good reputation; so that you may glory in the cross of the Lord, as he himself has gloried. Thus walked Paul, and for this reason he boasts, saying: But far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 6:14).

101. But let us see why, according to Matthew, the disciples were warned not to tell anyone that he is the Christ, while it is written here that they were rebuked for telling anyone that he would suffer many things and rise again (Matt. XVI, 20). You see that in the one name of Christ, everything is included. He is indeed the Christ who was born of the Virgin, he is the one who performed miracles among the people, he is the one who died for our sins, and he rose from the dead. If you deny one of these, you have denied your salvation. For even heretics seem to have Christ for themselves; for no one denies the name of Christ: but he denies Christ, who does not confess all the things that are of Christ. Therefore, for many reasons, he commands his disciples to be silent; so that he may deceive the prince of the world, so that he may avoid boasting, so that he may teach humility; at the same time, so that the uneducated disciples, who are still imperfect, are not overwhelmed by the great burdens of preaching.

102. Now let us consider why even unclean spirits are commanded to be silent. But Scripture has also revealed this to us, because God said to the sinner: Why do you declare my justices (Psalm XLIX, 16)? So that no one may follow the one who preaches while he himself is erring; for the wicked teacher is the devil, who often mixes falsehoods with truths, in order to cover his testimony of deceit with the appearance of truth.

103. Also, let us consider whether he first commanded his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ, or whether he had commanded them before when he appointed the twelve apostles, saying to them: 'Do not go into the ways of the Gentiles, and do not enter the cities of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel . . . heal the sick . . . cleanse the lepers . . . cast out demons . . . and into whatever city . . . intraveritis, discite quis in ea dignus sit, atque ibi manete (Marc. X, 5-11) . Itaque nec hic mandatum videtur, ut Christum Dei Filium praedicarent.

104. Therefore, the order of the debate is the order of the treatise, and for this reason, when some people from the nations are called to the Church, we must form the series of precepts in such a way that, first, we teach that there is one God, the author of the world and of all things, in whom we live and move and have our being, and of whose kind we are; so that he may be loved by us not only for the gifts of light and life, but also for a certain kinship of species. Then let us destroy that opinion which exists concerning idols, so that gold, silver, or wood cannot possess divine power. Once you are persuaded that there is one God, then you will understand through Christ the salvation given to us; beginning from the things he did in the body and describing those divine things, so that it seems he was more than a man, conquering the power of death and being raised from the dead; for gradually faith grows, so that he is believed to have been above men, God, unless you prove that he could not have done those things without divine power, how can you prove that there was divine power in him?

105. But perhaps we are given too little authority and credibility: by the Law, we consider the discourse of the Apostle spoken among the Athenians, who, if he wanted to destroy the ceremonies of idols from the beginning, the ears of the Gentiles would have rejected his discourse. Therefore, he starts from one God, the operator of the world, saying: God who made the world, and all things that are in it (Acts 17:24). It could not be denied that there is one operator of the world, one God, one creator of all things. He added that the Lord of heaven and earth does not deign to dwell in man-made things. Then he said that it is not at all likely that the power of divinity is contained within the material of gold and silver boxes crafted by humans, teaching that the remedy for error is the study of repentance. Then he came to Christ, but he preferred to call him a man rather than God, saying: 'For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed' (Acts 17:31). For whoever speaks should consider the persons of the listeners; so that he is not laughed at before being heard. For how would the Athenians believe that the Word became flesh and the Virgin conceived by the Holy Spirit, who were mocking because they had heard of the resurrection of the dead? However, even Dionysius the Areopagite believed, and others believed in the man; so that they would believe in God. What difference does it make in what order one believes? Perfection is not sought in the beginnings, but it is achieved through the beginnings. Therefore, the Athenians taught us with such a precept: such an order must be kept among us Gentiles.

106. But when the apostles spoke to the Jews, they said that he (Christ) was the one who had been promised to us in the prophetic oracles: whom they did not name as the Son of God by their own authority, but as a proven man, a righteous man, a man raised from the dead, the man of whom it was said in the prophets: You are my Son, today I have begotten you (Acts 2:22, 3:14, 13:33, from Psalm 2:7). Therefore, also learn from the authority of divine speech for those things that are difficult to believe, and designate his promised coming by the voice of the prophets. Also, teach the resurrection, which has been understood long before by the testimonies of the Scriptures, not unusual and common like with others, so that in the assertion of the resurrected body itself, you may acquire the testimony of the eternal divinity. For when you have proven that the bodies of the others have undergone corruption after death, you certainly prove that this one, of whom it is said, 'You will not allow your Holy One to see corruption' (Psalm 16:10), is free from human frailty, surpassing the merits of human condition, to be attributed more to God than to men.

107. If the catechumen is to be instructed towards the sacraments of the faithful, it must be said that there is one God from whom all things are, and one Jesus Christ through whom all things are (1 Corinthians 8:6): not that there are two lords, but that the Father is perfect and the Son is perfect; but that the Father and the Son are of the same substance: the eternal Word of the eternal God, not spoken but active; begotten from the Father, not uttered by word. Therefore, the apostles are forbidden from preaching the Son of God so that they may preach the crucified one afterwards. This is the glory of faith, if you truly understand the cross of Christ. Other crosses are of no benefit to me, only the cross of Christ is beneficial to me, and truly beneficial. Through it, the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (Galatians 6:14). If the world has been crucified to me, I know that it is dead, I do not love it; I know that it is passing away, I do not desire it; I know that corruption consumes this world, I avoid it as something foul, I flee from it as a plague, I abandon it as something harmful.

108. But not everyone can immediately believe in salvation rejected by the world through the cross. Therefore, it is true that through the histories of the Greeks this was possible, as sometimes even the Apostle urges unbelievers (Act. XVII, 28): nor does he shy away from poetic verses, in order to destroy the fables of the poets. For if it is recalled that the Greeks assert that legions and great peoples were often liberated by offering the deaths of some, if it is remembered that the emperor's daughter was called to sacrifice for the sake of transferring the Greek army: if we consider our own experience, that the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on the defiled, sanctify for the purification of the flesh (Hebr. IX, 13), as it is written to the Hebrews: if it is asserted that a pestilence contracted by certain people in a region is resolved by the death of one person, which either prevailed by reason or was confirmed by arrangement, so that it could be more easily believed in the cross of the Lord: it will be inclined for those who cannot deny their own things, to confirm ours.

109. But since no man could be so great as to take away the sins of the whole world, neither Enoch, nor Abraham, nor Isaac, who, although he offered himself to death, was nevertheless saved (Gen. XXII, 9); because he could not abolish all sins, (for what man could be so great in whom the sins of all might die?) therefore not one from among the people, not one from the number, but the Son of God was chosen by God the Father, who, being above all, could offer himself for all: it was necessary for him to die, so that being stronger than death, he might free others, He became. Among the dead, free without help (Psalm 87:6), free from death without the help of man or any creature. And truly free, who has rejected the servitude of desires, has not known the bonds of death.

Book Seven

(Vers. 27) (Verse 27) But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God. The Lord always raises future rewards as an incentive for virtue and teaches that the contempt of worldly things is useful. He also supports the weakness of the human mind with present rewards. For it is difficult to bear the cross and offer one's soul to dangers and death, to deny what you are when you want to be what you are not. And rarely, even though virtue is lofty, does it exchange the present for the future. It seems difficult for humans to purchase hope with dangers and to gain the profit of future life at the expense of the present. Therefore, a good and moral teacher should not be broken by despair or boredom; because the sweet allure of life

also soothes a steady emotion, and promises continuous success for the faithful: for consolations freeze under the fear of death, and a great love for life with difficulty balances the blandishments of hope with the terror of desired salvation. Therefore, you have no reason to complain, you have no reason to make excuses: the judge of all has given both reward to virtue and remedy to weakness; so that weakness is sustained in the present, and virtue in the future. If you are strong, despise death; if you are weak, flee. But no one can flee from death, unless they follow life. Your life is Christ, He is the life that does not know how to die. So if we want to not fear death, let us stand where Christ is, so that it can be said of us: Truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death. It is not enough to only stand, but rather to stand where Christ is; for only those who can stand with Christ cannot taste death. From the nature of His words, we can understand that those who seem to have deserved to be associated with Christ will not even have a slight sense of death. Certainly, the death of the body is tasted by being offered, while the life of the soul is held in possession. But what is it to taste death? It may be that just as bread is life, so bread may also be death. For there are those who eat the bread of sorrow (Psalm 126:2) ; there are also peoples of Ethiopia who have taken the dragon as food (Psalm 73:14) . May it be far from us to devour the venom of the dragon; for we have true bread, that bread which descends from heaven. He who keeps the things that are written eats that bread. Therefore, there are those who do not taste death, until they see the kingdom of God. There are also those who do not see death, as it is written: Who is the man who lives, and does not see death? (Psalm 88:49)

4. But who is the person who does not die, since resurrection cannot happen unless someone has died? Although we have heard that Enoch and Elijah did not experience bodily death, and the Lord said about the evangelist John, 'So I desire him to remain until I come' (John 21:22), yet because we do not think that this is expressed only about John, but rather that it is a general commandment about many, here it is not the death of the body but of the soul that is denied. For there are those who are dead while still alive, because there are those who are alive but dead, like that widow who, while alive, is considered dead (1 Timothy 5:6), as it is written: 'Let death come upon them; let them go down alive to Sheol' (Psalm 55:15). If therefore someone who is alive descends into hell (for he descends into the dwelling place of hell by the sin of death), there are certainly those for whom the order of living is not interrupted even in the death of the body, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom we know to live by the authority of divine judgment; for since God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Matthew 22:32).

5. Therefore, he speaks not of one, but of many; for neither did Peter die, of whom, according to the saying of the Lord, the gates of hell could not prevail (Matthew 16:18). Nor did James and John, the sons of thunder, die, who, being taken up for the use of heavenly glory, are not subject to earthly things, but rule over them. Therefore, be like Peter, devout, faithful, peaceful, so that you may open the gates of the Church and escape the gates of death. Be the son of thunder. You say: How can I be the son of thunder? You can be, if not on earth, but if you rest in the heart of Christ. You can be the son of thunder if earthly things do not move you, but rather you shake them with the power of your mind. Let the earth tremble, but not capture you; let your flesh fear the power of your soul and be subdued. You will be the son of thunder if you are a son of the Church. And let Christ say to you from the cross: Behold your mother (John 19:27). Let it be said to the Church: Behold your son (cf. John 19:26); for then you begin to be a son of the Church, when you see

Christ as the victorious one on the cross. For whoever considers the cross as a scandal is a Jew, and is not a son of the Church; whoever considers the cross as foolishness is a Greek. But he is a son of the Church who regards the cross as a triumph, who recognizes the cross of Christ triumphant. So that you may know that Peter, James, and John did not taste death, they deserved to see the glory of the resurrection; for only these three were taken up and led to the mountain after these words. What does he mean by saying 'eight days after these words'? Perhaps because the one who hears and believes the words of Christ will see the glory of Christ at the time of the resurrection; for the resurrection took place on the eighth day; hence many psalms are titled 'for the eighth day' (Psalm 6 and 11). Perhaps to show us that what he had said, that whoever would lose his soul for the word of God would save it, for he will restore his promises in the resurrection.

7. But Matthew and Mark after six days recounted that they were assumed to be these (Matthew 17:1; Mark 9:1). Concerning which we might say, after six thousand years; for a thousand years in the sight of God is like one day (Psalm 90:4): but more than six thousand years are calculated; and we prefer to understand six days as a symbol, because the works of the world were created in six days; so that through time we understand works, and through works we understand the world. And so, when the times of the world are fulfilled, the future resurrection is revealed: either because the one who has ascended above the world and surpassed the moments of this age, placed as it were on high, will await the eternal fruit of the future resurrection.

8. Therefore, let us transcend the works of the world, so that we may be able to see God face to face. Ascend to the mountain that proclaims Zion (Isaiah 40:9). If the one who proclaims Zion ascends to the mountain, how much more the one who proclaims Christ and the risen Christ? Perhaps many will see him in the body; for we have known Christ according to the flesh: but now we no longer know him.

9. We have known many, because we have seen many. We saw him, and he had neither appearance nor beauty (Isaiah 53:3). However, only three and three chosen ones are led onto the mountain. I would suppose that the three mystically represent the entire human race; because from the three sons of Noah the whole human race flowed, except for the chosen ones that I discern. Or perhaps because only those who have confessed Christ will deserve to reach the grace of resurrection out of all; because the wicked do not rise up for judgement, but are punished as if judgement has already been passed (Psalm 1:5). Therefore, three are chosen who would ascend the mountain; because also two are chosen who would be seen with the Lord. A sacred number on both sides. And perhaps for this reason, because no one can see the glory of the resurrection unless they have preserved the complete mystery of the Trinity with incorrupt sincerity of faith. Peter ascends, who received the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:19): John also, to whom the Mother of the Lord is entrusted (John 19:2): and James also, who first ascended the priestly throne.

10. (Verse 10.) From this it is evident that Moses and Elijah, that is, the Law and the Prophets, are with the Word; for the Law cannot exist without the Word, nor can a prophet prophesy unless they prophesy about the Son of God. And those sons of thunder beheld Moses and Elijah with corporeal glory; but we also see Moses with the Son of God every day; for we see the Law in the Gospel when we read: You shall love the Lord your God (Deut. VI, 5). We see Elijah with the Word of God, as we read: Behold, a virgin shall conceive (Isaiah VII, 14). Hence Luke added well,

because:

(Vers. 31.) (Verse 31) They were speaking about his departure, which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. For you teach the mysteries of his departure. Today Moses teaches, and today Elias speaks, and today in greater glory we are able to see Moses. For who is not able, when even the people of the Jews were able to see him, indeed saw him? For they saw the face of Moses in glory (Exod. XXXIV, 30, etc.): but he received a veil, but did not ascend to the mountain. And therefore he erred, because he saw only Moses, he was not able to see the Word of God at the same time.

Let us therefore reveal our face; so that, with the face revealed, beholding the glory of God, we may be transformed into the same image. Let us ascend the mountain, pray to the Word of God; so that in its appearance and beauty it may appear to us, and be strengthened, and proceed prosperously, and reign. And these indeed are mysteries, and they are explained at a higher level; for, according to your ability, either the Word may diminish or increase, and unless you ascend to the summit of higher wisdom, wisdom does not appear to you, knowledge of the mysteries does not appear to you, nor does the great glory and beauty appear to you in the Word of God; but the Word of God appears as if in a body, not having its appearance or beauty, and it appears as if a man in wounds, who can endure our weaknesses; it appears to you as if a certain word born from a man, covered with the veils of letters, not shining forth with the power of the spirit. But if, while considering the man, you believe that he was generated from a Virgin, and faith gradually arises that he was born of the Spirit of God, you begin to ascend the mountain. If you see him placed on the cross triumphant over death, not destroyed: if you see that the earth shook, the sun fled, darkness covered the eyes of the unbelievers, the tombs were opened, the dead arose; so that it might be evident that the Gentile people who were dead to God, as if with the tombs of their bodies opened, rose again with light poured out from the cross: if you see this mystery, you have ascended the high mountain, you behold the other glory of the Word.

13. His clothes are different below, and different above. And perhaps the clothes of the Word are the words of the Scriptures, and some are garments of divine understanding; because just as he appeared to Peter, John, and James in another form, and his clothes shone white (Mark 9:29); so the senses of your mind are now turning white with the reading of divine lessons. Therefore, the words of the divine become like snow, the clothes of the Word are excessively white, such that a fuller on earth cannot make.

14. Let us seek this fuller, let us seek this snow. We read that the prophet Isaiah went up to the village of the fuller (Isaiah VII, 3). Who is this fuller, if not perhaps the one who is accustomed to wash away our sins? Finally, he himself said, 'If your sins are like scarlet, I will make them white as snow' (Isaiah I, 18). Who is this fuller, if not the one who washes away the garments of our understanding, and clothes us in the garments of virtues, and having washed away the stains of the body, is accustomed to offer us alone to the divine.

15. I have also heard (in order to use an example to refute those who disagree) that the eloquence of two wise men is compared to snow and bees. I also found David saying: How sweet are your words to my throat, more than honey and the honeycomb (Psalm 118:103)! And below: Your word, O Lord, is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths (Ibid., 105). The Word of God is light, the Word of God is snow. The Word of God is also sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, which flowed from the divine mouth like honey, and clear, like snow, words fall with softer meanings.

Truly, here is a discourse to be compared with snow, which, sent from heaven to earth, has fertilized the barren fields of our souls. This is not presumptuously assumed, but God himself testifies that it is derived from a series of readings, saying: Let my discourse be awaited like rain, and let my words descend like dew, as showers upon the grass, and as snow upon the hay (Deut. XXXII, 2).

16. I wish, Lord Jesus, that my mind may grow green with the moisture of your rain; I wish that you may sprinkle my land with the whiteness of this snow, so that the fields may not flourish with the hasty heat of a springtime body, but rather that the pressed seeds of the heavenly word may be fertile through snowy nourishment! When snow falls, the birds of the sky have no place to dwell, and the harvest of wheat is more abundant than usual.

17. (Verse 32.) Peter saw this grace, and they who were with him saw it, although they had been burdened by sleep; for the incomprehensible splendor of the divinity of our body pressed upon their senses. For if the physical eye is unable to sustain the bodily rays of the sun when they are directed toward the region of the eyes, how would the corruption of human limbs be able to endure the glory of God? And thus, when the impurities have been purged and the body's substance has been refined, the form of the body is transformed in the resurrection. And perhaps for this reason they were weighed down by sleep, in order to see the appearance of the resurrection after rest. So, waking up, they saw his majesty; for no one sees the glory of Christ except when awake. Peter was delighted, and the allurements of this world could not capture him, for the grace of the resurrection enticed him.

18. (Verse 33.) It is good, he says, for us to be here (hence even the holy Paul says (Phil. I, 23): For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain), not content with praising, but showing superiority in both affection and devotion of deeds, an eager and diligent worker of common service promises the duty of building three tabernacles. And although he did not know what he was saying, he still promised the deed: by an not ill-considered impetuosity, but by a premature devotion, he accumulates the fruits of piety. For what he did not know, was the condition: what he promised, was devotion. But human condition cannot contain in this corruptible, in this mortal body, a dwelling for God. Whether in the mind, or in the body, or in any other place, do not seek that which is not allowed to know. If Peter did not know, how can you know? If he did not know, who made the promise, and who did not know the limits of the body by the magnitude of the soul; how can we know, being enclosed within the limits of the flesh by a certain laziness of the mind? Finally, such great devotion to God was pleasing.

(Vers. 34.)

(Verse 34.) And as these words were spoken, a cloud came and overshadowed them.

19. This is the overshadowing of the divine spirit, which does not darken the affections of men, but reveals hidden things. It is also understood in another place, with the angel saying: And the power of the Most High will overshadow you (Luke 1:35). Its advancement is shown by the voice of God saying:

(Vers. 35.)

(Verse 35.) This is my beloved son, listen to him.

20. This is, not the Son of Elias, not the Son of Moses: but this is the Son, whom you alone see; for those others had departed, when the Lord began to be designated. You see this faith to be perfect, not only of the foolish, but also of the accomplished, yea even of the heavenly ones, to know the Son of God. But since we have already spoken about these things, understand that this cloud is not made of the misty humidity of smoking mountains, nor the pitchy darkness of condensed air, which covers the heaven with the horror of darkness: but it is a bright cloud, which does not wet us with rainy waters and the moisture of drenched rain; but from which the minds of men, through the voice of almighty God, have been watered by the dew of faith.

(Vers. 36.)

(Verse 36.) And while the voice was happening, Jesus was found alone.

Therefore, when there were three, one became. They appear as three at the beginning, but as one in the end; for in the end they are one and perfect. Finally, even the Lord prays to the Father that we may all be one (John 17:21). Not only Moses and Elijah are one in Christ, but we are also one body of Christ. Therefore, they are received into the body of Christ, just as we will be one in Christ Jesus. Or perhaps because the Law and the prophets are from the Word, and what begins in the Word, ends in the Word. For the end of the Law is Christ, for righteousness to everyone who believes (Romans 10:4).

(Vers. 58.)

(Verse 58.) Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, where they rest; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

22. It does not seem reasonable that we should consider him a simple and faithful judge who is rejected by the favor of the Lord; when he had promised the unwearied service of his obedience; for the Lord seeks not the appearance of obedience, but the purity of affection. Finally, he says above:

(Vers. 48.)

(Verse 48.) Whoever receives this child in my name.

23. In the place where the Lord teaches that simplicity should be without arrogance, charity without envy, and devotion without anger: for even children are advised to receive this with a more advanced affection; because while a child claims nothing for himself, he follows the form of virtue: and if he does not know reason, he is ignorant of fault. However, because simplicity without reason seems like weakness to many, in order for you to receive true admonition, that is, to diligently fulfill the duty of nature, you are reminded. Et ideo ait:

(Ibid.) Whoever receives this child in my name, receives me. And whoever receives me, receives him who sent me. For whoever receives the imitator of Christ, receives Christ; and whoever receives the image of God, receives God. But because we were not able to see the image of God, the presence was made to us through the incarnation of the Word; so that the divinity that is above us may be reconciled to us.

25. However, because John greatly loved and therefore was greatly loved due to his fervent devotion to charity, he believes that someone who does not make use of a favor should be excluded, is not rightly condemned, but rather instructed. They are not condemned because they acted out of love, but rather instructed, so that they may know the difference between the weak and the strong. And therefore, although the Lord rewards the stronger ones, He does not exclude the weak.

(Vers. 50)

(Verse 50) Allow them, and do not hinder them; for whoever is not against you is for you.

Well, Lord, for both Joseph and Nicodemus, hidden disciples because of fear, did not deny you their service in the time of your suffering. But nevertheless, because you have said elsewhere: Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters; reveal to us, lest it appear to be otherwise. And I believe that if anyone considers the examiner of minds, they should not doubt that the actions of each person can be discerned by the mind. Finally, some say, follow me; others, foxes have dens. He is compelled, that one is removed; so that you may know that the faithful are admitted and the unfaithful are excluded.

27. (Verse 53-59.) But in fact, he rebuked his disciples because they wanted fire to come down on those who did not receive Christ: it is shown to us that we should not always seek revenge on those who have sinned; because sometimes it is more beneficial to you to have mercy for patience, in order to correct the fallen (23, q. 4, cap. Quod Christus). Finally, the Samaritans believed more quickly, from whom fire is kept away in this place. At the same time, learn that he did not want to receive from those whom he knew were not converted with a sincere mind; for if he had wanted to, he would have made the unfaithful faithful. But why did they not receive him? The evangelist himself explains, saying: Because his appearance was disliked by everyone in Jerusalem. However, the disciples were eager to be received in Samaria. But it is God who calls those whom he deems worthy, and he makes whom he wills to be religious. The disciples are not sinning when they follow the Law; for they knew that Phineas was considered righteous for killing the sacrilegious and that fire came down from heaven at the prayers of Elijah in order to avenge the prophet's mistreatment. But the one who fears will be avenged; he does not seek vengeance, he who does not fear. At the same time, it is shown to us in the apostles that they had the merits of the prophets, since they presumptuously assume the same power that the great prophet earned to obtain by right. And they assume rightly because fire descended from heaven at their words; for they are sons of thunder.

28. But the Lord marvels at all things, and does not easily accept one who offers himself without reason; nor is He moved by those who impiously refute their own Lord, in order to show that perfect virtue does not have a desire for vengeance, nor does it have any anger when there is fullness of charity; nor is weakness to be excluded, but rather to be helped. Far from the religious is indignation; far from the magnanimous is the desire for vengeance; far also from the prudent is thoughtless alliance and careless simplicity. And it is also said of them: Foxes have dens: nor is the courtesy of one with whose duty is not approved of admitted. For the hospitality of faith ought to be cautious; lest while we open the innermost parts of our home to unbelievers, we fall into the snares of another's treachery with unthinking credulity.

29. But lest we seem to have imprudently passed over this, why here we deny that those who can command unclean spirits by the imposition of hands in the name of Jesus should be prohibited: but according to Matthew, he says to them: I never knew you: depart from me, all workers of iniquity (Matt. VII, 23). We must take note that there is no difference in meaning or disagreement in opinions: but it is considered that not only the duties of the clergy, but also the works of virtue are required; and that the name of Christ is so powerful that it can help even those who are not very holy for protection; although it does not help for grace. Where no one should boast, nor should a redeemed man claim grace for himself, in whom the power of eternal name, not some possibility of human frailty, has worked; for it is not by your own merit but by his own hatred that the devil is conquered.

30. A man can exhibit sincere faith and observe the commandments with a religious mind, so that he may not be told: foxes have dens. For indeed the deceitful animal, always intent on traps, exercises the plunder of deception. Nothing is safe, nothing is idle, nothing is allowed to be secure, as it seeks prey amidst the very lodgings of men.

31. He compares heretics to foxes. Finally, when he calls the nations, he excludes heretics. For the fox is a creature full of deceit, preparing a pit, and always desiring to hide in the pit: so are the heretics, who do not know how to prepare a home for themselves, but try to deceive others with their tricks. Jacob dwells in a house: the heretic is in a pit, always intending the deceitful scheme of that Evangelical hen, about which it is written: How often have I desired to gather your children together, like a hen gathering her chicks, and you were not willing? Behold, your house will be left deserted (Matt. 23:37-38). Therefore, they deserve to have ditches, because they have lost the house they had. This animal never becomes tame; hence the Apostle says, 'Reject a heretical man after one...rebuke' (Titus 3:10). He is of no use, or benefit, not even as food; for Christ did not say of this: 'My food is to do the will of my Father, who is in heaven' (John 4:34). Moreover, it also drives them away from its fruits: 'Catch the little foxes for us, the ones destroying the vineyards' (Song of Solomon 2:15); that is, those that destroy the smaller vineyard, not the larger. And that is why Samson tied torches to their tails and let them loose in the fields of the foreigners (Judges 15:4); because heretics attempt to burn the fruits of others, more with loud barking than with refined words (for whoever denies the Word does not have a voice), for the present they speak freely with their mouths, but in the future, with their tails bound and burning with torches, they signify the fiery end of themselves.

Moreover, the birds of the sky, which are frequently derived in likeness to evil spirits, construct certain nests within the hearts of the wicked. And for this reason, the Son of Man, because wickedness abounds, has no place to rest his head. Indeed, when cunning rules, there is no place for simplicity, and no possession can exist in the affections of individuals for divinity: For the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3), who, when he approves a pure mind, in a manner reclines above it with the power of his majesty: which seems to be evident by the fact that a certain overflowing grace is implanted in the hearts of the good.

33. (Verse 59.) Therefore, understand that God does not reject worship, but rather fraud: he rejected the deceitful one and chose the innocent, saying, 'Follow me.' But he said this to whom he already knew the father was dead, the same father of whom it was said to him, 'Forget...the house of your father' (Psalm 44:11). So see that the Lord, whom he shows mercy to, also calls those who

are unaware, and he responds to the one who asks for paternal forgiveness:

(Vers. 60.)

(Verse 60) Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

Therefore, when we undertake the religious duty of burying the dead, just as here the burial of a father is also prohibited, unless you understand that human matters should be subordinate to divine matters. It is a good pursuit, but a greater hindrance; for whoever divides their pursuit, also divides their devotion (Acts 6:2 et seq.); and whoever divides their care, defers their progress (Luke 10:4). Therefore, the greatest things must be done first; for even the apostles, so that they would not be occupied with the pursuit of distributing, appointed ministers for the poor: and when they themselves were sent by the Lord, no one was prescribed the duty of administering salvation along the way: not because the duty of benevolence was displeasing, but because the intention of pursuing devotion pleased more.

35. However, how can the dead bury the dead, unless the body of one who has lost their heart and soul to infidelity is buried, so that their soul may be with God? Or is it because death is understood here in two ways, one as the end of nature, the other as the consequence of sin? There is also a third death, in which we die to sin and live for God, just as Christ died for sin. For he who died to sin died once, but he who lives lives to God (Rom. 6:10).

Therefore, death, by which the bond between body and soul is separated, is not to be feared, not to be dreaded; since it seems to be a departure of ourselves, not a punishment: not to be feared by the brave, desired by the wise, sought after by the wretched, of which it is said: Men will seek death, and shall not find it (Apocalypse 9:6).

37. There is also another death that brings the destruction of worldly pleasures: in it, not nature, but sins perish. We undergo this death when we are buried with baptism, and as dead with Christ from the elements of this world, we suffer the deeds of our former life to be forgotten. This death, when Balaam prophesied, he desired to live for God, and so he said: Let my soul die with the souls of the just, and let my seed be as their seed (Num. 23:10).

There is also a third death, when Christ, who is our life, is not known: but to know Christ is eternal life, which is now present to the just in shadow, but in the future it will be face to face; for the Lord Christ is the Spirit before our face (Lamentations 4:20), of whom it is said: In his shadow we live among the nations (Psalm 56:2). David hoped in the shadow of his wings, he longed for the shadow of him, and the Church sits in his shadow (Song of Solomon 2:3).

39. If only, Lord Jesus, does your shadow contribute as much as truth will bring? How will we live when we are no longer in the shadow but in life itself? For now our life is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ appears, our life, then we will also appear with him in glory (Colossians 3:3-4). That sweet life is the one that does not have death: but this life of the body has death due to the transgression of nature, which is often even desired. The soul itself often experiences the death of sin: For the soul that sins, it shall die (Ezekiel XVIII, 4). But when it begins to be strengthened by the firmness of blessedness and is no longer subject to sin, it will no longer be mortal, but will obtain eternal life.

40. Let us hasten, brothers, to this life, sorrowful in the world because we are strangers to the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6); for whoever is a stranger to the body is a stranger to the Lord. But it is much better to be released from the body and to be joined to God; so that we may be one with the almighty God, and may see the only-begotten Son of God, assumed into the glory of the resurrection and into the brightness of nature, and united by an everlasting pact of unbreakable harmony of souls, imitating the unity of lasting peace; so that what the Son of God promised about us may be fulfilled through praying to the Father: That they may be one, just as we are one (John 17:23).

Therefore, the burial of a father is not prohibited, but the piety of divine religion takes precedence over the obligation of kinship: the former is left to the relatives, the latter is entrusted to the chosen. Either because the open grave is the gaping mouth of the impious (Psalm 5:11), their memory is to be erased, whose merit dies with their body; nor is the son released from the duty of a father, but the faithful is separated from the communion of the treacherous. For there is a special burial for the just, such as that one of which it is said: For she has poured this ointment on my body, to bury me (Matthew 26:12); and therefore he who sincerely buries Christ in himself, in order to rise with him, should not bury the perfidy of the devil in himself.

43. And also that prophetic passage, as we set forth above, must be understood as referring to the tombs of our forefathers (Tb 4:18); you, who reads this, should not be an unbeliever. It is not because food and drink are commanded, but because the sacred communion of offering is revealed. Therefore, it is not forbidden to give gifts, but the mystery of religion is revealed, that there will be no communion between us and the dead nations. For since the sacraments belong to the living, the dead, who have eternal life, are not seen.

(Chap. X. — Vers. 3.)

(Chapter X, Verse 3) Behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.

44. To the seventy disciples He says, those whom He designated and sent two by two before His face. And in what manner did He send them two by two? Because two animals were sent into the ark, that is, the female with the male: unclean according to number, but cleansed by the sacrament of the Church. This was accomplished by the prophecy which Saint Peter received, when the Holy Spirit said to him: What God has cleansed, do not call common (Acts 10:15). And it is understood that this was said about the Gentiles, who followed more the succession of bodily generation than of spiritual grace. He redeemed them and made them heirs of his passion.

45. Therefore, Jesus sent his disciples into their own harvest, which, though planted with the word of God, still required the laborious work and diligent task of the worker; so that the birds of the sky would not scatter the seeds that were scattered, thus: Behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves (Isaiah 65:25).

46. These animals are contrary to each other, so that some devour others. But a good shepherd does not fear wolves for his flock: and therefore these disciples are directed not to prey, but to grace; for the solicitude of a good shepherd makes it so that wolves cannot dare anything against the lambs. Therefore, he sends lambs among wolves, so that that may be fulfilled: Then the wolves and the lambs will feed together.

47. And since recently a not unpleasant discussion about a fox has occurred with us, if I have experienced your trustworthy judgment in the form of a small creature (In Luke 9), I presume that I can reveal the profound mysteries that are veiled in the guise of wolves by the support of your studies. We have already explained that heretics are signified in the guise of foxes, who promise by name to follow Christ, but renounce it through deceit. The Lord does not take these, but rather He keeps them away and forbids them from His nest. We must pay attention to what the wolves seem to signify.

Indeed, the beasts are those that lie in wait for sheep, they move around the shepherd's huts, they do not dare to enter the dwellings of houses, they examine the sleep of dogs, the absence or laziness of the shepherd, they attack the throats of sheep, in order to strangle them quickly: they are wild, greedy, and by nature more rigid in body; that they cannot easily be bent, they are carried forward by a certain impetuosity, and therefore they are often played with. Moreover, if they see any man before them, they are compelled, by a certain power of nature, to snatch away his voice: but if a man sees them first, they are said to be chased away. And so I must be careful lest, if in today's treatise on spiritual mysteries, the grace may not be able to shine forth, I may be believed to have seen wolves beforehand and forced a vote of approval.

49. Surely these wolves must be compared to heretics who lie in wait for the sheep of Christ, raging around the sheepfolds more at nighttime than during the day? For always to the treacherous ones night is preferable, those who attempt to cover the light of Christ with the cruel mists of interpretation, and to the extent possible, darken it. They turn around the sheepfolds; however, they dare not enter the stable of Christ. And for this reason they are not healed, because Christ does not want to lead them into His stable, in which He cured the man who, descending from Jerusalem, fell among robbers, whom the Good Samaritan, having bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on him, put on his own beast and brought to an inn, leaving him to be healed by the innkeeper (Luke X, 30 et seq.). They do not accept medicine, who do not seek a doctor; for if they did seek, they would not detract.

50. Exploring the absence of the shepherd, the shepherds of the Church strive either to kill or to exile them, because they cannot attack the sheep of Christ in the presence of the shepherds. Therefore, the robbers attempt to plunder the flock of the Lord, with a certain stubborn and rigid intention of their mind, never deviating from their error. And thus the Apostle says: Avoid a heretical man after the first . . . correction (Titus 3:10), knowing that he is perverted, such as he is. Thus, Christ mocks these Scriptural interpreters, so that their empty attacks are poured out in vain, and they cannot harm.

51. If they anticipate anyone by the skillful circumscription of their argumentation, they cause him to become mute; for he is mute who does not confess the Word of God in the same manner as his glory. Therefore beware lest the heretic take away your voice, if you do not yourself first detect him; for his treachery creeps while it lies hidden: but if you recognize the discussions of his impiety, you will not be able to fear the loss of your pious voice. Therefore beware of the poisons of subtle disputation: they attack the soul, invade the throat, inflict a wound on the vital parts. *Graves sunt morsus haereticorum, qui ipsis graviores et rapaciores bestiis, nullum avaritiae finem impietatisque noverunt.*

Let it not bother you that they seem to present a human form: and if a man is seen on the outside, inside he rages like a beast. And therefore it is not to be doubted that they are wolves, according to the divine sentence of the Lord Jesus, who says: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inside they are ravening wolves; by their fruits you shall know them (Matthew VII, 15 and 16). Therefore, if anyone is moved by appearance, let him inquire about the fruit. You hear that a priest is being called, you recognize his robbery. He has the appearance of a sheep, the actions of a predator. Outside he is a sheep, inside he is a wolf: one who has no limit to his robberies, who, like a body hardened by Scythian frost in the night, with a bloodied face, flies around seeking whom he might devour. Doesn't he seem to you to be a wolf, who desires to satisfy his insatiable cruelty in the death of faithful people?

53. That person howls, does not reason, who denies the author of the voice, and with blasphemous speech, makes a bestial murmur, who does not confess the Lord Jesus, the eternal ruler of life. We heard his howls, when the sword was sent into the world. He showed his sharp teeth, his swollen mouth, and thought that he had taken away the voice from everyone, which he alone had lost. And therefore, in order to escape from these wolves, the Lord teaches us what we should follow, saying:

(Vers. 4.)

(Verse 4.) Do not carry a bag, nor a money pouch, nor sandals.

54. What it means for a bag not to be carried somewhere else is clearly expressed; for Matthew wrote that the Lord said to his disciples: Do not possess gold, nor silver (Matthew 10:9). If we are prohibited from possessing gold, what are we to take away, what are we to steal? If you command to give what you have, how are you accumulating what you did not have? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who curse idols, do you commit sacrilege? Do you who boast in the law, dishonor God by breaking the law? For, as it is written, 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.' (Romans 2:21-24)

55. Not so did the apostle Peter, who was the first executor of the Lord's command, show that the commandments of the Lord were not given in vain; when asked by a poor man to give him some money, he said: I have no silver or gold (Acts 3:6). He boasts that he does not have silver or gold: is it shameful to you to have less than you desire? Therefore, poverty is both glorious and blessed, as it is written: Blessed are the poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3). Nevertheless, Peter does not boast so much about this, that he has no silver and gold, as that he keeps the commandment of the Lord, who commanded: Do not possess gold; that is to say: You see that I am a disciple of Christ, and you ask for gold from me? He has given us something much more precious than gold, so that we may work in his name. Therefore, I have not what he has not given, but what he has given I have: In the name of the Lord Jesus, rise up and walk (Acts 3:6).

56. Just as, therefore, one who wants to build barns for storing grain is criticized by the authority of the Lord's words (Luke XII, 26): so one who wants to acquire a bag by preserving gold incurs the blemish of reprobation.

57. I will not err, nor will I put on sandals. Both are usually made from the skin of a dead animal; however, our Lord Jesus wants nothing in us to be mortal. Finally, to Moses He says: 'Take off

your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground' (Exod. III, 5). Therefore, He commands Moses to remove his mortal and earthly sandals when he was sent to free the people; for the one who serves in this ministry should fear nothing, and should not be delayed by the danger of death from fulfilling his duty. For when he received voluntary defense of his brothers, that is, of the Jews, he was recalled from his beginning by the terror of false accusations, and fled from Egypt. And therefore when the Lord tested his disposition, and saw his condition feeble, He deemed it necessary to free his soul and mind from mortal bonds.

58. And if someone is moved by the fact that in Egypt they were commanded to eat the Passover lamb wearing shoes (Exodus 12:11), he should consider that even though he is in Egypt, he still needs to beware of the bites of serpents. For there are many poisons in Egypt, and he who celebrates the Passover in a symbolic way can be susceptible to injury. But the minister of truth dulls the poisons and does not tremble. Indeed, the viper bit Paul on the island of Malta, and when the inhabitants of that place saw the viper hanging from his hand, they thought he would die. But when they saw him unharmed, they said he was a god, to whom venom could not do harm (Acts 28:3ff). And so that you know this to be true, the Lord himself said: Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you (Luke 10:19).

59. The apostles were not commanded to carry staffs in their hands; for thus Matthew thought it should be written (Matth. X, 10). But what is a staff, if not a symbol of authority and an instrument of inflicting pain? Therefore, the humble disciples of the humble Lord (for in his humility his judgment was exalted [Esai. LIII, 8]), I say, the humble disciples carry out the commandment of their Lord through the duties of humility; for they were sent to sow the faith, not to compel but to teach; not to exercise power, but to elevate the doctrine of humility. In this place, he thought that even patience should be joined to humility; because he himself also, according to the testimony of Peter, did not revile when he was reviled: when he was struck, he did not strike back (1 Peter 2:23). Therefore, this is to say: Be imitators of me, set aside the desire for vengeance, endure the insolence of those who strike you not with a sense of injury, but with the magnanimity of patience. No one should imitate in another what he himself condemns: gentleness returns severer wounds to the contumacious. The Lord struck back by saying: Whoever strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other also (Matt. V, 39). For it happens that by his own judgement he condemns himself, and he is pricked by a certain sting of his own conscience, which prompts him to recognize the kindness that was shown to him in contrast to the injury he committed.

However, he had those whom he sent as apostles with a rod, as Paul testifies, saying: What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness? (I Cor. IV, 21). The Apostle Timothy also received this rod, saying: Reprove, exhort, rebuke (II Tim. IV, 2). Or perhaps before the passion of the Lord, which strengthened the wavering hearts of the people, gentleness alone was necessary; after the passion, correction. Certainly the Lord rebukes, Paul incites. Let him who can persuade also soften hardened hearts, let him who cannot persuade all things rebuke. Therefore Paul had taken up the rod from the teaching of the Law. For he had read: 'He who spares the rod hates his son' (Prov. XIII, 24). He had also read that those who eat the lamb were ordered by the prophetic command to have a rod in their hands (Exod. XII, 11). And thus the Lord says in the old Testament: 'I will visit their iniquities with the rod' (Psal. LXXXVIII, 33). But in the new one, he offered himself for forgiveness to all, saying: If you seek me, let these go

away (John XVIII, 8). And in another place you have that when the apostles wanted to ask for fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans, who did not want to receive Jesus the Lord into their city: He turned and rebuked them, and said: You do not know what spirit you are of; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy lives, but to save them (Luke IX, 55 and 56).

61. Therefore, the more perfect are governed without a rod, while the weaker ones eat with a staff. But even Paul threatens with a rod, but in the spirit of meekness he visits those who sin. Finally, in order for you to know that he is a gentle teacher, he seeks the will of those whom he accuses: What do you want, he says, should I come to you with a rod, or in love and the spirit of meekness? (I Cor. IV, 21). He mentioned the rod once, and twice he added milder things, adding meekness to love. However, he had previously threatened with a rod, but he showed gentleness; for in the second letter to the Corinthians, he writes: I call God as my witness, that I did not come to Corinth again to spare you (II Cor. I, 23). Listen to the reason why he thought it necessary to spare them: So that I would not come to you again in sorrow (II Cor. II, 1). He put aside the rod and took on the feeling of charity.

(Vers. 4.)

(Verse 4.) And you have not greeted anyone on the way.

62. Perhaps to some, this may seem harsh and proud, and not in accordance with the gentle and humble command of the Lord, who even ordered that one should give up their place at the table. In this place, He commands His disciples: 'Do not greet anyone on the road.' (Luke 10:4) Although this is a common practice of grace. In this way, those who are lower in rank have often sought to win favor from those above them. Even the Gentiles have such exchanges of courtesies with Christians. How does the Lord tear away this use of humanity?

63. But consider this not only: You shall not greet anyone; but it is not in vain added, 'On your way'. Moreover, when Elisha (2 Kings 4:29) sent his servant to lay his staff on the body of the dead boy, he commanded him not to greet anyone on the way; for he ordered him to hasten in order to perform the duty of celebrating the resurrection, so that he would not be turned away from his task by the conversation of any passerby. Therefore, even here, the zeal for greeting is taken away, but the hindrance to devoutness is removed, so that when divine matters are commanded, human matters are temporarily set aside. Greeting is beautiful, but the mature execution of divine matters, which often delays and offends, is more beautiful. Therefore, even honorable things are prohibited, so that the grace of the ceremony does not creep in as an obstacle to duty and hinder the ministry, for which delay would be a fault.

64. (Verse. 8.) Now another virtue is this, that one should not wander from house to house with ease; so that we may preserve constancy even in hospitable love, and not easily dissolve the bond of friendship once formed; that we may prefer the message of peace, and that the first entrance of peace may be celebrated with a blessing: that we should be content with food and drink offered, not suppressing the banner of faith, and that we should preach the Gospel of the heavenly kingdom, shaking off the dust from our feet if anyone does not think they should be received into the hospitality of the city.

65. (Vers. 13-21.) It also teaches that those who do not follow the Gospel will be subject to a more severe punishment than those who considered the Law to be loosened; because if Tyre and Sidon

had seen such great miracles of heavenly operations, they would not have disregarded the remedy of repentance. This worldly abundance or insolence should neither be compared to heavenly gifts, nor should it be left without remedy, as there is assistance for everyone to repent. Finally, it reveals the heavenly mystery that it pleased God to reveal His grace to little ones rather than to the wise of this world. The apostle Paul explained this more fully, saying: 'Did not God make the wisdom of this world foolish? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of preaching to save those who believe.' (I Cor. I, 20-21).

66. Therefore let us accept the little one, who does not know how to exalt himself, and boast of his skill in lofty words, like many philosophers do. It was a little one who said: O Lord, my heart is not exalted, nor are my eyes lofty, nor have I walked in great things, nor in wonders above me (Psalm CXXX, 1). And to show that this little one was not young, nor wise, but humble in his humility, and with a certain turning away from boasting, he added: But I have exalted my soul (Ibid., 2). You see how high this little one has been, how lofty at the pinnacle of virtues? Such little ones does the Apostle want us to be, when he says: If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, let him become a fool, so that he may become wise; for the wisdom of this age is foolishness before God (1 Corinthians 3:18-19).

67. (Verse 22.) The most beautiful place is connected to faith when it says that all things have been given to it by its Father. When you acknowledge all the laws, you do not deny the all-powerful, unchanging Father; when you acknowledge the given laws, you confess the Son, to whom by nature all things are rightfully his own, not granted as a gift through grace. He added:

(Ibid.) No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

68. I remember that I did not mention this place in the books I wrote about Faith (Book IV On Faith, Chapter 6). But so that you may know, just as the Son reveals to whom He wills, the Father also reveals to whom He wills His Son, listen to the Lord Jesus Himself saying when He praised Peter for confessing Him to be the Son of God: Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven (Matthew 16:17).

69. (Verse 25.) This passage applies to those who consider themselves experts in the law, who grasp the words of the law but do not understand its meaning. From the very first chapter of the law, it shows that they are ignorant of the law, proving that in the beginning, the law immediately proclaimed the Father and the Son, and also announced the mystery of the Lord's incarnation. It says: You shall love the Lord your God... and you shall love your neighbor as yourself (Deut. 6:5).

70. (Verse 28.) So the Lord said to the scribe: Do this, and you will live. But he, who did not know his neighbor because he did not believe in Christ, answered: Who is my neighbor? Therefore, one who does not know Christ, does not know the Law either. For how can he know the Law, when he ignores the truth, when the Law proclaims the truth?

(Vers 30.)

(Verse 30.) A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers.

71. In order to better understand the place that has been proposed to us, let us revisit the ancient history of the city of Jericho. We remember that Jericho, as we read in the book called Joshua, was a great city surrounded by walls that could not be penetrated by iron or battering ram (Joshua 6:1). In that city, Rahab the prostitute lived. She received and provided shelter for the spies sent by Joshua, gave them instructions, and when the citizens asked about them, she hid them on her roof. In order to save herself and her people from the destruction of the city, she tied a scarlet cord in the window (Joshua 2:4ff). However, the invincible walls of the city itself fell down at the sound of the seven priestly trumpets and the shout of the jubilant people (Joshua 6:20).

See how each person keeps their own duty: the scouts guard, the prostitute has secrets, the conqueror has trust, the priest has religion. These do not fear danger for praise: she does not betray those she has taken on in danger: he is anxious to preserve trust more than to conquer, he entrusts his safety to the prostitute before the destruction of the city: but the weapons of religion are the insignia of the priest. Now, who would not think that it is a full miracle that no one from the whole city was saved, except for the one whom the prostitute freed? This is the simple history of truth: which, if considered deeply, signifies wondrous mysteries. For Jericho is the figure of this world, into which Adam, expelled from paradise, that is, from celestial Jerusalem, descended through the transgression of his disobedience, that is, migrating from the spiritual to the earthly: to whom not a change of place, but a change of character, made exile from his nature. Far removed from that Adam, who enjoyed faultless bliss, when he fell into worldly sins, he fell into the hands of thieves: into whom he would not have fallen, if he had not made himself subject to the commandment of heavenly government. Who are these robbers, if not angels of the night and darkness, who sometimes transform themselves into angels of light, but cannot persevere? They strip us of the garments of spiritual grace, and thus are accustomed to inflict wounds; for if we keep the unblemished garments that we have received, we cannot feel the wounds of the robbers. Therefore be careful not to be stripped beforehand, as Adam was stripped beforehand, deprived of the protection of the heavenly commandment, and stripped of the garment of faith, and thus received a deadly wound: in which all of humanity would have perished, if that Samaritan descending had not healed his bitter wounds.

74. This Samaritan is not mediocre, who despised by the priest and the Levite, did not despise himself. Do not despise the name of the sect, for you will marvel at the interpretation of the word; for indeed, Samaritan is a term that signifies guardian. This is its interpretation. And who is a guardian, if not he of whom it is said: The Lord keeps the little ones (Psalm 114:6)? Therefore, just as one Jew is different in letter and another in spirit, so too is the Samaritan, one outwardly and another in secret. So who is this Samaritan descending? Indeed: He who descended from heaven, and who ascends to heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven (John 3:13)? Seeing the half-dead man, whom no one had been able to heal before, just as she who had spent all her inheritance on doctors in order to stop her flowing blood: he came near him (Luke 8:43-44), that is, he became close to us by taking on our compassion and became our neighbor through the gift of mercy.

(Vers. 34.)

(Verse 34) And he bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them.

75. This doctor has many medicines, with which he is accustomed to heal. His speech is a medicine. One of his speeches binds wounds, another soothes with oil, another pours wine. He

binds wounds with a stricter command, soothes with the forgiveness of sin, just as he pierces with wine through the denunciation of judgment.

(Ibid.) And he placed, he said, on his beast.

76. Listen how he obligates himself: He carries our sins, and suffers for us (Isaiah 53:4): and a shepherd put a weary sheep on his shoulders (Luke 15:5). For a man has been made similar to a beast of burden; and therefore he has placed us on his beast of burden, so that we would not be like horses and mules; in order to abolish the weaknesses of our flesh by assuming our human body.

Finally, he led us into a stable, where we were animals. And indeed, it is a stable where the weary often take shelter after a long journey. Therefore, the Lord, who raises up the poor from the earth and lifts up the needy from the dung heap (Psalm 113:7), led us into the stable.

78. And he took care (Ibid.); lest the sick man should not observe those things which he had received. But the Samaritan had no leisure to stay on earth for long: he had to return to where he had come down from. Therefore:

(Vers. 35.) (The Verse 35.) On the second day. Who is this other day, unless perhaps that of the Lord's resurrection, of which it is said: This is the day which the Lord has made (Psalm CXVII, 24)?

(Ibid.) He brought out two denarii and gave them to the stable keeper, and said: Take care of him. Who are these two denarii, if not perhaps two Testaments, which have the image of the eternal king expressed in them, by whose price our wounds are healed? For we are redeemed by precious blood; so that we may avoid the wounds of death.

81. Therefore, the stableman receives these two denarii (it is not unreasonable to understand the four forms of these books as well). Who? Perhaps he who says: I consider them as dung, that I may gain Christ (Phil. III, 8); in which he cares for the wounded man. Therefore, that stableman is the one who said: Christ sent me to proclaim the good news (I Cor. I, 17). Those stablemen are those to whom it is said: Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; and whoever believes and is baptized will be saved (Mark XVI, 15 and 16), saved from death, saved from the wound inflicted by the robbers. Blessed is the stable boy, who can heal the wounds of others. Blessed is he to whom Jesus says:

(Vers. 35.)

(Verse 35.) Whatever you have supererogated, I will return to you when you come back.

82. Paul, a good steward, who even goes beyond what is required. Paul, the good steward, whose words and letters overflow as if he had received the same teaching as himself. By carrying out the moderate command of the Lord with almost excessive mental and physical labor, he has relieved many people from the burden of serious spiritual conversation. Therefore, he is a good stable master of the stable in which his Lord's donkey recognized the manger, and in which the flock of lambs is enclosed, so that there may be easy access to the sheepfold for the raging wolves.

83. Therefore, he promises that he will repay the reward. When will you return, Lord, if not on the day of judgment? For although you are always everywhere, and standing in our midst, you are not

seen by us, yet there will be a time when all flesh sees you returning. Therefore, you will repay what you owe. Blessed are those to whom you are a debtor! May we be worthy debtors! May we be able to repay what we have received; may neither the office of priesthood nor ministry lift us up! Lord Jesus, how will you repay? You have indeed promised in heaven a plentiful reward for the good (Matthew 5:12). Yet you will also repay when you say: 'Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord' (Matthew 25:21).

Therefore, since no one is closer than the one who has cared for our wounds, let us love him as a master, let us love him as a neighbor, for nothing is as close as the head is to the members: let us also love him who is an imitator of Christ, let us love him who sympathizes with the poverty of another's body through the unity of our own. For it is not blood relation that makes one close, but mercy: for mercy is according to nature; for nothing is so according to nature as to help a fellow being of the same nature.

85. (Verse 38, 42.) Therefore, it has been said about mercy, but there is not only one form of virtue. The example of Martha and Mary is added: the active devotion of one through her works, the religious intention of the other towards the word of God, which, if it is in harmony with faith, is even preferred to the works themselves, according to what is written: Mary has chosen the best part for herself, which will not be taken away from her. Let us therefore strive to have something that no one can take away from us, not for the sake of being superficial, but for diligent hearing; for even the seeds of the heavenly word itself are known to be taken away if they are sown in a different way (Luke 8:12). Love wisdom as you love Mary, for this is a greater and more perfect work: let not the care of your ministry turn you away from the knowledge of heavenly doctrine, nor condemn those whom you see studying wisdom as idle judges; for Solomon, that peaceful man, admitted wisdom to dwell with him.

Martha, however, is not reproached for her good ministry, but Mary, because she has chosen the better part, is preferred; for Jesus abounds in many things and bestows many blessings, and therefore he is considered wiser; because he chooses what is essential. Finally, the apostles did not consider it best to abandon the word of God and serve tables (Acts 6:2). But both are tasks of wisdom; for even Stephen, a minister full of wisdom, was chosen (Ibid., 5). And therefore let the one who serves the teacher defer to him; and let the one serving the doctor invite and challenge him; for there is one body of the Church, although there are different members: one member needs the other. The eye cannot say to the hand: I do not need your works; nor again can the head say to the feet, nor the ear deny that it is part of the body; for although some parts are more important, others are still necessary. Wisdom is in the head, action is in the hands: For the eyes of the wise are in their head (Ecclesiasticus 2:14); for he truly understands, whose mind is in Christ, and whose inner eye is raised to heavenly things. And therefore: The eyes of the wise are in their head; but the fool walks in darkness.

(Chap. XI. — Vers. 5.)

(Chapter 11, Verse 5.) Which of you, having a friend, will go to him in the middle of the night and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread.'

87. Another precept is that prayer should be offered at every moment, not just during the day but also at night. For you see that this person who set out in the middle of the night, asking for three loaves from his friend and persisting in his request, will not be denied his prayers. Who are these three loaves, if not the nourishment of heavenly mysteries? If you love the Lord your God, you will not only be able to acquire it for yourself, but also for others. But who is more friendly to us than the one who handed over his body for us? From this middle of the night, David asked for bread and received it; for he asked when he said: In the middle of the night, I rise to confess to you (Psalm 118:62); therefore he deserved these loaves of bread that he set before us to eat. He asked when he said: I will wash my bed every night (Psalm 6:7); for he did not fear to awaken the One who sleeps, whom he knows is always awake.

88. And therefore, mindful of the writings, we who devote ourselves to prayer day and night, should seek forgiveness for our sins. For if that holy one, who was occupied with the necessities of the kingdom, praised the Lord seven times a day in his prayers, always attentive to the morning and evening sacrifices (Psalm CXVIII, 164): what should we do, who should ask even more frequently, as we more frequently fall through the weakness of flesh and mind; so that for those worn out by the journey and greatly exhausted by the course of this age and the twists and turns of this life, the bread of refreshment may not be lacking, which strengthens the hearts of men?

89. Not only in the middle of the night does the Lord teach us to be watchful, but at all moments near to it; for he comes in the evening, and in the second, and in the third watch, and is accustomed to knock: Blessed, therefore, are those servants whom the Lord, when he comes, shall find watching (Luke 12:37). So if you desire that the power of God gird itself and minister to you, it is necessary to be always watchful: for there are many snares for the good, and a heavy sleep of the body; for if the mind begins to sleep, it loses the strength of its virtue. Therefore, awaken your sleep so that you may knock on the door of Christ; which Paul also requests to be opened to him, not only for himself, but also by the prayers of the people, imploring to be aided, so that the door may be opened to him to speak the mystery of Christ (Colossians 4:3). And perhaps that is the door that John saw opened; for he saw and said: After this I saw, and behold, a door open in heaven; and the first voice which I heard, as it were of a trumpet speaking with me, saying: Come up hither, and I will show thee the things that must be done (Revelation 4:1). The door was opened to John, the door was opened to Paul; so that they could receive the breads that we were eating. He persevered knocking on the door opportune, importune; so that he could refresh the peoples, who were troubled by the labor of the worldly path, with the abundance of heavenly sustenance.

Therefore, the prescriptive place of prayer, the hope of obtaining, the rationale of persuading, is first placed in the precept and then in the example. For whoever promises something, ought to offer the hope of the promise; so that obedience may be given to the admonitions, faith to the promises, which, by the human contemplation of piety, acquires a greater hope of eternal piety; if, however, they are demanded justly, lest prayer be turned into sin. Nor was he ashamed to ask for something frequently, lest he be seen to either lack confidence in the mercy of the Lord, or to arrogantly grieve because he obtained something through his first prayer. Therefore, he said, I asked the Lord three times (II Cor. XII, 8): and he showed that God often does not grant what is prayed for because he judges it to be useless, which we believe will benefit us.

(Vers. 17.) (Verse 17.) Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a house falls upon a house. The reason for this saying is that it was said that in Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he cast out demons; in order to show that his kingdom is indivisible and eternal. And he even responded to Pilate: My kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). And therefore, those who do not have hope in Christ but think that they cast out demons by the prince of demons, he denies them an eternal kingdom. This applies to the people of the Jews, who, in order to cast out demons in such passions, call upon the assistance of demons. For just as, when faith is divided, the kingdom cannot remain undivided, so too, since the people of the Jews are in the Law, and Christ was also generated according to the flesh from the Law, how can the kingdom of the Jews be everlasting, since it is from the Law, when the people themselves divide the Law, when Christ, who is owed to the people of the Law, is denied? Thus, from one side the faith of the Jewish people attacks itself, and by attacking it is divided, and by dividing it is dissolved. And therefore the kingdom of the Church will remain forever; because individual faith is one body: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all (Ephesians 4:5-6).

92. How great a sacrilegious madness is here; that when the Son of God undertook to crush unclean spirits and take away the spoils of the worldly prince by assuming flesh, and gave power for the destruction of evil spirits to men as well, dividing the spoils of his triumph, which is the emblem of victory, some should seek for themselves assistance and support from the power of the devil, while they exclude demons from the finger of God, or certainly according to Matthew, by the Spirit of God (Matt. 12:28)! It is understood that there is a certain individual, like a body of divinity and a kingdom; since Christ is at the right hand of God. And the Spirit, it seems, expresses the appearance of a finger, like one in the divine series of the body. Does it not seem that the individual is a kingdom, since it is like an undivided body? For, as you have read, the fullness of divinity dwells bodily in Christ (Colossians 2:9). Surely you cannot deny this of the Father, and you should not deny it of the Spirit. And so, may it not seem necessary for you to make a certain portion of virtue by comparison of our members; for there cannot be a division of an indivisible thing: and therefore, the naming of fingers must be referred to the form of unity, not to the distinction of power; as even the right hand of God says: I and the Father are one (John 10:30). But although the indivisible divinity is distinct persons.

93. However, when the word 'Spirit' is mentioned, it signifies the power of the operator, because just as the Father and the Son are operators of divine works, so too is the Holy Spirit. For David says: 'For I will behold the heavens, the works of your fingers' (Psalm 8:4). And in the thirty-second psalm: 'By the breath of his mouth, all their power' (Psalm 32:6). And Paul says: 'But all these things one and the same Spirit works, dividing to each according as he wills' (1 Corinthians 12:11). Et id cum dicit:

(Vers. 20)

(Verse 20) If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

94. At the same time, it shows that there is a certain imperial power of the Holy Spirit, in which the kingdom of God exists. We also, in whom the Spirit dwells, have a royal household. Therefore, we must consider the Holy Spirit as a companion of divinity, dominion, and imperial majesty, because the Lord is Spirit: where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (II Cor. III, 17).

(Vers. 24)

(Verse 24) When an unclean spirit comes out of a person, it roams through dry places seeking rest, and finding none.

95. This statement about the Jewish people cannot be ambiguous, whom the Lord separated from his kingdom in the past. Therefore, understand that all heretics and schismatics are also separated from his kingdom and from the Church. And therefore, it is clear that all schismatics and heretics are not of God, but of unclean spirits. Therefore, the comparison of the entire Jewish people can be made to one man, from whom the unclean spirit had departed through the law. But because in nations and peoples they could not find rest through the faith of Christ (for Christ is a fire to unclean spirits, who in the hearts of the Gentiles, which were dry before, were afterwards moistened by the baptismal dew of the Holy Spirit, and the fiery projectiles of the adversary were restrained), therefore he returned to the Jewish people, which remains inwardly more defiled though adorned with an outward appearance of respectability. For he neither washed in the irrigating or extinguishing water of the sacred font, nor quenched the fire. And rightly the unclean spirit returned to it, bringing with him seven spirits more wicked than himself; for during the week of the Law and the mystery of the eighth day, he committed sacrilege with an impious mind. Therefore, just as the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit is multiplied for us, so the injury of all unclean spirits is accumulated for them; for the universe is encompassed by this number multiple times, because God rested on the seventh day after completing the works of the world (Gen. II, 2). Therefore, she who was barren gave birth to seven, and she who was populous with children was made weak (I Sam. II, 5). Finally, to show you how the people of the Synagogue are disfigured, where the beatitude of the Church is praised, he added:

(Vers. 29, 30.)

(Verse 29, 30.) This generation is a wicked generation: it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so the Son of Man will be to this generation.

96. In this also is clearly expressed the mystery of the Church, which is gathered from the ends of the earth, in the penance of the Ninevites, and in the seeking of wisdom by the Queen of the South: so that she may know the peaceful words of Solomon, the Queen, indeed, whose kingdom is indivisible, arising from diverse and distant peoples into one body. Therefore, this is a great Sacrament... of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:32): but yet this is greater; because that took place in figure before, but now the mystery is fulfilled in truth; for there the type of Solomon, here Christ in His own body. Therefore, the Church consists of two things, so that either you may not know how to sin, or you may cease to sin; for repentance removes the offense, wisdom avoids it. This is the mystery.

97. Moreover, the sign of Jonah is not only a foreshadowing of the Lord's passion, but also a testimony of the serious sins committed by the Jews. It is worth noting both the oracle of majesty and the indication of piety; for just as the punishment is announced by the example of the Ninevites, so too is the remedy demonstrated. Therefore, the Jews should not despair of forgiveness if they are willing to repent.

(Vers. 33.)

(Verse 33.) No one lights a lamp and puts it in a hidden place, neither under a bushel basket, but on a lampstand.

Therefore, because in previous [passages] [he] preferred the Church to the Synagogue, [he] exhorts us to rather transfer our faith to the Church; for faith is a lamp, according to what is written: Your word, Lord, is a lamp to my feet (Psalm 118:105); for our faith is the word of God, the word of God is light, and faith is a lamp. [There] was the true light, which enlightens every person coming into this world (John 1:9). However, a lamp cannot shine unless it receives light from elsewhere. This is the lamp that is lit, namely the power of our mind and senses, so that it can find what was lost. Therefore, let no one establish faith under the Law; for the Law is within a measure, but grace is beyond measure: the Law shadows, grace illuminates. And therefore let no one confine their faith within the measure of the Law, but let them bring it to the Church, in which the grace of the sevenfold Spirit shines forth, which that Prince of priests illumines with the radiance of heavenly divinity, lest the shadow of the Law extinguish it.

99. Finally, that lamp which the high priest used to light at the times of morning and evening, according to the ancient rite of the Jews (Exodus 27:21), as if placed under a bushel, has disappeared: and that city, Jerusalem, which is on the earth, which killed the prophets, is hidden as if in a valley of tears: but that Jerusalem which is in heaven, in which our faith fights, placed on that highest of all mountains, that is, in Christ, the Church cannot be hidden by the darkness and ruins of this world: but shining with the brightness of the eternal sun, it illuminates us with the light of spiritual grace.

(Vers. 39.)

(Verse 39) Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish.

100. You see that our bodies, which are earthly and fragile, are marked by their outward appearance and easily broken by a brief fall. And easily the thoughts and actions of the mind are revealed through the senses and the movements of the body, just as the contents of a cup shine outwardly. Hence, in the latter (Luke 22:42), there is no doubt that the passion of the body is indicated by the word "cup," when the Lord says: The cup which the Father has given me, do you not want me to drink it? (John 18:11)? For he drinks his body, who absorbs bodily frailty with spiritual affection, and as it were pours it into his mind and soul, so that the weakness of the external is drawn into the inner. You therefore see that it is not the exterior of this cup or dish that contaminates us, but the interior. And therefore, like a good teacher, he has taught us how we should cleanse the contagion of our body, saying:

(Vers. 41.)

(Verse 41.) Give alms, and behold all things are clean for you.

101. Do you see what great remedies there are? Mercy cleanses us, the Word of God cleanses us, as it is written: Now you are clean by reason of the word, which I have spoken to you (John 15:3). Not only in this place, but also in others, you understand how great the grace is expressed: For almsgiving delivers from death (Tobit 12:9): and, Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and it shall obtain help for thee against all evil (Ecclesiasticus 29:15).

102. Therefore, this whole beautiful place is directed towards the fact that, since it invites us to the study of simplicity, it condemns the superfluous and earthly things of the Jews, who rightly compare what pertains to the Law, when understood according to the body, to glass and a dish due to the fragility of their nature; and they observe those things for which we have no use, but they neglect those things in which there is fruit for our hope; and therefore, they commit a great sin by despising better things; and yet, the forgiveness of their sins is promised to them if they obtain mercy.

103. (Verse 42.) However, he briefly exposes their many sins who devote all their effort to contributing the tithes of cheaper fruits: they have no fear of the future judgment or any love for God, since their works are worthless without faith; for they disregard the judgment and love of God: the judgment, because they do not bring everything they do under judgment; the love, because they do not love God out of devotion.

104. But so that it does not make us diligent in faith, neglectful of works, he concludes the perfection of a faithful man with a short discourse; so that he may be approved both by faith and works, saying: These things you ought to do, and not leave the others undone.

105. (Verse 43, 44.) He also criticizes the arrogance and boasting of the Jews, as they seek the places of honor at banquets. The sentence of condemnation is also pronounced against those who deceive others with a false appearance, like hidden tombs that are not visible and deceive by their outward beauty; they promise good things on the outside, but inside they are full of decayed bones. This is what many teachers do, demanding things from others that they themselves cannot accomplish. And therefore these are their monuments, as it is also said elsewhere: Their sepulcher is open throat (Psalms V, 11).

106. (Verse 47.) Also a good argument against the most foolish superstition of the Jews, who condemned the building of tombs for the prophets and their fathers; but by emulating their fathers' crimes, they turned the judgment upon themselves. Indeed, by constructing the tombs of the prophets, they were accusing those who had killed them of wrongdoing; and by imitating similar actions, they were also revealing themselves as heirs of their fathers' wickedness. Therefore, it is not the act of building, but the act of emulation that is considered a crime. For those who crucified the Son of God, which is the more serious offense, added to the heap of their father's crimes, cannot be absolved from hereditary wickedness. And therefore he rightly added elsewhere: Fill up the measure of your fathers (Matthew 23:32); because there is nothing more serious that they can sin beyond the injury against God.

107. (Vers. 49.) Therefore Wisdom sends apostles and prophets to them. Who is Wisdom if not Christ? Finally, in Matthew you have: Behold, I send you prophets and wise men (Matthew XXIII, 34).

108. (Verse 52.) They are still accused under the name of the Jews, and they are determined to be subject to future punishment; because while they claim for themselves the teaching of divine knowledge and hinder others, they themselves do not recognize what they profess.

(Chap. XII. — Vers. 6, 7.)

(Chapter 12, Verses 6-7.) Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not be afraid, you are of more value than many sparrows.

109. The Savior has woven the most beautiful place of holding simplicity and emulating faith, so that we do not fall into the same affection as the treacherous Jews, who pretend one thing with their voice and another with their heart; for in the last days, the secret of our thoughts, accusing or even defending, is revealed as if it were opening the hidden part of our mind. For what is a greater allure of simplicity than for everyone to know that the hiding place of deceit cannot exist?

110. But since there are two causes of treachery, which either arise from ingrained malice or from fear of an unexpected event; lest anyone, terrified by the fear of power, should attempt to deny the God whom he knows in his heart, it has elegantly added that punishment is only to be feared by the soul, not the body; for death is the end of nature, not a punishment; and therefore death is the failure of bodily punishment, but punishment of the soul is eternal; and therefore God alone is to be feared, whose power is not prescribed by nature, but nature itself submits; but death is not terrible, as immortality will repay with more interest.

111. The Lord had inspired the feeling of simplicity, had elevated the virtue of the mind, and only faith faltered; He had strengthened the worth of the lowly; for if God does not forget the sparrows, who among men can? But if the majesty of God is so great and eternal, that not even one of the sparrows, or the number of our hairs, is beyond His knowledge; how unworthy it is to think that the Lord either ignores or spurns the hearts of the faithful, He who knows even the most humble things!

Perhaps someone may say: How did the Apostle say, 'Is it for God that he is concerned about oxen' (I Cor. IX, 9); when surely an ox is more valuable than a sparrow? But care is one thing, and knowledge another. In fact, the number of hairs is not taken in terms of actual counting, but in terms of the ease of knowing; for God does not intend a watchful care in counting; but for Him who knows all things, all things are as if they were counted. However, they are indeed said to be counted properly; because, those things which we wish to keep, we count.

113. However, we can discuss some mystery of spiritual intelligence here, especially since it seems absurd for humans to be compared to birds rather than to other humans. These five birds appear to have five senses of the body: touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing. But if these birds, now engaged in the filth of earthly impurities and seeking food from uncultivated and foul places, become entangled in the snares of their own sins, they cannot fly back to the fruits of higher works, on which their souls feast. For there is indeed a certain snare of pleasure, which fastens certain chains to the footsteps of our souls, so that if it dulls the fiery vigor and purity of nature, it establishes under a certain auction of vices, subject to the price of worldly indulgence.

114. There are also certain markets of our sins. Therefore, captivated by the various enticements of pleasures, we are either sold under sin or redeemed from sin. Christ redeems us, the adversary sells; the former is put up for auction to death, the latter redeems to salvation. Hence Matthew wisely placed two sparrows (Matt. X, 29), signifying both body and soul; because if the flesh also, in agreement with God's law, and casting off the law of sin, has passed into the nature of the soul, it is lifted up to heaven by spiritual wings. Therefore, we are taught that nature has given us the

ability to fly, but pleasure has taken it away, which burdens the soul with the weight of evils, and inclines it towards the nature of corporeal mass.

115. And rightly he has stated that no one of them falls without the will of God (Ibid.); for what falls, tends toward the earth; and what flies, is elevated to the summit of immortality. And lest anyone should doubt what Matthew said, Luke clearly resolves it, because the will of man is known to God; for not everyone who falls, falls by the will of God; but whoever is crushed by the weight of his own sins, will not be able to escape the notice of God; for even Job is tested by the will of God (Job I, 12). He gave you an adversary, but he proposed a reward. Do not excuse your weakness, who have an image, you have received a fortification; therefore, this also contributes to salvation, so that you may know that the devil cannot harm without God's permission; do not fear the power of the devil more than the offense to divinity.

116. Now it is not doubtful that the soul is compared to a sparrow, as you read: Our soul has been snatched away like a sparrow from the snare of the hunter (Psalm 123:7). And elsewhere: How can you say to my soul, 'Flee to the mountain like a sparrow' (Psalm 10:2)? We also read that man himself is compared to a sparrow; for it is written: But I am like a lonely sparrow on a rooftop (Psalm 101:8); that is, formed from two sparrows into one sparrow, that is, the subtlety of spiritual substance, formed by the connecting structure of both wings. Therefore, a good sparrow is one to whom nature provides the ability to fly. There is also a bad sparrow, who has lost the skill of flying due to the fault of earthly vice: such are those sparrows that are sold for a small price.

117. Some are sold for a penny, others for two pennies (Matthew 10:29). How cheap are sins! For death is cheap, but virtue is precious. Indeed, the enemy assigns captured slaves a lower price of estimation, but the Lord, as the beautiful works that He made in His own image and likeness, redeemed us at a great price, as the holy Apostle said: For you were bought with a great price (1 Corinthians 6:20). And well great, not with silver or gold, but with blood; for Christ died for us, who freed us with his precious blood, as even Saint Peter mentions in his Epistle, writing to us: For you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your vain conversation according to the tradition of your fathers: But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled (1 Peter 1:18-19). And it is rightfully precious, because it is the blood of an undefiled body, because it is the blood of the Son of God; who not only redeemed us from the curse of the law, but also from the eternal death of impiety. In summary, therefore, the meaning here is: if the Lord has looked upon lowly birds and unbelieving humans, either in the rising sun or in the earthly fertility; if He imparts the gift of His mercy to all, there is no doubt that contemplation will be a source of merit for the faithful in His eyes. He has skillfully woven together faith and virtue, and he has laid the foundations of virtue in faith itself; for just as faith is an incentive to courage, so is courage a support for faith.

(Vers. 9, 10.)

(Vers. 9, 10.) But whoever denies me before men, will be denied before the angels of God. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.

Certainly, we understand Christ to be the Son of man, who was begotten by the Holy Spirit in a virgin, and that his parent on earth is the Virgin alone. Therefore, is the Holy Spirit greater than

Christ, so that those who sin against Christ may obtain forgiveness, but those who sin against the Holy Spirit do not deserve to receive forgiveness? But where there is unity of power, there is no question of comparison, nor any controversy about greatness, since the Lord is great, and the end of his greatness cannot be reached. Therefore, if, as we believe, there is a unity of the Trinity, then there is certainly an indivisible greatness, just as there is an indivisible operation; as is demonstrated in the following. For when it is said elsewhere, 'The Father will give you what to say,' here it is added, 'For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that hour what you should speak' (Matthew 10:19). Therefore, if the operation is one, the insult is one.

120. But let us return to the subject at hand. Here it seems to some that we understand Christ as both the Son of Man and the Holy Spirit, while maintaining a distinction of persons and unity of substance. For Christ is both God and man, the same Spirit, as it is written: 'The Spirit of the Lord Christ before our face' (Lamentations 4:20); the same holy Spirit; for just as God the Father and God the Son are both Lord, so too the Father is holy, the Son is holy, and the Spirit is holy. Finally, the Cherubim and Seraphim cry out with tireless voices: Holy, holy, holy (Isa. VI, 3); in order that the Trinity may be denoted by the repeated third appellation. Therefore, if Christ is both, what is the difference, except that we may know that it is not permissible to deny the divinity of Christ to us? Finally, in persecution, what is sought, except that God Christ be denied? Therefore, whoever does not confess in Christ the God, and from God, and in God the Christ, does not deserve forgiveness. But whoever does not confess that Christ has come in the flesh is not from God; whoever denies the human nature denies the divine nature, because Christ is both God in human form and a human in God.

Most people, however, hold that blasphemy is not forgivable if someone says that Christ casts out demons by Beelzebul, not by divine power.

(Vers. 13, 14.)

(Verse 13, 14.) And someone in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' But he said to him, 'Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?'

122. This whole place is prepared for undergoing the passion of the Lord either with contempt of death, or with hope of reward, or with the declaration of intention to endure punishment, to which no forgiveness will ever be granted. And because greed often tempts virtue, there is also a commandment and example given for the abolishment of this, as the Lord says: Who made me a judge or a divider among you? He who descended for the sake of divine things wisely avoids earthly affairs; nor does he deign to be a judge of disputes or an arbiter of possessions, having the judgment of the living and the dead and the decision of deeds. Therefore, it is not what you seek, but from whom you request that must be considered; and do not think that you must object to those who are greater with an attentive mind in the presence of those who are lesser. Hence, it is not without reason that this brother is refuted, who desired to occupy the stewardship of celestial things with corruptible things; for among brothers, it is not a judge who should divide the inheritance, but rather piety should separate it; although the inheritance of immortality, not of money, should be sought by humans; for he gathers wealth in vain who does not know how to use it: just like that person who, when the granaries were bursting with new harvests, was preparing receptacles for himself to collect the overflowing fruits, being ignorant of how to use them (Verses 27 and following). For everything that belongs to the world remains in the world, and whatever is

gathered together by heirs passes away from us; for those things are not ours, which we cannot take away with us. Only virtue is the companion of the dead, only mercy follows us, which as a leading guide of heavenly dwelling acquires eternal tabernacles through the cheap usury of money for the deceased, as the Lord's commandments testify, saying to us: Make for yourselves friends with the unjust steward, who will receive you into his eternal tabernacles (Luke 16:9). Therefore, it is a good and wholesome precept, and suitable to animate even the greedy, that they should seek to exchange perishable earthly things for everlasting divine things. But since devotion is often weakened by a lack of faith, and people are held back from giving generously by considering their own livelihood, the Lord added, saying:

(Vers. 22, 23.)

(Vers. 22, 23) Do not be anxious about what you eat or what you wear. The soul is worth more than food, and the body is worth more than clothing.

123. For nothing is more worthy of belief than that all things can be bestowed by God upon those who believe, with regard to the making of faith, than that airy vital breath, the binding link of the soul, united to the dwelling of the body, perpetuates itself without our labor, and the beneficial use of sustenance does not fail unless the day of final death arrives. Therefore, since the soul is clothed in the garment of the body, and the body is animated by the energy of the soul, it is absurd for us to think that the supply of food will be lacking, who obtain the constant substance of living.

124. Consider the birds of the sky, he says (Matth. VI, 26). Truly a great and fitting example for us to follow in faith. For even though the birds of the sky do not engage in the cultivation of crops, nor do they have any yield from the abundance of harvests, yet the unfailing divine providence provides them with sustenance. It is indeed true that our greed may appear as the cause of our poverty. For while these birds enjoy an abundance of unlabored food, because they do not know how to claim exclusive dominion over the common fruits as their own nourishment, we have lost the common provisions by asserting our own exclusive claims. For there is nothing that is truly our own where there is nothing everlasting, and there is no certain abundance where there is uncertain outcome. For why should you value your riches, when God wanted you to share even your food with other creatures? The birds of the sky do not claim anything special for themselves, and therefore they do not know how to be in need of food; because they do not know how to envy others.

(Vers. 27, 28.)

(Verse 27, 28.) Consider how the lilies grow. And below: If God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!

125. Indeed, it is a bonus and moral discourse, which contributes to the faith of divine mercy, either literally, because it relates to the stature of our body (verse 25), or spiritually, because without God's favor, we can add nothing beyond the measure of our stature. The discourse of the Lord, using the comparison of flowers and grass, is especially persuasive. For what could be more moral for persuasion than to see that even irrational things are adorned by God's providence, so that they have no need for usefulness or ornamentation? Much more so, you should believe that a rational person, if he puts all his use in God and never desires to change his faith, will never be in

need; precisely because he presumes on divine favor.

126. However, let us consider these things more deeply; for it does not seem idle that a flower is given to a man, or certainly that it is preferred to men in Solomon, who deserved so much that he both built the temple for God in its appearance and represented the Church of Christ in its mystery; it does not seem foreign that we think the glory of the heavenly angels is expressed through the brightness of color, who are truly the flowers of this world; for the world is adorned by their brightness and they exhale the good fragrance of sanctification. Supported by the protection of which we can say: we are the sweet fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved (2 Cor. 2:15); who, hindered by no anxiety, exercised by no use of labor, are adorned with the grace of divine generosity in themselves and bestowed upon by the heavenly gift. From whence Solomon is rightly adorned with his own glory here, and elsewhere is shown covered (Matt. 6:29), because he clothed the weakness of his bodily nature, as it were, with the virtue of the mind and the glory of his works. But angels, whose nature is more divine and devoid of physical injury, rightly, though they are superior to even the greatest of men, are surpassed in consideration of our injuries. Therefore, since through resurrection humans will be like angels in heaven, we also, by the example of the glory of the angels, hope for an increase in heavenly glory which the Lord has also granted to them, until this mortal being is swallowed up by life. For it is necessary for this corruptible to put on incorruption, and for this mortal to put on immortality (1 Cor. XV, 53).

127. Most people also consider this comparison, based on the nature and use of the proposed seed, more suitable; because lilies do not require the cultivation of any annual use, nor does the labor of farmers return solicitous towards the generation of this flower, as it does towards the yield of other fruits. For in any droughts, all that which nourishes into a flower, by a certain generative power from itself and in itself, is always animated; so when you see the stems of the young leaves withered, the nature of the flower still flourishes; for its greenness is hidden, not lost. But when spring has been enticed by its charms, the attire of the blossoming plant, the hair of the flower, resumes its adornment of lilies. As for the place now, since we recall that it has been sufficiently discussed elsewhere, it is enough to have briefly touched upon it; lest we repeat ourselves.

It must also be noted that lilies are not generated in the roughness of mountains and in the untamedness of forests, but in the pleasantness of gardens. For there are certain gardens of various fruitful virtues, according to what is written: A closed garden, my sister, my bride, a closed garden, a sealed fountain (Song of Solomon 4:12); because where there is integrity, where there is chastity, where there is piety, where there is faithful secrecy of secrets, where there is the brightness of angels, there the violets of confessors, the lilies of virgins, the roses of martyrs are. And it is not incongruous for anyone to compare angels to lilies, since Christ himself has mentioned the lily, saying: 'I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valley' (Song of Songs 2:1). And it is fitting that Christ is compared to a lily; for where there is the blood of martyrs, there is Christ, who is a sublime, immaculate, harmless flower; in him, the roughness of thorns does not offend, but the surrounding grace shines forth. For the thorns are like the roses, because they are the torments of the martyrs. Unoffended divinity has no thorns, which it has not felt the torments.

129. Therefore, if lilies or angels are clothed with glory surpassing that of humans, we must not despair of God's mercy in us, to whom the Lord promises a similar appearance of angels through the grace of resurrection (Matt. 22:30). In this passage, it also seems to address that question,

which even the Apostle did not overlook; for the peoples of this world inquire how the dead rise again and with what kind of body they come (1 Cor. 15:35).

130. (Verse 31.) For when he says, Seek the kingdom of God: and all these things shall be added unto you; he shows that grace will not be lacking to the faithful, neither in the present nor in the future, if only those who desire divine things do not seek after earthly things. For it is inappropriate for men to be concerned with food, who are soldiers for the kingdom. The king knows how to provide for, nourish, and clothe his household; and therefore he said: Cast your care upon God, and he himself will nourish you (Psalm 54:23).

(Vers. 49, 50.) (Verse 49, 50.) I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and what do I desire, if not that it be already kindled? I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished? In the past, he wanted us to stay awake, expecting at all times the coming of the Lord and Savior; lest while someone relaxes and neglects, delaying their works from day to day, on the day of final judgment, or prevented by their own death, they lose the merit of their commendation. And indeed, this general form of commandment applies to all; but the following series of examples seems to be proposed to stewards, that is, to priests; so that they may know that they will have to bear a heavy punishment in the future if, focused on worldly delights, they neglect to govern the household of the Lord and the people entrusted to them. But because there is little progress and little merit, and the fear of punishment is not enough to turn us away from error, and because the prerogative of charity and love is greater, the Lord sharpens our desire to earn his grace, and inflames us with the desire to acquire divinity, saying: I have come to cast fire upon the earth. Not an all-consuming fire, but the author of goodwill, who improves the golden vessels of the Lord's house and consumes the hay and straw, and burns away all the worldly pleasures that have been gathered, and burns away the perishable work of the flesh. That divine fire, which burned within the bones of the prophets, as the holy Jeremiah says: For he has become like a burning fire, blazing within my bones (Jeremiah 2:9). For indeed the fire of the Lord, of which it is said: The fire shall burn before him (Psalm 96:3). And the Lord himself is the same fire, as he himself said: I am a burning fire, and I do not consume (Exodus 3). For the fire of the Lord is eternal light. By this fire those lamps are lit, of which it was said above: Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning. And therefore because the night is the day of this life, a lamp is necessary. Amazon and Cleophas also testify that this fire was sent by the Lord, saying: Was not our heart burning within us as he opened to us the Scriptures? (Luke 24:32) Clearly, therefore, they have taught what the operation of this fire is, which illuminates the secrets of the heart. Perhaps, for this reason, the Lord is coming in fire, so that at the time of the resurrection he may consume all vices, fulfill the desires of each person in his sight, and ignite the light of merits and mysteries. So great, therefore, is the Lord's desire to inspire devotion in us, to perfect us, and to demonstrate His passion for us, that even though He had nothing in Himself to grieve over, He was nonetheless afflicted by our sorrows and displayed sorrow at the time of His death, which He did not take on out of fear of His own death, but out of the delay of our redemption, as it is written: 'How long will I be anguished until it is accomplished?' Certainly, whoever is striving for perfection, is secure in perfection. And elsewhere he says: My soul is sorrowful, even unto death (Matth. XXVI, 38). Not because of death, but unto death the Lord is sorrowful; because the condition of bodily feelings affects him, not the fear of death. For he who took on a body, had to undergo all things that are of the body; to hunger, to thirst, to be angry, to be saddened: but divinity does not

know how to be changed by these feelings. At the same time it shows that in the struggle of suffering, the death of the body is the release from anxiety, not an accumulation of pain.

(Vers. 51-53.)

(Verse 51-53). Do you think that I have come to bring peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division. For from now on, there will be five divided in one household, three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

134. Although in nearly all Evangelical places the spiritual intellect operates; nevertheless, for the present time, the series of senses must be moderated so as not to offend anyone with the harshness of naked exposition, especially since the sacred religion invites even the exiles of faith to reverence with moral disciplines and gentle examples of piety, kindly dissolving the hard superstitions with the meekness of its preceding discipline of faith, and compelling minds that are subject to errors to believe in faith, which it could soothe with piety. For indeed, since the lofty things of faith are not comprehended by weak minds, they are esteemed through the precepts, and the venerable things are considered; so that the just may testify about the just, and the holy about the holy, by the authority of their own goods.

135. Therefore, we will think now that the Lord, who embraced both reverence for divinity and the grace of piety, said: You shall love the Lord your God... and you shall love your neighbor (Luke 10:27); has it been changed so that we believe it commands the abolition of the names of relationships, the collision of feelings of piety, and the dissension of beloved family members? And how is He our peace who made both one (Ephesians 2:14)? How can he say, 'My peace I give to you, my peace I leave with you' (John 14:27), if he comes to separate parents from children, and children from parents, to destroy the bond of family? How cursed is the one who does not honor their father (Deuteronomy 27:16), the one who abandons their religious devotion?

136. But if we consider that the first cause of religion is piety, we must also evaluate this question in the same way; for it is necessary to prioritize divine matters over human matters. For if duty must be shown to parents, how much more to the author of parents, to whom you also owe gratitude for your parents! Or if they do not acknowledge a parent at all, how can you acknowledge one? Therefore, it does not say that debts must be renounced, but that God must be preferred above all. Finally, you have in another book: Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me (Matt. X, 37). You are not forbidden to love your parents, but you are instructed to prefer them to God; for they are the pledges of the Lord's blessings: and no one should love the gift he has received more than God from whom the gift was received. Therefore, even according to the literal meaning, the religious explanation is not lacking for those who understand it piously; however, there is a deeper meaning which we should consider because He added:

(Ibid.) There will be five divided into one group in the house, three into two, and two into three.

137. For who are the five, when it appears that there is subjection of six persons, of father and son, mother and daughter, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law? Although the same mother that can be called mother-in-law, since she is the mother of the son, is the mother-in-law of his wife; so that according to the letter of the number, the reason may not be absurd, and it may clearly be shown

that the bond of faith is not connected to nature, in which they are obligated by the duty of piety, yet they are free by faith.

138. It does not seem inappropriate either if we give the same meaning through a mystical interpretation. One house, one man. For each house is either of God or of the devil. Therefore, a spiritual house is a spiritual man, as we have in the Epistle of Peter: 'And you are being built up as living stones, a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood' (I Peter 2:5). In this house, two are divided into three, and three into two. We often read of two, the soul and the body (Matthew 18:19). If two come together on earth, both accomplish one. And elsewhere: I punish my body and subject it to servitude (I Cor. IX, 27). One thing is what serves, another is what it is subjected to.

139. If we have known two, we may know three also: which is easy to understand from those two. For there are three souls in the body: one rational, another concupiscible, a third irascible, that is, the reasoning, desiring, and angry. Therefore, not two into two: but two into three, and three into two are divided; for by the coming of Christ, man who was irrational became rational. Before, we were like beasts that do not have reason, we were carnal, we were earthly according to that saying: You are dust, and to dust you shall return (Gen. III, 19). The Son of God came, he sent his Spirit into our hearts; we have become spiritual children.

140. We can say that in this house there are five others, that is, smell, touch, taste, sight, hearing. Therefore, if we separate sight and hearing from the bodily pleasures that are generated by taste, touch, and smell, according to what we hear or read, we divide two into three, because the mind's disposition to vices is not captured by allurements, but is led away from the pleasures by the emulation of virtue. And so that there is not one consent of all, which would precipitate into error, but desires of the heart and obligations of virtue separate themselves by dividing. But if we receive five bodily senses, the defects of the body and sins are already separate. And perhaps there are five whom that wealthy and luxurious brother in the Gospel calls his brothers (Luke 16:28), who is described as tormented in hell, to whom he begs to be sent to know in this world the pleasures that must be renounced, so that they can have rest after the age, through the pursuit of virtue.

141. They may also be understood as the flesh and soul, separated from the odor, touch, and taste of indulgence, while residing in one house, dividing themselves against opposing vices, subjecting the flesh and soul to the Law of God, and removing them from the law of sin. Although their disagreement, due to the transgression of the first man, has converted into their nature so that they would not in any way agree with equal efforts towards virtue, yet through the cross of the Lord and Savior, they agreed in harmony after the enmities, as well as the law of commandments, were set aside. After Christ, our peace, descended from heaven, He made both one and broke down the middle wall of the barrier, abolishing enmities in His flesh by the law of commandments in doctrines, so that He might create peace, making both into one new man and reconciling both in one body to God (Ephesians 2:14-16). Who is each, if not one inside, the other outside? One looks at the strength of the soul, the other refers to the sensation of the body; although, by the agreement of separable affections, they harmonize, since the flesh is subject to the better, it obeys salutary commands: not because the soul descends into matter by the subtlety of its nature, but because, having cast aside pleasures, cleansed of every stain of vices, it walks the celestial path of obedience with an affection: no longer struggling against the law of the mind as before, but liberated by the law of the mind and the spirit of life from the law of sin; so that the flesh becomes

an appendix to the soul, no longer the temptress of vices, but a certain rival and as though attendant to virtue.

142. And again, when the soul of the body does not yield to enticements, nor is overcome by the delight of carnal pleasures, but rather the pure and clean mind stripped of the service of this world draws the senses of the body into their own illicit urges and attract pleasures, so that it may feast on the fruits of virtue by the use of hearing and reading, and satisfy its hunger for spiritual nourishment with the unknown food of inner sap. For truly, prayer is the food of the mind, and a splendid nourishment of sweetness, which does not burden the limbs, nor turns itself into the shameful parts of nature, but rather transforms itself into the temple of God, and starts to be the lodging of virtues, the sanctuary of vices. Indeed, it is then that it does so when the flesh, having returned to its nature, recognizes the nourishing power and, with the audacity of contempt put aside, joins with the moderate soul's will: just as it was when it undertook to inhabit the secret places of the paradise before it became infected with the venom of the deadly serpent, and knew the sacrilegious hunger and passed by the memory of divine precepts adhering to the senses of the soul, in its eagerness for gluttony.

143. Hence it is evident that sin originated, as it were, from the flesh and the soul, while the nature of the body is being tested, the sickly soul suffers. If the soul restrained the desire of the body, the origin of sin would have been extinguished at its very birth. But as if infused into the body by a masculine movement, the soul, also corrupted by its own vigor, gave birth to heavy works of others. For, indeed, the more violent and stronger sex is carried by a certain powerful impulse, like a masculine affection: she desires to maintain a softer rather than a more vehement reasoning. From these, therefore, arose the movements of various desires. But when the soul returns to itself, meeting its deformed offspring with shame, it disowns degenerate heirs, renouncing worldly passions, hating sin. The flesh, also weary from the burden of heavy labor and the shameful troubles of usury, where it grieves to be pierced by its own desires like thorns of the world, hastens to shed its old self; so that it may take itself away, lest it leave behind a heedless parent, a succession destined to perish. Again, attracting the irrational movements of desires, as if adorned with the beauty of a certain form, enticed by the allurements of pleasure, he has enrolled it for himself as if for the use of society: thus, like a certain pleasure of the body and soul, it joins the corrupt motion of desire.

Therefore, as long as it remained in one house, with vices conspiring, there seemed to be no division in the indivisible and inseparable agreement. But when Christ sent fire to burn the sins of the flesh, or the sword that signifies the drawn blade of power, by which the secrets of the spirit and the marrow are penetrated, into the world; then the flesh and the soul, renewed by the mysteries of regeneration, begin to be what they were not: and thus, it separates the fellowship of the old vice, although beloved before, and eliminates the bond of prodigal posterity. So that parents are divided from their children, when intemperate motion is expelled by temperance of the body, and the soul withdraws from the partnership of guilt, and there is no place left for external and foreign pleasure.

146. Moreover, children are divided among their parents, while the faults of old age are avoided by the renewed judgment of the human being, and the pleasure of youth, like a serious house, flees from discipline. It is not incongruous also if we think that they divide themselves for the purpose of

becoming better than their parents; especially when he said in the following passage: 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father or mother, or children, and brothers, and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple' (Luke 14:26). And therefore, according to the simple form of understanding, a son who follows Christ is preferred to pagan parents; for religion surpasses the duties of piety.

147. Moreover, according to a deeper interpretation, because sin is born from the flesh and operates as it were in the womb of the flesh, as the Apostle says: For what I do, I do not understand; for I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate (Rom. VII, 20). When the Lord's blood, poured out for the life of this world, has eradicated vices, it is converted into grace from offense: For sin abounded, that grace might much more abound (Rom. V, 20); and it happens that repentance, arising from sin, impels one to conversion of purpose and desire for spiritual grace. So what was for me unto death, this will be unto salvation. Therefore, sin washed by the flowing fountain is separated from the flesh from which it was generated: and while everyone desires to redeem their sin, from the sequence of guilt comes the earnest pursuit of discipline.

148. The desire for evil things is also transformed into a fervent longing for God's word and is poured into the appetite for divine charity and love, and in the same nature, various disciplines are formed, and the desire for the heavenly mysteries of the body and soul acquires a much better pleasure than before. For the mind is nourished by knowledge of things, and when the promise of future things is discovered, the soul despises its old works. For the natural man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him (I Cor. II, 14); but the spiritual person judges all things, and he himself is not subject to anyone's judgment.

(Vers. 58, 59.)

(Verse 58, 59) While you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make an effort on the way to be freed from him; lest he condemn you before the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. I tell you, you will not get out of there until you have paid the very last penny.

Matthew also included this (Matt. 5:25): but he specifically, this generally: for he thought that the former statement was about reconciling the peace of discordant brothers: the latter is about repentance and every amendment of sin. Therefore, let us discuss who the adversary is, who the magistrate is, who the judge is, or who the tax collector is, and who we may consider to be the debtor that, if he does not pay, should be sent to prison.

150. And according to Matthew, there is indeed an adversary with whom it seems you have least agreed in this life, who accuses you before the judge of future life and death, holding you guilty of enduring enmity towards the living and the dead. But according to Luke, our adversary is primarily he who sows the enticements of sin, so that he may have participants in punishment whom he had as companions in error; and therefore he seeks partners in guilt in order to expose them to punishment. The apostle Peter warns us, saying: Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

151. Our adversary, according to Matthew, is the use of all virtue, and the speech of apostles and prophets, which binds us to more rigorous commandments and more difficult lessons of life: it is fitting for us to agree with him, so that we may imitate him in deeds; lest we be found to have

turned away from him due to any stubbornness on our part. However, according to Luke, no one is more of an adversary to us than our own lapses, which accuse us with evidence of our own lives: not that he seeks to be a judge of any accusation, but because he accuses us of our own actions in the presence of the knower of all, while we are found to be at odds with the use of virtue and the apostolic commandments.

Therefore, every use of vice is an adversary to us, lust is an adversary to us, greed is an adversary, every dishonesty is an adversary, every unjust thought is an adversary: in short, a guilty conscience is our adversary, which afflicts us here and will accuse and expose us in the future, as the Apostle testifies, saying: Their conscience bearing witness to them, and their thoughts accusing or even defending one another (Rom. II, 15). But if conscience exposes each person, how much more is our work before God evident, which will be reviewed in our body at the last moment and the secret script of our thoughts will be read in our hearts! Let us therefore make an effort, so that while we are in the course of this life, we may be liberated from evil action as from a malicious adversary; lest while we go with the adversary to the magistrate, our error condemns us on the way.

Therefore, Matthew also says: Be in agreement with your opponent while you are on the way with him (Matt. 5:25). But the Greek word εὐνοῶν means benevolens, that is, well-disposed; for if, while we are in this life, we free ourselves from the bonds of the devil, he will not be condemned because of us, and we will be alien to his bonds. Hence the psalm is inscribed as seventy-fifth for the Assyrian. Therefore, you give good counsel to your opponent, and for that Assyrian, that is, vain, you do well if, freed from his snares, you offer this goodwill; so that both the punishment of your fall and death may be evaded. But if you adhere to his bonds, he will hand you over to the magistrate as a guilty person, the same accuser and betrayer.

154. Who is the magistrate, except the one in whose hands all power resides, and who claims for himself the lofty dignity of full and perfect authority? With confidence in his good works and without fear of an adversary, the holy Prophet hastens to say: My soul thirsts for the living God: when shall I come and appear before the face of God (Psalm 41:3)? For this magistrate will deliver the accused to the judge, that is, to the one to whom he has granted power over the living and the dead, a power bestowed by nature, not by grace. For he did not receive what he did not have, but rather, he assumed what he had from the substance of the Father when he was generated. He shows you this office and judge, who showed the accuser, and indicates when it should be revealed: 'On the day,' he says, 'when God will judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel through Jesus Christ our Lord' (Rom. 2:16). Therefore, Jesus Christ is the judge, through whom hidden things are convicted, and the punishment for wicked deeds is commanded.

155. Do you want to know Christ as a judge who hands over to the exactor and throws into prison? Ask him yourself, or rather read in the Gospel where he says: Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness (Matthew 22:13). He also showed his exactors in another place where he says: So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:49-50).

156. Now it remains for us to understand what the figure of a quadrant means. And it seems that the usual expression of the matter is called spiritual understanding. For just as those who pay

money repay a debt and do not remove the name of the interest until the entire amount of the debt is paid in any form of payment whatsoever: so by the compensation of charity and other actions, or by any satisfaction, the punishment of sin is dissolved.

157. It is not idle either, because he did not put in two copper coins (as elsewhere, Luke 21:2), not a penny (Matthew 10:29), not a denarius (Matthew 20:2), but a quarter in this place; for the exchange of a quarter is like a kind of compensation, since something different is given and something different is paid: so here, either the injury is redeemed by the price of love, or the punishment is mitigated by the estimation of the injury.

Moreover, we remember that a quadrant used to be given in baths, by the offering of which everyone there receives the opportunity to bathe, so here they receive the opportunity to wash away their sins; because the sin of each individual is washed away with the same kind of condition as mentioned above; as long as the guilty one is punished with penalties, in order to make amends for the committed punishment of error.

159. (Chapter XIII - Verse 1) But of those Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, it seems that a certain figure touches them, who, compelled by the devil, do not purely offer sacrifice: their prayer is unto sin, as it is written of Judas (Psalm 108:7), the traitor, who, being placed among the sacrifices, was thinking of betraying the blood of the Lord.

(Vers. 6.)

He planted a fig tree in his vineyard.

160. What does it mean that in his Gospel the Lord frequently introduces the parable of the fig tree (Matthew 21:19 and Mark 11:13)? For elsewhere it is stated that by the command of the Lord, all the greenness of this leafy tree withered: from which you understand the Creator of all things, who can command nature to either wither suddenly or flourish. In another place, he mentions that the coming of summer is usually inferred from the tenderness of this tree and its leaves (Matthew 24:32), signifying both the empty glory that the Jewish people claimed, like a flower falling at the coming of the Lord, because it was unfruitful in works: and the day of judgment, like the coming of summer, in which the mature fruits of all the earth are gathered, to be measured from the fullness of the Church, into which the Jews also will believe. So let us seek out some deeper meaning in this mystery. There is a fig tree in the vineyard: and the vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth, which He gave to be plundered by the nations. Therefore, He who made His vineyard a prey commanded that the fig tree also be cut down. The comparison of this tree is suitable for the synagogue; for just as this tree, overflowing with abundant leaves, disappoints the hope of its owner with the expectation of fruit: so also in the synagogue, while its teachers boast of unproductive works and wordy excess, the empty shadow of the Law flourishes, and the hopes of false reward mock the desires of the believing people.

162. There is also in the nature of a tree, which you will believe to have been expressed in comparison with the appearance of a synagogue; for if you inquire diligently, you will find the distinguished custom of this nature separated from the use of other trees. For other trees bear flowers before fruit, and they indicate the future fruit with the flower; this tree alone bears fruit instead of flowers from the beginning: in other trees the flower falls, and the fruit is born; in this tree the fruit falls so that the fruit may succeed. Therefore, those empty husks of fruits emerge in place

of flowers: thus, early ripening by a certain use of birth, they cannot preserve the benefit of nature because they are ignorant of the order of nature. For that which is accustomed to push itself out from the bark in the middle, the smallest fruits of this kind burst forth. We read about them in the Song of Songs: The fig tree brings forth its green figs (Cant. 2:13). And so, while the rest of the white shoots whiten in early spring, the fig tree alone does not know how to grow gray with its own flower; perhaps because no fruit is more mature in them. As other shoots succeed, these degenerate shoots are rejected and wither with their weak roots, while the renewed shoots with more beneficial sap flourish. However, some very rare shoots remain and do not wither, for they have found favor in this environment. They emerge like a small key breaking through the middle of two branches, taking refuge in the nurturing embrace of nature, growing with the nourishment of a richer sap. Stimulated by a more gentle breeze and the longer days of maturity, when they have shed the wild nature of their previous sap, they stand out in appearance and are preferred for their maturity.

163. Now consider the customs and spirits of the Jews, who, like the first fruits of a barren synagogue, have fallen by the resemblance of a crumbling log, so that lasting fruits might succeed beyond the age of our race. For indeed, the first people of the synagogue, weak as the root of withered works, could not draw in the abundance of natural wisdom. And therefore, like useless fruit, it fell away, so that a new people of the Church might emerge from the same keys of the fruitful tree, enriched by the ancient religion. Therefore, he who existed ceased to be, so that he who did not exist could begin to exist. However, those from the first Israel whom the more powerful branch of nature had brought forth, shaded by the Law and the Cross, colored by the double juice of both, like the example of a growing fruit, excelled in the beauty of their fruits compared to the others, to whom it is said: You shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). Nor is it irrelevant that Adam and Eve, those first parents of our race and of our error, who covered themselves with the leaves of this tree (Gen. III, 7), deserved to be exiled from paradise when, aware of their transgression, they avoided the presence of the Lord walking in paradise, in order to signify what would happen in the last times when the Jewish people, upon the coming of the Lord and Savior who called them, recognizing that they had been stripped of virtues through the temptations of the devil and fearing the unhidden stains of their conscience, would go astray from the true religion, confused by their transgressions, and would depart from the Lord, concealed by the flattery of their words and the shameful deeds they committed.

Therefore, those who did not pick fig leaves, but apples, were eliminated from the kingdom of God; for they were in a living soul. The second Adam came, and he was no longer seeking leaves, but fruits; for he was in a life-giving spirit. However, in the spirit, the fruit of virtue is acquired, and the Lord is worshipped (I Cor. XV, 45). But the Lord was seeking not because he did not know that the fig tree lacked fruit, but to show in a figure that the Synagogue ought to have fruit already. Finally, from the following, it teaches that it did not come before its time, which it came for three years; for you have it thus:

(Vers. 7.)

(Verse 7) Look, it has been three years since I came seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I have found none. Cut it down, why should it even use up the ground?

166. He came to Abraham, he came to Moses, he came to Mary, that is, he came in the flesh, he came under the Law, he came in a body. We recognize his coming through his blessings. In one place there is purification, in another sanctification, in another justification: circumcision purified, the Law sanctified, grace justified. He is one in all, and in him are all things. For no one can be cleansed unless they fear the Lord: no one deserves to receive the Law unless they are purified from guilt: no one comes to grace unless they know the Law. Therefore, the Jewish people could not be purified because they had circumcision not of the heart but of the body, nor could they be sanctified because they were ignorant of the power of the Law and followed physical rather than spiritual things (but the Law is spiritual), nor could they be justified because they did not repent of their sins and therefore did not know grace.

167. Therefore, deservedly, no fruit was found in the Synagogue; and for this reason, it is ordered to be cut down. But the good cultivator, and perhaps he in whom the foundation of the Church lies, foreseeing that another should be sent to the Gentiles, but himself to those who are from circumcision, intervenes religiously so that he is not cut down, relying on his own calling and even asserting that the people of the Jews can be saved through the Church. And therefore he says:

(Vers. 8.)

(Verse 8.) Forgive her and this year, until I dig around it, and I will put a basket of manure.

How quickly did he recognize that the hardness and pride of the Jews were the causes of their barrenness! Therefore, he knows how to cultivate, who knows how to detect vices. He promises that their hard hearts are to be dug up by apostolic hoes; so that the long neglect may turn the hidden mind inside out with sharp speech, and with the heart cut open, it may awaken the sense already thriving with airy breath; lest the heap of worldly wisdom bury and hide the root of wisdom. He also says that the dung basket is to be thrown. Truly great is the power of dung, which is so great that it makes the infertile fertile, the dry green, and the barren fruitful. Job sat in it while he was being tested, and he could not be defeated (Job 2:8). And Paul considers it as dung, in order to gain Christ (Philippians 3:8). Finally, when Job had lost many things before, after he sat in dung, the devil had nothing more to take from him. Therefore, the good earth that is dug is a good dung that is spread. Finally, the Lord raises up the needy from the earth, and lifts up the poor from the dung. (Psalm 113:7).

Therefore, through the exercise of spiritual understanding and the affection of humility, that good worshipper of Christ considers even the Jews to be fruitful in the Gospel. For he remembers that the Lord spoke through Haggai, saying, 'On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day the foundation of the temple of the Lord Almighty was laid, I will bless the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree, and they will not fail to bear fruit' (Haggai 2:20). By this, it is revealed that at the very end of the year, that is, at the decline of an aging age, the holy temple of God, which is the Church, is to be built, so that by the sanctification of baptism, the Jews and the nations of the people may be able to have the fruit of their merits.

Therefore, by the nature of the tree, the image of the Synagogue is indicated, fruitful in secondary benefits; for we are from the seed of the fathers. And rightly the Jews are compared to fat slipping away because, with their hearts hardened and their necks stiff, they cannot reach the permanence of themselves. But if they die and seem to fall from this world, so that they may be reborn in the

inner person through the grace of baptism, they will certainly be fruitful. However, the perfidy of stubborn people has rendered the Synagogue useless; and therefore it is commanded to be cut down as if it were barren.

I think that what is said about the Jews should be avoided by everyone, especially by us, so that we do not occupy a fruitful place in the Church through empty merits. We should be like blessed apple trees and bear internal fruits, such as the fruits of modesty, the fruits of unity, the fruits of mutual charity and love, all enclosed in the womb of the Church as one. We should not let any harmful breeze, hailstorm, heat of desire, or downpour of passions harm us.

172. However, some consider that this fig tree is not a symbol of the Synagogue, but rather a representation of evil and wickedness. The only difference is that they choose a specific kind for the genus. They say that they take caution in this matter because the Lord said to the fig tree, 'Let no fruit grow on you ever again' (Matthew 21:19), even though we know that many Jews believed, and will continue to believe. But those who believe are no longer the fruit of the Synagogue, but of the Church. And the one who is born again in the Church is not born of the Synagogue. Just as there are those who have gone out from among us, but were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us (1 John 2:19). So we say about those who believe from among the Jews, that if they were of the Synagogue, they would remain in the Synagogue. But they have gone out from the Synagogue so that it may be believed that they were not of the Synagogue. Then, in order to counteract the malice, someone intervened and said that it should be cultivated to bring forth fruit; for this reason the Lord came, to destroy the seeds of wickedness (1 John 3:5).

(Vers. 10, 11.)

(Verse 10, 11.) Now he was teaching in their synagogue on the sabbaths. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years and was bent over.

How quickly he indicated what he was saying about the Synagogue! He shows that he came to the same tree in which he was teaching. Finally, he assumes the form of the weak woman as a symbol of the Church, who, having fulfilled the measure of the Law and the resurrection, is raised to everlasting peace and cannot feel the inclination of our weakness. This woman could not have been healed in any other way, except that she fulfilled the Law and received grace: the Law in precepts, grace in baptism, through which we rise to Christ, who has died to the world. For in ten words, there is the perfection of the Law; in the number eight, there is the fullness of the resurrection. Therefore, the observance of the Sabbath is a sign of the future, in which each person, having fulfilled the Law and received grace through the mercy of Christ, will be freed from the troubles of bodily frailty. And so, in preparation for this, sanctification was established as a sign beforehand through Moses (Exodus 19:10), in order to be a practice of future sanctification and spiritual observance by abstaining from secular works. Finally, God rested from the works of the world (Genesis 2:2), but not from the works which are eternal and constant; as the Son says: 'My Father is working until now, and I am working' (John 5:17), so that our secular works, not our religious ones, would cease in resemblance to God.

174. (Verse 14.) But the ruler of the synagogue, not understanding this, was prohibiting anyone from being healed on the Sabbath, even though the Sabbath is a foreshadowing of future festivities. Therefore, the Sabbath is a holiday not for good works, but for evil works; and it is

prescribed that we observe no Sabbath carrying the burden of sins, nor the Sabbaths of fasting and good works after death. Hence, the Lord seems to respond spiritually when he says:

(Vers. 15.)

(Verse 15.) Hypocrites, each one of you does not untie his ox or donkey on the Sabbath and lead it to drink?

Why did not another animal indicate, except to show, that even though the leaders of the Synagogue opposed it, it would still come to pass that the Jewish and Gentile people would abandon the thirst of the body and the heat of this world, due to the abundance of the Lord's fountain? For the ox knows its owner, and the donkey the manger of its Lord (Isaiah 1:3). Therefore, that people who before were sustained by the cheap hay that withers before it is plucked, received the bread that descended from heaven. And therefore, because of the calling of two peoples, he says that the Church will be saved, at the time when the Law is fulfilled, and in the age of the Lord's resurrection, he received the time of his redemption. How merciful, then, is the Lord, how pious in both, when he either has mercy or avenges! In the Synagogue, he orders the cutting down of a tree as a symbol, in the Church, he saves a woman. What a sweet parable! And yet, the solution is easy. He compares a bond to a bond, so that by the pretense of the Jews, their own actions may be refuted. For when they themselves release the chains from animals on the Sabbath, they criticize the Lord, who freed mankind from the chains of sin.

(Vers. 18, 19.)

(Verse 18, 19.) To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? What shall I liken it to? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when a man took and sowed in his garden, grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches.

176. The present reading teaches us that we should consider the nature of comparisons, not just the appearance. So let us see why the sublime kingdom of heaven is compared to a grain of mustard seed: for I remember reading elsewhere about the grain of mustard seed, where it is compared to faith, with the Lord saying: If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain: Move from here to there, and it will move (Matthew XVII, 19 and 21). And this is not a minor, but a great faith, which can command a mountain to move and be thrown into the sea; for the Lord does not demand a mediocre faith from the apostles, who know that they must strive against the height of spiritual wickedness. Do you want to know that great faith is required? Read in the Apostle: And if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains (I Cor. XIII, 2).

177. Therefore, if the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, and faith is like a mustard seed: then faith is certainly the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdom of heaven is faith. So, whoever has faith, has the kingdom of heaven. And the kingdom of God is within us, and faith is within us; for we read: The kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21). And elsewhere: Have faith in yourselves (Matthew 16:19). Finally, Saint Peter, who had full faith, received the keys of the kingdom of heaven to unlock it for others.

Now let us consider the nature of mustard, and the power of comparison. The mustard seed itself is certainly a cheap and simple thing: if it is ground, it releases its strength. Similarly, faith at first seems simple, but if it is tested by adversity, it reveals the grace of its virtue; so that it also fills

others who either hear or read with the fragrance of itself. The mustard seed of our martyrs is Felix, Nabor, and Victor: they had the fragrance of faith, but it was hidden. Persecution came, they laid down their weapons, bowed their necks, and with a broken sword spread the grace of their martyrdom throughout the whole world, so that it may rightly be said: Their sound has gone out into all the earth (Psalm 19:4).

179. But faith is worn in one way, pressured in another, and sown in another. The Lord Himself is the grain of mustard seed. He was blameless from injury, but as the grain of mustard seed which the people had not crushed, he did not know. He preferred to be worn, so that we may say: "For we are the good odor of Christ unto God" (II Cor. II, 15). He preferred to be pressured; hence Peter said: "The crowds press you" (Luke VIII, 45). He preferred to be sown, like the grain which a man took in his hand and sowed in his garden; for in the garden Christ was both captured and buried: in the garden He grew, where He also rose, and He became a tree, as it is written: "As a tree of evil among the trees of the forest: so is my brother among the sons" (Song of Songs II, 3). So you also sow Christ in your garden. The garden is certainly a place full of various flowers and fruits, in which the grace of your work blossoms and the diverse scent of various virtues exhales. Therefore, let Christ be there where there is fruit. Sow the Lord Jesus. It is a seed when it is grasped, it is a tree when it rises again, a tree overshadowing the world. It is a seed when it is buried in the earth, it is a tree when it is elevated to heaven.

181. Press also with Christ, and sow faith. Faith is pressed when we believe in the crucified Christ. Paul pressed faith when he said: And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (I Cor. II, 1 and 2). And because he taught to press faith, he also taught to lift, saying: Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more (II Cor. V, 16). However, we sow faith when we believe in the Lord's passion from the Gospel and the apostolic and prophetic readings. Therefore, we sow faith when we work it as if on soft and tilled ground of the Lord's flesh, so that faith, like vapor and pressure from the sacred body, may scatter itself. For whoever believes that the Son of God became man believes that he died for us, believes that he rose again for us, believes that he ascended for us. Therefore, I sow faith when I bury him/her. Do you want to know the grain of Christ, and the sown Christ? Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit (John 12:24). Therefore, we have not erred, for we have said what He Himself has said. And indeed, He is both the grain of wheat, for He confirms the heart of man, and the grain of mustard seed, for He ignites the heart of man. And although both apply to everything, the grain of wheat seems to refer to His resurrection: for He is the bread of God that came down from heaven (John 6:33); because the Word of God, and the example of resurrection, nourishes the minds, sharpens hope, and strengthens the emotions. And the grain of mustard seed, because it speaks of the Lord's passion, is bitter for weeping, and sharp for stirring emotions. Therefore, when we hear and read that the Lord fasted (Matt. 4:2), that the Lord was tired (John 4:7), that the Lord wept (John 11:35), that the Lord was beaten, and that He Himself said at the time of His passion: Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation (Matt. 26:41); as if with the juice of a more bitter discourse, we temper the sweeter delights of bodily pleasures. Therefore, whoever sows the seed of mustard, sows the kingdom of heaven.

183. Do not despise this mustard seed: it is indeed the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown, it is larger than all the vegetables (Matt. XIII, 32) . If the mustard seed is Christ, how is Christ either the smallest or does he grow? Truly not by nature, but by species he grows again. Do you want to know the smallest? We have seen him, and he had neither species nor beauty (Isaiah XIII, 2) . Learn the largest: Beautiful in form among the sons of men (Psalm XLIV, 3) . For indeed, he who did not have appearance or beauty, became more excellent than the angels, beyond all the glory of the prophets, whom weak Israel had consumed like vegetables; for the bread by which hearts are strengthened, he had rejected one, he had not received the other.

184. Christ is the seed, because he is the seed of Abraham: for to Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as if speaking of many, but as of one, 'And to your seed,' which is Christ (Galatians 3:16). Christ is not only the seed, but also the smallest of all seeds; for he did not come in power, nor in riches, nor in the wisdom of this world. But suddenly, like a tree, he poured forth the height of his power, so that we may say, 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste' (Song of Solomon 2:3). And frequently together, as I think, it seemed both the tree and the grain. The grain is when it is said: Is not this the son of Joseph the carpenter (Matt. XIII, 55)? But amidst these words, it suddenly grew, with the Jews testifying, because they could not understand the wisdom of this man, like the branches of a wide tree, saying: Where did he get this wisdom (Ibid., 56).

185. Therefore, the grain is a figure, the tree is wisdom: on the branches of which the night heron dwells in its dwelling, the solitary sparrow in its building (Psalms 101:7-8), he is snatched into paradise, to be caught up into the air and the clouds, and now he rests in a safe abode (2 Corinthians 12:4 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16). Even the powers and angels of heaven rest, and all those who have deserved to fly away in their spiritual deeds. St. John also rests, as he reclined on the chest of Jesus; indeed, he himself, like a branch, extends with the sap of the tree. Ramus is Peter, ramus is Paul, forgetting the things that come after and desiring those that come before.

186. In the bosom of these recesses, and in certain retreats of discussion, which we were, perchance, far from, we, namely, gathered out of tribes, whom, standing aloof long time the spirituality of iniquity hath urged, spread our wings, taking hold of the oars of virtues, as if flying: that the shadow of the saints may protect us from the heat of this world, flourishing under the security of a determined position: because our soul, bent down with strong temptations before, like that woman, when caught as a bird in the snare of the hunters, hath escaped upon the branches of the Lord, and hath passed to the mountains. Therefore, now that we are freed by the faith of Christ from vain and empty observances, and from the levity of flying about in unnecessary matters, we intend to devote ourselves to good works and are freed from the bonds of the Sabbath. And in these feasts, we have freedom while excluding excess. We do not want to be slaves to our desires while being free from the Law, for the Law bound itself in order to absolve us from our desires. Grace, which has taken away lesser servitude, has commanded much greater things. All things are lawful for us, but not all things are expedient. (1 Cor. X, 22); For it is grave to use power, lest you fall under power. Cease to be under the Law, so that you may be above the Law by virtue.

(Vers. 21.)

(Verse 21.) To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened.

187. This comparison about the questions to be asked only adds ambiguity, so that it has various opinions of many people. Therefore, we appropriately compared Christ to a grain of wheat, because the spiritual leaven was hidden in us, and many people think that the leaven elevates Christ, who received power. And just as leaven surpasses its own species in quality: Christ also surpassed the fathers, equal in body but incomparable in divinity. Therefore, may the holy Church, which is symbolized by the type of this evangelical woman, in whose flour we are, hide the Lord Jesus in the innermost part of our mind, until the warmth of heavenly wisdom covers the secret depths of our souls.

188. And because we read in Matthew that the leaven is hidden in three measures (Matt. 16:33), it seemed fitting that we should believe the Son of God to be hidden in the Law, revealed in the Prophets, and fulfilled in the preaching of the Gospel; so that he may acquire for us a perfect faith from all sources, and, formed in us by the comparison of the Scriptures, who are his body, all things and in all things may be fulfilled. For he himself was the Word of God and the mystery that was hidden from ages and generations: than which nothing can more clearly testify to the expression of his eternity (Col. 1:26). For indeed he was hidden from the wicked, but revealed among the holy, predestined before the ages, kept for glory. And this is the glory, brothers, that we may investigate the mystery hidden from the ages in God. Which is in God, certainly and from God; for God cannot possess a nature that is foreign.

Nec sum dubius animi, quod aliqui de hoc mundo dictum putent, donec fermentetur in Lege, Prophetis, Evangelio; ut Dominum omnis lingua fateatur. Itaque discutiamus omnia, et diligentius requiramus. Nemo invenit nisi qui ante quaesierit. Aedificemus turrim, computemus sumptus Scripturarum, conferamus impensas; ne quis etiam de nostrum aliquo dicat: Hic voluit aedificare, et non potuit consummare (Luc. XIV, 30). Whoever builds a house must lay a good foundation. The good foundation is faith, the good foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephes. II, 20); for our faith arises from the two Testaments: and no injury is done to him who says that the measure of faith is perfect in both, since the Lord himself says: If you believed Moses, you would believe me also (John V, 46); for the Lord spoke in Moses. Therefore, in both there is a perfect measure, because he is perfect in both; and the faith of both is one, because it is the oracle and response of one virtue and understanding.

Nevertheless, it delights me to follow what the Lord himself taught, that the yeast of the Church is a spiritual teaching; for it is written: 'Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees' (Matthew 16:6); and the Apostle said: 'Not with the yeast of malice and wickedness' (1 Corinthians 5:8), showing that doctrine is yeast. But there is a different yeast for tares and a different yeast for wheat. Therefore, we agree with the good authors, to say that the Church sanctifies the reborn man, who is in body and soul and spirit, with spiritual yeast. For both body and soul are sanctified, and the very grace of the Spirit receives the increase of sanctification. Through the Church, as it were, a kind of fermenting agent, and the doctrine of the Scriptures, which grows and increases as it were by the heavenly comparison of words and the abundance of their meaning, is infused and mixed in with the whole man, so that they become one and the same ferment. This certainly happens when these three things agree with each other as if with an equal balance of desires, and an equal harmony of pleasures.

191. Therefore, this work of the Church is not tumultuous, nor random, but has been brought about by long meditation, so that these three may be one, free from the law of sin. Regarding this matter, we have the Apostle as its proponent, saying: May the Lord himself sanctify you in all things, so that your whole being—spirit, soul, and body—may be preserved blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5:23). This does not come about through worldly trials, except by that little bit of leaven, which is compared to the kingdom of heaven, that the woman mentioned in the Gospel hides in three measures of flour until it is all leavened (Matt. 13:33). For indeed, there are three measures, as I have said: of the flesh, of the soul, and of the spirit. But it is the spirit by which we all live in this body of thirst. This is true when the lust of the flesh does not overflow, and the soul is not bent by bodily errors, and the measure of living is preserved blameless in the whole person. But because the equality of measurements persists without the support of the Church and doctrine, therefore that woman, who bears the image of the Church, merges the virtue of spiritual doctrine with them until that whole hidden inner man of the heart is fermented and rises in the grace of heavenly bread. For the doctrine of Christ is rightly called the leaven, because Christ is the bread, and the Apostle says: Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body (I Cor. X, 17).

192. Therefore, there is one ferment when the flesh does not desire against the spirit, nor the spirit against the flesh: but we put to death the works of the flesh, and the soul, conscious of having received the breath of life from God, avoids the earthly contagions of worldly connections. Hence the Apostle instructs us to walk not in the flesh, but in the spirit: so that, sanctified by the washing of regeneration, having put off the old man with his desires, we may be clothed with the new man, who is created according to Christ, and may advance not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit (Colossians 3:9-10); whereby in the time of resurrection there may also remain an incorruptible communion of the body, soul, and spirit for us: and then we may obtain all that we ask for (Romans 6:4). Which, it seems to most people, the Lord also signified when he said: If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven (Matt. XVIII, 19).

Therefore some people receive two things, the soul and the body; others receive the soul and the spirit; so that if on earth, that is, in the body, the soul and the spirit are in agreement with each other, and do not oppose each other with different desires, then it seems that everything can be accomplished through prayers. This happens when both are one, if enmities are removed, or dissolved, and the two are united into one new person, that is, the soul and the spirit: So let us pray with the spirit, let us also pray with the mind (I Cor. XIV, 15). Many people believe that two peoples, from Israel and from the Gentiles, will be gathered together at the time of the resurrection, so that a lasting perfection may be achieved and that which is partial may be destroyed. However, many also believe that a man and a woman, in mutual agreement and with love, should come together.

Therefore, if in this life three measures remain in the same leaven until they are fermented and become one, so that no difference of equality is seen, and we do not appear to be composed of three different things, in the future there will be an incorruptible communion with Christ for those who are diligent: and we will not remain composed, for even now we who are composed will be one, and we will be transformed into one substance. For in the resurrection there will be no one inferior to another, just as now the weakness of the flesh is fragile in us, and the bodily condition of

nature is either subject to wounds or injuries, or is unable to raise the burden of itself higher above the earth than the foot can be raised: but we will be shaped into the grace of simple creatures, when what John said is fulfilled: Beloved, we are now children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we will be; but we know that when it is revealed, we will be like him (1 John 3:2). Therefore, since the nature of God is simple (for God is a spirit), we also shall be shaped into the same image (2 Corinthians 3:18), so that as He is heavenly, we too may be heavenly. Therefore, as we have borne the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:48-49), which our soul must put on.

195. (Chapter XIV. — Verses 2-14.) And therefore, first of all, the dropsical person is treated, in whom an excessive flow of flesh burdened the functions of the soul and extinguished the ardor of the spirit. Then humility is taught, while in that wedding banquet the desire for a higher place is restrained; yet gently, so that the kindness of persuasion would exclude the harshness of compulsion, reason would lead to the desired effect of persuasion, and correction would amend the affected person. Humanity is linked to this as if to a neighboring border, which is distinguished by the definition of the Lord's sentence, if it is conferred upon the poor and weak; for the affection to be hospitable to those who can repay is a form of greed.

196. (Vers. 18-21.) Finally, to the man who has finished his military service, a reward of contemptible stipends is prescribed; because neither he who, occupied with lower studies, acquires earthly possessions, can attain to the kingdom of heaven, since the Lord says: Sell all your possessions, and follow me (Matthew 19:21); nor he who buys oxen, as Elisha did, and divides them among the people (1 Kings 19:21); and he who takes a wife should consider what is of the world, not what is of God. Not that marriage is to be condemned, but because chastity is called to a higher honor; for the unmarried woman and the widow think about the things of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and in spirit. But the married woman thinks about the things of the world, how to please her husband (1 Corinthians 7:34).

However, in order to please, just as we mentioned above with widows, now with wives as well, we do not reject the opinion that many follow, that three types of people are considered excluded from participation in that great banquet: the pagans, the Jews, and the heretics.

198. Therefore the Apostle says that greed must be avoided, so that, hindered by pagan customs, iniquity, malice, impurity, greed, we may not be able to reach the kingdom of Christ (Rom. I, 29). For every immoral person or greedy person, which is idolatry, does not have inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God (Ephes. V, 5).

199. But the Jews impose on themselves the yoke of the Law by means of bodily ministry, and therefore according to the Prophet: Let us break their chains and cast away their yoke from us (Psalm II, 3); for we have received Christ, who gently suspends the yoke of his mercy on our necks. However, there are five yokes, or rather, five books of the old Law, about which the Samaritan woman seems to say in the Gospel: For you have had five husbands (John IV, 18).

200. But true heresy, like Eve, tries to weaken faith with a feminine softness, slipping with slippery ease, it affects the allure of false beauty, neglecting the unblemished beauty of truth. Therefore, they excuse themselves, because the kingdom is not closed to anyone, except for those whom the profession of their voice has excluded: but the Lord invites everyone kindly, but we turn away

either due to our sloth, or because of error.

201. Therefore, the one who buys a house is estranged from the kingdom; for those who bought and sold in the time of Noah, as you have read, were overwhelmed by the flood (Luke 17:21), and the one who chooses the yoke of the law rather than the gift of grace, and the one who makes excuses for not marrying a wife; for it is written: If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father, mother, and wife, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:21). Indeed, if the Lord renounces his mother for your sake, saying, 'Who is my mother, or who are my brothers?' (Matthew 12:48), why do you desire to prefer yourself to your Lord? But the Lord neither commands to ignore nature, nor to serve nature: but to indulge nature in such a way that you may worship the creator, and not stray from the love of God as a parent.

202. (Vers. 21-23.) Therefore, after despising the pride of the rich, he goes to the Gentiles and commands both the good and the bad to enter, in order to increase the number of the good and to change the disposition of the bad into something better. This is to fulfill what was read today: Then the wolf and the lamb will feed together (Isaiah 65:25). He invites the poor, the weak, and the blind, showing us that no physical weakness excludes anyone from the kingdom, and that those who are seduced by sin are rare if the allurements of sin are absent. Or it may be that the weakness of sinners is forgiven through the mercy of the Lord, so that one is redeemed from guilt not by works but by faith, and thus whoever boasts, let him boast in the Lord.

203. Therefore, he sends messengers to the exits of the roads, for prudence is sung at the exit. He sends to the streets because he sent to sinners, so that they may come from broader paths to the narrow one that leads to life. He sends to the paths and around hedges, because those who are fit for the kingdom of heaven, being occupied with no present desires, hasten towards future things, being established on a certain path of good will. They know how to separate the good and bad things, and to protect themselves against the temptation of spiritual wickedness by offering the defense of faith. Finally, the Lord, in order to show that he had fortified his vineyard, said, 'I have surrounded it with a hedge and dug a trench around it' (Matthew 21:33). And the Apostle says that the middle wall of partition has been removed, which interrupted the continuation of the fortification (Ephesians 2:14). Therefore, faith and reason are sought after, and they are sought after in the streets, that is, in the depths of the inner self; for it is written: 'Let your springs be dispersed in the streets' (Proverbs 5:16).

204. However, this is not enough, that someone is called to come unless he has the bridal garment, that is, unless he has faith and charity. And therefore, whoever does not bring peace and charity to the altars of Christ, will be taken, with feet and hands bound, and cast into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. XXII, 13). What are the outer darkness? Are there also prisons and punishments to be undergone there? No. But whoever acts outside the promises of heavenly commandments is in outer darkness; for the commandments of God are light. And whoever is without Christ is in darkness; for Christ is the light in darkness.

Therefore, there is neither a physical grinding of teeth, nor a perpetual fire of physical flames, nor is there a physical worm. But these things are mentioned because just as fevers and worms arise from a lot of impurity, so if someone does not purge their sins, but rather mixes sins with sins, as if they contracted a certain impurity of old and recent offenses, they will be burned by their own fire and consumed by their own worms. Therefore Isaiah says: Walk in the light of your fire, and in the

torches that you have kindled. This is the fire that is generated by the sadness of sins: it is a worm, because the irrational sins of the soul prick the mind and senses, and some consume the depths of conscience: these are born from each one as worms, as from the body of a sinner. Finally, the Lord declared this through Isaiah, saying: And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men that have transgressed against me: and their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be extinguished.

206. Also, the grinding of teeth reveals the feeling of indignation; because it is late to repent, it is late to groan, it is late to be angry with oneself, because one has sinned with such stubborn wickedness.

(Chap. XV. — Vers. 4.)

(Chapter 15, Verse 4) Which one of you, he said, if he has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the one that has gone astray?

207. Didiceras in superioribus ablegare negligentiam, vitare arrogantiam, devotionem sumere, saecularibus occupationibus non teneri, caduca non praeferre perpetuis: sed quia fragilitas humanafirmum nequit in tanto saeculi lubrico tenere vestigium, etiam adversus errorem remedia tibi bonus medicus demonstravit, spem veniae iudex misericors non negavit. Itaque non otiose sanctus Lucas (Vers. 8 et seq.) ex ordine tres parabolis posuit: ovis quae perierat, et inventa est: drachmae quae perierat, et inventa est: filii qui erat mortuus, et revixit; ut triplici remedio provocati, vulnera nostra curemus; spartum enim triplex non corrumpetur.

208. Who are these, father, pastor, woman? Isn't God the Father, Christ the shepherd, and the Church the woman? Christ carries you with his body, who has taken your sins upon himself, the Church seeks, the Father receives. Like a shepherd gathers, like a mother inquires, like a father clothes. The first is mercy, the second is intercession, the third is reconciliation. Each corresponds to the other: the redeemer helps, the Church intercedes, the author reconciles. The same mercy of divine work, but a different grace for our merits. The weary sheep is called back by the shepherd: the lost coin is found: the son returns to the Father following in his footsteps, and full of repentance, he returns from his condemned error. Hence it is well written: You will save men and animals, O Lord (Psalm 35:8). What are these animals? The prophet said: The seed of Israel in the seed of men, and Judah in the seed of animals (Jeremiah 31:27). So Israel is saved like a man, like a sheep Judah is gathered. Therefore, I would rather be a son than a sheep; for a sheep is sought by the shepherd, but the Son is honored by the Father.

209. Let us therefore rejoice, because that sheep which was lost in Adam is raised up in Christ. The shoulders of Christ are the arms of the cross. There I have put off my sins, there I have rested on the noble neck of the gallows. That sheep is one in kind, not in species: For we are all one body, but have many members. (I Cor. X, 17); and therefore it is written: But you are the body of Christ, and members of member (Ibid., 15). The Son of man came to save what was lost (Luc. XIX, 10); namely, all. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive (I Cor. XV, 22).

210. Therefore, the rich shepherd of whom we all are a hundredth part possesses both Angels and Archangels, Dominions, Powers, Thrones, and countless other hosts whom he has left in the mountains. And since they are rational, it is not without reason that they rejoice in the redemption

of humanity. Although this also promotes the incentives of goodness, if each person believes that their conversion will be pleasing to the assemblies of angels, whose protection they should either seek or fear offending. And let the angels of joy rejoice at your return.

211. It is not insignificant that the woman rejoices when the lost coin is found. This coin is not of little value, for it bears the image of the king. And therefore, the image of the king is the wealth of the Church. We are the sheep, let us pray that He may be pleased to place us by the waters of refreshment. We are the sheep, I say, let us seek pasture: we are the coins, let us possess value: we are the children, let us hasten to the Father.

212. And let us not be afraid, because we have advanced in earthly pleasures, of having lost the received spiritual inheritance of dignity, which the Father, in the Son he had, bestowed as a treasure. The census of faith is never depleted: although he has given everything, he has everything; because what he has given, he does not lose. And do not be afraid that he will not receive you: For God is not pleased with the destruction of the living (Wisdom 1:13): even when he meets you coming, he will fall upon your neck: For the Lord raises up the fallen (Psalm 145:8). He will give a kiss which is a pledge of affection and love. He will command that a stole, a ring, and shoes be brought forth. You still fear injury, he restores dignity: you fear punishment, he offers a kiss: you dread reproach, he adorns a feast. But now let us discuss the parable itself.

(Vers. 11, 12.)

There was a certain man who had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that will belong to me.'

213. You see that the divine inheritance is given to those who seek it. And do not think that it is the fault of the father, that he gave it to a younger son: no age is weak in the kingdom of God, nor is faith burdened by years. Certainly, he judged himself suitable who requested it. And I wish he had not departed from the father, he would not have known the obstacle of age: but after he left his homeland and went abroad, he began to be in need. Therefore, he rightly wasted the inheritance, who departed from the Church. After leaving home, he said, he left his homeland.

(Vers. 13.)

(Verse 13.) He set out on a journey to a distant region.

214. For what can be more distant than to depart from oneself; not to be separated by regions, but by customs: to be discerned by pursuits, not by lands; and as if there were an intervening heat of secular luxury, to have divisions of actions? For indeed, whoever separates himself from Christ is an exile from his homeland, a citizen of the world. But we are not aliens and strangers, but citizens of the saints and domestic of God (Ephesians 2:19); for we who were far away have been made near by the blood of Christ (Ibid., 2:13). Let us not envy those returning from a distant region; for we also were in a distant region, as Isaiah teaches, saying: Those who sat in the region of the shadow of death, a light has arisen for them (Isaiah 9:2). Therefore, the distant region is the shadow of death: but we, to whom the Spirit of Christ is Lord, live in the shadow of Christ. And for this reason, the Church says: I have desired to sit in his shadow, and I have sat (Song of Solomon 2:3). Therefore, he, living luxuriously, has consumed all the ornaments of nature. Wherever you, who have received the image of God, who have his likeness, do not consume it with irrational

abominations. You are the work of God, do not say to a piece of wood: 'You are my father' (Jer. II, 27); do not accept the likeness of wood; for it is written: 'Let those who make them become like them' (Psalm CXIII, 8).

(Vers. 14.)

(Verse 14) A famine occurred in that region.

215. Hunger is not for feasts, but for good deeds and virtues, which are more pitiable than fasting. Indeed, whoever departs from the word of God, hungers: For man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Matthew IV, 4). Whoever departs from the source, thirsts: whoever departs from the treasure, lacks: whoever departs from wisdom, dulls: whoever departs from virtue, dissolves. Therefore, he rightly began to lack, because he abandoned the treasures of wisdom and knowledge of God, and the height of heavenly riches. Therefore, he began to need, and to suffer hunger, because nothing is enough for prodigality. He always suffers hunger, who does not know how to be satisfied with constant nourishment.

(Vers. 15.)

(Verse 15.) So he went away and clung to one of the citizens.

216. For whoever clings, is in a trap. And that citizen seems to be the ruler of this world. Finally, he is sent to his villa which he bought, to excuse himself from the kingdom. And he feeds pigs: those in which the devil seeks to enter, those he throws into the sea of this world, living in filth and stench.

(Vers. 16.) (Verse 16) And he desired, he said, to fill his belly with the pods. For there is no other concern for the luxurious, except to fill their stomachs, which stomach is their god (Philippians 3:19). But what food is more suitable for people of this kind than that which, like a pod, is empty inside and soft outside: by which the body is not nourished, but filled; so it becomes more of a burden than a use?

There are those who accept pigs as herds of demons, husks as the power of empty men, and boastful words that can be of no benefit, with a certain seduction of empty philosophy, and demonstrating more the pomp of eloquence than any usefulness. But these pleasures cannot last long; and therefore,

Nobody gave to him; for he was in the region of one who has nobody; because he does not have those who exist. For indeed all people are considered as nothing (Isaiah 40:15): but God alone is the one who gives life to the dead, and calls things that are not, as though they were (Romans 4:17).

(Vers. 17.)

(Verse 17) But when he came to himself, he said: How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare!

He who turns back to himself turns well within himself. Indeed, he who turns back to the Lord returns himself to himself, and he who departs from Christ abdicates himself. But the mercenaries, unless they serve for wages, who are from Israel, do not pursue what is good out of a desire for

honesty, nor for the sake of virtue, but are driven by a desire for utility. But truly, the son who has the pledge of the Holy Spirit in his heart does not seek the petty wages of this world, for whom he should serve. Heirs are also mercenary workers who are hired for the vineyard. Good mercenary workers Peter, John, James, to whom it is said: Come, and I will make you fishers of men (Matth. IV, 19). They do not have figs, but they have an abundance of bread. Finally, they gathered twelve baskets of fragments (Matth. XIV, 20). O Lord Jesus, if you take away our figs and give us bread! For you are the steward in the house of the Father. Oh, if you would also deem us worthy to be hired as mercenary workers, even if we come late! For you also hired workers at the eleventh hour (Matthew 20:9), and you deem it worthy to pay an equal wage, an equal wage of life, not of glory; for the crown of righteousness is not reserved for everyone, but for those who can say: I have fought the good fight (2 Timothy 4:7). That is why I consider it necessary to mention, because I know that some people say that they reserve the grace of baptism or penance for their own death. First, how do you know if your soul will be demanded of you tonight? And then why do you think that everything can be put off until you have leisure? Suppose there is one grace, one reward; yet the prize of victory is different, to which Paul rightly aspired after receiving the reward of grace, pursuing it as his prize (Philippians 3:14). For he knew that although the reward of grace might be equal, the palm would still be for only a few.

222. And since we have come into the vineyard of the Lord, let us not depart empty-handed: for it is pleasing to gather the fruits and see His laborers. For what does it mean that workers are hired at different hours of the day (Matthew 20:1 and so on), if not because a thousand years are like a day in the eyes of the Lord, like yesterday's day that has passed, and an hour in the night (Psalm 90:4)? What is the night, except that which precedes, so that the day may draw near? And it is rightly called an hour in the night, because a thousand years are like one day (2 Peter 3:8). He who said, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. XIII, 8), knows the power of this day. He also knew that the day is manifold, who wrote, "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created" (Gen. II, 4). For when he had described seven days above, he encompassed all things in one day, showing the entire time of the world in the sight of the Lord as one day. This is because from the unformed and darkened state of the world, it has proceeded by the brightness of the divine work. Therefore, if the day is the entire time of the world, it certainly also has its hours in the ages: or the ages themselves are the hours. However, there are twelve hours of the day; hence, Christ is rightly called the day, whose apostles, distinguished by celestial light, shone forth with the turns of grace in themselves.

223. Therefore, the father of the family came and hired workers at the first hour, perhaps those who deserved to be righteous from the beginning of the world until the flood, about whom he said: 'And I spoke to you before dawn: and I sent my servants, the prophets, to you before dawn' (Jeremiah, VII, 25). The third period begins after the flood, encompassing the times of Noah and the others who are destined to be good workers in the vineyard; therefore Noah was, as it were, drunk at lunch. The merits of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob distinguish the sixth and remaining days. The ninth day, as the century declines and the light of virtue pales, the Law and the Prophets note the colorless morals of men. The eleventh day, and what remains of the day, the sacred coming forth produces. Hence, he himself says in the Gospel: Walk while you have the light (John XII, 35).

224. But now let us return to the Father; though I do not fear that we may seem to have been absent for a long time by the example of this penitent (for we have never been absent, who were in the vineyard, in which if he had remained, he would not have departed from the Father), it must be carefully avoided that we delay our reconciliation to him, which the Father did not delay. He is easily reconciled when earnestly begged. And therefore let us learn with what kind of supplication the Father is to be sought. Father, he says. How merciful, how pious, who is not offended to hear the name of his homeland!

(Vers. 18.) (Verse. 18.) Father, he said, I have sinned against heaven and before you. This is the first confession before the author of nature, the bishop of mercy, the judge of guilt. But although God knows all things, he still expects the voice of your confession. For confession is made with the mouth for salvation (Rom. X, 10); because it lightens the weight of error, whoever himself burdens himself; and it excludes the envy of accusation, who anticipates the accuser by confessing: For a righteous man accuses himself at the beginning of his speech (Prov. XVIII, 17). But you are trying in vain to hide what deceives no one; and you are giving away without danger what you know to be already known. Confess more, so that Christ, whom we have as an advocate with the Father, may intercede for you; let the Church pray for you, and let the people shed tears for you. Do not fear that you will not obtain. The advocate promises forgiveness, the patron promises grace, the defender promises reconciliation through paternal compassion to you. Believe, because it is the truth; acquiesce, because it is virtue. He has a reason to intervene for you, so that he may not die for you in vain. He has a reason to forgive, Father, because what the son wants, the Father also wants.

226. (Verse 18.) I have sinned against heaven and before you. It is not surely the elements that are expressed, but the heavenly gifts of the diminished Spirit are signified by the sin of the soul; or because it was not fitting to stray from the bosom of the mother Jerusalem, which is in heaven.

(Vers. 19.) (Verse 19.) I am no longer worthy to be called your son. For one who is dejected should not lift himself up; so that he may be rightfully elevated in his humility.

(Ibid.) Make me like one of your hired servants.

228. He knows the difference between sons, friends, mercenaries, and slaves; a son through baptism, a friend through virtue, a mercenary through work, a slave through fear. But even from slaves and mercenaries friends are made, according to what is written: You are my friends, if you do what I command you: I do not call you slaves anymore (John XV, 14).

229. She said this to herself; but it is not enough to say it, unless you come to the father. Where do you seek him, where do you find him? First rise up, that is, you who were sleeping while sitting. And for this reason the Apostle says: Rise, you who sleep, and arise from the dead (Ephesians 5:14). Iniquity sits on a leaden talent. To Moses it is said: But you stand here (Deuteronomy 5:31). Christ chose those who stand. Therefore, rise up, run to the Church; here is the Father, here is the Son, here is the Holy Spirit.

230. (Vers. 20, 21.) There comes to you one who hears you dealing with the secret thoughts of your mind. And even though you are still far away, he sees and comes running. He sees in your heart, he comes running so that no one can hinder you, he embraces you as well: in meeting there is foresight, in embrace there is kindness, and certain affections of paternal love. He falls above

your neck to raise you up while lying down, and to bring back to heaven, burdened by sins and turned towards earthly things, in which he seeks his own author. Christ falls upon your neck, so that he may strip off the yoke of servitude from your neck and may suspend his sweet yoke upon your neck. Does it not seem to you that Christ fell upon the neck of John, when John was reclining on the breast of Jesus with his neck bent back? And therefore the Word saw with God, because he was raised up to the things above. He falls upon your neck, when he says: Come to me, all you who labor...and I will refresh you: take my yoke upon you (Matth. XI, 28 and 29). Therefore it falls in this way, if you turn.

231. (Verse 22.) And he orders that the robe, ring, and sandals be brought forward. The robe is the garment of wisdom, which covers the apostle's body, because each one wraps themselves in it; and for this reason they receive the robe, so that they may clothe the weakness of the body with the power of spiritual wisdom. For it is said of Wisdom: She will wash her robe in wine (Gen. XLIX, 11). Therefore, the robe is a spiritual garment and a bridal attire. And what is the ring, if not the seal of sincere faith and the expression of truth? But the preaching of the Gospel is the footwear; and therefore it receives the first wisdom. For there is another mystery which it does not know, unless it has received the seal of its words and deeds, and a certain protection of good intention and course; lest it stumble on a stone with its foot, and being tripped up by the devil, it may abandon the duty of proclaiming the Lord's message. This is the preparation of the Gospel, directing the prepared ones towards the course of heavenly things; so that we may not walk in the flesh, but in the spirit.

232. (Verse 23.) The fatted calf is also slaughtered, so that by the power of the spiritual grace of the sacrament of the mysteries, the Lord's flesh may be restored and enjoyed through the participation of communion. For no one should partake in the heavenly sacraments unless they fear God (which is the beginning of wisdom), unless they have either kept or received the spiritual seal, and unless they have preached the Lord. But whoever has the ring, has the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; because God has marked us, and Christ is His image: and He has given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts, so that we may know that this ring which is given in the hand is a seal, by which the inner depths of the heart and the ministries of our deeds are marked. Therefore, we are sealed, just as we read: 'In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.' (Ephesians 1:13) But the flesh of the calf is good, for it is a sacrificial victim that was offered for sins.

233. (Verse 23.) The son introduces the father as feasting, to show that the fatherly food is our salvation, and the redemption of our sins is the joy of the Father. And indeed, if you refer to the Father, because the Son is the sacrificial victim for sins, the Father is delighted by the return of the sinner: above all, the Son is delighted, having found the lost sheep; so that you may know that the joy of the Father and the Son is one, one operation in the foundation of the Church. But the father rejoices;

(Vers. 24.) (Verse 24.) Because the son was lost, and he was found: he had died, and he came back to life. That person perishes who has existed; for one cannot perish who has not existed. Therefore, the nations do not exist, but the Christian exists, according to what was said above: For God chose what is not, so that he might destroy what is (1 Corinthians 1:28). However, here the

term 'the human race' can be understood. There was Adam, and in him we all were. Adam perished, and in him all perished (cf. Augustine, Against Julian of Eclanum, Book 1, Chapter 3). Therefore, humanity is reformed in that human who perished, and he is restored to the likeness of God and to the image of God by divine patience and magnanimity. What then is this: God has chosen what does not exist, in order to destroy what exists (1 Corinthians 1:28)? That is, He has chosen the people of the Gentiles who did not exist, in order to destroy the people of the Jews.

235. It can also be said about the agent of repentance; because only those who have lived at some point die. And therefore, the gentiles do not die, but they are dead; indeed, whoever does not believe in Christ is always dead. And indeed, when the gentiles believe, they are made alive by grace: but whoever has fallen, revives through repentance.

236. The place follows, so that we should favor sins by forgiving them after penance; lest while we envy another's pardon, we ourselves do not deserve it from the Lord. For who are you to contradict the Lord, so that he does not release guilt from whom he wishes; when you forgive whom you wish? He wants to be asked, he wants to be entreated. If there is justice for all, where is God's grace? Who are you, to envy God? And therefore, here the brother is noted, to such an extent that it is said that he comes from the villa, that is, occupied with earthly works, ignorant of the things of the Spirit of God; so that in the end he never complains for himself or for the slaughtered goat; for he is immolated not out of envy, but out of forgiveness, as a lamb of the world. The envious one seeks the goat; the innocent one desires to be sacrificed for himself. He is also called senior; because someone quickly ages through envy. Therefore, he stands outside; because the ill-will of those with envious minds excludes him. Therefore, he cannot listen to the chorus and symphony, that is, not those theatrical incentives of luxury, nor the harmony of courtly sounds, but rather the harmony of the people singing together, which springs forth a sweet joy from the saved sinner.

238. Establish for me someone from among those who seem just to themselves, who do not see the beam in their own eye, and cannot bear the splinter of another's vice. How indignant he becomes when forgiveness is granted to someone confessing their sin and lamenting for a long time. How his ears cannot bear the spiritual symphony of the people. For this is the symphony, when in the Church the diverse actions and virtues are harmonized, like the indiscriminating concord of various chords, the psalm is responded to, and 'amen' is said. This is the harmony that Paul learned; and therefore he says: I will sing with the spirit, I will sing with the mind as well (1 Cor. XIV, 13). We thought that this parable should be discussed here.

239. Nor do we envy if someone wishes to refer these two brothers to two peoples; so that the younger people, like the Israelites, who envied the greater brother for the benefit of their father's blessing. This is what the Jews were doing when they complained that Christ was dining with the Gentiles; and therefore they demanded a goat, a sacrifice with a foul smell. The Jew demands a goat, the Christian a lamb; and therefore Barabbas is released for them, and a lamb is sacrificed for us. Whereas among them there is the stench of crimes, among us there is the forgiveness of sins, sweet in hope, pleasant in its fruit. Anyone who seeks a kid (goat) awaits the Antichrist; for Christ is a sacrificial victim of good odor (Ephesians 5:2).

240. It seems that he is also complaining about the kid, because they have lost the ritual of ancient sacrifice: or because no one's blood has benefited them, just as the blood of Christ has benefited the Church; for the blood of the prophets could not redeem them. Shameless and similar to that

Pharisee who justified himself with arrogant prayer, thinking that the commandment of God had never been violated, because he observed the Law in the letter. Impious is the one who accused his brother of squandering his father's substance with prostitutes, when he should have noticed that it was said to him: Prostitutes and tax collectors will enter the kingdom of heaven before you (Matthew 21:31).

241. (Verse 28.) But he stands outside, and is not excluded; but he does not enter, ignorant of God's will concerning the calling of the Gentiles, having become a servant from a son; for a servant does not know what his master is doing (John 15:15). When he came to know, he envies and torments the Church with its goods, and stands outside. For outside Israel he hears the chorus and harmony; but he is angry because here the grace of the people sings, and the joyful sound of the people resonates. But the good Father also desired to save him, saying:

(Vers. 31.)

(Verse 31.) Son, you have always been with me;

Whether you be like a Jew in the Law, or like a righteous person in fellowship; and you are, if you stop envying.

(Ibid.) Et omnia mea tua sunt;

Either a Jew holding the sacraments of the Old Testament, or even a baptized person possessing those of the New.

(Chap. XVI. — Vers. 13.)

No servant can serve two masters;

Because there is not two, but one Lord. For although there are those who serve money; nevertheless, they do not know any laws of dominion; but they impose the yoke of servitude upon themselves; for it is not just authority, but unjust servitude. And therefore he says.

(Vers. 9.)

(Verse 9) Make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth;

245. In giving to the poor, let us obtain the grace of the angels and the other saints. The steward is not criticized because in him we learn that we ourselves are not the masters, but rather the stewards of others' resources. And therefore, even if he has sinned, because he sought help from the lord's indulgence for himself in the future, it is preached. But beautifully and unjustly he said 'Mammon'; because with various allurements of wealth, greed was tempting our desires, so that we would want to serve riches. Unde ait:

(Vers. 12.)

(Verse 12) If you have not been faithful with someone else's, who will give you what is yours?

246. Alienae nobis divitiae sunt, quia praeter naturam sunt; neque nobiscum nascuntur, nequenobiscum transeunt: Christus autem noster est, quia vita est. Denique In sua propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt (Joan. I, 11). Ergo nemo dabit quod vestrum est; quia vestrum non

credidistis, vestrum non recepistis.

Therefore, the Jews seem to be accused of both fraud and greed. And therefore, those who were not faithful in their possessions, which they knew to be someone else's (for the produce of the earth is given by the Lord God for the common use of all), should certainly have shared with the poor: and they did not deserve to receive Christ, whom Zacchaeus offered half of his possessions to acquire (Luke XIX, 8).

248. Therefore, we do not serve others because we must acknowledge no lord except Christ: There is only one God, the Father, from whom all things come, and we are in him; and there is only one Lord, Jesus, through whom all things exist (I Cor. VIII, 6). So, is the Father the Lord, or the Son God? But the Father is also the Lord, for the heavens were established by the Word of the Lord (Psal. XXXII, 6); and the Son is God, who is blessed above all forever (Rom. IX, 5). Therefore, how can one serve two masters? For there is one Lord, because there is one God; indeed, you shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him alone (Matth. IV, 10). Hence it is clear that the dominion of the Father and Son is one. But if it is not divided, let it be entirely in the Father, entirely in the Son. Therefore, because we profess the Trinity of one deity and one dominion, we confess one God and one Lord. However, those who speak of different powers of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit introduce many gods and many lords into the Church by the vice of Gentile error.

Book Eight (Vers. 16.) (Verse 16) The Law and the Prophets were until John. Not because the Law has failed, but because the preaching of the Gospel has begun; for the lesser things seem to be fulfilled when the greater things follow. And therefore let us use force for the kingdom of heaven; for whoever uses force, hastens with strong zeal and does not grow sluggish with inactive desire. Therefore, the violence of faith is religious, while sloth is criminal. The Law established many things according to nature; so that it might call us to the pursuit of justice with a greater indulgence for natural desires; but Christ cut into nature, for He also cuts off natural pleasures; and therefore let us use force for nature, so that it does not sink into earthly things, but raises itself to heavenly things.

(Vers. 18.)

(Verse 18.) Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and the one who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

2. First, we must talk about the law of marriage, so that later we can discuss the prohibition of divorce. Some people believe that every marriage is from God, especially because it is written: What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate (Mark 10:9). Therefore, if every marriage is from God, then every marriage cannot be dissolved. But how did the Apostle say: But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so (1 Corinthians 7:15)? In this, he both wonderfully did not want the cause of divorce to reside among Christians and showed that not every marriage is from God; for Christian marriages are not joined together by God's judgment with pagans, since the Law forbids it.

3. But that which Solomon says comes to mind: Fathers divide house and wealth among their children, but a wife is prepared for a man by God (Prov. XIX, 14). And whoever reads it in Greek does not think it is contrary. For the Greek well said ἁρμονία for harmony is said to be the

fitting and appropriate joining together of all things. Harmony is when the pipes of an organ are connected in order, it holds the grace of a pleasing melody, and the proper arrangement of the strings maintains concord. So, there is no harmony in their marriage when a Christian man is unlawfully joined with a pagan woman. Therefore, where there is marriage, there is harmony; where there is harmony, God joins together. Where there is no harmony, there is conflict and disagreement; and this is not from God, because God is love (1 John 4:8).

Therefore, do not divorce your wife, lest you deny God, the author of your union. Moreover, if you are tolerant and correct the habits of strangers, even more so should you tolerate and correct the habits of your wife. Listen to what the Lord has said: 'Whoever divorces his wife makes her commit adultery' (Matthew 5:32). For if it is not permissible to change one's spouse while the husband is alive, the desire to sin can easily creep in. Therefore, the one who is the author of the error is also guilty of the fault. With whom is a woman who has just given birth abandoned? To what stumbling step is the ancient woman pushed down? Harsh, if you exclude the parent, you hold the pledge, so that you add an insult to charity and also an injury to piety; harsh, if because of the mother you also drive away the children together; when the children should rather redeem the fault of the parent. How dangerous, if you expose the fragile age of a young girl to error! How impious, if you abandon her old age, whose youth you have deflowered! Therefore, should the commander-in-chief dismiss with dishonorable pay the veterans, and thus remove them from the possession of their empire, and should a farmer push out from his land the exhausted worker? Is it wickedness when done to subjects, but righteousness when done to equals? (33 quaest. 2, c. An quod) So you dismiss your wife as if it were a right, without any crime; and you think it is allowed to you, because human law does not prohibit it; but divine law does prohibit it. If you obey men, fear God. Hear the law of the Lord, to which even those who enact laws obey: What God has joined together, let no man separate (Matthew 19:6).

6. But not only this heavenly precept, but also a certain work of God is dissolved. Do you tolerate, I pray, your children, while you are alive, to live under a stepmother; or while their mother is unharmed, to live under a stepmother? Suppose she does not marry after being divorced. And should not these things displease you, to whom she keeps faith with an adulterer? Suppose she does marry. This is your crime of necessity; and the marriage which you imagine is adultery. For what does it matter, whether you allow it openly by confessing the crime, or admit an adulterer under the guise of a husband, unless that it is more serious to have made the law of the crime than the theft?

7. But perhaps someone may say: How did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to dismiss a wife? (Deut. XXIV, 1). He who says this is a Jew; he who says this is not a Christian. And therefore, because he objects to this, which is objected to the Lord, let the Lord respond to him: For the hardness of your hearts, Moses permitted you to give a bill of divorce, and to dismiss your wives: but from the beginning it was not so (Matth. XIX, 8). Moses permitted, he says, not God commanded; but from the beginning the law of God is. What is the law of God? A man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh (Gen. II, 24). Therefore, he who divorces his wife, tears his flesh, divides his body. But this passage shows that the things that are written because of human frailty are not written by God. Hence also the Apostle says: I, not the Lord, declare that a wife should not separate from her husband (1 Cor. 7:10). And further on: To the rest I say, not the Lord: if any brother has an unbelieving wife, and

she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her (Ibid., 12). Therefore, where there is inequality in marriage, there is no law of God. And he added: But if the unbeliever separates, let him separate (Ibid., 15). At the same time, the Apostle denied that the law is divine, so that any marriage can be dissolved; he neither commanded nor gave authority to anyone who wants to leave, but he removed blame from the one who is abandoned. These are moral teachings.

9. (Verse 17.) However, because he had mentioned above that he came to preach the kingdom of God, and after saying that not one jot or tittle of the Law will fall, he added: Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery. The Apostle rightly admonishes, saying that this is a great mystery concerning Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:32). Therefore, you find a marriage which no one doubts is joined by God, since he himself says: No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him (John 6:44); for only he could unite these marriages. And therefore Solomon said mystically: A wife is prepared for a man by God (Prov. XIX, 14). Christ is the man, the Church is the wife; by charity the wife, by integrity a virgin. Therefore, let not persecution separate whom God has drawn to the Son, let not lust turn them away, let not Philosophy plunder them, let not Manichaeism contaminate them, let not Arianism turn them away, let not Sabellianism infect them. God has joined them, let not the Jew separate them. All are adulterers who desire to adulterate the truth of faith and wisdom.

10. Who is that book, he says, of the divorce of your mother, whom I dismissed (Isaiah 50:1)? You have heard divorce, believe in marriage. You have heard what the man himself says to the Jewish people: Behold, you have been sold in your iniquities, and I have dismissed your mother in your sins (Ibid.). So stay in your father's house, stay with your husband, strive to please your husband. May your mind, which you have believed in God, be a strong woman, like that either of an ecclesiastical soul or of the Church, of which Solomon says: Who shall find a strong woman (Proverbs 31:10)? But more precious than precious stones is the one who is like this: her husband trusts in her (Ibid., 11). Let us see what she does for her husband, what is her work, what is her service, why Christ trusts in her.

11. A good wife dresses her husband. Let our faith clothe Jesus with her own body, let her dress her flesh with the glory of her divinity: just as that woman made two garments for her husband, so that she may honor him in the present and in the future age. This woman is not of average worth, as shown by her weaving; her husband shall find not soft wool threads in her hands, but the work of precious virtue. May her hands be lifted to the innocent, may her work be measured by the pound, may she weigh the burden of her character, and may she know how to keep the measure of her deeds. She weaves a glorious covering of labor, anxiously awaiting her husband's return, sighing and desiring to be with her husband, saying: My husband makes delay in coming, I will hurry to him myself; I will meet him face to face, when he begins to come in his glory.

12. Come, Lord Jesus, to find your bride, undefiled, uncorrupted, who has not violated your house, nor neglected your commandments. Let her say to you: I have found Him whom my soul loves (Song of Songs 3:4); let her bring you into the house of wine (for wine gladdens the heart of man) (Psalm 104:15), let her be intoxicated in the spirit, recognize the mystery, and speak the oracle.

(Vers. 19.)

(Verse 19) Now there was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple.

13. The story seems more like a narrative than a parable, especially when a name is mentioned. But it is not in vain that the Lord depicted the wealthy man, who had indulged in worldly delights, as being in torment in the perpetual hunger of the underworld: to whom rightly belonged five brothers, that is, the five senses of the body, which were united by a certain natural relationship and were burning with excessive and countless desires. But Lazarus, he placed in the embrace of Abraham, as it were in a peaceful bosom and a retreat of sanctity; so that, not enticed by the pleasure of the present, we may not remain in vices; or, overcome by weariness, flee the difficulties of labor. Therefore, whether Lazarus is poor in the world but rich in God, or whether someone apostolic is poor in word but rich in faith (for not all poverty is holy, nor are wealth criminal; just as luxury defames wealth, so holiness commends poverty), therefore, an apostolic who holds true faith does not require the trappings of words, the deceit of arguments, or the ornate veils of ambitious sayings. Instead, he receives a borrowed reward, attacking the heretics Manichaeus, Marcion, Sabellius, Arius, and Photinus (for they are nothing but brothers of the Jews, bound by the bonds of treachery), and also restraining the desires of the flesh, which, as I said, are fanned by those five senses. He receives, I say, a borrowed reward, for which the compensation is the abundance of resources and the interest of perpetuity.

14. (Vers. 20, 21.) Nor do we consider it foreign, that we should believe this treatise to be about faith as well, which Lazarus gathered from the table of the rich man: the sores of which, according to the literal meaning, the fastidious rich man would have shuddered at, and could not bear the stench of the sores while the dogs licked them, as the odor was disgusting even to the air itself: although the insolence and pride of the rich can be expressed by appropriate signs, for they are so forgetful of their human condition that, as if surpassing nature, they take pleasure in the miseries of the poor as incentives to their own delights, they mock the needy, insult the destitute, and take away from those whom it is fitting to pity.

Therefore, both of them, if anyone wishes to do so, may collect like Lazarus. I consider him similar to the one who was beaten repeatedly by the Jews, for the patience of the believers and for offering the wounds of his body to be licked by certain ones like dogs, because it is written: 'They will turn at evening, and they will suffer hunger like dogs'. This mystery was recognized by that Canaanite woman, to whom it is said: 'No one takes the bread of children and gives it to dogs'. He recognized this bread, not as the bread that appears, but as the one that is understood; and for this reason he responded: Certainly, Lord, for even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table (Ibid., 27). Those crumbs are from that bread. And because bread is the word, and faith is of the word, the crumbs are like certain doctrines of faith. Therefore, the Lord responded to show that what she said was faithful: O woman, great is your faith (Ibid., 28)!

16. O happy sores, which exclude perpetual pain! O abundant crumbs, which repel everlasting hunger, which satisfy the poor collector with eternal nourishment! The synagogue ruler cast you from his table, while he refuted the inner mysteries of the prophetic Scriptures and the Law (Luke 13:14), for your words are but crumbs of the Scriptures, as it is said: 'But you have rejected my words behind you' (Psalm 50:17). The scribe threw you aside, but Paul gathered diligently, reading the people in his injuries. They licked the wounds of him who had been bitten by a fearless serpent, and when the snake was shaken off, they saw and believed (Acts 28:6). The jailer who washed Paul's wounds also licked them, and believed (Acts 16:33). Blessed are the dogs into which the humor of such wounds drips, so that it may fill their hearts and fatten their throats: let

them learn to guard the house, to protect the flock, and to beware of wolves.

Now place before your eyes those Arians who are devoted to secular studies, aspiring to the society of royal power, that they may attack the truth of the Church with military weapons: do they not seem to you to lie on certain purple and fine linen and on luxurious couches, defending what is false with painted falsehoods? They abound in rich speeches, boasting that the earth trembled under the body of the Lord, the sky was covered in darkness, the seas were stirred up or calmed by a word: yet they deny the Son of God. He established and that poor man, who knowing that the kingdom of God was not in words but in virtue, expressed in a few words what he felt, saying: You are the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16); do not these riches seem to you to be in need, this poverty to be overflowing? The rich heresy has composed many Gospels; the poor faith has held onto this Gospel alone, which it received. The rich philosophy has made many gods for itself; the poor Church knows only one God.

18. (Verse 24.) Between this rich man and the poor man there is a great chasm; because after death, merits cannot be changed, and therefore the rich man is led into hell, desiring to draw something of the poor man's refreshing spirit; for water is the nourishment of the soul in its afflictions, of which Isaiah says: And water will be drunk with delight from the fountains of salvation (Isaiah 12:3). But why is he tormented before judgment? Because punishment is to be deprived of luxuries for the one indulging in them. For the Lord says: There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven (Luke 13:28).

19. (Verse 27.) And yet this late rich master begins to be; since he no longer has time for learning or teaching. In this place, the Lord clearly declares that the old Testament is the foundation of faith, refuting the unfaithfulness of the Jews, and excluding the wickedness of the heretics, by whom the weaker mind is deceived; for they themselves are small, who still do not know the advancements of virtue.

However, it is worth noting that in the comparison between the previous steward and the current rich man, the incentive for mercy is highlighted. Perhaps in the former case, he showed kindness to the saints whom he called friends and to whom he provided dwellings. But here, he teaches that the focus should be on helping the poor.

(Chapter 17, Verse 3) If your brother sins against you, rebuke him.

21. How good it is, after someone becomes rich and is tormented by punishments, to have the rule of granting forgiveness imposed upon them, especially those who turn away from error, so that despair does not keep them from repentance! How moderate it is, so that forgiveness is not difficult, nor indulgence lax; so that neither a harsh reprimand crushes anyone, nor leniency invites them to sin! Likewise elsewhere: If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him between you and him (Matthew 18:15). Indeed, friendly correction is more beneficial than harsh accusation: the former instills shame, while the latter provokes anger. Let what is feared to be revealed be preserved, for it is the one who is admonished. For it is good that a friend believes you who is being corrected rather than an enemy, for it is easier to accept advice than to succumb to injury. Hence, even the Apostle says: 'Rebuke, he says, as a brother, so that he may be ashamed, not so that you may consider him an enemy.' (II Thess. III, 15). For fear is a weak preserver of time: but

modesty is a good teacher of duty; for he who is afraid is restrained, but not reformed; he who is ashamed to do wrong turns towards what is right by nature. But He placed it beautifully: If he sins against you, the condition is not equal between God and man, for man is capable of sinning. Finally, the Apostle, who is the true interpreter of the divine oracle, says: Avoid the heretic after one correction (Titus 3:10), because perfidy is not equal to fault, and it is venial. And since error often arises from ignorance, he commanded that it be corrected, so that either obstinacy may be avoided, or a fall may be corrected. Verum quid est:

(Vers. 4.)

(Verse 4) If he sins against you seven times in a day, do you forgive him?

23. Is the number of forgiveness predetermined, or is it because on the seventh day God rested from all his works, after this week of the world, long-lasting rest is promised to us; so that just as the evils of this world will cease on the Sabbath, so too will the severity of vengeance rest? But the Sabbath is not only of days, but also of months; and therefore the tenth day of the seventh month is the Sabbath of Sabbaths (Lev. XXV, 9): not only of months, but also of years; not only of years, but also of generations, and finally of the world itself, which is a type of the great Sabbath; just as in the Law there is a seventh week, after which the Jubilee year is celebrated. What mystery the Lord wanted to reveal to us, when he says: Not only seven times, but also seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22). Because in the seventh generation, as you have according to Luke (Luke 3:37), Enoch was taken away, so that wickedness would not change his heart (Wisdom 4:11); and in him the sting of sorrow found rest. But in the seventieth and seventh generation, the Lord, born of Mary, taking upon himself the sins of the human race, granted the forgiveness of all offenses.

Therefore, even though you may frequently learn to forgive according to the letter, and not hold onto anger (for there is nothing by which it can be offended, to which forgiveness is customary), still understand the mystery; for the Lord did not say to the woman in vain on the Sabbath: 'You are released from your infirmity' (Luke 13:12), showing to his people, who, like the called woman, would follow him, that he had forgiven their sins by his coming. Therefore, Lamech is condemned seventy-seven times (Genesis 4:24); for he commits a greater offense, who, while punishing a crime, commits one himself. But they forgive every excess of the crime of baptism. Therefore, learn to forgive your injuries; because Christ forgave his persecutors.

25. Nor is it idle that He suffered on the great Sabbath, signifying that there would be a Sabbath in which death would be destroyed by Christ. If the Jews celebrate the Sabbath in such a way that they consider the entire month and year as a kind of Sabbath, how much more should we celebrate the resurrection of the Lord! And for this reason, our ancestors handed down to us all the fifty days of Pentecost to celebrate Easter, because Pentecost marks the beginning of the eighth week. And the Apostle, as if a disciple of Christ, who knew that there is a diversity of times, writing to the Corinthians, says: I will perhaps stay with you and spend the winter (I Cor. XVI, 6). And below: But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a great door has opened for me (Ibid., 8 and 9). Therefore, he spends the winter with the Corinthians, who were troubled by their errors; their affection for the worship of God was growing cold. And he celebrates Pentecost with the Ephesians, and delivers to them the mysteries, refreshing his spirit; for he saw them fervent with the ardor of faith. Therefore, during these fifty days, the Church does not observe fasting, just as on Sunday, the day of the Lord's resurrection, and all days are like Sunday.

26. There will be another Sunday on which the Lord's body will rise again. Paul knows this, who says: But you are the body of Christ, and members each in their parts (I Cor. XII, 27). For this is the body of the Lord, and the bones will cleave to his own head: But the head of the Church is Christ (Ephes. V, 23). Then fasting will cease, for in eternal joy, fatigue, care, and weariness will cease. Then death will be destroyed: For the last enemy to be destroyed is death (I Cor. XV, 26). Although Enoch ceased to exist, and was not found because he was taken up, he was not destroyed; for he was conveyed away so that death might be escaped. (Gen. 5:24) Christ, being sacrificed, destroyed death; therefore He rightly said, 'Where is your victory, O death? Where is your sting?' (1 Cor. 15:55) Therefore, in this resurrection, Christ will rise again in His body, just as He rose as the first fruits of those who sleep. Blessed, therefore, is the one who will have a part in the First Resurrection; for just as Christ is the first fruits of those who sleep, so then the Church and His saints will be the first fruits of those who rise. (1 Cor. 15:20)

27. Peter could not know this mystery. Perhaps he knew about Enoch: but who could comprehend the hidden mystery in God with the human mind? Therefore, let the Lord come into my soul, into my mind, and subject it to Himself; so that when my mind is subjected to Him, I may say: I will not fear evils, for you are with me (Psalm 22:4).

(Vers. 6.)

(v. 6) If you have faith like a mustard seed, you will say to this mulberry tree: Be uprooted and be thrown into the sea, and it will obey you.

28. It has been said about the mustard seed, now we must discuss the tree's death. I choose the tree, but I do not trust the tree. For what reason, what progress will there be if the tree that bears fruit for the laboring farmers is uprooted and thrown into the sea? We may judge this to be possible for the sake of faith's virtue, so that nature, which is insensible to sensible commands, may obey: but what does the very nature of the tree itself mean? I have read: 'I was a shepherd of goats, picking mulberries (Amos 7:14),' and I believe that the prophet signified to us that he himself, having turned from a sinner, was seeking fruit from a flock of sinners: although it is fitting that he, who would become a prophet of the Gentiles, should seem to have sought fruit in brambles and have extracted food from thorns, but would place the bleached and foul herds of the Gentiles, the peoples of the nations, in the pastures of his own writers, so that they might become fat from spiritual nourishment; he himself, however, would milk spiritual milk from a converted sinner.

29. But when it is said in another book of the Gospel (Matth. XVII, 19), that a mountain is called, the appearance of whose species is bare, giving birth to a defect in the fruit-bearing olive trees, barren in crops, suitable for the hiding places of beasts, and restless in the paths of wild animals, and it seems to express the height of spiritual wickedness, as it is written: Behold, I am against you, corrupt mountain, you who corrupt the whole earth (Jerem. LI, 25); it is fitting that we also understand this statement in this place, since faith excludes the unclean spirit, especially when the nature of the tree supports this opinion. And its fruit at first is white in bloom, then it grows and reddens, it blackens with maturity. The devil also, once radiant with the white flower of angelic nature and power, fell by his rebellion and grew horrid with the foul odor of sin. Behold, I give you the one who bites at the tree: Uproot it, and cast it into the sea, as he cast out a legion from a man and allowed them to enter into pigs: which, tormented by the demonic spirit, threw themselves into

the sea.

30. Therefore, this is an exhortative place for faith, teaching morally that even those things which are established can be dissolved by faith. From faith, however, comes charity, from charity comes hope, and again they are poured back into themselves in a holy circle.

31. (Vers. 7, 8.) It follows that no one should boast in works, because we owe obedience to the Lord by right. For if you do not say to the servant plowing or to the one tending sheep, 'Pass by, recline' (where it is understood that no one reclines unless they have passed by; moreover, even Moses passed by in order to see a great sight); therefore, if you do not say to your servant, 'Recline,' but you demand something else from him and do not give thanks to him, likewise the Lord does not allow the use of works or labor to belong to you alone; for as long as we live, we must always be working.

Verse 17. Therefore recognize yourself to be a servant overwhelmed with many acts of obedience. Do not consider yourself superior because you are called the Son of God: grace must be acknowledged, but nature must not be ignored. Do not boast if you have served well, for you should have done so. The sun obeys, the moon complies, the angels serve. You are a chosen vessel of the Gentiles by the Lord. 'I am not worthy to be called an apostle,' he says, 'because I persecuted the Church of God' (I Cor. XV, 9). Then, elsewhere, not showing himself conscious of any guilt, he added: 'But I am not justified by this' (I Cor. IV, 4). And so let us not seek praise from ourselves, nor steal God's judgment, nor prevent the judgment of God, but let us reserve it for its own time, its own judgment. After this, the ungrateful are reprehended: and thus finally comes the discussion of the future judgment.

(Vers. 31, 32.)

(v. 31, 32) In that hour, whoever is on the rooftop, and their belongings are in the house, should not go down to take them; and likewise, whoever is in the field should not turn back. Remember Lot's wife.

33. Asked by the disciples when the kingdom of God would come, the Lord said: The kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21); certainly by the truth of grace, not by the servitude of sin. Therefore, whoever wants to be free, let him be a servant in the Lord; for in the part in which we participate in servitude, we also participate in the kingdom. So He said: The kingdom of God is within you; but as for when it would come, He did not want to say, but He said that the day of judgement would come; so that He would instill fear in all about the impending judgement and not bring about a false sense of security through delay.

34. And so as not to appear to sadden the disciples if he denied them anything, he said in another book: But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but the Father (Matthew 24:36). He wisely placed the Son in the middle, for he is both the Son of Man and the Son of God; so that we may consider it more fitting to say according to the Son of Man, because he knows the end of times not by the nature of man, but by the nature of God. Nevertheless, it is not contrary to faith if you understand the Son to be God. For what is it that the good Father has hidden from the Son, to whom He has given all things? Or how did He not give the knowledge of time, to whom He gave the power of judgment itself? But how can the Son not know what the Father knows when the Son is in the Father, and the Spirit searches even the depths of God (John

14:11), since the Son himself is the height of the riches of wisdom and knowledge of God (1 Corinthians 2:10)? But why does He refuse to say, He explains in another place: 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has set by His own authority' (Acts 1:7).

35. Do you see where he who denies the Trinity of one power tends, so that there is something that the Son does not know? For why would the Father hide his very own Son? For either out of envy we do not want to reveal to others what we know, or perhaps we will be betrayed: but neither does suspicion fall on the envious one from the Father, nor on the betrayer from the Son. Therefore they have the same knowledge, because they have the same power. Furthermore, he who knows the signs of the future judgment certainly knows the end as well.

36. (Verse 24.) For what is it that he does not know, as a shining lightning, since the Son of God, as the light, illuminates the inner mystery of heaven? In that, he says, hour. Therefore, he knows the hour: but he knows it for himself, he does not know it for me. But he correctly asserts that the cause of the flood, the fire, and the judgment has emerged from our sins; because God did not create evil, but our own merits have brought it upon ourselves.

(Vers. 27.)

(Verse 27.) For they ate and drank; they led wives and married.

37. Not because marriages are condemned, nor so that food is condemned; since in them there are successions, in these there are supports of nature; otherwise it must be departed from this world: but in all things a measure is sought; however, whatever is in excess is from evil. Let there be some agreement for a time, so that we may devote ourselves to prayer: let there be some balance between the anxieties of the world, and the sobriety of religion in contrast to the excesses of indulgence, and the truce of chastity (I Cor. VII, 5).

Therefore, because of the wicked, it is necessary for the righteous in this age to endure contrition of heart and soul, so that they may receive a more abundant reward in the future. They are equipped with remedies, in order that those who are in Judea may flee to the mountains (Matthew 24:16). What is this Judea? For I know another Judea according to the spirit, not according to the letter: For God is known in Judea (Psalm 76:1). But what are these mountains that can hold back the fear of the coming judgment, when it is written: The mountains quaked at his presence (Isaiah 64:3)? Heaven and earth will pass away (Luke 21:33): how can a portion of the earth remain immune, or be able to protect me, when it cannot even protect itself? Where then shall I hide from His wrath, He who stirs up the depths of the sea? If I ascend to heaven, there He is; if I descend to the depths of hell, there He is (Psalm 139:8). Therefore, one cannot deceive Him who is everywhere, but one can appease Him.

39. Therefore, the day of judgment is approaching: if you do not want to be apprehended, fear every day, flee every day. You ask how to flee? Ascend to the mountain where you proclaim Zion (Isaiah 40:9): so that you may rise above the heights of merits. For God is the God of mountains, and not the God of valleys (1 Kings 20:28). Ascend to where Christ sits at the right hand of God, whose foundations are on the holy mountains (Psalm 87:1), and the mountains are around Him (Psalm 125:2). Your mountain is Paul, your mountain is Peter. Place the footprint of your mind above their faith. In the law of God and the inheritance of faith, judgment day does not find punishment, but glory.

40. If anyone is also placed in a high position, that is, the upper part of his house, and he ascends the summit of lofty virtues, he should not fall back into the earthly works of this world. For I know the roof in which that prostitute Rahab (Joshua 2:1ff.), by a mystery, hid the spies whom Jesus directed. It is the Church joined to the Gentiles in the fellowship of the sacraments, bound together with the people, among whom the explorers, who had been sent to capture them, would have been killed if they had descended to the lower parts of the house. Therefore, the roof is the lofty office of the mind, and the pinnacle of the soul, by which the naked weakness of the body is covered. Hence it seems to me that even that paralytic was healed (Mark 2:3) because he was lowered from the roof by four young men; because he submitted himself in a certain way, by the support of the virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice, to the feet of Christ. For nothing is higher than humility, which, as if superior, does not know how to be exalted, because no one desires what he judges to be beneath himself.

41. But since we are in court, let us not leave the house; lest while we desire to take away the vessels that are in the house, we be seized. For not in every house are there golden and silver vessels, but in many there are wooden ones: nor is every house full; for there are also empty ones, as the prophet knows, who said: What has happened to you now, that you have gone up into empty houses? The city is filled with those who cry out (Isaiah 22:1-2). And he adds: All your princes have fled, whoever were wounded in you, and have fallen from faith to betrayal. Sabellius was wounded, Valentinus was wounded, Arius was wounded; for they were found in an empty house.

42. Do you want to see a house full? Follow Peter, when he was hungry, walking towards the upper rooms of the house (Acts 10:9): there he understood the mystery of gathering the Church; in order not to judge the Gentile people as unclean, whom faith could cleanse from every contamination. But the vessels are made of clay: therefore the vessel is the body. And therefore, be careful not to abandon the noble pursuits of the mind for the desires of the body. If Peter did not understand the mystery placed in the lower things, how will you understand it? He accepted, because he ascended, to evangelize the Lord, not fearing the passion of the body.

Therefore, let the one who is on the roof not come down, and let the one who is in the field not turn back. How can I understand what the field is unless Jesus himself teaches me, saying: No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of heaven? The idle one sits in the villa, the industrious one sows in the field; the weak one is by the fire, the strong one is at the plow. The scent of the field is good; for the scent of the field is like the scent of a field full of Jacob. The field is full of flowers, full of various fruits. Therefore, plow your field if you want it to be guided towards God's kingdom. May there flourish for you a fertile crop of good merits. May the vine abound on the sides of your house, and newly planted olive trees around your table (Psalms 127:3). Let your soul, aware of its fertility, say to Christ, and sown by God's word, also cultivated by spiritual practices: Come, my brother, let us go out into the field (Song of Songs 7:11). He responds: I entered into my garden, my sister, my bride: I gathered my myrrh (Cant. V, 1). For what is better than the vintage of faith, by which the fruit of resurrection is stored, by which the fountain of eternal joy is watered?

Therefore, since you are prohibited from looking back, you are even more prohibited from returning and removing your tunic; for you have understood that you should forgive the one who

asks for your tunic and your cloak. (Matthew 5:40) Therefore, in your direct pursuit of God's kingdom, do not seek wealth and worldly possessions. Scripture also knows another tunic, of which the Apostle exhorts us, saying: Put off the old self with its practices and put on the new self. (Colossians 3:9-10) Let us not seek the garment of error from the previous tunic. And she also said: I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on again? (Song of Solomon 5:3) You should not only renounce your sins, but also erase all memory of your previous actions. Indeed, Paul, forgetting the past, cast off guilt and did not neglect repentance. (Philippians 3:13).

45. And therefore the Lord said: Be mindful of Lot's wife; who, because she looked back, lost her natural gift; for Satan is behind, Sodom is behind. Therefore flee intemperance, avoid licentiousness. And that you may know that not all can flee to the mountain, remember that he who did not turn away from old ways (for he had chosen Sodom before) escaped, because he reached the mountain (Gen. XIX, 30): she who was weaker, because she looked back, could not reach the mountain with the help of her husband's support, but she remained.

(Vers. 34.)

(Verse 34.) In that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

He said 'Good night,' because the Antichrist is the hour of darkness; because he spreads darkness in the hearts of men, when he claims to be Christ. There are false prophets who assert that Jesus now lives in the deserts, in order to deceive those who are wandering in error of opinion. And now, in secret, those who have heard are restrained by the high name of authority. But Christ, shining like a lightning, scatters the balls of his light throughout the whole world. And so, he does not wander in the deserts, nor is he confined to any places, because I fill heaven and earth, says the Lord (Jeremiah 23:24); but he shines with the brightness of his glory, so that we may see the glory of the resurrection in that night. Therefore, what does he mean when he says:

(Vers. 35.)

(Verse 35.) Two in one bed. . . . two grinding in a mill. . . two in the field: one will be taken, and the other left?

47. Is God unjust, that he distinguishes by equal zeal and society of living, and indiscriminate in quality of actions, by the reward of merits? It is not so, but the quality of the reward is according to the actions of man. Therefore, the merits of human union and the use of it are not equal: for both the Father and the Son rise up in the zeal of religion; because not all who begin are made perfect: But he who perseveres to the end, he shall be saved (Matthew 10:22). Then the Lord examines not the outward obedience, but the inner affection; for if you offer justly but do not divide justly, the sacrifice is not accepted by God (Genesis IV, 7). Therefore, from one bed (for it is the bed of human weakness, as it is written (Psalm XL, 4): You have turned all his bed in his sickness), one is left behind, the other is taken up: the one who is taken up is carried towards Christ in the air; but the one who is left behind is disapproved.

48. Two women grinding at the mill. Indeed, it seems that they symbolize those who seek hidden nourishment and bring forth what is within. However, what these two women are grinding needs to be investigated. Unless, perhaps, it is what we read in Isaiah: 'Bring no more vain oblations;

incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting' (Isaiah 1:13). Let us therefore discuss what they grind, what they grind, and what the mill represents. And perhaps this world is like a mill, in which I think the form of the human body is better represented, in which our soul is imprisoned like in a physical prison, producing celestial bread if it consults the good. In this mill or synagogue, or the soul subject to sins, the wetted and corrupted wheat, cannot separate the inner from the outer; and therefore it is left behind because its likeness displeased. But the holy Church, or the soul untainted by any contamination of sins, which grinds such wheat that it is parched by the heat of eternal suns, which God has clothed as he willed, and angels have purified from every stain of impurity, offering a good likeness to God of the innermost parts of mankind, commends the libations of its sacrifice.

49. Not only will there be two grinding, but also two working in one field, from which one will be taken. The good sower, who sows not only on the roads, but also on the plowed and cultivated soil, so that he may multiply the fruit pressed by humility, not scattered by boasting on the earth. However, there remains the sower of weeds, from which an easily refutable likeness is produced. We can find out who these different farmers are if we consider in what way the Apostle said that there are two voices, that is, two minds in us; perhaps because one is external, belonging to the corruptible man, and the other is internal, renewed through the sacraments. And he, perhaps worse off, who is vainly puffed up in his mind, not holding the head; because he deviates from the observation of the salutary precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ; for He is the head of all, who is the author of all. The other is more excellent, who loves humility, seeks wisdom, does not neglect mercy; the good sower, in particular; For he dispersed, he gave to the poor, his righteousness endures forever (Psalm 111:9). Therefore, here is the spiritual one, that is the carnal one. For just as we understand from the words of the Apostle that he praises himself, the deceiver, with an inflated mind of the flesh (Colossians 2:18); so also we show that the holy man is renewed in the spirit of his mind, as the same author says: But be renewed in the spirit of your mind (Ephesians 4:23). Therefore, he demonstrates that there are two minds; one, which becomes the mind of the flesh, is bound by sin; the other, which is united to the spirit, renounces the allurements of the flesh.

50. There are not only two minds but also two laws within us, both of which the Apostle explained to us, saying: For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members (Rom. VII, 22 et 23). Therefore, there is a law of the inner man and also a law of the outer man; the former prohibits sin, the latter persuades it; the former condemns error, the latter suggests it; the former instructs the mind, the latter tempts it. There are also two other laws within us, one of God and the other of sin, according to the same Apostle who says: Therefore, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin (Ibid., 25). And it is shown that if you only mention the mind, you reveal the contrary of the flesh; for when Paul says that he serves the law of God with his mind, he certainly demonstrates that the mind, if not overcome by the flesh, is good and created by nature to resist error. Therefore, when the flesh is conquered, it is the mind that is conquered, not having its origin in nature, but in the flesh, which is prone to failure; and as if in the name and property of the conqueror, it yields to the conquered; however, the nature of the flesh is opposed to the mind. In conclusion, we serve God

with our mind, and sin with our flesh. But the mind will be better if it does not cease to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in its religious duty. So these are the ones working in our field, of whom one gives good fruit through diligence, while the other loses it through neglect, which the Lawgiver calls blood, saying: 'The life of all flesh is its blood' (Leviticus 17:14). This is also the reason why some interpret the words: 'You shall not eat flesh with its blood' (Genesis 4:9); so that we may consider the pleasures of the body, stained with wounds of the soul, as food for nourishment rather than as a guilt for blood, which should be restored by the word of God. Therefore it is the food of nourishment, it is the food of blood; for just as the flesh of the Lord is truly food, so our blood is truly drink (De Consec. dist. 2, cap. In quibus, § Est cibus). Therefore, let us offer to the Lord a good food from our works; lest when He comes again, and does not find fruit on that fig tree, He turns away from the barrenness of our merits, fasting from the intended piety, saying to that soul which He finds naked of fruits, and stained with bloody blood: May there never be fruit born from you forever (Matthew 21:19). Therefore, the soul is in every part of the body. The soul is also superior, of which God said: All my souls are: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son (Ezek. XVIII, 4). Nor let us pass over this, that we interpret two peoples, that is, which is most frequently compared to this world's field, as two peoples, one of believers, the other not believing, who are about to report the work of their merits; and thus let the one who is faithful be assumed; let the one who is faithless be abandoned. But those two women, two souls, or rather the Church and the Synagogue; for it is wont to be not only one figure, but manifold in divine writings, so that one discourse can comprehend multiple meanings. Therefore, the mind of the flesh, and the soul of the flesh, and the synagogue collect that wheat and grind it into a similar form, which is offered in vain. However, the mind that is joined to the soul, and the soul that is the receiver of the saving word, or the Church of God, cultivate and grind the true likeness of the spiritual law. From this, the loaves of presentation are made, which only priests eat, to whom it is prescribed to eat the purer bread (Leviticus 24:8), that bread, certainly, which came down from heaven (John 6:31). But we are all, if our merits endure, priests of righteousness, who are consecrated by the anointing of joy into the kingdom and priesthood. So let us work and cultivate our field in this task of cultivation that we have been assigned; so that in that higher Jerusalem, where the true observance of the law is celebrated, we may have a likeness of our sheaves, which the blessed ones who are able to gather may bring in joy, carrying their sheaves (Psalm 126:6). These, therefore, are spiritual fruits, and the happy true yield of labor, which are not soaked with any useless rain: but the fruit of the flesh is subject to corruption; and therefore, whoever sows carnal things will also reap carnal things (2 Corinthians 9:6). But what should I say about the field, when it is evident in the work of the farmer whether it is praise or blame?

(Vers. 36)

(Verse 36) And they answered, saying: where, Lord?

54. The disciples spoke this: But the Lord, when he warned them both where to flee and where to stay, and what to avoid, encompassed the whole with a general definition, saying:

(Vers. 37)

(Verse 37) Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

Therefore, first let us consider what eagles are, so that we can define the body. For the souls of the just are compared to eagles, because they seek the heights, leave behind the lowly, and are said to live a long life. Hence, David says of his soul: Your youth will be renewed like the eagle's (Psalm 103:5). Therefore, if we understand eagles, we cannot doubt the body, especially if we remember that Joseph received the body from Pilate (John 19:38). Do not the eagles seem to you to be around the body of Mary Cleophae, and Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of the Lord, and the gathering of the apostles around the burial of the Lord? Do not the eagles seem to you to be around the body, when the Son of Man comes with intelligible clouds: And every eye shall see him, and those who pierced him (Apoc, I, 7)?

56. There is also (De Consecr., dist. 2, cap. In quibus, § Est etiam) a body of which it is said: my flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink (John VI, 56). Concerning this body there are eagles, which fly around with spiritual wings. There are also around the body eagles that believe Jesus came in the flesh; because every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God (I John IV, 7). Where there is faith, there is sacrament, there is a place of holiness. The Church is also a body, in which we are renewed in spirit through the grace of baptism, and the old age of senility is restored to renewed youth.

(Chap. XVIII. — Vers. 16.)

(Chapter 18, Verse 16) Allow the children to come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.

57. However, this age is weak in strength, lacking in intelligence, immature in wisdom: therefore, it is not preferred over another age, otherwise it would hinder growth. What need is there for wishes to obtain maturity of life, if heavenly reward is going to take away the merit of the kingdom from me? Therefore, God has given the course of life to vices, not to the growth of virtue. And why did He choose the apostles not in their childhood, but in more advanced age? And why does He say that children are fit for the kingdom of heaven? Perhaps because they do not know wickedness, they do not know how to deceive, they dare not to report, they are ignorant of wealth, honor, and ambition. But virtue is not to ignore these things, but to despise them; praise for self-control is not where there is integrity of weakness. Therefore, it is not childhood, but the goodness of emulating childlike simplicity that is indicated. For it is not the virtue of not being able to sin, but of not wanting to, and thus holding steadfastness of will, so that the will imitates infancy, as use imitates nature. Finally, the Savior himself expressed this, saying: Unless you are converted and become like this child, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:8).

58. Who then is the boy to be imitated by the apostles of Christ, perhaps one of the little ones? Therefore, is this the virtue of the apostles? Who then is the boy? Perhaps he is the one of whom Isaiah says: 'For a child is born to us, a son is given to us' (Is. IX, 6)? For this boy himself said to you: 'Take up your cross and follow me' (Matt. XVI, 24). And so that you may recognize the boy: When he was cursed, he did not curse in return; when he was struck, he did not strike back (I Pet. II, 23); for this is perfect virtue. And so, in childhood there is a certain venerable old age of character, and in old age there is an innocent childhood. For old age is venerable, not because it is long-lasting or calculated by the number of years, but because the senses of a person are wise, and the life of old age is blameless. Therefore it is written: Praise the Lord, O children, praise the name of the Lord; for no one praises the Lord unless they are perfect. For no one can say 'Lord

Jesus' except in the Holy Spirit.

59. It seems to be prophesying about the people of the Church, who surpassed the older people of the Jews in their zeal for virtue. And therefore it says: Behold, I and the children whom you have given me (Isaiah VIII, 18). These are the children who, following the Lord riding on the foal of a donkey with prophetic voices, said that the redemption of the nations had come (Matthew XXI, 15): these are the children or infants who drank from the breasts of Christ with a fuller draught of wine. From the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have established praise. (Psalm 8:3).

60. Therefore, it can seem harsh and unkind to some that the disciples were prohibiting the little children from approaching the Lord, unless you understand either the mystery or the affection; for they were not doing this out of a harshness of mind towards the children, but out of diligent obedience, they were offering services to the Lord so that he would not be overwhelmed by the crowds. Finally, it is written elsewhere: Master, the crowds are pressing in on you (Luke 7:45). Our usefulness must indeed be rejected when it is an injury to divinity. Therefore, let us flee pride and embrace childlike simplicity; for truth is the adversary of pride, while simplicity aligns with truth and is exalted in humility itself. For God does not dwell in a haughty heart, as the prophets have taught us: 'The throne of power is exalted' (Jerem. XVII, 12), namely, in one whose wisdom is elevated to the heights of truth. Let us not hide deceit in the guise of a brother, like Cain; rather, let us be a brother outwardly and inwardly. These things are in effect. However, in the mystery, because they were eager to save the Jewish people, from whom they were also born according to the flesh, they even pleaded for the Canaanite woman (Matt. XV, 23). Therefore, they knew the mystery, that the call would be given to both peoples, but perhaps they still did not know the order.

Now pay attention to the distance between the words. When He commands infants to approach so that He may bless them either by preaching or by the laying on of hands, He calls them children. When He instructs us not to cause them to stumble (Matt. XVIII, 6), He calls them little ones; for those who are touched by Christ are not caused to stumble, and those who draw near to Christ do not falter; but those who are little not in age but in virtue stumble. At the same time He also teaches that the weak should not be tested; lest their sins be turned against us, for though they themselves may be weak in virtue, they are raised up by the prayers of the angels. Therefore, let no one mock the poor, for it angers the one who created them: let no one test the weak, lest they harm the angels: let no one cause the helpless to fall, lest they undo the work of the Redeemer's grace. (Prov. XII, 5). And therefore he said: Woe to this world because of scandals (Matthew XVIII, 7); because many judged the cross of the Lord as a scandal, when the humility of the Lord's passion is the sacrament of salvation; so that we may adore the function of virtue, let us take the example of humility. Therefore, woe to him who does not believe in the cross of the Lord, by which the weak are scandalized: It is expedient for him that a millstone be hanged about his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea (Matthew XVIII, 6).

63. In the divine Scriptures, we must examine not the order of words, but the weight of things; for it is more effective to restrain sins by a certain strange and deformed pomp of punishment. Nevertheless, lest also a scandal be generated for the weak from this, we consider the donkey mill placed alongside as not being placed there in vain, the neck of a man in the depths of the sea. For when the Gentile people have received the figure of a donkey, does it not seem to you that they continue to turn the donkey mill as long as they are twisted in the error of their ignorance, bound

indeed by the chains of their nature, seeking the word, seeking God: but they are suffused with the blindness of a covered mind; they do not know how to raise the face of their soul towards God, and to open the eyes of their heart? And therefore, without any eagerness of speed, often returning to its own footprints, it reluctantly labors for the use of others. However, the one who turns the millstone, sometimes has an end to their work and carries the hope of removing blindness; but the millstone that is hung around the neck carries the stone of him who refused to bear the yoke of the Lord. Therefore, the donkey to the mill, the blind to the stone, the pagan to the rock, he worships him whom he does not see, nor recognize: for God does not dwell in things made by hand, nor is He known in stone, but in the spirit.

64. Therefore, both the people and the Gentile and Jewish nations are exposed to a certain parade of this discourse, but a more severe punishment is decreed against the Jews. For the memory of the Gentiles in this age will be overwhelmed by the waves, and they will be obliterated by the filth of this world, who wanted to exist among things that do not exist, and being alienated from the knowledge of God, they are as if drowned in the deep sea. But the Jews, who were chosen through the patriarchs, marked by circumcision, and educated through the Law, will not perish as unknown, but will be punished as sacrilegious. For truly, the unknown God to the Athenians, known but not accepted in Judea (Acts 17:23). And therefore, he who is ignorant will be ignored; he who transgresses will be condemned; and he who is unaware of his own author will not be freed from guilt, and he who does not receive the Lord will not be granted forgiveness. However, it is more tolerable to not offer faith to Christ than to bring harm upon him (Psalm 75:2).

(Vers. 18, 19.)

(Verse 18, 19.) Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

65. A clever question and therefore a sharp response. For that chief tempter said that the good teacher should have said that God is good. For even though goodness is in the divinity, and divinity is in goodness (for no one is good except God alone, but every human being is a liar (Psalm 116:11), and whatever is a liar, is certainly not good), nevertheless by adding, 'Good teacher,' he said good in part, not in entirety; for God is good in entirety, but human beings only in part. Therefore the Lord says: What good do you say about me, whom you deny as God? What good do you say, when no one is good except God alone? Therefore he does not deny himself as good, but designates himself as God. For what is good, if not full of goodness? But when it is written: There is no one who does good, not even one (Psalm 14:2), it is certainly spoken of humans, not of God; for God is one, not one among many (Deuteronomy 6:4); so too the Son of God is taken as unique, not as one among many; he is the only begotten, not one among the begotten. And for this reason, no one who is good does harm to Christ; because no one judges Christ. For no one is called in common with us, but nothing is common to Christ with us.

66. And if anyone is moved because No one is good except one God, let him also be moved by this, that no one is good except God. And if the Son is not excluded from God, certainly Christ is not excluded from the good. But since in God the Son is another person, but one in power, for there is one God from whom are all things, and one Lord through whom are all things (1 Corinthians 8:6); and yet God and Lord are not two gods, but one God, for your Lord God is one

Lord (Deuteronomy 6:4); certainly since according to majesty God is one in both persons, and one good in both. For how can one who is not good be born from the good? For a good tree produces good fruit (Matthew 7:17). How can one who is not good, when the substance of goodness assumed from the Father does not degenerate in the Son, which did not degenerate in the Spirit? And therefore, your good Spirit will lead me on the right path (Psalm 143:11). And if the good Spirit who received from the Son is good, surely the one who handed it over is also good. And since the Father is good, surely he is also good who has all that the Father has. But if you deny that the Son has goodness, you also deny the Father (John 17:10).

67. Clear reasoning does not need examples, yet you should also follow the authority of the Scriptures; for it is written: 'The Lord is the righteous judge of the house of Israel' (Isaiah 33:22). Does it speak of the Son or of the Father? But the Father judges no one; for He has given all judgment to the Son (John 5:22). Therefore, the Son is the righteous Lord. Consider another thing: those who come to baptism confess the Trinity; for they are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they confess the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when it is said: Confess to the Lord, for he is good (Ps. 135:1), he is truly good Father, good Son, good Holy Spirit, but God is one; for the Lord is good to those who wait for him (Lam. 3:25). Is he not good who gives good things to the soul that seeks him? Is he not good, who satisfies your soul with good things (Ps. 103:5)? Is he not good, who says: I am the good shepherd (John 10:11)?

68. But do you think God is good for this reason, because he has no need to take revenge? (Above, no. 67). Although it has already been said that the judge is good for the house of Israel, elsewhere you have: How good God is to those with upright hearts! (Ps. LXXII, 1)! Therefore, about whom do you think this is said, about the Father or about the Son? If about the Father, then he is not good to everyone. Why then do you diminish the Son? If about the Son, then you confess that God and the Son are good; for he is the Blessed God of Israel, because he has visited and accomplished the redemption of his people. (Luke I, 68). He is the king and God of Israel, to whom it is said: Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the king of Israel (John 1:49). Therefore, he says here: Since you cannot understand my goodness, which you test, why do you call me good? I am indeed good, but to the righteous in heart, to whom it is natural to be good, not through cunning. Therefore, the Son is good, for he is the brightness of eternal light, and the spotless mirror of God's majesty, and the image of His goodness (Wisdom 7:26). Therefore, how can someone be not good, who is an image of goodness? Just as God is the image of God, but one God, so too is the divine image of goodness, good, but one goodness. It is certainly useful for me to believe in the good God, whom I will have as the judge of my sins. Let those who do not want to believe in the good God see for themselves. Therefore, because this person who is testing is knowledgeable in the law, as is shown in another book, he rightly said: No one is good, except God (Mark 10:18), to remind us that it is written: You shall not test the Lord your God (Deuteronomy 6:16), but rather confess to the Lord, For he is good (Psalm 136:1).

69. (Verse 21.) Finally, he often criticizes him, for he boasts in the law that he has kept everything since his youth; in order to expose his empty boast, he shows him that he still lacks what the Law requires. And therefore, he is led to the command of mercy with sadness, so that a certain natural form of judgment is given against him.

(Vers. 25.)

(Verse 25.) It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

70. Great power, great weight in words. For with what other words could one express more vigorously that one should not boast of being rich in one's wealth than with such words by which it is defined as against nature to be a wealthy merciful person? Take away from me the allurements and deceit of words, which usually weaken the meaning. That person should not have been pleased but broken, who rejected mercy. However, if some people are more delighted by the embellishments of words than by a strong and natural meaning and form, which seekers of good do in choosing a wife, in order to examine their character, not their beauty; nor are they turned away by appearance, when they are provoked by virtue of character: even they should seek a mystery in words, which is a certain mind and soul of words; nor should they separate words in the mystery.

Therefore, the camel is accepted as a symbol of the Gentile people, whom that lion is seeking to devour, burdened with the treasure of prophetic visions into the desert: for in tribulation and distress, the lion and the lion's cub, asp vipers and the offspring of flying asps, were carrying their riches on donkeys and camels (Isaiah XXX, 6). And the camel is well represented as a figure of the Gentile people; because degenerating with the deformity of superstition, before the people of the nations believed, it presented the appearance of a beastly ugliness, absurd footprints, and disgusting faces. Therefore, that sinner entered more easily through the narrow way (which is the way of Christ, who, by the passion of his own body's death, opened again like a needle torn pieces of our natural garment) than the rich people of the Jewish law, poor(in faith, steeped in rage, disgraceful in crime.

72. It can also be understood morally about every sinner and about the arrogant rich man. Does it not seem to you that the publican, burdened by the consciousness of his sins, when he did not dare to lift his eyes to God (Luke 18:13), entered the remedy of his own confession more easily, like a camel through the eye of a needle, than that Pharisee entered the kingdom of God, arrogant in prayer, boasting of his innocence, presuming on glory, reproaching mercy, preaching himself, accusing others: who would be more fitting to come before the Lord than to ask? Therefore, if someone is disgusted by a camel, let them be disgusted by someone who is even more hideous than a camel.

(Vers. 20.)

(Verse 20) Honor your father and mother.

73. Today the beginning of the Law is read beautifully to me, as it is the anniversary of my ordination; every year the priesthood seems to begin anew when the age of time is renewed. It is also good that it is read: Honor your father and mother (Exodus XX, 12). For you are my parents, who have brought me to the priesthood: you, I say, are both children and parents: children individually, parents collectively; for I am glad to call you either my children or parents, because you hear and do the word of God: children, because it is written: Come, children, listen to me (Psalm XXXIII, 12): parents, because the Lord Himself said: Who is my mother or my brothers? My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it (Luke 8:21). So then the

Law which had foretold: You shall love the Lord your God and you shall love your neighbor, added: Honor your father and your mother. For this is the first step of piety; for God wanted these to be your authors. Honor them with obedience, in order to abstain from insults, because even by a look piety towards parents is hurt. But it is not enough to not hurt, because the Law foresaw that they should not suffer injury: for whoever curses his father or mother, shall be put to death (Exod. XXI, 17): honor them, that you may be good. It is one thing to receive the benefit of the law, another to fulfill the duty of piety. Honor your own, because the Son of God honored His own. For you have read, 'And he was subject to them' (Luke 2:51): if God, being a servant, obeyed His parents, how much more should you obey yours? Therefore, Christ honored Joseph and Mary not out of obligation of nature, but out of the duty of piety. He also honored God the Father, as no one could honor Him, by being obedient even unto death. Therefore, you should also honor your parents. But honor is not only for honor, but also for generosity: Honor widows who are truly widows (1 Tim. V, 3). For honor is to give due to merit. Feed your father, feed your mother. And if you have fed your mother, you have not yet paid back the pains, the torments she has suffered for you: you have not repaid the services she has borne for you: you have not repaid the nourishment she has given you with tender affection of piety, nourishing your lips with her breasts: you have not repaid the hunger she has endured for you; so that she would not eat anything harmful to you, nor drink anything harmful to milk. She fasted for you, she ate for you, she did not accept the food she desired for you, she took the food she did not desire for you, she stayed awake for you, she wept for you: and do you allow her to be in need? Oh son, how much judgment you take upon yourself if you do not feed your parent! You owe to her what you have, to whom you owe what you are. How much judgment, if the Church feeds those whom you refuse to feed! If anyone is faithful, he says, or if anyone has widows, let him assist them; so that the Church may not be burdened, but may suffice for those who are truly widows (1 Timothy 5:16). This is about strangers: what about parents?

76. We spoke recently not without reason, because we were touched by our mother's complaint: but we preferred to admonish publicly rather than to punish privately. And if he is not exposed by our voice, he is ashamed at least by his own affection. Do not pity, my son, that other people's hunger feeds your parents: do not pity, my son, that the poor seek food from your parents' fasting. Whether for the sake of gratitude and salvation, or for the sake of shame, feed yourself, my son, or you, my daughter. Are you not ashamed that when you enter the Church, an old mother extends her hands for alms, while you pass by with your head held high, casting glances with your eyes, trailing your clothing, wearing earrings, and rings, and all the other things that Isaiah mentions (Isa. III, 16 et seq)? What if she were to turn her talk towards you, demanding the debt of nature, the price of nourishment, that which is owed to a mother's hand? Quid respondebis? Will you give to others? What if they say to you: Go, first feed your mother. For even if they are poor, they do not seek impiety in exchange. Have you not heard above that the rich man, reclining in fine linen and purple, from whose table Lazarus gathered crumbs, is tormented with eternal punishment for not sharing food with the poor (Luke 16:19 et seq.)? If it is not burdensome to give to strangers, how much more burdensome is it to exclude parents? But you say that you prefer to confer with your parents, you would rather contribute to the Church. God does not seek a gift from the hunger of parents. Therefore, in response to the Jews who criticized the disciples of the Lord for not washing their hands, Jesus said: Whoever speaks: Whatever gift is from me, it will benefit you, it will not honor the father or mother (Matthew XV, 5 and 6).

78. Therefore, we wisely avoided the obscurity of meaning. For the Jews, when they follow the tradition of men, neglect the commandments of God; but the disciples, preferring the tradition of God, neglected the commands of men, such as washing their hands when they ate bread. For, the one who is completely clean does not need to wash his hands (John 13:10). Jesus had washed them, they did not seek another washing; for by one Baptism, Christ has done away with all baptisms. Therefore, whoever is washed in the Church has no need to be washed again. Thus the disciples were focused on the mystery, seeking not the cleanliness of the body but of the soul. The Jews criticized this, but they are cleverly rebuked by the Lord for observing empty traditions while neglecting things that are beneficial. And so He says to them: Why do you say to your father or mother, whom the Law commands you to honor: Whatever gift you would have received from me is beneficial to you (Exodus 20:12); that is, when a father or mother, fearing the Law, asks for something from their son because they are in need of support, the Jew typically seeks an excuse for not giving and says: Whatever gift you would have received from me is beneficial to you, so that a religious father might refrain from accepting money given to God from his children. This tradition of men is an excuse for those who conceal their greed. But the tradition of God is that you should first feed your parents. (Dist. 86, chap. Caeterum) For if, according to the divine oracle, insult to a parent is paid for by death (Exod. XXI, 17), how much more so hunger, which is a graver death! In what place does the Lord rein in the insolence of boasting? For many, as they are preached by men, contribute to the Church, which takes away from their own possessions; whereas mercy should proceed from domestic duty of piety. Therefore, first give to your parent, also give to the poor, give to that priest what earthly things abound to you, so that you may receive from him spiritual things that are lacking to you; for he who honors will be honored. Therefore, see that when he receives, he hands over: and he receives not as one in need, but as one who will repay with a greater measure. Give rest to the poor, so that you, communicating of your own poverty, may obtain rest. But as the Scripture says about feeding one's parents (Luke 14:26): so for the sake of God, parents should be left behind if they hinder the affections of a devoted mind.

(Vers. 35.)

(Verse 35.) And it came to pass, when he was near Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the road.

80. In the second book of Matthew, two instances are mentioned (Matt. XX, 30), one here: as Jericho is being left, another there: as Jericho is being approached. But there is no difference; for although in this one instance the representation is of a Gentile people who receive the light of lost sight by means of the Lord's sacrament, it makes no difference whether he receives the healing in one instance or in two instances; since the authors, who trace their descent from the sons of Noah, Ham and Japheth, show two instances of their own kind in two blind men.

81. What Luke also seems not to have omitted, when he mentions Zacchaeus, who was of short stature, that is, lacking in the innate dignity of nobility, insignificant in merits, like the people of nations, desired to see the Lord's Savior, whom they had not received. But no one easily sees Jesus, no one can see Jesus as established on earth. And because he did not have prophets, he did not have a kingdom, he ascended in favor of his natural beauty among the sycamores, trampling on the vanity of the Jews, and correcting the errors of the previous age: and for this reason, he received Jesus in the inner house as a guest. And he went up a tree to make the good tree produce good fruits, and being naturally cut out from the wild olive tree, and contrary to

nature, grafted into the good olive tree, he was able to bring forth the fruit of the Law; for the root is holy, and if the branches are useless, the people of the Gentiles surpass their fruitless glory by faith in the resurrection, as if by a kind of elevation of the body.

(Chap. XIX. — Vers. 2.)

(Chapter 19, Verse 2) And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus.

82. Zacchaeus in the sycamore, a blind man on the road. The Lord expects to have mercy on one, he honors the other with the glory of his dwelling: he interrogates the one he is about to heal, he invites himself to the one he will not be invited to; for he knew that there would be a generous reward from his host, but even if he had not yet heard the voice of the inviter, he had heard his affection.

83. But lest we seem to have quickly abandoned that blind man, as if he were a despised beggar, and passed on to the wealthy man, let us wait for him, because the Lord has waited for us: let us question him, because Christ has questioned us. Let us question him, because we do not know: he questioned, because he knew: let us question, so that we may know from where this man has been healed: he questioned, so that we may learn from many in one how we may deserve to see the Lord; he questioned, so that we may believe that the unconfessing cannot be healed. And immediately he saw him, and he followed him, magnifying the Lord. . . . And he went about in Jericho (Chapter 18, verse 43).

84. For he would not see otherwise, unless he followed Christ, unless he preached the Lord, unless he passed by the world. Let us also return to favor with the wealthy; for we do not want to offend the wealthy, because we want, if possible, to heal all; so that, not being preoccupied with the comparison of a camel, and not having abandoned Zacchaeus too quickly, they may not have a legitimate cause for offense.

85. It is not a crime to have abilities, but to not know how to use them; for wealth, like obstacles for the wicked, is a support for the virtuous. Certainly, Zacchaeus was chosen by Christ as rich; but by giving half of his wealth to the poor, and even by repaying four times what he had obtained by fraud (for one is not enough: generosity does not have grace if injustice persists; because gifts, not spoils, are sought), he received a more abundant reward than he bestowed.

86. (Verse 2.) And the prince is well introduced to the tax collectors. For who despairs of themselves when even he, who obtained his wealth through fraud, has arrived? And he himself says he's rich. So that you may know that not all rich people are greedy.

87. (Vers. 3.) What does it mean that Scripture expresses the stature of no other person except this one, because he was of low stature? See, lest perhaps he was of low malice or still of small faith; for he had not yet promised when he ascended, he had not yet seen Christ, and he was still of low merit. Finally, John was great because he saw both Christ and the Spirit descending like a dove and remaining upon Christ, as he himself says: I saw the Spirit descending like a dove, and remaining upon him (John 1:32).

88. But what crowd, if not the foolish confusion of the multitude, who cannot see the pinnacle of wisdom? Therefore, as long as Zacchaeus is in the crowd, he does not see Christ; he ascends above the crowd and sees; that is, surpassing the ignorant mob, he deserved to behold the one he

desired. Moreover, he added beautifully:

(Vers. 4.)

(Verse 4.) Because the Lord was going to pass through that part.

89. Whether he was under a fig tree or whether he was about to believe, in order to preserve the mystery and sow grace: for he had come to pass through the Jews to the Gentiles.

90. So Zachaeus looked up high; for now, by the height of faith, he stood out among the fruits of new works like a tree flourishing in its abundant altitude. And since we have shifted from type to moral meaning, it is pleasing to the many desires of believers to ease their minds on the Lord's day and mix in festivities. Zachaeus in the sycamore tree, indeed the new fruit of the new time, so that this may also be fulfilled: The fig tree has produced its thick branches (Song of Solomon 2:13); for this reason, Christ came, so that not fruits, but men would be born from trees. We read elsewhere: When you were under the fig tree, I saw you (John 1:48). Therefore, Nathanael was not under the tree, that is, above the root, because he is just; for the root is holy. However, Nathanael was under the tree, because he was under the Law; Zacchaeus was above the tree, because he was above the Law: the former hidden defender of the Lord, the latter public preacher. The former still sought Christ from the Law, the latter was already above the Law, leaving behind his own things and following the Lord.

(Verse 16) Behold, your mina has acquired ten minas.

91. As a good order, so that he would call the nations and order the killing of the Jews, who did not want Christ to rule over them, he sent this comparison ahead, so that it might not be said: He had given nothing to the Jewish people, from where could he become better; or what is demanded from someone who has received nothing? This is not a small amount, which the woman in the Gospel because she did not find, lit a lamp, and with the light, she searched, rejoicing when she found it (Luke 15:8).

92. (Verse 18.) Finally, out of ten minas one made another, and another five. Perhaps these have a moral meaning, because there are five senses of the body: those ten, being double, that is, the mystical and moral teachings of the Law. Hence, Matthew placed five talents and two talents (Matt. 25:15): the five talents to represent moral teachings, and the two talents to represent both mystical and moral teachings. Thus, the lower number is more productive. And here we can understand the ten minas as ten words, that is, the doctrine of the Law: the five minas as the teachings of the master's discipline. But I want the law to be perfect in all things; for the kingdom of God is not in speech but in virtue.

93. But indeed, because he speaks about the Jews, two alone are carrying multiplied money; not certainly of bronze, but of a dispute's interest. For the money of interest is one thing, the interest of heavenly doctrine is another.

Finally, when the Lord says, 'Why did you not put my money on the table?' (Matthew 25, 18), he seeks interest not on our money, but on his own.

95. One person hides himself within the earth, because he overwhelms the reason that was given to us, which leads to the image and likeness of God, with the pursuit of pleasure, and he hides

himself like a pit of flesh. As for others, they are silenced, who, like spendthrift debtors, have lost what they received. (Luke 20:10). In those two instances, there are only a few who have been appointed as vineyard workers twice: in the rest, all are Jews. (Matthew 24:18). Matthew also wanted to apply this comparison to us, that just as the rich person who does not share his wealth with the poor is likewise guilty, so too is the person who does not share the grace of his teaching with the inexperienced, even though he is able to teach, guilty of no small fault. (Book 5, On Faith, Chapter 1). Of which, since we have already spoken about in the books written concerning faith, it would be better to move on.

However, there can be ten cities, unless perhaps the souls to whom the Lord entrusts money and who have approved chaste words like silver, have lent money to the minds of men. For just as Jerusalem is said to be built like a city, so are peaceful souls. And just as angels preside, so do those who have earned the life of angels.

Book Nine

(Vers. 29, 30.)

(Verse 29, 30.) And it came to pass, when he came near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying: Go into the village opposite, in which when you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat.

1. Beautifully, the Jews having been left behind, the Lord ascended the temple, in which the Lord is worshipped not in letter, but in spirit. This is the true temple, in which the series of faith, not the structure of stones, founded. Therefore, those who hated are abandoned, and those who were loved are chosen.

2. And therefore he came to the Mount of Olives, to plant new olive trees with sublime virtue, whose mother is she who is above Jerusalem. In this mountain is that heavenly farmer, so that all planted in the house of God may be able to say individually: But I am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of the Lord (Psalm 51:10). And perhaps this mountain is Christ himself. For who else would bear such fruits of olive trees, not with the fertility of withering berries, but with the fullness of the Holy Spirit of fruitful nations? He himself is the one through whom we ascend, and the one to whom we ascend. He himself is the door, he himself is the way, who is opened and who opens, who is knocked upon by those entering, and adored by those departing.

Therefore, he was in the castle, and a colt was tied with a donkey: it could not be untied, except by the command of the Lord: the apostolic hand untied it: such an act, such a life, such grace. Be such that you can also untie the tied.

Now let us consider who those were, who, after their error was detected, were cast out of paradise and are confined in a castle. And you see how those whom death had expelled, life has restored. (Matthew 21:2). And therefore, according to Matthew, we read about both the donkey and the foal, so that just as both sexes were expelled in two individuals, both sexes are restored in two animals. Therefore, there, in the mother donkey, the error is figuratively represented as Eve; but here, in the foal, the universality of the gentile people is expressed; and therefore, the foal is placed upon the donkey.

5. And well: In which no one has sat; because no one before Christ called the nations to the Church. Finally, according to Mark, you have this: But no one has yet sat of the human race (Mk. XI, 2). However, he was bound by the chains of perfidy, held captive by injustice, serving in error to a false master: but he could not claim dominion over himself, whom he had made guilty not by nature, but by fault. And therefore, when the Lord is said to be one, he is understood to be alone; for there are many gods and many lords, but in a general sense: yet for us, there is only one God and one Lord. Therefore, although not explicitly expressed, the Lord is defined not by the addition of a person but by the totality of nature. But Marcus brought the bound man before the door (Mark. XI, 4); for whoever is outside Christ is on the way: but whoever is in Christ is not outside. In passing, he added, where there is no certain possession, there is no crib, no nourishment, no stable. Miserable servitude for whom the right is uncertain; for he has many masters who has none. They bind others to possess; he sets free in order to hold; for he knows that gifts are more powerful than chains. And not idle is that which the two disciples are directed, Peter to Cornelius, Paul to the others (Acts 10:23 and 13:3). And therefore he did not designate persons, but defined the number; however, if there is someone who demands persons, he can consider Philip whom the Spirit sent to Gaza (Acts 8:26), when he baptized the eunuch of the queen Candace, and from Azotus he sowed the word of the Lord in Caesarea through all the cities. And not to be overlooked is what he asserts should be sent back soon; because there were those who needed to be directed to preach the Lord Jesus in the territories of the Gentiles.

8. (Verse 34.) So they went and brought the colt: but they used not their own words, but that which Jesus had spoken. That you may know, that they did not infuse faith to the people of the Gentiles by their own speech, but by the word of God; and that the powers which claimed obedience from nations yielded to the divine command, not to their own authority, to the name of Christ.

9. (Verse 35.) And therefore the apostles also extended their own clothing to Christ, either so that they would prefer glory by preaching the gospel: for in divine Scriptures, clothing is often virtues, which also softens the hardness of the gentiles to some extent with its own virtue; so that they would offer diligent submission to the service of a blessed journey without offense. For the Lord of the world did not delight in being carried on the back of an ass in a public appearance: but in order to spread the hidden mystery within our minds, and to enter into the inner assembly of souls, as if infused with a certain body of divinity, governing the footsteps of the mind, restraining the recklessness of the flesh; so that, by the guidance of piety, he would subdue the accustomed affection of the Gentile people. Happy are those who have received such a guide in their inner heart! Truly happy are those whose mouths are not loose in endless speech, but are restrained by the reins of divine words!

10. What is this bridle, brothers? Who will teach me how to either restrain or release the mouths of men? That person showed me the bridle and said: 'Let speech be given to me to open my mouth' (Acts 9:5). Therefore, speech is a bridle, speech is a spur. And that is why it is hard for you to kick against the spur. This person taught us to open our hearts, to endure the spur, to bear the yoke. Let someone else teach us to endure the restraints of language. For the virtue of remaining silent is rarer than that of speaking. Let that one teach, who, like a mute, did not open their mouth against deceit (Psalm 37:14), prepared for scourges and not refusing beatings, in order to be a pious offering to God.

11. (Verse 36.) Learn to carry Christ from the home of God; for he carried you first, when as a shepherd he brought back the wandering sheep (Luke XV, 6): learn to earnestly lay down the burdens of your mind, learn to be under Christ, so that you can be above the world. Not everyone who easily carries Christ, but he who can say: I am greatly bowed down and humbled: I groaned because of the moaning of my heart (Psalm XXXVII, 9). And if you desire not to be moved, fix your footstep upon those garments of the saints that have been washed. Beware lest you walk with muddy feet, beware lest you leave the paths of prophetic ways with wayward steps; for in order to make the approach of future generations safer, those who went before Jesus to the temple of God paved the way with their own garments. So that you may walk without stumbling, the disciples of the Lord, stripping themselves of their own bodily habits, cleared a path for you through the obstacles of the crowd with their own martyrdom. However, if someone wishes to receive it in this way, we do not object, because that foal already walks on the garments of the Jews.

12. However, I would doubt what the scattered branches of trees (Matt. 21:8) mean, which certainly used to entangle the steps of those walking; unless the good farmer had taught me in earlier things, that now the axe has been placed at the roots of the trees, which, under the coming of the Lord of Salvation, cuts down the unfruitful ones and overthrows the empty glory of the nations, to be trampled underfoot by the feet of the faithful; so that with the spirit of a renewed mind, nations, like shoots of new trees, can sprout from the old with twigs.

13. So do not despise this donkey; for just as in the clothing of sheep there are rapacious wolves, so also within there is hidden a man of one heart under a bestial appearance; because within the outer garments of the body, which we share in common with animals, the mind, filled with God, prospers. That which pertains to the form of men was more clearly declared by the holy John, adding that they took palm branches for themselves: for the just man blooms like a palm tree. And therefore with the coming of Christ, the banners of righteousness were already being raised above the shoulders of men, and the emblems of triumph. Why does the crowd marvel at what it works? Even if it does not know what to marvel at; it marvels nonetheless because in that work wisdom sits, virtue remains, and justice adheres.

14. Also, do not despise that donkey, which once saw the angel of God (Num. 22:23), whom a man could not see. And she saw, and she reported, and she spoke; so that you may recognize that in later times, under the coming of the great angel of God, those Gentiles will speak before donkeys.

15. (Verse 37.) But we read that the crowds praised God beautifully according to Luke, as they ran to meet Him as He descended the mountain, in order to signify to themselves that the worker of the spiritual mystery had come to them from heaven. Therefore, the crowd recognizes God, calls Him king, repeats the prophecy (Psalm 117:24): Hosanna to the Son of David, that is, it declares that the long-awaited redeemer of the house of David, also according to the flesh, has come as the son of David; and the crowd said this just a short time before the crucifixion. Truly memorable is the mark of divine operation, that testimony is wrested from those who deny God with their emotions but confess Him with their words. Hence, that saying of the Lord:

(Vers. 40.)

(Verse 40.) If these remain silent, the stones will cry out.

16. For it is not surprising if the rocks, against their nature, respond with praise to the Lord, whom the unyielding cliffs proclaim to be omnipotent. Or perhaps because the Jews, who were mute after the Lord's passion, were living according to Peter, they will cry out as stones (1 Peter 2:5). Therefore, even though their affections conflict within them, the crowd still leads God to their temple with praise.

17. But God does not want His temple to be a marketplace, but a dwelling place of holiness: not informed by the business of selling religion, but by the free service of the priestly ministry. Therefore, consider what the Sunday events prescribe to you as an example of living.

18. And he cast out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those selling doves (Matthew 21:12). Therefore, he taught above all that secular contracts should be kept away from the temple of God; specifically, he expelled the money changers. Who are the money changers, if not those who seek profit from the money of the Lord and do not distinguish between good and evil? For the money of the Lord is divine scripture; for he distributed denarii to his servants before departing, and he divided talents (Matthew 25:14), and for the healing of a wounded man he left two coins with the innkeeper (Luke 10:35); for our wounds are healed by the two Testaments. But you, like a good money-changer, store up the pure words of the Lord, words that have been tested by fire, purified by the sevenfold Spirit (Psalm 12:6). Do not accept the adulterated image of the king (for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light) through impious interchange. Do not mix the diminished likeness of your prince with the deceitful fraud of Arius in your treasure. Do not tempt the ears of the faithful with the sound of money, so that the ringing of bronze excludes the hearing of the religious Scriptures or the desire to possess affects religious emotions. So not all moneylenders should be excluded; for there are also good ones. Finally, 'You should have given my money to the moneylenders,' he says, 'and when I came back, I would have received it with interest.' (Matthew 25:27) Now if money is of the Scriptures, so is interest of the Scriptures. But why the money-changers overturned the chairs of those selling doves, I do not understand according to the literal sense; for the bird-traders, who could not claim for themselves the honor of a booth at the markets, could not have the dignity of a throne. What prerogative of dignity is there in doves? However, the form of baptism of Dominic reminds us, when the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove (Luke 3:22), of the expulsion of such merchants from the temple, that those who traffic in the grace of the Holy Spirit cannot have a share in the Church of God. Freely you have received, freely give (Matthew 10:8). Finally, when Simon thought that the power of conferring the gift of sanctification could be bought, Peter responded: Your money perish with you, because you think that the gift of God can be obtained with money. You have neither part nor share in this matter of faith (Acts 8:20-21).

Also, I think those who profit from the labor of others or from simplicity, repulsive merchants, seize certain markets: either because sheep and cattle are expelled, or because doves are commanded to be taken away, it seems that the Jewish people are excluded; for just as a dove, because their Lord and successors hates their toils.

21. And this he did not do by some concise hand or by means of wealth, but he struck down the crowds with a whip made of cords, and no one dared to resist. And now he uses a rod, now a whip (for the rod is the straight scepter of your kingdom): the rod, to correct; the whip, to persuade.

There, it is direct; here, it is a moral precept as if bent, with which the conscience of the sinner is lashed like a slow whip; for there are some terrifying prophecies, and there are some apostolic exhortations: yet in both, there is discipline of one word. And therefore He made a whip out of ropes, because 'the cords have fallen to me in pleasant places' (Psalm XVI, 6); for my inheritance is glorious to me; for the cords are said to be the ones with which surveyors measure the boundaries of divided fields. And therefore, like a good surveyor, He distinguished the boundaries of the Synagogue and the Church, and He ordered the sacrilegious ones to leave the temple. For a new surveyor of fertile souls had come, who would measure the kinds of fields, not the spaces.

However, a mode of possession is not enclosed by beautifully stretched ropes, nor are the boundaries of a defined thing limited by the limits of faith, but the boundaries of the Church extend freely in all directions like a whip: the Jews are eliminated, not by any prescribed exile, but without end; so that no place for a synagogue remains anywhere in the world.

(Chap. XX. — Vers. 9.)

A man planted a vineyard.

23. Most derive various meanings from the name 'vineyard': but clearly Isaiah referred to the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts, the house of Israel (Isaiah 5:7). Who else but God established this vineyard? He is the one who planted it and then went on a journey: not because the Lord, who is always everywhere, has journeyed from place to place, but because he is more present to those who are diligent and absent from those who are negligent. He has been absent at many times; not because he was slow in collecting the harvest. The more indulgent the generosity, the more inexcusable the stubbornness.

24. Therefore, according to Matthew, you have the following: 'And often it surrounded (Matt. XXI, 33),' that is, it was fortified by the divine protection, so that it would not easily be exposed to the attacks of spiritual beasts. 'And He dug a winepress in it (Ibid.)'. How do we understand what a winepress is, unless it is perhaps because the psalms are inscribed for winepresses (Psalm VIII, LXXX and LXXXIII); because in them the mysteries of the Lord's passion, like must fervently boiling with the Holy Spirit of the prophets, overflowed more abundantly? Finally, they were considered drunk, those on whom the Holy Spirit poured down (Acts 2:13). Therefore, here He dug a winepress, in which the reasonable fruit of the grape would flow out by a spiritual infusion. He built a tower (Matthew 21:33), raising the pinnacle of the Law: and thus He placed this vineyard fortified, equipped, and adorned for the Jews.

25. (Verse 10.) And in the time of the fruits, he sent his servants. He placed the time of the fruits well, but not the produce; for there was no fruit of the Jews, no produce of this vineyard, of which the Lord said: I expected it to bring forth grapes, but it brought forth thorns (Isaiah 5:2). Therefore, it overflowed with the blood of the prophets, not with the joy of wine or the spiritual must, but with the bloody bloodpresses. Ultimately, Jeremiah was thrown into a pit (Jeremiah 38:6); for these were now the winepresses of the Jews, not filled with wine, but with blood. And although the prophets seem to be generally described, however, the reading (3 Kings 21:13) gives us reason to believe that the one who was stoned is Naboth: for although we have not received any prophetic words from him, we have nevertheless received a prophetic action; because he prophesied many martyrs to come for this vineyard with his own blood. But who is the one who is wounded on his

head? Undoubtedly it is Isaiah, whose body was more easily divided by a saw than his faith was inclined, his steadfastness was destroyed, or the strength of his mind was executed.

Therefore, it happened that when he had sent many others, whom the Jews dishonored and found useless, from whom they could do nothing, they finally also sent the only begotten Son, whom they treacherously killed by crucifixion, desiring to remove him as an heir, and cast him out by denying him.

27. Therefore, let us consider briefly how great, how numerous are these blessings. First, because it is natural goodness that often believes in the unworthy. Secondly, because Christ came as the ultimate remedy for all evils. Thirdly, because whoever denies the heir despairs of the author. But Christ is the heir, the same as the testator, because he survived his own death and, as the one who established the Testaments, receives the benefits as if they were hereditary gains in our own transactions.

28. (Verse 15.) He interrogates well, so that his own judgment condemns himself. However, he says that the Lord of the vineyard will come, either because the paternal majesty is also present in the Son, or because he aspires more strongly to human affections in the final times. Therefore, they themselves pronounce judgment upon themselves, so that the evil ones perish and the vineyard is transferred to other tenants. So, let us consider who these tenants are, and what the vineyard is.

29. Our vineyard is the type because the people of God, founded on the root of the eternal grapevine, rises above the earth and covers the lowly soil, now covered with budding flowers, now dressed in verdant green, now taking on the gentle yoke, when with its more mature branches it grows like the second shoots of the grapevine. For the all-powerful Farmer is Christ (John XV, 1 et seq.): but we are the branches, who, if we do not bear fruit in Christ, are cut off by the eternal cultivator's sickle. Therefore, the vineyard of Christ is rightly called the people, either because the sign of the cross is displayed on their forehead, or because their fruit is gathered at the last age of the year, or because in the Church of God there is an equal distribution to all orders of the vineyards, to the poor and the rich, the humble and the powerful, the servants and the masters, with no discrimination: just as the vine is joined to trees, so the body to the soul, and the soul to the body: just as the vine is lifted up when it is pruned, and it is not diminished but increased when it is cut, so the holy people, while they are bound, are set free, while they are humbled, are exalted, while they are cut off, are crowned. Moreover, just as a tender shoot, cut off from an old tree, is inserted into the fruit of another root, so too this holy Church, with its wounds healed, grows from the scars of the old shoot, nurtured in the bosom of the pious Parent on the wood of the Cross; and the Holy Spirit, descending from the heights of heaven to the depths of the earth, is poured into this earthly body like living water, cleansing whatever is foul, and elevating the state of our members to heavenly discipline.

30. The diligent farmer is accustomed to dig, plow, and work this vineyard: and having dug out the mounds of earth, used to expose them to the scorching sun and drench them with rain, accustomed to weed the field; lest the gem be harmed by thorns, lest the shadow of leaves cause it to grow too luxuriantly, and lest the boasting of unproductive words overshadow its virtues, hindering the maturity of its natural potential. But far be it from us to fear anything adverse to this vineyard, which the watchful guardian of the Lord of Salvation has fortified with the wall of eternal

life against all the lures of worldly wickedness, and has extended its branches even to the sea (Psalm 79:12): for the earth is the Lord's (Psalm 24:1). Everywhere God the Father is worshipped, everywhere Christ the Lord is adored.

31. This is our harvest. Therefore, joyful and secure, let one part load their gentle bosom with the clusters of grapes, let others pour forth heavenly gifts with their mouth, and many, by the steps of good desires, extract the divine fruit of the gift, their barefoot steps having been stripped of sandals, let us dip them in the flowing must; for the place in which we stand is holy ground, and therefore our shoes must be loosed (Exod. III, 5), so that, ascending the spiritual path to the sacred tribunal, we may be freed from earthly attachments; for it is proper that here the harvest of the entire world should take place, since here is the vineyard of the entire world.

32. Behold the acceptable time, when the year is not frozen by the treacherous frost of winter, nor is the crust of blasphemy formed by the shapeless clouds of the sky, but, freed from the storms of sacrilege, the earth now brings forth new fruits. Truly it brings forth; for the storm of all dissensions has calmed, and all the heat of secular desire, and all the waves by which the people of Italy were formerly burned with the fires of Jewish and Arian cruelty, are now tempered by a calm breath. The storm has subsided, harmony navigates, faith breathes: eagerly the sailors seek those of faith whom the ports have left behind, and affix sweet kisses on their native shores, rejoicing in being freed from dangers, absolved from errors.

33. Hello, vineyard worthy of such a keeper: you were consecrated not by the blood of one Naboth but by the precious blood of the Lord, who also consecrated countless prophets. Although he, not frightened by royal threats, was pressed down by fear, and not enticed by abundant rewards, sold his religious affection; yet he resisted the desire of the king, so that in his vineyard no vegetable, cut vine, would be sowed, when he could not do anything else, he extinguished the prepared fires with his own blood; he defended the temporal vineyard; but you, in perpetuity, have been planted among us as the destruction of many martyrs: the cross, rival of the passion of the Apostles, has spread to the ends of the whole world.

(Vers. 24.) (Verse 24) Whose image and inscription does it have? In this place, the Lord teaches us that we should be careful in responding to heretics or Jews. He said elsewhere: 'Be as shrewd as snakes' (Matthew 10:16). Many understand this passage to mean that, just as the cross of Christ was proclaimed by a hanging serpent, in order to abolish the spiritual venom of evil, one should be shrewd like Christ and simple like the Spirit. Behold, here is the serpent who always guards his head, excluding the deadly wound. When asked by the Jews whether he received his authority from heaven, he replied: 'Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?' (Luke 20:4) In order to prevent them from denying that it was from heaven, which would prove their foolishness in denying its author to be from heaven. When asked for a denarius, he inquires about the image; for there is one image of God and another image of the world. (Matthew 22:20) Therefore, he also admonishes us: 'Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.' (1 Corinthians 15:49)

35. Christ does not have the image of Caesar, because he is the image of God. Peter does not have the image of Caesar, because he said: We have left everything and followed you (Matthew 19:27). The image of Caesar is not found in James or John, because they are sons of thunder (Mark 3:17): but it is found in the sea, where those dragons with crushed heads are over the water,

and the great dragon himself with his head crushed is given as food to the people of Ethiopia (Psalm 74:14). Therefore, if he did not have the image of Caesar, why did he pay tribute? He did not pay from his own, but he paid the world what belonged to the world. And if you wish not to be subject to Caesar, do not possess the things of the world. But if you have wealth, you are subject to Caesar. If you wish to owe nothing to the earthly king, leave behind all your possessions and follow Christ.

36. (Verse 25.) And he rightly determines that what belongs to Caesar should be rendered to Caesar: for no one can be the Lord's unless he has renounced the world first. But we all renounce with words, but not all renounce with affection; for when we receive the sacraments, we renounce. How serious it is to promise God binding bonds and not to fulfill them! It is better, he says, not to vow than to vow and not to render (Ecclesiastes 5:4). The contract of faith is greater than that of money. Give the promise, while you are in this body, before the collector comes, and sends you to prison. Truly I say to you, you will not get out of there until you pay the last penny (Matthew 5:26).

(Vers. 28.)

(Verse 28) If someone's brother shall have died.

37. The Sadducees, that is, the more detestable portion of the Jews, in this place test the Lord: whose open stupidity is reproached, but their mystical meaning is twisted back; because they excluded from themselves the example of chastity, since a woman is compelled to marry according to the letter and unwillingly, in order to raise up offspring for the deceased brother (Deut. XXV, 5). Therefore, the letter kills as a pander of vices: but the spirit is the teacher of chastity (II Cor. III, 6).

Therefore, let us see if this woman is the Synagogue, who had seven husbands, as it is said of the Samaritan woman: For you have had five husbands (John 4:18); for the Samaritans only follow the five books of Moses. The Synagogue, however, primarily follows the seven, and because of its unbelief, it has not received the hereditary posterity of the seed. And for this reason, she will not be able to have a part with her husbands in the resurrection, because she turns the spiritual precept according to the sense of the flesh (Revelation 20:6). For no bodily brother has been called to raise the seed of the deceased brother; but rather, he who, after the death of the Jewish people, took upon himself the wisdom of divine worship and raised seed from it among the apostles. These, like the shapeless remains of the deceased Jews left behind in the womb of the Synagogue, deserved to be preserved according to the election of grace, through the admixture of the new seed.

However, the synagogue often receives a stole, which is a symbol of marriage, as if it were the authority of believers: but it is often rejected, because it is the mother of faithless people: to whom the Law kills physically so that they may spiritually rise. Therefore, the holy people of God, if they have loved the five books of the Law with a certain love of marriage and have obeyed its marital commands, will have heavenly communion in the resurrection, not confused by the shame of bodily impurities, but enriched by the gifts of divine grace.

Book Ten (Verse 42) The Lord said to my Lord. The Lord, about to fulfill his precepts, also concludes faith and mercy, which prepare the way for his passion, at the end of his Testament: faith, in that we believe in Christ as our Lord and God, and that he sits at the right hand of God, not

that he physically sits, but because he is everywhere. Finally, he is in the Father; because he is in the substance of God, one power, one majesty. He himself, therefore, is in the Father, and the Father is in him; because the Word is in God, and God is in the Word: he himself is in the Father, because he is the Word; he himself is at the right hand of the Father, because he is a partner to the Father, second to none: he himself is sent by the Father, because he descends from heaven to fulfill the Father's will. Take away from here the questions of treachery, and fullness is found in religion. It is not preferred, because it sits at the right hand: nor does it suffer injury, because it is sent. The degree of dignity is not sought, where there is fullness of divinity.

2. (Verse 44.) It is also worth considering that he reproaches those who say that Christ is the son of David. And how did that blind man, by confessing David's son, deserve healing? (Luke 18:43) How did the children, saying 'Hosanna to the son of David' (Matthew 21:9), give glory of sublime preaching to God? But they are not reproached in this place because they confess David's son, but because they do not believe in the Son of God. For it is not one thing, but the other that is true in the true faith: for although at first we judged that we knew nothing but Christ Jesus, and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2): now, however, as if by the judgment of our neighbor, we no longer know Christ who is crucified, but we are covered by him who is coming in the clouds. *Incredulus vulnera -citis asp fidelis obviam Christo in aera raptus occurrit.*

Therefore, let us believe that Christ is both God and man: not one or the other, but both. The enemies are subjected to Him by the Father, not by the weakness of His power, but by the unity of His nature; for in one He works, and in the other, the other works. For the Son also subjects the enemies to the Father, who glorifies the Father above the earth (John 17:4). And the Father gave the Son a Name which is above every name (Philippians 2:9-10). But the Son also says to the Father: I have manifested Your Name to men, which You gave Me (John 17:6). But giving the name that is above every name, he did not give more than he had; but he gave all that he had. And he gave this name, so that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philip. II, 11).

Therefore, consider each thing separately. The Father submits to the Son, the Son submits to the Father. The Father raises the Son, and the Son raises himself. Hence he says: 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up' (John 2:19). And the Father is Lord, and the Son is Lord. The Lord said to my Lord. And not two Lords, but one Lord; because both the Father is God, and the Son is God: but one God; because the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. One God, because one divinity: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness, therefore God, your God, has anointed you (Psalm 45:7-8). But there is only one God, in whom the teaching of both the Old and New Testaments agrees. For it is also written in the Old Testament: You shall love the Lord your God, and you shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him alone (Deuteronomy 6:5, 13). In the New Testament: There is one God and Father of all (Ephesians 4:6). Thus, both the Father is Lord and the Son is Lord, but there is only one Lord. Finally it is written: 'You should not serve two masters' (Matt. VI, 24); this is in the New Testament. In the Old Testament it is written: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one' (Deut. VI, 4). Therefore, the Apostle admirably, so as not to speak of two Gods or name two Lords or derogate from the Son or the Father, says: 'There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus, through whom are all things' (I Cor. VIII, 6). For he who is God is also Lord, and he who is

Lord is God. Finally it is written: Know that the Lord himself is our God (Psalm 99:3).

5. Therefore, all that the Father has, the Son also has. God the Father according to the nature of generation: God the Son according to the unity of image. The Son is Lord, because He could subject all things to Himself by power; the Father is Lord, because He is the root of the Son. Thus, the Father is distinguished from us in the definition of persons in the Son, and is connected by the unity of power. Therefore, each is in the other, and one in the other. For the glory of the Father is in the Son, if it has not degenerated; and the grace of the Son, if the Father is seen in the Son. Therefore, he is not degenerate, in whom the highest majesty of unity is; not alien, in whom the property of generation is, the expression of truth.

(Chap. XXI. Vers. 6.)

Not one stone will be left upon another that will not be thrown down.

6. The place of the widows follows (Verse 1 and following), which since we have already preached about in the book we wrote about widows (Book of Widows), we now separate. But it is true according to what was said about the temple that Solomon built, and it should be destroyed at the time of judgment, for there is nothing made by work and hand that old age does not wear out, force does not overthrow, or fire does not burn. However, there is another temple built of beautiful stones, and adorned with gifts, which the Lord seems to indicate the destruction of. The synagogue, namely of the Jews, whose structure is old, dissolves with the rising Church. There is also a temple in each person, which crumbles with the failing faith; especially if someone falsely claims the name of Christ, in order to attack the inner disposition.

7. There can also be an interpretation that benefits me more. For what benefit is it to me to know the day of judgment? What benefit is it to me to be aware of such great sins, if the Lord comes, unless he comes into my soul, returns to my mind, unless Christ lives in me, unless Christ speaks within me? Therefore, Christ must come to me, his coming must happen for me. And the Lord's second coming takes place in the defection of the world, when we can say: But as for me, the world is crucified to me, and I to the world (Galatians 6:14). But if this man finds such defects of the world in the higher realms, so that the conversation of this man is in heaven; then the physical and visible temple is destroyed, the physical Law, the physical Passover, and the visible Passover, physical unleavened bread, and visible unleavened bread, I dare to say, Christ is temporal, as he was to Paul before he believed; because in him to whom the world fails, Christ is eternal. To this man belongs the spiritual temple, the spiritual Law, and also the spiritual Passover; for Christ is sacrificed once. Here we feast on unleavened bread, not from earthly grain, but from the grain of justice. Therefore it is the presence of wisdom, the presence of virtue and justice, the presence of redemption; for Christ indeed once died for the sins of the people, but he redeems the sins of the people daily.

(Vers. 9.)

(Verse 9.) But when you hear of battles and reports of battles.

9. The Lord, being asked when the destruction of the temple would happen, and what would be the sign of his coming, teaches about the signs but does not think it is necessary to disclose the timing. However, Matthew added a third question (Matt. XXIV, 3), so that the disciples would

inquire about both the times of the temple's destruction and the sign of his coming, and the end of the age. Luke considered it enough to know about the end of the age if it was spoken about the coming of the Lord.

10. But we are witnesses of heavenly words more than anyone else, whom the end of the world found. For what great battles and what opinions of battles we have experienced! The Chunni rose up against the Alans, the Alans against the Goths, the Goths against the Taifali and the Sarmatians. We too, exiles in Illyricum, have made a homeland for ourselves in the exile of the Goths, and there is no end yet. The famine and plague of all, equally of cattle and men, of other livestock; so that even those of us who did not endure war, the pestilence has made us equal to those who were defeated! Therefore, because we are in the decline of the age, certain afflictions of the world precede. The affliction of the world is hunger, the affliction of the world is pestilence, the affliction of the world is persecution.

However, there are also other wars that a Christian man endures, as well as conflicts of various desires and struggles of studies, and much more serious domestic enemies than foreigners. Now greed stimulates, now lust ignites, now fear frightens, now anger agitates, now ambition moves, now they try to terrify with spiritual wickedness, which are in heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12). Therefore, he is pressed as if by certain battles, and he is shaken by certain earthquakes of the moving and wavering affections of the soul.

12. But the stronger one says: If camps rise up against me, my heart will not fear; if battle arises against me, in this I will hope (Ps. 26:3). He stands in the battle line, bearing his chest against the enemy, even if someone like Goliath rises up, fierce and lofty (1 Sam. 17:4); while others fear, he will rise up humble like David, casting aside the weapons of the earthly king, taking up the lighter weapons of faith, and hurling the triple-pointed spear of pure confession, he wounds the audacity of the persecutor, scorns threats, disregards powers, and becomes worthy for Christ to speak through. Elsewhere Christ speaks, elsewhere the Father, elsewhere the Spirit speaks of the Father. These things are not conflicting, but they are consistent. What one speaks, the three speak; for there is one voice of the Trinity. To this victor, who has slain his Goliath with his own sword, while he suffers death for Christ, the Allophyles are put to flight, and young women come to meet him, even those who are like eagles, saying: Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands (1 Samuel 18:7). This is evidence that the victors of the world are preferred to the princes of the age. Finally, to dead kings, the martyrs succeed with the honor of the eternal kingdom of heavenly grace; and those become supplicants, these are patrons.

13. There is also another sword of Goliath (1 Samuel 21:9), another weapon of the devil, namely the speech of heretics, which a man skilled in singing takes up in order to conquer the adversary, hearing his wars, not enduring, nor moved by any wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14), not knowing the hunger for the word (Amos 8:11), and being satisfied with the abundance of heavenly Scripture, who does not hesitate to provoke the heretic who echoes empty voices. Then let the weak one wait, so as not to cause disadvantage to the others in unequal encounter. Let David come, to whom Christ may open his mouth for speaking of mysteries. Let that Nazarene come, whose hair does not fall, having nothing superfluous that can fall, or nothing to lose from his higher virtues, whole in sobriety, strong in peace, who keeps all his senses and words until the end.

14. The Gospel shall be proclaimed, so that the world may be destroyed. Just as the preaching of the Gospel went forth into the entire world (Matthew 24:14), to which the Goths and Armenians have now also believed, and therefore we see the end of the world: so also the Gospel is preached by a spiritual man, when he executes all the progress of wisdom and all virtues, with a singing mind and spirit, destroying the final death; for then the end will be, when Christ delivers the kingdom to God the Father, and when this man will be subject to Him who subjected all things to Himself, so that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:25). And the Gospel will be preached in all cities, that is, the cities of Judea; For God is known in Judea (Ps. 75:1). For then the cities of Judea are built, when the foundations of virtues are laid.

(Vers. 20.)

(Verse 20) When you see Jerusalem surrounded by an army.

15. Truly, Jerusalem was besieged by an army, and conquered by a Roman leader. Hence the Jews believed that the abomination of desolation was then done, because the Romans, mocking the Jewish rite of observance, threw a pig's head into the temple. Which I would not say even in madness. For the abomination of desolation is the accursed arrival of the Antichrist; because it contaminates the innermost parts of minds with sacrilegious and unfortunate practices: sitting next to history in the temple, in order to claim for himself the divine throne of power alone. But the spiritual interpretation is beautifully supported, because by discussing from the Scriptures that he is Christ, he desires to confirm the trace of his own unfaithfulness in the emotions of each individual.

Then the desolation will approach, because many who have strayed from the true religion will fall into error. Then will come the day of the Lord, which the Apostle clearly explained, saying (II Thess. II et seq.), that we should not be afraid as if the day of the Lord is imminent; let no one deceive us in any way: because unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he sits in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God.

Therefore, he will sit in the temple, and in the inner temple of the Jews who deny Christ: in a temple not inviolable, but susceptible to corruption, which either the downfall of infidelity will involve, or the force of anger will overthrow, or the fire of desires will consume. And then the day of the Lord will come, and the days will be shortened for the sake of the chosen ones (Matthew 24:22): because just as the first coming of the Lord was for the redemption of sins, so the second is for the reprimand of offenses, lest more people should be led astray by the error of infidelity.

18. Then pseudo-prophets, then famine. Recall to me the times of Elijah, and you will find then prophets of confusion, then Jezebel, then famine, then the dryness of the earth. By what reason? Because iniquity had abounded, charity had grown cold (Matt. XXIV, 12). In short, the just man is in the desert, the unjust man is in the kingdom.

19. Another Antichrist is the author of this, the devil indeed, who seeks to besiege my Jerusalem, my soul, certainly the soul of God, the peaceful soul, with the army of his legion. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this world, of these dark powers (Ephesians 6:12). Then there is a departure when the soul departs from itself: and again when it considers the Lord, it trembles and is troubled. Then when Antichrist holds

sway over the hearts of men, injustice exults, iniquity reigns. Then faith is rare, so much so that the Lord himself, as if doubting, will ask: 'When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?' (Luke 18:8), either in our own land or throughout the world. Similarly, elsewhere it is written: 'The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God' (Psalm 14:2). Not because God doubts, but because faith will be so rare among men that it will, according to human opinion, appear to be in doubt.

Therefore, when the devil is in the midst of the temple, there is the desolation of abomination, according to the prophet Daniel (Dan. IX, 27): but when the spiritual presence of Christ shines upon everyone who labors for Him, the wicked is removed from their midst, and begins the reign of justice which empties the minds of the faithful of all dominion.

21. There is also a third Antichrist, either Arius or Sabellius; indeed, all who deceive us with their corrupt interpretation are Antichrists. And therefore, let him who reads understand (Matt. XXIV, 15): whoever understands, will not be deceived, so as to believe falsehoods instead of truths, just like the Jews who denied the true Christ; hence it follows that those who are false will believe him to be true: similarly, the Arians will not deny that Christ is the Antichrist.

(Vers. 23.)

(Verse 23) Woe to those who are pregnant and nursing infants in those days!

22. Therefore, is conception criminal? But the rewards of marriage are children. And how did the Lord bless Sarah, and she gave birth? How did Hannah pray, and she conceived? How did Rachel receive blessed children? Did the prophets make mistakes, since the Lord cannot err? But the Lord also spoke in the prophets, and therefore they could not err. So, who will be able to reconcile the discord of letters?

23. But because there is war there, let us turn to the spirit of peace; For Pax has said: A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she has delivered the child, she remembers the sorrow no more. You have again what follows: And now, indeed, you have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice (John 16:21-22); that he might show that the perfect should rejoice, the weak should tremble, as if still uncertain and fearful. But even here in what was said before: They ate and drank, they married and led wives (Luke 17: 27), namely binding themselves to this life and binding themselves with secular anxieties. These, therefore, are the pregnant ones to whom woe is said, who stretch the field of their own flesh and in whom the steps of the innermost souls grow sluggish, exhausted of virtues and fertile in vices.

24. But not all of them who are pregnant with condemnation are able to give birth yet to the processes undertaken in good deeds. For there are also those who conceive of the fear of God, who say: 'We have conceived and given birth because of your fear' (Isaiah 26:18). But not everyone gives birth, not everyone is perfect, not everyone can say: 'We have given birth to the spirit of salvation on earth.' Not everyone is like Mary, who conceives Christ from the Holy Spirit and gives birth to the Word. For there are those who exclude the Word as an abortion before giving birth: there are those who have Christ in the womb, but have not yet formed him, of whom it is said: My little children, whom I am in labor with again, until Christ is formed in you (Galatians 4:19). Therefore, those who are still in the womb, give birth as if imperfect: but those already more perfect, to whom it is said: I have begotten you through the Gospel (1 Corinthians 4:15).

25. Many fathers through the Gospel, and many mothers who give birth to Christ. So who, then, will show me the parents of Christ? He himself showed, saying: Who is my mother or who are my brothers? . . . Whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother (Matth. XII, 48 and 50). Do the will of the Father, so that you may be the mother of Christ. Many conceived Christ, but did not give birth. Therefore, she who gives birth to justice, gives birth to Christ; she who gives birth to wisdom, gives birth to Christ; she who gives birth to the Word, gives birth to Christ.

26. There is also she who gave birth to injustice, and brought forth iniquity. Woe to these pregnant women who are burdened in body and are too lazy to escape danger! Woe to those in whom the future birth, in which the entire body is shaken, is accompanied by pain. These are the signs of the beginning of the pains of judgment (Matthew 24:8).

27. Moses also taught that if a pregnant woman is trampled by two fighting men, she should quickly have an abortion (Exod. XXI, 22). Therefore, a virtuous woman should avoid litigation and seek peace so that she can complete her pregnancy. She should not wait for the full nine months, for the timing of childbirth depends not on time but on the fullness of diligence. On the other hand, an unfinished soul is quickly trampled and loses the word it conceived (Sap. IV, 13). But woe to him who scandalizes one of these little ones! Woe to him who tramples upon a pregnant woman! For if he has expelled an as yet unformed offspring, there is loss of money; but if it is formed, he shall render life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand.

28. But why, when the fetus has both a hand and an eye, does it matter if it is expelled? From this it is clear that each one should be condemned in the same way that they harm. For if someone expels a catechumen or a heretic or a schismatic as if from the womb of the soul or the Church, they are punished less severely: if it is a believer, more severely. And therefore, one must be careful not to trample on the Church when contending with such people; for foolish fights and pointless arguments should be avoided, knowing that they give rise to lawsuits, by which the Church, like a pregnant woman, is crushed by the trampling of the whole body (2 Timothy 2:16). So quickly fill your stomach, so that you can give birth faster. Listen to how you fill it, and with what you fill it: He says, 'A man filled his stomach with the fruit of his mouth: but he will be satisfied with the fruit of his lips.' (Prov. XVIII, 20).

30. He also taught me that sublime judgment of Solomon and that contention between two women, namely that even though they have already given birth to their children and have experienced the pain of childbirth, they still fear for the safety of their offspring. This is because the sleep of the nourisher can be overtaken by drunkenness and the mother, in her stupor, may accidentally smother her little one, denying her own child and seeking another's. But even she who does not kill her son is still in danger because her judgment remains uncertain (III Kings 3:25).

31. Therefore, let us also, so that the day of judgment or death does not find us like unfinished parents of our works, we hasten to wean our little ones. Isaac, when he was weaned, was not subject to the sleep of his mother; and therefore Abraham prepared a great feast when he weaned his son (Gen. XXI, 8). David, when he was weaned, hopes for the reward of his soul (Psal. CXXX, 2); for he was not, like the Corinthians in the beginning of faith, still weak with stronger food, but had already grown up with solid bread to the fullness of perfect age (I Cor. III, 2). Therefore, it is not enough to have care for procreation unless there is the ability to nourish.

Therefore, let the word of God grow in you, just as it did in Mary, and may wisdom and age advance. This happens when you keep all the words of righteousness in your heart and do not wait for the time of old age. Instead, in your youth, be betrothed to a righteous man and quickly conceive, quickly give birth, quickly nurture wisdom without the corruption of your body. See for yourself Paul, who was persecuting yesterday, believing today, and preaching tomorrow (Acts 9:21).

33. Pray that your flight may not be in winter, or on a sabbath (Matthew, XXIV, 20). Since the Lord will come on the day of judgment, before whom the fire will burn; but fire either burns the same or more quickly in summer: how then does He advise us to pray that our flight may not be in winter; unless it be because one who flees to the mountains ought to fear the cold and ice, the storms and hailstorms of his sins, and desire the calmness of the summer light, lest the unsteady steps of his weak body slip on a slippery path.

34. And then she, now secure in her progress, now rejoices supported by firm roots, saying: Winter has passed, the time of pruning has come (Song of Songs 2:11-12); for in the winter the wind strips the trees of their honor, and the harshness of the cold kills the delicate leaves like the appearance of death; but in truth the seeds rise again, and like a new summer, the youth of the flourishing nature grows. In truth, Easter is when I am saved; Pentecost is in the summer, when we celebrate the glory of the resurrection as if it were the future.

35. It should also be prayed that on the Sabbath, that is, coming upon you while you are at rest from work, the Lord may find you. And therefore, according to the Law, work day by day, and be fervent in spirit, and diligent in labor. Do not consider it idle, because it is written: On the Sabbath you shall humble your soul (Lev. 16:29); and because the people endured captivity for seventy years, then religion was violated, liberty was crushed, and chastity was wounded. Therefore, it is then that you must migrate from this life, when virtues flourish, vices are held captive; not when the soul is captive, the body lacks strength and virtue, and sins reign.

(Vers. 25.)

(Verse 25) And there will be signs in the sun, and moon, and stars.

36. And the true series of prophecies, and the complete cause of the mystery, that both the captive Jews will be led for the second time into Babylon and Assyria, and captives will be in the whole world, because they denied Christ: and Jerusalem, which is visible, will be trampled by a hostile army, with the Jews falling by the edge of the sword: and all of Judea will be subjected to the nations believing in the spiritual sword, which is the sharp word: and different signs will occur in the sun and moon and stars.

37. The signs that are expressed more clearly according to Matthew are: Then, he says, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall (Matt. 24:29). Indeed, with many people lacking religion, the clear faith will be obscured by the cloud of unbelief; because for me that heavenly sun is either diminished or increased by my faith. Just as if many people were to look at the rays of the worldly sun, it appears either paler or brighter according to the capacity of the viewer: so for each believer, a spiritual light is infused according to their devotion. And just as when the moon is in opposition to the sun, it disappears through the regular flow of the menstrual cycle or through the alignment of the earth, so too the holy Church, when the vices of the flesh

oppose the heavenly light, cannot receive the divine radiance of Christ's rays. For in persecutions, the love of this life often excludes the light of God alone.

38. The stars will fall, those certainly shining with the glory of resurrection, those men like luminaries in the world holding the word of life, those men of whom it was said to Abraham, 'For as the sky shines and the stars, so shall his descendants be' (Gen. XIII, 16). Therefore, the patriarchs will fall to men, the prophets will fall, if the bitterness of persecution increases: which must happen until the Church is filled with all virtues and fullness in each; for in this way the good are proven, the weak are revealed. Therefore, the various passions of the soul will be so heavy that with the multitude of sins, the guilty conscience and the fear of the future judgment, the sacred dew of the fountain within us will dry up; for deceit drips, faith drips.

(Vers. 26, 27.)

(Verse 26, 27.) For the powers in heaven will be shaken, and then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds.

Perhaps, just as the coming of the Lord is awaited, so that his presence may be experienced in the whole world or in the whole human race, which certainly happens in individuals when they receive Christ with all their feelings, in the same way, with the coming and return of the Savior, the virtues of the heavens must necessarily obtain an increase of grace, for the Lord is the source of virtues, and they must be moved closer by the overflowing of divinity in order to reach their fullness.

There are also virtues of the heavens that declare the glory of God (Psalms 19:1), which are moved by a more complete infusion of Christ, spiritual virtues, which see Christ. David taught us how these virtues are moved, saying: Come to him, and be enlightened (Psalms 33:6). Paul also taught us how to see Christ (2 Corinthians 3:16); for when you are converted to the Lord, the veil is taken away, and you see Christ.

You see him in the clouds. Indeed, I do not think that Christ comes in a dark gloom and rainy horror; for when clouds are seen, they certainly obscure the sky with a terrifying gloom. And how can he place his tabernacle in the sun, if his coming is rainy? But there are clouds which, because it is necessary, cover the brightness of heavenly mystery: they are clouds from which the moisture of spiritual grace is sought. Behold the cloud in the Old Testament: In a pillar, it is said, the cloud spoke to them (Psalm 98:7). It certainly spoke through Moses, through Joshua, who stopped the sun (Joshua 10:12); in order to receive the brightness of fuller light. Therefore, Moses and Jesus are clouds. Behold that holy men are clouds, who fly like clouds and like doves with their young. *Super me nubes sunt Esaias, Ezechiel, qui mihi per Cherubim et Seraphim sanctitatem divinae Trinitatis ostendunt (Esai. LX, 8). Nubes sunt omnes prophetae: in his nubibus venit Christus. Venit in nube in Canticis canticorum, serena nube, et Sponsi refulgens laetitia (Cant. III, 11). Venit et in nube levi incarnatus ex Virgine; vidit enim propheta sicut nubem venire ab Oriente (Esai. XIX, 1). And he said that he would lift up a cloud, which earthly things would not weigh down. See the cloud, into which the Holy Spirit came upon, and the power of the Most High overshadowed (Luke 1:35).*

43. Therefore, when Christ appears in the clouds (Matthew 24:30), the tribes of the earth will fall; for there is a certain order of crimes and a series of sins that will be dissolved by the advent of Christ.

(Vers. 29, 30.)

(Verse 29, 30) Look at the fig tree and all the trees, when they already bear fruit from themselves, you know that summer is near.

Indeed, in different ways, the opinion of the Evangelists seems to converge on one point; for Matthew spoke only of the fig tree, when its branch is tender (Matt. XXIV, 32): here it is about all the trees. But whether the fruit grows in all the trees and the fig tree is already fruitful and blooming, so that every tongue confesses to God, including the people of the Jews confessing; we should hope for the coming of the Lord, in which, like in the summer seasons, the fruits of resurrection will be harvested: or whether the branch of the synagogue, like the leaves, will put on a light and fragile boasting of the man of iniquity, we should conclude that the judgment is approaching: for the Lord rewards faith and is eager to bring an end to sinning.

Therefore, this fig tree has a dual nature, either when the harshness softens or when sins abound. For through the faith of the believers, which was withered before, they will flourish, and through the grace of the sins, the sinners will boast: here is the fruit of faith, there is the lasciviousness of unfaithfulness. The cultivation of the Evangelical fig tree promises fruit to me, the farmer: we must not despair if sinners have covered themselves with the leaves of deceit, so as to veil their conscience: therefore, suspicious leaves without fruit. And they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. (Gen. III, 7).

(Chap. XXII. — Vers. 10.)

Behold, as you enter the city, a man will meet you carrying a jar of water.

It is good to consider where the Lord makes the Passover. According to Matthew, you have: Go into the city to a certain (Matt. XXVI, 18). First, consider the majesty of divinity. He is speaking to the disciples, and already knows what will happen elsewhere. Then consider his condescension; for he does not choose the person of a rich or powerful man, but seeks out the poor, and prefers a cramped lodging of a poor man to the spacious mansions of the noble. Go, he says, to a certain (man). You knew, O Lord, his name, whose ministry you knew, you knew the ministry of him whose encounter you knew: but he is designated without a name, so that he may be considered ignoble. Nothing here is contrived, where the person is not expressed, but the cause. According to Mark, however, he carries a jar of water (Mark 14:13). Therefore, here he is commanded to be followed by the apostles.

47. (Verses 11, 12.) And how is the head of the household? In order for you to recognize that the definition of holiness is not wealth. And how does he have a large bed in the upper room? So that you may notice his great merit, in which the Lord would rest with delight in the company of his disciples, enjoying his sublime virtues. Oh, if only I could have the opportunity to carry a jar of water, to carry a pitcher of water, like the head of the household who has a large bed in the upper room. For what is an amphora, if not a more perfect measure? Those who have a measure are not ordinary. Finally, the Lord says: They will give you a good measure, shaken together, overflowing.

48. But what shall I say about water? Over the water, before the very birth of the world, the Holy Spirit, as it is written, was borne (Gen. I, 2). O water, which, sprinkled with human blood, to prefigure the present baptisms, washed the world! O water, which deserved to be the sacrament of

Christ, which washes all things, and is not washed! You begin first, you complete perfect mysteries. From you comes the beginning, in you is the end; or rather, you make us ignorant of the end. Through you, the foul odor of decaying flesh is removed, and the decaying organs, besmirched with filth, are preserved for a long time through the sprinkling of salt. Through you, a sweet beverage is poured into parched and hot bodies, bringing delight, health, and pleasure. You have given your name to prophets and apostles, you have given your name to the Savior: they are the clouds of heaven (Isaiah 60:8), they are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13), this is the wellspring of life (John 7:38). You, who are not confined by mountains or shattered by cliffs or depleted when poured into the earth: but gushing forth from within, you either breathe in vital breath, or provide nourishing sap when infused, or supply beneficial moisture when poured over. Do not let the vital energies dry up or deny the customary productivity of the earth. The substance of all elements, the sky, air, sea, and earth, attest to you. Struck by a prophetic touch, you made the hearts of the thirsty people cold; the rock gushed forth water (Exodus 17:6). When you burst forth from the Savior's side, the witnesses saw and believed (John 19:34). And this is why you are one of the three witnesses of our regeneration; for there are three witnesses, water, blood, and spirit (1 John 5:8). Water for washing, blood for redemption, and spirit for resurrection.

(Vers. 29.) (Verse 29) And indeed, I appoint to you, just as my Father appointed to me, a kingdom. The kingdom of God is not of this world. Therefore, the equality of man to God is not possible, but rather an emulation of similarity. For only Christ is the perfect image of God, because of the unity of the expressed glory of the Father in Him. But a just man is in the image of God, if, for the purpose of imitating the likeness of divine conduct, he despises this world through knowledge of God and looks down upon earthly pleasures through the perception of the word of God, by which we are nourished unto life. And so we partake of the body of Christ, that we may be partakers of eternal life. For it is not food and drink that are promised to us as rewards and honors, but the sharing of heavenly grace and life. And the twelve thrones, as described (Ver. 30), are not physical receptacles for sitting, but because just as Christ, according to his divine likeness, judges by the knowledge of hearts and not by questioning deeds, rewarding virtue and condemning impiety, so too the apostles are formed in spiritual judgment by the reward of faith and the condemnation of perfidy, refuting error with their power and pursuing sacrilege with hatred.

Therefore, let us be converted and let us beware lest any contention can arise among us regarding preeminence; for if the apostles contended, it is not an excuse, but a caution. If Peter, who followed the Lord's first voice (Matt. IV, 20), is ever converted, who can say that he was converted quickly? Therefore, beware of boasting, beware of the world; for he is commanded to strengthen his brothers, who said: 'We have left everything and have followed you' (Luke XVIII, 28).

51. Then it should be considered that not all honor is defined by the pursuit of humility; for you can defer to someone for the sake of worldly favor, the fear of power, and the view of usefulness. Your growth is sought, not someone else's honor: and therefore the same form of thought is given to everyone, so that there is no boasting about preeminence, but rather contention about humility; and thus the Lord presents himself as an example to be imitated. We needed everyone, he needed no one; and yet he presented himself as the author of humility when he served his disciples. He was certainly not doing it for the sake of utility, but for the exercise of virtue.

52. (Vers. 31.) Peter, though ready in spirit, was still weak in the body and was being prepared emotionally to deny the Lord; for he could not match the steadfastness of divine intention. The passion of the Lord has imitators, but not equals. Thus, I do not criticize him for his denial, but praise him for his tears. It is one thing to share in a common human condition, and another to possess a special virtue. And therefore, he is instructed to be cautious, not forced to deny.

(Vers. 36.)

(Verse 36) He said, "Whoever has a money bag should take it, and also a sack; and whoever has no sword should sell his cloak and buy one.

53. O Lord, why do you command me to buy a sword, which you forbid me to strike with? Why do you tell me to have what you forbid me to draw? Unless perhaps it is for the purpose of defense, not necessary vengeance; and I may seem able to be avenged, but unwilling. However, the law does not forbid retaliation, and therefore perhaps you offer two swords to Peter: 'It is enough' (Luke 22:38), you say, as if it were allowed until the Gospel; so that there may be instruction in the law of equity, and perfection in the Gospel of goodness.

54. (Verse 37.) Many consider this unfair: but the Lord is not unfair, who, when He could avenge Himself, preferred to be sacrificed. For it is a spiritual sword, to sell your property, to buy the word by which the naked innermost thoughts are clothed. There is also the sword of passion, to divest the body, and with the stripped-off garments of the slaughtered flesh, a sacred crown of martyrdom is bought for you: which you can gather from the blessings of the Lord, who preached the highest crown of all, if anyone suffers persecution for righteousness. Finally, to let you know that he was talking about his passion, so as not to disturb the minds of the disciples, he gave an example of himself, saying: Because this that is written must be fulfilled in me, that is, he was reckoned among the transgressors.

However, it still moves me that the disciples have brought two swords; lest perhaps one is new, the other of the old Testament, with which we arm ourselves against the snares of the devil? Finally, the Lord says: It is enough, as if nothing is lacking to him whom the teaching of both Testaments has fortified.

(Vers. 42, 43.)

(Verse 42, 43.) Father, if it is possible, take this cup away from me.

56. Most people cling to this argument in this place, who are inclined to sadness at the evidence of unfamiliar salvation rather than at the time of their own weakness, and desire to twist the natural meaning of the statement. However, I not only do not think that he should be excused, but I also admire his piety and majesty nowhere more so; for he did not confer less on me, unless he had undertaken my feeling. Therefore, he grieved for me, who had nothing to grieve about for himself; and removed from the delight of eternal divinity, he is afflicted by the weariness of my weakness. For He took on my sadness, so that He could give me His joy: and He descended to the suffering of death in our footsteps, so that He could call us back to life in His footsteps. Therefore, I confidently name sadness, because I proclaim the cross; for He did not assume the appearance of the Incarnation, but the truth. Therefore, He had to also take on sorrow, so that He could overcome sadness, not exclude it. For those who endure the astonishment of wounds more than

the pain do not have the praise of strength: for indeed, the Man on the wound, and knowing, says, 'Surely He has borne our infirmities' (Isaiah 53:3).

57. He wants to teach us, so that because in Joseph we learn not to be afraid of prison, we may learn to conquer death in Christ: and what is more, how to conquer the sorrow of future death. For how could we imitate you, Lord Jesus, unless we followed you as a human, unless we believed you were dead, unless we saw your wounds? How could the disciples believe that you were going to die, unless they had experienced the sadness of those who were about to die? But they still sleep, and do not know how to grieve for those for whom Christ was grieving; for so we read: Because he carries our sins, and he grieves for us (Ibid. 4). Therefore, Lord, the wounds are not yours, but mine; the death is not yours, but our weakness. And we thought that you were in pain, when you were not suffering for yourself, but for me; for you were weakened, but because of our sins. It was not because that weakness was assumed by you from the Father, but it was taken on for me; because it was beneficial for me that the instruction of our peace be in you, and that you heal our wounds with your passion.

58. But what is surprising if he grieved for all, who wept for one? And what is surprising if he, who was about to die for all, grew weary of them, since he wept for Lazarus whom he was going to raise from the dead (John 11:35)? And there he is moved by the tears of his pious sister, because his human mind was touched; and here he works with deep affection, so that just as he was destroying our sins in his flesh, he might also abolish the sorrow of our soul, his own soul's sorrow. And perhaps for this reason he is sad, because after the fall of Adam it was necessary for us to depart from this world by such a passing, that it would be necessary to die: for God did not make death, nor does he delight in the destruction of the living (Wisdom 1:13); and therefore, he despises what he himself did not make.

59. Finally he says: Take away from me that cup, as if a man refusing death, as if God preserving his own judgment; for it is necessary for us to die to the world, so that we may rise to God; so that according to the divine judgment the law of curse, being dissolved into the earthly slime of the end of nature, may be loosened (Gen. III, 19). But what he says:

(Vers. 42.)

(Verse 42.) Not my will, but yours be done.

60. He brought it back to his ad hominem argument: the will of the Father to divinity; for the will of man is temporal, the will of divinity eternal. The will of the Father is not different from the will of the Son; for there is one will where there is one divinity. However, learn to be subject to God, so that you do not choose what you yourself desire, but what you know to be pleasing to God.

61. Then let us consider the nature of the words themselves: 'My soul is sorrowful,' he says, (Matt. XXVI, 38). And elsewhere: 'Now my soul is troubled greatly,' (Psalm VI, 4). Therefore, not receiving, but the one received is troubled; for the soul is subject to passions, divinity is free. Finally, the Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak, (Matt. XXVI, 41). But it is not the Spirit that is sorrowful, nor wisdom, nor divine substance, but the soul. He took my body; he did not deceive me, so that it would be one thing, and appear to be another. He seemed sad, and he was sad, not for his own suffering, but for our dispersion. Finally, he said: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered (Matthew 26:31). He was sad because he was leaving us as

little ones. Moreover, Scripture declares how steadfastly he offered himself to death (John 18:4); for when they were seeking him, he presented himself to them, he confirmed the troubled, he provoked the fearful, he welcomed the betrayer with the dignity of a kiss.

62. And it is not far from the truth, if he was sad for his persecutors, whom he knew would suffer terrible punishment for their sacrilege. And for this reason he said: Remove this cup from me (Luke 22:42); not because the Son of God feared death, but because he did not want even the wicked to perish. Finally, he said: Lord, do not hold this sin against them (Luke 23:34), so that his passion would be salvific for all.

(Vers. 48.)

(Verse 48.) Juda, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?

63. The great significance of divine power, the great discipline of virtue. And the plan of betrayal is revealed, and yet patience is not denied. You have shown, Lord, who would betray, while you reveal hidden things. You have also shown whom he would deliver, while you say: Son of man; because flesh, not divinity, can be understood. However, the fact that he handed him over contradicts even more the ungrateful, that he, although being the Son of God, yet wanted to be the Son of man for our sake. As if to say: Because of my kindness, ungrateful one, you betray me. Behold the hypocrisy. Therefore, I think it should be pronounced as a question, as if a loving person rebukes a traitor: Judas, do you hand over the Son of Man with a kiss? This means, you inflict a wound as a pledge of love, and you shed blood in the duty of charity, and you inflict death with an instrument of peace? The servant betrays the master, the disciple betrays the teacher, the chosen one betrays the author? This is that which is said: The wounds of a friend are more valuable than the kisses of an enemy (Prov. XXVII, 6). What does this traitor say? Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth (Song of Solomon, 1:1).

64. And he kissed him, he said (Matthew 26:49). Not that he teaches us to pretend, but so that he does not seem to avoid betrayal and to affect the traitor more, to whom he would not deny acts of love; for it is written: I was peaceful with those who hated peace (Psalm 119:7).

65. And when the sign was given, he said, 'Those who came with swords arrested him' (Matt. 26:50); but they did not seize the mysteries of the Lord, only weapons. Finally, he spoke and they fell backward (John 18:6). Where are the legions of angels to me, where is the heavenly army? The voice of the Lord alone terrifies more. He chose it as a sign to demonstrate divine majesty, who reclined in the heart of Christ. Therefore, the crowd lays hands on the one who is willing, and chains are bound. Oh, you madmen! Oh, you traitors! Wisdom is not understood in this way, justice is not upheld in this way.

66. (Vers. 49-51.) And the disciples did not lack zeal. Finally, Peter, knowledgeable in the Law and filled with emotion, struck the servant of the ruler, knowing that Phineas was considered righteous for killing the sacrilegious (Psalm 105:31). But the Lord healed the wounds and revealed divine mysteries; so that the servant of the ruler of the world, not by the condition of nature but by the fault of sin, the servant of worldly powers, could receive the wound in his ear; because he had not heard the words of wisdom: Truly, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin (John 8:34). You have been sold because of your sins (Isaiah 50:1). The sale is due to our sins; but the redemption of sinners is due to the goodness of God. And if Peter, willing (24, question 1, chapter If Peter),

struck the ear, he taught that they should not have an ear in appearance that they did not have in mystery. But the good Lord Himself restores their hearing, as shown by the prophetic words (Isaiah 35:10), and demonstrates that they can be healed if they repent, those who were wounded in the passion of the Lord; because every sin is washed away by the mysteries of faith.

67. Therefore, Peter raises his ear. Why, Peter? Because he himself is the one who received the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:19): he condemns and absolves; for he has obtained the power to bind and to loose. But he raises the ear of one who hears poorly: he raises the inner ear of one who understands badly with a spiritual sword.

68. Let us beware that no one takes away the ear. The Passion of the Lord is read: if we attribute the weakness of bodily suffering to His divinity, the ear is cut off, and it is cut off by Peter, who did not allow Christ to be considered merely a prophet: but by faithful confession, he taught that He is the Son of God. Therefore, when we read that Jesus was taken captive, let us beware that we do not hear from anyone and think that He was taken captive according to His divinity, taken captive against His will, taken captive as if He were weak. Indeed, he is bound according to the truth of the body, as John said (John XVIII, 12): but woe to those who bind the Word! For those who think only of Christ as a man bind him: those who do not think he is prescient, who do not confess he is omnipotent, bind him. The evil bonds of the Jews do not bind Christ, but bind themselves. And he is bound not in the house of any pious and just person, but in the house of Caiaphas (John XI, 50), that is, in an impious house; where he is also prophesied to die for all. How crazy, therefore, are those who confess divine blessings and pursue the author of blessings!

69. They lose their ear because they have lost the power of hearing. Many do not have the power of hearing, who think they have it. In the Church, all have it; outside the Church, they do not have it. Or perhaps the ear was taken away so that those who could not keep what they heard would not sin further by listening. And sometimes God confused the languages of those building the tower, so that they could not hear each other and increase the work of their impiety (Gen. XI, 7).

70. Understand, if you can, how the pain of a healthy right hand escaping touch flees, and wounds are healed not by ointment but by touch. The clay recognizes its potter, and the flesh follows the hand of its Master; for as he wills, the Creator restores his work. Thus elsewhere does sight return to the blind man, when mud spread over his eyes as if it had returned to nature, is reformed (John 9:6). He could have commanded, but he preferred to work; so that we may know that it is he who from the clay of the earth fashioned the various organs of our body with different functions, and infused them with the vigor of the mind. So they came and arrested him, who were about to perish with a more severe loss of their pursuit: neither did they understand the unhappy mystery, nor did they worship such a compassionate affection of piety, which even allowed their enemies not to be wounded. They were inflicting death justly: he was healing the wounds of his persecutors.

(Vers. 54, 55.)

(Vers. 54, 55.) Peter, however, followed from afar.

72. And he followed from a distance, about to deny it; for he could not have denied it if he had joined Christ closely. But perhaps in this we should greatly admire him, that he did not leave the Lord, even when he was afraid. Fear is natural, concern is piety. He fears what is foreign: he does not flee what is his own. What he follows is devotion: what he denies is deception. What is shared

is what slips away: what is of faith is what he regrets. Now a fire was burning in the high priest's courtyard: Peter approached to warm himself; because with the Lord locked away, the heat of his mind had also cooled in him.

73. (Verse 56.) What does it mean that the first witness proclaims him, when men could certainly recognize him more; unless it seemed that this sex had sinned unto the death of the Lord, so that this sex might be redeemed through the passion of the Lord? And therefore, the woman receives the first mystery of the resurrection (John 20:17), and she keeps the commandments; in order to abolish the ancient error of transgression.

74. (Verse 57.) Therefore, Peter, betrayed, denies; let us suppose that Peter denies, because the Lord said: Thrice you will deny me (Matthew 26:34)? And I would rather have Peter deny than the Lord be deceived. What did he deny? What he promised rashly. He considered devotion, not the condition. He was punished because he said he would lay down his life (John 13:37): which is not a weakness of humanity but a power of divinity. When he paid such a heavy penalty for his imprudent words, how great is the punishment for his betrayal!

75. Where, however, did Peter deny? Not on the mountain, not in the temple, not in his own house: but in the praetorium of the Jews, in the house of the high priest. There he denies, where the truth is not: there he denies, where Christ is captured, where Jesus is bound. What, if not he who was led in by the doorkeeper, questioned by the doorkeeper (John 18:17), and by the doorkeeper of the Jews? Eve led Adam astray, and the woman led Peter astray. But he falls in paradise, where there is no venial sin: here in the praetorium of the Jews, where innocence is difficult. That mistake was forbidden, this error was predicted. That was entrusted to this, this one resolved it.

76. Let us also consider in what state he denied. 'It was cold,' he says (cf. John 18). If we consider the temperature, it could not have been cold: but it was cold where Jesus was not recognized, where there was no one to see the light, where the consuming fire was denied. Therefore, it was cold of the mind, not of the body. In the end, Peter was standing by the coals, because he was chilled by emotion (cf. Mark 14). The Jewish flame is wicked: it burns, not warms. It is an evil hearth, which sprinkles a certain soot of error even on the minds of the saints, by which Peter's inner eyes were also darkened. Those eyes were not of flesh and blood, but eyes of the mind, with which he saw Christ.

Someone will say: Do you also condemn the elements of the Jews? I do not condemn the elements, because they are not Jewish, but Christ's: but there is one thing I condemn, the flame of perfidy. This flame I condemn in the Jews, following the divine oracles; for the Lord says: Your silver is worthless (Jerem. 6:30). If the silver of the Jews is worthless, then the fire of the Jews is also worthless. Finally, the head of the calf formed from the fire and gold of the Jews represents sacrilegious leadership (Exod. 32:24).

78. But let us see the sense of denial, which I see to be different among the evangelists. Thus it was that Peter could sin, such that his sin could not be understood by the evangelists. Therefore, when Peter was accused by the servant girl of being one of those who were with Jesus of Galilee, Matthew recorded that he answered first: 'I do not know what you are talking about' (Matt. 26:70). Mark also recorded this (Mark 14:68), as he followed Peter and could therefore know the truth

more accurately. The first voice of denial is Peter's; by which, however, he does not deny the Lord, but seems to have separated himself from the betrayal of the woman.

79. However, consider why he denies. Certainly, he denies himself to be one of those who were with Jesus of Galilee, or, as Mark put it, with Jesus of Nazareth. Did he deny that he was with God as His Son? This is to say: I do not know Galilee, I do not know Nazareth, whom I know as the Son of God. Let people have the names of places, the homeland of the Son of God cannot be named, as no place can contain His majesty. And so that you may know this to be true, it is also proven by example; for elsewhere, when the Lord asked his disciples: Whom do men say that the Son of Man is? Some said Eliam, others said Hieremiam, or one of the prophets (Matt. XVI, 13). But Peter said: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God (Ibid., 16). Did he deny it there, because he preferred to confess Christ not as the Son of man, but as the Son of God? Surely what ambiguity do we think exists here, which even Christ approved?

80. And take another thing. For when Peter was questioned: And you are one of those who were with Jesus of Galilee (Matthew 26:69)? He shied away from the word of eternity; for those who began to exist were not, that is to say: He alone was, who was in the beginning (John 1:1). Finally, he said: I am not; for the existence belongs to him who always is. Hence Moses also said: He who is, has sent me (Exodus 3:14).

Again, when he was accused of being one of them, according to Mark, he denied it (Mark 14:70); so that you may know that the evangelist gave more to the truth than to grace: but he denied being one of them, he did not deny Christ. He denied the company of men, not the grace of God. He may have denied being one of those who were with Galilee, but he did not deny being with the Son of God.

82. Finally, according to Matthew, when it was revealed that he had been with Jesus of Nazareth, he said: 'I do not know the man' (Matt. 26:72). The same thing is said by both evangelists in the third voice, as we have mentioned; for they both responded with an oath, saying that they did not know the man. And he rightly denied the man whom he knew to be God. Finally, when an oath is made, the response is cautious. For although Peter denied, he did not perjure himself; for the Lord had not mentioned that he would be perjuring himself. But if there is doubt in Peter, how dangerous is an oath! But John said this because, when questioned by the servant girl, Peter, whether he was one of that man's disciples, he answered straightaway: I am not (John 18:17). For he was not an apostle of a man, but of Christ. And even Paul denied being an apostle of man, saying: Paul, an apostle not from men, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father (Galatians 1:1). But lest he seem to bring some ambiguity to the incarnation, he added: Who raised him from the dead (ibid.); so that you may believe that he is not only God, but also man, since you believed in him as God before. He maintains the same meaning elsewhere when he says: For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). He certainly called him the mediator between God and men before he called him the mediator between God and men; for it is not enough to believe both unless the order of faith is preserved.

84. Therefore, the response is consistent everywhere; for the one who said, 'I do not know the man,' it was fair that when questioned whether he was a disciple of the man, he would say, 'I am not.' Therefore, he denied being a disciple, not of Christ, but of the man. Therefore, both Peter and

Paul denied the man whom they confessed to be the Son of God. What Peter felt, and Paul expressed; from this, that one made progress. Peter's mistake is the teaching of the righteous: and Peter's stumble is the rock of all. Finally, he wavers upon the waves, but extends his right hand to Christ: he falls on the mountain, but is lifted up by Christ. Indeed, Peter wavered on the sea, but he walked (Matt. XIV, 30). Peter's wavering is stronger than our steadfastness. There he falls, where no one ascends: there he wavers, where no one walks. And yet, even though he wavers among the waves, he does not fall: he wavers, but does not fall: he floats, but does not plunge. And if he falls, he falls on the mountain: but he fell more favorably than others stood: he fell more favorably, whom Christ lifted up.

Again, when he was questioned about his disciples, John wrote that he denied it (John 18:25). And he denied it well, because it was said that he was one of his disciples, whom they had spoken of earlier. For a third time, when he was seen with him, he denied it, and this is derived from the earlier conversation: 'I was not with him, the man you call him, but I have not abandoned the Son of God.'

86. Luke also wrote that when Peter was asked whether he was one of them, he replied in the first voice, 'I do not know him.' And he said well. It was rash, indeed, to say that he knew him, whom the human mind cannot comprehend. For no one knows the Son except the Father (Matthew 11:27). Again, in the second voice, Peter himself says the same thing according to Luke: 'I am not.' He clearly preferred to deny himself rather than Christ. Either because he seemed to deny association with Christ, he certainly denied himself. Certainly, when he denies concerning the man, he sinned against the Son of man, so that it may be forgiven to him, not against the Holy Spirit. Also, when he was asked for the third time, he said: I do not know what you are saying, that is, I do not know your sacrileges.

87. But we excuse ourselves, he himself did not excuse himself; for it is not enough to give a hidden answer, confessing Jesus, but an open confession. What use is it to wrap words if you want to appear to have denied? And therefore Peter is not shown to have responded deliberately; because afterwards he remembered, and yet he wept. For he preferred to accuse his own sin, in order to justify himself by confessing, rather than burden himself by denying: for the righteous man is his own accuser at the beginning (Prov. XVIII, 17); and therefore he wept.

88. Why did he weep? Because guilt overtook him: I am accustomed to weeping, if guilt is lacking to me, that is, if I do not avenge myself, if I do not obtain what I wickedly desire. Peter was grieved and wept; because he erred as a man. I do not find what he said, I find that he wept: I read his tears, I do not read satisfaction: but what cannot be defended, can be washed away. Tears wash away the sin, which shame is too modest to confess with words. And tears seek both forgiveness and modesty. Tears speak of guilt without horror; tears confess a crime without causing offense; tears do not ask for forgiveness, and yet they deserve it. I found out why Peter remained silent, so that a quick request for forgiveness would not cause further offense. Before we cry, we must pray like this.

89. Good tears, which wash away guilt. Finally, those whom Jesus looks upon, weep. Peter denied at first, and did not weep; because the Lord had not looked upon him. He denied a second time, did not weep; because the Lord had not yet looked upon him. He denied a third time, Jesus looked upon him, and he wept bitterly. Look upon us, Lord Jesus, so that we may mourn our sin, wash

away our transgression. Hence the usefulness of the fall of the saints: what Peter denied did me no harm, what he corrected benefited me. I learned to beware of the conversations of traitors. Peter, among the Jews, denied, and Solomon, deceived by the company of the Gentiles, erred (1 Kings 11:4).

90. Therefore, Peter wept very bitterly, he wept so that he could wash away his sin with tears: and you, if you want to deserve forgiveness, wash away your guilt with tears: at the same moment, at the same time, Christ looks at you. If you perhaps stumble in any way; because the witness of your secrets is present, he looks at you so that you may remember and confess your error. Imitate Peter saying elsewhere for a third time: Lord, you know that I love you. For indeed, because he had denied for the third time, for the third time he confesses: but he denied at night, he confesses in the day (cf. Augustine, Book I on the Grace of Christ, chapter 45).

However, these things are written so that we may know that no one should boast; for if Peter fell, because he said, 'Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble' (Mark 14:29), who else has the right to presume about himself? And indeed, David, because he had said, 'I said in my prosperity, 'I shall never be moved"' (Psalm 30:6), openly admits that this was boasting, saying, 'You hid Your face, and I was troubled' (Psalm 30:7-8).

92. Where shall I summon you, Peter, that you may instruct me what you were thinking while weeping? Where, I ask, shall I summon you? From heaven, where you have now been joined to the choir of angels; or even from the tomb, because you do not think there is any injury in being there, from where the Lord rose again? Instruct us what benefit your tears have been to you. But you have instructed us immediately: for you, who had fallen, before you wept, after you wept, were chosen to rule others, whom you yourself had not ruled before.

93. Therefore, Peter had tears, which he poured forth with pious emotion: the traitor did not have tears with which to wash away his guilt, but torments of conscience with which to confess his sacrilege; so that while he is condemned by his own judgment and his crime is atoned for by voluntary punishment, the mercy of the Lord, who did not wish to avenge himself, is demonstrated, and the divinity is proven, who examines the conscience of the mind with invisible power.

94. He said: 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood' (Matthew 27:5). Although the repentance of the traitor is in vain, since he sinned against the Holy Spirit, there is still some shame in acknowledging guilt in the crime. And although he is not absolved, the impudence of the Jews is refuted: when the confession convicts the seller, the wicked still claim the rights of the contract for themselves, and they believe themselves to be free from guilt, as they say: 'What is it to us?' You seem (Ibid.). Truly insane are those who think they are more released from the author's crime than held. In monetary cases, the law is dissolved by the price being paid: these people receive the price, and they pursue sacrilege, and with persistent efforts they claim for themselves the deadly auction of blood, when the seller repays the reward of sacrilege.

Therefore, while the price of blood is separated from the treasures of the Jews, and the field of the potter is compared to the money with which Christ is sold (Ibid., 7); while that place is dedicated to the burial of the remains of foreigners, and the prophecy is fulfilled (Jeremiah XXXII, 44), and the mystery of the rising Church is revealed. For this whole world is the field according to divine precepts (Matthew XIII, 38); but the potter, he who formed man from clay, as you have in the Old

Testament, 'For God formed man from the clay of the earth' (Genesis II, 7), having the power by nature to form and by grace to reform according to his own will. For even though we fall through our own vices, by his mercy, we are renewed in spirit of mind, according to the oracles of Jeremiah.

96. The price of blood is also the price of the passion of the Lord. Therefore, the world is redeemed by Christ at the price of his blood; for he came to save the world through himself (John III, 17): in which, according to the work of the author, it is right. He came, therefore, to preserve through baptism those who were buried and dead to Christ for the grace of eternity. But not everyone has a place for burial, for although the whole world includes everyone, it does not reserve everyone: and if it is a common habitation, it is a legitimate burial for those who now are God's household through faith, but who were strangers under the law. Who are these unless it is said of them: Remember that at one time you were Gentiles in the flesh, separated from the conversation of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise (Ephesians 2:11-12)? But now these are no longer strangers and foreigners; because they have deserved to be citizens of the faith of the saints.

97. There follows an admirable place, where the patience to bear moral harm is poured into the human breast. The Lord is accused, and he is silent (Matthew XXVII, 11): and he is right to be silent, who does not need to defend himself. Let those who fear to be conquered, roam around seeking to be defended. Therefore, he does not confirm the accusation by fearing it, but he despises it by not refuting it. For what would he fear, who does not seek salvation? He betrayed his own salvation for the salvation of all, that it may be acquired by all. But what can I say about God? Susanna remained silent and prevailed; for a better reason is one that is not defended and is proven. And here Pilate absolves: but he absolves by judgment, he crucifies by mystery. But this is specific to Christ: the human aspect, that with unjust judges it seemed more a matter of unwillingness than inability to be defended.

98. But why did the Lord remain silent? He himself gave the answer, saying: If I tell you, you will not believe me; if I ask you, you will not answer me (Luke 22:67-68). However, the most remarkable thing is that he preferred to prove himself as a king rather than to speak; so that those who accuse him could not have a reason to condemn him, as they confess what they object to.

Vers. 8. But Herod, desiring to see some miracles done by him, kept silent and did nothing; for neither did his cruelty deserve to see divine things, nor did the Lord desire to indulge in boasting. And perhaps in Herod all the wicked are symbolized: who, if they do not believe in the Law and the prophets, are unable to see the miracles of Christ's works even in the Gospel.

100. (Verse 11.) He is sent to Herod, sent back to Pilate. And although neither of them pronounce him guilty, they still comply with the desires of someone else's cruelty. Indeed, Pilate washed his hands, but he did not wash away his deeds; for a judge ought not to yield to envy or fear, so as to deliver the blood of an innocent person. His wife warned him: grace shone in the darkness; divinity was evident; yet she did not temper the sacrilegious sentence in this way.

101. Similarly, I think that this is a prototype of all judgments that they would condemn those whom they believed to be innocent. However, it is evident that the Gentiles are more tolerant than the Jews, as Pilate's association with them demonstrates, and they are more persuaded by divine

works. But what about those who crucified the Lord of majesty?

102. (Vers. 18.) It is not without reason that murderers seek absolution, as they sought the destruction of the innocent. Such unjust laws have the quality of hating innocence and loving crime. However, in the interpretation of the name, it gives the appearance of a figure; for Barabbas is translated to mean 'son of the father' in Latin: therefore, those to whom it is said, 'You are of your father the devil' (John 8:44), are shown to prefer the son of their father, Antichrist, over the true Son of God.

(Vers. 11.)

And he clothed him in a white garment and sent him away.

103. It is not idle that he is dressed in a white robe by Herod, giving clear indications of his passion; for the great God, without spot, with glory, received the sins of the world. In the figure of Herod and Pilate also, who became friends from enemies through Jesus Christ, the figure of the people of Israel and the Gentile people is preserved, so that through the passion of the Lord there will be future harmony between them both: in such a way, however, that the pious people of the nations receive the word of God and transmit their faith to the Jewish people with their devotion; so that they too may clothe the body of Christ with the glory of their majesty, whom they had previously despised.

104. Moreover, soldiers put on a scarlet cloak and a purple tunic (Matthew 27:27), indicating in one the palms of the martyrs, in the other the insignia of royal power: that his flesh, shed throughout the whole world, would receive our blood for us, and his passion would give birth to a kingdom from us.

105. Also, the crown of thorns attached to His head (Ibid., 29) serves to show nothing other than the gift of divine work, which sought the triumphant glory of God through the thorns of the world, like the thorns of the world, as it were. Nor are there any lack of whips, for he himself was whipped, so that we might not be whipped. For the man, being wounded and knowing how to endure weaknesses, sorrows for us (Isaiah 53:3-4), for us who previously fled from God, turning the whips of fugitives. So patient is the Lord that he would offer his own hands in the chains of fugitives and his own body in the whips of fugitives. Therefore, they reveal an honored outcome for the Jews despite their detestable state of mind; for although they crown the tormentors and adore the mockers, although they do not believe in their hearts, they confess the one they are killing. They lacked the desire for good deeds, but they did not lack honor before God: they are hailed as king, crowned as conqueror, worshiped as if they were God and Lord.

106. The reed is also included according to Matthew's account, when it is taken in his hand (Matt. 27:29); so that human weakness, no longer being moved like a reed by the wind, may be strengthened by the works of Christ and established, and the ancient sentence that was against us may cease with the crucifixion of the handwriting that was contrary to us; or according to Mark's account, when they strike his head (Mark 15:19), so that our condition, being fortified by the touch of divinity, cannot be shaken.

107. (Vers. 26.) But now let the victorious one raise his own trophy. The cross is placed upon the shoulders as a trophy, which either Simon or he himself carried; and Christ is in the man, and the

man carried in Christ. The statements of the evangelists do not contradict when the mystery agrees: and the good order of our progress is this; that he himself would first raise the trophy of his cross, and then hand it over to be raised by the martyrs. It is not a Jew who carries the cross, but a foreigner and a stranger: he does not lead, but follows, as it is written: Take up your cross and follow me. For Christ ascended not his own cross, but ours. Nor was that death of his a divine death, but, as it were, human; whence also he himself saith: My God, my God, look upon me: why hast thou forsaken me? (Matthew XXVII, 46)

108. Beautifully ascending, he laid aside the royal garments, so that you may know that he suffered as a man, not as a God-king: although Christ is both, he was affixed to the cross as a man, not as a God. But the soldiers, not being Jews, do not know the time or what kind of clothes are suitable for Christ. He stands in judgment as a conqueror: he comes to his passion as a defendant, humbly.

Now since we have already seen the trophy, let the triumphator ascend his chariot: not seeking spoils from the trunks of trees or from four-horse wagons obtained from a mortal enemy, but hanging the captured spoils from the triumphal gibbet. Here we do not see nations with their arms bound behind their backs, nor the images of sacked cities, nor the likenesses of captured towns, or the bowed necks of captured kings, as is customary in human triumphs; nor the boundaries of victory marked by the end of a region: but we see rejoicing peoples of nations, not sought out for punishment, but for reward, adoring kings with affection for their children, cities devoted to voluntary pursuits and reformed for the better, images of towns that have not been depicted by makeup, but have been colored by devotion to the faith: arms and the rights of victories flowing throughout the entire world, the captive prince of the world, and the spiritual wickednesses which are in the heavens, obedient to the command of the human voice, subject to the dominions of various virtues, shining forth not in silk, but in morals. Chastity shines, faith gleams, and devotion to fortitude rises now, having stripped off the robes of death. The triumph of God has made all men near to triumph, the cross of the Lord.

110. Therefore, it is worth considering how one ascends. I see it as naked: let such a one ascend who is prepared to overcome the world; so that they may not seek the help of the world. Adam was defeated when he sought clothing; he who discarded covering was victorious. And such ones ascend as we, created by God as their author, nature formed: such a one dwelt in paradise as the first man, such a one entered paradise as the second man. And in order to conquer not only for oneself but for all, he extended his hand, so that he might draw all things to himself; so that, having stripped off the bondage of death, suspended by the yoke of faith, he might unite heavenly things with earthly things that were previously terrestrial.

111. (Verse 38.) Also, a title is written: the victors are accustomed to lead the procession; but indeed, a good procession of the rising dead preceded the triumphal chariot of the Lord. Also, a title is accustomed to indicate the number of subjugated nations. In those triumphs, a pitiful order is arranged of the conquered, the contemptible captivity of nations perishing: here, the grace of the redeemed nations flourishes: fitting slaves for such a great triumph, that heaven, earth, seas, and the underworld are changed from corruption to grace.

112. However, a title is written and placed above the cross, not beneath the cross; for the beginning is on his shoulders. And what is the beginning, if not his eternal power and divinity?

Therefore, when he was asked who he was, he replied: The beginning, who also speak to you. Let us read this title:

Jesus, he says, the Nazarene, king of the Jews.

113. The title is rightly placed above the cross; because the kingdom that Christ has is not of a human body, but of divine power. The title is rightly placed above the cross; for although the Lord Jesus was on the cross, he shone with the majesty of a king above the cross. A worm on the cross, a beetle on the cross: and a good worm that clung to the wood, a good beetle that cried out from the wood. What did he cry out? Lord, do not hold this sin against them. He cried out to the thief: Today you will be with me in paradise. He cried out like a scarab beetle: God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And the good scarab beetle, who with the tracks of his feet used to turn the shapeless and sluggish clay of our body; the good scarab beetle who raises the poor from the dung. He raised Paul, who was considered as dung; he also raised Job, who was sitting in dung. Therefore, not an insignificant title.

114. But the very place of the cross, either in the middle, as visible to all, or above Adam, as the Hebrews argue, for burial. For it was fitting that there our first-fruits of life should be placed, where the beginnings of death had been.

115. The garments are divided, each is carried away by a different fate; for the spirit of God is not grasped by human opinion, but rather it glides in like an unexpected event. And perhaps these soldiers had the type of the four Evangelists who wrote the title that we all read. I read the title of the king of the Jews, when I read: My kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). I read the cause of Christ written above his head, when I read: And the Word was God (John 1:1); for the head of Christ is God.

116. Therefore they were keeping Jesus and today they keep him, so that he may not happen to stumble, so that he may not descend from passion, which the Jewish people sought. To me it is clear that Christ dies in passion, so that he may rise after the passion. He did not want to descend for himself, so that he may die for me. Therefore Christ is already kept for us: for us his garments are divided. Individuals cannot possess everything, and therefore the lot is cast over the tunic; because the division of the Holy Spirit is not made according to human will. For there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;

117. Look now at the divided garments of Christ. Where shall I find them? Look in Matthew, you will find the scarlet cloak alone with Him (Matt. 27:28); with John, the purple robe (John 19:2); with Mark, only the purple (Mark 15:17); with Luke, the white garment (Luke 23:11), for this one He was content with as His portion. How many soldiers, then, did Christ clothe with His garment? But I believe not just four, but He clothed all the soldiers and abundantly provided for all. But let us return to the evangelists.

118. Therefore, these mystical parts, not parts of garments, but qualities, seem to me to be virtues. For one has written more sublimely about the kingdom, another more extensively about the training of the individual, Luke has chosen the brilliance of priestly garments for himself, but Mark did not desire the text of words, finally John wove certain sentences with which he clothes our faith. Does not that which is woven seem to you: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God: this was in the beginning with God, and all things were

made through it (John 1:1-3)? But Marcus, content with the brilliance of purple, without any embellishment of words, says: The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mark 1:1).

Therefore, the garments of Christ are divided either by action or by grace; for the tunic could not be divided, namely, faith, because it is not for the portion of individuals, but for the common right of all; for what is not divided remains whole for each. And the cloths from above are good; for the faith of Christ is covered in such a way that it descends from the divine to the human; because he who was born from God before the ages, took on the assumption of flesh in the later times. Therefore, it is signified to us that faith should not be torn apart but should remain solid.

(Vers. 43.)

(Verse 43.) Amen, amen I say to you: Today you will be with me in paradise.

121. The most beautiful example of a desired conversion, which is so quickly granted to a thief, and grace is more abundant than prayer; for the Lord always gives more than is requested. He asked the Lord to remember him when He came into His kingdom, and the Lord said to him: Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise (Matthew 27:44). For to be with Christ is life; therefore, where Christ is, there is life, there is the kingdom. Therefore, the Lord quickly forgives (Mark 15:32), because he quickly turns back.

122. (Verse 39.) And hence it seems that this is resolved, because others bring in two accusing thieves, but this one accuses one, and one asks. Perhaps this one was accused first, but suddenly he was converted. It is not surprising if he forgave the fault when he turned against those insulting him, he who granted pardon to the insulters. He could also speak in the plural about one, as in this case: The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers gathered together against the Lord and against his Anointed (Psalm 2:2); for only Herod the king and Pontius Pilate the governor are said to have conspired against Christ by the voice of Peter in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 4:27). Thus, you have it in Hebrews, they walked about in goat skins, they were sawed in two, and they were stuffed into the mouths of lions (Heb. XI, 37); while only Elijah is said to have had a hairy mantle, Isaiah is said to have been sawed in two (IV Kings I, 8), and Daniel is shown to have remained unharmed by the lions (Dan. VI, 22).

123. (Verse 40) How execrable is the injustice of the Jews in the act of crucifying the Redeemer as if he were a thief! However, the good thief is mystically cunning, who deceived the devil in order to take away his vessels. But mystically, the two thieves represent two groups of sinners to be crucified with Christ through baptism: their disagreement signifies the diversity of believers. Finally, one was on the left, the other on the right (John 19:30). The reproof also reveals the future scandal of the cross even among believers.

124. And the Jews offered vinegar (Matthew 27:48). Indeed, corruption of sincerity is drawn from all things that are consumed, so that all things that were tainted would be fixed to the cross. Therefore vinegar is drunk, wine with gall is not drunk (ibid., 34), not because of the gall, but because the bitterness mixed with the wine is rejected. For the bitterness of our life has been taken on for the sake of the condition of the body. Finally, he himself says: They gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink (Psalm 69:22). But bitterness should not be mixed with sincerity, so that the future immortality of those who rise may be shown without

bitterness: and since immortality had formed in the human vessel, it is separated in Christ. Therefore vinegar is drunk, that is, the vice of corrupted immortality by Adam is erased on the cross, so that it may be absorbed from the human body. We also should pour our vices, which have concreted through the carelessness of mind and body, into Christ: pour them through baptism, so that we may be crucified in Christ: pour them through repentance, so that from Him the pure sincerity of heavenly wine and blood may be restored to us.

Finally, when he had tasted the vinegar, he said, 'It is finished' (John 19:30); because the fullness of assumed mortality had fulfilled every mystery, and with all vices exhausted, only the joy of immortality remained. And for this reason he said:

(Vers. 46.)

(Verse 46.) Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.

126. And the spirit that is reserved is well commended; for what is commended is certainly not lost. Therefore, the spirit is a good pledge, a good deposit. Hence it says there: O Timothy, guard the good deposit (2 Timothy 1:14). For the spirit is commended to the Father; and therefore it says: For you will not abandon my soul in Hades (Psalm 16:10). But observe the great mystery. Now he commends his spirit into the hands of the Father, now he sits in the lap of the Father; for no one else can fully contain Christ. Finally: 'I am in the Father, and the Father is in me' (John 14:10). Therefore, the spirit is commended to the Father. But since it is in higher things, it illuminates both the heavens and the depths, so that all things may be redeemed; for indeed, Christ is all and in all, although Christ works in each individual (Colossians 3:11). The flesh dies so that it may rise again; the spirit is commended to the Father so that even heavenly things may be released from the bondage of iniquity, and peace may be made in heaven, which earthly things may follow.

(Ibid.) And saying this, he gave up the spirit.

127. And he handed over well, who did not unwillingly breathe out his spirit. Finally Matthew says: He breathed out his spirit (Matt. XXVII, 50); for what is breathed out is voluntary: what is lost is necessary. Therefore he added: With a loud voice. In which either there is a glorious declaration that he descended for our sins even to death (so, should I be ashamed to confess what Christ was not ashamed to proclaim with a loud voice), or there is a clear manifestation of God testifying to the separation of divinity and body. For thus you have it: Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying: My God, My God, look at me: why have you forsaken me? A man about to die separated from divinity cried out. For since divinity is free from death, death could not possibly exist unless life departed; for life is divinity.

128. (Verses 44-47.) Now, what follows shows that the end of the age will come because of the impiety of men. Therefore, the present is signified by the Lord's passion, so that the future may arise. Darkness is therefore cast over the eyes of the faithless, so that the light of faith may rise. The sun sets or retreats from the sacrilegious, so that the horrifying spectacle of crime may be obscured. The rocks split, so that through the steep rocks, it may be shown that the power of the word penetrates the hard hearts of sinners; thus, more easily, those hunters, whom Jeremiah predicted, would hunt for the Lord in the hollows of the rocks. But the opening of the monuments (Matthew 27:52) signifies nothing else than the breaking open of the gates of death, the resurrection of the dead, whose faith in appearance and their example in process, by going forth

into the holy city, declared in the sight of those present, that eternal dwelling which will be the abode of the risen. Also, the veil is torn, by which the separation of the two peoples or the desecration of the mysteries of the Synagogue is declared. Therefore, the old veil is torn apart; so that the new Church may hang the sails of its faith. The covering of the synagogues is removed; so that we may see the internal mysteries of religion, with the mind's gaze revealed. Finally, even the centurion who crucified the Son of God confesses. O, the hearts of the Jews are harder than stones! The rocks are split, but their hearts remain hardened. The judge condemns, the executioner believes, the traitor condemns his own crime with death, the elements flee, the earth quakes, the tombs are opened: Yet the hard-heartedness of the Jews remains unchanged amidst a shaken world.

129. (Verse 49.) And there were also standing women who were seeing this: the mother was also standing, when her piety put aside her own dangers. But the Lord, hanging on the cross, who despised his own dangers, commendeth his mother with pious affection. This was not without purpose that John followed Him in many things (John 19:25); for others described the world shaken, the sky covered in darkness, the sun fleeing. Matthew and Mark added, who more fully pursued the human and moral aspects: My God, my God, look upon me (Matthew 27:46); why hast thou forsaken me (Mark 15:34)? But in order to believe that we have reached the acceptance of the cross of Christ, Luke clearly asserts that forgiveness was granted to the thief through priestly intercession, and that the same mercy was requested for the persecuting Jews (Luke 23:45).

Therefore, John, who more deeply penetrated the divine mysteries, rightly labored to declare that she who gave birth to God remained a virgin. He alone teaches me what others did not teach, how, while on the cross, he called her mother (John 19:26), considering it of greater value that, as the victor over tortures and punishments, the victor over the devil, he divided the obligation of piety than that he bestowed the heavenly kingdom. For if it is pious that the thief is granted forgiveness by the Lord, it is much more pious that the mother is honored by the Son.

131. Nor should it be considered out of order that I wrote the absolution of the thief before the mention of the mother; for he who had come to save sinners, it is not absurd if he first fulfilled his mission in my writings to redeem the salvation of the sinner. Finally, he himself says: 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' (Matth. XII, 48). For he had not come to call the righteous, but sinners. But there, in that place; here, even on the cross, not forgetful of his mother, he addresses her, saying: 'Behold, your son'; and to John: 'Behold, your mother' (Joan. XIX, 26 and 27). Christ was being tested on the cross, and John proclaimed his testament, worthy to bear witness to such a testator. The good testament is not of money, but of life: it is written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God: My tongue is the pen of a swiftly writing scribe (Psalm 45:3). But neither did it befit Mary, who was not less than the mother of Christ, to flee from the cross; she stood by, and with pious eyes beheld the wounds of her Son; for she looked not for His death as the payment, but the salvation of the world. Or perhaps because she knew that through the death of her Son the redemption of the world would come, she considered herself and her death as adding something to the public gift. But Jesus needed no assistance for the redemption of all, who said: I am become like a man without assistance, free among the dead. He did indeed receive his mother's affection, but he did not seek the help of man. Therefore, we have a master of kindness: the reading teaches what maternal affection should imitate, what reverence should follow from children; so that those

mothers offer themselves in the dangers of their children, that their maternal concern for them should be more than their own grief for their own death.

133. In this passage, the most abundant testimony is given to the virginity of Mary. For a wife is not separated from her husband, since it is written: What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate (Matthew 19:6); but she who, on account of the mystery of marriage, put on a veil, no longer needed marriage after the completion of the mysteries. Or if we follow moral teachings, purity is commanded in times of mourning.

134. However, it is a mysterious thing that is commended to John among the others who are younger: that we should not receive it with idle ears. For the union of a young man with a woman is dangerous, as is the appearance of youth; lest perhaps some inquisitive woman, neglectful of the mysteries, desiring to luxuriate in Christ, may present the appearance of Mary but not imitate her devotion, as the common people now malignantly speak ill of women who, abandoning their older husbands, follow younger ones. Therefore let the Church learn that it is a mystery, which, having been joined to the elder people in appearance before, not in practice, after giving birth to the Word, and having sown in the bodies and minds of men through the faith of the cross and the burial of the body of the Lord, has chosen the society of the younger people by the command of God.

135. I also wonder why before death we do not find that he was struck, but after death we find it (John 19:34). Unless perhaps it is taught that his death was voluntary rather than necessary, and we know the mystical order; for not before the sacraments of the altar, but before baptism: and likewise the cup. Then let us observe that although his body had a mortal nature, although it had a similar quality, it had a different grace. For surely after death the blood freezes in our bodies; but from that incorruptible yet dead body, the life of all flowed forth. For water and blood came forth: the one to cleanse, the other to redeem. Let us therefore drink our redemption, that by drinking we may be redeemed.

136. (Verse 50.) What does it mean that it is not the apostles, but Joseph and Nicodemus who bury Christ? One is righteous and steadfast, the other in whom there was no deceit (John 19:38-39); for such is the burial of Christ, which has no deceit or wickedness. Therefore, the opportunity for evasiveness is closed, and they are refuted by the testimony of their own Jewish people; for if it had been buried by the apostles, they would surely say that he was not buried, whom they said was buried and taken away.

Just as the body of Christ is covered with a shroud, innocence anoints with ointment (John 19:40); for we find these things distinct not without purpose; because righteousness clothes the Church, innocence supplies grace. Therefore, clothe yourself with the glory of the Lord's body, so that you may also be righteous: even if you believe it to be dead, still anoint it with the fullness of its divinity. Anoint it with myrrh and aloes, so that you may be the good odor of Christ. Joseph, that righteous man, sent the good linen cloth, and perhaps that which Peter saw descending from heaven to him, in which were depicted the species of quadrupeds, wild animals, and birds, in the likeness of the nations (Acts 10:11). Therefore, the Church, which has united the diversity of peoples in the communion of its faith, is buried with that mysterious and sacred ointment.

138. Concerning this, in the Gospel of John alone, I find that Joseph came secretly to Pilate out of fear of the Jews (John 19:38). How did the righteous seek refuge? However, I think that he sought

it secretly in order to obtain the body, not to avoid danger. And yet, what is surprising if the righteous were hidden, when the apostles, the masters of the righteous, were also hidden? Come, you as well: whether late or at night, or at whatever hour you come, you will find Jesus ready to receive you, not delaying to give a generous reward even to those who come late; for even the one who comes at the sixth hour is not cheated of his reward, and the one who comes at the eleventh hour receives the fullness of the reward (Matthew 20:4ff). But Nicodemus also came by night (John 3:2). It was night, because the resurrection had not yet occurred. Finally, Christ arose, and the righteous one said: The night has passed, and the day is approaching (Romans 13:12).

139. Joseph, a just man, is called a rich man in Luke (23:50), while Matthew calls him a rich man (Matthew 27:57). And rightly is he called rich in this place where he received the body of Christ; for by receiving the rich man, he did not know the poverty of faith. Therefore, he is rich who is just. Therefore, the just man wraps him in a linen cloth (John 19:39): but the Israelite mixes various fragrances of virtues, and sends aloes as if a hundred pounds, that is, the quantity of perfect faith. And they bound the body of Jesus according to the custom of the spiritual Jews, not with knots of treachery, but with ties of faith. And they placed it in the garden (Ibid., 41), which is often compared to the Church, which has various fruits of merits and flowers of virtues.

140. And another new monument he said, the monument of Joseph (Ibid. and Matthew 27:60). Therefore, Christ did not have his own tomb; for tombs are prepared for those under the law of death: the victor over death does not have his own tomb. For what communion does a tomb have with God? Finally, Ecclesiastes says of the one who meditates on good things: 'And he has no burial' (Ecclesiastes 6:3). Therefore, the death of Christ is special besides the common death of all: and therefore he is not buried with others, but is enclosed alone in a tomb; for the incarnation of the Lord had everything in likeness to men, but with a difference. He was born of a Virgin, similar in nature, dissimilar in conception. He healed the sick, but commanded. John baptized with water, but He with the Spirit (Luke III, 16). And therefore, the death of Christ is common according to the nature of the body, but special according to His power.

141. (Verse 53.) But who is Joseph, in whose tomb is he placed? Surely he is the righteous one. Therefore, Christ is fittingly believed to be in the tomb of the righteous one, so that the Son of Man may have a place to rest his head and find repose in the dwelling of righteousness. And it is fitting that, according to the literal sense, it is not said that another raised from the dead was spoken of by the unfaithful ones; mystically, truly, what can we understand if not perhaps because we read: Their throat is an open sepulcher (Psalm 5, 11)? Therefore, the open tomb is the throat of man, in which deadly treachery and lifeless words are buried, which through age and the attack of some beasts weaken and fall apart. Therefore, on the other hand, it is a monument in the secrets of men, which righteous hardness in their hearts is penetrated by the penetrating word of the Gentiles, polished by the works of faith and doctrine, so that it may present the virtue of Christ among the nations.

142. To whom a most beautiful stone was placed (Matt. XXVII, 60), so that it would not be open; for whoever has buried Christ within themselves, should carefully guard him; so as not to lose him, nor enter into faithlessness. For you see that Peter and John deserved to enter first. Finally, John himself entered before he believed (John. XX, 6 and 8).

143. And it is said that it was carved well in rock (Matt. 27:60), that is, in the firmament of faith, from which the true Israelites sucked the sweetness of honey and the spiritual oil. But the just man, and he who has seen God, burial Christ; for Christ is not buried except by those who believe in God.

Finally, not all were able to bury Christ: although religious women stood from afar, they diligently observed the place in order to bring ointments and pour them out. However, they are both anxious and depart from the tomb and return to the tomb: although constancy is lacking, diligence is not. The gender falters, devotion burns.

Finally, at the time of the resurrection, they are present, and while the men were fleeing, only the women are admonished by the angel to not be afraid (John 20:1-2). The disciples call Peter and the others in earnest, but the later ones come with confidence. Finally, he comes without fear, and the one who came later enters first, as if he had received the keys of the kingdom to open them for others.

146. The shaking of the earth (Matthew 28:2) is a resurrection for the faithful, but a fear for the wicked: for the former, because the lazy body stirs from the sleep of death; for the latter, because they are disturbed by the shaking of the body and the earthly movement, they turn away from the faith and trust in the resurrection. But early on the sabbath, they came to the tomb.

147. There is a great doubt that arises from this passage; for although the evangelists do not seem to have said contradictory things, they have said different things. For here: 'In the morning, very early' (Mark 16:1); Matthew, 'In the evening of the Sabbath' (Matthew 28:1); John, 'Early in the morning, while it was still dark' (John 20:1), they said that the women came to the tomb. Then here, Mark mentioned two men, one young man sitting in white clothes (Mark 16:5); Matthew mentioned one angel (Matthew 28:2); John mentioned two angels sitting in white clothes (John 20:12) who were seen. Lastly, what seems scarcely explicable, John wrote that Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father' (John 20:17). Matthew wrote that the Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, and that they came and held his feet, and worshiped him, as he described in the clearest terms (Matthew 28:9).

148. How then can it be solved, unless the four evangelists are believed to have spoken at different times; so that they mention different women and different visions? Finally, some come with ointment on the first day of the Sabbath, others without ointment on the evening of the Sabbath. The name of these women is expressed, they signify those who followed the Lord from Galilee. In order that no harsh difficulty of a thorny interpretation may offend at the end, where pleasant things may have been presumed; now consider us about to lower the sails of our completed discourse, since we have come to port: and the ship which has crossed the seas with a swift course, when it begins to approach the shore, is hindered by hidden rocks in its course. Therefore, let the discussion not cling to me like a sluggish helmsman on the sandy shores, as if the journey should be made slowly in the blind shallows rather than swiftly; so that the speech may not open up to us with too many cracks.

First of all, that which is written must be considered: 'In the evening of the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, the Lord rose' (Matthew 28:1). This is how it goes: 'In the evening of the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a

great earthquake. For it was not on the Sabbath day (since they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment) (Luke 23:56); but after the Sabbath day, during the night, he rose again.' Finally, those who came in the morning, although very early, already knew that the Lord had risen.

Thus, it must be observed that the resurrection did not take place on Sunday morning, the first day after Sabbath, nor on the Sabbath itself. For how could the three days be fulfilled? He did not rise in the evening of the last day, but in the evening of the night, as the Greek says, which means 'late.' And 'late' signifies both the hour at sunset and the slowness of any event; just as if you were to say, 'It was suggested to me late,' that is, 'slowly.' He arrives late, that is, he arrives after the appointed time has passed: and even if he arrives in the early morning of the following day, it is still late, when the time for action has already been wasted. It is also late in the deep night, so that if you say: He rose late to work at night, that is, not at evening time, but in the deep night.

152. Therefore, women have the authority to approach the tomb, especially when the guards are resting; and the guards themselves are even more frightened because they woke up from sleep. Finally, even the assembled chief priests confirm that this happened at night, saying to the guards: Say, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we were asleep' (Matthew 28:13). For they immediately seize upon the excuse of fraud based on what they learned from the guards. For John, early in the morning, while it was still dark, indicates that Mary Magdalene had come to him and to Peter, and yet she is unaware of the resurrection (John 20:2); for surely if it had happened when the day was growing late, it could have been made known immediately.

153. It is morning, and still Peter does not know, John does not know. Did the Lord tolerate the disciples' uncertainty about His death for a longer time, to whom immediately an angel, immediately the Lord Himself, sent the message of the accomplished event? And so that you may know what happened during the night, some women do not know, others know: those who observed during the nights and days know, those who withdrew do not know. One Mary Magdalene does not know, according to John (John 20:15): the other Mary Magdalene knows, according to Matthew (Matthew 28:9); for the same person could not both know beforehand and then not know afterwards. Therefore, if there are many Marys, perhaps there are also many Magdalenes, since that is a personal name of places.

Finally, recognize that the other is different. She is allowed to hold the feet of the Lord; touching the Lord is prohibited for her. She deserved to see an angel, but when she first came, she saw no one. She told the disciples that the Lord had risen; she signifies that he has been taken. She rejoices, but she weeps. Christ has already appeared to him in his glory, but she is still seeking the dead. She saw the Lord and believed, but she could not recognize him when she saw him. She worshiped with faithful spirit, while this one was troubled with doubtful sorrow.

155. Indeed, it is rightly forbidden to touch the Lord; for we do not touch Christ with physical touch, but with faith: For I have not yet ascended to my Father (John 20:17); that is, I have not yet ascended to the position that you seek as one who seeks the living among the dead. And therefore, he is sent to the stronger ones, whose example he may learn to believe, so that they may proclaim his resurrection.

156. Just as in the beginning, woman was the author of sin, man the executor of error: so now she who had tasted death first, saw resurrection first, in the order of guilt and remedy. And lest

perpetual guilt should bear reproach among men: she who had transferred guilt to man, transferred also grace, and compensated for the ancient downfall with the evidence of resurrection. Through the mouth of woman, death had progressed before, through the mouth of woman, life is restored. But because constancy is necessary for preaching, and the female sex is weaker for carrying out tasks, the duty of evangelizing is entrusted to men. For just as through Jesus the guilt of women is not only dissolved but also grace is multiplied, so that she may persuade many, whom she had deceived before as one person, so also the man, who had believed rashly before, should recover the entrusted office; so that he who had been unstable in believing in himself, would become suitable for preaching to others.

158. But let us turn to the words of the mandate: Do not touch me; for I have not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God (John XX, 17). How have you not ascended, Lord Jesus? How have you departed, who entrusted your spirit into the hands of the Father? Or when can you be absent, who are always in the Father, with the Father always? In fact, you yourself said: If I descend into the underworld, you are there. If I should take my wings before dawn, and dwell at the end of the sea, even there your hand would lead me. (Psalm 139:8 et seq.) Or how do you ascend, who are always everywhere?

159. You did indeed descend, O Son of man, and when you descended, you did not separate from the Father, but you descended for us, so that we may see you with our eyes and minds, so that we may believe in you. Therefore, you also ascended for us, so that we may follow you with our minds, whom we cannot see with our eyes. You ascended to the apostles, to whom you said: 'He who sees me, sees the Father' (John 14:9). Finally, when John was searching for you, he knew that you were with the Father. He sought you in the Father, and he found you, and therefore he said: 'And the Word was with God' (John 1:1). You ascended and Paul, who was not content to follow you alone, also taught us how to follow you and where we can find you, saying: If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God (Col. III, 1). And lest we think this pertains more to the eyes than to the soul, he added: Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth (Ib., 2). So we should not seek you above the earth, nor in the earth, nor according to the flesh, if we want to find you; for now we no longer know Christ according to the flesh. Indeed, Stephen did not seek you above the earth, who saw you standing at the right hand of God; but Mary, because she sought on earth, could not touch. Stephen touched because he sought in heaven; Stephen saw you absent among the Jews: Mary did not see you present among the angels. But why she could not touch him, the evangelist himself has taught us, saying, 'For when she saw you, she did not know that you are; thus you have it: she turned back, and saw Jesus standing, and she did not know that it is Jesus' (Ibid., 1). She rightfully could not touch, what she could not see; for one who sees, touches.

Therefore, Scripture distinguishes between her and Mary. Mary goes to meet Jesus, this one turns back: Mary is greeted, this one is rebuked. Finally, this is how it goes: Jesus says to her: 'Woman' (John 20:14). The one who does not believe is a woman, and is still referred to by the designation of the female body: for the one who believes, she encounters the perfect man, in the measure of the fullness of Christ's age, lacking now the name of the world, the sex of the body, the slippery nature of youth, the verbosity of old age. Therefore, Jesus says: Woman, why are you weeping? As if to say: God does not require naked tears, but faith. Good tears, if you recognize Christ.

Whom are you seeking? He says. For the Lord condemns late efforts. But he added well: Whom are you seeking? Not that he doubts whom he is seeking, but because she does not know whom she is seeking; for she is not seeking Christ, whom she thinks has been taken away. Christ is present, how is he sought? Therefore he is not known who is sought, when he is not recognized, although he can be seen.

162. Finally, she saw Christ and thought he was the gardener; for thus it is written: Thinking that he was the gardener, she said to him: Lord, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him. Although her faith was uncertain, her words were not slippery: although she thought he was the gardener, she designated him as the Son of God: although she still did not believe, she desired to believe; for he himself, who raised him, took his body. Therefore, the woman's venerable mistake, who, although she should not have doubted that Christ's body was taken up through the glory of the resurrection, still desires to be taught by Christ, and devoutly pledges her faith to him; so that she herself may now take him away from the earth, and seek him at the right hand of God.

163. Finally, after these words, she is not called a woman, but now she is called Mary (John 20:16); for one thing is the common name of the people, another is the special name of this person who followed Christ. And to the disciples, although they have not yet believed fully, she is nevertheless sent as a messenger. But she is forbidden to touch, because she has not yet experienced in a bodily way the fullness of the divinity dwelling in Christ, as Paul had understood (Colossians 2:9); she has not yet emptied herself of the slippery world, the ambiguous flesh; she has not yet lived the life of Christ. Finally, he stands, not worshiping the Lord, nor holding his feet, like that Mary: in whom, surely, not so much physical obedience is indicated, as the affection of full faith; that he believes Christ to be both man and God: for it is God who is worshiped, and man who is held (Matthew 28:9).

Therefore, the Lord does not disdain to be touched by a woman, as both Mary and Martha anointed His feet with ointment (Luke 7:38); nor does He refuse to be touched, but rather teaches progress; for not all can touch the risen Christ, whom they touched in this life while He dwelled in a body. If one desires to touch Christ, they should mortify their own members and put on the inward parts of mercy like the one who will be resurrected, and not hesitate to renounce earthly things.

165. So what does 'Noli me tangere' (John 20:17) mean? Do not touch me, but go to my brothers, that is, to the more perfect ones. For whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother (Matthew 12:50). Because the resurrection can only be understood by the more perfect, the foundation of this faith is preserved specifically by the more grounded: But I do not permit women to teach in the Church, let them ask their husbands at home (1 Corinthians 14:35). So they are sent to those who are at home: and she received the written commands (I Tim. II, 12). And it is not without reason that some have understood that Christ did not want to be touched in this place, because he had not yet received the sign which he had entrusted to the Father, as if he should not yet be touched.

I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God (John 20:17). He distinguished well because he was speaking to a woman; for our nature is not common with Christ, except in human condition. To Him the Father by His own generation, to us by voluntary adoption; to Him by nature, to us by grace; to Him God by the unity of the mystery, to us by heavenly power.

Someone says: How, then, did Thomas, though he did not yet believe, touch Christ? (Ibid., 27) But it seems that he doubted not about the resurrection of the Lord, but about the quality of the resurrection; and he required to touch with his own hand, just as Paul taught; For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (II Cor. XV, 53); so that the unbeliever may believe, and the doubter may not be able to doubt: for we more readily believe what we see. However, Thomas had a reason to admire when he saw a body inserted inside all the closed and impassable structures, with no damage; and therefore it is amazing how the corporal nature has penetrated through an impenetrable body, with an invisible entrance but a visible appearance: easy to touch, difficult to estimate.

169. (Vers. 37, 39.) Finally, the disturbed disciples believed that they were seeing a spirit; and therefore the Lord, in order to show us the appearance of the resurrection: Touch, he said, and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have. Therefore, he penetrated not through an incorporeal nature, but through the quality of a resurrected body, impermeable to use and closed. For what is touched is a body: what is felt is a body: but we will rise in a body: For there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body (I Cor. XV, 44); but the former is more refined, the latter more dense, since it is still concentered by the quality of earthly corruption.

170. For how could He not offer to touch the body in which the marks of wounds remained, the traces of scars which the Lord displayed? In this body He not only strengthens faith, but also sharpens devotion; He chose to bear the wounds inflicted for us, He did not choose to abolish them; so that He could show to God the Father the price of our freedom. The Father places such a one at His right hand, embracing the trophies of our salvation: there He will show us such martyrs with their scars as a crown.

171. And since our discussion has reached this point, let us consider for what reason the apostles believed according to John, who rejoiced (John 20:20), whereas according to Luke they were rebuked as unbelieving (Verse 25). There they received the Holy Spirit, here they are commanded to wait in the city until they are clothed with power from on high (Verse 49). And it seems to me that the former, as an apostle, touched on greater and loftier things, while the latter dealt with what follows and is closer to human matters. The former used a concise style, since there can be no doubt about him who bears witness concerning those events in which he himself was present (John 19:35), and his witness is true. From this also it is reasonable to ward off any suspicion of either negligence or falsehood from the one who merited to be an evangelist. And therefore we think both are true, not distinguished by a variety of opinions or a diversity of persons. For although in the beginning Luke says that they did not believe, he later demonstrates that they did believe: and if we consider the first [accounts], they are contrary; if we consider the following [accounts], it is certain that they agree. Let us therefore consider the very words of Scripture.

172. (Verses 35-37.) Thus says John: And the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. He said to them again: Peace be with you, as the Father has sent me, so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said: Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you retain, they are retained (John 20:20, et seq.). But Luke says: And how they recognized him in the breaking of the bread. But while they were speaking these things, he stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace to you, it is I, do not be afraid." But they were troubled and frightened, thinking that they saw a spirit. And there could have been more

here: but because this was late in the day of the resurrection (for in the evening of that day when those who had entered remained with the Lord, where He suddenly disappeared, those two were reported to have returned to the disciples at the same hour when the Lord presented Himself to be touched) and according to John on that late day, on the first day of the week, He appeared to the disciples and showed them His wounds to be touched (John 20:19); in order to remove any ambiguity, we thought it necessary to investigate more diligently. For it seems that he showed them separately to these eleven, just as he had shown himself separately to Ammaon and Cleophas in the evening; and just as these two, so also those eleven seem to have been able to come together to confirm the others. In the end, they were also confused, as you have according to Luke; and therefore, he opened their minds so that they understood the things that were written. It is without a doubt that he wrote this more extensively, and that one more succinctly. For how could they say that only Cephas saw him, if he was seen by everyone? But just as from the women: first Mary and then the other Mary; so too from the men: Peter was seen in the early morning. And Paul says: For I delivered to you first of all, that Christ died according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he was seen by Cephas (I Cor. XV, 3 et seq.). And therefore, Mark specifically mentions a young man instructing the women to tell Peter and the disciples that the Lord has risen (Mark XVI, 5 et 7). So Peter, therefore, saw the Lord alone; for he always believed that devout and ready devotion, and therefore he strove to gather more frequent signs of faith. Sometimes with John, sometimes alone, yet he ran eagerly everywhere, either alone or first: not satisfied with seeing what he had seen, he repeated the things to be looked at, and inflamed by the love of seeking the Lord, he is not satisfied with seeing. He sees him alone, he sees him with the eleven, he sees him with the seventy, he sees him even when Thomas believed, he sees him while fishing: but not content with having seen, impatient of desire, neglectful of capture, unmindful of danger, but still not forgetful of reverence; where he saw the Lord on the shore, he covered himself with a garment, considering it late if he should arrive with the others by boat. Thus, as the Lord walked on the waves, forgetting the nature of the sea, he appeared (Matthew 14:28): thus, as the Lord was being held by the Jews, he alone wielded a sword against the crowds (Matthew 26:51): thus, even now, as the Lord stood on the perilous shore, he hastened the religious duty with prompt obedience (John 21:4).

175. There is therefore no doubt that Peter believed, and believed because he loved, and loved because he believed. Wherefore he is saddened also because he is questioned a third time: Lovest thou me? For he is questioned about whom there is doubt. But the Lord has no doubt, who asks, not that he may learn, but that he may teach, him whom he was raising up to heaven, leaving to us his love as it were a pledge. Thus thou hast it: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Surely thou knowest, Lord, that I love thee. Jesus said to him: Feed my lambs (Ibid., 16). Peter, being well aware of himself not being chosen for the moment but already known to God, testifies to this affection. For who else can easily profess this about himself? And therefore, because he alone professes it out of all, he is preferred before all; for charity is greater than all.

Furthermore, this is to be looked at more closely: why, when the Lord said, 'Do you love me?' did Peter respond, 'You know, Lord, that I love you.' In this, it seems to me that love has the affection of the soul, a certain ardor of the body and mind, and I believe that Peter's fervor not only marks the devotion of his soul, but also of his body in worshipping God. Finally, the third time, the Lord

asked not, 'Do you love me?' but 'Do you love me?' (John 21:17). And now, he is not commanded to feed infants, as before, with a kind of milk, nor young sheep as before, but to feed mature sheep, so that he may govern the more perfect ones as he is more perfect.

177. And therefore, as if having been perfected in all things, which the flesh could no longer recall from the glory of the passion, a crown is awarded: 'When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go' (John 21:18). A good old age is not weak for the use of long life, but prepared for martyrdom by the maturity of virtue: which restrains the lasciviousness of bodily pleasures, does not indulge in desires, avoids sweet things, does not seek what is attractive; for the flesh desires against the spirit, and finds for itself crooked paths to walk in the diversity of pleasures (Galatians 5:17). Truly, old age of the mind, which chooses not what is pleasant for the body, but what is useful for the mind: it is not carried away by the pleasurable appetite of the body, but is recalled by the restraint of resisting as if unwilling.

Therefore, even Peter, although he was prepared in his mind to undergo martyrdom (Luke 22:33), nevertheless when danger approached, he was swayed from his steadfastness; for the sweetness of Christ captivates us, the enjoyment of a heavenly gift. For who among us would not choose martyrdom if they could gladly die? Therefore, Peter also seems not to want it, but he is prepared to overcome. And what is surprising if Peter does not want it, when the Lord says: Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not my will, but yours be done (Matthew 26:39)? Finally, after the temptation of his presumption, Peter no longer dares to promise constancy of will: but, as if for his own consolation, he seeks the company of another.

179. (Verse 37, 45.) Therefore, we believe that Peter could not have doubted, having been convinced by so many examples of virtue. It is also clear that John believed (John 20:8) when he saw the Savior, who believed at that moment, after he saw the empty tomb. So why does Luke mention that several were troubled? First of all, because the opinion of a few includes the sentiment of the majority; secondly, even though Peter believed in the resurrection, he could still be troubled when he saw the Lord suddenly appear with his body in a place that was locked and enclosed by walls. So Luke, in his historical account, pursued each particular event: he considered the end, while here he focused on the sequence. For, by saying: 'Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,' he confesses that the disciples themselves came to believe what was written.

180. (Vers. 49.) However, he breathed the Holy Spirit on the eleven, who were considered more perfect, and promised that the rest would also receive it later (John 20:22): either he breathed on them there, or he promised it here. And it does not seem contradictory, since there are different gifts: To one is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:8-10). Therefore, one bestowed another operation there, while here another promises; for there the grace of remitting sins is given, which seems more august: and therefore it is bestowed by Christ, so that you may believe in the Spirit of Christ, and believe in God's Spirit; for God alone forgives sins. However, Luke describes the grace of

tongues poured out. Finally, there you have: Receive the Holy Spirit: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven (John, cited place). But in the Acts of the Apostles you have this: And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in different languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4). The diversity of visions signifies the multitude of angels serving, as it is written: 'And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven' (Matthew 28:2), and 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man' (John 1:51). And I hope that with the end of the Gospel, our discourse may also come to a close!

Why does he command the disciples according to Matthew and Mark: I will go before you into Galilee (Matt. XXVI, 32), there you will see me (Mark. XVI, 7); but according to Luke and John he also offered himself to be seen inside a room (Luke XXIV, 36)? And indeed we have proven by the testimony of more than five hundred brothers, and of Peter, and of James, even apostolic, that he frequently offered himself to be seen (John XX, 19) (I Cor. XV, 6). And Luke in the Acts of the Apostles taught that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after his passion, appearing to them in many ways and discussing the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). Therefore, because he appeared more often and in different ways, though he was seen in Galilee, the Scripture did not designate a specified and definitive time: when he presented himself in Jerusalem, he specified both the day and the hour. The more timid ones returned to the inner rooms, while the stronger ones gathered on the mountain.

183. Finally, within the locked doors of the chamber, John brings in the disciples who had gathered because of fear of the Jews (John 20:19), whom Luke wrote were not just eleven, but more (Verse 33); however, Matthew did not remain silent about these eleven alone having gathered in Galilee. Finally, you have it like this: But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had appointed them, and seeing him, they worshipped him; but some doubted (Matthew 28:16-17). To whom he gives the power to teach and baptize. He also writes that he appeared to the eleven disciples and Mark at the end (Mark 16:7), when he likewise commanded them to preach this duty throughout the whole world.

184. Therefore, I think this is more fitting, that indeed the Lord commanded the disciples to see him in Galilee: but while they were staying in fear within the locked room, he first appeared to them, and later, with their hearts confirmed, the eleven went to Galilee. Or certainly (I also find that this pleased diligent writers) it is not objectionable if we say that fewer were in the locked room, and a number were on the mountain.

Commentary on the Song of Songs

Commentary on the Song of Songs, Collected from the works of Saint Ambrose by William, once the abbot of Saint Theoderic, later a monk of Signy

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- To the Reader
- Prologue
- Chapter 1
- Chapter 2
- Chapter 3
- Chapter 4
- Chapter 5
- Chapter 6
- Chapter 7
- Chapter 8 To the Reader Indeed, it was our intention in this volume to present no other works than those pertaining to the exposition of the Old and New Testaments, and those that are known to be written by Ambrose, if you only exclude the other Davidian Apology. However, when considering the number of spurious treatises that we have decided to publish at the end of the following volume, we feared that the same amount of effort would become even greater. Therefore, we thought that some additional supplement should be added to this first one. But since nothing suitable was found in the legitimate works of our Teacher which either adequately corresponded to the argument of the previous volume or was sufficient to be included in both volumes, it seemed most convenient to us to present this commentary. It is indeed of a certain intermediate character between the genuine and spurious works of Blessed Ambrose, neither entirely foreign to him, since it consists of his words and sentences, nor completely his own, since it was put together by someone else. Indeed, it is certain that Ambrose never wrote on the Song of Songs without purpose, but it is evident that he was so delighted with that book that he did not miss any opportunity to explain it in his various writings. This led certain students of Ambrosian works to gather together the scattered and dispersed passages and, sewing them together like patches, to create one body of commentary. Hence it is that in the year of Leuven there appeared an Exposition on the Song of Songs, taken from Reginald Coster's commentary, of which Gillotius, while praising his diligence, nevertheless asserts that he changed everything; he removed many

things and added more of his own. A decade later, the same Gillotius published another Exposition on the Song of Songs at the end of the works of St. Ambrose, which is mentioned as being collected into one body from the extracts of Antoine Monchiaceno Demochares, a doctor of the Sorbonne. Nevertheless, it seems much more likely that this collection was only increased and edited by Demochares; since not only is it contained in the Navarricum college manuscript of around 400 years, and in the Vindocinensis monastery code written before 600 years, although it is contained in a shorter form: but it is also found in a copy from at least 800 years, and in a commentary on the Letters of St. by Floro the deacon of Lyon, who lived around the year 855. A citation of Paul's unpublished work is found. However, Peter Franc. Chiffletius kept these two codices in his possession while he was alive. Furthermore, we provide a commentary on the same subject matter that has never been published before, although we find it handwritten in many libraries without the author's name, it is clear that it was not compiled by the other person, but by Guillelmus, the former abbot of S. Theodoric and later a monk of Signiacum. Indeed, from this very fact it is possible to understand, while he reviews his own essays in the preface of the treatise on the solitary life addressed to the brothers of the mountain of God, he speaks as follows: For I extracted from the books of St. Ambrose whatever he discussed in them about the Song of Songs, a great and illustrious work. This certainly cannot be understood of Chifflet's commentary, since William lived only around 1142. But the decisive argument is that the autograph manuscript of William himself, inscribed with his own name, exists in Saigny; hence we have a copy of it. P. Casimir Oudin, a Canon Regular of the Premonstratensian Order, born to merit well in all things, wrote this by his own hand. The title of this collection in the mentioned Signiacensis codex is: Excerpts from the books of blessed Ambrose on the Song of Songs.

Prologue

Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth (Song of Solomon 1:1). In this passage, the mysteries of chastity are celebrated, not the incentives of filth. It is a spiritual and affective contemplation of the marriage and union of Christ and the Church, of the uncreated spirit and the created, of flesh and spirit. Therefore, let us circumcise our hearts, let us not seek anything vile or earthly, but let us consider everything earthly as vile. Therefore, let us not speak of anything earthly, carnal, secular, corporeal, light, or mutable in these heavenly matters: for the words of the Lord are pure words, so that the spotless and modest purity of these heavenly mysteries may shine forth in spiritual interpretation. Let us not mix earthly things with divine by any adulterous notion, nor violate that inviolable sacrament of prophetic vision or eternal oracle by the estimation of our nature; for whether it is about kisses or such things, whatever is offered to religion is fitting; let us not be ashamed of any service that contributes to the worship and observance of Christ: just as in that dance of David before the ark; for that dance was not a companion of delights and luxury, but rather because each one should raise their diligent body, nor should they let their limbs lie lazily on the ground, or allow their steps to be slow and sluggish. For we did not discover this teaching ourselves, but received it; thus he establishes the order of the mystical song, the doctrine of the heavens.

2. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for your breasts are better than wine, and the scent of your perfumes is above all spices. Your name is as an ointment poured forth (Song of Solomon). This whole place of delights resounds with laughter, applause, and provokes love. Therefore, says the bride, the maidens have loved you and drawn you after them; let us run after

the scent of your ointments. The king has brought me into his chamber (Song of Solomon, 3). With kisses he begins, that he may come to the chamber, and she, impatient of her lord's labor and exercised virtue, is driven to open with her hand the shutters, to go out into the field, to abide in the towers; yet in the beginning she runs after the scent of the ointment, when she has come to the chamber, she changes the ointment for the towers. Finally, see where it leads.

3. If there is a wall, let us build silver towers upon it, which she played with kisses, she now erects towers, so that with the precious pinnacles of the saints, she not only frustrates the enemy's attacks, but also builds secure ramparts of merits. Even in these temporal unions, praises are given to the bride before she is commanded; so that harsh commands do not offend before love, nurtured by flatteries, takes root. The heifer, learning the sound of applause, begins to love suffering, so that she does not reject the yoke of the neck; finally, she becomes accustomed to the word of playfulness before the whip of discipline. But once she has submitted to the yoke, and the rein tightens, and the goad urges, and the companions pull, and the bridal invites. Thus our Virgin should first be struck by pious love; marvel at the golden supports of the celestial marriage bed, and see the posts crowned with garlands in the very entrance of the wedding chamber, and drink in the delights of the resounding chorus within; lest she, being afraid of the Lord's yoke, withdraw herself before being called, she should bow down when summoned. For it is necessary that we know certain degrees of progress and order, what should come first, what should follow: for to know what you do, but not the order of doing, is not perfect knowledge, for they mostly offend by doing things in the wrong order. Therefore, because as many people, so many opinions, if anything is lacking in our discourse, let everyone read it: if anything is well-cooked, let the more mature approve it: if anything is modest, let it cling to hearts, paint cheeks: if anything is florid, let the florid age not disapprove. We should awaken love in the bride; for it is written: You shall love the Lord your God (Deut. VI, 5): we should adorn the bride's hair in the wedding with some curls of prayer; for it is written: Clap your hands, and stamp your feet (Ezek. XXI, 14): we should scatter the bridal chamber with everlasting roses.

Chapter 1

Before the pursuit of knowledge comes life; for a good and virtuous life has grace even without knowledge, but knowledge without life lacks integrity. Indeed, wisdom does not enter into a malevolent soul (Wisdom 1:4); thus it is said: 'Evil men seek me, but they shall not find me' (Proverbs 1:28), for the eye of the mind is blinded by wickedness and cannot find deep mysteries in the darkness of its own injustice. Therefore, the first thing to be done is to engage in the battle of life, correcting one's character. When we establish these things for the proper course, so that there may be correction of offenses for the sake of purity, then we may proceed to the pursuit of knowledge in its own order and manner. Therefore, the first things are moral, the second mystical: in the former is life, in the latter is knowledge; so that if you seek perfection, neither life without knowledge, nor knowledge without life, should be lacking, each complementing the other. Solomon, following this arrangement, wrote the book of Proverbs, in which he more fully expressed the moral aspect, the natural aspect in Ecclesiastes, and the mystical aspect in the Song of Songs; although if you carefully examine them, you will find many mystical elements in Proverbs, and sweetness of morals in the Song of Songs. For surely it is mysterious: Wisdom has built her house and set up seven pillars, she has killed her beasts, etc. (Prov. IX, 1). Indeed, in the Song of Songs, this mystical and moral truth shines forth, in which the sweetness of endearment

and the affection of a lover are expressed.

2. (Vers. 1, 2.) Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth; for thy breasts are better than wine, smelling sweet of the best ointments. Therefore doth the chaste Virgin, betrothed for a long time, and burning with sincere love, know by the testimony of probable witnesses, having often expanded her desires, now unable to bear delay, whatsoever she hath done that she might deserve her spouse; sometimes obtaining what she wished for, she is troubled with joy at the unexpected coming of her spouse, not seeking the beginning of salutation, not the interchange of words, but forthwith demanding what she hath desired. And so the holy Church, which was betrothed to in the beginning of the world in paradise, prefigured in the flood, proclaimed through the Law, called by the prophets, having long awaited the redemption of mankind, the beauty of the Gospel, eagerly rushes into His embrace, saying: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; and delighted by the kisses, she adds: for your breasts are more delightful than wine. And to speak more morally, I understand that flesh which had been tainted by the venom of the serpent in Adam, which was marred by the stench of sins, which advanced in the daughters of Zion with a high neck and nodding of the eyes, and dragging along robes with the journey of her feet, and playing with her own feet, with locks of hair and composed countenance and headbands, and with all affected beauty, exposing more shame. However, she was instructed by numerous prophecies that He would come who, after excluding the allurements of the serpent, would infuse the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that all flesh would see the salvation of God, all flesh would come to God, and would wither in desire. But fearing that, as before, she would displease as impatient, as lustful, as luxurious, as complaining, even though she could endure the delay of the Lord's coming longer than she was able, she would be tormented by the expectation of His delayed arrival. Yet she would not murmur or step over the bounds, but would raise pure hands in every place, without anger and dispute, dressed with modesty and sobriety, adorning herself not with twisted hair or gold or pearls or precious garments, but with those things which give grace to chastity and good conduct, and would say in prayer: Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth; for your love is better than wine. Now she desired to cling to Christ in the flesh, now she hastened to be joined in marriage, so that there would be one spirit and the flesh of Christ would become what it was before the prostitute. 'Kiss me,' she says, 'Let the Word of God kiss us when the spirit of knowledge enlightens our understanding.'

Therefore, either the Church, for a long time suspended by the promise made to her through the prophets of the Lord's coming in many ages, or the soul, which, having elevated itself from the body, having cast aside luxury and pleasures, and carnal desires, and having also stripped away the cares of worldly vanities, longs for the infusion of divine presence and the grace of the saving Word, laments that He comes late and is afflicted; therefore, as if wounded by love, since it cannot bear His delays, it turns to the Father to beseech Him to send the Son, and declares the cause of its impatience, saying: Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth.

5. He does not seek just one kiss, but many kisses, so that he may fulfill his desire; for the one he loves is not satisfied with the scarcity of one kiss, but demands many, claims more, and thus she is accustomed to commend herself more to her beloved. Finally, the woman in the Gospel is proven thus, For she did not cease, says the Lord, to kiss my feet, and for this reason many sins have been forgiven her, because she loved much (Luke 7:46-47). Therefore, this soul also desires many kisses of the Word, so that it may be illumined by the light of divine knowledge; for this is the

kiss of the Word, namely, the light of sacred knowledge. For God the Word kisses us when He illuminates our heart and the principal Spirit of man with the light of divine knowledge; whereby the soul, gifted with the pledge of bridal charity, says with joy and exultation: I opened my mouth and drew in the breath (Psalms 118:131). The kiss is indeed the way in which those who love each other adhere to one another, and they possess the sweetness of inner grace. Through this kiss, the soul adheres to the Word of God, which is poured into it by the Spirit of the one who kisses: just as those who kiss each other are not satisfied with a mere touching of lips, but seem to pour their spirits into each other.

6. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. Do you want to be united to Christ? Nothing could be more pleasing. Do you want to please your soul? Nothing could be more delightful. Let him kiss me, he sees that you are cleansed from all sin, because sins come from the earth; therefore, he judges you worthy of heavenly sacraments, and therefore he invites you to the heavenly banquet; so that he may kiss you with the kisses of his mouth. However, because of the following, your soul, whether it be human condition or the Church, has seen that it has been cleansed from all sins, worthy to approach the altar of God. What is the altar but the representation of the body of Christ? He saw wonderful sacraments and said: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; that is, may Christ imprint a kiss on me. Why? Because:

7. Your breasts are better than wine, that is, better senses, your sacraments are better than wine, better than that wine which, although it has sweetness, joy, and grace: yet in that is worldly joy, but in you is spiritual delight. Then already Solomon was leading the marriage either of Christ and the Church, or of spirit and flesh and soul. And as if despising all his joys and delights, desiring to cling to heavenly commands, he says: for the precepts of your testaments are better than any desire of the flesh and the pleasure of the world; for he remembered himself fallen in Eve before, when he preferred the pleasure of the body over heavenly commands. Therefore, showing not only the appearance of the Word and a certain expression, but also loving all His inner things, He adds to the favor of kisses: 'For, your breasts are better than wine and the fragrance of your ointments is above all spices.' She asked for a kiss, and God the Word poured Himself completely into her and uncovered His breasts, that is, His teachings and the disciplines of internal wisdom, and He fragrancd them with the sweet scent of His ointments, by which she, captivated, says that the pleasure of divine knowledge is more abundant than the joy of all bodily pleasure.

8. The emptied ointment or poured out oil is your name. This means that the whole world, fetid with the foul impurities of various crimes, now breathes everywhere the sweetness of chastity, the ointment of faith, the flower of integrity. It also breathes in the Word the fragrance of grace and the forgiveness of sins, which, poured out throughout the world, has filled everything as if emptied out with ointment, because the heavy flood of vices has been washed away throughout all, by means of this ointment. This emptied ointment is above the Jews and is gathered to those who act: emptied out in Judea and scented in all the lands. By this ointment Mary was anointed, and the Virgin conceived, the Virgin bore the good scent of the Son of God. By this ointment it was poured out upon the waters, and it sanctified the waters. By this ointment three boys were anointed, and their moisture was tempered by fire; by this ointment Daniel was anointed, and it softened the mouths of the lions, and it soothed their ferocity. This ointment flows daily, and never fails. Take your vessel, virgin, and approach, so that you may be filled with this ointment: take this ointment valued at three hundred denarii, but given freely, not sold, so that all may have it freely. Virgin,

anoint yourself; do not be saddened like Judas, because this ointment is poured out, but rather embrace Christ in yourself: indeed, close your vessel, lest the ointment flow away: close it with the key of integrity, with the modesty of speech, with the restraint from boasting; whoever possesses this ointment, receives Christ: The ointment empties your name.

9. (Verse 2) Therefore the young women love you. Who are these young women, if not the souls of each individual who have shed the senility of this body, renewed by the Holy Spirit? Your name is like a poured-out ointment, of which the power of speech can have nothing more excellent. For just as ointment enclosed in a vessel retains its fragrance, which fragrance, as long as it is confined within the narrowness of that vessel, although it cannot reach many people, nonetheless preserves its strength; but when that ointment which was enclosed in the vessel has been poured out, it is said to have been diffused far and wide: so is the name of Christ before his advent in the people of Israel, as if it were enclosed in some vessel of Jewish minds. For God is known in Judah, and his name is great in Israel. (Psalm 75:1) This, therefore, is the name that the vessels of the Jews were contained within their narrowness. Indeed, it was a great name then, when it was confined to the narrowness of the sick and few, but its greatness had not yet spread through the hearts of the nations and to the ends of the whole world. But after it shone upon the whole world with its coming, it certainly extended that divine name of his through every creature, not filled by any addition, for fullness knows no increase; but filling the empty, so that his wonderful name would be in all the earth. Therefore, the pouring out of this name signifies an abundant overflow of grace and heavenly blessings, for whatever is poured out in abundance overflows. Therefore, young girls love you. Bonum, she says, is prudence, but sweet mercy; few attain the former, while the latter reaches all: it is because of this indulgence of yours that renewed souls love you with a renewed spirit.

10. (Verse 3.) Draw us after you, we shall run in the fragrance of your ointments. The holy soul, having already kissed the Word of God, is not satisfied, and it says: You are sweet, O Lord, and in your delight teach me your commandments (Psalm 118:12). The Word of God, having been kissed, desires surpassing beauty, loves surpassing joy, takes pleasure in all aromas, desires to see frequently, intends to listen often, desires to be drawn so that it can follow; Your name is a poured-out ointment, therefore we love you, young women; therefore we strive, but we cannot comprehend. Draw us, so that we can run; so that, with the fragrance of your ointments, we may receive the strength to follow. He also eagerly desires to see the internal mysteries, the very rest of the Word, the very dwelling place of that highest good, and his light and glory in that native bosom and sanctuary; he eagerly desires to hear his words, and when he hears them, he receives them above all sweetness.

11. Let the prophet teach you, who has tasted and said: How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (Psalm 119:103) For what else does the soul desire, once it has tasted the sweetness of the Word, once it has seen His glory? Moses, standing on the mountain for forty days receiving the Law, did not require bodily food; Elijah, hastening to that place of rest, besought that his soul might be taken from him; Peter, also looking upon the glory of the Lord's resurrection on the mountain, did not want to come down, saying: Lord, it is good for us to be here (Matthew 17:4). Therefore, how great is the glory of the divine substance, how great are the gifts of the Word, which the angels long to behold!

12. Therefore, the soul which sees that, does not require this body, and understands that it must have the least familiarity with it, renounces the world, frees itself from the bonds of the flesh, and strips away all these bonds of pleasures. Finally, Stephen saw Jesus and was not afraid to be stoned; in fact, when he was being stoned, he did not pray for himself but for those who were killing him. Paul, too, whether he was in the body or out of the body, when he was caught up to the third heaven, did not know, whether he was in the body or out of the body, he was caught up, I say, into paradise, and did not feel the use of his own body anymore, and when he heard the words of God, how He descended to the weaknesses of the body, he blushed. Therefore, knowing what he had seen in paradise, or what he had heard, he cried out, saying: Why do you still decide as if living in this world? Do not touch, do not defile, do not taste, all of which lead to corruption through their very use (Colossians 2:20-21). For he wished us to be in the likeness of this world, not in possession and use, so that we may use this world as if not using it, as if passing through, not as residents; walking as if in the image of the age, not in desire, so that through a rapid dispute we may transcend the image of this world itself. Finally, walking by faith, not by appearance, he wandered from the body and was present with God: and while he was on earth, he conversed not in earthly things, but in heavenly things. Therefore, let our soul, which desires to draw near to God, raise itself from the body, always cleave to that highest good, to that good which is divine, which is always, and which was from the beginning, and which was with God (1 John 1), that is, the Word of God: it is that divine Word, In whom we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:28).

13. Let us run to the fragrance of your ointments. This fragrance is smelled by the soul which begins to open to Christ, in order to receive the first fragrance of the Lord's burial, and to believe that his flesh did not see corruption, nor wither from any smell of death: but rather, covered in the fragrance of that eternal and evergreen flower, he rose. For how could it decay in the flesh, whose name is an Anointed One emptied out? He emptied himself in order to breathe for you; this ointment was always present, but it was with the Father, it was in the Father, it smelled only to the angels and archangels, as if inside a heavenly vessel. The Father opened his mouth, saying: Behold, I have set you as a testament of my people, as a light to the gentiles; that you may be for salvation even to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6). The Son descended, and all things were filled with the new fragrance of the Word. The heart of the Father brought forth the good Word, the Son made fragrant, the Holy Spirit exhaled, and diffused through the hearts of all: For the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). The Son of God himself contained his own fragrance in his body like in a vessel, waiting for the time as he said: The Lord has given me the tongue of instruction, that I should know when it is necessary to speak. The hour came, he opened his mouth, the ointment came forth, when power was going out from him. And therefore, this [fragrance] hastens towards the Word, and it asks to be drawn, lest perhaps it be left behind; because the Word of God runs, and it is not restrained. Finally, it rejoices like a giant to run on the way (Psalm 18:6). And because I have come out from the highest heaven and his coming extends to his highest point, seeing myself unequal to such speed, he says: Draw us.

14. A good soul who does not pray only for herself, but for everyone: Draw us, I say, for we have the desire to follow, which is inspired by the grace of your ointments; but because we cannot keep pace with your course, Draw us; so that supported by your help, we may be able to walk in your footsteps. For if you draw us, we will run, and we will catch the spiritual breath of speed. For the burden is laid down on those whose hand is your staff, and your oil is poured on the one who was

wounded by robbers.

15. But lest it seem impudent to you what he says: Draw us, hear him saying: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you (Matt. XI, 28). You see that he willingly draws us, so that we do not remain following: but whoever wants to be drawn, let him run so as to grasp, and let him run forgetting the things behind, and desiring the things that are before, for thus he will be able to grasp Christ; which is why the Apostle also says: Run in such a way that you may grasp. He wants to attain those things which he desires to understand. Therefore, he wisely asks to be rebuked, because not everyone can follow. Finally, when Peter said, 'Where are you going?' the Word of God responded, 'You cannot follow me now, but you will follow later' (John 13:36; Matthew 14:30). He entrusted to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and in following him, he considered himself unworthy. However, he did not delay his soul, because he did not presume, but he asked. Denique,

16. (Vers. 3.) He led me into his chamber. Blessed is the soul that enters the innermost secrets of the Word, for when it rises above the body, it becomes more distant from all things; and that which is beyond itself, it investigates and seeks as if it can somehow attain the divine. And when it can comprehend it, having surpassed intelligible things, it is confirmed in that and nourished by it. Such was Paul, who knew that he was caught up into Paradise, but whether outside the body or in the body, he did not know. For his soul had risen from the body, and had withdrawn itself from the bowels and bonds of the flesh, and had been lifted up, and being estranged from itself, held within itself ineffable words which it had heard and could not express in common language, which it perceived could not be spoken to mortal man. Therefore, the good soul despises visible and sensible things, neither abides nor dwells in them, but ascends to those eternal and invisible things, full of miracles, uplifting itself with pure intellect. For indeed, one who strives for perfection, intends only that good of divinity, and thinks nothing else is to be sought, because they hold that it is the highest.

17. The king led me into his chamber. A kiss is simple, but the secret of the chamber is full of activity; for in this place, he testifies that he wants to know the mysteries more fully, so that he may enter the innermost secrets of the celestial mysteries, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ are revealed to him: which he may be able to do, perhaps he says what is above: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. It signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit that is to come, just as the Angel said to Mary: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you (Luke 1:35). But when the king brought her into his chamber, it signifies the time of suffering, the piercing of the side, the shedding of blood, the anointing of burial, the mystery of the resurrection; so that she may receive a kiss as a bride. But let the Church be brought into the chamber of Christ, not now as only betrothed, but also as wedded: not only entering into the bridal chamber, but also obtaining the keys of legitimate union. Therefore, as if seated in the bridal chamber, she says: A drop of my brother is bound to me, it rests between my breasts (Song of Solomon 8:12).

18. But if we seek a bedroom, He Himself teaches us, saying: But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret (Matt. VI, 6). The bedroom of the Church is the body of Christ. The king has led her into all the inner mysteries, he has given her the keys to open for herself the treasures of knowledge, to reveal the mysteries shut

behind the doors of sacraments, to understand the grace of the sleeping, the sleep of the dead, the power of the risen. In that chamber, the bride of the Lord Jesus finds the justice. What are those justices? Surely the sacraments of Baptism, as we read, because when John said to Jesus coming to be baptized: I ought to be baptized by you, and you come to me; Jesus replied: Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all justice (Matthew 3:15). In that chamber, she learns the justifications of the Lord, she knows the counsel of God, which nothing can be higher; for this is divine, in which the forgiveness of sins takes place.

19. This seeks to learn from the Lord what humans could not teach, unless God had taught it beforehand: what the apostles learned from Christ, the Church says: The king has brought me into his chamber, that is, into that secret place where all the treasures of his knowledge and understanding are found. Therefore, it is said to you: When you pray, enter into your chamber (Matthew 6:6), which signifies the secret of the mind and soul. In this chamber, the bride of justice requested to be brought, when she rushed out after the smell of the ointment, which always flows and never runs out.

20. The king led me into his bedroom, the Greek has his pantry and cellar: where there are good sacrifices, where there are good smells, sweet honey, where there are various fruits, where there are various feasts, so that your lunch is prepared with many feasts. Finally introduced into the secret of that divine bridegroom.

21. Let us rejoice and be glad in you, he says; let us love your breasts more than wine; for he does not rejoice in riches and treasures of gold and silver, nor in the produce of possessions, nor in powers, nor in feasts, but only in God, saying to him: Let us love your breasts more than wine. Nevertheless, he drank in such a way that he was not swallowed up by the wine, but he drew the joy of his heart from the grace of it, not stumbling from the intoxication of his body. Finally, drinking this wine, he opened his eyes and saw the straight path, leaving behind the crooked paths, saying: Righteousness has loved you, that is, your steps are not crookedly following you; but only the path of justice can reach you, for he who loves justice does not turn away from Christ. How, then, does the innocent conscience fear the judge of justice and the rewarder of merits? Nevertheless, the same soul, knowing itself to be united with the body, says to other souls, or to other celestial powers joined with the sacred mystery: Do not look upon me, for I am obscured, for the sun does not gaze upon me.

22. (Verse 4.) I am dark and lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem. Behold the Lord Jesus reclining at the feast, with John resting on his chest, and others amazed that a servant would recline above the Lord, that sinful flesh would recline above the temple of the Word, that a soul bound by the chains of the flesh would search the hall of divine fullness. Therefore, in response to the amazement of others, the soul of John said: I am dark and lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem; dark through sin, lovely through grace. And she says, 'I am dark and beautiful; dark with secular dust collected by striving, beautiful with spiritual sight that washes away the dust and filth of this world. Dark through vice, but beautiful now through the bath that cleanses all sin. I am dark because I have sinned, but beautiful because Christ now loves me; for what he had rejected in Eve, he receives in the Virgin, he assumes from Mary.'

23. The Synagogue also says, whose mysteries seem to be expressed in this place to most; which, when it saw itself rejected because of the impiety of the whole people, still consoled itself,

because it saw not only Christ himself but also Peter, John, and James adhering to Christ, because it had entrusted words to itself. And therefore it said: I am dusky and beautiful, daughters of Jerusalem: dusky through unbelief, beautiful through the law: dusky through falling, beautiful because the sun, who is Christ, loved me, and I have become the first assembly of God. Do not reject me because I am dark; I am dark because the sun has left me, who used to illuminate me before. I have lost the color of my face, the sharpness of my eyes which used to see before the sun: I walk in darkness, which I do not know the day of Christ. Yet do not despise me, for he who has left can look back again. He is accustomed to show mercy again, to gather the dispersed, to seek the forsaken, to gather the destitute. All the tribes of Israel, come together, look at me, beautiful before the sins; do not look at me, for I am obscured; this is not the only reason why you should look, because I am obscured; the sun does not shine on me alone, and therefore I am obscured. But the sun shines on the righteous and the unrighteous, on the righteous with grace, on the unrighteous with mercy; giving them the reward of their merits, forgiving them their sins. And it did not shine before the gentiles, now it shines, now it rises for them who used to rise for me; he who forgave them, will also forgive me. Do not think that because I am obscured, the sun has completely abandoned me, and now does not look at me, does not inquire about my illness. It has hidden itself from me because I have not kept its commandments: it will be reconciled when it sees the repentance of my sins. The sun has not seen me because I have not received it coming, I have not opened the windows for the light of life to enter: when I open, it will illuminate my eyes, who came to illuminate the whole world, and let even the blind see. Or the Church says concerning the nations: Look not upon me, because I am dark, because the sun hath looked upon me; because, as with winter frost and ice the error of the Gentiles hath held me fast, the sun of righteousness, for a long time unworthy, hath thought scorn to look upon the congregation of the Gentiles, whom the shining brightness of His countenance ought to have illuminated. Did it not seem to thee a winter season, when the Lord was known in Judea only? But now the fulness of light of summer is shining, when Christ is all things in all men. Is not the earth the Lord's, and the fullness thereof (Psalm. XXIII, 1)? And truly the world is the Church, for it is not only the Jew or the Greek, not the Barbarian or the Scythian, not the servant or the free: but all are one in Christ (Coloss. III, 11). The sun shines for everyone, the day lightens for everyone. I am black and beautiful. He sent blackness before beauty, so that blackness would increase beauty: He did not say: I am black and beautiful, so that what is black might be considered beautiful: but he says: I am black by reason of previous sin, but beautiful by confession of sin, and by the desire for correction and the love of virtue. Therefore, although the syllable, as grammarians call it, is conjunctive, it still has a distinction by which confusion is distinguished and separated; for if you say that Ambrosius Bassus is inside, he is considered as one person; but if you assert that Ambrosius and Bassus are inside, then two people are certainly understood.

25. Like the tents of Kedar, like the skins of Solomon; for tents are made from the skins of dead animals. Therefore, she who said this was dead to sin, and she lived for God: and so let us die to sin, that we may live for God. Filled with the spirit, with joy and the sweetness of gladness, we shall be spiritual robes, free from bodily weakness, and preserving within us the divine grace infused into us in the fullness of our minds. But it is clear that the tabernacle of Cedar or the skins of Solomon's body are called this from multiple places: yet also understand from there that when Adam and Eve removed the celestial image that they previously carried and put on the image of an earthly man, they were said to be clothed in tunics made of skin; for God had made them bodily

from spiritual things because of the sin they committed. And it is not absurd to understand that she says she became a spouse just as the skins of the sun, burnt by its heat; because even though she was placed in the roughness of tribulations, she still mortified her body so that she could not feel that roughness: just as the skin of the tabernacle does not feel the heat of the sun, because the skin is from a dead animal; so she, dead to sin, could not feel the heat of sin: either because she was not broken by necessities, or because we are the body of affliction, and we must always bear the death of the Lord Jesus in our body.

27. (Verse 5.) The sons of my mother fought against me; that is, the passions of the body attacked me, the allurements of the flesh discolored me. Therefore the sun of righteousness did not shine upon me, because being deprived of protection, I could not keep my devotion and full obedience, that is, I did not guard my vineyard, for I brought thorns instead of grapes, that is, I committed sins instead of bearing fruits. And when he speaks about the Word, shining with the splendor of the Word, he turns to him and says:

28. (Verse 6.) Where do you feed, where do you stay at noon? He rightly says, where do you feed, because the Word of God is royal; where do you stay, because it is moral; at noon, because it is mystical: for at noon Joseph, with his brothers, while sitting in a feast, revealed the mysteries of future times. But David also says: Put your life before the Lord and hope in him, and he will act and bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. (Psalm 36:5). And Paul himself declared that a light shone around him at midday when he was converted from persecution to grace.

29. Therefore, it is questioned why she is deserted and why the poor is abandoned by the rich; for she was abounding in the gift of grace: but she began to lack when the abundance of divine presence was denied to her. And therefore she demands to be considered as if she were a hired worker, who before claimed the grace of a more precious connection for herself.

They set me as a watchman in the vineyards, but I did not keep my own vineyard (Verse 5). Some think that this is said about those who bind the Synagogue to the commandments of the law, so that it may keep the law and watch over its own vineyard, which it could not keep. In the end, it guarded in order to produce grapes, but it produced thorns. Therefore, David came to testify to us about the vineyard, saying: You have taken the vineyard from Egypt, and you have cast out the nations and planted it (Psalm 80:9). The apostles can also be understood as the sons of their mother, who truly fought against the Synagogue, saying: Behold, we turn to the Gentiles, and began to sow the word of God among the nations. The prophets can also be understood who, by warning and denouncing, did not succeed in keeping their vineyard, the Synagogue, for it produced thorns of wickedness instead of the rich fruits of virtue it should have borne. And for this reason, it confesses that it could not keep its people and, rightly, it seeks to possess late the one whom it lost when it possessed him. It is far different from She who says: I have found him whom my soul loves, I have taken hold of him, and I will not let him go (Song of Solomon 3:4). Finally, she invites her fiance into her garden; when she looks for the one who feeds on these things, she says to him:

31. Announce to me the one whom my soul loves. Why do you say the one whom my soul loved, and not the one whom he loves? Why did you let go of the one you were holding? You loved the faith of the fathers, you lost it through unbelief: you held on to the bonds of charity, you lost them

through the long rope of treachery. Therefore, you do not know where he pastures, where he remains; for if you knew, you would not seek. For you say: Where do you pasture, where do you remain at midday? You know that midday is the Church that holds Christ, and you seek him in the night. Tell me, Christ, respond why, because of this, you were dear and beloved to me; therefore, although I lost the privilege of such love, still respond to me. Where do you graze, where do you dwell? You left me, you went away to the nations, you withdrew far from me, and you became closer to those from whom you were far away. But you became close because they believed in your blood. You withdrew from me because I did not accept the cross for the redemption of the world, but for the condemnation of the guilty. But those who receive as the author of salvation are at midday; in them you shine, in them you glow, in them your grace burns like the midday sun. For me, you were the morning, when I still believed, but I did not fully believe, because I was not found at midday, like Joseph with his brothers who held the midday: you became midday for them, who feed on your riches and hope in you. Therefore, as David said: You will lead their righteousness like light, and their judgment like midday (Psalm. XXXVI, 6).

You seek, therefore, what you were as a stranger, what you were as a poor man who became rich: you want to follow what you were leading, and I wish you would even follow those whom you should have led! You desire to be a hired hand whom you used to gather before; therefore, the voice of one saying this is that of a hired hand: Lest I become surrounded by the flocks of your companions. What you used to receive before from the nations as proselytes, now you yourself want to be received among the nations as proselytes, and to be gathered as a stranger. The Word of God answered the longing soul:

33. (Verse 7.) Unless you know yourself to be beautiful among women. Know yourself, O man, it is said to your soul, unless you have recognized yourself to be beautiful in women. Know yourself, soul, for you are not of the earth, not of clay, for God has breathed into you, and made you into a living soul. You are a magnificent work, formed by the inspiration of God: Attend to yourself, as the Law says, that is, to your soul: let worldly and mundane things not detain you, let earthly things not kill you. Hasten to that with your whole intention, on whose inspiration you rely: 'Great', he says, 'is the man, and precious is the merciful man; it is necessary to find a faithful man.' (Prov. XX, 6). Learn, O man, where you are great and precious. Earth shows you as lowly, but virtue makes you glorious, faith makes you rare, an image makes you precious. For what is anything so precious as the image of God? Which at first should instill faith in you, so that a certain likeness of the Creator may shine forth in your heart; lest anyone who questions your mind does not recognize the author. Is there anything so precious as humility; that you may examine the nature of body and soul and subject yourself to one, and recognize yourself in the other. The allure of the flesh urges mercy; for what you give to others, you pay to yourself: whatever proceeds from you, returns to you, and whatever you do, you do for yourself: and whatever benefits you, benefits yourself. Let the vitality of the lively soul, the senses of reason and the receptive intellect and judgment, not lose the prerogative of their nature, so that the worthy house may seem to have such a great inhabitant. Unless you know yourself, you are beautiful among women. Why do you complain that you have been abandoned, unless you know yourself, unless you regret your mistake, unless you approve of your intention of devotion, unless your faith and sincerity are increased, complaining will be of no use. Or thus, unless you know yourself that you are beautiful, unless you preserve the beauty of your nature, and the allurements of the body do not engulf you, nor do obstacles detain you, the

nobility of a better creature will be of no assistance to you.

34. Therefore, know yourself and the beauty of your nature, and go forth as if freed from the shackles of your feet, and with bare footstep, so that you do not feel the carnal coverings: let the chains of your body not entangle the trace of your mind, so that your foot may appear beautiful. For such are those who are chosen by the Lord to proclaim the kingdom of heaven, of whom it is said: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach peace (Isaiah 52:7). Like Moses to whom it is said: Take off the sandals from your feet (Exodus 3:5); so that, casting off the garments of the flesh, he who would call the people to the kingdom of God would first proceed with a bare spirit and trace of the mind. This is therefore what he says: Go forth in the sandals of the flock, and feed your kids in the tents of the shepherds.

35. By flocks, we understand a kingdom, because it has the power to preside over flocks. And each person presides over themselves with a certain royal power, if they restrain the luxury of the body within themselves, and bring their flesh into servitude. Therefore it is said: The kingdom of God is within you. Hence he well says to the soul: Go forth, that is, go forth from servitude, go forth from the rule and dominion of the flesh, and go forth not in the flesh but in the spirit, go forth to the governance of power. Therefore, He added: Feed your young goats, that is, govern those things which are on your left hand; for if they are not governed, they easily slip away. Restrain the impudence, the lasciviousness of your body, and the irrational indulgence, and subdue the fleeting movements: feed them not in bodily tabernacles, but in the tabernacles of shepherds who know how to govern the flock; for the tabernacles of Israel are lovely, like shade-giving groves over a river, in which the soul, like an army encamped, practices good warfare and scouts out enemy attacks.

36. Unless you know yourself, you are admired among women. What is it to know oneself, except that each person knows that they were made in the image and likeness of God, capable of reason, and that they should cultivate their own land like a good farmer with a certain plow and the sickle of wisdom; so that either the harsh things are cut away, or the luxuriant things are pruned, who should govern the inner part of their soul with authority. Therefore it is also written in the Law: Take care of yourself, lest a hidden word be made in your heart (Deut. XV, 9): take care of yourself, it says, not certainly for your money, not for your possessions, not for the powers of the body, but for your soul and your mind, from which all counsel, actions, and thoughts flow. So pay attention to yourself where you know yourself to be superior. Know yourself, which is attributed to the Gentile men to Apollo Pythius, as if he himself were the author of this statement; since they take what is ours and transfer it to their own, and Moses, who wrote the book of Deuteronomy, was far earlier than the philosophers who invented these things.

37. Therefore, following the divine oracle, Solomon wrote in the Song of Songs: Unless you know yourself, you are beautiful among women; that is, unless you understand yourself as a mortal being endowed with reason, and quickly confess your sins, quickly speak of your iniquities in order to justify yourself, unless you convert and first accuse your own faults, the day of death will come and there will be no remedy for conversion; you will be overtaken while you still contemplate. Ignite your torch before the door of the bridegroom is closed to you, for he does not often wait for the negligent. Unless you know, he said, beautiful among women; and say: I am dark and beautiful: I am dark, because I have sinned, beautiful, because I am loved, because I am of the lineage of

Abraham, the chosen lineage, beloved by God; the grace of the fathers will profit you nothing: For God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham (Matthew 3:9). And elsewhere in the Gospel you have read that the daughter of Abraham was bound by the devil of wickedness with his chains, whom the Lord loosed on the Sabbath day. Therefore, if you do not know yourself, it will be of no benefit to you. Even if you say, 'I am the daughter of Abraham', if you do not believe, if you do not correct the error, Abraham indeed is saved, but the nobility of your lineage will not help you unless faith saves you. Do not let the promise given to the fathers deceive you, I do not judge a person based on their lineage, I do not judge based on the prerogative of lineage. Unless I see a moral nobility consistent with the lineage, so that a just election of lineage may be made.

38. But if you know yourself, and know that you are subject to sin, you must leave in the footsteps of the flock. Go forth, therefore, barefoot, and feed your goats in the shepherds' tents. The one who is without sin feeds lambs, feeds sheep: but the one who is subject to sin, let them feed the goats which are on the left; for they cannot be on the right of the good shepherd. Let them instead follow the one who says to Peter: Get behind me, Satan (Mark 8:33). By following Peter, he deserved to be placed on the right hand; and that is why it is said of him: Feed my lambs (John 21:16). But listen to where he goes: He says, 'To the tents of the shepherds, that is, to the Gentiles, to the dispersion.' And that is why it is said: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered (Zechariah 13:7); so that the whole world may be filled with the flock of Christ, signifying that the Synagogue will then be saved when it joins this dispersion itself, which has filled this world; for the tents of the shepherds are the kingdoms of the earth.

39. (Verse 8.) I have compared you, my dear, to the horses in Pharaoh's chariots, my closest one. In this comparison, as the similarity of swift horses to the Church is observed, her wealth is esteemed. Therefore, do not understand her as a single horse of a wealthy king, but rather as the whole cavalry, as we have often said, such as the sheep to their flock. Therefore, Pharaoh, as the most powerful and wealthy king, had powerful horses; hence, the Scripture says, 'Pharaoh's chariots,' as the most powerful type for the use of war and a support for fighting: finally, with these chariots, Pharaoh easily captures the fleeing Hebrews. Just as, therefore, yoked horses easily pull a chariot, and patiently bear the yoke, and carry it with grace, and by the acceptance of that yoke they become gentle: so also the congregation of nations, with untamed customs, used to boast of itself. But when it accepted the yoke of Christ saying: Take my yoke upon you, for it is light; and my burden, for it is sweet (Matth. XI, 29 and 30); and the bride of Christ began to be exalted by the harmony and gentleness of the peoples, and to be carried throughout the whole world, as if a chariot snatched up by swift horses ascended above the world to the bridegroom. For Christ has horses, of which the prophet says: You have sent your horses into the sea, disturbing many waters (Habakkuk 3); because the apostles, by proclaiming the good news, have stirred up the nations, who are like many waters and are tossed by the waves of water, so that they may rise up from earthly idolatrous ceremonies and believe in Christ. And it also says above: You have ascended on your horses, your chariot is salvation. O wondrous pair of good horses, by whose reins peace is governed, and the bridle is charity: bound together by the bonds of harmony, and subject to the yoke of faith, they carry the mystery of the Gospel on their four wheels to the ends of the whole world, carrying the Word of God, the good charioteer; by the whip of whom secular allurements have been banished, the prince of this world has been exterminated, and the race of the righteous has been completed. Oh, the great contest of rational horses! Oh, the astonishing mystery! A

wheel ran within a wheel, and was not impeded. The new Testament was running within the old Testament, through which it was announced. The wheels went in four directions, and did not turn back; for the breath of life was in those who ran in the four parts of the world. And they ran without stumbling, because the life of the horses was good. Therefore, the horses were running, for the one who had mounted the horses did not sleep.

Therefore, Jesus is the charioteer of our souls, who also wants to mount our horses, that is, our bodies, and always be vigilant so that it may not be said of us: They who mounted the horses have fallen asleep (Psalm LXXV, 7). This sea must be crossed swiftly; it is hardly crossed by those who are vigilant. But if anyone falls asleep, they cannot cross, but they are submerged, like the Egyptian whose soul and body perished. For the horse and its rider were cast into the sea (Exod. XV, 1), those who did not follow the law, but followed themselves.

42. I likened you to my horse in the chariots of Pharaoh. The labor of virtue seeks victory, so that it cannot be compared to the horse that belongs to Solomon, swift in running, adept in giving birth; for the fruitfulness of the soul is desired and sought. Therefore, this horse is precious, and the chariots of Pharaoh are fleet. But in this place we have undertaken to speak of the soul, of this horse which is considered similar to this soul, that is, of prophetic or apostolic virtue: which is counted among the flock of those who, by the fruitfulness of their preaching, have filled the whole world with their words. And although they are in a physical body, they have not experienced any loss in their spiritual journey. Therefore, it is praised that, enlightened by the heavenly precept, she is now beautiful and radiant, displaying the virtue of chastity in her appearance and wearing the symbols of patience and humility around her neck. And for this reason, he praised his bride, saying:

43. (Verse 9.) How beautiful are your cheeks like turtledoves, your neck like necklaces. Your countenance is more noble, where there is consciousness of charity; and to bear the yoke of Christ is sweet, if you consider the ornaments of your neck to be, not burdens. Lift up your eyes always to your Lord, and seek God, in order to find. Raise your neck, you wear necklaces not chains: mute animals rejoice in necklaces, and seem to prefer being adorned rather than being tied up. May our cheeks, like those of doves, bear the marks of modesty: Let the ribbons of freedom lift up our confidence; for the yoke of Christ is light, and thus the neck is not pressed down, but lifted up.

44. (Vers. 10, 11.) We will make similes of gold for you from the distinctions of silver, as long as the king is in his decline. For from those who are of the Law and the Prophets, they had moderately believed in the glory of the Lord Jesus, and his inheritance spread among the peoples, which, when examined more frequently, is proven more. Indeed, frequent persecutions of the Church of the righteous have produced to us titles, victories of martyrdom. Therefore, just as gold is good, when the Church uses anger, it does not feel the resulting harm, but rather its brilliance increases, until Christ comes into his kingdom and reclines his head in the faith of the Church. When he came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he had nowhere to recline his head; but now the faith already emits a fragrance, and thus the Church says: My spikenard has given off its fragrance; and it speaks with presumption, awaiting retribution. The fragrance of grace is spread, in which the virgin gave birth, and the Lord Jesus assumed the sacrament of the incarnation.

45. (Verse 12, 13.) The gathering of myrrh, my brother, shall remain with me, in the midst of my breasts, or dwell. Previously, it had been said that myrrh had given its fragrance to the bridegroom; and because it had received the fragrance of its scent through the ointment with which it had been anointed: but now it is said: My brother gives off a drop for me, and this drop is not spread or dispersed as one pleases, but gathered and bound, so that the scent of its sweetness may become denser and more powerful. And here, he says, when he is such, he dwells and remains in the midst of my breasts, and makes his rest and dwelling place in the location of my heart. Colligation, he says, the brother of my cousin, the bunch of Cyprus, will rest between my breasts. For the Lord Jesus, taking on a body, bound himself with the chains of love, and not only united himself with our members and natural passions, but also with the cross; therefore, as a bunch of grapes rests in the faith of the Church, and rests in moral grace.

46. *Nardus cypri consobrinus meus in vineis Engaddi. Si locum quaerimus regionis cujusdam quae in Judaea est, locus sic dicitur in quo opobalsamum gignitur: si interpretationem, tentatio Latine significatur. In illis vero vineis lignum est, quod si quis compungat, unguentum emittit, hic fructus est ligni. Si non incidatur lignum, non ita fragrat et redolet, cum autem compunctum fuerit artificis manu, tunc lacrymam distillat.* Just as Christ, on that cross of temptation, wept for the people in order to wash away our sins, and from the depths of his mercy poured out the ointment, saying: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing' (Luke 23:34). Then, pierced by the spear while on the cross, blood and water flowed from him, sweeter than any ointment, offering to God a sacrifice which, pouring forth the fragrance of sanctification, spreads throughout the whole world. And just as balsam comes out from a tree, so virtue was coming out from his body, as it is said: 'I feel that virtue has gone out from me' (Luke 8:46). Hence opobalsamum is more expressly called, because balsam comes out through the cavity of the puncture by means of the compunction of the wood.

Therefore, Jesus, with a feeling of remorse, poured out the fragrance of the remission of sins and redemption. For he was bound when the Word became flesh: and he became poor when he was rich; so that we may be enriched by his poverty: he was powerful, yet he presented himself as despised, so that Herod could reject him and mock him: he moved the earth, and clung to the wood: he covered the heavens with darkness, and crucified the world, and was crucified: he bowed his head, and the Word went forth: he was emptied, and he filled all things: God descended, man ascended: the Word became flesh, so that the flesh could claim the throne of the Word on the right hand of God: there was a wound and ointment flowed: the scarab was heard, and God was recognized. And Christ replied.

48. (Verse 14.) Behold, you are good, my neighbor, behold you are good: your eyes are like doves. For the Church knew the mystery and preached the crucified Lord Jesus for the redemption of the whole world, and she deserves to hear: Behold, you are good, who call me good; Behold, you are good, who have seen the glory of my beauty, and you yourself are beautiful and lovely. But what does it mean to say to Christ: You are good, or you are lovely, unless it is that Gospel: Be steadfast, daughter, your sins are forgiven you (Matt. IX, 22)? Therefore, the one whom Christ forgave sins says correctly: 'Reward your servant, that I may live, and keep your commandments' (Psalm 118:146). He does not have anything to despair about in retribution, for the Lord Jesus came to save the world, not to destroy it. Therefore, he forgets the offense and remembers the grace, as it is testified in the prophetic book itself, saying: 'I am, I am the one who wipes out your

iniquities, and I will not remember them; but you, remember and let us argue, state your case first, that you may be vindicated' (Isaiah 43:25-26). Therefore, whoever confesses their injustices to God is justified; and whoever is justified does not fear retribution, but seeks it; whoever does not fear retribution, lives.

49. (Vers. 15, 16.) Behold, he says, my handsome cousin, and indeed beautiful. Our darkened incline, the beams of our houses cedar, our ceilings cypress. The Church praises the beauty of the groom, which everyone quietly praises with deep affection, and a faithful interpreter of mysteries proclaims even more by remaining silent. For what secrets it reveals, it diminishes the beauty of Christ; therefore, let no one cast their pearls before swine, lest they trample the precious ornaments. Therefore, not in the shop of the loquacious and garrulous; for in much speaking sin is committed. But in the serious man, who is sparing in speech, neither intemperate in conversation, and avoids the drunkenness of loquacity with the sobriety of words, Christ rests his head.

50. And appropriately it signifies a shady reclining; because the virtue of the Most High overshadows those placed in the Church. David requested to be protected by this shade, so that the sun would not burn him during the day, nor the moon during the night (Psalm 120:6). This shade is provided by spiritual grace, fleeing the scorching heat of this world and the summer of the world. Therefore, the shady reclining of Christ and the Church, for whom that eternal rest of God the Father aspires. In this shade, let us rest, weary from the heat of our sins if our desires have burned anyone, may the cross of the Lord refresh them, on which He reclined in order to accept our debts. If anyone has been wearied by fault, may Jesus receive them into his own embrace and cherish them with tender affection; hence I dare to say that the leaning of Christ's flesh is the Church.

51. The beams of our houses are made of cedar. The glory of the righteous is symbolized by the cedar, the glory of our ancestors who were just. For the righteous shall flourish like a palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon (Psalm. XCI, 13); just as the cedar does not decay, so the glory of our ancestors is not corrupted by any age. Our cypress saucers. This type of tree never loses its greenness, it nourishes its hair in both winter and summer, and it does not change color. Only the wind never strips this tree of its own honor, only it is never stripped of its old cover or dressed in new flowers. Similarly, the grace of the apostles never knows weariness, but it flourishes with the passage of time. Therefore, the soul does not know corruption, as it thrives in flourishing limbs, always sustaining the peaks of justice and other virtues with great patience and courage. And for this reason, it does not wither or fade, because there is nothing in it that is porous or weak, nothing that is movable, nothing that can be said to be released from it due to a fault in speech. The Church follows or the faithful soul follows, I say the soul, because nothing is so essential to a person as the soul.

Chapter 2

1. (Verse 1, 2.) I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys, like a lily among thorns; for the faith of the believing people has gone out into all the earth, and Christ has set his feet in a spacious place; and therefore he beautifully says that he is the flower of the field. Paul was also a flower who said: We are the sweet aroma of Christ to God (II Corinthians II, 15). And truly a flower, who could bring forth new and old things from the treasure of his heart. I am the flower of the field. And well the Church is a flower that announces fruit, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it was

said to Mary: Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb (Luke 1:42).

Moreover, in another sense, I show you a flower to be picked, namely, the one who said: I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valley. Many people consider this comparison more suitable for the nature of the flower and the purpose of the intended germination; because lilies do not require the cultivation of any annual use, nor does the labor of farmers, anxious about the yield of other fruits, return to this flower's generation in a circular manner; for in all drynesses of the fields, everything that is nourished by a certain generative power within itself into a flower, and is animated by the juice of evergreenness within itself; so that even though you see the stem of the leafy foliage wither, the nature of the flower still flourishes; for the greenness is hidden, not lost. But when it has been enticed by the charms of spring, it puts on the attire of the budding season, with the hair of flowers, and resumes the adornment of the lily.

It is also delightful to observe this, that lilies are not generated in the roughness of mountains and in the wildness of forests, but rather in the pleasantness of gardens. For there are certain gardens of various fruitful virtues, according to what is written: A enclosed garden, etc. (Song of Songs 4:12), because where there is integrity, where there is chastity, where there is religion, where there is faithful silence of secrets; there is the radiance of angels, there are the violets of confessors, the lilies of virgins, the roses of martyrs. The lily is Christ, for where there is the blood of martyrs, there is Christ who is a sublime, immaculate, harmless flower, in which the roughness of thorns does not offend, but grace shines around. For there are thorns of roses, which are the torments of martyrs; the unsullied divinity does not have thorns, which did not feel torments.

4. Like a lily among thorns. This is a clear sign that virtue is besieged by the thorns of spiritual wickedness, from which no one can bear fruit unless they approach with caution. Therefore, take wings, O virgin, but wings of the spirit, so that you may soar above vices if you desire to touch Christ, who dwells in the heights and looks upon the lowly. (Psalm 113:5) And his beauty is like the cedar of Lebanon, which spreads its branches to the clouds and roots itself in the earth; for his origin is from heaven, and his final destination is on earth. The fruits he produces are closest to heaven. Search more carefully for such a good flower, lest you find it in the valley of your heart; for it often grows in humble places. It loves to be born in gardens, where, when Susanna was walking, it was found: ready to die rather than be violated.

5. Otherwise, I am a flower of the field, and a lily of the valleys, like a lily among thorns. Behold another place in which the Lord is accustomed to dwell, indeed not in one, but in many: I am, He says, a flower of the field; because He frequents the open simplicity of a pure mind. And a lily of the valleys; for Christ is a flower of humility, not of luxury, not of pleasures and lust, but a flower of simplicity, a flower of humility. The flower preserves its fragrance even when it is cut and gathers strength when it is crushed, neither losing its beauty when torn away; in the same way, the Lord Jesus on that cross neither withered when crushed, nor vanished when torn away, and when pierced by the lance, He became more beautiful with the holy color of the poured out blood, not knowing death Himself, and offering the gift of eternal life to the dead.

6. (Verse 3.) Like a lily among thorns, does not the flower of goodness rise amidst the hardships and trials of the soul, because God is pleased with a contrite heart. This is the desert, daughters, that leads to the kingdom; this is also the desert that blooms like a lily, as it is written: Rejoice, O barren one, who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the

desolate woman has more children than she who has a husband. In this desert, daughters, that good fruit-bearing tree, which produces good fruits, begins to spread its branches of actions, to raise the top of divinity, by which the trees of our forest bear fruit; for as the tree of evil is among the trees of the forest, so is my brother among the sons; that seeing this, the Church, and our faith now joyful in its success, may say: In His shadow I desired and sat down, and His fruit was sweet to my taste.

7. (Verse 3, 4.) Note that often in this Song of Solomon book, Solomon clearly expressed that triple wisdom, namely moral, natural, and mystical, just as he had said in Proverbs. He wrote it in a triple manner for those who wanted to hear his wisdom. Therefore, the bride says about the bridegroom in the Song: Behold, you are beautiful, my cousin, behold, you are beautiful and handsome; our leaning is shady, the beams of our houses are cedar, our ceilings are cypress (Song of Solomon 1:15 and 16). We can take this from moral principles; for where else does Christ and the Church find rest, if not in the works of his people? In fact, where there was impurity, pride, and injustice, there, the Lord Jesus says: The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head (Mat. VIII, 20). But what can we take from natural principles? In his shade, I desired and sat, and his fruit was sweet in my mouth; for whoever surpasses earthly things, and to whom worldly things die (for the world is crucified to him, and he to the world), he rejects and despises all things that are under the sun. He also says about the mystics: 'Lead me into the house of wine, establish charity in me. Just as the vine embraces its vineyard, so does the Lord Jesus embrace his people, like an eternal vine with certain brancharms of charity.'

8. Consider each individually; in moral matters the lily is among thorns, as it says: 'I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys' (Song of Songs, v. 1). In moral matters, therefore, the flower is like the sun of justice in natural matters, which rising and shining illuminates, and setting casts shadows. Beware lest it set for you, for it is written: 'Let not the sun go down upon your anger' (Ephesians 4:26). In mystical matters, charity is present, for Christ is the fulfillment of the law. And therefore the Church, which loves Christ, is wounded by charity.

9. The Church is also said to be a beautiful lily; just as a lily shines, so too the works of the saints shine. It is also beautifully said: Lily of the valley; because grace shines more in the humble. But this lily is in the midst of thorns, that is, among the Jews and heretics, that is, among the anxieties of this world, which sting the mind and soul of man. We can also understand it another way, that just as the lily stands out among thorns, so the Church of God shines above all gatherings.

It is worth considering that this lily is surrounded by splendor, but inside it is red, good, and has its own scent; because the flesh of Christ, surrounded by the splendor of moral divinity, had the celestial protection of grace. Finally, he says in the later part: My brother is both white and red (Song of Solomon 5:10): white in divine brightness, red in the appearance of human flesh, which he assumed in the sacrament of the incarnation. And rightly so, even the red itself smells good, because the flesh of Christ is without sin, which the treacherous ones contaminating, stained their hands; venerating the holy ones, they emitted the aroma of piety.

11. The Lord Jesus received this fragrance of his fragrant Church, and said: Behold my nearest good. And the Church says to Christ: Behold, you are my good brother, behold, you are good, like the evil in the woods. A beautiful comparison! For what can be said more beautiful and fitting, than to compare the bridegroom to the apple tree? For this type of fruit has a pleasing fragrance,

surpassing the fragrance of all other fruits. And Christ, nailed to the wood, like the apple hanging on the tree, poured out a good fragrance of worldly redemption, which removed the heavy stench of sin, and poured out the ointment of life-giving drink.

12. Just as, he says, an apple is in the trees of the forest, so my cousin was among the children; because he charmed the inner hearts of men with the sweetness of his words, surpassing the prophets and apostles. But not only is there a sweet scent, but also pleasant food in the apple: therefore Christ is a sweet food. In his shadow I desired and sat; for he had received the law, he followed it, he ran this way. Therefore, resting in the law, he rested in the shadow of Christ. Good shadow, which defends us from the sun of wickedness! But who doubts that the law of God is the shadow of Christ? What is the law of the feast day, the new moon, the Sabbath, if not the shadow of the future? Which day according to the law of Moses: That I may see six days, and again the seventh day, and thus for all eternity? Who is the month according to the law of Moses, so that knowing the month, I may know the first day of the month, and the truly holy things to be offered on the first day of the month? Who, according to the law of Moses, is the year, consisting of six days as it says: The Hebrew shall serve for six years, and in the seventh year he shall be set free (Deut. XV, 12); so that six years may be found in which someone works the land, and in the seventh year he releases it to strangers, and to the poor, and to the beasts of the land? In the seventh year, when all debts are to be forgiven to the Hebrews.

14. In this shadow rested the faith of the Fathers, the holy devotion of the prophets. Therefore, say, religious congregation or holy soul: In his shadow have I desired and sat. The shadow is the jubilee year: for who can see its mystical meaning, so as to know face to face what must be fulfilled in the year of the five hundredth prescribed by the Law? The shadow is the feast day according to the Law from the first month on the tenth day of the month, until the fourteenth, and from there until the twenty-first of the month. What is that famous shadow between the first and seventh month during that anonymous time? The shadow is the sanctified freedom on the Sabbath. The shadow is the feast day of the seventh month's new moon, and the memorial of the trumpets, the tenth day of the seventh month, the day of atonement. You see that there are singles and tens, two festive days. Also, the fifteenth day, the day of the Tabernacles for eight days: all of these in shadow. The first day is called a shadow, and the eighth day is called a shadow, which is prescribed for the stage-carriers according to the Law.

15. Establish for me some believers from among the circumcised, learned in the Law, diligent in observance, now enlightened by the knowledge of the Gospel, nourished by the spiritual grace, the Church says in these people, who see Christ, who receive the bridegroom, who are nourished by his food: In his shadow have I desired, and sat, and his fruits are sweet in my mouth. What are his sweet fruits, if not the preaching of the Lord's passion? As he himself says, Behold the inheritance of the Lord, the reward, the fruit of the womb (Psalm 126:3). For what sweeter fruit can there be in our mouths than the forgiveness of sins? And its fruit is sweet to my throat. It is spiritual manna, that is, the rain of spiritual wisdom, which is poured out on the ingenious and those who seek from heaven, and moistens the minds of the devout, and sweetens their throats: therefore, whoever understands the infusion of divine wisdom, is delighted and seeks no other food, and does not live on bread alone, but on every word of God. Those who are more curious seek what is sweeter than honey: the servant of God answers him: This is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. Listen to what this bread is: It is the word, he says, that God ordained. Therefore, this

ordination of God, this nourishment feeds the soul of the wise, and it illuminates and allures, shining brightly with the splendor of truth, and soothing like a certain honeycomb, with the sweetness of various virtues and the discourse of wisdom. For the words of honeycomb are good, as it is written in Proverbs. Therefore, once he has tasted the fruit of sweetness, he hastens eagerly to more perfect things, saying:

17. (Vers. 4-7.) Bring me into the house of wine, establish love in me, strengthen me with ointments, support me with apples; for I am wounded with love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and strengths of the field, if you awaken and revive love, until it pleases. He rightly seeks him, he rightly desires him; because our emperor has arranged all things well in this course and journey. First of all, he thought that this tent should be strengthened as the foundation of faith. Then, if there is any rough and dry and rocky dwelling for us, this Emperor still distinguishes troubled places, irrigates the dry ones, and makes the deserted ones fertile. If there is any bitterness, any temptation, any weakness, our leader tempers the bitter things and mitigates the anxious ones; he dissolves the hard things and strengthens the strong ones.

18. Whenever the king of the earth wants to rest his army, he chooses a notable town that doesn't lack provisions, that is not sandy and bare of crops, but a town that is distinguished by buildings, replenished and abundant in resources, or a pleasant field, or green pastures, or a wooded and open area suitable for camping. Therefore, if earthly kings know how to provide for the needs of those who follow them, how much more does God, who is good, know how to arrange things for those who diligently seek Him? First, when an unknown journey is to be undertaken, guides of the roads are chosen who run ahead of the train, but these commanders consider this disrespectful to themselves: but God went before, when the Hebrews made the journey, finally speaking to them in a pillar of cloud. And so that you may know that God went before them, he said, God went before them: by day, indeed, showing them the way in a pillar of cloud; but by night, in a pillar of fire, and the pillar of cloud did not fail by day (Exod. XIII, 21 and 22). Following this preceding column, the Church, so as not to fail herself, was refreshed by its shadow; and therefore it says: In its shadow I desired and sat, and its sweet fruit was in my mouth (Song of Songs, verse 3); because it was nourished by the Lord, and led to a place of pastures and refreshing water.

19. Bring me into the house of wine. Having prepared resources, he seeks to move on to another dwelling, in which he may capture the grace and sweetness of mysteries. Furthermore, promoting the true journey, he says: Organize love in me. Good resting places, where the fullness of charity exists. Charity cannot exist without faith; for there are three guarantees of the Church: hope, faith, and charity. When hope has come first, faith has been established, charity is ordered, and the Church is joined together.

Confirm me, he said, in ointments, support me in difficulties. You have other dwellings, which the Church gladly occupies. These dwellings are the Cross of Christ and His burial, in which the Church was wounded, but with the wound of love; for the wound is what Christ received, but the ointment is what He poured out. It is the fruit that hung, this fruit the Church tasted, and she says: And its fruit is sweet to my mouth. And so that you may know that the apple is the Lord, you read above: Like an apple on the trees of the forest, so is my cousin. We also admit the wound when we preach Christ crucified, but we are a good fragrance to God; for the cross of Christ is a

stumbling block to the Jews, foolishness to the Greeks, but to us it is the power and wisdom of God. The Church is wounded by this wound when it preaches the death of its Savior, but this wound is a wound of love. Finally, he who does not believe denies; he who loves confesses. Manichaeus denies, the Christian confesses; and therefore it is written: The wounds of a friend are more desirable than the voluntary kisses of an enemy (Prov. XXVII, 6). Therefore, the Church says beautifully: I am wounded by love.

21. Let us expose our bodies to a good wound, let us expose chosen arrows: this arrow is Christ who says: He has made me as a chosen arrow (Isaiah 49:2); it is good, therefore, to be wounded by this arrow, this procession is not of mediocre dwelling, not everyone can say it, because they are wounded by love. The apostles said it when they were stoned for Christ and preached Christ: Paul said it when he was beaten with rods three times and day and night debated with the Gentiles about worshiping Christ; the martyrs say this, who are wounded for Christ; and because they have deserved to be wounded for his name, they love more. So coming to this dwelling, the Church, to this procession, in order to offer her children for Christ, to receive the wounds of love, she herself tasted the fruits of piety, and began to exhort others, saying: Taste and see that the Lord is sweet. And the Church added, saying:

22. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. And these are the mansions of the Church walking in the royal way; for there are many mansions in my Father's house (John 14:2) . The Lord Jesus testifies: And behold, I come and call you (Ibid.) . The mansion of wisdom is good, whether on his left or on his right, it is a good mansion; for it is the royal way. Therefore, wise messengers say: We will go on the royal way, we will not turn aside to the right or to the left, until we pass through your borders (Numbers 20:17) . These messengers sent by Moses said to the king of Edom, this is earthly; because all earthly things, whether on the right or on the left, are evil. Evil is foolishness, evil is intemperance; and therefore the Hebrew passes through these dwellings: he does not turn aside to them, but passes through; so that he may arrive at the left of wisdom and the right, and may abide in them, where the riches of simplicity, where glory, where length of life are. For length of life is on his right hand, as Solomon says: On his left hand are riches and glory (Prov. 3:16): on the right is life, on the left is rest. I wish to rest upon his left shoulder, and not seek pillows! Alas for those who use pillows, as Ezekiel says (Ezek. XIII, 18). The good leader prepares these abodes for his Church, and through the ways of wisdom directs its journey. Finally, the wise praise his ways: His ways are good ways, and all his paths are peaceful (Prov. III, 17).

23. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. The bride speaks of Christ, and the soul of the Word of God: for Christ is the same as the Word of God and wisdom. Blessed, therefore, is the soul that is embraced by wisdom. Great is the hand of wisdom, great is the right hand, it embraces the whole soul; for the soul is entirely fortified, since it is espoused to the Word of God. For the fullness of wisdom is to fear God: therefore, the soul that fears God is fortified by itself with full protection. Wisdom extends her left hand under her neck, but her right hand is in her embrace. Both of her arms reach out to useful things; however, wisdom's individual hands have their own properties: In the right hand is the length of life, but in the left hand are riches and glory. Truly, both hands are endowed with good gifts; however, they have a variety in their office, as they encompass both present and future times; so that the left hand may be a rewarder of the present, and the right hand may be of the future.

24. We can also learn about this from the prophecy of the holy patriarch of Israel. When he placed his right hand on Ephraim and his left hand on Manasseh and wanted to switch them because of the age of Joseph, he did not want to place his father's right hand on the head of the elder son Manasseh, and he said: I know, my son, he too will become a nation, and he too will be exalted, but the younger brother will be greater than him (Genesis 48:19). In which [is] greater? In him certainly, because he has been elevated by a blessing, with the posterity of Ephraem saying: Let God make you as He made Ephraem and Manassen (Ibid., 20): either because his seed is the multitude of nations, which has chosen labor in this century, believing in the Lord Jesus, so that it may have consolation in the future. But Manassen is the seed of a forgotten people, who, having forgotten their own author, has been exalted for a time in this century, giving heavy punishments for the remainder; because he denied his own God and Lord.

25. We said this in order to prove that those things which are future are better. Finally, the left hand of wisdom is under the head of the bride, but the right hand is above, which embraces the whole bride. Therefore, it is like the support of present rest, on which the soul rests. It has a place to recline its head, because the left hand of wisdom is wealth and glory. During this time, these things soothe and are partly a consolation, and therefore, the Son of Man had no place to rest his head (Matthew VIII, 20); because although he was rich, he became poor (II Corinthians VIII, 9). He did not seek any glory of this world; for he had come not to benefit only a portion but to help the whole human race, saying: 'Do you take offense at me because I made a whole man well on the Sabbath?' (John 7:23). That is, he made him whole not by bestowing wealth, not by conferring honors, not by increasing worldly glory; for these things do not possess the fullness of blessedness and grace. But he made him whole, that is, he encompassed the length of eternal life. For the life that is in the right hand of wisdom is not similar to common life, but it is the length of life, so that the one who receives life from wisdom, obtains not the shortness of life, but the permanence and length of eternity.

26. The eternal reward of life and the bonus attire. Therefore, the bride of evil pomegranates, that is, of diverse and countless fruits, and especially of the fragrances of faith, grace, wisdom, and glory, supported by the riches of eternal life, which are around the left and right hand of the groom, through the holy souls of praising congregations, excites Christ with applause, saying:

27. I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and strengths of the field, if you awaken and resurrect love as long as it desires. That field which the Lord has blessed is not this earthly one, or rough with forests, or rugged with torrents, or useless with vines, or barren with rocky sand, or gaping and dry with drought, or soaked with blood, or uncultivated and overgrown with thorns, but that field about which the Lord says: And the beauty of the field is with me (Psalm 49:19). In this field is found that grape which, when pressed, shed its blood and cleansed the world; in this field is that fig tree under which the saints will rest, rejuvenated by the sweetness of spiritual grace; in this field is that fruitful olive tree, flowing with the ointment of the Lord's peace; in this field flourish pomegranates, which hide many fruits under the protection of one shield of faith, and are nourished by the embrace of love.

28. Therefore, since wisdom and honorable brightness are so perfect, if they have charity (for charity is the fullness of the law (Rom. XIII, 10)), He desires charity to be aroused and revived, aroused in the old Testament, revived in the new. God is charity, as we read, Christ is charity (I

John IV, 8). He is aroused like a lion and the lion's cub, as Judah rises from the seed (Gen. XLIX, 9): He is revived like one sleeping, like one reclining; for He was aroused from the dead not by human, but by His own and the Father's majesty. Where the Scripture says: Who will raise him up? For neither an angel nor a Power could raise up someone else, since he himself raised up others. Therefore, when he says here: If you have raised him up and have restored love, how long will you keep him waiting? he is speaking about those who can appropriately proclaim his resurrection, so that they may ignite the fire of faith and devotion in those who hear: either Christ is raised up in those who first come forward, or he is restored in those who, having come forward later, have fallen asleep. Therefore Christ sleeps for the negligent, but is raised in the holy ones.

29. Therefore, this charity awakens and revives until it receives his voice and summons his presence: for he not only comes when sought, but he also comes as a stranger. But now the bridegroom was present to prove what he still says to us who are speaking: Here I am. He is present because he was awakened by the daughters of Judah, as if revived by the daughters of Jerusalem. The Church hears the sound of his voice and says:

30. (Verse 8.) The voice of my cousin, behold, here he comes leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills. This book is a crowd, having many noble characters, like a triumphant troop, and signifying many actions that we can understand more than express. For as if the bride heard the bridegroom approaching and speaking with some traveling together, the bride says: The voice of my cousin. While she speaks with the daughters of Jerusalem, and asks them to rouse and awaken the bridegroom; suddenly, as if sensing the sound of a voice coming from afar, she says: The voice of my cousin, announcing whom she had sought to be announced to her before. She who desired to be awakened by others, on her own prayer being revived, believing that the Father was coming, said joyfully: 'The voice of my cousin.' She added well, 'my cousin'; so that not others, but only her cousin would claim his arrival for herself.

Look, he says, that person is coming; I am still looking for him, and he has already arrived. I am still taking votes for him to come, and he is already next in line. I desire to stir up love in myself, I consider myself wounded by love, and love itself hastens to me even more. I said, come; he jumps and leaps over. I ask him to come with grace, and he works increases of grace; and while he comes, he brings increases of grace with him, and by coming, he acquires more, because he himself is eager to please his beloved. He leaps upon the heights, that he may ascend to the bride; for the bride's chamber is the tribunal of Christ. He leaps upon Adam, he surpasses the Synagogue; he leaps upon the Gentiles, he surpasses the Jews.

Let us see Salit leaping from heaven into the Virgin, from the womb into the manger, from the Jordan to the cross, from the cross to the tomb, from the tomb to heaven. Show me David leaping, show me running; for you have said: His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends thereof; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof (Psalms 19:6-7). And now he leaps, and now he runs, from the heart of the Father upon his holy ones, from the East unto the West, from the North unto the South. This is the one who ascends above the West, he himself above the skies of the heavens to the East, he himself ascends above the mountains, he himself above the hills.

33. I wish I could say, my poor soul, 'Behold, he comes, and he does not come on earthly things, not on valleys, but he comes: leaping over mountains; for God is the God of mountains, not

valleys: therefore, where he leaps, he leaps over mountains. If you are a mountain, he leaps over you, he leaps over Isaiah, he leaps over Jeremiah, he leaps over Peter, John, James. Mountains surround him (Psalm 124:2): if you cannot be a mountain and not prevail, be even a hill, so that Christ may ascend over you; and if he crosses over, may his crossing guard and protect you.'

We have spoken about Christ and the Church; let us speak about the soul and the Word. The soul of the just is the bride of the Word. If she desires, if she longs for, if she prays and prays constantly, if she prays without any doubt, and wholeheartedly focuses on the Word, suddenly she hears the voice of the one she does not see, and in the fear of her senses, she recognizes the scent of His divinity, which those who believe well often experience. Suddenly, the nostrils of the soul are filled with spiritual grace, and she feels the breath of His presence whom she seeks, and she says: Behold, this is the very one I seek, the one I desire.

35. When we think about something from the Scriptures, and we cannot find its explanation; while we doubt, while we seek, suddenly it seems to us as if it ascends over mountains, that is, the highest doctrines. Then, appearing to us as if over hills, it illuminates the mind, so as to infuse into the senses what seemed difficult to find: therefore, the Word becomes present in our hearts as if absent. And again, when something is obscure to us, as if the Word is taken away, and as if we desire the coming of the absent; and again it appears, it shows itself to us as if it is present to us in the things that we seek to understand.

Therefore it leaps frequently in the heart of each individual, it crosses over and goes out and returns: if you follow, if you ask, if you demand to be revived by the Word of God that has gone out and passed by, with the pleasing discussion of faithful and learned men. Just as she who sought and found, who said: My brother has passed by, my soul went out in his word (Song of Songs 5:6). Therefore, even if it leaps over the mountains, follow; even if it leaps over the hills, follow. For there are found in the mountains and in the hills the hunters of the Lord, who seek out those captured for life; for thus God spoke through Jeremiah: Behold, I will send many fishermen and many hunters, and they will hunt them over every mountain and over every hill (Jeremiah 16:16). Therefore, let the people of God be sought and found in the teachings, grace, and discipline of Peter and Paul; so that they are not in the valley of tears, but on the mountains from which Christ enlightens each one. And when we read Peter, Christ enlightens; and when we read Paul, Christ enlightens. Paul cared, Christ illuminated; because by invoking the name of the Lord Jesus, he rose, through the gift of his healing. Peter revived the dead, Christ illuminated; and therefore it is said: You wonderfully enlighten from the eternal mountains (Psalm 75:5). So we who cannot be mountains, let us stand on mountains or hills; so that when the Lord sends his fishermen and hunters to hunt those who are above every mountain or hill, that is, those who are in the precepts of the law and the prophets; and having knowledge of both the new and the old Testament, let them find us prepared, and like good reapers, let them gather the ripe grains at the opportune time; for if anyone is found outside the mountain or hill, they will not be able to gather them like good grain, but they will be sent to separate the wheat from the chaff, to make a comparison with something else. Therefore, the Lord has diligent ministers of many tasks: they are fishermen, they are also hunters, and reapers. If you were to expect them to reap at harvest time, you would see the Lord Jesus leaping like a young deer or fawn over the mountains of Bethel. For He leaps upon the Church, which is the house of bread, in order to strengthen the hearts of the faithful; which is why the Bride says of Him:

38. (Verse 9.) My cousin is like a young goat or a fawn of the deer, on the mountains of Bethel; for he leaps over the Church, which is the house of God, because he strengthens the hearts of the faithful. He is rightly compared to a young goat, because a goat feeds on high places. He is called Dorcas because of his vision, for the vision of Dorcas is sharper. What could be more fitting for Christ, who has seen the Father whom no one has seen: or if anyone has seen in Christ, he himself has revealed the Son? Just as a fawn of deer, a fawn is like a child, on whom the power of nature has imprinted paternal strength, so that hidden things do not escape him, snakes flee, poisons do not harm him. Finally, the serpent that was brought forth from a man, when it was brought forth from its hiding place, said: Why have you come before the appointed time to torment us (Matthew 8:29)? Therefore, let us watch this leaping fawn, so that we cannot be afraid of the serpent. And he himself stands behind our wall, looking through the windows, peering through the lattice. Therefore, he comes and is first behind the wall, in order to loosen the enmities of soul and body, removing the wall that seemed to bring an obstacle to concord. Then he looks through the windows: what the windows are, listen to the Prophet saying: The windows are open from heaven (Isaiah 24:18). Therefore, he signifies the prophets, through whom the Lord looked upon the human race before he himself descended into the earth. And today if any soul earnestly seeks Him, it will greatly deserve mercy; because whoever seeks much, much is owed to him. Therefore, if any soul seeks Him more diligently, it hears His voice from far away: and even though it seeks from others, it hears His voice above those from whom it seeks. It sees Him coming towards it, that is, hastening and running over those who cannot receive His virtue with a weak heart: then it sees Him looking through the riddles of the prophets, reading them, and keeping their words; for it sees Him looking, but as if through a window, not yet as if present. He sees something prominent above the nets. What is this? Unless perhaps because those nets are ours, they are not his nets, because that soul is still within the sensible and worldly things, which it is accustomed to envelop and capture the mind of man in its own bosom.

40. And he himself stands behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattice. For the Church, or the soul of the just man, has seen her Beloved leaping like a young colt upon the mountains, and suddenly, when she first looks behind her wall, sees him looking through the windows, appearing above the lattice, she rejoices and is glad, for she herself is also loved by the Bridegroom. And just as he himself is wounded with the beauty of love, when his beloved first departs, he comes when asked to be kissed (for he is asked when it is said, "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth"), and then he does not reject the prayers and entreaties of his bride, who offers her beloved breasts; and he kindly leads her into the inner rooms of his house; then, as if playfully tempting the senses of the lover, because he desires to experience the sensations of love to their full extent, he often goes out in search of the Bride, and often returns to be invited to kisses, standing behind the wall, looking through the windows, appearing above the lattice, so that he is not completely absent, nor as if he were completely entering, but he himself calls his bride to himself, so that their mutual exchanges might become more gracious, and they might nurture their love with mutual conversations.

41. (Verse 10.) Arise, he says, come, my nearest one, my beautiful one, my dove; and if you have a well-founded wall, not the middle one that separates the members of a single house, but built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, so that the structure of it may grow into a temple, and may not separate its internal parts, but fortify them. Therefore, if you have the

edification of God within you, and let your windows always open towards the East, the Word comes and stands behind your wall (Song of Solomon 2:9); for the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous (Psalm 34:16); he looks through your windows (Song of Solomon 2:9).

42. What are these windows? We read about windows in which Jeremiah says: Death came in through the windows (Jer. IX, 21), through which greed came in, through which lust came in. Your eye is a window. If you see a woman and desire her, death comes in through your eye: if you see the property of a widow, or the treasures of the poor, and you stir up your desires, death comes in through the window. Just as death comes in through these, so does life come in: if, gazing upon the beauty of a young woman, you honor the Lord Jesus, who in His tender years came to the age of old age, a pure life, and you offer your daughter; so that she may be consecrated with a pious veil: if, looking upon the property of the poor, you do not desire to possess it, but, like an anxious parent, you protect it with religious affection: through these windows Christ looks out, so that He may call the bride.

43. Towering above the nets: towering well; because he alone is not entangled by the nets of sins. We were all inside the nets, in fact we are still inside the nets; because no one is without sin except Jesus alone, who being unaware of sin, the Father made him sin for us, and indeed he delivered him up to snares, he delivered him up to nets: sending him not into the sin in which all men were, but in the likeness of sinful flesh, in order that he might condemn sin in the flesh. The flesh was a sin, according to that saying that it was condemned by a hereditary curse; the sin was a lure and the minister of sin. The Lord Jesus came, and in sin-prone flesh, he exercised the warfare of virtue: our members became no longer weapons of desire, but weapons of virtue; for where there were incentives of desire, there are now dwellings of chastity. Here, therefore, he came to snares, but willingly: he came to nets, but without fear. All things were full of nets, filled with snares. Listen to the speaker saying: 'On this path on which I was walking, the proud have hidden a snare for me' (Psalm 141:4). And in the book of Wisdom, Sirach warns you to know that you are walking amidst snares (Sirach 9:20). As many vices, as many nets; as many sins, as many snares.

44. The hereditary bonds already held you, Jesus came to the snares, to free what was lost. We were all held in nets, no one could free another, since they could not free themselves. Therefore, such a necessary one was needed, whom the bonds of the human generation's sins did not hold, whom greed did not seize, whom deceit did not bind. Only Jesus was such a person, who, even though he surrounded himself with the bonds of this flesh, was not captured, was not bound. But breaking and dissolving them, he called the Church to himself more, Looking through the snares, towering over the nets, so that the Church itself may learn that it is not held by bonds. Finally, He came so close to the chains that He could undergo death for us, but He did not become a slave to death, but a free man among the dead; for He was the one who had the power to release death. Finally, let Him Himself teach you, who said: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up (John 2:19). Let us listen, therefore, to what He says:

45. (Verses 11 - 13) Arise, come to me; that is, rise from the dead, arise from the chains with which you were surrounded. Arise, for I have risen for you; loosen the bonds of wickedness, for I have already loosened them for you. Come, for the nets are already loosened. A virgin has given birth, a child is born of a virgin, he owes nothing to female inheritance, as if he were not bound by

the woman's sonship. See the middle wall of the partition that was already broken, which divided the harmony of internal affections and aroused discordance of bodily passions. Come, therefore, without fear. I desire to see your face and hear your voice: come, so that now you may not see me through nets, but that you may possess the beloved countenance face to face.

46. And here let these things be briefly discussed in ethical manner. But if we are able, let us examine the mystical meaning, or gaze upon the ultimate line. The devoted Bride sat within the house of the Lord, within the wall of the Law and the prophets, established by the building up of spiritual stones, which enclosed and fortified the royal house, full of joy and gladness. She marveled at the royal treasures, and looked upon them earnestly, desiring the wisdom that would show her these riches, to acquire it. He was in secret, but he was in need of an interpreter of his own secret. The Lord Jesus came, leaping over mountains. It seemed late to us for him to come, but he hurried. Finally, he leaped and crossed over, in order to cross over the bodily and rocky doctrines of the Jews. He stood behind the wall of the house that was in the Old Testament, looking through the window of the Law, and the caves of the prophets. The doors of her house were not yet open, the gates of wisdom had not yet been opened, with which the inner workings of the Law were closed; however, looking from above, that is, the spiritual part, she calls the Church, so that, rising high through the Law and the prophets, she may tread fearlessly on the nets of Jewish interpretation and break the knots. Therefore, she is called Proxima, so that she may cling to Christ and not seek the worldly; she is called Formosa, so that she may carry the beautiful feet of those who evangelize; she is called Columba, so that she may seek spiritual things and abandon earthly things.

Behold, he said, winter has passed, the rain has gone, it has parted from itself, flowers have been seen on the earth, the time for harvesting has come. Before the coming of Christ there was winter: Christ came, he made summer. Then everything was destitute of flowers, bare of virtues: Christ suffered, and all things began to be fertilized by the new seeds of grace. The rain of overflowing luxury has gone, and the clouds arising from foul deeds are now being dispersed by the pure serenity of a conscience. Therefore, those who escape during the winter do not do so because they do not follow the passion of the Lord, do not take up their cross, and do not follow Christ.

49. The rain hinders the flowers: but now the flowers are seen on the ground. The good flowers are the apostles, who spread the fragrance of their various writings and works. The time of harvesting has come, when the ripe fruits are stored in the barns; and he who reaps receives his reward. The voice of the turtledove is heard, because it has found its nest; for the Church is the home of chastity. The fig tree that was ordered to be cut down because of its barrenness has now begun to bear fruit. The vineyard, transferred from Egypt, now no longer destroyed by ruins, is assailed by beasts; not by rough brambles, but by sweet-smelling flowers.

50. Arise, he says, come, my nearest one, my beautiful one, my dove, my perfect one; nearest indeed in desire for faith, beautiful in the splendor of virtue, dove by spiritual grace; for the silvered feathers of the dove can signify that eternal power, and the flight of the dove declares the presence of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Christ calls her to himself to come, since she was already endowed with spiritual rewards. For behold, he says, winter has passed, the rain has gone away, the flowers have appeared on the earth. See how the holy Church is invited. Winter, it is said, has departed from itself, so that it may not fear a naked winter, not the season of winter, but the frailty,

which deprives the fertile field of the soul of every flower. For it is not the winter of the earthly sun, it is the winter of the mind, when a coldness creeps into the soul, when the steam of the mind vanishes, when the strength of the senses dissolves, when excessive moisture overflows, and weighs down the mind, when the inner sight is clouded. And so the Lord says: See to it that your flight during winter or on the Sabbath day does not happen (Matth. XXIV, 20); for it is good that the day of judgment or death comes when the pleasant temperature of the soul is lively, when the heavenly mystery shines with clear light, when our heart burns within us. For it is then that Christ is present, as testified in the Gospel by Cleopas and Ammaon saying: Was not our heart burning within us while he opened the Scriptures to us (Luc. XXIV, 32). But the soul rejoices when even a flower appears on the earth. Who is this flower of sweet fragrance, if not the one who said: I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valley (above, verse 1): about whom it is also written in Isaiah: A shoot will come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit, and a flower will come out from the branch (Isaiah 11:1). The root is certainly the family of the Jews, the branch is Mary, the flower is Christ: when he shines upon our earthly affairs, and his fragrance fills the field of the soul, or blooms in his Church, we cannot fear the cold or dread the rain, but we wait for the day of judgment. And therefore the Church hastened with all diligence to see this flower, as she herself testifies in the following words: 'In my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves' (Song of Songs 3:1).

Ficus protulit grossos suos. Apta Synagogae arboris istius comparatio est, quia sicut arbor ista foliis redundans fluentibus, spem possessoris sui cassa speratorum proventuum exspectatione destituit: ita etiam in Synagoga, dum doctores ejus operibus infecundi, verbis tantum velut foliis redundantibus gloriantur, inanis umbra Legis exsuperat; spes autem falsi exspectata proventus, populi vota credentis illudit.

51. There is also in the nature of a tree a comparison expressed by its likeness to a Synagogue. For if you carefully investigate, you will find a separate custom of this nature from the use of other trees; for other trees bear their flower before the fruit, and apples show the coming of themselves by their flower; this tree alone germinates apples from the beginning instead of flowers; in others the flower is cut off and the fruit is born; in this tree the fruit falls off so that the apples may succeed. Therefore, those empty shells of fruits emerge in place of flowers: thus, by a certain precocious mode of birth, they cannot preserve the benefit of nature since they do not know the order of nature. Indeed, just as a bud commonly thrusts itself out from the bark, so do the smallest fruits of this kind burst forth: about which we read in the Song of Songs: The fig tree brought forth its green figs. Therefore, while the other whitening shoots in early spring, only the fig tree does not know how to become gray with its own flower; perhaps because there is no more mature use in these fruits. For as other shoots, which spring forth resembling a degenerate nature, are rejected, and being weak through want of moisture, renew their strength when moistened by the sap that gives them sustenance, so it happens even here, although the shoots are very few, that some are spared and do not fall, to which, when they have once emerged in the narrow space between the two rods, they take their course, as if to a place of security, and growing up by the nourishment derived from their parent stock, they become fuller and more vigorous. And this takes place when the climate is more favorable, and the seasons are more prolonged, when they have lost their wild and undisciplined state from having parted with their previous superfluous moisture, and when they surpass the rest in beauty and the maturity of their growth.

52. Look now at the manners and souls of the Jews, who, like the first fruits of a barren Synagogue, fell as if in the likeness of a falling tree, so that lasting fruits beyond the age of our race would follow. For indeed the first people of the Synagogue, weak like a root in a withering work, could not draw the abundance of natural wisdom. And therefore the fruit fell as if useless, so that as if from the same key of a fruitful tree, a new people of the Church would arise from the richness of the ancient religion. Therefore, he who was, ceased to exist, so that he who was not could begin: but the first among the Israelites, whom the branch of stronger nature had brought forth, colored with the double juice in the shade of the Law and the cross, surpassed the others in the grace of the most beautiful fruits, to whom it is said: You shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).

53. The flourishing vines give off their fragrance (Sup., v. 5). The Church is well represented by a vineyard; just as the vine is married to the trees, so too is the body joined to the soul, and the soul to the body. As the vineyard is bound, it is lifted up, and when cut, it is not diminished but increased; likewise, the holy people, when bound, are set free; when humbled, they are exalted; when cut off, they are crowned. Moreover, just as a tender shoot, separated from its old tree, is grafted onto the root of another, so too is this holy people, with their old wounds healed, nourished in the embrace of the new sign of the cross, as if in the womb of a loving parent. And the Holy Spirit, infused into this prison-like body, like water poured into deep wells, washes away all that is foul, and raises up the bearing of our limbs to heavenly discipline. The diligent farmer used to dig, water, and cultivate this vineyard and, having formed mounds of earth, would work the land of our bodies, now scorching it with the sun, now drenching it with rain, packing the field so that the gem is not harmed by thorns, so that the shade of the leaves does not luxuriously grow, and by overshadowing the virtues with fruitless boasting of words, it does not hinder the maturity of natural ability.

55. (Verse 14.) And come, he says, my dove, into the hiding place of the rock, near the fortification; that is, come near the Gospel: the strongholds of your faith, are the deeds of Christ: the supports of your walls, are the words of the Lord: the passion of the Lord's body, is your strength.

Show me your face and reveal your voice; for your voice is sweet and your face is beautiful. Your voice is sweet, for with your mouth comes confession unto salvation; and your face is beautiful, for it does not blush before its author nor does it confound its redeemer. Therefore, it shows its face, bearing the sign of the cross; and it reveals its voice, assuming the authority of preaching. For the covering of the body of Christ, by which he was redeemed from sin, finds the protection of spiritual grace, so that it may both experience and speak of salvation. Oh, how sweet was the voice that spoke in the divine testimonies: how lovely was the face that was not ashamed in the presence of kings.

Arise, He says, come, my closest one; that is, arise from the pleasures of the world, arise from earthly things, and come to Me, who are still laboring and burdened, who are anxious about the things of the world: come above the world, come to Me, for I have conquered the world: come close to Me, now beautiful with the beauty of eternal life, now a dove, that is, gentle and meek, now completely filled with spiritual grace. Therefore, you should no longer fear the nets, since He calls to Himself the soul that could not be captured by the temptations and nets of the world. For

when we walk among the snares, we are exposed at the same time to the enticement of food and to noxious nets and snares. He who is placed in the body does not fear the nets, but he rises above them, that is, above the temptations of the world and the passions of the body; indeed, he even causes others to rise above them.

58. Arise, come, my nearest one, do not fear the nets, winter has already passed. Easter is coming, forgiveness is coming, the remission of sins is coming, temptation has ceased, the rain has gone, the storm has gone, and the shaking. Before the advent of Christ there was winter, after the advent of Christ there are flowers, as it says: The flowers have appeared on the earth. Where there were thorns before, there are now flowers; 'The time has come,' he says, 'to cut. Where there was a desert before, there is now a harvest.' The voice of the turtledove has been heard in our land; our prophet has added well, as if marveling, that where there was previously impurity, there is now chastity. The fig tree has brought forth its full fruits. What was commanded to be cut down as if unfruitful, now begins to bear fruit. But why do you hesitate, because it said 'full fruits'? It removes the former ones, so that it may bring forth better ones: just as the fruit of the synagogue is rejected, but the church is renewed. And although full tranquility exists, and the mysteries have grown, yet again He says: Rise up secure in the covering of the rock, that is, protected by the defense of my passion and the support of faith. For honey has been drawn from the rock and oil from the strong rock. This covering, when put on the souls of the devout, they are no longer naked, and this is their protection. Therefore, He also says to this soul: Come, my dove, in the covering of the rock near the protection: show me your face, and make your voice known. He encourages to confidence, so that he may not be ashamed of the cross of Christ, nor of its emblem. He encourages to confession, wanting all traps to be removed; so that the good odor of faith may breathe, that the day may shine, that the shadow of the opposing night may not harm; for whoever is close to Christ, says: The night has passed, but the day is approaching (Rom. XXIII, 12). There is the shadow of the worldly things that pass, and there is the day of the heavenly Christ, who shines for his holy ones.

60. (Verse 15.) Take for us small foxes that are destroying the vineyards, so that our vineyards may flourish. Scripture says that man is made in the image and likeness of God, but it is accustomed to call the serpent, or a horse neighing at women, or a little fox, or a beast. Regarding one of them, the Lord says: Go, tell that fox (Luke 13:32), meaning Herod. And elsewhere, when he noticed that he was being cunningly questioned, he said: Foxes have dens, and the birds of the sky have nests, where they may rest (Matthew 8:20); because they cunningly dwell in some hiding places of earthly passions.

61. Also, Samson caught two foxes, and tied torches to their tails, and let them loose through the fields of the Philistines (Judges 15): by this action, he signified that wicked and deceitful men, especially heretics, have free rein to bark with their tongues, but their ultimate outcome is hindered or their contentious principles are set on fire by the end of their deceit. Therefore, he also let loose three hundred foxes, because those who desire to commend themselves through the preaching of the deceitful cross are unable to grasp its mystery. Instead, they attempt to burn the fruits of others with their false and simulated preaching. Certainly, the true cross of the Lord does not burn the merits of others, but enriches them. And rightly it is written: Capture for us little foxes, destroying the vineyards, so that our vineyards may flourish. By this it is shown that either the Lord Jesus or the Church commands the deceitful tricks of fraudsters to be exterminated from their vineyards, so

that they may not harm the little vineyards, since they cannot harm the mature vines. For a heretic can attempt to attack the imperfect, but cannot overthrow the perfect.

63. (Verse 16.) My brother for me, and I for him. This voice is of a virgin; for to preserve an immaculate body from the mingling with a man, and to raise the palm of chastity, with mud upon the body even to the conversation of angels, is a private benefit, a public glory. How rare in the world is he who can say this, how alien to vices, how distant from every stain of sin, who has nothing in common with the world, and says: My beloved is for me and I for him, he shall dwell in the midst of my breasts. Certainly, let each one claim nothing of this world for himself, to whom there is no possession of bodily desires, whom desire does not inflame, greed does not stimulate, lust does not effeminate, luxury does not corrupt, ambition does not overthrow, envy does not torment, and no concern for secular affairs troubles him: a true minister of the altar, born to God, not to himself; for Levi, as the interpretation has it, signifies: Taken up for myself; it signifies: And he is mine; and it solely signifies: Taken up; it signifies: And taken up for me.

64. He himself is both for me and for God. How is he both a priest for me and for God? He is both an advocate for me and a supplicant to the Lord: offering sacrifice for me, and offering himself to the Lord. Furthermore, elsewhere Levi is said in interpretation for me; for if Levi is named for me, Levi is for me: if he offers for me, he is for me: if he intercedes for me, he is for me: but if he is called by the Lord, he is called for me: that is to say, he is not subject to anyone else, he does not demand tithes, he is not generous from his own possessions. He himself, that is, as if overflowing with all things for himself. I do not seek tithes from this, nor fruits, nor gifts, nor presents; he himself is my gift, he himself is my tribute. He is not generous to me in his possession, but he himself is my possession, he himself is my fruit, he himself is my sense. Taken by me, or rather taken for me, this cannot be without divine grace. For just as possession cannot be mine unless I purchase it: so it cannot be Levi's unless he is taken by the Lord, for when he is taken, he rightly says, he is mine. Finally, when it was commanded to Moses that he should divide and distribute the dwellings of the Jewish people through each tribe, God exempted the tribe of Levi, saying to the sons of Levi: They shall not have a portion or inheritance among their brethren, for the Lord God is their portion (Deuteronomy 10:9). And elsewhere: I am the Lord, their portion (Numbers 18:20). The earthly division is denied to those who, while not claiming a worldly portion for themselves, become possessors of the celestial realm. They should know that they possess this alone, that is, the service of faith and devotion, much richer than those who spread out the wide expanses of their possessions. However much they may extend their boundaries, the land fails and the sea encloses insane desires, and they pay greater tribute than the fruit they yield. But this person, possessing nothing, serves only God and is a portion above the earth; he is not limited by the failing earth, nor enclosed by the sea. Whose portion is God, is possessor of the whole nature. Therefore, for the fields, He is sufficient to Himself, having the good fruit, which can never perish. For the houses, He is sufficient to Himself, that it may be the dwelling of the Lord, and the temple of God, than which nothing can be more precious. For what is more precious than God? Or what does this man lack, who can say: Let me not glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world (Galatians VI, 4)?

66. The prince of this world cannot claim ownership in this fellowship, in which he finds nothing of his own. Therefore the Lord who came to teach, so that God might become our portion, said: 'The prince of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me' (John 14:30). And desiring to have

imitators of Himself, He said: 'Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money' (Matthew 10:9). Thus Peter, showing that his portion is in God, not in the world, said: 'Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk' (Acts 3:6); that is, this is my portion, my portion is Christ: Therefore, in the name of Christ Jesus, rise up and walk' (ibid). This is, in my portion I am rich, in my portion I am powerful. I rightly anticipate such fruits of this portion, like health and life being given; because this is the inheritance of the portion that I have chosen for myself: My beloved is mine, and I am his.

67. Who feeds among the lilies. The lily signifies chastity. Therefore, the good shepherd knows where to feed his flock, which pastures are beneficial for his sheep. What are our pastures, that is, the faithful, if not Christ? In whose pastures the Prophet rejoiced, saying: In a place of pasture, there he placed me (Psalm 22:2); for there he feeds and refreshes us. Good pastures are the divine sacraments. There you gather the new flower, which gave the sweet smell of resurrection: you gather the lily, in which the splendor of eternity dwells: you gather the rose, that is, the blood of the Lord's body. Even the Scriptures are the good pastures in which we are nourished by daily reading, in which we are refreshed and restored; when we taste what is written, or rather, when we frequently chew what has been offered to us with the highest mouth. By these pastures, the flock of the Lord is fattened. Even the Easter of Christ are the mountains of valleys; for Christ also feeds in these, like a gazelle or a young stag of the deer, that is, in the splendors of the saints.

68. (Vers. 17.) Until the day dawns and the shadows fall. Zacchaeus climbs a sycamore tree to see Christ: Jesus also extends his hands to us, to overshadow the whole world. How are we not in the shadow, who are protected by the covering of his cross? How are we not in the shadow, whom the crucified one defends against the malignity of the world and the heat of the body? Do we not know that the Word of God, coming into this world, did not come as a word. What he was in the beginning, what he was with God: but he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant (Phil. II, 7). He came in a light cloud, and while he was the power of the Most High, he overshadowed Mary; that he might transform the body of our humility, to be made like the body of his glory. Just as he therefore changed his form when he was born of the Virgin: so also the words of God seem to be transformed to us, when they are read in the Gospel, when their appearance is seen in the Scriptures as if through a mirror; because the whole truth cannot be comprehended here, but when that which is perfect comes, not through discussion, not through appearance as if transformed, but they shine with complete and explicit truth.

69. Therefore, let the soul bend with the yoke of the Word, and let it guide its reins, so that by the will of God it may be led away from vices and may receive the scent of eternal life; for this life is not perfect, but this life is in shadow. Therefore, in order for the man Christ Jesus to be born from the Virgin, the power of the Most High overshadowed his future mother; for he descended into shadow, beginning to work the salvation of mankind from shadow, and he will complete it with the brightness of the eternal sun. Therefore, this life is shadow. Hasten to the sun, so that it may protect you from the cold of this shadow, and bathe you in summer warmth. And therefore it advises us to pray, so that our flight does not happen in winter or on Saturday, not indicating a specific time and day, but preventing us from becoming cold due to our sins, and being empty of good deeds.

Chapter 3

1. (Verse 1.) In my bed, in the night, I sought the one whom my soul loves: I sought him and did not find him. Therefore, I will arise and search for him in the city, in the marketplace, in the streets, the one whom my soul loves. This soul had already received the good pledges of love, but because we must always be solicitous, always intent, and because the Word of God leaps forth like a young goat or like a young hind; let the soul always be watchful and extend itself towards the one it seeks and desires to hold onto. Therefore, like one who has fallen, I deplored myself, saying, 'In my bed, in the nights, I sought the one whom my soul loves. Whoever seeks diligently, let them seek in their bed, let them seek in the nights; let there be no days off, nor nights off: let no time be empty of the duty of piety; even if they do not find at first, let them persist in seeking.' And therefore, he says:

2. (Verse 2.) Therefore, I will rise up and search in the city, in the forum, in the streets. And perhaps for this reason, he has not yet found, because he searched in the forum, where there are lawsuits: in the streets, where there are markets for goods; for Christ is not obtained with money. Holy devotion does not allow any idle time for preaching to pass by. If students of secular knowledge indulge too little in sleep, how much more so those who desire to know God, should they not be hindered by bodily sleep, except as much as is necessary for nature? David would dampen his bed with tears every night, he would even rise in the middle of the night to confess to the Lord: and do you think that the whole night should be devoted to sleep? Then the Lord should be prayed to more, then protection should be sought, sin should be avoided, when it seems that he has a secret. Then especially when darkness surrounds me, and the walls cover me, it should be considered that God sees all hidden things. Therefore, do not say when surrounded by darkness, who sees me? And who do I truly fear surrounded by walls and enclosed? Because the Face of the Lord is upon those who do evil. Finally, if you do not see the judge, do you not see yourself? Are you not afraid of the testimony of your conscience? Do you not know that the darkness of night is not a covering, but an incentive for sin? When the body burns with sleep and food, even the strength of the mind is loosened by sleep, it is dissolved by sleep. Then impure desire for coitus creeps in, then the heart is disturbed by the filthiness of impurity, chastity is not seen, purity is not considered, the glory of modesty is not valued.

It was night when Judas betrayed, when Peter denied. Therefore, especially at that time, the justifications of God must be meditated upon, the exhortations must be reviewed: let not the precepts concerning chastity be absent, so that the mind occupied with these may quench the ardor of lust, extinguish the burning of the flesh. Keep this in mind: I will wash my bed every night (Psalm 6:7). For who, given to debauchery, wrapped in scandals, washes his bed every night? He who commits things to be wept for does not know how to weep; and though he himself be worthy of tears, he has not tears for his punishment. But he who chastens his own body and is solicitous for himself as a pilot, and groaning and lamenting for the offense of a past transgression, seeks how he may wash it away by tears of repentance, he washes his bed with tears every night. Therefore, let us not sleep through the whole night, but let us devote the greater part of them to reading and prayers. Listen to the voice of the Church seeking Christ even in the nights: 'In my bed, I sought Him whom my soul loves.'

4. Take it according to the letter, because he sought it in the nights by praying, begging, and even weeping. He sought it in the nights; because he has set darkness as his hiding place (Psalm 17:12), so that we may seek him more eagerly. Therefore, the Church, gathered from the Gentiles,

sought it in the prophets, and therefore believed. Finally, the coming of the Lord is supported by the testimonies of the prophets, the Evangelists, and Paul, from which it is written: For night reveals knowledge to night (Psalm 19:3). He sought in the nights, in persecutions and adversities, in troubles and harsh pains. Night is for all those who do not have perfect security; hence the Lord says: The night will come when no one can work. While I am in this world, I am the light of this world (John 9: 4). Therefore, let us not work in darkness; for if our works shine, we are not working in darkness, but in light.

5. It is the days on which Christ is present, it is the nights on which he denies himself. It is not great for you if you give thanks to the Lord then, when you are in prosperity and success: but if then you adhere to Christ, when the persecutor harasses you, when some storm disturbs you. Have you lost a son? In that sorrow, in that night, in that destitution, remember the Lord your God; lest, as if not heard, you be ungrateful, and in your distress you transgress. Have you been driven into exile? Remember the Lord your God, lest you prefer the love of your homeland forbidden by God. Have you, overwhelmed by the power of some rich person, lost your own resources and are in need of support? Remember the Lord your God, lest the night of poverty take you away from the affection of devotion. For this is the commandment of the Law, that you seek more diligently in the night, when you are more likely to be heard by the Lord, and that you may be able to say: In my distress I called upon the Lord, and the Lord heard me and set me in a broad place (Psalm 118:5).

6. But to seek superficially does not suffice for favor, but to insist and be diligent in the task. Finally, either the Church or the soul, which sought in the bed, sought in the nights, did not find at first; because perhaps it sought in the bed. But after it arose and went into the city (see that he did not send the disciples to that city where the Lord was to celebrate the Passover, saying (Matthew 26:18): Go into the city to a certain person), afterwards, as I said, it sought in the marketplace, where oil is sold, which they are accustomed to buy while awaiting the Bridegroom; where there is justice, where there are laws. For if the law is spiritual, and the forum is certainly spiritual, where those skilled in eternal law debate. This forum is not tumultuous with lawsuits, but glorious with Christ's tribunals. Where did he seek, you ask? In the forum, and afterwards he sought in the streets, from which those who were invited to the feast of the Evangelical fathers were gathered: and they did not think it necessary to excuse themselves from such banquets. After he sought in the forum, I say, and in the streets, he came across those who wander the city, and only then was he able to find what he was seeking; perhaps he will find more grace in tribulation and fear. Finally, he says later:

7. (Verse 3.) They found me who go around the city, they took my cloak from me. Therefore, there was a struggle: but by what means they did not take this cloak from him, I am stuck trying to discover; unless perhaps because he said there that he asked: Have you seen the one whom my soul loves? She who was speaking about Christ took off her cloak and found the one she was seeking. Learn how Christ is to be sought: certainly by those who seek not superficially, but who violently retain, as it says: I held him and will not let him go, he found with faith, he constrained with meditation.

8. If we receive good custodians, then surely they are angels. But he who transcended angels. He found the word; therefore there was not much distance when he crossed over from them and found Jesus. So how then did they carry the cloak below, unless perhaps because in the process

of offense to faith, the Church, while being stripped, is loved more by the Lord, stripping off the old self in order to put on the new, which is not covered by sins but rather clarifies the secrets of the mind, or because she has cast off the garment of secular wisdom in order to come to Christ? And he did not take off the cloak, even after he began to be more perfect.

9. Therefore, let us be mindful of heavenly justifications; so that while we sing them in the secret voice of our mind, we may be mindful in the night of the name of the Lord, and say as it is written: 'This has come to me, because I have sought your justifications' (Psalm 118:56); that is, this memory has come to me, so that I may remember you in the night, not being overcome by drunkenness, not being dissolved in feasts into sleep, not being occupied with worldly cares, so that forgetfulness of your worship does not creep upon me: but by daily meditation, chastising the faculties and exercising the intention of the mind; so that by assiduity, this solemn course may be made for us, so that we may worship the Lord Jesus even in the nights with complete devotion.

10. In my room, in the night, I sought him whom my soul loves. We can understand it thus: he seeks Christ in his room, who seeks him with tranquility, with peace. He seeks in the night, because he spoke in parables; For he has set darkness as his hiding place, and the night reveals knowledge (Psalm XVII, 12). Then, what we say in our hearts should pierce us in our rooms.

11. However, he did not find it in that way, and therefore he says: I will arise, that is, I will raise up and lift up my intention, so that I may search diligently, search earnestly: I will enter into the city. There is also a soul that says: I am a fortified city, I am a besieged city (Isaiah 27:3). Christ is the fortified city, that city is Jerusalem in heaven, in which there are abundant interpreters of divine law and experts in disciplines, through whom the Word of God is sought. He said, 'I shall seek in the forum of that city, in that forum where legal experts discuss laws, where oil is sold, which the virgins of the Gospel buy, so that their lamps always shine, and the smoke of wickedness does not extinguish them. I shall seek in the streets where water overflows from those fountains, from which Solomon says we must drink.'

12. They found me, he says, the guards who go around the city. So while he is searching for Christ, he finds the guards who are in the ministry; he asks them: Have you seen the one whom my soul loves? But the soul that seeks God also passes by the guards. For there are mysteries that even the angels desire to see, as Peter says: They have been announced to you, he says, through those who preached the Gospel to you, with the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, into which the angels desire to look (1 Peter 1:12).

13. (Verse 4.) How little when I passed by them, I found Him, I held Him, and I did not let Him go. Therefore, he who passes by the guards finds the Word. John passed by, who found the Word with the Father. There are also many others who seek Christ in leisure, and do not find Him; and they seek Him in persecutions, and find Him. And thus, as if after temptations, because He is present in the dangers of His faithful: How little, He says, when I passed by them, I found Him, I held Him, and I did not let Him go. For everyone who seeks, finds; and whoever finds, must adhere so as not to lose.

14. And since through the Gospel we see heavenly mysteries foreshadowed on earth, let us come to Mary Magdalene, let us come to the other Mary. Let us consider how they sought Christ in the tomb of his body, where he lay dead, in the nights, when an angel said to them: You seek Jesus

who was crucified: he is not here, for he has risen: why do you seek the living among the dead? (Matthew 28:5 et seq.) What do you seek in the tomb of the one who is already in heaven? What do you seek in the bonds of burial, the one who loosens the bonds of all? This is not a place of burial, but of heaven; therefore, one of them said: I sought him, and I did not find him (Song of Songs 3:1). However, while they were going to report to the apostles, Jesus, having compassion on those who were seeking, met them and said: Hail. But they approached, and held his feet, and worshiped him.

15. Therefore Jesus is obliged, and delights in being held thus, because he is held by faith. Finally, that woman who touched him and was cured of a flow of blood also delighted him, of whom he said: Someone touched me; for I perceive virtue to have gone out from me (Luke VIII, 46). Therefore touch him, and hold him by faith, and faithfully bind his feet; so that virtue may go out from him, and heal your soul. And if he says: Do not touch me; you hold him. For I have not yet ascended to my Father, he said (John XX, 17). Once he said: Do not touch me, when he rose again: or perhaps he said to her, what she thought was taken by theft, and not raised by his own power. Finally, in another book you have, because to those who held his feet and worshiped, he said: Do not be afraid (Matt. XXVIII, 10). So hold on, soul, just as Mary held on and say: I have held him and will not let him go: to whom they both said, we hold you. Go to the Father, but do not leave me, lest I fall again; and with Mary not wandering but holding onto the tree of life, take with you the one who clings to your feet. I will ascend with you, do not let me go, lest the serpent again spew forth its venom, lest it again be able to bite the woman's heel, so as to overthrow Adam. Therefore, let your soul say: I hold you, and I will lead you into the house of my mother, and into her secret place who conceived me (Song of Solomon 3:4); that I may know your mysteries, that I may draw from your sacraments.

17. I held him and will not let him go until I bring him into the house of my mother and into the chamber of her who conceived me. What is the house of my mother and her chamber, if not the innermost and secret nature of your being? Preserve this house, cleanse the innermost parts of this house, so that when the house is unblemished and not tainted by the filth of any adulterous conscience, the spiritual house may rise up in a holy priesthood, built together with the corner stone, and the Holy Spirit may dwell in it. What seeks Christ in this way, what beseeches Christ in this way, is not abandoned by Him: indeed, it is even frequently revisited.

18. Or perhaps the house of the mother is a strong house, in which the discipline of morals shines forth: but that is the secret, in which there are higher mysteries, in which the honey of divine grace is fragrant. Is not the forgiveness of sins sweeter than all honey? Is not the resurrection of the dead more fragrant than every flower? Receive, therefore, Eve, no longer covered by fig leaves, but clothed with the holy Spirit, and with new grace glorious; because now she is not hidden as if stripped, but appears as if surrounded by the splendor of shining garments, because grace clothes her: nor was Adam naked at first when innocence clothed him. Therefore, seeing her clinging to Christ, the Daughters of Jerusalem say (for he graciously often encounters and condescends to those who seek him, in order to uplift them):

19. (Verse 6.) Who is this that comes up from the wilderness? Be like that soul, which stirs up the charity of Christ within itself, which the virtues of heaven marvel at as it ascends; may it ascend without offense and may it depart from this world with joy and delight, like a vine branch, and may

it raise itself up to the heights like smoke, emitting the fragrance of a pious resurrection and the sweetness of faith, as it is written: Who is this that comes up from the wilderness, like a vine branch, perfumed with the smoke of incense, myrrh and frankincense from all the powders of the ointment. He expressed its beauty beautifully, with a comparison to dust and a mention of ointment; because in Exodus we read about the fine, compounded incense, which is the prophetic prayer of the saints, that it may be directed before the Lord, as David also says: Let my prayer be directed as incense before your face (Psalm 140:2).

20. Who is this that rises from the desert? This place is a deserted and uncultivated land, covered with the thorns and thistles of our sins. They marvel, of course, how the soul that was left behind in hell may cling to the Word of God and rise up like a vine branch, lifting itself to higher things, like smoke born from fire, and seeking the heights, while also emitting fragrant odors of good works. That odor, however, is the sweetness of devout prayer, which is directed like incense in the presence of the Lord (Ps. 140:2). And in the Apocalypse we read that the smoke of the incense ascended from the prayers of the saints (Rev. 8:4). These incenses are symbolized by the prayers of the angels, namely at that golden altar which is before the throne of God. And like the fragrance of a sweet-smelling prayer, the ointment exudes; because it is composed not of requests for temporal and visible things, but for eternal and invisible things: especially, however, it smells of myrrh and frankincense, because it has died to sin and lives for God. And in the following: 'I shall go,' he says, 'to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.' It follows:

21. (Verse 7.) Behold, sixty strong men in the vicinity of his offspring, armed with drawn swords, and skilled in the discipline of warfare. Who are these strong and skilled in the discipline of warfare, take notice. It is the duty of strong and spiritual men not to conceal when something is impending, but to pretend and as if to explore from a certain lookout of the mind, and to anticipate with prudent thought things that will be advantageous in the future; lest perhaps they may afterwards say: Therefore I fell into these things, because I did not think they could happen. Finally, unless the obstacles are explored, they quickly occupy. In war, an unexpected enemy is hardly sustained, and if it finds them unprepared, easily overwhelms them: thus, unknown evils break the spirit more. Therefore, in these two things is the excellence of the spirit, that first your mind, exercised with good thoughts, sees what is true and honorable: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God also: and let it judge only what is honorable as good. Then let him not be disturbed by any occupations, let him not be swayed by any desires. And indeed, no one accomplishes this easily: for what is so difficult as to discern, as from a lofty citadel of wisdom, the true worth of riches and all the other things that to many seem great and high? Moreover, how can you firmly establish your judgement, and despise as utterly valueless whatever you have judged to be trifling? Furthermore, if anything unfortunate should happen, and it is regarded as serious and distressing, bear it in such a way that you think nothing has happened besides what is in accordance with nature, when you read: 'Naked I was born, naked I shall depart. What the Lord has given, the Lord has taken away' (Job 1:21); and indeed, he had lost both his children and his possessions: and in all things maintain the role of a wise and just person, just as he did who said: 'As it pleased the Lord, so has it happened. May the name of the Lord be blessed' (Ibid.). And further, as you have spoken like one of the foolish women: if we have received good things from the hand of the Lord, shall we not also endure evil things? (Ibid., 2)

23. Therefore, the courage of the mind that wages war with virtues is neither moderate nor separate from others; but rather it alone defends the ornaments of all virtues, and guards judgments, and with an inescapable battle fights against all vices, invincible in labor, strong in danger, more rigid against pleasures, harsh against allurements, to which it is ignorant to yield its ear, and does not say 'welcome,' neglects money, flees avarice as a certain stain that effeminates virtue; for there is nothing so contrary to courage as to be conquered by gain. Having frequently repulsed the enemy, and with the line of the adversaries inclined to flight, while he was engaged in taking the spoils of the fallen opponents, he died a pitiable death, cut down among those he had slain; and the legions, who were in the midst of rejoicing over their victories and busy spoiling the enemy, were brought back to face the foe who had fled.

Therefore, let fortitude repel and crush such a monstrous plague, neither being tempted by desires nor broken by fear; because virtue consists in pursuing all vices aggressively, as if they were poisons of virtue. Let it push away anger with weapons, which takes away reason, and let it avoid sadness as well. Let it also beware the desire for glory, which frequently harms when excessively sought, though always desired. For to be softened by flattery does not seem to be a lack of fortitude alone, but also of cowardice. Seeing these strong camps, Jacob said in spirit, 'These are the camps of God.' (Gen. XXXII, 2).

25. But what are the sixty? We know the week of the old, and the octoechos of the new Testament, namely when Christ rose again, and the day of the new salvation dawned for all: on which day the brilliance of complete and perfect circumcision poured into human hearts. But seven and eight make fifteen. Therefore, these are seven and eight, that is, fifteen, by which Hosea led the prostitute to be hired, whom the Lord had commanded him to hire. Therefore, the week and the octave signify the culmination of the two Testaments and the fullness of faith. However, the number fifteen, which is derived four times, which is sixty, signifies the perfection of the Gospel.

26. What is, then, the plant around which these powerful beings are? 'Naphthali,' he says, 'is a vine let loose, stretching forth its beauty in growth. Another shoot of the vine is cut, which seems useless, so that the vine does not become luxuriant with the exuberance of its shoots, and another is pruned and allowed to remain for a little while, in order to bear fruit, whose splendor is extended in generation; for while it raises itself to the heights, it embraces the vine, and ascending to the summit, it clothes the constant neck of the vine's precious branches with a certain necklace.' He is also beautiful in his generation, because he abounds in full clusters and produces many fruits. This is beautiful, but that is even more beautiful, which signifies the fruitful palm that clings to the spiritual vine, of which we are the branches, and we can bear fruit if we remain in the vine; but if not, we are cut off. The holy patriarch Naphtali was an abundant vine, from which Moses says: Naphtali is satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the Lord; he shall possess the sea and the south (Deut. 33:23); explaining what Jacob had said, what it means to be a relaxed vine, that is, freed from the bonds of death by the grace of faith: in which it is signified that the people of God, called to the freedom of faith and the abundance of grace, are spread throughout the entire world, who by good fruit may clothe themselves with the yoke of Christ, and embrace the true branches of that vine, that is, the mysteries of the Lord's Cross, and may not fear the danger of confessing it; but rather, even in persecutions, may glory in the name of Christ.

27. However, these strong ones hold swords in their hands, which they do not refute for the name of Christ, or by which they distinguish the corporal from the spiritual, the shadow from the truth. For the word of God is living and efficacious, and more penetrating than any two-edged sword, and reaching to the division of the soul and spirit, of joints also and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart: and there is no creature invisible in his sight, but all things are naked and open to his eyes (Hebrews 4:12-13). For the word of God is a two-edged sword. And there are two other swords in the Church, of which it is said: Lord, behold here are two swords, namely of ecclesiastical and worldly power, with which falsehood resists mercy.

28. There is just mercy: but there is also unjust mercy. Finally, in the Law it is written about someone: You shall show no mercy to him (Deut. XIX, 13). And in the books of the Kings of the Law, it is stated that Saul incurred guilt because he had mercy on Agag, the king of the enemy, whom divine judgment had commanded to be destroyed (I Sam. XV, 9). So if someone, moved by the pleas of his children and swayed by the tears of his wife, were to think that he should be released, even though he still has the desire to commit robbery, would he not deliver the innocent to destruction, he who sets free a person who contemplates the destruction of many? Certainly, if he restrains his sword, he dissolves the chains, loosens the exile; but he does not take away the opportunity of robbery by a more merciful way, he who could not extort the will. Then, between the two, that is, the accuser and the defendant, deciding with equal danger of the death penalty, if he does not prove one, if the other is not convicted by the accuser, the judge does not follow what is just; but while he pities the defendant, he condemns the one proving; or while he favors the accuser who cannot prove, he rejects the innocent. Therefore, this cannot be called just mercy.

29. In the Church itself, where it is most fitting to show mercy, the form of justice should be held as strongly as possible, so that no one who abstains from communion is quickly coerced into it with a few tears, temporarily prepared, or even with more abundant weeping, demanding communion in many instances more than necessary, and thus forcing the priest to yield. For when one grants indulgence to the unworthy, it causes many to be provoked to the contagion of falling away. For the ease of forgiveness gives incentive to sinning. This is said so that we may know that mercy is to be dispensed to debtors according to the word of God and according to reason, otherwise the sword will carry out what is its own.

30. (Verses 9, 10.) Solomon the king made for himself a bed of Lebanon wood, its columns were made of silver, its canopy was made of gold, its steps were purple, and its back was adorned with gems. Who is this bed, if not a representation of our body? For in gems, the appearance of the air is seen, in gold, fire, in silver, water, in wood, earth; from these four elements the human body is made, in which our soul rests, so that it may not exist rough from the mountains, deprived of rest from the dry ground; but may rest elevated, supported by the wood, free from vices. Wherefore David also saith: The Lord bringeth help to him upon his bed of sorrow (cf. Psalms, 40:4); for what can be the bed of sorrow but he who cannot feel pain, who has no sense? But the body of sorrow, like the body of death: Unhappy man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death (Romans, 7:24)? And since we have introduced a verse in which we made mention of the body of the Lord, lest anyone reading this should be disturbed by the fact that the Lord took on a body of pain, let him remember that he mourned and wept for the death of Lazarus, and in his passion he was wounded, and from his wound blood and water flowed, and he breathed out his spirit (John 11:35). Water for cleansing, blood for drinking, and spirit for resurrection. For Christ is to us hope,

faith, and love: hope in the resurrection, faith in baptism, and love in the sacrament. However, just as the body took on pain, so also it underwent suffering in weakness; for it turned weakness into the advantage of human flesh: for weakness is loosed by suffering, and death by resurrection. And yet, you should mourn for the world, you should rejoice in the Lord: the sad should turn to penitence, the cheerful to grace, though it is necessary to weep with those who weep, and to rejoice with those who rejoice, as the Teacher of the nations of salvation has prescribed by his salvific teaching (Rom. XII, 15).

32. He built Media with love, on behalf of the daughters of Jerusalem. Who are these daughters? It should not be hidden that the superior ones appear before the general, the weaker ones afterwards. For they are compared to the birth of this world in the womb of a woman; for those who are born in the strength of youth are stronger, those who are born in old age are weaker. For this age has diminished in number like the vulva of a woman giving birth, and like an aging creature, it lays down the strength of its youth, as if a withering flower sheds the vigor of its powers. Therefore, these are the daughters of Jerusalem, that is, the more delicate and weaker souls: to them she shows herself so that her image may shine forth in their confession, shine forth in their love, shine forth in their actions; and if possible, let her whole appearance be expressed in them.

33. Therefore seeing the daughters of Jerusalem, the bride ascending, and not resisting, and being delighted with the odors of her merits, and also recognizing her to be the peaceful bride of that Solomon, they diligently pursue her even to the bed of Solomon: because true rest is owed to her in Christ. For the bed of the saints is Christ, in whom the hearts weary from worldly battles find rest. In this bed Isaac rested, and blessed his younger son, saying: The older shall serve the younger. On this bed lying down, Jacob blessed the twelve patriarchs. On this bed lying down, the daughter of the archsynagogue rose from the dead. On this bed lying down, the only son of a widowed woman, who had died, called back by the voice of Christ, broke the bonds of death. Therefore, leading the bride all the way to the rest of the bridegroom, they sing a wedding song, saying to the daughters of Jerusalem:

34. (Verse 11.) Go forth and see the crown with which his mother crowned King Solomon on the day of his wedding. They sing the wedding song and summon the other powers of heaven or the souls, so that they may see the love that Christ has for the daughters of Jerusalem. Hence, he deserved to be crowned by his mother as a son of love, as Paul shows when he says: Because God has delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son (Colossians 1:13). Therefore the Son of Charity is himself Charity: not having charity by accident, but having it in his own substance, as the kingdom of which he says: I was born for this. And therefore he says, Go forth, that is, depart from the worries and thoughts of the world: depart from bodily difficulties: depart from the vanities of the world, and see how the peaceful king has love on the day of his wedding: how glorious he is, because he has given resurrection to the bodies, and has united souls to himself. This is the great crown of the struggle, this is the splendid gift of Christ's wedding, his blood and passion. For who could give more, who did not even spare himself, and laid down his life for us in death?

36. But what is the crown of glory if not the Church, which crowns its head Christ? What is the joy of the whole earth, if not the house of the Christian people, the court of the saints, of whom it is written: 'Their sound has gone out into all the earth' (Psalm 19:4)? Therefore, because the Church

is the crown of glory, it is said: 'Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon, with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his espousals, and on the day of the gladness of his heart.'

37. It is said to the souls that they should depart from bodily constraints and enclosures, that they should go beyond corporeal thoughts, that they should depart from desires, and from worries, and from the other passions of this flesh and slippery affection: that they should rise above the world, that they should depart from this world, that they should meet Christ, that they should be prepared with shining burning torches, as if angels of Christ are speaking these words: 'You cannot see His splendor, His glory, unless you depart from the cares of human frailty, O daughters of Jerusalem.' As if to say: Why do you seek the living among the dead? (Luke 24:5) Christ is not sought within this world, but above the world, where he wanted his disciples to be.

38. What is the crown with which Christ is crowned, if not the crown of glory? Joseph had the crown of chastity, Paul of justice, Peter of faith. The crowns of each virtue are. Only Christ has the crown of glory, with which the Church has crowned him. In this crown all crowns are; because glory is not the portion of one crown, but the reward of all crowns.

Chapter 4

1. (Verse 1.) Now the Bridegroom, turned towards the praise of the bride, says: How beautiful you are, my friend, how beautiful you are! Your eyes are like doves, beyond silence. Beautiful in preaching, beautiful in conversation. He also says, her eyes are like doves. The eyes are the man's, that is, they are adorned with spiritual senses, which are sharp for seeing mysteries, and prepared for penetrating the secret divine Scriptures, shining with reasonable milk, in which there is no confused stain of deceit, but the pure and immaculate simplicity of sincere affection. Therefore, after being washed in the abundance of water, she remembered these doves in milk.

Moreover, we understand that the teeth and cheeks, like a scarlet net, symbolize the virtues of the soul and the diverse dispositions of teachers: who either diligently provide spiritual nourishment through careful administration, or bind the listener with the preaching of the Lord's cross, like a certain line of the Word; or with true modesty and the pleasantness of youth. Although they may be withdrawn by the sense of shame, nevertheless the fragrance of Christ may emanate from them: and just as the ointment descends onto the cheeks as if from a priestly head, so may the beauty of doctrine shine forth from them. Your eyes are like doves outside your silence; so that you may see and know both spiritually the time to be silent and the time to speak; so that in the time of speaking you may bring forth words and not be able to incur the sin of speaking with importunity. Your eyes, like doves. Here the dove, that is, the simplicity and grace of the Church is revealed. So see the simplicity of the eyes, for he who sees the just and rejoices himself desires to be just: for it is beautiful that he delights in others in what he himself wishes to preserve, if he can: for it is inherent to the good that the chaste love the modest, the wise the affections of the pious, the merciful the liberal, and love their own virtues in others. For most people, even the sight of righteous conduct is a reminder of correction, but for the more perfect it is a source of joy. For if there is such power in natural things that the sight of an animal benefits those suffering from jaundice, so much so that it is said that even the dead body of that animal can be beneficial to them if it has been shown to those who have experienced such a condition, can we doubt that the sight of righteous conduct, whose eyes are like doves, simple and modest, can heal? Therefore,

does this lowly irrational animal have such great virtue that it can heal a person in a brief moment of being seen: a righteous person, if indeed they are seen with faith by someone who desires to derive benefit from them, will they contribute nothing? How beautiful, therefore, you appear and excel!

5. Therefore, a just man is good. Finally, the Apostle Paul went up to Jerusalem to see the just ones: and he stayed with Peter for fifteen days, in order to benefit from his companionship (Gal. 1:18). Therefore, both Paul and Barnabas entered Jerusalem and were warmly welcomed by the Church, the apostles, and the elders. But when they wanted to leave, they were begged not to depart, and as we read later about Paul, he was led away with tears. Do not the rays of his own eyes seem to infuse a certain power into those who desire to see him faithfully? But just as the righteous person brings joy to the heart of the innocent, it seems that the wicked are tormented by their knowledge of the righteous, because they are accused by the silent virtues of the saints. Chastity torments the impure, generosity torments greed, and faith torments impiety. Let us also take a similar example from a lowly creature. For just as we said that a mute animal seems to benefit, so we perceive that a wolf is harmful if it anticipates someone by seeing them; for they are said to lose their voice, those whom the wolf has seen first. The basilisk, also known as the harmful serpent, is said to kill whatever animal it sees first. It is said that anyone who is able to foresee such a serpent will be immediately killed. The serpent itself is said to die if it is prevented from being seen by a human. Therefore, if there is such power either in the eyes of the serpent or in the eyes of a human that if one sees the other first, it can kill, then there is no power in the eyes of the just person who is filled with the grace of virtue, especially since faith alone works so much. For even the woman who touched the fringe of the Lord's garment was healed, and the one on whom the Lord Jesus looked immediately drew the grace of healing from His eyes.

7. But he who sees the just must know what he sees. He does not see him in the body, nor in clothing, nor in wealth, nor in appearance: but he sees him within. No, I say, he does not see him unless he sees his mind, unless he understands his speech, unless he can comprehend his meaning, unless he is able to derive wisdom from his discourse. Therefore, he will rejoice when he has perceived these things, when he has come to know them. So let us also, whenever we hear of a just person, hasten to see him, like that woman who heard that the Lord Jesus was reclining in the house of the Pharisee, and she entered and anointed his feet with ointment (Luke VII, 37 and 38). Let us be imitators of him, for who would doubt that the Church is represented in that woman? Therefore, wherever the righteous man sits, wherever he reclines, let us hasten to see him. It is precious to see a righteous man, to see him according to the image of God. What is external is of no use: what is internal heals. Truly, even in the one who is external, we frequently see the one who is internal: so that if we see a poor person, let us honor him in the poor person, in whom he has been made similar, of whom he says: 'You gave me food to eat, for whatever you gave to one of the least of these, you gave to me.' (Matthew 25:35 and 40).

8. Your hair is like a flock of goats that have been revealed from Mount Gilead. Why hair? Because the power of all the senses is in the head: For the eyes of the wise are in his head (Eccl. II). Therefore, the deep wisdom of the learned can reveal those things that are hidden and unlock the depths of understanding.

9. (Verse 2.) Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep, which came up from the washing, all of which bear twins, and none is barren among them. What is said in appearance about goats is to be understood mystically about the flock of the Church. Do not let these animals seem worthless to you; you see that this flock grazes in the heights, bold on the mountain. Therefore, where there are cliffs for others, there is no danger for the goats; where there is danger for others, there is nourishment for that flock, there is sweeter food, there is more excellent fruit. They watch over their sheep, hanging from the bushy rock where the attacks of wolves cannot reach, and there they supply the whole fruit of fertile trees. It is possible to see them stretched out, distended with abundant milk, solicitous for their tender offspring with motherly affection. Therefore, the Holy Spirit has chosen them, in order to prepare the venerable Church for union.

10. And so that you may hear mystically, the hair of the Word is height, and a certain eminence of righteous souls; because the sense of the wise is in their head. For it is certain that there is wisdom in the height of human thought. And just as goats are shorn to remove the excess: so also the flock of shorn souls, that is, the holy Church, has the virtues of many souls, in which flock you can find nothing insensitive, nothing excessive; for faith has made the wise, and spiritual grace has cleansed from every excessive stain.

11. Therefore, rightly are the souls of the just revealed, and revealed from the mountain of Gilead, that is, from the transmigration of testimony, because the heavenly testimony migrated from the Synagogue to the Church. On this mountain, therefore, frankincense, resin, and other fragrances are born, which those merchants, the Ishmaelites, as you have in the first book of the Old Testament, used to bring (Gen. XXXVII, 25). Therefore, just as goats, nourished with good food and flourishing in the warmth of the sun, are washed in a river and, rejoicing, emerge clean from the river, so the souls of the just ascend from the spiritual bath.

12. These are truly the ones who create twins, in whom there is no infertility of any virtues, no barrenness of merits. They create twins well, because they multiply their senses; hence you have it written in Proverbs: 'And you write these things to yourself threefold, in counsel, and in knowledge' (Prov. XXII, 20). He prefaced a triple writing, and added two, counsel and knowledge. But knowledge is twofold, one of incorporeal things, the other of corporeal things; hence you also have in the following: 'Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies, until the day breathes and the shadows flee away' (Vers. 5).

13. We spoke of fertility, let us now speak of teeth. For many, both sailors and those traveling on land, when they see a beautiful place, they stop for the sake of pleasure, delighting their eyes and lifting their spirits. It is not considered a delay in their journey, but rather a gratification. In the same way, it is dear to us to consider the most beautiful teeth of righteous souls; for the Scripture teaches that the teeth of the righteous are beautiful, speaking literally of the patriarch Judah and spiritually of Christ: 'His eyes will be sparkling with wine, and his teeth as white as milk' (Genesis 49:12). In which he preached not the duties of human flesh, but the gifts of divine grace. Therefore, it teaches the example, that the teeth should not be overlooked when we talk about the eyes.

14. Who then are the dentists of righteous souls, if not those who receive rough and hard food, often cold or excessively hot, sometimes breaking it down, sometimes nourishing it, sometimes moderating it, depending on the quality of the nourishment? They break down the hard parts, lest

the harshness of the letter in the Old Testament and the rigid understanding of the world suffocate the very life of the sacred books, closing off the vital supplies, and the throat of the soul, with an incurious, gluttonous consumption. Therefore, it is necessary that you first separate, if the food that is consumed seems solid to you, and distinguish it; and that you transfer it softened, without any harm to the soul, into all the members of its body through natural division; so that every part of its body may be nourished by the vital juice, and that you may not take anything putrid or dead into your mouth, so that it may not be said: The throat of those is an open sepulcher (Psalm 13:3). But you should drink in the living word, so that it may be able to operate in the depths of your mind. Teeth brighter than milk; for the teeth of the righteous.

Finally, when all our fathers were baptized in the cloud and in the sea with Moses, it is not without reason that it is written: 'For all of them ate the same spiritual food, and all of them drank the same spiritual drink' (1 Corinthians 10:3-4), so that a greater light might shine upon those holy teeth of theirs, whom we will know to have been purified after crossing the Red Sea, tempered by the bitterness of the fountain of myrrh through the grace of the wood (Exodus 15:25); then by the drink of twelve fountains, and finally by the spiritual water from the flowing rock; for the rock was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:3-4). Therefore they ate manna (Num. XX, 11), so that they might eat bread as many times as they were washed, as it is written, of angels (Psalm. LXXVII, 25). Now also in the mysteries of the Gospel, you recognize those who have been baptized, although they are washed with their whole body, afterwards they are cleansed by spiritual food and drink; for that is the true brightness of the teeth, where the melodious confession of a well-conscious mind resounds. That is the clean eye, which no beam of heavy sins can depress, which no light speck of impurities can disturb.

16. Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep that have come up from the washing, all of which bear twins, and not one among them is barren. This is no mean praise, first fittingly compared to a flock of sheep; for we know that goats can safely graze on high places and take food without danger on precipices, but when they are shorn, they are relieved of their superfluous burdens. The Church is compared to this flock, having in herself many virtues of souls which through the washing cast off superfluous sins, which bestow the mystical faith and moral grace upon Christ, which speak of the Lord Jesus' cross. In her is the beauty of the Church, wherein God the Word says to her: Behold thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thine eyes are as doves. Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee; because the stain of sin is washed away. Come from Lebanon, my spouse, come from Lebanon, and thou shalt pass from the beginning of faith; for she, renouncing the world, hath passed over the ages, and hath come to Christ.

17. (Verse 3.) Your lips are like a scarlet thread. For scarlet is the appearance of fire, and the blood of the Lord's cross is mingled with it. The scarlet lips of the Lord spoke of His own passion. Indeed, in Exodus, scarlet was placed in the fire (Exod. 25:4). For the world is not without scarlet, but consists of four elements. But in scarlet, the figure of fire is expressed, the vapor of which, if it did not penetrate the heavens and the air, the seas and the lands, would cause everything to fall apart as if its strength had been exhausted. Therefore, we recognize the thread of persuasion through the network, either through the crimson color of desire that sparkles in the minds of the audience, or through an indication of passion.

18. (Verse 4.) As the tower of David, your neck is built in Thalphioth, a thousand shields hang upon it, all the spears of the mighty. For your neck is raised up to God, and is ready for the yoke of Christ, which will not bend in the deceitful ways of the world. Just like the royal tower of Christ, to which Nebuchadnezzar cannot impose his yoke. For that tower was built by the strong hand of David, and was built high above the walls, so that it may serve both as a defense and as a decoration. As a defense, because it foresees and repels the enemy; as a decoration, because it not only surpasses what is low, but also what is high. However, it is also helpful or decorous if it contains within itself the teachings of the word, like certain ornaments or necklaces: if it also has the javelins of powerful prophets, which are directed against every exalting of oneself, guided by the arms of faith.

Therefore, do not let your soul be drawn into the dust of death, to which the Lord has also given natural height and strength, by which it may raise itself up and ascend. Hence, it is well said of this conjunction of soul and body, because in the natural mystery of our life, the soul, joined to the body, crawls upon the ground like a reptile and clings to the earth, partly because of this earthly dwelling, partly because this body is from the earth. And so, both the region of our body and the material itself of our body agree with this opinion. Therefore, the Apostle desires to be freed beautifully from the death of this body, because we are enclosed in a certain prison and we are enveloped in the craving darkness of sins.

Therefore, let us walk according to the will of God, so that we may be called to adhere to God. For he who lives according to the desires of the body is flesh, but he who lives according to the precepts of God is spirit. Therefore, may our soul not become flesh, that is, may we not be called flesh, just as those who perished in the flood, of whom it is said: "For they are flesh" (Genesis VI, 3). Rather, let our flesh be obedient to the governance of the soul, and may the soul become flesh, and may it deserve to be called by that name, just as the family of the patriarch Jacob and his holy posterity were called; for thus it is written: These are the descendants of Bala, whom Rachel, his daughter, gave birth to; she bore for Jacob seven souls. And there: But all the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, that came out of his thigh, besides the wives of his sons, sixty-six (Gen. XLVI, 25 and 26). And at the beginning of Exodus we read: Now all the souls that came out of Jacob were seventy-five (Exod. I, 5).

Therefore, those who lived with Joseph and came out of Egypt are souls; but those who were with the angels of God, that is, imitating the grace of angelic life (for those who do not marry or take wives will be like the angels of God in heaven, as it is written: 'For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven' (Matthew XXII, 30)), those who appeared with the angels were captivated by feminine beauty, they are of flesh, as the Lord God said: 'My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh' (Genesis VI, 3). And rightfully so, they are compared to angels, for they are not of the flesh, because they are not in the flesh, but in the spirit: such were those who followed the teaching of the Apostle, to whom he said: But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit (Rom. VIII, 9). But those who are captivated by the lust for women are of the flesh: and would that they were only of the flesh, and not also like neighing horses! For it is said: They neighed after their neighbor's wife (Jerem. V, 8).

22. (Verse 7.) You are entirely beautiful, my love, and there is no flaw in you. Indeed, who can estimate the greatness of her beauty, who is loved by the king, approved by the judge, dedicated

to the Lord, consecrated to God? Always a bride, always a virgin; so that love has no end, and modesty no loss. Truly, this is the true beauty, to which nothing is lacking, which alone deserves to hear from the Lord: You are entirely beautiful, my love, and there is no flaw in you.

23. (Verse 8.) Come here from Lebanon, come here from Lebanon: you will pass through and go over from the beginning of faith, from the head of Sanir and Hermon, from the hiding places of lions, from the mountains of leopards. By these signs, the perfect and blameless beauty of the virgin soul consecrated to divine altars is shown, not bent towards mortal things, but focused on the mysteries of God, worthy to have deserved the beloved, whose breasts are full of joy; For wine gladdens the heart of man.

24. And the smell, he says, of your garments, like the smell of Lebanon. Come from Lebanon, O bride, come from Lebanon: you shall pass over and pass through from the beginning of faith: you shall pass through the world contending, you shall pass through to Christ triumphing over the world. You have heard that he separated you from the lions and leopards, that is, the attacks of spiritual wickedness: you have heard that the beauty of your virtues pleases Him.

Come here from Lebanon, my bride, come here from Lebanon: you will cross over and pass through from the beginning of faith, from the head of Sanir and Hermon, from the dens of lions, from the mountains of leopards; that is, come out of the body, and leave all of yourself outside. You cannot be present to me unless you first journey away from the body; for those who are in the flesh journey away from the kingdom of God. Come, he says, come. He repeats it well, because whether present or absent, you must be present and pleasing to the Lord your God: be present when present, be present when absent, even though you are still in the body; for all of those whose faith is with me are present to me. There is one who came forth from the world for me: there is one who thinks of me, looks upon me, hopes in me, of whom I am a part: there is one who has been absent to himself: he is with me, who is not within himself; for he who is in the flesh is not in the spirit: he is with me, who goes forth from himself; he is near me, who has been outside himself: he is whole to me, who has lost his own soul for my sake; and therefore, come, come, oh bride; you will pass over and pass through from the beginning of faith. He travels through and surpasses all that reaches Christ: he travels through the merit of faith, and the brightness of works, which shines like Sanir and Hermon, that is, the way of the lantern: he travels through the conquered temptations of the world, and the defeated spiritual wickedness, seeking the legitimate crown of the contest.

You have wounded my heart, my sister, my bride, you have wounded my heart with one of your eyes, with one strand of your hair. For these eyes are the eyes of the mind, namely of the inner man, not those eyes that carry out the ministry of sight. For there is an eye of the mind and of the flesh, but that blind eye is the one that does not see the things that are divine, which is inflated in vain by the mind of the flesh. There is also another eye, the sense of Christ, by which the Church sees Christ, as He Himself says to His Bride: You have taken us with your heart, from one of your eyes. Christ deserves to be seen with one eye, because he is not seen with the carnal eye, or because having two eyes, the Church sees Christ more with the eye of faith; for the mystical eye is sharper, the moral eye sweeter.

27. And perhaps these are the eyes with which Paul saw the eternal things, where he began to no longer see temporal things. Finally, he who did not see Christ before losing his sight, saw Him

after losing the sight of his eyes; for he saw Him who said, 'Who are you, Lord?' (Acts 9:5). Certainly, he saw Christ, whom he also acknowledged as Lord. And below, he said, 'Lord, what do you want me to do?' Therefore, did he not see Him whose command he awaited? Therefore, with what eyes did Paul begin to see more clearly, except those that he himself showed us, saying: I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the mind (I Cor. XIV, 15)? Indeed, so that you may know that he saw by praying: It happened, he said, as I returned to Jerusalem, when I was praying in the temple, I had a sense of dread, I saw him saying to me: Hurry, leave Jerusalem quickly; for they will not accept your testimony about me (Act. XXII, 17 and 18).

28. Therefore, these eyes fail in the word of God, and say: When will you comfort me? These eyes were called the eyes of the prophets, because through revelation they saw things that were hidden with their minds. But because the eye of the mind and the eye of the flesh are one eye, and then man is comforted when the flesh and the mind do not desire different things, but desire and seek one thing; therefore, they are attentive to him who says: I and the Father are one (John 10:30). These eyes also confess that they are one; because they perform the same desire and function.

29. (Verse 10.) Your breasts are more beautiful than wine, and the scent of your ointments is above all aromas. And below: The smell of your garments is like that of Lebanon. See what progress you give us, virgin! For your first scent surpasses all aromas that have been sent by the Savior's tomb, and it brings the sweet smell of the dead body's movement and the decay of the limbs. Your second scent, like the scent of Lebanon, exhales the integrity of the Lord's body, the flower of virgin purity. May they therefore construct a beehive of honey by means of your work. The odor of garments is also the odor of our actions. Therefore, bring your hands to your nostrils and explore the odor of your actions with tireless and alert enthusiasm of the mind. The fragrance of your right hand will soothe you, and the limbs of your resurrection will exude a burning scent; the myrrh of your finger will sweat, that is, the grace of true faith will burn with spiritual works. Therefore, virgin, you capture pleasure from within your body, and you yourself are sweet to yourself, you yourself are pleasing to yourself (which often happens to sinners), you do not begin to displease yourself.

30. (Verse 11.) The dripping honeycomb, your lips, my bride. Therefore let your works compose the honeycomb; for virginity is worthy to be compared to bees, so laborious, so chaste, so continent: the bee feeds on dew, knows no union, composes honey. Dew is also the divine word to the virgin; because as the dew, the words of God descend. Modesty of the virgin is an untarnished nature, the offspring of the virgin is the fruit of the lips, devoid of bitterness, fertile in sweetness: a shared labor, a shared fruit. How I wish, daughter, that you would imitate this little bee, whose food is the flower, whose offspring is read by the mouth, whose offspring is composed by the mouth. Imitate her, daughter; let your words have no veil of deceit, let them have no cloak of fraud, so that they may be both pure and full of gravity. Let the eternal posterity of your merits be born from your mouth, not only for yourself, but also for many others, for who knows when your soul will be demanded of you; lest, leaving behind the storehouses filled with gathered grain, you are carried away by that which cannot carry your treasure. Therefore, give to the wealthy, but also to the poor, so that they may be participants of your nature and also participants of your abilities.

31. Honeycomb dripping from your lips, O bride. Tell us, Solomon, what is this honeycomb? For you have said: Good words are like a honeycomb (Prov. XVI, 24). And truly, a good honeycomb is

the one that the Church consumes, filled with the spiritual abundance of many prophets, emitting the fragrance of honey. This is the honey that it is said: I have eaten my bread with honey (Cant. V, 1). The lips of the preacher drip with honey, when the broken parts of the fallen soul are revived amidst harsh trials and ruins. Your lips drip honey, O bride; honey and milk are under your tongue; the mouth of the righteous distills wisdom. From the mouth of the righteous comes forth sweetness and mercy; in the mouth of the righteous there is no deceit, no falsehood, no bitterness of sin. The Church hears the words of the righteous, the people of God hear the words of the wise; they delight in the sweetness of conversation, they are soothed by the delight of moral discussion, saying: How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Because honey of bees pleases for an hour, but its taste quickly disappears, and usually the viscera are harmed: however, even though the honey of moral words sting, they do not harm.

32. However, find out to whom those things are believed; for it is written: Do not say anything in the ear of a fool, lest he ridicule your wise words (Prov. XXIII, 9). He will vomit and reject your speech, the fool who cannot perceive its sweetness. How can the words of God be sweet in your mouth, in which there is bitterness of wickedness? How can honey and milk be under your tongue, when your tongue produces deceit; so that you conceive one thing in your heart, and present another thing in your public speech, in order to deceive the unwary? When the apostle Peter tells you to put away all wickedness and deceitful behavior, saying: 'As newborn babies, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.' (1 Peter 2:2). For he shows us what it means to have honey and milk under the tongue, teaching us not to curse those who curse us, but rather to return a blessing. Let us not hate except the way of wickedness, so that we may avoid doing what we detest, resisting it with all our might.

33. (Verse 12.) My sister, my bride, is a closed garden, a closed garden, a sealed fountain. Your shoots, etc. Because in gardens of this kind the image of God, impressed with seals, shines forth like a pure spring, and the flowing streams of spiritual beasts do not disturb it with scattered filth. Hence, that modesty enclosed by a wall of the Spirit is shut in, so as not to be exposed to plunder. Therefore, just as a garden inaccessible to thieves smells of vines, burns with the fragrance of olives, and shines with roses, so may the religion of the vine, peace of the olive, and modesty of sacred virginity grow in the rose. This is the scent which the patriarch Jacob smelled, when he deserved to hear: Behold, the scent of my son is as the scent of a field full (Genesis 27:27). For although the field of the holy patriarch was full of almost all fruits, he nonetheless generated the fruits with greater virtue and labor, while this one produced flowers. Therefore, prepare yourself, virgin, and if you desire such a garden to breathe upon you, enclose it with prophetic precepts: Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips (Psalm 141:3).

34. My sister, my bride, a closed garden, a sealed fountain. Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates, with choice fruits, henna with nard plants. The Bride is praised because she is a garden, full of the fragrance of that field, of which Isaac says: 'The fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field that the Lord has blessed' (Genesis 27:27). Therefore, a good soul burns with the fragrance of justice. And perhaps the field is the patriarch, the garden is the soul of someone lower, like a portion of the field. And the closed garden is not to be invaded by beasts, and the sealed fountain, by the integrity of the seal and the perseverance of faith, washes away their own sins. For the one who receives from the Church has something to refer to the grace of virginity because in the paradise of delight he receives spiritual fruits without labor, so that the souls of the

patriarchs may confer their fruits to him through a certain labor of his own soul, by which he may be able to partake of perpetual sweetness: which is rightly called a sealed fountain, because the image of the invisible God is expressed in it.

35. My sister, my bride, is a closed garden, a sealed fountain. All the doctors agree on paradise, and the rooted tree of life and the tree of knowledge, by which one discerns good and evil: and the other trees, full of strength, full of life-giving power, and breathing and rational. From this it is gathered that paradise itself can be seen as earthly, not in any one place, but in our principal one, where the soul is animated and enlivened by virtues and the infusion of the Holy Spirit. Finally, Solomon clearly declared that paradise is in man's spirit. And because he expresses the mysteries of either the soul and the Word, or Christ and the Church; therefore he says about the virgin soul or the Church, which he wanted to assign as a chaste virgin to Christ: A closed paradise, my sister bride, a closed paradise, a sealed fountain. Paradise is called 'hortus' in Greek and 'garden' in Latin. Finally, Susanna was in paradise, and it is thus read in Latin: and Adam was in paradise, and we read it as such. Therefore, do not be surprised that some Latin texts have 'hortus' (garden) and others have 'paradisus' (paradise). In the garden, there is a chaste wife, and also a virgin. The virgin may have her own enclosure and seals, but both are in paradise; so that they may be cooled by the shade of virtues against the heat of the body and the burning desire of the flesh.

36. Therefore, paradise is in our principal, flourishing with the plantations of many opinions, in which God primarily establishes the tree of life, that is, the root of devotion. For it is the substance of our life, if we render proper worship to the Lord our God. It also establishes the seedbed of knowledge of good and evil; for man alone, among other earthly creatures, has knowledge of good and evil. There are also other diverse plants there, whose fruits are virtues. But because the capacity of man's knowledge was known by God to be affected, so that he would be inclined more quickly to cunning than to the highest prudence; and since the quality of his work could not escape the judgment of the one who established certain limits in our soul, he wished to eliminate cunning from paradise, as a provident author of our salvation, and to infuse into us the desire for the study and discipline of piety. Therefore, he commanded man to taste from every tree in paradise, but not to taste from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But because every creature is subject to passion, pleasure has slipped into human affections like a serpentine movement.

Therefore, it is not without reason that the holy Moses depicted the delight of the serpent by means of a likeness; for it is prone on its belly like a serpent, not walking on feet or raised with any limbs, but smooth with the sinuous movement of its entire body. Just as for the serpent, the earth is its food, because it is ignorant of heavenly sustenance; for it is nourished by bodily things and is transformed into various forms of desires, and it twists and bends with tortuous windings. It has poison in its teeth, by which each luxurious person disembowels themselves, a glutton annihilates, a prodigal destroys. How many wines it has broken, drunkenness dissolves, indigestion extends! Now I understand the reason why the Lord God breathed into the face of man; for there are all the senses, there are the seats and enticements of pleasure, in the eyes, ears, nostrils, and in the mouth; so that he might make our senses stronger against pleasure. Therefore, the serpent has infused cunning into us; for it is not pleasure, but toil and prolonged meditation with the grace of God that gives perfect prudence. However, because the inheritance of the human race is entangled in the deceit of the serpent, let us follow the cunning of the serpent, so that we do not expose our head to dangers, but rather safeguard it above all else; and our head is Christ. Let this

remain inviolate, so that the poisons of the serpent cannot harm us: for wisdom is good with inheritance, that is, with faith; because the inheritance of believers is in the Lord.

38. But if the first man, who spoke with God and was placed in paradise, was able to fall so easily, having been created from the earth, while the virgin, who was formed and created at the recent dawn of the word of God, had not yet been stained by that parricidal and others' concrete blood, not yet polluted by crimes and disgrace, not yet condemned by our flesh to the curse of an obnoxious inheritance: how much more easily afterwards, along the slippery path to sin, did he bring a greater precipice to the human race, when the worse succeeded the tolerable in succession of generations! For indeed, if a magnet, a stone, has such a great force of nature that it attracts and transfuses iron into its own likeness, and if, when many people who wish to experiment have brought several iron rings near that stone, it holds all of them in the same way: then if you bring another ring near that stone to which the stone has adhered, and then in order replace each one; although the force of nature from that stone permeates into all of them in order, it binds together the previous ones with a stronger connection and the later ones with a weaker connection: to that extent the condition and nature of the human race, having fallen from a purer state into a worse one, has reached a weaker state! For if through these (senses) the nature is diminished, which are not capable of fault: by how much more the virtue of that (nature) is dulled through polluted minds and limbs (affected) by sins! Therefore, because malice triumphed, innocence was abolished, there was no one who could do goodness, there was not even one. And so the Lord came, who would reform the grace of nature, indeed increase it; so that where sin abounded, grace would superabound.

Therefore it is clear that God is the author of humankind, and that there is only one God, not many gods, but one who created the world, and one world, not many worlds as the philosophers say. First, he created the world, then the inhabitant of the world, to whom the whole world would be his homeland: for if a wise person were to go anywhere today, they would be a citizen everywhere, they would understand everything as their own, they would never consider themselves a stranger or a guest. How much more so was that first man, he was a resident of the whole world, and as the Greeks say, a citizen of the universe, a recent interlocutor of God, a constant citizen of the holy ones! *Complantatus virtutibus, praepositus omnibus terrenis animantibus, marinis, volatilibus, totum mundum suam possessionem putabat, quem Dominus tuebatur ut opus suum, neque ut bonus parens atque auctor deserebat. Denique eousque creatum fovit, ut abdicatum redimeret, eliminatum reciperet, mortuum passione filii sui unigeniti resuscitaret. Est ergo hominis auctor Deus, et diligit opus suum operator bonus, nec derelinquit bonus pater, quem etiam sicut dives paterfamilias censu propriae haereditatis redemit.*

40. Let us therefore be cautious lest that man, namely the mind, that woman, namely the passion of our senses, by pleasure and herself deceived and deluded, weaken and draw us away into her own laws and opinion. Let us flee pleasure like a serpent, it has many tricks and especially in man. For other animals are caught by the desire for food; but when man has more senses, namely of the eyes and ears, the dangers are even greater. Therefore, be careful that the strength of your mind is not softened by a certain indulgence of bodily pleasure, and dissolved in all its embraces, and that its fountain is opened, which should be closed and sealed by the study of intention and the consideration of reason: for the garden is closed, the fountain is sealed. For when the sense of the mind is loosened, harmful bodily pleasures flow out excessively, and they flow into a desire full

of serious danger; which, if it had remained under the vigilant protection of the lively mind, it would have restrained.

41. (Vers. 3, 4.) Your emissions, he says, are a paradise of evil of pomegranates with the fruit of apples, of Cyprus with spikenard, of nard and saffron, of pipe and cinnamon with all the woods of Lebanon, of myrrh and aloes with all the first ointments. The gifts of the soul that are sent by the Bridegroom are praised, with which she, when endowed, came (but to God, pious souls are good odors), myrrh, aloes, saffron, and other things, with which the grace of gardens breathes, and the stench of sins is blotted out. And so, free from worry, the south wind seeks to dispel the heavy north wind, so as not to scatter the flowers: the south wind breathes, that is, as if passing by winter, and brings a milder breath of spring. The Bridegroom is invited into His garden, the Bridegroom descends, and delighted by the variety of its fruits, rejoices that He has found a stronger food, and has also found a sweeter one. For He is like a certain bread of the Word and honey, another more vehement, another more persuasive speech. And there is another faith, more fervent like wine; another, clearer like the juice of milk. Christ feasts on this food in us, drinks from this cup, and His drinking intoxicates us, so that we might surpass lower things and strive for what is better and best. The soul, hearing these things, drinks in the intoxication of celestial mysteries, and, as if lulled to sleep by wine, and placed in a state of ecstasy or stupor, says: I sleep, and my heart is awake (Song of Songs 5:2). Then, struck by the light of the present Word, it is awakened by the Word. This is the fourth process of the soul. For at first, impatient of love and unable to bear the delays of the Word, it asked to be kissed, and deserved to see its desire. After being introduced into the king's chamber for the second time and engaging in mutual conversation, she rested in his shadow and suddenly the Word departed from her midst. However, it did not remain far away for long, but came leaping over the mountains and skipping over the hills. Not long after, like a young deer or a fawn, while addressing his beloved, it leapt up and left. For the third time, when it could not be found in the bedroom and during the nights, in the city and in the marketplace, it called back the one seeking it with its prayers, so much so that it was even called closer by its betrothed. While she herself is already asleep, she is awakened by Him, although she was watchful in her heart; so that she immediately hears the voice of the one knocking: but after enduring a delay while He rises (because she could not comprehend the speed of the Word), while He opens the door, the Word passes through, and she herself goes out in His Word: and through wounds searched for, but wounds of love, she finally finds and holds, so that she would not lose afterwards. In summary, I have explained these things in a concise manner, now let us discuss each individual one.

43. (Verse 15.) The fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, which flow impetuously from Lebanon. You have these in Solomon, because his Proverbs are moral, Ecclesiastes is natural, in which he despises the vanities of this world: his Songs of Songs are mystical. You also have them in the prophet: Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of life, enlighten yourselves with the light of knowledge (Hosea 10:12); for this is the light of knowledge, to have the perfection of charity. Therefore it is said: Fear not (John 12:15); for charity casts out fear.

44. However, in order that we may understand that Solomon so interpreted these three wells, which Jacob dug, as to apply them to moral doctrine and natural and mystical [doctrine], he placed these wells in each of his books, which he wrote about moral, natural, or mystical matters. For even in Proverbs, when he discussed the need to avoid the appearance of secular pleasures, he

said: 'Drink water from your own vessels, and from the fountains of your wells, and let your waters flow forth from your own fountain' (Prov. 5:15). And below: May the fountain of your water be your own, and rejoice with the wife who is from your youth (Ibid., 18); because true wisdom is a remedy against the temptations of the world. Moral doctrine also washes away the image of worldly pleasure, which is tainted with certain harlotry, with its flowing fountain and cleanses it.

45. In Ecclesiastes, you also have this about natural things: I made for myself pools of water in order to irrigate a grove shooting up through these (Eccl. 2:6). Do not be surprised that he called the pools a well, since even Moses referred to a well as wide; because the person who transcends this world with a devout mind is set free from all narrowness and anxiety. Therefore, the Preacher rightly has pools, since he saw that there is no abundance under the sun; but if anyone wants to abound, let them abound in Christ.

46. We have left the topic of mysteries and move on to the well, which we also find mentioned in the Song of Songs, as Scripture says: 'A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon.' If you seek the depth of mysteries, the well appears to you as if mystical wisdom is situated in the deep: but if you wish to draw from the abundance of charity, which is greater and more plentiful than faith and hope, then the fountain is for you. For charity overflows, so that you can both drink it in up close, and water your garden with its abundant fruits overflowing with spiritual blessings. And since he himself is a well of breadth, whoever possesses charity; therefore he said, where there is charity, there the great impulse descends from Lebanon.

47. But let nothing move you, that he called both the well and the fountain the same thing; let the Gospel also instruct you, in which it is written: "Now Jesus came to a city of Samaria, which is called Sichar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph" (John 4:5-6). Now there was Jacob's well there. And tired, he said, he was sitting thus on the well. Hence, we also know that this well is referred to the mystical doctrine, because there Samaritan woman, that is, the guardian (but guardian of heavenly precepts) drew divine mysteries from that well, knowing that God is spirit, and is not to be worshipped in a place, but in spirit: and that the Messiah has come, who is Christ. Having heard these things, that woman who bears the appearance of the Church, recognized and believed the sacraments of the Law.

48. The fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, and the descending impetus from Lebanon. With these impetuses the Church was led from Lebanon, with this impetus sins are washed away, with this impetus the pure fountain of the Holy Spirit came from Lebanon to the Bride, and from the beginning of faith it passed through the ages, and it passed into the kingdom. To some, it is a fountain, to others a well according to our spiritual capacity: to some a closed garden, a sealed fountain, to others a fountain of gardens, which is reckoned in the Church's endowment: to others, the impetus descending from Lebanon, and the great impetus that never fails. For neither do the breasts fail from the rock, nor the snow from Lebanon, nor the water which is carried by a strong wind to the virgin of Jerusalem. The impulse descended from Lebanon when the apostles and many believers were gathered together, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, who gave them the gift of speaking in different languages (Acts 2:1, 3). A good impulse is one that knows not how to harm, but how to fill. Therefore, if anyone desires to earn this impulse of grace that comes from heaven, let them also descend with their eyes into the courses of the waters. Whoever launches this first attack will

deserve it. He lowered his eyes to these water channels, which he watered the Lord's feet with tears in the Gospel (Luke 7:38), and therefore he bought the health of his soul and body with the price of his faith, no longer flowing with blood, but with spiritual grace.

50. Therefore, the prophet David descended, and thus brought grace from sin. He descended into the channels of water, that is, he filled them, and he filled the flowing streams of tears with his own tears, or he filled the empty channels of the sun with weeping. Or it shows certain moral meanings of speech, he descended into the channels of water, he passed through them. And we could say, he surpassed them, and he exceeded them: but the power of speech is diminished, by which the greater force of descending abundance is expressed than that of ascending. See, I ask, what benefit words may have, that their prophetic discourse may not lose its momentum, although the very usage of writers has been accustomed to serve the meaning with greater elegance.

51. The well of living waters; for if you draw nothing from a well, it easily corrupts with idle inactivity and degenerate state; but when exercised, it shines with beauty and becomes sweet for drinking. Thus a heap of riches, though sandy in its accumulation, is beautiful in its use, but useless in idleness. So, derive something from this well: for water quenches a burning fire, and almsgiving resists sins (Sirach 3:33). But stagnant water quickly breeds worms: let not your treasure stay stagnant, lest your fire stay stagnant. It will stand against you unless you turn it away by the works of your mercy.

52. (Verse 16.) Arise, north wind, and come, south wind, blow upon my garden, and let its spices flow out. You have heard, O bride of Christ, that the beauty of your virtues pleases him; you have heard that the fragrance of your garments, that is, the good odor of integrity, surpasses all other odors. You have heard that you are an enclosed garden, filled with the fruits of the apple tree. Therefore, seek that the Holy Spirit may blow upon you, may blow above your bed, and may gather the fragrance of a pious mind and spiritual grace. Raise the Holy Spirit, saying: Arise, north wind, and come, south wind; breathe upon my garden, and let its spices flow forth. May my brother come down into his garden, and eat the fruit of his apple tree. The garden of the Word is moved by the affections of a soul in springtime, and in its fruitful trees is the fruit of virtue. Therefore, come, and whether you eat or drink, if you invoke Christ, He is present and says: Come, eat my bread, and drink my wine (Prov. 9:5).

Arise, he says, north wind, and come, south wind; blow upon my garden, and let its spices flow out. From all parts of the world the fragrance of holy religion has spread, by which the limbs of the beloved virgin have become fragrant. Therefore, the Church, keeping the height of heavenly mysteries, rejects the heavier storms of winds and invites the sweetness of blossoming grace; and knowing that its rising cannot displease Christ, it calls upon its Bridegroom: Arise, he says, north wind, and come, south wind. Most people understand this in such a way, as if the north wind is cast away, and the south wind is invited. If they understand it this way, the icy harshness of infidelity is driven out from the Church, so that our flight in winter or on the Sabbath may not happen, and the gentle warmth of spring is invited.

54. Certainly: Arise, O north wind, that is, rise up, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead (Ephes. V, 14). O people of the nations, who have long slept, awake at last, and Christ shall shine upon thee. Lastly, all are invited to the Church, both the people of the Synagogue and the Gentiles: but first the Synagogue, because the first believed from the Jews, and through them

afterwards the people of the nations were gathered together. Therefore, behold our sun coming from the south, afterwards turning to the north. Jerusalem, Jerusalem: she came, indeed, to the city which she was even deemed worthy to be called; but this Jerusalem is the earthly one, which killed the prophets, that is, the synagogue of the Jews: How often, he says, have I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks, and you were not willing? Behold, your house will be left vacant (Matt. XXIII, 37 and 38). Therefore, it turned to the Gentiles: and while turning in circles, the Spirit of God turned, and he turned back to his circles, so that God could be all in all.

Chapter 5 1. (Verse 1.) Let my beloved come into my garden, and eat the fruit of his apples. On this account, Plato created for himself that garden, which he called the garden of Jupiter in one place, and the garden of the mind in another place; for he called Jupiter both God and mind. He composed this from the book of Canticles; because the soul, adhering to God, entered into the garden of the mind, in which there was an abundance of various virtues and a profusion of words. Who, however, is ignorant that the abundance of virtues which we think should be transferred from that very Paradise which we read of in Genesis, where it is said that there was also a tree of life and a tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and other trees, should be planted in the garden of the mind? In the Song of Songs, the garden represents the soul or the soul itself; for it is written: A closed garden, my sister, my bride, a closed garden, a sealed fountain. And further, the soul says: Arise, north wind, and come, south wind; blow upon my garden, let its fragrance be wafted abroad. Let my beloved come to his garden (Song of Solomon 4:12-13). How beautiful it is that the soul, adorned with the flowers of virtues, is a garden; or that it contains a budding paradise, into which the Word of God invites to come down; so that the soul, watered by the heavenly rain of that Word and irrigated by its abundance, may bear fruit! But the Word of God feeds on the virtues of the soul, whenever it finds a soul obedient to itself and rich: and it enjoys its fruits, and is delighted by them. But when the Word of God descends into it, the healing ointments of words flow from it, emitting far and wide the fragrances of various graces. Hence the Bridegroom says (for the Bridegroom of the soul is the Word of God, to whom the soul is joined by a kind of lawful marriage covenant):

3. (Verse 2.) I entered my garden, my sister, my bride; I harvested my myrrh with my ointments, I ate my bread with my honey, I drank my wine with my milk. Eat, my neighbors, and drink and become drunk, my brothers. I sleep, but my heart is awake. Let us know what fruits or foods God feasts on, or with what he takes delight. He takes delight in it, if anyone mortifies their sin, erases their guilt, buries and abolishes their iniquities; for myrrh is the burial of the dead, and dead are the sins that cannot have the sweetness of life. But they are completed with the ointments of divine discourse, and some wounds of sins are healed with a stronger nourishment of the word, as if with bread, and with a sweeter discourse, as if with honey. Solomon also teaches elsewhere that words are nourishment, saying: Pleasant words are like a honeycomb (Prov. 16:24). Therefore, in that garden there are good words; one that restrains fault, another that rebukes iniquity, another that causes insolence to die and buries it, when someone who is corrected renounces their errors.

There is also a stronger word which strengthens the heart of man with the heavenly nourishment of Scripture. I have eaten honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk. For this word is sweet like honey, yet it pierces the sinner's conscience with its own sweetness. There is also a word of fervent spirit, which intoxicates like wine and gladdens the heart of man. And finally,

there is a milky word, pure and candid. The Bridegroom says to his close ones to feast on these sweet and beneficial words: Eat, my close ones, and drink, and be intoxicated, my brothers. But those who follow him closely and take part in his wedding feast are nearby. They satisfy their souls with food and drink (for each person drinks water from their own vessels and from the wells of their own cisterns) and sleep, awakened to God. And so, just as the later teachings instruct, God requested that the door of his Word be opened to him, so that he might fill it with his own entrance.

Hence those Platonist feasters, hence that nectar made from wine and honey which they called prophetic, hence that sleep was transported, hence that perpetual life which they said their gods enjoyed, for Christ is life. Therefore, his soul was filled with the seeds of such discourse, and itself went forth in the Word: but that soul which comes out of such servitude and is raised above the body follows the Word. Otherwise, let us repeat what was said above (suptcp., chap. 4): My sister, my bride, is a closed garden, a sealed fountain. In this it signifies that the mystery must remain sealed within you, so that it may not be defiled by the works of wicked life and the adulteration of chastity: so that it may not be divulged to those with whom it is not fitting, so that it may not be scattered among the treacherous by garrulous loquacity.

6. Therefore, it is necessary for the good to be the guardian of your faith, so that the integrity of a blameless life and silence may persevere. Thus, the Church, preserving the height of celestial mysteries, rejects more violent storms from itself and invites the sweetness of springtime grace. And knowing that its garden cannot displease Christ, it calls upon the Bridegroom Himself, saying: Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind: blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out (Song of Solomon 4:16); let my beloved come into his garden, and eat the fruit of his pleasant fruits (Song of Solomon 5:1); for it has good and fruitful trees, and its root that has been dipped in the irrigating water of the sacred font and has sprouted into the good fruits of new fertility. So that now they may not be cut down by the prophetic axe, but may be made fruitful by the abundance of the Gospel. Finally, the Lord, pleased with their fertility, responds:

7. I entered into my garden, my sister, my bride: I harvested my myrrh with my perfumes, I ate my bread with my honey: I drank my drink with my milk. Why I speak of bread and wine, the faithful understand. But it is not doubtful that he himself eats and drinks with us, as you have read in us, because he said he was in prison (Matthew XXV, 36). Therefore the Church, seeing so great a grace, encourages her children, encourages her neighbors, to come together for the sacraments, saying: Eat, my neighbors, and drink, and be intoxicated, my brothers. What we should eat, what we should drink, elsewhere the Holy Spirit expressed to you through the prophet, saying: Taste and see that the Lord is sweet; blessed is the man who hopes in Him (Psalm. XXXIII, 9). In that sacrament is Christ, for it is the body of Christ: therefore, it is not a bodily food, but a spiritual one. Hence the Apostle also says about its type: For our fathers ate the spiritual food and drank the spiritual drink (I Cor. X, 3). For the body of God is a spiritual body, and the body of Christ is the body of the divine spirit; for Christ is a spirit, as we read: The Lord Christ, the spirit, is before our face (Lamentations 4:20). And in the epistle of Peter we have: Christ died for us (1 Peter 2:21). Finally, this food strengthens our heart, and this drink delights the heart of man, as the prophet has mentioned (Psalm 103:25).

8. My sister, my bride, is a closed garden, a closed garden, a sealed fountain. May she not easily open her mouth, nor reveal herself in common conversation; for it is not fitting to speak about

divine matters unless prompted by the word of God. What concern is it of yours with others? Speak to Christ alone, converse with Christ alone. For if it is written that women should remain silent in the Church (I Cor. XIV, 34), how much more improper is it for the gate of a virgin to be open, or for the doors of a widow to be open! The tempter quickly attacks modesty, quickly captures a word that you desire to retract. If the door of Eve had been closed, neither would Adam have been deceived, nor would he have responded when questioned by the serpent. Death entered through the window, that is, through Eve's door. Death enters through your door if you speak falsely, if you speak obscenely, if you speak rashly, and finally, if you speak where it is not fitting. Therefore, let the doors of your lips be closed, and let the entrance of your voice remain sealed, perhaps to be opened when you hear the voice of God, when you hear the word of God. Then myrrh will sweat for you, then the grace of baptism will breathe on you, so that you may die with Christ from the elements of the world, and rise again with Christ. What more, he says, do you still judge as if living, concerning this world? Do not touch, do not defile, do not taste the things that bring corruption through their very use (Colossians 2:20 and following).

9. Let my brother descend into his garden, in order to eat the fruit of his fruit-bearing trees. What are these fruit-bearing trees? You were made a dry tree in Adam, but now by the grace of Christ you have become a fruit-bearing tree. Lord Jesus willingly accepted and with heavenly favor responded to his Church: I descended, he said, into my garden, I harvested myrrh with my ointments, I ate my bread with my honey, and I drank my wine with my milk.

10. Edit, he said, my brothers, and get drunk: I have harvested myrrh with my ointments (Psalm. LXXIX, 9). What is this harvest? Know the vineyard, and you will recognize the harvest. The vineyard, he said, you have transferred from Egypt, that is, the people of God. You are the vineyard, you are the harvest: as if a vineyard planted, as if a harvest you have given fruit. I have harvested myrrh with my ointments, that is, for the fragrance that you have received.

11. I have eaten my bread with my honey. You see that in this bread there is no bitterness, but all sweetness. I have drunk my wine with my milk, you see what kind of joy it is, which is not polluted by any stain of sin? For whenever you drink, you receive the forgiveness of sins and are intoxicated with the spirit. Therefore, the Apostle says: Do not be intoxicated with wine . . . but be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). For the one who is intoxicated with wine staggers and stumbles, but the one who is intoxicated with the spirit is rooted in Christ, and thus this excellent intoxication works sobriety of mind.

12. 'Come on,' he says, 'my friends, eat and drink and get drunk. Good drunkenness makes someone's mind overflow to better and more pleasant things, so that our mind, forgetful of worries, may be cheered by the delight of wine. The spiritual drunkenness of the table is good; in conclusion, how excellent is the intoxicating cup! (Psalm 22:5) And elsewhere: 'You have saturated its streams, multiply its generations.' (Psalm 64:11) because when the drunkenness of the earth has been infused with heavenly rain, it is accustomed to awaken seeds and multiply fruits. So when the Word, which descends from heaven like rain, has inebriated the veins of our earth, that is, our souls and minds, with divine preaching, the studies of various virtues are aroused, and the fruits of faith and pure devotion grow, and rightly it is said to Him: You have visited the earth and have inebriated it (Psalm 64:10). For He visited by receiving the body, in order to heal the sick; He inebriated with spiritual grace, in order to soothe the anxious with joy.

13. I sleep, and my heart keeps watch. The sleep of the saints is also a worker, as it is written: I sleep, and my heart keeps watch. And as the holy Jacob, sleeping, saw the mysteries which he had not seen when awake; he saw the air, stretching from heaven to earth, filled with the saints, looking towards the Lord and promising them the possession of the land. Therefore, sleeping a brief sleep, he obtained what he later acquired with great labor, for the inheritance of the saints is sleep, exempt from all bodily pleasures. from every disturbance of the mind, bringing tranquility to the soul, calmness to the spirit; so that, as if freed from the bondage of the body, it may cleave to Christ. This is the sleep of the saints.

14. The voice of my beloved knocking, open to me, my sister. And if you are sleeping, and if now Christ knows the devotion of your soul, he comes and knocks at its door, and says: Open to me, my sister. Good sister, for the spiritual marriage is of the Word and the soul; for souls do not know the obligations of marriage, nor the physical union, but they are like the angels of God in heaven. Open, he says, to me, but close to strangers. Close to the world, close to the earthly. Neither do you go outside to those material things, nor leave your own light, seeking what is foreign; for material light casts a dark shadow, so that the light of true glory is not seen. Therefore, open to me, do not be confined, but expand yourself, and I will fill you. And because I have found more troubles and stumbling blocks after traveling around the world, and I did not easily find a place to rest; therefore, you open up, so that the Son of Man may rest his head in you, for he finds no rest except upon the humble and meek.

15. Open to me, my sister, rise, my dearest, my dove, my perfect one. Near in love, dove in simplicity, perfect in virtue. For my head is full of dew; just as the dew of heaven removes the dryness of the night, so the dew of our Lord Jesus Christ has dripped moisture onto the nocturnal and worldly darkness of eternal life. This is the head that the heat of the world did not know how to dry up, wherefore it says: For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will they do when it is dry? (Luke 23:31) Therefore, this head drips on others, it abounds in itself. And the head of Christ also abounds well; for Christ is your head, who is always full, and is not depleted by his own generosity, nor does he lack in lasting abundance. Into this head does not enter iron, which is a tool of war, a symbol of discord. Now observe, and see what kind of dew it is, namely not of ordinary moisture.

16. However, my darling, do not accept the curls of bodily hair: they are not ornaments, but rather sins: the enticements of beauty, not the teachings of virtue. Nazaraeus has other curls, in which iron does not enter, and which no one cuts: they are not arranged with curling irons or artfully styled, but rather shine forth with the grace of multiple virtues. Learn from history what kind of curls Nazaraeus has, which as long as Samson had them intact, he could never be defeated. He lost his hairs and the reward of his virtue.

17. (Verse 3.) Therefore, having heard the voice of the Word, which you have stripped of your tunic during the night, do not inquire how you will put it on again; for it is shown and frequently offered through spiritual wickedness how, I say, you will put it on, not remembering and not knowing; as if the Lord were already present, rise up without the bonds of the flesh being an obstacle, and with disturbed mind prepare your inner self through prayers, while you rise up; so that from humble things you may strive for heavenly things, and strive to open the doors of your heart. While you reach out your hands to Christ, your faithful deeds will emit a sweet scent.

18. Open to me, my sister. When you desire to meet someone of noble birth, first approach his house, then seek to be informed and instructed, so that you may know the mind of the head of the household. Then, enter his house, plead that no one may reject or exclude you. Therefore, knock on that heavenly palace, knock not with the hand of the body, but with the power of your prayer. The hand of the body alone does not knock, the voice also knocks; for it is written: The voice of my brother knocks at the door. We knock with a finger. Finally, even Thomas deserved to open the door of the resurrection with a finger: and Jesus says to you: Put your finger here and put it in my hands and my side, and do not be unbelieving, but faithful (John 20:27). Therefore, knock with a finger, if you cannot with the whole hand, knock the door. Christ is the door who says: If anyone enters through me, he will be saved (John 10:9).

19. When you have knocked on this door, see how you enter; lest, having entered, you be out of sight of the king. Many enter palaces and do not immediately see that king of the land, but often they observe so that they may deserve to see him. They do not presume to have the opportunity to see, but they are presented by command and offer a prayer, so that they may be received with kindness, avoiding stumbling at the first entrance of their speech; may they stumble upon nothing, may they offend nothing: how much more must God be asked, so that our prayer may enter the door of his mercy! The voice of my brother knocks at the door. Learn also to guard your door, O bride of Christ, during the night hours, lest anyone easily find it open. The bridegroom himself desires it to be closed when he knocks. Our door is our mouth, it should be opened almost exclusively for Christ, and should not be opened unless the Word of God has knocked first. The voice of my brother knocks at the door. Listen to the one knocking, listen to the one desiring to enter.

21. (Verse 2.) Open to me, my sister, my bride, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. Consider when God the Word knocks most eagerly at your door, when his head is filled with the nightly dew. He is pleased to visit those who are in distress and temptation, lest anyone be overcome by afflictions. Therefore, his head is filled with dew or drops, when his body is in labor. Therefore, you must be watchful, so that when the Bridegroom comes, he does not depart excluded. For if you sleep and your heart does not keep watch, he departs before knocking; but if your heart keeps watch, he knocks and asks for the door to be opened to him.

Therefore, we have the gate of our souls, and we also have gates of which it is said: Lift up your gates, O princes, and be lifted up, O eternal gates, and the King of glory will enter (Psalm 24:7). So there is also heaven in those in which there are eternal gates. If you want to lift up these gates of your faith, the King of glory will enter to you, carrying the triumph of his own passion. For righteousness also has gates, for we also read about them, with the Lord Jesus speaking through his prophet: Open to me the gates of righteousness (Psalm 118:19). And below, the prophet David says: Praise, O Jerusalem, the Lord; praise your God, O Zion; for he has strengthened the bars of your gates.

23. Therefore, there is a soul that has a door, there is that which has gates. To this door comes Christ, and knocks: he knocks even at the gates. Open therefore to him, he wants to enter, he wants to find the vigilant Bride. Do not make delays for this good lover, he quickly departs: and you seem to have shut out the one knocking while in the sleep of your body. For you shut him out

when you are lazy, when you are sluggish, when you are drowsy. With these barriers, Christ is shut out: if you are chaste and sober, be careful not to be neglectful. He does a great injustice to Christ who repels him as he comes.

Open to me, my sister, my nearest one: knock at the door even when you are sleeping: yet if either awakened, you stay awake, or if called, you open the door of your breast, he will enter. But if you flee from the prophetic reading, if you do not read at home, if you are unwilling to hear in the Church, will you not close your eyes like that person who, with averted glance, closes them so as not to see what he can see, to whom the power of seeing belongs: or like most people who, in anger, place their hands over their eyes; so also will you turn away at first from the winking one, more with dissimulation than with a broken refusal. For when you come to the Church and assert that you are a Christian, you seem to be sane, you open the eyes with which you can see: but while you pretend not to hear what is read, you close your eyes so that you may not see for yourself, and so that you may seem to see to others. You also bring the hands of perfidy and intemperance to the eyes of your soul, and you willingly bring blindness to your heart (which is worse); so that, even though you see, you do not see, and even though you hear, you do not hear.

25. Do you think that you are the only one who engages in prostitution and does not remember that the eyes of the Lord see the whole world? Do you not hear the one who says: Behold, the hour is coming when you will be scattered, each to his own, and you will leave me alone. But I am not alone, because the Father is with me (John 16:32). Therefore, the Father is present, the Son of God is present, the ministers are present, the Cherubim and Seraphim are present, who say: Holy, holy, holy, the whole earth is full of your glory (Isaiah 6). For the world is full of virtues, because it is full of vices: the earth is full of remedies, because it is full of snares.

26. (Verse 3.) I have taken off my tunic, how shall I put it on again? Indeed, in this night of the world, the clothing of physical life must first be taken off for you; for the Lord has taken off his flesh, that he may triumph for you over the dominions and powers of this world. How shall I put it on again? See, devoted soul of God, what it says. Thus, he has taken off the actions of the body and earthly customs, so that he may not know how, even if he wishes, to put them on again. How shall I put it on again? What is this but shame, but modesty, but finally memory? For the custom of goodness has lost the practice of ancient corruption.

27. Hearing this, the soul, having a head full of dew, that is, troubled suddenly by secular temptations and as if about to rise, which it was commanded to rise, says while smelling aloes and remarkable myrrh of the burial: 'Shall I take off my tunic, how will I put it on again? I have washed my feet, how will I defile them? For she fears lest she rise again into temptations, return again into fault and sin, and start to defile her goings-out and the progress of her virtues with earthly footprints.'

Certainly in this way it also indicates the perfection of his virtue, which has deserved such great charity from Christ; that he may come to it, and knock on his door, and come with the Father, and dine with the same soul, and she with him, as John the Apostle said in the Apocalypse (Rev. III, 20). For when he heard in the previous passages: Come here from Lebanon; and when he realized that he could not be present to Christ in the flesh, but that he would be present if he were present in spirit, conforming himself to his will, so that she would also be similar to the image of Christ; she no longer feels the skins of the flesh, now as if a spirit shedding itself of the conjunction

of the body, now as if forgotten, and she cannot remember the union if she wishes to, she said: I have taken off my garment, how will I put it on again? For they had on that tunic of skin, which Adam and Eve received after their sin, the tunic of corruption, the tunic of passions; How shall I put it on? It does not require to put it on: but it signifies being cast off, so that it could no longer be itself a garment.

29. (Verse 3.) I washed my feet, how shall I defile them? That is, I washed my footsteps, as I left and raised myself from the company of the body, from that connection and familiarity of carnal embrace: how shall I defile them, so that I return to the closed prison of the body and its dark cell of passions? Thus we bury the passions, if we do not dissolve the cross of this body; if we do not rewrite the cancelled handwriting of sin on the cross of Christ, if we do not put on the garment of the old man that we have taken off. For it is written in the Song of Songs: 'I have taken off my tunic, how shall I put it on again? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?' Therefore, the members of the body are mortified, why do its vices sprout? Therefore, the law did not prevail, because it did not mortify the flesh: therefore, it passed by like a shadow, because it did not change its color: and therefore, it overshadowed us from the sun of justice, because it heaped up sins.

30. Sometimes being naked is a sign of virtue, as it is written: 'I have taken off my tunic, how shall I put it on again? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?' Therefore, if we can find in the Scriptures how one should take off a tunic and not find how to put it on again, let us reveal it. For there is a certain bodily tunic, and there are certain coverings woven with desires; and therefore, sometimes it is better to be naked in body than veiled in heart. Thus, even Paul admonishes us to strip off and discards the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge, according to the image of Him who created him. Therefore, the one who has been stripped and has washed feet does not know how they cannot be contaminated; for they forget, through grace, what they had acquired through nature.

31. I washed my feet, how will I defile them? You have learned in the Gospel that washing feet is a symbol of the mystery of faith and a sign of humility, as it is written: 'If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet' (John 13:14)! But this pertains to humility. However, as for the mystery, it is necessary for one to wash their own feet if they desire to share in Christ: 'If I do not wash you, you have no part in me' (Ibid. 8). When this is said to Peter, what is thought of us? Therefore, whoever has washed their feet does not need to wash them again; and therefore, they should be careful not to dirty them.

32. And the holy Church rightly says: I have washed my feet; it does not say: how shall I again wash them, but how shall I again defile them? As if forgetting the old stain, forgetting the contagion, it remind us how we should wash away the trace of our actions in bodily ministry in a spiritual way. Therefore, when you have once washed your feet in the waters of the eternal fountain, and have been cleansed by the sacrament of the mystery, beware of again polluting them with the filth of carnal desires, lest your muddy actions be defiled by earthly impurities. These are the feet that David bathed in the Spirit, which teach you how you cannot defile them, saying: Our feet were standing in your courts, O Jerusalem (Psalm 122:2). Surely, understand here not the feet of the body, but of the soul; for how could an earthly man have feet of the body in heaven? O Jerusalem, as Paul has taught you, is in heaven; and he has also taught you how you can stand

in heaven, when he says: But our conversation is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). Conversation of morals, conversation of actions, conversation of faith.

33. I have done judgment and justice, do not deliver me to those who calumniate me. Where there is justice, there is mercy. Mercy frees from sin. Therefore, how am I delivered to sinners? It is similar to that in the Song of Songs: I have put off my tunic, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? I have put off the tunic of the sinner, the covering of the earthly; why am I judged as if I were a sinner and earthly? I have washed my feet, so that no lot of sin could adhere to the footprints; why do you give power to the transgressors over me?

Jeremiah says in his Lamentations: Your iniquity has failed, O daughter of Zion, you will not be expelled anymore; he has visited your iniquities, O daughter of Edom, he has revealed your sins (Lam. IV, 21). Recognize that iniquity cannot fail without the visitation of God, nor can correction be complete without the grace of the Lord and Savior. But how does iniquity fail? Listen to the Church saying: I have taken off my tunic, how will I put it on again? I wash my feet, how shall I defile them? Therefore, the old man's garment woven with the vices of error, deposited in the regeneration of the bath, does not know how it can be put on; for in the striving for correction, it has fostered forgetfulness of sins. Such is the power of complete amendment, that it returns to a certain spiritual childhood, which is ignorant of the ways of error; even if it desires crime, it cannot commit it; for it has become unaccustomed to knowing how to sin.

35. (Verse 4.) My brother reached out his hand from the window, and my stomach was troubled for him. I arose to open to my brother. My hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers were full of myrrh. Therefore, as if from a window, he reaches out his hand first, when God is judged by his works, where it says: If you do not believe me, believe the works (John 10:38). Then love increases, and the conception grows within the innermost parts. Hence, our soul desires to draw in the fullness of the Word, who inhabits the intelligible womb, in which is the receptacle of the Word, with His seeds infused. For the womb of women is not troubled, unless they are heavy with child. Therefore, the soul rises up in order to open to the Word of God, but while it expands and opens itself, it mortifies the works of this world by receiving that Word, just as he who says: We bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus (II Cor. IV, 19). Therefore, while she is opening, the Bridegroom passes by; for he always wants to be sought, more often found. And if he finds a closed door, he knocks; and if he is excluded for a delay, he departs; but he quickly returns, he knocks again, so that he may find his prepared Bride thereafter.

Indeed, it can be understood in this way: My brother has passed away, just as we read that he penetrated the innermost depths of his beloved, as it was said to Mary: 'And a sword will pierce through your own soul also.' (Luke 2:35). Finally, the Bride added that her soul departed in his word, which happens when the soul journeys without the body and is present with God. Hearing this, the Bridegroom sent his operation, the Word, as if through a cave, not yet face to face: he sent it as a hand, and said, 'My bowels were troubled upon him.' Whoever lives like this can say:

37. My brother reached out his hand through the window, and my stomach was disturbed by him. I got up to open for my brother. It is good that at the Lord's coming our inner selves are disturbed. If Mary was troubled at the angel's coming, how much more are we troubled at the coming of Christ! Indeed, with the divine influence flowing in, our earthly affections wander, and that outer use of man fades away. So you, be troubled, be quick. Those who are quick are commanded to eat the

lamb. Rise, open, Christ is at the door, knocking at the door of your house: If you open, He will enter, and He will enter with the Father. Not only when He enters does He leave a reward: but even before He enters, He sends a reward. Still the soul is disturbed, still it feels the walls of its house, still it searches for the door where Christ is, still it loosens the bond of flesh and the prison of the body, still Christ knocks outside.

38. What is our window, if not through which we see the works of Christ, namely the eye of the soul and mind? And therefore, virgin, let Christ enter through your window, let Christ extend His hand: let the Word of God come to you through the window, not the love of the body. Therefore, if the Word of God extends His hand through your window, see how you should prepare your windows, see how you should cleanse them from all the dust of sins. Let the windows of the virgin have nothing filthy, nothing adulterated. Far away is the lead and other affected trappings of beauty, far away are the allurements of adulterated love. It is like the closing of ears, with which burdens are not to be suspended, wounds are not to be inflicted, but it is one adornment, to hear what is profitable.

39. (Verse 6.) I opened, he says, to my brother; my brother passed through. How he passed through, that is, he penetrated the innermost part of the mind, as it was said to Mary: And a sword will pierce through your own soul also. For the living Word of God, like a sharp sword, penetrating the barriers of bodily thoughts, probes the innermost thoughts of the heart. Therefore, in your bed and at the appointed time of night, always contemplate Christ, and await his coming at every moment. If you think it is late, arise. It seems late when you sleep for a long time; it seems late when you are idle from prayer; it seems late when you do not rouse your voice with psalms. Offer the first fruits of your vigils to Christ; sacrifice the first fruits of your actions to Christ.

40. (Vers. 5.) I arose to open to my brother; my hands dripped with myrrh, and my fingers with liquid myrrh, upon the handles of the bolt. Let us consider what this signifies. First, it seems that God, as I have said, comes to his works as if through a cave, not fully and perfectly: then love increases and conception grows, and from the seeds that the soul, received as it were into a certain intelligible womb, has conceived, it desires to see the whole fullness of his divinity dwelling in him bodily, as we read. He rose in order to see the Word of God more closely, and in this very act, his resurrection is signified, for he rose with strength and power; for the presence of the Word drew strength from his soul, just as the presence of Mary, when she was pregnant, enlightened John who was formed in the womb: so that he leaped in the womb and rejoiced, recognizing the presence of the Lord.

41. The wild boar arose to open, and his works and deeds were mortified to the world. For such ought to be the soul, which is to receive the Word, that it may die to the world, and be buried in Christ; for thus Christ is found, and seeks such a dwelling for Himself. Then the very ministries of operations, that is, the hands and fingers, by which Christ is apprehended, are mortified: these fingers we can estimate as the prominence of our deeds. Therefore, just as he extended his intelligible hands and fingers to grasp the Word, he says that the Word passed through him, but not yet through the devout soul. And this process occurs when the Word of God passes through and beyond the soul, for it is written: And a sword will pierce through your own soul, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed (Luke 2:35). Thus, it is still being passed through, not yet pierced through, as it were, in Mary it might have been pierced through in her posterior parts,

where the Lord Jesus is placed as a seal in her midst.

42. Finally, immediately another one departed, the soul having left in the Word; that is, his Word having followed, went out of the body, lifting itself up from its dwelling, and making itself a stranger to it, so as to be present with God, and to be a citizen of the saints. For at the same time we cannot be both servants of the flesh and of God. Therefore, in this place, the soul is said to go out, as I said, when it withdraws itself from the pleasures of the body. Finally, it is written: Go out of Babylon, flee from the Chaldeans (Isaiah 48:20). Not so much that the Hebrew flees from the regions of Babylon, but the customs, as is admonished by the prophetic discourse: since there may be Hebrews who are in Babylon, and who teach that they have left Babylon's customs. For those about whom the prophet speaks, that they were sitting by the rivers of Babylon (Ps. CXXXVI, 1), they were indeed sitting in the region of Babylon, but they were not partaking in its vices and confusion. For how could they be in that confusion of vices, those who were weeping and repenting for having fallen away from the ark of devotion and faith, and the merits of paternal virtue? But what the soul seeks in the word, it requires the Word; hence, while it sought those things, it fell into the guardians who patrol the city.

43. The guards who surround the city found me, they struck me, and wounded me, and took my cloak from me, the guards of the walls. Indeed, like a bride coming with a cloak, with which she would cover her head when the bridegroom approached; just as Rebecca, who, knowing that Isaac was coming to meet her, descended from the camel and covered herself with a cloak: so also this soul, sent ahead the insignia of the wedding garment, lest it be rejected as if it did not have a wedding garment; or to veil her head because of the angels. But they struck her, so that she might be tested further; for souls are exercised by temptations. They took her cloak, seeking whether she brought the true beauty of naked virtue, or because no one should enter that celestial city without clothing, carrying with them no covering of hypocrisies. There are also those who ask that no soul should bring with it the remains of carnal allurements and bodily desires. She is stripped of her cloak, when her conscience is revealed. But it is she who is well stripped, who can imitate him saying: For the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me (John 14:30); for certainly in him alone does he find nothing, who has not committed sin.

44. Blessed is she in whom she does not find burdens or many things, but finds in her the garment of faith and the discipline of wisdom. Therefore, without any loss to herself (for even if someone wants to, they cannot take away true wisdom), even if the adversary objects; where, however, the integrity of true harmless conversation shines forth, she passes by the guardians, and being mingled with the daughters of that heavenly city, she seeks the Word; and by seeking him within herself, she stirs up love, and where she seeks the Word, she recognizes. It is not only a harm to not find whom you seek, but often it is a wound to search where it is not appropriate: to search in the houses of men who falsely assume the title of learned, to search with more audacity than modesty. Therefore, let us beware of the example of that person, lest we find ourselves being the guards who roam around the city.

45. They found, he says, the guards who go around the city: they struck and wounded me, and the guards of the walls took my cloak from me. Not in herself, daughter, but in us is the Church wounded. Let us therefore beware that our fall does not become a wound to the Church, lest anyone take the cloak from us, that is, the garment of prudence, the badge of patience, by which

the ambition of the softer ones is cast off: For those who are clothed in softer garments are in the homes of kings (Matthew 11:8). But to us, Christ gave a cloak, with which he clothed his apostles and his own body, which he finally commands you to give, if someone asks you for a tunic, that you may give it to him and the cloak as well (Matthew 5:40); that is, you should hand over the symbol of your philosophy and, as if with the clothing of your wisdom, clothe him who was previously naked.

Therefore, daughters, let us seek Christ where the Church seeks Him, among the mountains of sweet fragrance, which, with their lofty height, exhale the sweet scent of life from the peaks of merits. That which seeks Christ should not be common, should not be in the marketplace, not in the streets, with a complaining voice, a slippery step, easily accessible, and cheap in appearance. The Apostle denies you earthly companionship and teaches you to fly towards heaven with spiritual wings, almost beyond the limits of nature. He says, "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:2). But because this was impossible for those confined in the prison of the body, and because when bodies have died, the soul is carried away to fly to the higher things, bound as long as we live by a certain law of our nature, therefore He added: "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Ibid., 3). If it is hidden with Christ in God, it does not appear to the world, for Christ has died to the world and lives for God. Now see how Christ, whom I desire, does not desire conversations. That virgin opened her doors to the Word of God: but he passed by, she said, and my soul went out in his word (Verse 6). He went out from the world, he went out from the age, he remained in Christ. I sought him, she said, and I did not find him. For Christ loves to be sought for a long time.

They found that city without guardians of the walls. Perhaps there are other guardians that we should understand better. For it is a city that does not have closed gates of the walls, of which it is said: 'And its gates shall not be closed by day' (Apoc. 21:25); for there shall be no more night in it. The nations shall bring their glory and honor into it. Therefore, that city is Jerusalem, which is in heaven, within which you are now being kept, as though already perfect and immaculate; for not all common people enter into it. Common chastity is not, common modesty is not, which is written in the book of life.

48. Therefore, if we find a city, let us enter into it, let us see its light, let us see its walls, let us see its wall foundations, let us even see the guardians of the walls. But how shall we enter into it? In this city is life, and there is only one way that leads to life. Therefore, the way is Christ, so let us follow Christ. But the city itself is in heaven; so how then shall we ascend to heaven? The Evangelist teaches us, who says: And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven (Rev. 21:10). Let us ascend therefore by the Spirit, because the flesh cannot ascend to it. Let us meanwhile ascend to heaven, so that afterwards she may descend to us from heaven, in which there is a light like that of a precious stone, which has a great and high wall, like that of jasper and crystal.

You have learned the light, you have learned the wall; learn the gates, learn the guards. It has, he says, twelve gates, and in the gates are twelve angels, on which the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel are written (Ibid., 12). In the gates are the names of the patriarchs, in the wall the names of the apostles; for the foundations of the city, the apostles, and the cornerstone is Christ, on which the whole structure arises. God is outside, God is inside, God is everywhere: For

the city has the majesty of God (Ibid., 11). Therefore, you holy virgins and all who are righteous and bear the immaculate chastity of the soul, you are citizens of the saints and household of God. But then you will possess this nobility of the homeland, if you seek Christ within the walls of this city, entering through faith and precious deeds, enlightened by the brilliance of the patriarchs, founded upon the apostles, living among the angels.

50. How, then, are these watchful angels who remove the cloak from chaste souls? The cloak of virgins is different from that of young women in the marketplace. She who seeks Christ in the marketplace has also lost the cloak that she had. For prudence is possessed not in the marketplace, not in the streets, but in the Church. And perhaps so that we may also find favor with them, and teach that God is merciful to all; because even they will sometimes find Christ, if they continually seek, and this cloak is the covering of the body. Therefore, whoever seeks Christ in bed, if indeed he seeks Him thus, just as He who said: 'Thus I have remembered you on my bed' (Ps. 62:7); if he seeks Him in the nights, according to what is written: 'In the nights, lift up your hands to the holy place' (Ps. 132:2); if he seeks Him in the city, in the forum and in the streets, in the city of our God: perhaps in the forum, where that judge of divine law sits, in the streets from where those who gathered for the Lord's Supper were collected; it is possible for him to encounter the angels guarding the city of God, when he seeks for a long time. Moreover, from the celestial nature of the guardians, we can understand the celestial city, the celestial forum of eternal justice, not the ordinary streets, but perhaps those where that abundant fountain is accustomed to overflow, of which it is written: Let your springs overflow with water, and let your water be dispersed in your streets (Prov. 5:16). Therefore, whoever seeks Christ in this way, arrives at the angels.

51. But if one reaches the angels through good merits, why is one wounded when one has reached them? There is also a good sword, whose good lies in its ability to wound. It wounds the word of God, but does not cause ulcers. There is a wound of good love, there are wounds of charity; therefore it is said: I am wounded with love (Song of Songs 2:5). She who is perfect is wounded with charity. Therefore, the wounds of the Word are good, the wounds of the lover are good: For the wounds of a friend are more beneficial than the voluntary kisses of an enemy (Proverbs 27:6). Rebecca, wounded in love, left her parents and migrated to her betrothed. Rachel, wounded in love, who was jealous of her sister, loved her husband; for her sister, who had many children, she herself, still childless, envied, because she symbolized the Church, to which it is said: Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in labor! (Isaiah 54:1).

52. So the guards found her and wounded her, and took her cloak, that is, they removed the physical covering, so that the naked simplicity of her mind might seek Christ; for no one can see Christ dressed in the clothing of philosophy, that is, in the habit of worldly wisdom. And it is rightly removed from her, the clothing of philosophy, so that no one may plunder her through philosophy. It is rightly removed from her, the cloak, which approaches Christ, in order to see God, may walk with a pure heart in the world: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matthew 5:8). Finally, when the heart is cleansed, it finds the Word, it beholds God. Therefore, seek Him, virgin, indeed let us all seek Him; for the soul has no gender. But perhaps it has received a feminine name because a more violent surge of the body affects her: yet she soothes the force of her flesh and her own love with a gentle and tender reason. Therefore, we must invite God with prayers and

entreaties, so that He may deign to breathe upon us like a gentle breeze. And may the breath of the heavenly Word aspire to us: may it be accustomed to shake fruitful trees not with a heavy wind but with a soft and gentle breath.

53. They took away my cloak. A good garment is the everlasting life, and this cloak the keepers of the walls wanted to take away from the Bride, with which the first man was stripped; but the soul, devoted to God, sought it for a long time, holding it and not letting go of it, and clothed itself with the precious garment of divine love. Blessed, therefore, are those who are clothed with such a cloak, and have deserved to be clothed with such a garment by observing the law; for they have not forgotten the law, but have fulfilled what the law required.

54. (Verse 8.) I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, tell him that I am lovesick. But what is this languishing of the soul? The moral of the ancient story reminds us that we must remember the story of the holy Moses, who begged God to show Himself to him and to see Him face to face. The holy prophet of the Lord knew, of course, that he could not see the invisible God face to face. But holy devotion surpasses measure, and he believed that this, too, was possible for God, to make the incorporeal be comprehended by bodily eyes. This error is not blameworthy, but rather a delightful and insatiable desire to hold his Lord as if by hand, and to see him with the gaze of his eyes. For he knew that man was made in the image and likeness of God; for when he was chosen by the Lord God to deliver his people, he was filled with the spirit of wisdom, he saw that angel, and his face in glory, and, finally, he was awestruck by the shining of his light, and he saw the burning bush and it not being consumed. He began to see a brightness, which, amazed, he approached; provoked by desire and grace, so that he might more diligently consider that brightness in the bush. Therefore, if he received so much ardor, he underwent so much desire, when he saw an angel in the flame of fire from the bush, so that although seized by fear, he did not dare to consider, nevertheless, he wanted to consider: how much more did he desire to physically see the face of the Lord, saying within himself: that face full of light, full of grace, full of virtue, full of divinity, what shall I say it is? I cannot say or feel more about God; for when man has finished, then he begins; and when he has ended, then he will be perplexed, as it is written, because the eternal majesty of God is incomprehensible (Eccles. 18:6).

Indeed, the effect of the request was in vain, but the likely emotion of the servant; because beyond his nature he estimated the devotion of the Lord's angels, as much as he desired more from the face of the Lord, so that he could fulfill his desire. He knew in himself another glory that would come after death, another brightness: Just as one star differs from another in brightness, so does the resurrection of the dead; and even if it is sown in corruption, it will rise in incorruption, it will rise in glory, it will rise in power, it will rise as a spiritual body (I Cor. XV, 41-44). Therefore, whoever could know these things, presumed rightly that he desired to see the face of the Lord, since he was going to see it after the death of the body. He had certainly taken on such a form, and the Lord had already approved of it, so that he did not differ from the ministering angels and the executor of the oracle of heaven. And therefore, since he knew that the angels of little ones daily see the face of the Father who is in heaven (Matt. XVIII, 10), he thought that he could and should now see it, as if he had forgotten his body and put aside his flesh; just like the one who, while still in the body, when he was caught up to paradise, said that he did not know whether he was caught up in the body or outside of the body to the third heaven (II Cor. XII, 3). For even though the saints bear a body, they are not in the flesh, but in the spirit; because those who are in lust and carnal

behavior cannot please God. But the saints are not in the flesh by their behavior, but in heaven.

56. Therefore, let us grasp the condition of the weak bride from these things. To see the face of God as though innocent, as if by a certain face of consciousness, desired to open the face of the inner mind and wanted to be known more fully. Impatient love, knocking at the doors of harlots day and night, if the desires of possession are delayed for a long time, it fails in its expectation while hoping: in which, truly, there is not an end to love but an increase. And whatever is desirable, if it does not happen to the one desiring it, it fails in that thing and, as it were, gives up the very soul that desires it; if, however, a closer hope arises, it gives strength to the next hope; but if the beloved is absent, by the very fact that she desires the absent one, she suffers the defection of her own soul that she desired. Therefore, the further away the desired thing is, the more the person who desires it lacks. Thus, it is a lack to migrate with one's whole effort towards one thing that one loves; one thinks about it, clings to it, and keeps it in mind; that which one has received as something to love, is poured into the soul in a certain defection. Just as a mother expects the presence of her son, as Tobias' wife expected her son on his journey; lacking in desire, she was placed in distress, and seemed to be dissolved. For what else do his words signify if not a certain lack? But the more the emotion tires, the more love grows; and the longer the one who desires is absent, the desires of the one waiting ignite with a greater force of love. The flesh diminishes, but desire is nurtured and increased.

Therefore, the holy soul knows no other desire than the Bridegroom, who is Christ Jesus: she desires Him, she longs for Him, she directs all her strength towards Him, she cherishes Him in the depths of her mind, she opens herself up to Him and pours herself out, and her only fear is that she might lose Him. Therefore, the more the soul is aroused by a greater desire to cling to her saving God, the more she weakens. Thus, this weakening indeed operates a decrease in frailty, but an increase in virtue. He longed, he desired, he was growing weak, he was completely overcome with affection, so that he became wholly the one he desired, as David himself also says: I pour out my prayer in his presence, and before him I declare my trouble, when my spirit grows faint within me (Ps. CXLI, 3 and 4). For his spirit failed; rather, the spirit failed in him, who denies himself in order to cleave to Christ. Therefore, like one impatient with love, he ran around and sought the Word of God everywhere, because wounded, because naked; and he sought the support of someone by whom Christ might be asked to come. See the one who is boiling, see the one who is longing: I adjure, he says, you, daughters of Jerusalem, etc.; then, mingled with the daughters of that heavenly city, he seeks the Word, and by seeking and contemplating his appearance, he arouses love for him within himself.

58. (Verse 10.) My brother, he says, is fair and ruddy, chosen from among thousands. For it is fitting, maiden, that you fully know whom you love, and that in him you recognize the mystery both of his innate divinity and of his assumed incarnation. He is fair, therefore, deservedly, because he is the splendor of the Father; ruddy, because he is the offspring of the Virgin. The color shines and glows in him of both natures. Yet remember the more ancient marks of divinity in him, rather than the sacraments of the body; for he did not begin from the Virgin, but he who existed came into the Virgin. My brother is fair and reddish. Fair with eternal brightness, reddish in appearance like human flesh, which he assumed by the sacrament of the incarnation. And rightly, even what is reddish smells good; because the flesh of Christ is without sin, which the perfidious, by touching it, have defiled their hands: those who venerate the holy, burn with the scent of piety.

60. Chosen from among thousands. Ten thousand, says Jacob, Ephraem and the thousands of Manasseh; that is, both of the Jews and of the Gentiles shall dominate, and acquire for itself the fullness of the Church from both peoples. And therefore holy Jacob placed his right hand upon Ephraem; because the Church says in the Song of Songs: My brother is white and ruddy, chosen from among ten thousand. Finally, even David in his Psalms praised the author of the maiden Mary, from whose lineage Christ was born through the Virgin's birth, in ten thousand: but Saul in thousands, although they should have given greater grace of reverence to the king.

61. (Verse 11.) Its head is as gold, Cephas. Which signifies stable and eminent wisdom. The body of Christ is the Church, and its head is as gold because the wisdom of the saints is precious, that is, righteous and prudent men. Her hair is like fir trees, black like a raven. Regarding this, elsewhere it is said, Your hair is like a flock of goats. Hair is mentioned here because the power of all the senses is in the head: The eyes of a wise man are in his head (Ecclesiastes 2:14). Therefore, the deep wisdom of scholars is able to reveal things that are obscure and open up the depths of understanding. And such debaters are the hair of the Church, like the young ravens to whom the Lord gives food: as He gave it to holy Jacob and nourished him from his youth. The Lord feeds these others with profound richness of doctrine through heavenly sacraments.

63. (Verse 12.) Her eyes also are like doves. The eyes of the man are adorned, of course, with spiritual senses, which are keen to see mysteries, and prepared to penetrate the secret divine Scriptures, shining with rational milk, in which there is no confusing stain of deceit, but rather the unsullied sincerity of simple affection. Therefore, after mentioning the doves that are washed in the abundance of waters, he says:

64. His eyes are like doves above the abundance of water, washed in milk, sitting on fullness. The Lord baptizes in milk, that is, in sincerity. And these are the ones who are truly baptized in milk, who believe without deceit and offer pure faith, so that they may receive immaculate grace. Therefore, the pure Bride ascends to Christ because she was baptized in milk. Therefore, the virtues marvel at her, saying: Who is this who ascends white (Cant. VIII, 7)? A little while ago she was saying, 'I am black' (Canticles 1); now she is seen as white, and she ascends to heaven, supported by the Word of God, she now reaches the heights.

65. Not without reason is there an abundance of water there, where Christ is, from whom the human mind desires to be filled. The deer thirsts for these waters, and when it drinks them, it cannot thirst anymore. The Prophet thirsted for these waters when he said: As the deer longs for streams of water (Psalm 42:1). Therefore, Christ sits upon the abundance of waters and upon their fullness, and for this reason, the one who baptizes in water says: And from his fullness we have all received (John 1:16). Hence, the eye of punishment is not absent from the Church, for although John was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, where there was an abundance of water, and twelve springs, and seventy palm trees. The Church has these sources, namely, in the Old Testament the twelve patriarchs, and in the New Testament the twelve apostles; and therefore it is said: Bless the Lord God in the churches, from the fountains of Israel (Psalm 67:27). Whoever attains the most holy mysteries is sprinkled with these fountains, for these fountains, flowing from the eternal source, have spread throughout the whole world. Where these fountains are, there is the ascension of souls. Finally, Salim is interpreted as the one ascending; for he truly ascends who casts off his own sins. Therefore, the use of this word expresses the purification of sanctification.

66. (Verse 13.) Her cheeks are like vials of perfume, overflowing with fragrance. Now we understand that the cheeks and other virtues of the soul are the various qualities of teachers: those who diligently provide spiritual nourishment to the mind through careful instruction, or bind the listener with the preaching of the Lord's cross as if with a certain line of the Word, or are most pleasing in their modesty and the bloom of youth. Although they may be withdrawn from physical contact out of modesty, nevertheless the fragrance of Christ should emanate from them: and just as the anointing descends from the priestly head onto the cheeks, so should the beauty of doctrine shine forth in them. Her lips, dripping with full myrrh, symbolize the ointment of passion and the grace of resurrection. This ointment, which gives off the fragrance of new life, is poured into the hearts of the dead. Therefore, may the gates of your lips be closed, and may the entrance to your voice remain sealed, until perhaps it should be opened when you hear the Word of God. Then, myrrh will flow to you, then the grace of baptism will breathe upon you, so that you may die to the elements of the world and rise with Christ. Her lips dripping with full myrrh. But we consider ourselves idle if we only appear to study in word: and we value those who work more than those who exercise the pursuit of knowledge of truth; for many say: Behold the man and his works: as if one who studies in word does not work; when that work should be valued more than the rest. For if justice is a work, if temperance is a work, if fortitude is a work: surely wisdom is also a work; for these four principal virtues are considered. For if Christ works according to what is right, certainly He works according to what the Word is. And He worked when He was in the beginning with the Father. Indeed, through Him all things were made, so that you may know that He is the operator of all things, and our work is Christ Jesus. Truly, according to what the Word is, the Word is a great work for those who seek it. Therefore, when Martha was busy with her ministry, while Mary was listening to the Word of the Lord, she deserved to be esteemed higher than the one who was serving her; for Martha said to Him: Lord, is it not of concern to You that my sister has left me alone to serve? Therefore, tell her to help me; And Jesus answering, said to her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things: But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her. (Luke 10:40-42). Thus, it is defined by divine authority that knowing the Word is a greater work than serving.

69. But perhaps someone might say that it is said by the Apostle: The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power (I Cor. IV, 20). I do not deny that it is written, but in what word I recognize it; namely, the word which the inspired one has poured forth, which cannot benefit those who hear it unless it is demonstrated, and which is without display of spirit and power. Paul does not deign to acknowledge this word; for he wants rather to commend the power of the word. Finally, the Apostle wanted his word to be such that it would come in weakness, so as to make others stronger: in fear and trembling, so that those who fear would fear nothing except the Lord Jesus; trembling, that they would preserve his peace and tranquility. Listen to what kind of speech the Apostle had: And he says, my speech and my preaching were not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and power (2 Corinthians 2:4); for faith is not confirmed by eloquent words of wisdom, but by the demonstration of the Spirit, but by the power of God.

Therefore, in the speech of the saints, there is power, but in that forensic and philosophical speech, there is the vanity of the world. However, let this prophet teach you that there is virtue in the speech of the saints, who says: 'The Lord will give the word to those who preach the Gospel

with great power' (Psalm 68:11); that is, so that they may preach the Gospel with great power. Therefore, it is proven that there is power in the preaching of the Gospel, and the preaching of the Gospel is the speech of the saints; thus, there is no doubt that there is virtue in holy speech. And this myrrh, dripping from the lips of the Bridegroom, namely through which vices are mortified.

71. (Verse 14.) Her hands are skillful, golden, adorned with hyacinths. See what hands have made man, and what man they have made! Certainly, the one whom we put on according to Christ, stripping off the old man with his actions, and putting on the new one who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created him: where there is neither slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all (Colossians 3:9-11). Therefore, we put on Christ, as it is also said elsewhere: You have put on Christ (Galatians 3:27). We have received the Holy Spirit, who not only forgives our sins but also makes us priests to forgive the sins of others. Therefore, the Prophet says: You formed me and placed your hand upon me (Psalm 138:5): formed from clay, placed your hand by means of spiritual grace; although many interpret this psalm as spoken by the Savior. Listen, because the hand of the Lord is also called the spirit, Job proclaims: The divine spirit that made me (Job 33:4). These are therefore the hands that created man, Christ and the Spirit.

Therefore, the Lord Jesus is the author of our body, who first made man in His image; and later fashioned him from clay, and desired to save what He had made, to save what He had molded, in order to make the whole man safe. These are the skillful hands of God, that is, perfect: golden because of the wisdom that is Christ, full of hyacinths because of the Holy Spirit, and the fullness of His gifts.

73. (Verse 14.) His belly is like ivory, adorned with sapphires. The Apostle says, 'And though he was crucified through weakness, yet he lives by the power of God' (2 Corinthians 13:4); behold the belly, that is, the weakness of the flesh. But he still lives by the power of God; behold the adornment of sapphires. For sapphire, because it bears the appearance of a serene sky, signifies the works of divinity. But onyx, because of its purity, brightness, and eternity, signifies that flesh of the Savior about which the same Apostle says, 'So we have known Christ according to the flesh, but now henceforth we know him no more' (2 Corinthians 5:16).

74. (Verse 15.) The legs of that marble column, founded upon golden bases. They signify the columns of the Church, who were founded in holy fear. For just as Peter, James, John, and Barnabas seemed to be columns of the Church, so whoever overcomes this age becomes a column of God, which is confirmed by the one who says: I have confirmed its columns (Psalm 74:4). So too, the golden base is full of fear and discipline, because it is the beginning of wisdom. Therefore, in the fear of the wise, the apostolic preaching is firmly established as a golden column of Christ. Therefore, the fear of the just is both the judgment and the golden foundation full of prudence: but the good image, like the likeness of truth, is the discourse of the saints.

75. And see how the fear of the saints is like a golden foundation. Read Isaiah: see how much fear he has subjected, to make it blameless and good fear: The Spirit, he says, of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and power, the Spirit of knowledge and piety, the Spirit of the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2); how much fear he has subjected, so that it may have something to follow! It is informed by wisdom, instructed by understanding, guided by counsel, strengthened by power, governed by knowledge, adorned by piety. Take away these fears of the Lord, for this fear

is irrational and foolish, one of those: Outside are battles, inside are fears (II Cor. VII, 5); with which Paul would have been afflicted if he had not had the comforting Lord.

76. (Verse 15.) Its appearance is like that of the Cedar of Lebanon, chosen as the Cedars. It dwells in high places and looks upon lowly things, for its appearance is like the Cedar of Lebanon, which extends its hair to the clouds and its roots to the earth; its beginning is from heaven, and its latter fruits have come forth from the earth. This type of tree never loses its greenness, it feeds its hair both in winter and in summer, and it does not change color with the seasons; only the wind never strips this tree of its honor: only it is never deprived of its old garment or clothed in a new flower. Thus also the apostolic grace does not know decay, and it flourishes with perpetual beauty. Therefore, the soul does not know corruption, which thrives in flourishing limbs, always supporting the heights of justice and the other virtues with patient magnanimity; and thus it does not flow away or fail, because nothing in it is ruinous or lax, nothing is movable, nothing is slippery, nothing that could be poured out from it by the fault of speech.

77. (Verse 16.) His throat is most sweet, and his whole being is desirable. The judgments of the Lord are true, justified in themselves, more desirable than gold and a great deal of precious stone (Psalm 18:10-11). What is severe in others is sweet in Christ, sweet in Christ; because He Himself is sweet: Finally, taste and see that the Lord is sweet (Psalm 23:9). Sweet are the judgments to the one confessing, because He Himself says: I am, I am the one who destroys your iniquities, and I will not remember: but you, remember, and let us be judged. Declare your iniquities, that you may be justified (Isaiah XLIII, 25 and 26). Sweet are the judgments for those who repent, for he himself said: There will be joy over one sinner doing penance, more than over ninety-nine just who do not need penance (Luke XV, 7). Therefore, if the judgments of the Lord are sweet, let us strive to receive the fruit of sweetness. Do you want to know how sweet are the judgments of the Lord? Whoever believes in him is not judged (John III, 18). Therefore sweet judgments await those who believe: but those who do not believe, are condemned by the judgment of Christ, who came not to judge the world, but to save and redeem; but the judgment of their impiety falls upon those who refuse to believe in the remission of sins. For they cannot partake of his goodness, whom they have refused to acknowledge. Therefore, those who do not believe in him, are seen as unworthy of his judgment. For recognize what his judgment is, as he himself says: But this judgment is, by which the light came into this world (John 19). Therefore, what is sweet is light, and what precedes mercy is sweet judgment; for it is written, I will sing of mercy and judgment to you, O Lord (Psalm 101:1). The throat is also sweet and most pleasant, from which mercy precedes and this judgment.

78. (Verse 16.) And wholly desirable. Beautiful in form among the sons of men (Psalm 44:3). For indeed He was a man according to the flesh, but beyond man according to divine operation. For when He touched the leper, He appeared as a man, but beyond man when He cleansed. And when He wept for Lazarus dead, He wept as a man, but He was above man when He commanded the dead man, bound with fetters, to come forth. He appeared as a man when He hung on the cross, but He was above man when He opened the tombs and raised the dead. Nor do the Apollinarian heretics deceive themselves, because it is thus read: 'And being found in fashion as a man' (Philip. II, 7); for Jesus is not denied to be man, since elsewhere Paul himself says of Him: 'The Mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus' (I Tim. II, 5); but He is confirmed. For this is the way and custom of Scripture to signify thus, as we also read in the Gospel: 'And we saw his

glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father' (John I). Just as therefore he is called the only-begotten, and the only-begotten Son of God is not denied; so also he is called man, and it is not denied that the perfection of man was in him.

79. When, therefore, he was in the form of a servant, he was humbled even unto death, yet he was in the glory of God. What then hindered him from being a servant? It is recorded that he became a servant because he is read to have been made of a Virgin, and created in the flesh; for every creature serves, as the prophet says: For all creatures serve thee. This is the glory of Christ, that he took on servitude in his body, that he might restore liberty to all: he carried our sins, that he might remove the sin of the world: he, a servant, became sin, became a curse, that you might cease to be a servant of sin, and be freed from the curse of divine judgment. Therefore, he received your curse: For cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree; he became cursed on the cross, so that you may be blessed in the kingdom of God. He was dishonored and despised, not valued at all. He said, 'I have labored in vain'; by whom Paul deserved to say, 'I have not labored in vain' (Philippians 2:16); so that he may bestow the fruit of good works and the glory of preaching the Gospel upon his servants, through whom the burden of labor may be completed for all.

80. (Verse 17.) Such is my beloved and my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. Thus the Church or the holy soul, mingled with the daughters of that heavenly city, seeks the Word by searching, and by searching excites love for Him in herself. But to those who seek and say, 'Where has your beloved gone, O most beautiful among women? Where has your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you?'

Chapter 6

1. (Verse 1.) My beloved, he says, descended into his garden to the bed of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. Where he may seek the Word, he recognizes: what he may abide among the prayers of the saints, and what may cleave to them, he knows, and what he may feed his Church or the souls of his righteous among the lilies, he understands. This mystery he demonstrated to you in the Gospel, when on the Sabbath he led his disciples through the cornfields. Moses led the people of the Jews through the desert, Christ leads through the sown fields, Christ leads through the lilies; for through his passion the desert blooms like a lily. Let us therefore follow, so that on that great Sabbath day, on which there is great rest, we may gather fruit. Do not fear that the Pharisees will accuse us of gathering what has been sown: even if they accuse, Christ pardons, and He makes those souls similar whom He wants to follow Him, like David, who ate the bread of proposition above the Law, already conceiving the prophetic sacraments of the new grace in his mind at that time.

(Verse 2.) I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, who grazes among the lilies. The voice appears easy and common, but it is of a few. For it is rare enough for someone to be able to say: I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. What does it mean to say: I am yours? For it is he who speaks who is joined to God with all his senses, who cannot think of anything else, he who uses this voice who can say to the Lord: Show us the Father, and it is enough for us. (John 14:8). Does he use this voice eagerly for money, honor, power? For many people, knowing God is not enough, and indeed for many more. So many populations, so many nations, so many rich people think that poverty serves the Lord; and He who is above all is small and narrow to them: the Son of God is not enough for them, in whom all things are. Finally, that rich man in the Gospel to whom it was

said: If you wish to be perfect, sell all that you have, and give to the poor (Matthew 19:21); he judged that God was not enough for himself. Finally, he was saddened, as if he were ordered to leave what was worth more and choose what was worth less. Therefore, he says: I am yours, who can say: Behold, we have left everything and followed you (Ibid., 27). This is the voice of the apostles, but not of all the apostles; for even Judas was an apostle and reclined at the table with Christ. He himself also said: I am yours; but with his voice, not his heart. Then Satan came and entered into him, and began to say: He is not yours, Jesus, but mine. Finally, he thinks about what is mine, he turns over in his heart what is mine: he feasts with you and eats with me: he receives bread from you, money from me: he drinks with you, and sells your blood to me: he is your apostle, and my hireling. The secular person cannot say: I am yours; for he has many masters. Lust comes and says: You are mine; for you desire those things which pertain to my body: you have sold yourself to me for the love of that young woman: I have counted the price of your concubinage with that prostitute as yours. Greed comes and says: The silver and gold which you have is the price of your servitude: the possession which you hold is the purchase of your right, the sale of your freedom. Luxury comes and says: You are mine; a banquet of one day is the price of your life: that expense of feasting, the bidding of your head, is the sum of your contract. And what is worse, you have been bought at a price for flesh, you are cheaper than your food: your table of one day is more precious than your whole life: I have redeemed you among the cups, I have acquired you among the feasts. Ambition comes and says to you: You are completely mine. Do you not know that I made you rule over others so that you would serve me? Do you not know that for this reason I have given you power, that I might subject you to my power? Do you not know that it is written in the gospel of the Lord and Savior himself, by the prince of this world, when he showed him all the kingdoms of the world: All these I will give you, if you fall down and worship me (Matt. 4:9)? Therefore, he who wants to have others subjected to him is himself subjected. All vices come and each one says: 'You are mine.' How great they seem, how worthless they are! Therefore, how can you, who are of such a kind, say to Christ: I am yours? He will answer you: Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21): not everyone who says to me, I am yours, is mine.

4. My plan is, if conscience does not reproach me, if my mind or actions do not refute your words. I do not deny that he is mine who does not deny himself, or certainly if he denies himself for my sake. I do not want to have a slave serving many masters. For how can he be mine if he says to me in word: I am yours; and denies it in deeds, and condemns himself to the devil and binds himself? He is not mine whom lust inflames, because chastity is mine: he is not mine whom the desire to plunder the weak drives, because generosity is mine: he is not mine whom the fickleness of the wind troubles, because tranquility is mine. I am not a slave to the intoxication of wine, impure in the filth of ambition, desirous of worldly glory, drunk into danger, who cannot keep the trace of sober moderation. I am peace, I do not know how to argue: why should I care what the devil may say about him. He is mine; for he has bent his neck to me, I find more in him: he claims your name for himself, and my gift. Therefore, he is not of Christ, unless he is free from crime: he is not of Christ, unless he can always show himself to be a servant of Christ.

5. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, who pastures among the lilies. It seems that among the beloved, the beloved says: My secret is mine, my secret is mine. For she had understood certain mysteries of her hidden faith in the ecstasy of her love, which she believed should not be

revealed even to the daughters of Jerusalem themselves. The mystery of the king is to keep it hidden; for it is a sin against God for anyone to think that entrusted mysteries should be made known to unworthy individuals. Therefore, there is not only the danger of speaking falsehoods, but also of speaking truths, if someone insinuates them to those who ought not to know. What vice is fourfold, either flattery or greed or boasting or careless talk; because when someone wants to flatter, they reveal a secret to the person they are speaking to: some also, driven by the desire for gain, follow the payment of betrayal, so that they may sell what should be hidden by speaking in silence; others, in order to seem to know more and boast of their knowledge, reveal what they should conceal; most, when they speak without judgment, utter a word that they cannot take back. Therefore, the man is praised for being diligent and not idle. He was a man who carefully chose his words, like the apostle Paul, who knew what to say to each person and when to speak.

6. (Verse 3.) You are pleasing, my sister, beautiful like Jerusalem, admirable like an army arrayed for battle. The truth of love is proven by its perpetuity. Therefore, the Bride is praised by the Bridegroom because she has sought him so well and steadfastly. And now she is not only called sister, but also named pleasing, as if she has pleased him; because she pleased the Father: and, beautiful like Jerusalem, admirable like an army arrayed for battle; because she holds all the mysteries of the eternal city: and she is a wonder to all who see her; because she is filled with equity, and is perfect: and she shines with the light borrowed from the Word, while always striving for it, and is also terrible in a certain order, advanced to the highest level of virtue.

You are beautiful, my friend, sweet and lovely, etc. And truly beautiful, which is said of Him: 'Thou art fairer than the children of men.' (Psalm 44:3). Therefore, let us direct our minds as much as we can towards Him and be in Him. Let us hold firmly in our minds that which is beautiful, lovely, and good, so that our souls may become beautiful through His illumination and shine brightly. For if our eyes are clouded by darkness, they are nourished by the greenness of fields, and the beauty of a forest or shady hill repels every imperfection from our dwindling gaze, and the pupils themselves and the iris seem to take on a healthy color: how much more does this eye of our mind, when it beholds and dwells upon that Supreme Good, and feeds on it, become resplendent and radiant. Beautiful as Jerusalem. This beauty of the body is not perishable, either by disease or old age, but is not subject to any troubles, and will never die in the estimation of good deeds; for it is worthy to be compared not to human beings, but to heavenly ones, whose life it lives on earth. Therefore, the Bridegroom, as if to a bride already perfected, says:

Turn your eyes away from me, for they have caused me to fly away. Do not direct too much devotion and faith towards me. You have exceeded the possibility of your nature and condition, for it is difficult to behold an inaccessible light from a distance. 'Turn your eyes away from me,' he says, 'because you cannot endure the fullness of his divinity and the radiance of true light.'

However, we can also understand it this way: Turn your eyes away from me; although you are perfect, there are still other souls that need to be redeemed by me, and others that need to be supported. For you lift me up by seeing me, but I have descended in order to lift up all. Although I have risen and have the seat of the Father, I will not forsake you as orphans deprived of paternal protection, but I will strengthen you with my presence. In the Gospel it is written: Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20). Turn your eyes away from me, for you lift me up. For as much as anyone directs their intentions towards the Lord, they elevate the Lord

even more, and they themselves are elevated. Therefore, he says: I will exalt you, O Lord, for you have lifted me up (Psalm 29:1). The holy person exalts the Lord, while the sinner humbles themselves. Therefore, they want to turn their eyes away from her, so that by not considering her, she may be elevated to higher things and not abandon other souls. That is why in the Gospel, he revealed his glory not to all the disciples, but to the more perfect ones (Matthew 17:1). Now, establish someone as a teacher who is willing to explain obscure matters to his listeners, even though he himself may be skilled in speech and knowledge. However, he should lower himself to the ignorance of those who do not understand and use a simple, clearer, and more familiar speech so that he can be understood. If there is anyone among the listeners who is more lively in understanding and can easily follow, he is raised and promoted. Seeing this, the teacher calls him back to allow the more knowledgeable to dwell among the humble and straightforward, so that others can follow.

10. (Verse 5-7.) The Bride is praised because she is faithful, powerful in word, fruitful in various fruits, and one dove, having the unity of the spirit, in which there is peace, which makes both one: and which is not composed of diverse elements of conflicting and separate nature. For what is so different than fire and water, air and earth, from which the creation of our body consists? But every blessed soul is simple, which imitates the one who says: That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us (John 17:21); for this is the consummation and perfection, from which he added: That they may be one, as we also are one: I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one (Ibid., 23). This is therefore a dove and perfect, which is simple and spiritual, not troubled by the passions of this body, in which there are outward battles, inward fears. Finally, Scripture teaches us that this word signifies unity and peace, saying: 'The multitude of believers had one heart and one soul, and there was no separation among them.' (Acts 4:32)

11. The soul is praised for its fruitful nature, not only because it is fruitful in virtues, but also because it has no evil within itself; for that which is beautiful and lovely is that in which there is no evil. For what is beautiful is good; but what is ugly is evil. Fruitfulness is the beauty of good works, therefore sterility is the opposite of beauty; because one who lacks beauty or charm, in them is all evil: for what is evil is barren and unfruitful. What greater evidence is there of something than the earth? For the earth that is good is fertile and productive; but the earth that is bad is barren and sterile; and the earth that is fertile is both beautiful and adorned. For what is more beautiful than a field full of crops, with the crops waving in the breeze, the fruit ripening, and the vines bearing garlands, or the olive trees bending under the weight of their fruit, or the low hills covered in lush green grass? For God is the author of all good things, and what belongs to Him is certainly all good, and there is no evil in Him; and if our mind remains in Him, it does not know evil. Therefore, the soul that does not remain in God itself is the author of evils, and thus sins. But the soul that sins itself will die; for, freed from the golden chains of virtues, it is inclined towards a precipice and falls to lower things. However, the blessed soul is the one that is not conquered by any adversities of the body. This soul, like a sparrow, escapes from the broken snare. For bodily pleasures are the bait: whoever indulges in them, ensnares their soul. But whoever refrains from those pleasures and departs from darkness, their soul shines like the dawn, of which it is said:

13. (Verse 9.) Who is this looking forth like the dawn, beautiful as the moon? She looks forth like one set free from her home, and does not say: Darkness covers me, and walls surround me, and

who knows if the Most High sees me? But she herself seeks the light more, as if in the higher parts of her own home, that is, her body: and placed above the world, she looks upon the divine and elevates herself to the eternal, to be with God; now the light of her works, like the moon, carries her orbit throughout the whole world.

14. (Verse 10.) I went down into the walnut grove, to see the birth of the torrent, and to see if the vine had flowered, and if the pomegranate trees had borne fruit. Finally, the Word of God is invited into the walnut grove, where the fruit of prophetic reading and the grace of priesthood are found, which is bitter in temptations, hard in labors, and fruitful in interior virtues. Hence, even the staff of Aaron bloomed with walnuts, not by its own nature, but by a hidden power. Therefore, let him descend into the garden, in order to find faith, to pluck fragrances, to discover heavenly sustenance, to feast on the sweetness of our honey.

15. For while she is praised by the Bridegroom, she modestly shies away from being praised; then, called back by the love of the Bridegroom, she says: I went down into the garden of the walnut tree to see in the birth of the torrent. For where is the Church, if not where the rod and grace of the priesthood flourish? There it is often tested in bitternesses and temptations. By the walnut tree we understand bitternesses, by the torrent temptations, but nevertheless tolerable, for it is written: Our soul has passed through the torrent (Psalm 123:5). And so he descends into a place of bitterness, where diverse and manifold fruits flourish, resembling a covering that protects the whole body with faith and charity.

16. Therefore, in that bitterness, the soul did not recognize itself. For the corruptible body weighs down the soul, and the earthly dwelling is quickly inclined. However, one must always know oneself. But Peter was tempted, and did not know himself and Peter; for if he had known himself, he would not have denied his creator. But Christ knew him. Finally, he knew, because he also looked back; for the Lord knows those who are his, and like a good ruler with the reins of his mercy, he called him back from his fall: therefore, Christ is our ruler. Unde et sequitur:

17. (Verse 11.) Aminadab set me as a chariot: because the soul is joined to the body, and like one of those raging chariots, seeks its driver. For Aminadab was the father of Naason, as we read in Numbers (Num. I, 7), who was the chief of the people of Judah, whose figure is related to Christ, who, as the true prince of the people, ascends the soul of the righteous as a charioteer, guiding it with the reins of the Word, so that it is not carried away by the madness of violent horses into precipices and ravines. For there are as it were four horses of the soul: anger, desire, pleasure, and fear. When these are raging and acting, she does not at all know herself. For the corruptible body burdens the soul and, like the chariot of irrational animals, drags her unwillingly, while personal cares roll on like a kind of violent impulse, until the passions of the mentioned body are calmed by the power of the Word.

18. This is the providence of the Word, like that of a good driver, so that the soul, which is not subject to death in itself, may not make the action of the body, which is subject to death, difficult. Therefore, first, it tames the swift motions of the body and restrains them with the bond of reason. Then, it takes care that they do not entangle themselves in movements that are not in harmony, like a horse; so that the good may not be stained by the evil, or the slow may impede, or the turbulent may disturb. For the horse rages with malice, and by tossing itself, it damages the chariot, and it burdens the yoke. This good charioteer soothes and sends into the field of truth,

avoiding the twists and turns of deceit. Safe is the course to higher things, dangerous is the descent to lower things. From there, as if well-deserved, those who carried the yoke of the Word are led to the Lord's manger, in which there is not hay as food, but bread that comes down from heaven. These are the wheels of this chariot, of which the Prophet said: 'And the spirit of life was in the wheels' (Ezek. I, 20); because the chariot of the soul spins, smooth and round, without any obstruction.

19. Aminadab put me on a chariot. Therefore, the chariot is the soul, which supports a good charioteer. If the chariot is the soul, it has horses, either good or bad. Good horses are the virtues of the soul: bad horses are the passions of the body. Therefore, a good charioteer restrains and controls the bad horses, and incites the good ones. There are four good horses: prudence, temperance, courage, and justice; and four bad horses: anger, desire, fear, and injustice. Sometimes the horses themselves disagree with each other, and either anger or fear extends itself; and they hinder each other and slow down the course. But truly, good horses fly and raise themselves from the earth to the upper regions, and elevate the soul; especially if they have a sweet yoke and a light burden, saying: Take my yoke upon you; for my yoke is sweet and my burden is light (Matthew 11:29).

He himself is the charioteer, who knows how to guide his own horses, so that the course of all is equal: prudence slows down the swiftest, justice admonishes the slower with its own whip; temperance makes them gentler, fortitude makes them harder. He knows how to unite the discordant ones, lest they should scatter his chariot. Therefore, it is allowed to see, in a visible spectacle, each soul being snatched up to heaven with the utmost effort, the horses hastening so that the first may reach the reward of Christ, and on their necks the palm is first placed. These are the horses subject to the yoke of faith, bound by the bond of charity, restrained by the reins of justice, held by the reins of sobriety.

21. Therefore, he beautifully said: Aminadab, which means, the father of the people, has placed me in the chariot. And he himself who is the father of the people, is also the father of Naason, which means, of serpents. Now you recall who, like a serpent, suffered on the cross for the salvation of all, and understand that soul to be the peaceful one, whose leader is God the Father, and Christ is the guide; for it is written, and this name is in our language: Father, father, guide of Israel (2 Kings 11:12). Therefore, this guide says:

22. (Verse 12.) Turn back, Shunammite, turn back. He speaks well, and as if he were a charioteer, he says: Turn back, Shunammite, that is, be at peace; for a peaceful soul quickly turns and corrects itself, even if it sinned before. And Christ ascends more to rule and govern it, to whom it is said: Mount your horses, and your chariot is healing. And elsewhere: You sent your horses to Tharsis (Habakkuk 3:8). *Hi sunt equi Christi. Ascendit ergo equos suos Christus: ascendit Verbum Dei animas pias. Cum fuerit anima nostra pacifica, ut dicatur ei: Convertere; convertere Sunamitis, quod pacificam significat: tunc accipiet in se sicut signaculum Christum, hoc est, imaginem Dei, ut sit ad imaginem; quoniam Qualis coelestis, tales et coelestes, et oportet nos portare imaginem coelestis (I Cor. XV, 48), id est, pacem.* And so that we may know it to be true, you have in the same Canticles, in the last part of the perfectly developed soul, what the Lord Jesus also says to me: Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm (Song of Solomon 8:6); so that peace may shine in my heart, and in my works Christ may be formed, wisdom, righteousness, and

redemption may be formed in me.

Chapter 7 1. (Verse 1.) How beautiful are your footsteps in your sandals, daughter of Aminadab! The shape of your thighs is like twisted cords, the work of a craftsman. There is no doubt that these footsteps also signify the progress of the Church, or the progress of the soul. How beautiful are the feet of those who preach peace, who bring good news (Isaiah 52:7)! Indeed, the progress of the preaching and discussion of the Gospel is said to be beautiful, as it is said elsewhere: Cross over the rivers (Isaiah 47:2), that is, pass through the flowing and slippery currents of this world with a firm and steady step. David clearly shows what is said about the departure of the soul, asserting that his soul would pass through a torrent of iniquities (Ps. 212:5). But what does it mean when he says that the Church has beautiful footsteps in her shoes? We read in the Book of Exodus: 'Take off your sandals from your feet' (Exodus 3:5), from which it seems that he is being reminded not to be bound by earthly attachments. Therefore, in the Song of Songs, 'beautiful' signifies the beauty of the soul, which uses the body as a shoe but is not hindered by it, rather excelling in its graceful steps. Therefore, let the soul put on ecclesiastical grace, so that it may pass through the course of this life and its transition with beauty. This happens if it does not soil its footwear with bodily dirt, if it does not sink into the abyss of vices: if it restrains its flesh, so that it does not delay on the journey, and is not burdened by the weight of rich crops. Modesty is a good footwear for the soul, a good step is in the footprint of chastity. However, wisdom is the attire of the soul, as it is written: Honor her, and she will embrace you (Prov. IV, 8). Therefore, let us make use of the body as a tool for the works of virtue: for service, not command; for obedience, not dissent; and let us place our footsteps on the path of wisdom, so that the force of any current does not hinder our progress.

Therefore it was said to Moses: 'Take off your sandals' (Exodus III, 5). And it was also said to Joshua, son of Nun (Josue V, 16). But nothing was said about Christ, rather it is written, with John the Baptist saying: 'After me will come a man whose sandals I am not worthy to carry' (Matthew III, 11); for they were well advised to take off their sandals, who could not be without sin. But he not only did not take off his sandals, he also forgave the sins of others; for he not only kept his own body free from sin, but also granted forgiveness for the sins of all.

Therefore, the Church is beautiful in imitation of Christ, and washed clean of all sin in its sandals. And perhaps when it speaks of wisdom among the perfect, it is beautiful in its higher members. But when even those of lower rank or learning follow the Word, they do not forget the series of faith, they keep the precepts of the priest, it is beautiful in its sandals. Often, the clergy has erred, the priest has changed his opinion, the rich have felt with the earthly king of this age, and the people have reserved their own faith.

5. And so we can also speak well of the Lord Jesus, because even in those things that are physical, the Word has beautiful steps when discussing moral matters. Perhaps the apostles are sent barefoot so that their discussion is not overshadowed, but shines forth. Therefore the Church, the daughter of Aminadab, that is, of voluntary or pleasing will; because a volunteer or pleasing one gathered her, and she is beautiful in her sandals. And rightfully it is added:

6. The ornaments of your thighs are like necklaces, the work of a craftsman's hands, so that they might be celebrated as the adornments of the Church of future generations. For by the thigh we recognize the emblem of generation, according to that saying: Gird your sword upon your thigh, O

most mighty one (Psalm 44:4), by which it is signified that when the Son of God emptied himself, having taken on the divinity of the Word and having been clothed with human generation, he would come forth from the Virgin to grant salvation to all. However, they are called precious ornaments, which are accustomed to be hung on the necks of matrons. Such great processions of the Church are signified, that it is compared to the most precious ornaments and to the necklaces of conquerors; for these ornaments are of warriors. Hence also Symmachus said Epitrachelia, that is, those things which are around the neck. Therefore, whether it be the generation of Christ from the Virgin, or the propagation of the Church, indeed in appearance adorned like the handiwork of an artist with necklaces, but truly adorned with the eminent virtue of spiritual necks of the faithful. Finally, this entire description of the members of the Church is full of beauty and praise. For also:

(Verse 2.) His navel is described as a round bowl that never lacks mixed wine, because in all knowledge it is rounded, not lacking in spiritual drink. And his belly is not only nourished by a heap of wheat, that is, by more powerful nourishment of the celestial mystery, but also filled with the sweetness of certain lilies of moral virtue. Hence, she herself is crowned with the blood of Christ as a well-deserving queen, as it is written: And the ornament of her head is as purple. The blood of Christ is a purple dye, which stains the souls of the saints, not only with color but also with power; for it makes kings, and better kings to whom it grants eternal kingdom.

8. Your navel is like a rounded goblet never lacking mixed wine. The navel is the seat of one's soul and the subtle belly of her who ascends to Christ; and therefore it is praised by the voice of the Bridegroom saying: Your navel is like a rounded goblet, never lacking mixed wine; your belly is a heap of wheat encircled with lilies. It is indeed turned in all doctrine, and a spiritual drink never lacking in fullness, and knowledge of heavenly mysteries. The stomach is also a mysterious soul, like a navel, from which the stomach not only takes in strong food by which hearts are strengthened, but also a sweet and flowering one by which they are delighted.

9. (Verse 4.) Your eyes are like pools in Heshbon, by the gates of many daughters. Your nostrils are like the tower of Lebanon. Pools in Heshbon signify the abundance of rational thoughts in the gates of the Church, to which the multitude of teachings is rightly attributed. For the daughter of many is the succession and consequence of many teachings, and its nostrils are the fragrance of sacrifices, surpassing all flowers.

10. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon: exceedingly high, and therefore it overlooks the face of Damascus, the noble people, I say, smelling their scent, and the faith of those whose grace would wipe away the stench of their sins. Therefore, the faith of Damascus is the faith of the nations, not overshadowed by any shade, not covered by any garment, naked and free, more inclined towards heaven than towards earth. The nostrils of the Church observe and gaze upon this, collecting the sweet fragrance of aspiration and grace from it.

11. And indeed, his nostrils are like the tower of Lebanon; for in sacrifices the sweet smell is the odour of the Church, in which the offering of good smell is the remission of sins. Therefore, take these nostrils, O man, that you may separate the fragrant from the malodorous, and then the Lord will give you life. For when He perceives what you seek from Him, to turn the eyes of your mind away from vanity, He cooperates with your soul, that if it is captivated by any appearance, it is not swayed by either hardness or weakness, but let it be swayed by the yoke of the Word, and let it be guided by its reins, so that it may be led away from vices by the will of God, and may take the

fragrance of eternal life.

12. (Verse 8.) I will go up into the palm tree, and will take hold of its branches. From this, know that it also ascends and leads it to the place of the palm tree, when it says to it: How beautiful and sweet you have become, my love, in your delights! Your stature has become like a palm tree (Song of Solomon 7:6). And it itself says: I said, I will go up into the palm tree. But even it itself is love, for love is the fullness of victory; for the fullness of the Law is love. Let us run therefore, that we may apprehend, let us run that we may conquer: he that conquereth, ascendeth into the palm, and eateth the fruits thereof: he that conquereth, now ceaseth to run, but sitteth, as it is written: He that shall overcome, I will make him sit with me in my throne, as I also have overcome and am set down with my Father in his throne (Apoc. III, 21). Hence the philosophers have described those chariot races of souls in their books, but were not able to attain to the palm; because they knew not the sweetness of the Word, nor the height of their own souls. I will ascend," he said, "to victory in this world; that I may grasp the height of the Word, which this soul has known, in which the conversion of the Word was; for thus he says:

13. (Verse 10.) I am my brother's, and his affection is upon me. This meaning is repeated three times in the Song of Songs. In the beginning, it says: My brother is mine, and I am his; he feeds among lilies until the day breathes and the shadows incline (Song of Songs 2:16). Then it says: I am my brother's, and my brother is mine; he feeds among the lilies (Song of Songs 6:2). Finally, it says: I am my brother's, and his affection is upon me. First, towards the instruction of the soul; therefore, he also mentioned: 'My brother to me'; for by his demonstration, he also took on the desire to cling to God. What follows is the second stage of progress: the third stage is according to perfection? In the first, as if in an initial instruction, the soul still sees shadows, not yet moved by the revelation of the approaching Word; and therefore, the days of the Gospel did not yet shine upon it: in the second, it gathers the pious fragrances without the confusion of shadows: in the third, it already ministers perfect rest in itself to the Word, so that the Word may turn towards it, lay its head upon it, and find rest; and it invites saying: 'Come to my field.'

14. (Verse 11.) Come, my brother, let us go out into the field, let us rest in the castles. Above, he was inviting to the garden; here, to the field having not only the grace of flowers, but also wheat and barley, that is, the strong foundation of virtues, so that he might see the fruits of it. Let us rest, he says, in the castles, to which Adam, when he was expelled from paradise, had been banished: in these he would rest, but he would work the land. But the reason why he would want to go out into the field is clear; so that, like a good shepherd, he may feed his flock, comfort the tired, and call back the straying ones. For even if this new soul has saved both the old and the new, they are still like lambs that need to be nourished with milk. Therefore, in a manner of speaking, he intervenes not for himself but for others, so that he may come out of his father's bosom, so that he may come forth like a bridegroom from his chamber; he runs out on the path, so that he may help the weak; not to stay in that secret throne of his father, and not to dwell in that light in which the weak horses cannot climb; but so that he may be taken and led into the house of the Bride and the secret place. Let the soul be outside, so that the Word may be inside: it is outside the body, so that the Word may dwell in us.

16. 'Assumam te, inquit, et inducam te' (Ibid., 2). It is rightly assumed, and the Word of God is induced, because it knocks on the soul to open the door to itself. And unless it finds the door open

to itself, it does not enter. But if anyone opens the door, it enters and dines. Thus the Bride assumes the Word, in order to be taught by assuming. Therefore, she rightly ascends to this, to the higher mansions, and always receives the progress of virtue.

17. Come, my brother, let us go out into the field, rest in the castles, rise early in the vineyards, and see if the vine has blossomed. Many fields have fruit, but that one is better which abounds both in fruit and flowers. Therefore, the field of the Church is fruitful with various riches. Here you may see the shoots of virginity blooming like flowers in spring; there, as in open fields, you may see the strength of widowhood; elsewhere, like the abundant produce of the Church, you may see the granaries of the world filled with the harvest of marriage, and as if the vineyard of the married, overflowing with the excesses of the Lord Jesus, in which the faithful fruit of marriage abounds.

18. The bride, having obtained the fulfillment of her desire, speaks to the Bridegroom: Come, my brother, let us go out into the field, let us rest in the castles, let us rise early to the vineyards. You see how the Bride invites the Word of God to come into the earth and remove the sins of the world. This field was previously deserted, disfigured by the thorns of our sins, covered in hideous brambles. The castle was where Adam, bound, perpetually afflicted his heirs with exile. Therefore, the Church leads Christ, to free Adam. Then, with the exiles liberated, the field of this world began to have suitable cultivators: and he who was formerly barren, became fruitful through the planting of the eternal vine. Yet, it does not wander far from the joyful spiritual branches, but calls Christ to these vineyards, where singing and praying are present, where the blameless fruit perseveres day and night.

19. (Verse 12.) There, he said, I will give my breasts, there the mandrakes have given forth their fragrance. Many distinguish between the sexes of the mandrakes; they believe that there are both males and females, but the females have a strong odor. Therefore, it signifies the nations that were previously barren, when they were weaker due to a certain weakness of unfaithfulness, they began to bear the good fruit of a pleasing odor after they believed in the coming of the Lord. We also read that the holy Rachel received mandrakes from her sister Leah, so that she could sleep with the holy Jacob that night. Ruben, the firstborn of Mandragoras, brought his mother Lia a figure of the Synagogue with its eyes closed, because she could not see the grace of Christ, her weak mind dulled. This signifies that the fruits that she had received before the Synagogue, from the firstborn Son of God, were given to the Church. But because she conceived and gave birth to the heir of her posterity through a requested union on that night, the mystery was fulfilled. For by believing apostles, the remnant of the Jews were saved through the election of grace, as the Church says:

20. (Verse 13.) I have kept both the new and the old, my brother, for you. Who will give you a breastfeeding brother from my mother's breasts? Finding you outside, I will kiss you, and indeed they will not reject me. I will take you and bring you into my mother's house, and into her secret place where she conceived me, there you will teach me. Therefore, having knowledge of the new and old Scriptures, and not feeling themselves to be despicable, the Word holds on to prayers in the secret of the heart, and also kisses it with the voices of the singing choir, as if with certain kisses of gratitude.

21. I have preserved for you, my brother, the new and the old; that is to say, I hold on to all the commandments of the new and the old Testament. Only the Church can say this: no other

congregation says it, nor does the Synagogue, nor does it hold on to the new according to the literal meaning; nor does it hold on to the old according to the spirit. The heresy of Manichaeus does not say it, 'I have preserved for you the Old,' which does not accept the prophets. It is rightly called white, which shines with the grace of both Testaments.

22. I have adjured you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you may awaken and revive love as long as it pleases. Still, he seeks one who will awaken it, and he requests to be awakened by the daughters of Jerusalem, whose favor, that is, the souls of the faithful, he desires to be provoked to a more abundant love. Therefore, those virtues who guard the gates of heaven say.

Chapter 8

1. (Verse 5.) Who is she who ascends white, leaning on her brother? How is it that she, who placed her head on the left hand of wisdom, opened her hands to help the poor; sharing or abandoning her own possessions, and not seizing and plundering riches for her own use? She, who eagerly sought glory through good works, did not aim for empty worldly boasting of dignity, for this is her head, and she established a certain principle of senses above the hand of wisdom. She, I say, her soul ascends to the shining rewards, from this deserted life as many have, to that flourishing place of eternal delight.

These are the virtues that are also mentioned in the book of Isaiah: Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this one who is beautiful in his robe (Isa. LXIII, 1)? These, I say, are the ones who marvel that from this rugged and rocky desert it is possible for a soul to ascend without the stain of great vices; and therefore they rejoice that one has been found who has not defiled the garments of natural innocence with the ink of worldly folly, but rather cleansed them with the brightness of spiritual wisdom and grace. The daughters of Jerusalem admire the holy souls of the patriarchs and prophets, and of the old righteous, or celestial powers, saying: Who is this that ascends, leaning on her brother, beautifully adorned? This, indeed, is the Church that shines in such solemnities, and which was before dark during the day, now shines in the night and glows. The Lord Himself, delighted by such a gift of those who sing, also says:

3. (Verse 6.) Put me like a seal upon your heart, like a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. For the church has seen such devotion and considers the people suitable who can bear His seal in our hearts and on our arms. For God the Father Himself has sealed it, and those who have received His testimony have been sealed because God is true. Therefore, those who work for food that endures to eternal life have been sealed in the image and likeness of Christ, who is the image of the invisible God. So, just as God is true, you also must show the truth in your thoughts and actions. Let your mouth not speak falsehood, and let your hands not engage in the deceitful works of this world. Instead, let them perform deeds that are pleasing to God: giving to the poor, helping the weak, and honoring the dead with proper burial. It is through these acts of charity that we seek the union with Christ, where no one can separate us from Him, even in the face of death. Tribulation, or distress, or persecution (Rom. VIII, 35)? And further: For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels (Ibid.).

4. In this form, zealotry is also a hard form of charity, and its wings are wings of fire. It has wings like a dove, for its feathers are silvered like the feathers of a dove, by which the one who

loves takes flight, saying: Behold, I have fled far away, and have stayed in the wilderness (Psalm 54:8). But the wings of charity are wings of fire, by which the ardor of love is inflamed. By this vapor, the Lord made his angels fervent spirits, and his ministers burning fire, but not consuming fire. We read that he also brought Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple, above which the devil, tempting Him, made Him ascend (Matt. IV, 3). Therefore, there are heights of piety, there are summits of charity, which are accustomed to kindle the vapor of grace in human hearts, so that much water may not be able to extinguish or exclude charity, and rivers of secular storms may not confine it. We have said that charity excludes fear, but we have not said that it excludes all disturbance; for, indeed, the one who loves God, there is a profound tranquility of a confirmed mind.

5. (Verse 7.) Many waters, he says, cannot extinguish charity, and rivers cannot drown it. There is much water of different passions, and rivers driven by secular desires with bodily motions, which, however, cannot undermine the wall of charity. Therefore, being founded on charity, he says: Our soul has passed through a torrent (Psalm 123:5). Could the water of the sea exclude the charity of Moses? And so, in accordance with the literal interpretation, the sequence of the psalms supports you, namely, he believed that a safe journey through the seas is to diligently trust in God: but those who did not love God, they were submerged in the waves and suffered a worthy end of their sacrilege.

6. (Verse 5.) Who is this who comes up leaning on her beloved? Above, they said, What is this who looks forth like the dawn, beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun? Here, more was found to be added, because she had ascended leaning on the Word of God; for the more perfect rest above Christ, just as John was resting on Christ's chest. Thus, either she was reclining upon Christ or reclining above him; or certainly, since we are speaking about a wedding, she was already being led by the Bridegroom into the bridal chamber, as if delivered into Christ's right hand. And because now there is a bond of love, the groom flatters her, and says:

7. Under the evil tree I lifted you up, there your mother gave birth to you, there the one who bore you gave birth to you. A good soul rests under the fruitful tree, and most of all a soul of good fragrance. For if Nathanael was good, in whom there was no deceit, he was seen under the fig tree; surely a good soul, which was lifted up under her spouse. For it is greater to be lifted up than to be seen: even greater to be lifted up by one's spouse. For although Nathanael seemed to be under the tree, his soul was not a bride; because he secretly came to Christ, because he feared the Jews. She was not as beautiful as the moon, nor as chosen as the sun, which was in shadow; because the bride who marries during the day openly confesses. Therefore, this one is under the apple tree, that one under the fig tree; because this one spread the scent of her confession further, that one had the sweetness of purity and did not have the ardor of the spirit.

8. There, he says, your mother gave birth to you, there she gave birth to you who gave birth to you; for there we are born, there we are reborn. But those in whom the image of Christ is formed give birth, hence Paul also says: Little children, whom I am in labor until Christ is formed in you (Galatians IV, 19). Indeed, he who receives the spirit of salvation in the womb gives birth, and pours it into others. Therefore, since Christ was already formed in this, he says:

9. (Verse 6.) Place me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm. The seal of Christ is upon the forehead, a seal upon the heart: on the forehead, to confess always; on the heart, to love

always: a seal upon the arm, to work always. Therefore, let his image shine in our confession, shine in our reading, shine in our actions and deeds; so that, if possible, his whole likeness may be expressed in us. He is our head, for the head of man is Christ: he is our eye, through which we see the Father: he is our voice, through which we speak to the Father: he is our right hand, through which we offer our sacrifice to God the Father. He himself is also our seal, which is the sign of charity and perfection; because the loving Father sealed the Son, as we read: Whom the Father sealed, God (John 6:27). Therefore, our charity is Christ. Good charity, when he offered himself to death for his beloved; good charity which forgave sin. And therefore let our soul put on charity, and such charity that is strong like death; for as death is the end of sins, so is charity; because he who loves the Lord, ceases from sinning: For charity does not think evil, nor does it rejoice over wickedness, but sustains all things (1 Corinthians 13:5). For he who does not seek his own possessions, how will he seek those of others? And that death is also strong through the washing, through which all sin is buried and guilt is forgiven. Such was the charity which that Gospel woman showed, of whom the Lord said: Her many sins are forgiven her, because she has loved much (Luke 7:47). And so that death of the holy martyrs is mighty, which wipes away previous guilt; and therefore it is mighty, whose charity is not unequal to the passion of the martyrs, so as to take away the reward of sins.

11. Zeal, moreover, is like the infernal [beings], for the one who has zeal for God does not spare even themselves for Christ. Therefore, love has both death and zeal, and love has the wings of fire. Finally, [we see that] Christ, loving Moses, appeared to him in fire. And Jeremiah, having within him the gift of divine love, said: 'There was a fire burning in my bones, and I am consumed on all sides, and I cannot bear it' (Jer. XX, 9). Therefore, love with the wings of burning fire is good, which flutters through the hearts and minds of the saints, and consumes whatever is material and earthly; it tests whatever is genuine, and improves whatever it touches with its own fire.

12. The Lord Jesus sent this fire on the earth, and faith shone forth, devotion was kindled, charity was illuminated, justice shone. With this fire, He inflamed the hearts of His apostles, as Cleophas testifies, saying: 'Did not our hearts burn within us while He opened the Scriptures?' (Luke 24:32) Therefore, the wings of fire are the divine Scriptures. Finally, He opened the Scriptures, and the fire went forth, and it penetrated the hearts of those who heard. And true wings of fire, because: The words of the Lord are chaste words, silver tried by fire (Psalm 11:7). When Paul also was taken up by Christ, he saw a light shine around him and those who were with him, he fell from fear, and he rose up stronger. Finally, he became an apostle, who had come as a persecutor. The Holy Spirit also descended and filled the whole house where they were sitting, and tongues as of fire were seen divided. Good wings, wings of charity, truly wings that flew through the mouths of the apostles: and wings of fire, because they spoke a purified word.

13. Enoch flew away with wings and was taken up to heaven; Elijah flew away with wings of fire and horses of fire and was carried up to the heights. The Lord God led the people of the fathers through the desert with wings of fire. The Seraphim had these wings when he took coals of fire from the altar, touched the mouth of the prophet, took away his sins, and purified his transgressions. The sons of Levi were cleansed by the fire of these wings, and the peoples of the nations were baptized, as John bears witness, saying of the Lord Jesus: He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matt. III, 11). Deservedly, he wanted to burn his kidneys and his heart like David because he knew that the fiery wings of love should not be feared. Deservedly, the Hebrew

boys did not feel the fires of the burning furnace because the flame of their charity cooled them. And so that we may know more fully that perfect charity has wings, you have heard him say: 'How often have I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings' (Matthew 23:37).

14. Let us therefore take these wings, which, like flames, rise upward. Let each one strip off their soul with dirty clothing and, like gold, prove it cleansed by fire from the filth. For thus the soul is purified, like the best gold. But the true beauty of the soul is virtue and beauty, a truer knowledge of heavenly things; so that it may see that good from which all things depend, itself, however, depending on nothing. Therefore, it lives and receives understanding. For the source of life is that highest good, the desire for which is kindled within us, the pleasure of approaching and mingling with which is the ultimate delight: those who do not see it long for it, and those who see it possess life; therefore it despises all other things, and is gratified by this alone. This is what supplies all substance: while remaining in itself, it gives to others; but it receives nothing from others, concerning which the Prophet says: I said to the Lord: You are my God; for you have no need of my goods (Psalms XV, 2).

15. His wings, the wings of fire. It is necessary for all those who desire to return to paradise to be tested by fire; for it is not written in vain that, after Adam and Eve were ejected from the seat of paradise, God placed a flaming sword at the exit of paradise. It is necessary for all to pass through the flames, whether it be that John the Evangelist, whom the Lord loved so much that he said to Peter about him: If I will that he remain, what is that to you? You follow me (John 21:22). Some doubted his death, we cannot doubt his passing through fire; because he is in paradise, and is not separated from Christ. Whether he be Peter, who received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, who walked upon the sea, he must say: We have passed through fire and water, and thou hast brought us out into a refreshment (Psalm 65:12). But to John, the fiery sword will quickly turn; because no injustice is found in him, whom justice loved. If there was any fault of human weakness in him, divine charity purged it: For his wings are like the wings of fire. Whoever has the fire of charity here, cannot fear the fire of the sword there. To Peter himself, who so often offered his own death for Christ, He says: Pass over, recline. But he said: He has tested us with fire, just as he tested silver.

16. His wings, wings of fire. Therefore, since we have been given the opportunity to fly, let each one awaken gratitude to God within themselves, forgetting what is behind and striving towards what is ahead, towards the goal. Far from the honors of worldly affairs, far from the heat of the world; lest, as the fables tell, the heat of the sun melts the wax and the wax wings, causing them to fall from the sky. For though the weight of words may hinder, they still wanted to declare with poetic wit that flights through the heavens are safe for the maturity of the wise; but the youthful lightness, prone to worldly desires, with wings flowing back, and loosened by the bonds of forgetfulness of truth and the bonds of merits, descends to the earth with greater destruction.

17. The flight is not easy for everyone, it is even difficult for animals on earth with different ways of life. But if the order of our actions suits you, you will see in us that prophet's wheel on the ground, connected to four animals. And you will see Ezekiel once again, for he still sees and is full of life and will continue to be so (Ezek. I, 15 and 16): I say, you will see the wheel within the wheel, gliding smoothly on the ground without stumbling. For the wheel upon the earth, life is fitted to the

virtue of the soul, and formed by a precept in cohesion with the gospel. And the wheel within the midst of the wheel, as life within life, so that the life of the saints is not discordant; but as it was in the previous age, so let it be in the following: or let this usage of the eternal life revolve in this life of the body. When these things are in agreement, then the divine voice will resound, then upon the likeness of the throne a similarity like the appearance of a man will be seen. Here is the man who is the Word, because the Word became flesh (John 1:14): this man is the driver of our animals, the ruler of our morals, who for the sake of our merits, often ascends a chariot, a mountain, or a ship.

18. Place me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for you have preserved for me what is new and what is old. You are my seal, created in my image and likeness. In you shines the image of justice, the image of wisdom, the image of virtue. And since the image of God is in your heart, may it also be in your actions: may the likeness of the Gospel be present in your deeds, so that you may keep my commandments in your conduct. The likeness of the Gospel will be in you if, when someone strikes your cheek, you offer the other one; if you love your enemy; if you take up your cross and follow me. Therefore, I carried the cross for you, so that you would not hesitate to carry it for me. The daughters of Jerusalem heard this, that the Lord God was joining the Church to himself: and because they were considering the greatness of the Word, they considered themselves unworthy of such a marriage; lest they be unable to bear the weight of such a bond, they made excuses, saying:

19. (Vers. 8.) Our little sister, she does not have breasts. For those who want to postpone marriage have customarily made excuses, pretending to have the weakness of a young age and claiming that they do not have breasts, which signify the time of marriageable age. This is usually a common symbol for all virgin brides; when their breasts start to develop, they are considered ready for marriage. Therefore, disturbed that the Bridegroom is urging them to marry out of love, they say:

20. What shall we do for our sister on the day when she speaks within her, or as Symmachus, when he speaks to her? This is the colloquy that usually takes place during the celebration of the betrothal and the confirmation of the marriage. What, then, shall we do, they ask, because the spiritual union presses upon us? They cannot excuse themselves from such a great wedding; no one is so foolish as to consider the union of soul and spirit, or of Christ and the Church, as not blessed. But because the fullness of the Word or the Holy Spirit quivers and shines, and there is nothing that can be equal to them; therefore, they desire to delay, so that by that delay either the soul or the Church may become more perfect. Dicunt ergo:

21. (Verse 9.) If it is a wall, let us build silver receptacles upon it: and if it is a gate, let us carve cedar tablets upon it. The wall is the soul of the holy one. And the Church also has its walls, which it declares to be more perfect: I am a fortified city (Isaiah 27:3). This is the wall that has twelve apostolic gates, through which the entrance into the Church is open to the people of all nations. But although the wall may encompass the entire city, it is still more fortified when it has prepared receptacles in which the defenders of the city can have a safe place to watch and defend. But because this city is rational, and all its hope is in the Word of God, it requires not iron but silver ramparts to repel hostile attacks accustomed to be repulsed by heavenly eloquence rather than bodily pleasures.

22. Supported by this protection, shining with this splendor, one is considered more capable of uniting with Christ. And because Christ is the door, who says: If anyone enters through me, he will be saved (John 10:9); and the church is called a door, because through it the entrance to salvation is open to the people. But so that it is not corrupted by the worms or pests of heretics, the daughters of Jerusalem, or the angels, or the souls of the righteous say: Let us build on it cedar boards, that is, the good fragrance of sublime faith. For the scent of this material is pleasant, which neither worm nor moth can corrupt. Therefore, the use of this material is chosen for the elevation of roofs and the formation of letter elements, with which the young age is imbued with the study of liberal education. Thus, this material is sublime for beauty, light for burden, pleasant for smell, useful for the instrument of knowledge, and suitable for the service of eternal cognition. But just as Christ lovingly urged His bride to the solemnity of spiritual union, so too did the Church, captivated by the splendor of the Word, hasten to the wedding. Therefore, impatient of delay and procrastination, which the daughters of Jerusalem were eager to interweave, he says:

23. (Verse 10.) I am a wall, and my breasts are towers. That is, do not doubt whether I am a wall; for they had said: If he is a wall; I am a wall, she says, and I have not small breasts, but my breasts are like towers. How do you say, then, that I do not have breasts? I understand that my breasts are like towers of wisdom, in which there is abundance, as it is written: And abundance in your towers (Psalm 122:7). With these breasts, that is, with these senses, she considered herself fit for such a marriage. But the daughters of Jerusalem still could not understand, because they could not see the abundance of her blessings. And he added:

24. (Verse 11.) I was in his eyes as one who finds peace; that is, having deliberated on my senses, when I found the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, and guards hearts and senses in Christ Jesus. Such, he says, was I in the eyes of the bridegroom, like one who possesses peace; for it is written: Those who seek peace will rejoice.

25. (Verse 12.) I, he said, am a fortified city, I am a besieged city (Isaiah 27:3). It is fortified by these walls, it is defended by being besieged. And truly the walls are the soul, which is extended in the camp. Hence she herself says in the Song of Songs: I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers (Verse 10). A good wall which the Lord painted, as he himself says: I have painted your walls in my hands, and you are always in my sight (Isaiah 49:16). A good soul which has God as its watchman, and is in his hands; like the prophetic soul, which is entrusted to the hands of God as a spirit (Psalm 31:6), and which is in the sight of God: For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous; as he himself also says: I was in his eyes like one who finds peace. It has good towers, which have both the word of intelligibles and the discipline of morals. Therefore, to those who are in a hurry, the spiritual union is celebrated, desired with mutual consent. And so, like a wedding song, the Spirit rejoiced in the prophet, saying:

26. (Verse 11.) A vineyard was made for Solomon in Baal-hamon, he gave his vineyard to those who keep it. Therefore the Spirit cries out, A congregation of peoples is planted, but the vine, rooted in the eternal, has subjected gentle hearts under the yoke of the Word. However, it is planted among the multitude of nations. For Beel-hamon, Symmachus, Aquila, and other translations have taught that this should be understood in the Greek language. The old covenant which could not bear fruit has been rejected, a vineyard has been given to new and faithful cultivators who can not only bear fruit but also guard it. Therefore, one sheep has gone astray, but

in being called back it has filled the spaces of the entire world. The error of one sheep had led it astray, but by the grace of the Lord it has gathered a multitude of peoples. Man has erred, but in the Church there is now a strong wall. Adam erred, but David is the wall who did not forget the commands of God. Therefore, this vineyard, guarded and protected by spiritual means, produces a thousand fruits for Christ, and two hundred fruits for the guardians. And so the Church says:

27. (Verse 12.) My vineyard is in front of me like a thousand of Solomon, and two hundred fruit-bearing servants. The perfection and fullness of Christ is the portion of little ones. You have this mystery in Genesis, where Joseph gives Benjamin, his younger brother, five portions while giving one portion to each of his other brothers (Gen. 43:34). Therefore, the Lord is bestowed with the portion and prerogative of the five senses, which He surely gives to the one whom He loves, just as He loved Paul and gave him the primacy of wisdom for the calling of the gentiles. Let the fear of these sacred virgins cease, to whom the Church has given such great protection, which, solicitous for the success of its tender offspring, like a wall grows with abundant towers: until, the hostile attack of the besiegement being loosened, it acquires peace through the strength of maternal protection to the powerful youth. Hence, the Prophet says: Let peace be in your strength, and abundance in your towers (Psalm 122:7).

28. (Verse 13.) You who sit in the gardens, friends attending to your voice, intimate your voice to me. Therefore, this soul having the grace of her abundant breasts, enters into the gardens, and finding there the Bridegroom sitting and conversing with friends, says: You who sit in the gardens, intimate your voice to me: to me, she says, not to friends.

29. You who sit in the gardens, while your friends listen to your voice, whisper your voice to me. For they were delighted that Christ was sitting in the gardens, and his friends who were placed in the gardens were attentive to his voice. But because those friends were from the heavens, Archangels or Dominions and Thrones (for humans were expelled from paradise because of their disobedience to heavenly commandments, and therefore the Church still could not hear his voice, which it desired to hear), therefore he says: Whisper your voice to me. And so, if we want Him to dwell in us, let us be closed and fortified gardens, let us bear the flowers of virtues, the sweetness of graces, so that we may be able to hear the Lord Jesus speaking with the angels while He is disputing. But because it was going to happen that when the Church had reached its fullness, it would be tried by various persecutions; therefore, when he was delighted with the grace of the Word, he suddenly perceives the snares of the persecutors: and what he feared more for the Bridegroom than for himself, or because Christ is more desired by persecutors in us, therefore he says:

30. (Verse 14.) Flee, my brother, and be like a young deer or a young stag on the mountains of spices. For the weak flee, those who could not bear heavier trials. Therefore it is written, that we should flee from cities to cities: and if we are persecuted in this city, let us flee to another. Therefore, let the weak flee from those who pursue them, or let them flee from the lowest places and go to the mountains of spices, where they can bring the fragrance of blessed resurrection through martyrdom. The mountains of spices are holy. Christ takes refuge in them; because his foundations are on holy mountains (Psalm 86:1). Therefore he takes refuge in those who are his stable foundations. He flees in us, he stands firm in them. Therefore, Paul is a mountain of spices, who can say: We are the good odor of Christ to God (2 Corinthians 2:15). The mountain of spices

is David, whose prayer's scent rose up to the Lord, and therefore he said: Let my prayer be directed as incense in your sight (Psalm 140:2).

However, Symmachus and Aquila have interpreted it as Christ saying to the Church: 'You who sit in gardens, that is, you now sit in gardens, worthy of the heavenly paradise; and therefore, whisper your voice to me, to whom friends are attentive: I also desire to hear it. The Church began to be in the gardens after Christ was captured in the gardens.'

32. Flee, my brother, and become like a deer or the fawn of a deer, in the mountains of spices. For you are hated by serpents that crawl on the ground, and you flee from dogs, and are threatened by crawling serpents. You can only dwell in the heights of virtues, and only stay with such daughters of the Church who can say: For we are the good smell of Christ to God (2 Corinthians 2:15). But to some, we are the smell of death leading to death, and to others, we are the smell of life leading to life, especially to those who hope in the smell of the Lord's resurrection with a lively faith. These are the mountains of spices, which received the body of the Lord Jesus and bound it in linen with spices. For whoever believed that Jesus died, and was buried, and rose again, they raised the highest peak of true faith with the heights of virtues. So where is Christ sought, namely in the heart of a wise priest?

33. Flee, my brother. He urges that the Bridegroom should flee, for she will now be able to follow the one fleeing from earth herself. He says that she should be like the damsel who escapes from the nets; for she wants to flee herself and fly above the world. Therefore, let us flee to our true homeland. There our country is, and the Father from whom we are created, where is the city of Jerusalem, which is the mother of all. But what is fleeing? It is not certainly the fleeing of feet, which are of the body; for wherever they run, they run on earth, and they pass from one ground to another. Let us not flee from ships or chariots, or horses that are bound and fall; but let us flee in mind and eyes, or let us accustom our inner feet to see the things that are clear and bright, to gaze upon the countenance of self-control and moderation, and all virtues; in which there is nothing rough, nothing obscure and twisted: and let someone look at himself and his conscience, let him cleanse that eye; lest he have anything filthy. For what is seen should not be inconsistent with the one who sees; since God wanted us to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Therefore, that good thing is known to us, and it is not far from each one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and exist; as some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' Being, then, the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." - Acts 17:28-31 Let us be similar to this good, and let us work according to what is good. This is the good that surpasses all work, surpasses all mind and understanding, it is what always remains, giving life and being to all; because Christ is the source of all life, of whom the prophet says: In his shadow we will live. Now our life is hidden in Christ: but when Christ, our life, appears, then we will also appear with him in glory. So let us not fear death; for it is the rest of the body, but freedom or absolution for the soul. And let us not truly fear him who can kill the flesh, but cannot kill the soul; for we do not fear him who can take away our clothing, but we do not fear him who can steal from us, but he cannot.

Therefore, let us be souls, if we wish to be Hebrews, the companions of Jacob, that is, his imitators. Let us be souls, but our limbs are clothing: indeed, clothing must be preserved so that it does not tear or grow old, but he who uses them should above all preserve and guard himself.

Concerning Repentance - Book 1

Book I.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Chapter XIII.

Chapter XIV.

Chapter XV.

Chapter XVI.

Chapter XVII.

Book I.

Chapter I.

St. Ambrose writes in praise of gentleness, pointing out how needful that grace is for the rulers of the Church, and commended to them by the meekness of Christ. As the Novatians have fallen away from this, they cannot be considered disciples of Christ. Their pride and harshness are inveighed against.

1. If the highest end of virtue is that which aims at the advancement of most, gentleness is the most lovely of all, which does not hurt even those whom it condemns, and usually renders those whom it condemns worthy of absolution. Moreover, it is the only virtue which has led to the increase of the Church which the Lord sought at the price of His own Blood, imitating the

lovingkindness of heaven, and aiming at the redemption of all, seeks this end with a gentleness which the ears of men can endure, in presence of which their hearts do not sink, nor their spirits quail.

2. For he who endeavours to amend the faults of human weakness ought to bear this very weakness on his own shoulders, let it weigh upon himself, not cast it off. For we read that the Shepherd in the Gospel¹ carried the weary sheep, and did not cast it off. And Solomon says: "Be not overmuch righteous;"² for restraint should temper righteousness. For how shall he offer himself to you for healing whom you despise, who thinks that he will be an object of contempt, not of compassion, to his physician?

3. Therefore had the Lord Jesus compassion upon us in order to call us to Himself, not frighten us away. He came in meekness, He came in humility, and so He said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."³ So, then, the Lord Jesus refreshes, and does not shut out nor cast off, and fitly chose such disciples as should be interpreters of the Lord's will, as should gather together and not drive away the people of God. Whence it is clear that they are not to be counted amongst the disciples of Christ, who think that harsh and proud opinions should be followed rather than such as are gentle and meek; persons who, while they themselves seek God's mercy, deny it to others, such as are the teachers of the Novatians, who call themselves pure.⁴

4. What can show more pride than this, since the Scripture says: "No one is free from sin, not even an infant of a day old;"⁵ and David cries out: "Cleanse me from my sin."⁶ Are they more holy than David, of whose family Christ vouchsafed to be born in the mystery of the Incarnation, whose descendant is that heavenly Hall which received the world's Redeemer in her virgin womb? For what is more harsh than to inflict a penance which they do not relax, and by refusing pardon to take away the incentive to penance and repentance?⁷ Now no one can repent to good purpose unless he hopes for mercy.

Chapter II. The assertion of the Novatians that they refuse communion only to the lapsed agrees neither with the teaching of holy Scripture nor with their own. And whereas they allege as a pretext their reverence for the divine power, they really are contemning it, inasmuch as it is a sign of low estimation not to use the whole of a power entrusted to one. But the Church rightly claims the power of binding and loosing, which heretics have not, inasmuch as she has received it from the Holy Spirit, against Whom they act presumptuously.

5. But they say that those should not be restored to communion who have fallen into denial⁸ of the faith. If they made the crime of sacrilege the only exception to receiving forgiveness, they would be acting harshly indeed, and, as it would seem, would be in opposition to the divine utterances only, while consistent with their own assertions. For when the Lord forgave all sins, He made an exception of none. But since, as it were after the fashion of the Stoics, they think that all sins are equal in gravity, and assert that he who has stolen a common fowl, as they say, no less than he who has smothered his father, should be for ever excluded from the divine mysteries, how can they select those guilty of one special offence, since even they themselves cannot deny that it is most unjust that the penalty of one should extend to many?⁹

6. They affirm that they are showing great reverence for God, to Whom alone they reserve the power of forgiving sins. But in truth none do Him greater injury than they who choose to prune His commandments and reject the office entrusted to them. For inasmuch as the Lord Jesus Himself said in the Gospel: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit whosoever sins ye forgive they are forgiven unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained,"¹⁰ Who is it that honours Him most, he who obeys His bidding or he who rejects it?

7. The Church holds fast its obedience on either side, by both retaining and remitting sin; heresy is on the one side cruel, and on the other disobedient; wishes to bind what it will not loosen, and will not loosen what it has bound, whereby it condemns itself by its own sentence. For the Lord willed that the power of binding and of loosing should be alike, and sanctioned each by a similar condition. So he who has not the power to loose has not the power to bind. For as, according to the Lord's word, he who has the power to bind has also the power to loose, their teaching destroys itself, inasmuch as they who deny that they have the power of loosing ought also to deny that of binding. For how can the one be allowed and the other disallowed? It is plain and evident that either each is allowed or each is disallowed in the case of those to whom each has been given. Each is allowed to the Church, neither to heresy, for this power has been entrusted to priests alone. Rightly, therefore, does the Church claim it, which has true priests; heresy, which has not the priests of God,¹¹ cannot claim it. And by not claiming this power heresy pronounces its own sentence, that not possessing priests it cannot claim priestly power. And so in their shameless obstinacy a shamefaced acknowledgment meets our view.

8. Consider, too, the point that he who has received the Holy Ghost has also received the power of forgiving and of retaining sin. For thus it is written: "Receive the Holy Spirit: whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."¹² So, then, he who has not received power to forgive sins has not received the Holy Spirit. The office of the priest is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and His right it is specially to forgive and to retain sins. How, then, can they claim His gift who distrust His power and His right?

9. And what is to be said of their excessive arrogance? For although the Spirit of God is more inclined to mercy than to severity, their will is opposed to that which He wills, and they do that which He wills not; whereas it is the office of a judge to punish, but of mercy to forgive. It would be more endurable, Novatian, that thou shouldst forgive than that thou shouldst bind. In the one case thou wouldst assume the right as one who rarely offended; in the other thou wouldst forgive as one who had fellowfeeling with the misery of sin.

Chapter III. To the argument of the Novatians, that they only deny forgiveness in the case of greater sins, St. Ambrose replies, that this is also an offence against God, Who gave the power to forgive all sins, but that of course a more severe penance must follow in case of graver sins. He points out likewise that this distinction as to the gravity of sins assigns, as it were, severity to God, Whose mercy in the Incarnation is overlooked by the Novatians.

10. But they say that, with the exception of graver sins, they grant forgiveness to those of less weight. This is not the teaching of your father, Novatian, who thought that no one should be admitted to penance, considering that what he was unable to loose he would not bind,¹³ lest by binding he should inspire the hope that he would loose. So that your father is condemned by your own sentence, you who make a distinction between sins, some of which you consider that you can

loose, and others which you consider to be without remedy. But God does not make a distinction, Who has promised His mercy to all, and granted to His priests the power of loosing without any exception. But he who has heaped up sin must also increase his penitence. For greater sins are washed away by greater weeping. So neither is Novatian justified, who excluded all from pardon; nor are you, who imitate and, at the same time, condemn him, for you diminish zeal for penance where it ought to be increased, since the mercy of Christ has taught us that graver sins must be made good by greater efforts.

11. And what perversity it is to claim for yourselves what can be forgiven, and, as you say, to reserve to God what cannot be forgiven. This would be to reserve to oneself the cases for mercy, to God those for severity. And what as to that saying: "Let God be true but every man a liar, as it is written, That Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and overcome when Thou art judged"?¹⁴ In order, then, that we may recognize that the God of mercy is rather prone to indulgence than to severity, it is said: "I desire mercy rather than sacrifice."¹⁵ How, then, can your sacrifice, who refuse mercy, be acceptable to God, since He says that He wills not the death of a sinner, but his correction?¹⁶

12. Interpreting which truth, the Apostle says: "For God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us."¹⁷ He does not say "in the likeness of flesh," for Christ took on Himself the reality not the likeness of flesh; nor does He say in the likeness of sin, for He did no sin, but was made sin for us. Yet He came "in the likeness of sinful flesh;" that is, He took on Him the likeness of sinful flesh, the likeness, because it is written: "He is man, and who shall know Him?"¹⁸ He was man in the flesh, according to His human nature, that He might be recognized, but in power was above man, that He might not be recognized, so He has our flesh, but has not the failings of this flesh.

13. For He was not begotten, as is every man, by intercourse between male and female, but born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin; He received a stainless body, which not only no sins polluted, but which neither the generation nor the conception had been stained by any admixture of defilement. For we men are all born under sin, and our very origin is in evil, as we read in the words of David: "For lo, I was conceived in wickedness, and in sin did my mother bring me forth."¹⁹ Therefore the flesh of Paul was a body of death, as he himself says: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"²⁰ But the flesh of Christ condemned sin, which He felt not at His birth, and crucified by His death, so that in our flesh there might be justification through grace, in which before there had been pollution by guilt.

14. What, then, shall we say to this, except that which the Apostle said: "If God is for us, who is against us? He who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how has He not with Him also given us all things? Who shall lay a charge against the elect? It is God Who justifieth, who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Who died, yea, Who also rose again, Who is at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us."²¹ Novatian then brings charges against those for whom Christ intercedes. Those whom Christ has redeemed unto salvation Novatian condemns to death. Those to whom Christ says: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am gentle,"²² Novatian says, I am not gentle. On those to whom Christ says: "Ye shall find rest for your souls, for My yoke is pleasant and My burden is light,"²³ Novatian lays a heavy burden and a hard yoke.

Chapter IV.

St. Ambrose proceeds with the proof of the divine mercy, and shows by the testimony of the Gospels that it prevails over severity, and he adduces the instance of athletes to show that of those who have denied Christ before men, all are not to be esteemed alike.

15. Although what has been said sufficiently shows how inclined the Lord Jesus is to mercy, let Him further instruct us with His own words, when He would arm us against the assaults of persecution. "Fear not," He says, "those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul, but rather fear Him Who can cast both body and soul into hell."²⁴ And farther on: "Every one, therefore, who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father, Who is in heaven, but he who shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father, Who is in heaven."²⁵

16. Where He says that He will confess, He will confess "every one."²⁶ Where He speaks of denying, He does not speak of denying "every one." For, whereas in the former clause He says, "Every one who shall confess Me, him will I confess," we should expect that in the following clause He would also say, "Every one who shall deny Me." But in order that He might not appear to deny every one, He concludes: "But he who shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny." He promises favour to every one, but He does not threaten the penalty to every one. He makes more of that which is merciful. He makes less of what is penal.

17. And this is written not only in that book of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, which is written according to Matthew, but it is also to be read in that which we have according to Luke,²⁷ that we might know that neither had thus related the saying by chance.

18. We have said that it is thus written. Let us now consider the meaning. "Every one," He says, "who shall confess Me," that is to say, of whatever age, of whatever condition he may be, who shall confess Me, he shall have Me as the Rewarder of his confession. Whereas the expression is, "every one," no one who shall confess is excluded from the reward. But it is not said in like manner, "Every one who shall deny shall be denied," for it is possible that a man overcome by torture may deny God in word, and yet worship Him in his heart.

19. Is the case the same with him who denies voluntarily, and with him whom torture, not his own will, has led to denial? How unfit were it, since with men credit is given for endurance in a struggle, that one should assert that it had no value with God! For often in this world's athletic contests the public crown together with the victors even the vanquished whose conduct has been approved, especially if perchance they have seen that they lost the victory by some trick or fraud. And shall Christ suffer His athletes, whom He has seen to yield for a moment to severe torments, to remain without forgiveness?

20. Shall not He take account of their toil, Who will not cast off for ever even those whom He casts off? For David says: "God will not cast off for ever,"²⁸ and in opposition to this shall we listen to heresy asserting, "He does cast off for ever"? David says: "God will not for ever cut off His mercy from generation to generation, nor will He forget to be merciful."²⁹ This is the prophet's declaration, and there are those who would maintain a forgetfulness of mercy on God's part.

Chapter V. The objection from the unchangeableness of God is answered from several passages of Scripture, wherein God promises forgiveness to sinners on their repentance. St. Ambrose also shows that mercy will be more readily accorded to such as have sinned, as it were, against their will, which he illustrates by the case of prisoners taken in war, and by language put into the mouth

of the devil.

21. But they say that they make these assertions in order not to seem to make God liable to change, as He would be if He forgave those with whom He was angry. What then? Shall we reject the utterances of God and follow their opinions? But God is not to be judged by the statements of others, but by His own words. What mark of His mercy have we more ready at hand than that He Himself, through the prophet Hoses, is at once merciful as though reconciled to those whom in His anger He had threatened? For He says: "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee, or what shall I do unto thee, O Judah? Your kindness," etc.³⁰ And further on: "How shall I establish thee? I will make thee as Admah, and as Zeboim."³¹ In the midst of His indignation He hesitates, as it were, with fatherly love, doubting how He can give over the wanderer to punishment; for although the Jew deserves it, God yet takes counsel with Himself. For immediately after having said, "I will make thee as Admah and as Zeboim," which cities, owing to their nearness to Sodom, suffered together in like destruction, He adds, "My heart is turned against Me, My compassion is aroused, I will not do according to the fierceness of Mine anger."³²

22. Is it not evident that the Lord Jesus is angry with us when we sin in order that He may convert us through fear of His indignation? His indignation, then, is not the carrying out of vengeance, but rather the working out of forgiveness, for these are His words: "If thou shalt turn and lament, thou shalt be saved."³³ He waits for our lamentations here, that is, in time, that He may spare us those which shall be eternal. He waits for our tears, that He may pour forth His goodness. So in the Gospel, having pity on the tears of the widow, He raised her son. He waits for our conversion, that He may Himself restore us to grace, which would have continued with us had no fall overtaken us. But He is angry because we have by our sins incurred guilt, in order that we may be humbled; we are humbled, in order that we may be found worthy rather of pity than of punishment.

23. Jeremiah, too, may certainly teach when he says: "For the Lord will not cast off for ever; for after He has humbled, He will have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies, Who hath not humbled from His whole heart nor cast off the children of men."³⁴ This passage we certainly find in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and from it, and from what follows, we note that the Lord humbles all the prisoners of the earth under His feet,³⁵ in order that we may escape His judgment. But He does not bring down the sinner even to the earth with His whole heart Who raises the poor even from the dust and the needy from the dunghill. For He brings not down with His whole heart Who reserves the intention of forgiving.

24. But if He brings not down every sinner with His whole heart, how much less does He bring down him with His whole heart who has not sinned with his whole heart! For as He said of the Jews: "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me,"³⁶ so perhaps He may say of some of the fallen: "They denied Me with their lips, but in heart they are with Me. It was pain which overcame them, not unfaithfulness which turned them aside."³⁷ But some without cause refuse pardon to those whose faith the persecutor himself confessed up to the point of striving to overcome it by torture. They denied the Lord once, but confess Him daily; they denied Him in word, but confess Him with groans, with cries, and with tears; they confess Him with willing words, not under compulsion. They yielded, indeed, for a moment to the temptation of the devil, but even the devil afterwards departed from those whom he was unable to claim as his own. He yielded to their weeping, he yielded to their repentance, and after making them his own lost those

whom he attached when they belonged to Another.

25. Is not the case such as when any one carries away captive the people of a conquered city? The captive is led away, but against his will. He must of necessity go to foreign lands, does not willingly make the journey; he takes his native land with him in his heart, and seeks an opportunity to return. What then? When any such return, does any one urge that they should not be received; with less honour indeed, but with readier will, that the enemy may have nothing with which to reproach them? If you pardon an armed man who was able to fight, do you not pardon him in whom faith alone waged the battle?

26. If we were to enquire what is the opinion of the devil concerning those who have fallen after this sort, would he not probably reply: "This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me? For how can he be with me who does not depart from Christ? Without any cause do they appear to honour me who keep the doctrine of Jesus, and I thought that they would teach mine. They condemn me all the more when they forsake me after trial. Indeed Jesus is more glorified in these, when He receives them on their return to Him. All the angels rejoice, for in heaven there is greater joy over one sinner that repents, than over ninety and nine just persons who need not repentance. I am triumphed over in heaven and on earth. Christ loses nothing when they who came to me with weeping return with longing to the Church, and I am in danger even as regards my own, who will learn that in reality there is nothing here where men are led on by present rewards, but that there must be very much there where groans and tears and fasts are preferred to my feasts."

Chapter VI. The Novatians, by excluding such from the banquet of Christ, imitate not indeed the good Samaritan, but the proud lawyer, the priest, and the Levite who are blamed in the Gospel, and are indeed worse than these.

27. Do you then, O Novatians, shut out these? For what is it when you refuse the hope of forgiveness but to shut out? But the Samaritan did not pass by the man who had been left half dead by the robbers; he dressed his wounds with oil and wine, first pouring in oil in order to comfort them; he set the wounded man on his own beast, on which he bore all his sins; nor did the Shepherd despise His wandering sheep.

28. But you say: "Touch me not." You who wish to justify yourselves say, "He is not our neighbour," being more proud than that lawyer who wished to tempt Christ, for he said "Who is my neighbour?" He asked, you deny, going on like that priest, like that Levite passing by him whom you ought to have taken and tended, and not receiving them into the inn for whom Christ paid the two pence, whose neighbour Christ bids you to become that you might show mercy to him. For he is our neighbour whom not only a similar condition has joined, but whom mercy has bound to us. You make yourself strange to him through pride, in vain puffing up yourself in your carnal mind, and not holding the Head.³⁸ For if you held the Head you would consider that you must not forsake him for whom Christ died. If you held the Head you would consider that the whole body, by joining together rather than by separating, grows unto the increase of God³⁹ by the bond of charity and the rescue of a sinner.

29. When, then, you take away all the fruits of repentance, what do you say but this: Let no one who is wounded enter our inn, let no one be healed in our Church? With us the sick are not cared

for, we are whole, we have no need of a physician, for He Himself says: "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick"

Chapter VII.

St. Ambrose, addressing Christ, complains of the Novatians, and shows that they have no part with Christ, Who wishes all men to be saved.

30. So, then, Lord Jesus, come wholly to Thy Church, since Novatian makes excuse. Novatian says, "I have bought a yoke of oxen," and he puts not on the light yoke of Christ, but lays upon his shoulders a heavy burden which he is not able to bear. Novatian held back Thy servants by whom he was invited, treated them contemptuously and slew them, polluting them with the stain of a reiterated baptism. Send forth, therefore, into the highways, and gather together good and bad,⁴⁰ bring the weak, the blind, and the lame into Thy Church. Command that Thy house be filled, bring in all unto Thy supper, for Thou wilt make him whom Thou shalt call worthy, if he follow Thee. He indeed is rejected who has not the wedding garment, that is, the vestment of charity, the veil of grace. Send forth I pray Thee to all.

31. Thy Church does not excuse herself from Thy supper, Novatian makes excuse. Thy family says not, "I am whole, I need not the physician," but it says: "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved."⁴¹ The likeness of Thy Church is that woman who went behind and touched the hem of Thy garment, saying within herself: "If I do but touch His garment I shall be whole."⁴² So the Church confesses her wounds, but desires to be healed.

32. And Thou indeed, O Lord, desirest that all should be healed, but all do not wish to be healed. Novatian wishes not, who thinks that he is whole. Thou, O Lord, sayest that Thou art sick, and feelest our infirmity in the least of us, saying: "I was sick and ye visited Me."⁴³ Novatian does not visit that least one in whom Thou desirest to be visited. Thou saidst to Peter when he excused himself from having his feet washed by Thee: "If I wash not thy feet, thou wilt have no part with Me."⁴⁴ What fellowship, then, can they have with Thee, who receive not the keys of the kingdom of heaven, saying that they ought not to remit sins?

33. And this confession is indeed rightly made by them, for they have not the succession of Peter, who hold not the chair of Peter, which they rend by wicked schism; and this, too, they do, wickedly denying that sins can be forgiven even in the Church, whereas it was said to Peter: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven."⁴⁵ And the vessel of divine election himself said: "If ye have forgiven anything to any one, I forgive also, for what I have forgiven I have done it for your sakes in the person of Christ."⁴⁶ Why, then, do they read Paul's writings, if they think that he has erred so wickedly as to claim for himself the right of his Lord? But he claimed what he had received, he did not usurp that which was not due to him.

Chapter VIII.

It was the Lord's will to confer great gifts on His disciples. Further, the Novatians confute themselves by the practices of laying on of hands and of baptism, since it is by the same power that sins are remitted in penance and in baptism. Their conduct is then contrasted with that of our Lord.

34. It is the will of the Lord that His disciples should possess great powers; it is His will that the same things which He did when on earth should be done in His Name by His servants. For He said: "Ye shall do greater things than these."⁴⁷ He gave them power to raise the dead. And whereas He could Himself have restored to Saul the use of his sight, He nevertheless sent him to His disciple Ananias, that by his blessing Saul's eyes might be restored, the sight of which he had lost.⁴⁸ Peter also He bade walk with Himself on the sea, and because he faltered He blamed him for lessening the grace given him by the weakness of his faith.⁴⁹ He Who Himself was the light of the world granted to His disciples to be the light of the world through grace.⁵⁰ And because He purposed to descend from heaven and to ascend thither again, He took up Elijah into heaven to restore him again to earth at the time which should please Him. And being baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire, He foreshadowed the Sacrament of Baptism at the hands of John.⁵¹

35. And in fine He gave all gifts to His disciples, of whom He said: "In My Name they shalt cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall do well."⁵² So, then, He gave them all things, but there is no power of man exercised in these things, in which the grace of the divine gift operates.

36. Why, then, do you lay on hands, and believe it to be the effect of the blessing, if perchance some sick person recovers? Why do you assume that any can be cleansed by you from the pollution of the devil? Why do you baptize if sins cannot be remitted by man? If baptism is certainly the remission of all sins, what difference does it make whether priests claim that this power is given to them in penance or at the font? In each the mystery is one.

37. But you say that the grace of the mysteries works in the font. What works, then, in penance? Does not the Name of God do the work? What then? Do you, when you choose, claim for yourselves the grace of God, and when you choose reject it? But this is a mark of insolent presumption, not of holy fear, when those who wish to do penance are despised by you. You cannot, forsooth, endure the tears of the weepers; your eyes cannot bear the coarse clothing, the filth of the squalid; with proud eyes and puffed-up hearts you delicate ones say with angry tones, "Touch me not, for I am pure."

38. The Lord said indeed to Mary Magdalene, "Touch Me not,"⁵³ but He Who was pure did not say, "because I am pure." Do you, Novatian, dare to call yourself pure, whilst, even if you were pure as regards your acts, you would be made impure by this saying alone? Isaiah says: "O wretched that I am, and pricked to the heart; for that being a man, and having unclean lips, I dwell also in the midst of a people having unclean lips,"⁵⁴ and do you say, "I am clean," when, as it is written, not even an infant of a day old is pure?⁵⁵ David says, "And cleanse me from my sin,"⁵⁶ whom for his tender heart the grace of God often cleansed; are you pure who are so unrighteous as to have no tenderness, as to see the mote in your brother's eye, but not to consider the beam which is in your own eye? For with God no one who is unjust is pure. And what is more unjust than to desire to have your sins forgiven you, and yet yourself to think that he who entreats you ought not to be forgiven? What is more unjust than to justify yourself in that wherein you condemn another, whilst you yourself are committing worse offences?

39. Then, too, the Lord Jesus when about to consecrate⁵⁷ the forgiveness of our sins replied to John, who said: "I ought to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? Suffer it now, for thus it

becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."58 And the Lord indeed came to a sinner, though indeed He had no sin, and desired to be baptized, having no need of cleansing; who, then, can tolerate you, who think there is no need for you to be cleansed by penance, because you say you are cleansed by grace, as though it were now impossible for you to sin?

Chapter IX. By collating similar passages with 1 Sam. iii. 25, St. Ambrose shows that the meaning is not that no one shall intercede, but that the intercessor must be worthy as were Moses and Jeremiah, at whose prayers we read that God spared Israel.

40. But you Say, It is written: "If a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?"59 First of all, as I already said before, I might allow you to make that objection if you refused penance to those only who denied the faith. But what difficulty does that question produce? For it is not written, "No one shall entreat for him;" but, "Who shall entreat?" that is to say, the question is, Who in such a case can entreat? The entreaty is not excluded.

41. Then you have in the fifteenth Psalm "Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon Thy holy hill?"60 It is not that no one, but that he who is approved shall dwell there, nor does it say that no one shall rest, but he who is chosen shall rest. And that you may know that this is true, it is said not much later in the twenty-fourth Psalm: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place?"61 The writer implies, not any ordinary person, or one of the common sort, but only a man of excellent life and of singular merit. And that we may understand that when the question is asked, Who? it does not imply no one, but some special one is meant, after having said "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" the Psalmist adds: "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lift up his mind unto vanity."62 And elsewhere it is said: "Who is wise and he shall understand these things?"63 And in the Gospel: "Who is the faithful and wise steward, whom the Lord shall set over His household to give them their measure of wheat in due season?"64 And that we may understand that He speaks of such as really exist, the Lord added: "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing."65 And I am of opinion that where it is said, "Lord, who is like unto Thee?"66 it is not meant that none is like, for the Son is the image of the Father.

42. We must then understand in the same manner, "Who shall entreat for him?" as implying: It must be some one of excellent life who shall entreat for him who has sinned against the Lord. The greater the sin, the more worthy must be the prayers that are sought. For it was not any one of the common people who prayed for the Jewish people, but Moses,67 when forgetful of their covenant they worshipped the head of the calf. Was Moses wrong? Certainly he was not wrong in praying, who both merited and obtained that for which he asked. For what should such love not obtain as that of his when he offered himself for the people and said: "And now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin, forgive; but if not, blot me out of the book of life."68 We see that he does not think of himself, like a man full of fancies and scruples, whether he may incur the risk of some offence, as Novatian says he dreads that he might, but rather, thinking of all and forgetful of himself, he was not afraid lest he should offend, so that he might rescue and free the people from danger of offence.

43. Rightly, then, is it said: "Who shall entreat for him?" It implies that it must be such an one as Moses to offer himself for those who sin, or such as Jeremiah, who, though the Lord said to him, "Pray not thou for this people,"69 and yet he prayed and obtained their forgiveness. For at the intercession of the prophet, and the entreaty of so great a seer, the Lord was moved and said to

Jerusalem, which had meanwhile repented for its sins, and had said: "O Almighty Lord God of Israel, the soul in anguish, and the troubled spirit crieth unto Thee, hear, O Lord, and have mercy."⁷⁰ And the Lord bids them lay aside the garments of mourning, and to cease the groanings of repentance, saying: "Put off, O Jerusalem, the garment of thy mourning and affliction. and clothe thyself in beauty, the glory which God hath given thee for ever."⁷¹

Chapter X.

St. John did not absolutely forbid that prayer should be made for those who "sin unto death," since he knew that Moses, Jeremiah, and Stephen had so prayed, and he himself implies that forgiveness is not to be denied them.

44. Such intercessors, then, must be sought for after very grievous sins, for if any ordinary persons pray they are not heard.

45. So that point of yours will have no weight, which you take from the Epistle of John, where he says: "He who knows that his brother sinneth a sin not unto death, let him ask, and God will give him life, because he sinned not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning it do I say, let him ask."⁷² He was not speaking to Moses and Jeremiah, but to the people, who must seek another intercessor for their sins; the people, for whom it is sufficient they entreat God for their lighter faults, and consider that pardon for weightier sins must be reserved for the prayers of the just. For how could John say that graver sins should not be prayed for, when he had read that Moses prayed and obtained his request, where there had been wilful casting off of faith, and knew that Jeremiah also had entreated?

46. How could John say that we should not pray for the sin unto death, who himself in the Apocalypse wrote the message to the angel of the Church of Pergamos? "Thou hast there those that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to put a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrines of the Nicolaitans. Repent likewise, or else I will come to thee quickly."⁷³ Do you see that the same God Who requires repentance promises forgiveness? And then He says: "He that hath ears let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna."⁷⁴

47. Did not John himself know that Stephen prayed for his persecutors, who had not been able even to listen to the Name of Christ, when he said of those very men by whom he was being stoned: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"?⁷⁵ And we see the result of this prayer in the case of the Apostle, for Paul, who kept the garments of those who were stoning Stephen, not long after became an apostle by the grace of God, having before been a persecutor.

Chapter XI. The passage quoted from St. John's Epistle is confirmed by another in which salvation is promised to those who believe in Christ, which refutes the Novatians who try to induce the lapsed to believe, although denying them pardon. Furthermore, many who had lapsed have received the grace of martyrdom, whilst the example of the good Samaritan shows that we must not abandon those in whom even the faintest amount of faith is still alive.

48. Since, then, we have spoken of the general Epistle of St. John, let us enquire whether the writings of John in the Gospel agree with your interpretation. For he writes that the Lord said: "God

so loved this world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that every one that believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."76 If, then, you wish to reclaim any one of the lapsed, do you exhort him to believe, or not to believe? Undoubtedly you exhort him to believe. But, according to the Lord's words, he who believes shall have everlasting life. How, then, will you forbid to pray for him, who has a claim to everlasting life? since faith is of divine grace, as the Apostle teaches where he speaks of the differences of gifts, for "to another is given faith by the same Spirit."77 And the disciples say to the Lord: "Increase our faith."78 He then who has faith has life, and he who has life is certainly not shut out from pardon; "that every one," it is said, "that believeth on Him should not perish." Since it is said, Every one, no one is shut out, no one is excepted, for He does not except him who has lapsed, if only afterwards he believes effectually.

49. We find that many have at length recovered themselves after a fall, and have suffered for the Name of God. Can we deny fellowship with the martyrs to these to whom the Lord Jesus has not denied it? Do we dare to say that life is not restored to those to whom Christ has given a crown? As, then, a crown is given to many after they have lapsed, so, too, if they believe, their faith is restored, which faith is the gift of God, as you read: "Because unto you it hath been granted by God not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer in His behalf."79 Is it possible that he who has the gift of God should not have His forgiveness?

50. Now it is not a single but a twofold grace that every one who believes should also suffer for the Lord Jesus. He, then, who believes receives his grace, but he receives a second, if his faith be crowned by suffering. For neither was Peter without grace before he suffered, but when he suffered he received a second gift. And many who have not had the grace to suffer for Christ have nevertheless had the grace of believing on Him.51. Therefore it is said: "That every one that believeth in Him should not perish." Let no one, that is, of whatever condition, after whatever fall, fear that he will perish. For it may come to pass that the good Samaritan of the Gospel may find some one going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, that is, falling back from the martyr's conflict to the pleasures of this life and the comforts of the world; wounded by robbers, that is, by persecutors, and left half dead; that good Samaritan, Who is the Guardian of our souls (for the word Samaritan means Guardian),80 may, I say, not pass by him but tend and heal him.81

52. Perchance He therefore passes him not by, because He sees in him some signs of life, so that there is hope that he may recover. Does it not seem to you that he who has fallen is half alive if faith sustains any breath of life? For he is dead who wholly casts God out of his heart. He, then, who does not wholly cast Him out, but under pressure of torments has denied Him for a time, is half dead. Or if he be dead, why do you bid him repent, seeing he cannot now be healed? If he be half dead, pour in oil and wine, not wine without oil, that may be the comfort and the smart. Place him upon thy beast, give hint over to the host, lay out two pence for his cure, be to him a neighbour. But you cannot be a neighbour unless you have compassion on him; for no one can be called a neighbour unless he have healed, not killed, another. But if you wish to be called a neighbour, Christ says to you: "Go and do likewise."82

Chapter XII.

Another passage of St. John is considered. The necessity of keeping the commandments of God may be complied with by those who, having fallen, repent, as well as by those who have not fallen, as is shown in the case of David.

53. Let us consider another similar passage: "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."⁸³ That which abideth has certainly had a commencement, and that from some offence, viz., that first he not believe. When, then, any one believes, the wrath of God departs and life comes. To believe, then, in Christ is to gain life, for "he that believeth in Him is not judged."⁸⁴

54. But with reference to this passage they allege that he who believes in Christ ought to keep His sayings, and say that it is written in the Lord's own words: "I am come a light into this world, that whosoever believeth in Me may not abide in darkness. And if any man hear My word and keep it, I judge him not."⁸⁵ He judges not, and do you judge? He says, "that whosoever believeth on Me may not abide in darkness," that is, that if he be in darkness he may not remain therein, but may amend his error, correct his fault, and keep My commandments, for I have said, "I will not the death of the wicked, but the correction."⁸⁶ I said above that he that believeth on Me is not judged, and I keep to this: "For I am not come to judge the world, but that the world may be saved through Me."⁸⁷ I pardon willingly, I quickly forgive, "I will have mercy rather than sacrifice,"⁸⁸ because by sacrifice the just is rendered more acceptable, by mercy the sinner is redeemed. "I come not to call the righteous but sinners."⁸⁹ Sacrifice was under the Law, in the Gospel is mercy. "The Law was given by Moses, grace by Me."⁹⁰

55. And again further on He says: "He that despiseth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him."⁹¹ Does he seem to you to have received Christ's words who has not corrected himself? Undoubtedly not. He, then, who corrects himself receives His word, for this is His word, that every one should turn back from sin. So, then, of necessity you must either reject this saying of His, or if you cannot deny it you must accept it.

56. It is also necessary that he who leaves off sinning must keep the commandments of God and renounce his sins. We ought not, then, to interpret this saying of him who has always kept the commandments, for if this had been His meaning He would have added the word always, but by not adding it He shows that He was speaking of him who has kept what he has heard, and what he heard has led him to correct his faults; he has then kept what he has heard.

57. But how hard it is to condemn to penance for life one who even afterwards keeps the commandments of the Lord, let Him teach us Himself Who has not refused forgiveness. Even to those who do not keep His commandments, as you read in the Psalm: "If they profane My statutes and keep not My commandments, I will visit their offences with the rod and their sins with scourges, but My mercy will I not take from them."⁹² So, then, He promises mercy to all.

58. Yet that we may not think that this mercy is without judgment, there is a distinction made between those who have paid continual obedience to God's commandments, and those who at some time, either by error or by compulsion, have fallen. And that you may not think that it is only our arguments which press you, consider the decision of Christ, Who said: "If the servant knew his Lord's will and did it not, he shall be beaten with many stripes, but if he knew it not, he shall be beaten with few stripes."⁹³ Each, then, if he believes, is received, for God "chasteneth every son whom He receiveth,"⁹⁴ and him whom He chasteneth He does not give over unto death, for it is written: "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over unto death."⁹⁵

Chapter XIII.

They who have committed a "sin unto death" are not to be abandoned, but subjected to penance, according to St. Paul. Explanation of the phrase "Deliver unto Satan." Satan can afflict the body, but these afflictions bring spiritual profit, showing the power of God, Who thus turns Satan's devices against himself.

59. Lastly, Paul teaches us that we must not abandon those who have committed a sin unto death, but that we must rather coerce them with the bread of tears and tears to drink, yet so that their sorrow itself be moderated. For this is the meaning of the passage: "Thou hast given them to drink in large measure,"⁹⁶ that their sorrow itself should have its measure, lest perchance he who is doing penance should be consumed by overmuch sorrow, as was said to the Corinthians: "What will ye? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of meekness?"⁹⁷ But even the rod is not severe, since he had read: "Thou shalt beat him indeed with the rod, but shalt deliver his soul from death."⁹⁸

60. What the Apostle means by the rod is shown by his invective against fornication,⁹⁹ his denunciation of incest, his reprehension of pride, because they were puffed up who ought rather to be mourning, and lastly, his sentence on the guilty person, that he should be excluded from communion, and delivered to the adversary, not for the destruction of the soul but of the flesh. For as the Lord did not give power to Satan over the soul of holy Job, but allowed him to afflict his body,¹⁰⁰ so here, too, the sinner is delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the serpent might lick the dust¹⁰¹ of his flesh, but not hurt his soul.

61. Let, then, our flesh die to lusts, let it be captive, let it be subdued, and not war against the law of our mind, but die in subjection to a good service, as in Paul, who buffeted his body that he might bring it into subjection, in order that his preaching might become more approved, if the law of his flesh agreed and was consonant with the law of his flesh. For the flesh dies when its wisdom passes over into the spirit, so that it no longer has a taste for the things of the flesh, but for the things of the spirit. Would that I might see my flesh growing weak, would that I were not dragged captive into the law of sin, would that I lived not in the flesh, but in the faith of Christ! And so there is greater grace in the infirmity of the body than in its soundness.

62. Having explained Paul's meaning, let us now consider the words themselves, in what sense he said that he had delivered him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, for the devil it is who tries us. For he brings ailments on each of our limbs, and sickness on our whole bodies. And then, too, he smote holy Job with evil sores from the feet to the head, because he had received the power of destroying his flesh, when God said: "Behold, I give him up unto thee, only preserve his life."¹⁰² This the Apostle took up in the same words, giving up this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit might be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁰³

63. Great is the power, great is the gift, which commands the devil to destroy himself. For he destroys himself when he makes the man whom he is seeking to overthrow by temptation stronger instead of weak, because whilst he is weakening the body he is strengthening his soul. For sickness of the body restrains sin, but luxury sets on fire the sin of the flesh.

64. The devil is then deceived so as to wound himself with his own bite, and to arm against himself him whom he thought to weaken. So he armed holy Job the more after he wounded him, who, with his whole body covered with sores, endured indeed the bite of the devil, but felt not his poison.

And so it is well said of him, "Thou shalt draw out the dragon with an hook, thou wilt play with him as with a bird, thou shall bind him as a boy doth a sparrow, thou shalt lay thine hand upon him."¹⁰⁴

65. You see how he is mocked by Paul, so that, like the child in prophecy, he lays his hand on the hole of the asp, and the serpent injures him not; he draws him out of his hiding-places, and makes of his venom a spiritual antidote, so that what is venom becomes a medicine, the venom serves to the destruction of the flesh, it becomes medicine to the healing of the spirit. For that which hurts the body benefits the spirit.

66. Let, then, the serpent bite the earthy part of me, let him drive his tooth into my flesh, and bruise my body; and may the Lord say of me: "I give him up unto thee, only preserve his life." How great is the power of Christ, that the guardianship of man is made a charge even to the devil himself, who always desires to injure him. Let us then make the Lord Jesus favourable to ourselves. At the command of Christ the devil himself becomes the guardian of his prey. Even unwillingly he carries out the commands of heaven, and, though cruel, obeys the commands of gentleness.

67. But why do I commend his obedience? Let him be ever evil that God may be ever good, Who converts his ill-will into grace for us. He wishes to injure us, but cannot if Christ resist him. He wounds the flesh but preserves the life. And then it is written: "Then shall the wolves and the lambs feed together, the lion and the ox shall eat straw, and they shall not hurt nor destroy in My holy mountain, saith the Lord."¹⁰⁵ For this is the sentence of condemnation on the serpent: "Dust shall be thy food."¹⁰⁶ What dust? Surely that of which it is said: "Dust thou art, and into dust shall thou return."¹⁰⁷

Chapter XIV.

St. Ambrose explains that the flesh given to Satan for destruction is eaten by the serpent when the soul is set free from carnal desires. He gives, therefore, various rules for guarding the senses, points out the snares laid for us by means of pleasures, and exhorts his hearers not to fear the destruction of the flesh by the serpent.

68. The serpent eats this dust, if the Lord Jesus is favourable to us, that our spirit may not sympathize with the weakness of the flesh, nor be set on fire by the vapours of the flesh and the heat of our members. "It is better to marry than to burn,"¹⁰⁸ for there is a flame which burns within. Let us not then suffer this fire to approach the bosom of our minds and the depths of our hearts, lest we burn up the covering of our inmost hearts, and lest the devouring fire of lust consume this outward garment of the soul and its fleshy veil, but let us pass through the fire.¹⁰⁹ And should any one fall into the fire of love let him leap over it and pass forth; let him not bind to himself adulterous lust with the bands of thoughts, let him not tie knots around himself by the fastenings of continual reflection, let him not too often turn his attention to the form of a harlot, and let not a maiden lift her eyes to the countenance of a youth. And if by chance she has looked and is caught, how much more will she be entangled if she gazes with curiosity.

69. Let custom itself teach us. A woman covers her face with a veil for this reason, that in public her modesty may be safe, That her face may not easily meet the gaze of a youth, let her be covered with the nuptial veil, so that not even in chance meetings she might be exposed to the wounding of another or of herself, though the wound of either were indeed hers. But if she cover

her head with a veil that she may not accidentally see or be seen (for when the head is veiled the face is hidden), how much more ought she to cover herself with the veil of modesty, so as even in public to have her own secret place.

70. But granted that the eye has fallen upon another, at least let not the inward affection follow. For to have seen is no sin, but one must be careful that it be not the source of sin. The bodily eye sees, but let the eye of the heart be closed; let modesty of mind remain. We have a Lord Who is both strict and indulgent. The prophet indeed said: "Look not upon the beauty of a woman that is all harlot."¹¹⁰ But the Lord said: "Whoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."¹¹¹ He does not say, "Whosoever shall look hath committed adultery," but "Whosoever shall look on her to lust after her." He condemned not the look but sought out the inward affection. But that modesty is praiseworthy which has so accustomed itself to close the bodily eyes as often not to see what we really behold. For we seem to behold with the bodily sight whatever meets us; but if there be not joined to this any attention of the mind, the sight also, according to what is usual in the body, fades away, so that in reality we see rather with the mind than with the body.

71. And if the flesh has seen the flame, let us not cherish that flame in our bosoms, that is, in the depths of the heart and the inward part of the mind. Let us not instil this fire into our bones, let us not bind bonds upon ourselves, let us not join in conversation with such as may be the cause to us of unholy fires. The speech of a maiden is a snare to a youth, the words of a youth are the bonds of love.

72. Joseph saw the fire when the woman eager for adultery spoke to him.¹¹² She wished to catch him with her words. She set the snares of her lips, but was not able to capture the chaste man. For the voice of modesty, the voice of gravity, the rein of caution, the care for integrity, the discipline of chastity, loosed the woman's chains. So that unchaste person could not entangle him in her meshes. She laid her hand upon him; she caught his garment, that she might tighten the noose around him. The words of a lascivious woman are the snares of lust, and her hands the bonds of love; but the chaste mind could not be taken either by snares or by bonds. The garment was cast off, the bonds were loosed, and because he did not admit the fire into the bosom of his mind, his body was not burnt.

73. You see, then, that our mind is the cause of our guilt. And so the flesh is innocent, but is often the minister of sin. Let not, then, desire of beauty overcome you. Many nets and many snares are spread by the devil. The look of a harlot is the snare of him who loves her. Our own eyes are nets to us, wherefore it is written: "Be not taken with thine eyes."¹¹³ So, then, we spread nets for ourselves in which we are entangled and hampered. We bind chains on ourselves, as we read: "For every one is bound with the chains of his own sins."¹¹⁴

74. Let us then pass through the fires of youth and the glow of early years; let us pass through the waters, let us not remain therein, lest the deep floods shut us in. Let us rather pass over, that we too may say: "Our soul has passed over the stream,"¹¹⁵ for he who has passed over is safe. And lastly, the Lord speaks thus: "If thou pass through the water, I am with thee, the rivers shall not overflow thee."¹¹⁶ And the prophet says: "I have seen the wicked exalted above the cedars of Libanus, and I passed by, and lo, he was not." Pass by things of this world, and you will see that the high places of the wicked have fallen. Moses, too, passing by things of this world, saw a great

sight and said: "I will turn aside and see this great sight,"¹¹⁷ for had he been held by the fleeting pleasures of this world he would not have seen so great a mystery.

75. Let us also pass over this fire of lust, fearing which Paul-but fearing for us, inasmuch as by buffeting his body he had come no longer to fear for himself-says to us: "Flee fornication."¹¹⁸ Let us then flee it as though following us, though indeed it follows not behind us, but within our very selves. Let us then diligently take heed lest while we are fleeing from it we carry it with ourselves. For we wish for the most part to flee, but if we do not wholly cast it out of our mind, we rather take it up than forsake it. Let us then spring over it, lest it be said to us: "Walk ye in the flame of your fire, which ye have kindled for yourselves."¹¹⁹ For as he who "takes fire into his bosom burns his clothes,"¹²⁰ so he who walks upon fiery coals must of necessity burn his feet, as it is written: "Can one walk upon coals of fire and not burn his feet?"¹²¹

76. This fire is dangerous, let us then not feed it with the fuel of luxury. Lust is fed by feastings, nourished by delicacies, kindled by wine, and inflamed by drunkenness. Still more dangerous than these are the incentives of words, which intoxicate the mind as it were with a kind of wine of the vine of Sodome. Let us be on our guard against abundance of this wine, for when the flesh is intoxicated the mind totters, the heart wavers, the heart is carried to and fro. And so with regard to each that precept is useful wherein Timothy is warned: "Drink a little wine because of thy frequent infirmities."¹²² When the body is heated, it excites the glow of the mind; when the flesh is chilled with the cold of disease the spirit is chilled; when the body is in pain, the mind is sad, but the sadness shall become joy.

77. Do not then fear if your flesh be eaten away, the soul is not consumed. And so David says that he does not fear, because the enemy were eating up his flesh but not his soul, as we read: "When evil-doers come near upon me to eat up my flesh, my foes who trouble me, they were weakened and fell."¹²³ So the serpent works overthrow for himself alone, therefore is he who has been injured by the serpent given over to the serpent that he may raise up again him whom he cast down, and the overthrow of the serpent may be the raising again of the man. And Scripture testifies that Satan is the author of this bodily suffering and weakness of the flesh, where Paul says: "There was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted."¹²⁴ So Paul learned to heal even as he himself had been made whole.

Chapter XV.

Returning from this digression, St. Ambrose explains what is the meaning of St. Paul where he speaks of coming "with a rod or in the spirit of meekness." One who has grievously fallen is to be separated, but to be again restored to religious privileges when he has sufficiently repented. The old leaven is purged out when the hardness of the letter is tempered by the meal of a milder interpretation. All should be sprinkled with the Church's meal and fed with the food of charity, lest they become like that envious elder brother, whose example is followed by the Novatians.

78. That faithful teacher, having promised one of two things, gave each. He came with a rod, for he separated the guilty man from the holy fellowship. And well is he said to be delivered to Satan who is separated from the body of Christ. But he came in love and with the spirit of meekness, whether because he so delivered him up as to save his soul, or because he afterwards restored to the sacraments him whom he had before separated.

79. For it is needful to separate one who has grievously fallen, lest a little leaven corrupt the whole lump. And the old leaven must be purged out, or the old man in each person; that is, the outward man and his deeds, he who among the people has grown old in sin and hardened in vices. And well did he say purged, not cast forth, for what is purged is not considered wholly valueless, for to this end is it purged, that what is of value be separated from the worthless, but that which is cast forth is considered to have in itself nothing of value.

80. The Apostle then judged that the sinner should then at once be restored to the heavenly sacraments if he himself wished to be cleansed. And well is it said "Purge," for he is purged as by certain things done by the whole people, and is washed in the tears of the multitude, and redeemed from sin by the weeping of the multitude, and is purged in the inner man. For Christ granted to His Church that one should be redeemed by means of all, as she herself was found worthy of the coming of the Lord Jesus, in order that through One all might be redeemed.

81. This is Paul's meaning which the words make more obscure. Let us consider the exact words of the Apostle: "Purge out," says he, "the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened."¹²⁵ Either that the whole Church takes up the burden of the sinner, with whom she has to suffer in weeping and prayer and pain, and, as it were, covers herself with his leaven, in order that by means of all that which is to be done away in the individual doing penance may be purged by a kind of contribution and commixture of compassion and mercy offered with manly vigor.¹²⁶ Or one may understand it as that woman in the Gospel teaches us, who is a type of the Church, when she hid the leaven in her meal, till all was leavened, and the whole could be used as pure.

82. The Lord taught me in the Gospel what leaven is when He said: "Do ye not understand that I said not concerning bread, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?"¹²⁷ Then, it is said, they understood that He spake not of bread, but that they should beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. This leaven, then-that is, the doctrine of the Pharisees and the contentiousness of the Sadducees-the Church hides in her meal, when she softened the hard letter of the Law by a spiritual interpretation, and ground it as it were in the mill of her explanations, bringing out as it were from the husks of the letter the inner secrets of the mysteries, and setting forth the belief in the Resurrection, wherein the mercy of God is proclaimed, and wherein it is believed that the life of those who are dead is restored.

83. Now this comparison seems to be not unfitly brought forward in this place, since the kingdom of heaven is redemption from sin, and therefore we all, both bad and good, are mingled with the meal of the Church that we all may be a new lump. But that no one may be afraid that an admixture of evil leaven might injure the lump, the Apostle said: "That ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened;"¹²⁸ that is to say, This mixture will render you again such, as in the pure integrity of your innocence. If we thus have compassion, we are not stained with the sins of others, but we gain the restoration of another to the increase of our own grace, so that our integrity remains as it was. And therefore he adds: "For Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;"¹²⁹ that is, the Passion of the Lord profited all, and gave redemption to sinners who repented of the sins they had committed.

84. Let us then keep the feast on good food, doing penance yet joyful in our redemption, for no food is sweeter than kindness and gentleness. Let no envy towards the sinner who is saved be

mingled with our feasts and joy, lest that envious brother, as is set forth in the Gospel, exclude himself from the house of his Father, because he grieved at the reception of his brother, at whose lasting exile he was wont to rejoice.

85. And you Novatians cannot deny that you are like him, who, as you say, do not come together to the Church because by penance a hope of return had been given to those who had lapsed. But this is only a pretence, for Novatian contrived his schism through grief at his loss of the episcopal office.

86. But do you not understand that the Apostle also prophesied of you and says to you: "And ye are puffed up and did not rather mourn, that he who did this deed might be taken away from among you"?¹³⁰ He is, then, wholly taken away when his sin is done away, but the Apostle does not say that the sinner is to be shut out of the Church who counsels his cleansing.

Chapter XVI.

Comparison between the apostles and Novatians. The fitness of the words, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of," when applied to them. The desire of penance is extinguished by them when they take away its fruit. And thus are sinners deprived of the promises of Christ, though, indeed, they ought not to be too soon admitted to the mysteries. Some examples of repentance.

87. Inasmuch, then, as the Apostle forgave sins, by what authority do you say that they are not to be forgiven? Who has the most reverence for Christ, Paul or Novatian? But Paul knew that the Lord was merciful. He knew that the Lord Jesus was offended more by the harshness of the disciples than by their pitifulness.

88. Furthermore, Jesus rebuked James and John when they spoke of bringing down fire from heaven to consume those who refused to receive the Lord, and said to them: "Ye know not whose spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."¹³¹ To them, indeed, He said, "Ye know not whose spirit ye are of," who were of His spirit; but to you He says, "Ye are not of My spirit, who hold not fast My clemency, who reject My mercy, who refuse repentance which I willed to be preached by the apostles in My Name."

89. For it is in vain that you say that you preach repentance who remove the fruits of repentance. For men are led to the pursuit of anything either by rewards or results, and every pursuit grows slack by delay. And for this reason the Lord, in order that the devotion of His disciples might be increased, said that every one who had left all that was his, and followed God, should receive sevenfold more both here and hereafter.¹³² First of all He promised the reward here, to do away with the tedium of delay, and again hereafter, that we might learn to believe that rewards will also be given to us hereafter. Present rewards are then an earnest of those hereafter.

90. If, then, any one, having committed hidden sins, shall nevertheless diligently do penance, how shall he receive those rewards if not restored to the communion of the Church? I am willing, indeed, that the guilty man should hope for pardon, should seek it with tears and groans, should seek it with the aid of the tears of all the people, should implore forgiveness; and if communion be postponed two or three times, that he should believe that his entreaties have not been urgent enough, that he must increase his tears, must come again even in greater trouble, clasp the feet of the faithful with his arms, kiss them, wash them with tears, and not let them go, so that the Lord

Jesus may say of him too: "His sins which are many are forgiven, for he loved much."¹³³

91. I have known penitents whose countenance was furrowed with tears, their cheeks worn with constant weeping, who offered their body to be trodden under foot by all, who with faces ever pale and worn with fasting bore about in a yet living body the likeness of death.

Chapter XVII. That gentleness must be added to severity, as is shown in the case of St. Paul at Corinth. The man had been baptized, though the Novatians argue against it. And by the word "destruction" is not meant annihilation but severe chastening.

92. Why do we postpone the time of pardon for those who have mortified themselves, who during life have done themselves to death? "Sufficient," says St. Paul, "to such a one is this punishment which is inflicted by the many; so that contrariwise, ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means he should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow."¹³⁴ If the punishment which is inflicted by the many is sufficient for condemnation, the intercession which is made by many is also sufficient for the remission of sin. The Master of morals, Who both knows our weakness and is the interpreter of the will of God, wills that comfort should be given, lest sorrow through the weariness of long delay should swallow up the penitent.

93. The Apostle then forgave him, and not only forgave him, but desired that love to him should again grow strong. He who is loved receives not harshness but mercy. And not only did he himself forgive him only, but willed that all should forgive him, and says that he forgave for the sake of others, lest many should be longer saddened on account of one. "To whom," says he, "ye have forgiven anything, I forgive also, for I also have forgiven for your sakes in the person of Christ, for we are not ignorant of his devices."¹³⁵ Rightly can he be on his guard against the serpent who is not ignorant of his devices, of which there are so many to our detriment. He is always desirous to do harm, always desirous to circumvent us, that he may cause death; but we ought to take heed lest our remedy become an occasion of triumph for him; for we are circumvented by him, if any one perish through overmuch sorrow, who might be set free by pitifulness.

94. And that we may know that this person was baptized, he added: "I wrote to you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators, not altogether with fornicators of this world."¹³⁶ And farther on he adds: "But now I write unto you not to keep company if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator."¹³⁷ Those whom he has joined together under one penalty, he willed to attain together to forgiveness. "If any be such," he says, "with him not to eat."¹³⁸ How severe he is with the obstinate, how indulgent to those who seek. Against those rises up in arms the injury done to Christ, whilst the calling upon Christ aids these.

95. But lest any one be perplexed because it is written: "I have delivered such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh,"¹³⁹ and should say: How can he attain forgiveness whose whole flesh has perished, seeing that it is evident that man was redeemed both in body and soul, and is saved in both and that neither the soul without the body, nor yet the body without the soul, since both are united by their fellowship in the deeds that have been done, can be without fellowship either in punishment or in reward? Let this suffice for an answer to him: That "destruction" does not mean the complete annihilation of the flesh, but its chastening. For as he who is dead to sin lives to God, so the allurements of the flesh perish, and the flesh dies to its lusts, in order that it may live again to purity and to other good works.

96. And what more suitable example can we take than one from our common mother? For the earth itself, from which we are all taken, when it is not worked and cultivated, seems to be desert; and the field dies to the vines or olive-trees with which it was planted, and yet it does not lose its own nutritive power, which is, as it were, its life. And then later, when cultivation begins once more, and the seed is sown for which the land seems suitable, it breaks forth again more fruitful than before with its products. It is not, then, anything so strange if our flesh is said to die, and yet is understood to be subdued rather than annihilated.

1: S. Luke xv. 5.

2: Eccles. vii. 17.

3: S. Matt. xi. 28.

4: In order to distinguish themselves from Catholics the Novatians assumed the name kaqaroi "pure."

5: Job xiv. 4 [LXX loosely].

6: Ps. li. [l.] 2.

7: It is necessary to vary the translation of the word poenitentia in this place, as it bears the meaning both of "penance," the temporal punishment inflicted on the sinner, and also of "repentance."

8: Proevaricatio.

9: i.e. the penalty of the one sin of denying the faith should be extended to all sins.

10: S. John xx. 22, John xx. 23.

11: This is not a denial of the validity of Novatian ordinations, which were admitted by the 8th Canon of the Council of Nicaea, but of their lawful jurisdiction.

12: S. John xx. 22, John xx. 23.

13: Binding and loosing here refer rather to the infliction of open penance, the outward sign of repentance, than to absolution.

14: Rom. iii. 4.

15: Hosea vi. 6.

16: Ezek. xviii. 32.

17: Rom. viii. 3, Rom. viii. 4.

18: Jerem. xvii. 9 [LXX.].

19: Ps. li. [l.] 5.

20: Rom. vii. 24.

21: Rom. viii. 31-35.

- 22: S. Matt. xi. 29.
- 23: S. Matt. xi. 30.
- 24: S. Matt. x. 28.
- 25: S. Matt. x. 32, Matt. x. 33.
- 26: Omnis.
- 27: S. Luke xii. 8, Luke xii. 9.
- 28: Ps. lxxvii. [lxxvi.] 7. In the Psalm this passage is a question of the Psalmist in his bitter troubles, "Will God cast off?" St. Ambrose, in arguing against Novatian, not only modifies the text, but somewhat modifies its meaning.
- 29: Ps. lxxvii. [lxxvi.] 8, Ps. lxxvii. [lxxvi.] 9.
- 30: Hos. vi. 4.
- 31: Hos. xi. 8.
- 32: Hos. xi. 8.
- 33: Ps. xxx. 15 [LXX.].
- 34: Lam. iii. 31, Lam. iii. 32.
- 35: Lam. iii. 34.
- 36: Isa. xxix. 13.
- 37: S. Matt. xv. 8.
- 38: Col. ii. 18.
- 39: Col. ii. 19.
- 40: S. Luke xiv. 21.
- 41: Jerem. xvii. 14.
- 42: S. Matt. ix. 21.
- 43: S. Matt. xxv. 36.
- 44: S. John xiii. 8.
- 45: S. Matt. xvi. 19.
- 46: 2 Cor. ii. 10.
- 47: S. John xiv. 12; S. Matt. x. 8.
- 48: Acts ix. 17.
- 49: S. Matt. xiv. 31.

50: S. Matt. v. 14.

51: S. Matt. iii. 11.

52: S. Mark xvi. 17, Mark xvi. 18.

53: S. John xx. 17.

54: Isa. vi. 5.

55: Job xiv. 4 [LXX.].

56: Ps. li. [I.] 2.

57: Celebraturus.

58: S. Matt. iii. 14, Matt. iii. 15.

59: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] ii. 25.

60: Ps. xv. [xiv.] 1.

61: Ps. xxiv. [xxiii.] 3.

62: Ps. xxiv. [xxiii.] 4.

63: Hos. xiv. 10.

64: S. Luke xii. 42.

65: S. Luke xii. 43.

66: Ps. lxxi. [lxx.] 19.

67: Ex. xxxii. 31.

68: Ex. xxxii. 32.

69: Jer. vii. 16.

70: Bar. iii. 1, Bar. iii. 2.

71: Bar. v. 1.

72: 1 John v. 16.

73: Rev. ii. 14, Rev. ii. 15, Rev. ii. 16.

74: Rev. ii. 17.

75: Acts vii. 60.

76: S. John iii. 16.

77: 1 Cor. xii. 9.

78: S. Luke xvii. 5.

79: Phil. i. 29.

80: The Samaritans took their name from the territory which they inhabited. But they called themselves Hebrew [Shomrim], Guardians, that is, of the Law. This idea is referred to here by St. Ambrose as elsewhere by others of the Fathers.

81: S. Luke x. 33 ff.

82: S. Luke x. 37.

83: S. John iii. 36.

84: S. John iii. 3.

85: S. John xii. 47 [not exact].

86: Ezek. xxiii. 11.

87: S. John iii. 17.

88: Hosea vi. 6.

89: S. Matt. ix. 13.

90: S. John i. 17.

91: S. John xii. 48.

92: Ps. lxxxix. [lxxxviii.] 31, Ps. lxxxix. [lxxxviii.] 32.

93: S. Luke xii. 47, Luke xii. 48.

94: Heb. xii. 6.

95: Ps. cxviii. [cxvii.] 18.

96: Ps. lxxx. [lxxix.] 5.

97: 1 Cor. iv. 21.

98: Prov. xxiii. 13.

99: 1 Cor. v. 1 ff.

100: Job ii. 6.

101: Mic. vii. 17.

102: Job ii. 6.

103: 1 Cor. v. 5.

104: Job xli. 1, Job xli. 5, Job xli. 8 [LXX.].

105: Isa. xi. 6, Isa. xi. 8, Isa. xi. 9.

106: Gen. iii. 14.

107: Gen. iii. 19.

108: 1 Cor. vii. 9; Prov. vi. 27.

109: Isa xliii. 2.

110: Possibly from Prov. v. condensed.

111: S. Matt. v. 28.

112: Gen. xxxix. 7.

113: Prov. vi. 25.

114: Prov. vi. 2 [LXX.] very loosely.

115: Ps. cxxiv. [cxxiii.] 4.

116: Isa. xliii. 2.

117: Ex. iii. 3.

118: 1 Cor. vi. 18.

119: Isa I. 11.

120: Prov. vi. 27.

121: Prov. vi. 28.

122: 1 Tim. v. 23.

123: Ps. xxvii. 2.

124: 2 Cor. xii. 7.

125: 1 Cor. v. 7.

126: There is probably here a reference to a generous custom of antiquity, whereby if any one were visited by calamity and loss of goods, his friends contributed according to their power to present him with a gift which should help to re-establish him. St. Ambrose seems to apply this to the bearing one another's burdens by mourning, fasting, and praying with the penitent, that God might be moved by the entreaties of all, offered with great energy, and forgive what might be lacking in the individual. It is an instructive commentary on the doctrine of the communion of saints.

127: S. Matt. xvi. 11.

128: 1 Cor. v. 7.

129: 1 Cor. v. 7.

130: 1 Cor. v. 2.

131: S. Luke ix. 55, Luke ix. 56.

132: S. Matt. xix. 29.

133: S. Luke vii. 47.

134: 2 Cor. ii. 6.

135: 2 Cor. ii. 10.

136: 1 Cor. v. 9.

137: 1 Cor. v. 11.

138: 1 Cor. v. 11.

139: 1 Cor. v. 5.

Concerning Repentance - Book 2

Book II.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Book II.

Chapter I.

St. Ambrose gives additional rules concerning repentance, and shows that it must not be delayed.

1. Although in the former book we have written many things which may tend to the more perfect practice of repentance, yet inasmuch as a great deal more may be added, we will continue the repast so as not to seem to have relinquished the provisions of our teaching only half consumed.

2. For repentance must be taken in hand not only anxiously, but also quickly, lest perchance that father of the house in the Gospel who planted a fig-tree in his vineyard should come and seek fruit on it, and finding none, say to the vine-dresser: "Cut it down, why doth it cumber the ground?"¹ And unless the vine-dresser should intercede and say: "Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and dung it, and if it bear fruit-well; but if not let it be cut down."²

3. Let us then dung this field which we possess, and imitate those hard-working farmers, who are not ashamed to satiate the land with rich dung and to scatter the grimy ashes over the field, that they may gather more abundant crops.

4. And the Apostle teaches us how to dung it, saying: "I count all things but dung, that I may gain Christ,"³ and he, through evil report and good report, attained to pleasing Christ. For he had read that Abraham, when confessing himself to be but dust and ashes,⁴ in his deep humility found

favour with God. He had read how Job, sitting among the ashes,⁵ regained all that he had lost.⁶ He had heard in the utterance of David, how God "raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill."⁷

5. Let us then not be ashamed to confess our sins unto the Lord. Shame indeed there is when each makes known his sins, but that shame, as it were, ploughs his land, removes the ever-recurring brambles, prunes the thorns, and gives life to the fruits which he believed were dead. Follow him who, by diligently ploughing his field, sought for eternal fruit: "Being reviled we bless, being persecuted we endure, being defamed we entreat, we are made as the offscouring of the world."⁸ If you plough after this fashion you will sow spiritual seed. Plough that you may get rid of sin and gain fruit. He ploughed so as to destroy in himself the last tendency to persecution. What more could Christ give to lead us on to the pursuit of perfection, than to convert and then give us for a teacher one who was a persecutor?

Chapter II. A passage quoted by the heretics against repentance is explained in two ways, the first being that Heb. vi. 4 refers to the impossibility of being baptized again; the second, that what is impossible with man is possible with God.

6. Being then refuted by the clear example of the Apostle and by his writings, the heretics yet endeavour to resist further, and say that their opinion is supported by apostolic authority, bringing forward the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "For it is impossible that those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, should if they fall away be again renewed unto repentance, crucifying again the Son of God, and put Him to open shame."⁹

7. Could Paul teach in opposition to his own act? He had at Corinth forgiven sin through penance, how could he himself speak against his own decision? Since, then, he could not destroy what he had built, we must assume that what he says was different from, but not contrary to, what had gone before. For what is contrary is opposed to itself, what is different has ordinarily another meaning. Things which are contrary are not such that one can support the other. Inasmuch, then, as the Apostle spoke of remitting penance, he could not be silent as to those who thought that baptism was to be repeated. And it was right first of all to remove our anxiety, and to let us know that even after baptism, if any sinned their sins could be forgiven them, lest a false belief in a reiterated baptism should lead astray those who were destitute of all hope of forgiveness. And secondly, it was right to set forth in a well-reasoned argument that baptism is not to be repeated.

8. And that the writer was speaking of baptism is evident from the very words in which it is stated that it is impossible to renew unto repentance those who were fallen, inasmuch as we are renewed by means of the layer of baptism, whereby we are born again, as Paul says himself: "For we are buried with Him through baptism into death, that, like as Christ rose from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we, too, should walk in newness of life."¹⁰ And in another place: "Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man which is created after God."¹¹ And elsewhere again: "Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle,"¹² because the eagle after death is born again from its ashes, as we being dead in sin are through the Sacrament of Baptism born again to God, and created anew. So, then, here as elsewhere, he teaches one baptism. "One faith," he says, "one baptism."¹³

9. This, too, is plain, that in him who is baptized the Son of God is crucified, for our flesh could not do away sin unless it were crucified in Jesus Christ. And then it is written that: "All we who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death."¹⁴ And farther on: "If we have been planted in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing that our old man was fastened with Him to His cross."¹⁵ And to the Colossians he says: "Buried with Him by baptism, wherein ye also rose again with Him."¹⁶ Which was written to the intent that we should believe that He is crucified in us, that our sins may be purged through Him, that He, Who alone can forgive sins, may nail to His cross the handwriting which was against us.¹⁷ In us He triumphs over principalities and powers, as it is written of Him: "He made a show of principalities and powers, triumphing over them in Himself."¹⁸

10. So, then, that which he says in this Epistle to the Hebrews, that it is impossible for those who have fallen to be "renewed unto repentance, crucifying again the Son of God, and putting Him to open shame," must be considered as having reference to baptism, wherein we crucify the Son of God in ourselves, that the world may be by Him crucified for us, who triumph, as it were, when we take to ourselves the likeness of His death, who put to open shame upon His cross principalities and powers, and triumphed over them, that in the likeness of His death we, too, might triumph over the principalities whose yoke we throw off. But Christ was crucified once, and died to sin once, and so there is but one, not several baptisms.

11. But what of the passage wherein the doctrine of baptisms is spoken of? Because under the Law there were many baptisms or washings, he rightly rebukes those who forsake what is perfect and seek again the first principles of the word. He teaches us that the whole of the washings under the Law are done away with, and that there is one baptism in the sacraments of the Church. But he exhorts us that leaving the first principles of the word we should go on to perfection. "And this," he says, "we will do, if God permits,"¹⁹ for no one can be perfect without the grace of God.

12. And indeed I might also say to any one who thought that this passage spoke of repentance, that things which are impossible with men are possible with God; and God is able whensoever He wills to forgive us our sins, even those which we think cannot be forgiven. And so it is possible for God to give us that which it seems to us impossible to obtain. For it seemed impossible that water should wash away sin, and Naaman the Syrian²⁰ thought that his leprosy could not be cleansed by water. But that which was impossible God made to be possible, Who gave us so great grace. In like manner it seemed impossible that sins should be forgiven through repentance, but Christ gave this power to His apostles, which has been transmitted to the priestly office. That, then, has become possible which was impossible. But, by a true reasoning, he convinces us that the reiteration by any one of the Sacrament of Baptism is not permitted.

Chapter III.

Explanation of the parable of the Prodigal Son, in which St. Ambrose applies it to refute the teaching of the Novatians, proving that reconciliation ought not to be refused to the greatest offender upon suitable proof of repentance.

13. And the Apostle does not contradict the plain teaching of Christ, Who set forth, as a comparison of a repentant sinner, one going to a foreign country after receiving all his substance from his father, wasted it in riotous living, and later, when feeding upon husks, longed for his

father's bread and then gained the robe, the ring, the shoes, and the slaying of the calf,²¹ which is a likeness of the Passion of the Lord, whereby we receive forgiveness.

14. Well is it said that he went into a foreign country who is cut off from the sacred altar, for this is to be separated from that Jerusalem which is in heaven, from the citizenship and home of the saints. For which reason the Apostle says: "Therefore now ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God."²²

15. "And," it is said, "wasted his substance." Rightly, for he whose faith halts in bringing forth good works does consume it. For, "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."²³ And faith is a good substance, the inheritance of our hope.

16. And no wonder if he was perishing for hunger, who lacked the divine nourishment, impelled by the want of which he says: "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." Do you not see it plainly declared to us, that we are urged to prayer for the sake of gaining the sacrament? and do you wish to take away that for the sake of which penance is undertaken? Deprive the pilot of the hope of reaching port, and he will wander uncertainly here and there on the waves. Take away the crown from the athlete, and he will fail and lie on the course. Take from the fisher the power of catching his booty, and he will cease to cast the nets. How, then, can he, who suffers hunger in his soul, pray more earnestly to God, if he has no hope of the heavenly food?

17. "I have sinned," he says, "against heaven, and before thee." He confesses what is clearly a sin unto death, that you may not think that any one doing penance²⁴ is rightly shut out from pardon. For he who has sinned against heaven has sinned either against the kingdom of heaven, or against his own soul, which is a sin unto death, and against God, to Whom alone is said: "Against Thee only have I sinned, and done evil before Thee."²⁵

18. So quickly does he gain forgiveness, that, as he is coming, and is still a great way off, his father meets him, gives him a kiss, which is the sign of sacred peace; orders the robe to be brought forth, which is the marriage garment, which if any one have not, he is shut out from the marriage feast; places the ring on his hand, which is the pledge of faith and the seal of the Holy Spirit; orders the shoes to be brought out,²⁶ for he who is about to celebrate the Lord's Passover, about to feast on the Lamb, ought to have his feet protected against all attacks of spiritual wild beasts and the bite of the serpent; bids the calf to be slain, for "Christ our Passover hath been sacrificed."²⁷ For as often as we receive the Blood of the Lord, we proclaim the death of the Lord.²⁸ As, then, He was once slain for all, so whensoever forgiveness of sins is granted, we receive the Sacrament of His Body, that through His Blood there may be remission of sins.

19. Therefore most evidently are we bidden by the teaching of the Lord to confer again the grace of the heavenly sacrament on those guilty even of the greatest sins, if they with open confession bear the penance due to their sin.

Chapter IV.

St. Ambrose turns against the Novatians themselves another objection concerning blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, showing that it consists in an erroneous belief, proving this by St. Peter's words against Simon Magus, and other passages, exhorting the Novatians to return to the Church,

affirming that such is our Lord's mercy that even Judas would have found forgiveness had he repented.

20. But we have heard that you are accustomed to bring forward as an objection that which is written: "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but blasphemies against the Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come."²⁹ By which quotation the whole of your assertion is destroyed and done away, for it is written: "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Why, then, do you not remit them? Why do you bind chains which you do not loose? Why do you tie knots which you do not unfasten? Forgive the others, and deal with those who you think are bound for ever by the authority of the Gospel for sinning against the Holy Spirit.

21. But let us consider the case of those whom the Lord so binds, going back to the words before the passage quoted, that we may understand it more clearly: The Jews were saying: "This man doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, prince of the devils." Jesus replied: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be destroyed, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand; for if Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself, how then shall his kingdom stand? But if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out?"³⁰

22. Now we see plainly here that the words are expressly used of those who were saying that the Lord Jesus cast out devils through Beelzebub, to whom the Lord gave that answer, because they were of the heritage of Satan, who compared the Saviour of all to Satan, and attributed the grace of Christ to the kingdom of the devil. And that we might know that He was speaking of this blasphemy, He added: "O generation of vipers, how can ye speak good, being yourselves evil?" He says, then, that those who thus speak attain not to forgiveness.

23. Then, when Simon, depraved by long practice of magic, had thought he could gain by money the power of conferring the grace of Christ and the infusion of the Holy Spirit, Peter said: "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this faith, for thy heart is not right with God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perchance this thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee, for I see that thou art in the bond of iniquity and in the bitterness of gall."³¹ We see that Peter by his apostolic authority condemns him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit through magic vanity, and all the more because he had not the clear consciousness of faith. And yet he did not exclude him from the hope of forgiveness, for he called him to repentance.

24. The Lord then replies to the blasphemy of the Pharisees, and refuses to them the grace of His power, which consists in the remission of sins, because they asserted that His heavenly power rested on the help of the devil. And He affirms that they act with satanic spirit who divide the Church of God, so that He includes the heretics and schismatics of all times, to whom He denies forgiveness, for every other sin is concerned with single persons, this is a sin against all. For they alone wish to destroy the grace of Christ who rend asunder the members of the Church for which the Lord Jesus suffered, and the Holy Spirit was given us.

25. Lastly, that we may know that He is speaking of those who destroy the unity of the Church, we find it written: "He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathered not with Me, scattereth."³² And that we might know that He is speaking of these, He at once added: "Therefore

I say unto you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but blasphemies against the Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men." When He says, "Therefore say I unto you," is it not evident that He intended the words following to be laid to heart by us beyond the others? And He rightly added: "A good tree bringeth forth good fruits, but a bad tree bringeth forth bad fruits,"³³ for an evil association cannot produce good fruits. The tree, then, is the association; the fruits of the good tree are the children of the Church.

26. Return, then, to the Church, those of you who have wickedly separated yourselves. For He promises forgiveness to all who are converted, since it is written: "Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved."³⁴ And lastly, the Jewish people who said of the Lord Jesus, "He hath a devil,"³⁵ and "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub," and who crucified the Lord Jesus, are, by the preaching of Peter, called to baptism, that they may put away the guilt of so great a wickedness.

27. But what wonder is it if you should deny salvation to others, who reject your own, though they lose nothing who seek for penance from you? For I suppose that even Judas might through the exceeding mercy of God not have been shut out from forgiveness, if he had expressed his sorrow not before the Jews but before Christ. "I have sinned," he said, "in that I have betrayed righteous blood."³⁶ Their answer was: "What is that to us, see thou to that." What other reply do you give, when one guilty of a smaller sin confesses his deed to you? What do you answer but this: "What is that to us, see thou to that"? The halter followed on those words, but the punishment is all the more severe, the smaller the sin is.

28. But if they be not converted, do you at least repent, who by many a slip have fallen from the lofty pinnacle of innocence and faith. We have a good Lord, Whose will it is to forgive all, Who called you by the prophet, and said: "I, even I, am He that blot out transgressions, and I will not remember, but do thou remember, and let us plead together."³⁷

Chapter V. As to the words of St. Peter to Simon Magus, from which the Novatians infer that there was no forgiveness for the latter, it is pointed out that St. Peter, knowing his evil heart, might well use words of doubt, and then by some Old Testament instances it is pointed out that "perchance" does not exclude forgiveness. The apostles transmitted to us that penitence, the fruits of which are shown in the case of David. St. Ambrose then adduces the example of the Ephraimites, whose penitence must be followed in order to gain the divine mercy and the sacraments.

29. The Novatians bring up a question from the words of the Apostle Peter. Because he said, "if perchance," they think that he did not imply that forgiveness would be granted on repentance. But let them consider concerning whom the words were spoken: of Simon, who did not believe through faith, but was meditating trickery. So too the Lord to him who said, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," replied, "Foxes have holes."³⁸ For he knew that the man's sincerity was not wholly perfect. If, then, the Lord refused to him who was not baptized permission to follow Him, because He saw that he was not sincere, do you wonder that the Apostle did not absolve him who after baptism was guilty of deceit, and whom he declared to be still in the bond of iniquity?

30. But let this be my answer to them. As to myself, I say that Peter did not doubt, and I do not think that so great a question can be burked by the questionable interpretation of a single word. For if they think that Peter doubted, did God doubt, Who said to the prophet Jeremiah: "Stand in

the court of the Lord's house, and thou shall give an answer to all Judah, to those who come to worship in the Lord's house, even all the words which I have appointed for thee to answer them. Keep not back a word, perchance they will hearken and be converted."³⁹ Let them say, then, that God also knew not what would happen.

31. But ignorance is not implied in that word, but the common custom of holy Scripture is observed, in order to simplicity of utterance. Inasmuch as the Lord says also to Ezekiel: "Son of man, I will send thee unto the house of Israel, to those who have angered Me, both themselves and their fathers, unto this day, and thou shall say unto them, Thus saith the Lord, if perchance they will hear and be afraid."⁴⁰ Did He not know that they could or could not be converted? So, then, that expression is not always a proof of doubt.

32 Lastly, the wise men of this world, who stake all their reputation on expressions and words, do not everywhere use the Latin word *forte*, "perchance," or its Greek equivalent *taxa*, as an expression of doubt. And so they say that their earliest poet used the words,

... h taxa xhrh

... esomai, which is, "I shall soon be a widow;" and the passage goes on:

... taxa gar se katakneousin 'Axaioi pantej eformhqentej.⁴¹ But he had no doubt that when all were joining in the attack one might well be laid low by all.

33. But let us use our own instances rather than foreign ones. You find in the Gospel that the Son Himself says of the Father (when He had sent His servants to His vineyard, and they had been slain), that the Father said, "I will send My well-beloved Son, perchance they will reverence Him."⁴² And in another place the Son says of Himself: "Ye know neither Me nor My Father; for if ye knew Me, ye would perchance know My Father also."⁴³

34. If, then, Peter used those words which were used by God without any prejudice to His knowledge, why should we not assume that Peter also used them without prejudice to his belief? For he could not doubt concerning the gift of Christ, Who had given him the power of forgiving sins; especially since he was bound not to leave any place for the craftiness of heretics who desire to deprive men of hope, in order the more easily to insinuate into the despairing their opinion as to the reiteration of baptism.

35. But the apostles, having this baptism according to the direction of Christ, taught repentance, promised forgiveness, and remitted guilt, as David taught when he said: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin."⁴⁴ He calls each blessed both him whose sins are remitted by the font, and him whose sin is covered by good works. For he who repents ought not only to wash away his sin by his tears, but also to cover and hide his former transgressions by amended deeds, that sin may not be imputed to him.

36. Let us, then, cover our falls by our subsequent acts; let us purify ourselves by tears, that the Lord our God may hear us when we lament, as He heard Ephraim when weeping, as it is written: "I have surely heard Ephraim weeping."⁴⁵ And He expressly repeats the very words of Ephraim: "Thou hast chastised me and I was chastised, like a calf I was not trained."⁴⁶ For a calf disports itself, and leaves its stall, and so Ephraim was untrained like a calf far away from the stall;

because he had forsaken the stall of the Lord, followed Jeroboam,⁴⁷ and worshipped the calves, which future event was prophetically indicated through Aaron,⁴⁸ namely, that the people of the Jews would fall after this manner. And so repenting, Ephraim says: "Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned, for Thou art the Lord my God. Surely in the end of my captivity I repented, and after I learned I mourned over the days of confusion, and subjected myself to Thee because I received reproach and made Thee known."⁴⁹

37. We see how to repent, with what words and with what acts, that the days of sin are called "days of confusion;" for there is confusion when Christ is denied.

38. Let us, then, submit ourselves to God, and not be subject to sin, and when we ponder the remembrance of our offences, let us blush as though at some disgrace, and not speak of them as a glory to us, as some boast of overcoming modesty, or putting down the feeling of justice. Let our conversion be such, that we who did not know God may now ourselves declare Him to others, that the Lord, moved by such a conversion on our part, may answer to us: "Ephraim is from youth a dear son, a pleasant child, for since My words are concerning him, I will verily remember him, therefore have I hastened to be over him; I will surely have mercy on him, saith the Lord."⁵⁰

39. And what mercy He promises us, the Lord also shows, when He says further on: "I have satiated every thirsty soul, and have satisfied every hungry soul. Therefore, I awaked and beheld, and My sleep was sweet unto Me."⁵¹ We observe that the Lord promises His sacraments to those who sin. Let us, then, all be converted to the Lord.

Chapter VI.

St. Ambrose teaches out of the prophet Isaiah what they must do who have fallen. Then referring to our Lord's proverbial expression respecting piping and dancing, he condemns dances. Next by the example of Jeremiah he sets forth the necessary accompaniments of repentance. And lastly, in order to show the efficacy of this medicine of penance, he enumerates the names of many who have used it for themselves or for others.

40. But if they be not converted, do you at least repent, who by many a slip have fallen from the lofty pinnacle of innocence and faith. We have a good Lord, Whose will it is to forgive all, Who called you by the prophet and said: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions, and I will not remember, but do thou remember that we may plead together." "I," He says, "will not remember, but do thou remember," that is to say, "I do not recall those transgressions which I have forgiven thee, which are covered, as it were, with oblivion, but do thou remember them. I will not remember them because of My grace, do thou remember them in order to correction; remember, thou mayest know that the sin is forgiven, boast not as though innocent, that thou aggravate not the sin, but thou wilt be justified, confess thy sin." For a shamefaced confession of sins looses the bands of transgression.

41. You see what God requires of you, that you remember that grace which you have received, and boast not as though you had not received it. You see by how complete a promise of remission He draws you to confession. Take heed, lest by resisting the commandments of God you fall into the offence of the Jews, to whom the Lord Jesus said: "We piped to you and ye danced not; we wailed and ye wept not."⁵²

42. The words are ordinary words, but the mystery is not ordinary. And so one must be on one's guard, lest, deceived by any common interpretation of this saying, one should suppose that the movements of wanton dances and the madness of the stage were commended; for these are full of evil in youthful age. But the dancing is commended which David practised before the ark of God. For everything is seemly which is done for religion, so that we need be ashamed of no service which tends to the worship and honouring of Christ.

43. Dancing, then, which is an accompaniment of pleasures and luxury, is not spoken of, but spiritually such as that wherewith one raises the eager body, and suffers not the limbs to lie slothfully on the ground, nor to grow stiff in their accustomed tracks. Paul danced spiritually, when for us he stretched forward, and forgetting the things which were behind, and aiming at those which were before, he pressed on to the prize of Christ.⁵³ And you, too, when you come to baptism, are warned to raise the hands, and to cause your feet wherewith you ascend to things eternal to be swifter. This dancing accompanies faith, and is the companion of grace.

44. This, then, is the mystery. "We piped to you," singing in truth the song of the New Testament, "and ye danced not." That is, did not raise your souls to the spiritual grace. "We wailed, and ye wept not." That is, ye did not repent. And therefore was the Jewish people forsaken, because it did not repent, and rejected grace. Repentance came by John, grace by Christ. He, as the Lord, gives the one; the other is proclaimed, as it were, by the servant. The Church, then, keeps both that it may both attain to grace and not cast away repentance, for grace is the gift of One Who confers it; repentance is the remedy of the sinner.

45. Jeremiah knew that penitence was a great remedy, which he in his Lamentations took up for Jerusalem, and brings forward Jerusalem itself as repenting, when he says: "She wept sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks, nor is there one to comfort her of all who love her. The ways of Sion do mourn."⁵⁴ And he says further: "For these things I weep, my eyes have grown dim with weeping, because he who used to comfort me is gone far from me."⁵⁵ We notice that he thought this the bitterest addition to his woes, that he who used to comfort the mourner was gone far from him. How, then, can you take away the very comfort by refusing to repentance the hope of forgiveness?

46. But let those who repent learn how they ought to carry it out, with what zeal, with what affection, with what intention of mind, with what shaking of the inmost bowels, with what conversion of heart: "Behold," he says, "O Lord, that I am in distress, my bowels are troubled by my weeping, my heart is turned within me."⁵⁶

47. Here you recognize the intention of the soul, the faithfulness of the mind, the disposition of the body: "The elders of the daughters of Sion sat," he says, "upon the ground, they put dust upon their heads, they girded themselves with haircloth, the princes hung their heads to the ground, the virgins of Jerusalem fainted with weeping, my eyes grew dim, my bowels were troubled, my glory was poured on the earth."⁵⁷

48. So, too, did the people of Nineveh mourn, and escaped the destruction of their city.⁵⁸ Such is the remedial power of repentance, that God seems because of it to change His intention. To escape is, then, in your own power; the Lord wills to be entreated, He wills that men should hope in Him, He wills that supplication should be made to Him. Thou art a man, and wilt to be asked

to forgive, and dost thou think that God will pardon thee without asking Him?

49. The Lord Himself wept over Jerusalem, that, inasmuch as it would not weep itself, it might obtain forgiveness through the tears of the Lord. He wills that we should weep in order that we may escape, as you find it in the Gospel: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves."⁵⁹

50. David wept, and obtained of the divine mercy the removal of the death of the people who were perishing, when of the three things proposed for his choice he selected that in which he might have the most experience of the divine mercy. Why do you blush to weep for your sins, when God commanded even the prophets to weep for the people?

51. And, lastly, Ezekiel was bidden to weep for Jerusalem, and he took the book, at the beginning of which was written "Lamentation, and melody, and woe,"⁶⁰ two things sad and one pleasant, for he shall be saved in the future who has wept most in this age. "For the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, and the heart of fools in the house of feasting."⁶¹ And the Lord Himself said: "Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh."⁶²

Chapter VII. An exhortation to mourning and confession of sins for Christ is moved by these and the tears of the Church. Illustration from the story of Lazarus. After showing that the Novatians are the successors of those who planned to kill Lazarus, St. Ambrose argues that the full forgiveness of every sin is signified by the odour of the ointment poured by Mary on the feet of Christ; and further, that the Novatian heretics find their likeness in Judas, who grudged and envied when others rejoiced.

52. Let us, then, mourn for a time, that we may rejoice for eternity. Let us fear the Lord, let us anticipate Him with the confession of our sins, let us correct our backslidings and amend our faults, lest of us too it be said: "Woe is me, my soul, for the godly man is perished from the earth, and there is none amongst men to correct them."⁶³

53. Why do you fear to confess your sins to our good Lord? "Set them forth," He says, "that thou mayest be justified." The rewards of justification are set before him who is still guilty of sin, for he is justified who voluntarily confesses his own sin; and lastly, "the just man is his own accuser in the beginning of his speaking."⁶⁴ The Lord knows all things, but He waits for your words, not that He may punish, but that He may pardon. It is not His will that the devil should triumph over you and accuse you when you conceal your sins. Be beforehand with your accuser: if you accuse yourself, you will fear no accuser; if you report yourself, though you were dead you shall live.

54. Christ will come to your grave, and if He finds there weeping for you Martha the woman of good service, and Mary who carefully heard the Word of God, like holy Church which has chosen the best part, He will be moved with compassion, when at your death He shall see the tears of many and will say: "Where have ye laid him?"⁶⁵ that is to say, in what condition of guilt is he? in which rank of penitents? I would see him for whom ye weep, that he himself may move Me with his tears. I will see if he is already dead to that sin for which forgiveness is entreated.

55. The people will say to Him, "Come and see."⁶⁶ What is the meaning of "Come"? It means, Let forgiveness of sins come, let the life of the departed come, the resurrection of the dead, let Thy kingdom come to this sinner also.

56. He will come and will command that the stone be taken away which his fall has laid on the shoulders of the sinner. He could have removed the stone by a word of command, for even inanimate nature is wont to obey the bidding of Christ. He could by the silent power of His working have removed the stone of the sepulchre, at Whose Passion the stones being suddenly removed many sepulchres of the dead were opened, but He bade men remove the stone, in very truth indeed, that the unbelieving might believe what they saw, and see the dead rising again, but in a type that He might give us the power of lightening the burden of sins, the heavy pressure as it were upon the guilty. Ours it is to remove the burdens, His to raise again, His to bring forth from the tombs those set free from their bands.

57. So the Lord Jesus, seeing the heavy burden of the sinner, weeps, for the Church alone He suffers not to weep. He has compassion with His beloved, and says to him that is dead, "Come forth,"⁶⁷ that is, "Thou who liest in darkness of conscience, and in the squalor of thy sins, as in the prison-house of the guilty, come forth, declare thy sins that thou mayest be justified. "For with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."⁶⁸

58. If you have confessed at the call of Christ the bars will be broken, and every chain loosed, even the stench of the bodily corruption be grievous. For he had been dead four days and his flesh stank in the tomb; but He Whose flesh saw no corruption was three days in the sepulchre, for He knew no evils of the flesh, which consists of the substances of the four elements. However great, then, the stench of the dead body may be, it is all done away so soon as the sacred ointment has shed its odour; and the dead rises again, and the command is given to loose his hands who till now was in sin; the covering is taken from his face which veiled the truth of the grace which he had received. But since he has received forgiveness, the command is given to uncover his face, to lay bare his features. For he whose sin is forgiven has nothing whereof to be ashamed.

59. But in the presence of such grace given by the Lord, of such a miracle of divine bounty, when all ought to have rejoiced, the wicked were stirred up and gathered a council against Christ,⁶⁹ and wished moreover to kill Lazarus also.⁷⁰ Do you not recognize that you are the successors of those whose hardness you inherit? For you too are angry and gather a council against the Church, because you see the dead come to life again in the Church, and to be raised again by receiving forgiveness of their sins. And thus, so far as? you, you desire to slay again through envy those who are raised to life.

60. But Jesus does not revoke His benefits, nay, rather He amplifies them by additions of His liberality, He anxiously revisits him who was raised again, and rejoicing in the gift of the restored life, He comes to the feast which His Church has prepared for Him, at which he who had been dead is found as one amongst those sitting down with Christ.

61. Then all wonder who look upon him with the pure gaze of the mind, who are free from envy, for such children the Church has. They wonder, as I said, how he who yesterday and the day before lay in the tomb is one of those sitting with the Lord Jesus.

62. Mary herself pours ointment on the feet of the Lord Jesus.⁷¹ Perchance for this reason on His feet, because one of the lowliest has been snatched from death, for we are all the body of Christ,⁷² but others perchance are the more honourable members. The Apostle was the mouth of Christ, for he said, "Ye seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me."⁷³ The prophets through whom

He spake of things to come were His month, would that I might be found worthy to be His foot, and may Mary pour on me her precious ointment, and anoint me and wipe away my sin.

63. What, then, we read concerning Lazarus we ought to believe of every sinner who is converted, who, though he may have been stinking, nevertheless is cleansed by the precious ointment of faith. For faith has such grace that there where the dead stank the day before, now the whole house is filled with good odour.

64. The house of Corinth stank, when it was written concerning it: "It is reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles."⁷⁴ There was a stench, for a little leaven had corrupted the whole lump. A good odour began when it was said: "If ye forgive anything to any one I forgive also. For what I also have forgiven, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ."⁷⁵ And so, the sinner being set free, there was great joy in that place, and the whole house was filled with the odour of the sweetness of grace. Wherefore the Apostle, knowing well that he had shed upon all the ointment of apostolic forgiveness, says: "We are a sweet savour of Christ unto God in them that are saved."⁷⁶

65. At the pouring forth, then, of this ointment all rejoice; Judas alone speaks against it.⁷⁷ So, too, now he who is a sinner speaks against it, he who is a traitor blames it, but he is himself blamed by Christ, as he knows not the remedy of the Lord's death, and understands not the mystery of that so great burial. For the Lord both suffered and died that He might redeem us from death. This is manifest from the most excellent value from His death, which is sufficient for the absolution of the sinner, and his restoration to fresh grace; so that all may come and wonder at his sitting at table with Christ, and may praise God, saying: "Let us eat and feast, for he was dead and is alive again, had perished and is found."⁷⁸ But any one devoid of faith objects: "Why does He eat with publicans and sinners?" This is his answer: "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick."⁷⁹

Chapter VIII. In urging repentance St. Ambrose turns to his own case, expressing the wish that he could wash our Lord's feet like the woman in the Gospel, which is a great pattern of penitence, though such as cannot attain to it find acceptance. He prays for himself, especially that he may sorrow with sinners, who are better than himself. Those for whom Christ died are not to be contemned.

66. Show, then, your wound to the Physician that He may heal it. Though you show it not, He knows it, but waits to hear your voice. Do away your scars by tears. Thus did that woman in the Gospel, and wiped out the stench of her sin; thus did she wash away her fault, when washing the feet of Jesus with her tears.

67. Would that Thou, Lord Jesus, mightest reserve for me the washing off from Thy feet of the stains contracted since Thou walkest in me! O that Thou mightest offer to me to cleanse the pollution which I by my deeds have caused on Thy steps! But whence can I obtain living water, wherewith I may wash Thy feet? If I have no water I have tears, and whilst with them I wash Thy feet I trust to cleanse myself. Whence is it that Thou shouldst say to me: "His sins which are many are forgiven, because he loved much"? I confess that I owe more, and that more has been forgiven me who have been called to the priesthood from the tumult and strife of the law courts and the dread of public administration; and therefore I fear that I may be found ungrateful, if I, to

whom more has been forgiven, love less.

68. But all are not able to equal that woman, who was deservedly preferred even to Simon, who was giving the feast to the Lord; who gave a lesson to all who desire to gain forgiveness, by kissing the feet of Christ, washing them with her tears, wiping them with her hair, and anointing them with ointment.

69. In a kiss is the sign of love, and therefore the Lord Jesus says: "Let her kiss Me with the kisses of her mouth."⁸⁰ What is the meaning of the hair, but that you may learn that, having laid aside all the pomp of worldly trappings, you must implore pardon, throw yourself on the earth with tears, and prostrate on the ground move pity. In the ointment, too, is set forth the savour of a good conversation. David was a king, yet he said: "Every night will I wash my bed, I will water my couch with tears."⁸¹ And therefore he obtained such a favour, as that of his house the Virgin should be chosen, who by her child-bearing should bring forth Christ for us. Therefore is this woman also praised in the Gospel.

70. Nevertheless if we are unable to equal her, the Lord Jesus knows also how to aid the weak, when there is no one who can prepare the feast, or bring the ointment, or carry with her a spring of living water. He comes Himself to the sepulchre.

71. Would that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to come to this sepulchre of mine, O Lord Jesus, that Thou wouldst wash me with Thy tears, since in my hardened eyes I possess not such tears as to be able to wash away my offence. If Thou shalt weep for me I shall be saved; if I am worthy of Thy tears I shall cleanse the stench of all my offences; if I am worthy that Thou weep but a little, Thou wilt call me out of the tomb of this body and will say: "Come forth," that my meditations may not be kept pent up in the narrow limits of this body, but may go forth to Christ, and move in the light, that I may think no more on works of darkness but on works of light. For he who thinks on sins endeavours to shut himself up within his own consciousness.

72. Call forth, then, Thy servant. Although bound with the chain of my sins I have my feet fastened and my hands tied; being now buried in dead thoughts and works, yet at Thy call I shall go forth free, and shall be found one of those sitting at Thy feast, and Thy house shall be filled with precious ointment. If Thou hast vouchsafed to redeem any one, Thou wilt preserve him. For it shall be said, "See, he was not brought up in the bosom of the Church, nor trained from childhood, but hurried from the judgment-seat, brought away from the vanities of this world, growing accustomed to the singing of the choir instead of the shout of the crier, but he continues in the priesthood not by his own strength, but by the grace of Christ, and sits among the guests at the heavenly table.

73. Preserve, O Lord, Thy work, guard the gift which Thou hast given even to him who shrank from it. For I knew that I was not worthy to be called a bishop, because I had devoted myself to this world, but by Thy grace I am what I am. And I am indeed the least of all bishops, and the lowest in merit; yet since I too have undertaken some labour for Thy holy Church, watch over this fruit, and let not him whom when lost Thou didst call to the priesthood, to be lost when a priest. And first grant that I may know how with inmost affection to mourn with those who sin; for this is a very great virtue, since it is written: "And thou shalt not rejoice over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction, and speak not proudly in the day of their trouble."⁸² Grant that so often as the sin of any one who has fallen is made known to me I may suffer with him, and not chide him proudly,

but mourn and weep, so that weeping over another I may mourn for myself, saying, "Tamar hath been more righteous than I."⁸³

74. Perchance a maiden may have fallen, deceived and hurried away by those occasions which are the sources of sins. Well, we who are older sin too. In us, too, the law of this flesh wars against the law of our mind, and makes us captives of sin, so that we do what we would not.⁸⁴ Her youth is an excuse for her, I now have none, for she ought to learn, we ought to teach. So that "Tamar hath been more righteous than I."

75. We inveigh against some one's covetousness, let us call to mind whether we ourselves have never done anything covetously; and if we have, since covetousness is the root of all evils, and is working in our bodies like a serpent secretly under the earth, let each of us say: "Tamar hath been more righteous than I."

76. If we have been seriously moved against any one, a layman may act hastily for a smaller matter than a bishop. Let us ponder that with ourselves and say, He who is reproved for quick temper is more righteous than I. For if we thus speak, we guard ourselves against this, that the Lord Jesus or one of His disciples should say to us: "Thou beholdest the mote in thy brother's eye, but beholdest not the beam which is in thine own eye. Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."⁸⁵

77. Let us, then, not be ashamed to say that our fault is more serious than that of him whom we think we must reprove, for this is what Judah did who reprimanded Tamar, and remembering his own fault said: "Tamar is more righteous than I." In which saying there is a deep mystery and a moral precept; and therefore is his offence not reckoned to him, because he accused himself before he was accused by others.

78. Let us, then, not rejoice over the sin of any one, but rather let us mourn, for it is written: "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy, because I have fallen, for I shall arise; for if I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me, I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He maintain my cause, and execute judgment for me, and bring me forth to the light. and I shall behold His righteousness. Mine enemy, too, shall see it and shall be covered with confusion, which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God? Mine eyes shall behold her, and she shall be for treading down as the mire in the streets,"⁸⁶ And this not unreservedly, for he who rejoices at the fall of another rejoices at the victory of the devil. Let us, then, rather mourn when we hear that one has perished for whom Christ died, Who despises not even the straw in time of harvest.

79. O that He may not cast away this straw at His harvest, the empty stalks of my produce; but may He gather it in, as is said by some one: "Woe is me, for I am become as one that gathereth straw in harvest, and grape gleanings in the vintage,"⁸⁷ that He may eat of the firstfruits at least of His grace in me, though He approve not the later fruit.

Chapter IX. In what way faith is necessary for repentance. Means for paying our debts, in which work, prayer, tears, and fasting are of more value than money. Some instances are adduced, and St. Ambrose declares that generosity is profitable, but only when joined with faith; it is, moreover, liable to certain defects. He goes on to speak of some defects in repentance, such as too great haste in seeking reconciliation, considering abstinence from sacraments all that is needed, of

committing sin in hope of repenting later.

80. So, then, it is fitting for us to believe both that sinners must repent and that forgiveness is to be given on repentance, yet still as hoping for forgiveness as granted upon faith, not as a debt, for it is one thing to earn, and an other presumptuously to claim a right. Faith asks for forgiveness, as it were, by covenant, but presumption is more akin to demand than to request. Pay first that which you owe, that you may be in a position to ask for what you have hoped. Come with the disposition of an honest debtor, that you may not contract a fresh liability, but may pay that which is due of the existing debt with the possessions of your faith.

81. He who owes a debt to God has more help towards payment than he whets indebted to man. Man requires money for money, and this is not always at the debtor's command. God demands the affection of the heart, which is in our own power. No one who owes a debt to God is poor, except one who has made himself poor. And even if he have nothing to sell, yet has he wherewith to pay. Prayer, fasting, and tears are the resources of an honest debtor, and much more abundant than if one from the price of his estate offered money without faith.

82. Ananias was poor, when after selling his land he brought the money to the apostles, and was not able with it to pay his debt, but involved himself the more.⁸⁸ That widow was rich who cast her two small pieces into the treasury, of whom Christ said: "This poor widow hath cast in more than they all."⁸⁹ For God requires not money but faith.

83. And I do not deny that sins may be diminished by liberal gifts to the poor, but only if faith commend what is spent. For what would the giving of one's whole property benefit without charity?

84. There are some who aim at the credit of generosity for pride alone, because they wish thereby to gain the good opinion of the multitude for leaving nothing to themselves; but whilst they are seeking rewards in this life, they are laying up none for the life to come, and having received their reward here they cannot hope for it there.

85. Some again, having, through impulsive excitement and not after long consideration, given their possessions to the Church, think that they can claim them back. These gain neither the first nor the second reward, for the gift was made thoughtlessly, its recall sacrilegiously.

86. Some repent of having distributed their property to the poor. But they who are doing penance must not repent of this, lest they repent of their own repentance. For many seek for penance through fear of future punishment, being conscious of their sins, and having received their penance are held back by fear of the public entreaties. These persons seem to have sought for repentance for their evil deeds, but to exercise it for their good ones.

87. Some seek penance because they wish to be at once restored to communion. These wish not so much to loose themselves as to bind the priest, for they do not put off the guilt from their own conscience, but lay it on that of the priest, to whom the command is given: "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine;"⁹⁰ that is to say, that partaking of the holy Communion is not to be allowed to those polluted with impurity.

88. And so one may see those walking in other attire, who ought to be weeping and groaning because they had defiled the robe of sanctification and grace; and women loading their ears with pearls, and weighing down their necks, who had better have bent to Christ than to gold, and who

ought to be weeping for themselves, because they have lost the pearl from heaven.

89. There are, again, some who think that it is penitence to abstain from the heavenly sacraments. These are too cruel judges of themselves, who prescribe a penalty for themselves but refuse the remedy, who ought to be mourning over their self-imposed penalty, because it deprives them of heavenly grace.

90. Others think that licence is granted them to sin, because the hope of penitence is before them, whereas penitence is the remedy, not an incentive to sin. For the salve is necessary for the wound, not the wound for the salve, since a salve is sought because of the wound, the wound is not wished for on account of the salve. The hope which is put off to a future season is but feeble, for every season is uncertain, and hope does not outlive all time.

Chapter X. In order to do away with the feeling of shame which holds back the guilty from public penance, St. Ambrose points out the advantage of prayers offered by the whole Church, and sets forth the example of saints who have sorrowed. Then, after reproving those who imagine that penance may be often repeated, he points on the difficulty of repentance, and how it is to be carried out.

91. Can any one endure that you should blush to entreat God, when you do not blush to entreat a man? That you should be ashamed to entreat Him Who knows you fully, when you are not ashamed to confess your sins to a man who knows you not? 91 Do you shrink from witnesses and sympathizers in your prayers, when, if you have to satisfy a man, you must visit many and entreat them to be kind enough to intervene; when you throw yourself at a man's knees, kiss his feet, bring your children, still unconscious of guilt, to entreat also for their father's pardon? And you disdain to do this in the Church in order to entreat God, in order to gain for yourself the support of the holy congregation; where there is no cause for shame, except indeed not to confess, since we are all sinners, amongst whom he is the most praiseworthy who is the most humble; he is the most just who feels himself the lowest.

92. Let the Church, our Mother, weep for you, and wash away your guilt with her tears; let Christ see you mourning and say, "Blessed are ye that are sad, for ye shall rejoice." It pleases Him that many should entreat for one. In the Gospel, too, moved by the widow's tears, because many were weeping for her, He raised her son. He heard Peter more quickly when He raised Dorcas, because the poor were mourning over the death of the woman. He also forthwith forgave Peter, for he wept most bitterly. And if you weep bitterly Christ will look upon you and your guilt shall leave you. For the application of pain does away with the enjoyment of the wickedness and the delight of the sin. And so while mourning over our past sins we shut the door against fresh ones, and from the condemnation of our guilt there arises as it were a training in innocence.

93. Let, then, nothing call you away from penitence, for this you have in common with the saints, and would that such sorrowing for sin as that of the saints were copied by you. David, as it were, "ate ashes for bread, and mingled his drink with weeping," 92 and therefore now rejoices the more because he wept the more: "Mine eyes ran down," he said, "with rivers of water." 93

94. John wept sore, 94 and, as he tells us, the mysteries of Christ were revealed to him. But that woman who, when she was in sin and ought to have wept, nevertheless rejoiced, and covered herself with a robe of purple and scarlet, 95 and adorned herself with much gold and precious

stones, now mourns the misery of eternal weeping.

95. Deservedly are they blamed who think that they often do penance, for they are wanton against Christ. For if they went through their penance in truth, they would not think that it could be repeated again; for as there is but one baptism, so there is but one course of penance, so far as the outward practice goes, for we must repent of our daily faults, but this latter has to do with lighter faults, the former with such as are graver.

96. But I have more easily found such as had preserved their innocence than such as had fittingly repented. Does any one think that that is penitence where there still exists the striving after earthly honours, where wine flows, and even conjugal connection takes place? The world must be renounced; less sleep must be indulged in than nature demands; it must be broken by groans, interrupted by sighs, put aside by prayers; the mode of life must be such that we die to the usual habits of life. Let the man deny himself and be wholly changed, as in the fable they relate of a certain youth, who left his home because of his love for a harlot, and, having subdued his love, returned; then one day meeting his old favourite and not speaking to her, she, being surprised and supposing that he had not recognized her, said, when they met again, "It is I." "But," was his answer, "I am not the former I."

97. Well then did the Lord say: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."⁹⁶ For they who are dead and buried in Christ ought not again to make their conclusions as though. living in the world. "Touch not," it is said, "nor attend to those things which tend to corruption by their very use,"⁹⁷ for the very customs of this life corrupt integrity."

Chapter XI. The possibility of repentance is a reason why baptism should not be deferred to old age, a practice which is against the will of God in holy Scripture. But it is of no use to practise penance whilst still serving lusts. These must be first subdued.

98. Good, then, is penitence, and if there were no place for it, every one would defer the grace of cleansing by baptism to old age. And a sufficient reason is that it is better, to have a robe to mend, than none to put on; but as that which has been repaired once is restored, so that which is frequently mended is destroyed.

99. And the Lord has given a sufficient warning to those who put off repentance, when He says: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."⁹⁸ We know not at what hour the thief will come, we know not whether our soul may be required of us this next night. God cast Adam out of Paradise immediately after his fault; there was no delay. At once the fallen were severed from all their enjoyments that they might do penance; at once God clothed them with garments of skins, not of silk.⁹⁹

100. And what reason is there for putting off is it that you may sin yet more? Then because God is good you are evil, and "despise the riches of His goodness and long-suffering."¹⁰⁰ But the goodness of the Lord ought rather to draw you to repentance. Wherefore holy David says to all: "Come, let us worship and fall down before Him, and mourn before our Lord Who made us."¹⁰¹ But for a sinner who has died without repentance, because nothing remains but to mourn grievously and to weep, you find him groaning and saying: "O my son Absalom I my son Absalom!"¹⁰² For him who is wholly dead mourning is without alleviation.

101. But of those who as exiles and banished from their ancestral homes, which the holy law of Moses had assigned them, will be entangled in the errors of the world, you hear him saying: "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion."¹⁰³ He sets forth the wailings of those who have fallen, and shows that they who are living in this condition of passing time and changing circumstances ought to repent, after the example of those who, as a reward for sin, had been led into miserable captivity.

102. But nothing causes such exceeding grief as when any one, lying under the captivity of sin, calls to mind whence he has fallen, because he turned aside to carnal and earthly things, instead of directing his mind in the beautiful ways of the knowledge of God.

103. So you find Adam concealing himself, when he knew that God was present, and wishing to be hidden when called by God with that voice which wounded the soul of him who was hiding: "Adam, where art thou?"¹⁰⁴ That is to say, Wherefore hidest thou thyself? Why art thou concealed? Why dost thou avoid Him, Whom thou once didst long to see? A guilty conscience is so burdensome that it punishes itself without a judge, and wishes for covering, and yet is bare before God.

104. And so no one in a state of sin ought to claim a right to or the use of the sacraments, for it is written: "Thou hast sinned, be still."¹⁰⁵ As David says in the Psalm lately quoted: "We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof;" and again: "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"¹⁰⁶ For if the flesh wars against the mind, and is not subject to the guidance of the Spirit, that is a strange land which is not subdued by the toil of the cultivator, and so cannot produce the fruits of charity, patience, and peace. It is better, then, to be still when you cannot practise the works of repentance, lest in the very acts of repentance there be that which afterward will need further repentance. For if it be once entered upon and not rightly carried out, it obtains not the result of a first repentance and takes away the use of a later one.¹⁰⁷

105. When, then, the flesh resists, the soul must be intent upon God, and if results do not follow, let not faith fail. And if the enticements of the flesh come upon us, or the powers of the enemy attack us, let the soul keep in submission to God. For we are then specially oppressed when the flesh yields. And some there are who trouble heavily the wretched soul, seeking to deprive it of all protection. To which case the words apply: "Ruse it, ruse it, even to the foundations."¹⁰⁸

106. And David, pitying her,, says: "O wretched daughter of Babylon."¹⁰⁹ Wretched indeed, as being the daughter of Babylon, when she ceased to be the daughter of Jerusalem.¹¹⁰ And yet he calls for a healer for her, and says: "Blessed is he who shall take thy little ones and dash them against the rock."¹¹¹ That is to say, shall dash all corrupt and filthy thoughts against Christ, Who by His fear and His rebuke will break down all motions against reason, so as, if any one is seized by an adulterous love, to extinguish the fire, that he may by his zeal put away the love of a harlot, and deny himself that he may gain Christ.

107. We have then learned that we must do penance, and this at a time when the heat of luxury and sin is giving way; and that we, when under the dominion of sin, must show ourselves God fearing by refraining, rather than allowing ourselves in evil practices. For if it is said to Moses when he was desiring to draw nearer: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet,"¹¹² how much more must we free the feet of our soul from the bonds of the body, and clear our steps from all connection with

this world.

1: S. Luke xiii. 7.

2: S. Luke xiii. 8, Luke xiii. 9.

3: Phil iii. 8.

4: Gen. xviii. 27.

5: Job ii. 8.

6: Job xlii. 10.

7: Ps. cxiii. [cxii.] 7.

8: 1 Cor. iv. 12, 1 Cor. iv. 13.

9: Heb. vi. 4-6. The use made by the Montanists and Novatians of this passage in support of their heresy seems to have been one of the reasons why the Epistle to the Hebrews was so late in being received as canonical. This is stated by one authority in so many words: " Epistola ad Hebreos non legitur propter Navatianos. " Philastrius, de Hoer. 41.

10: Rom. vi. 4.

11: Eph. iv. 29.

12: Ps. civ. [ciii.] 5.

13: Eph. iv. 5.

14: Rom. vi. 3.

15: Rom. vi. 5, Rom. vi. 6.

16: Col. ii. 12.

17: Col. ii. 14.

18: Col. ii. 15.

19: Heb. vi. 3.

20: 2 [4] Kings v. 11.

21: S. Luke xv. 13 ff.

22: Eph. ii. 19.

23: Heb. xi. 1.

24: Penitentiam agere must here and elsewhere be translated thus, for it implies not mere repentance, but the undergoing outward discipline. The word penitentia means both repentance and penance.

25: Ps. li. [l.] 4.

26: Ex. xii. 11.

27: 1 Cor. v. 7.

28: 1 Cor. xi. 26.

29: S. Matt. xii. 31, Matt. xii. 32.

30: S. Matt. xii. 24 ff.

31: Acts viii. 21 ff.

32: S. Matt. xii. 30.

33: S. Matt. vii. 17.

34: Joel ii. 32.

35: S. John viii. 43.

36: S. Matt. xxvii. 5.

37: Isa. xliii. 25 [LXX.]. St. Ambrose, taking the Septuagint reading, makes the contrast to be between man's remembering and God's forgetting. But the contrast in the Hebrew is different: God will do away sins of His pure mercy and challenges Israel to bring forward any merits which can plead for pardon. God shows that His mercy is even greater than His justice. St. Ambrose, as is shown more clearly in chap. vi., is merely using a verbal antithesis.

38: S. Matt. viii. 19, Matt. viii. 20.

39: Jer. xxvi. 2, Jer. xxvi. 3.

40: Ezek. ii. 4, Ezek. ii. 5.

41: taxa with the sense of "perchance," though this is common in later Greek. In Homer it means quickly.

42: S. Matt. xxi. 37.

43: S. John viii. 19.

44: Ps. xxxii. [xxxi.] 1, Ps. xxxii. [xxxi.] 2.

45: Jer. xxxi. 18.

46: Jer. xxxi. 18.

47: Ecclus. xlvii. 23.

48: Ex. xxxi.

49: Jer. xxxi. 19 [very loosely].

50: Jer. xxxi. [LXX.] 20.

51: Jer. xxxi. 25, Jer. xxxi. 26.

52: S. Luke vii. 32.
53: Phil. ii. 13, Phil. ii. 14.
54: Lam. i. 2, Lam. i. 4.
55: Lam. i. 16.
56: Lam. i. 20.
57: Lam. ii. 10, Lam. ii. 11.
58: Jon. iii. 5.
59: S. Luke xxiii. 28.
60: Ezek. ii. 9 [LXX].
61: Eccles. vii. 4.
62: S. Luke vi. 21.
63: Mic. vii. 2 [LXX].
64: Prov. xviii. 17.
65: S. John xi. 34.
66: S. John xi. 34.
67: S. John xi. 43.
68: Rom. x. 10.
69: S. John xi. 47.
70: S. John xii. 10.
71: S. John xii. 3.
72: 1 Cor. xii. 27.
73: 2 Cor. xiii. 3.
74: 1 Cor. v. 1.
75: 2 Cor. ii. 10.
76: 2 Cor. ii. 15.
77: S. John xii. 4.
78: S. Luke xv. 24.
79: S. Matt. ix. 11, Matt. ix. 12.
80: Cant. i. 2.

81: Ps. vi. 6.

82: Obed. 12.

83: Gen. xxxviii. 26.

84: Rom. vii. 23 ff.

85: S. Matt. vii. 4, Matt. vii. 5.

86: Mic. vii. 8, Mic. vii. 9, Mic. vii. 10.

87: Mic. vii. 1.

88: Acts v. 1, Acts v. 2.

89: S. Luke xxi. 3.

90: S. Matt. vii. 6.

91: A good deal of controversy has arisen about this passage, which certainly appears, *prima facie*, to contrast confession to God and to a man obviously priest or bishop. The Benedictine editors insist much upon the use of the singular number, *homini*, a man. But the word might conceivably be used in a general sense. There is no real doubt as to the practice of the Early Church. See note at the end of this treatise.

92: Ps. cii. [ci.] 9.

93: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 136.

94: Rev. v. 4.

95: Rev. xvii. 4.

96: S. Matt. xvi. 24.

97: Col. ii. 21. We have here an instance of a very extreme kind, of the way in which St. Ambrose and other writers occasionally quote the words of holy Scripture without reference to their context or real meaning. The words suit the argument of St. Ambrose and he uses them. But they mean almost the very opposite in the original. They are part of the argument which St. Paul is opposing, not his argument.

98: S. Matt. iv. 17.

99: Gen. iii. 21, Gen. iii. 24.

100: Rom. ii. 4.

101: Ps. xcv. [xciv.] 6.

102: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xviii. 33.

103: Ps. cxxxvii. [cxxxvi.] 1.

104: Gen. iii. 9.

105: Gen. iv. 7 [LXX.]. These words occur in the Septuagint only, and would seem to be taken here by St. Ambrose as a warning from God to Cain, not to sacrifice whilst in sin, and so be applied to those sinners whom he enjoins not to communicate before they repent.

106: Ps. cxxxvii. [cxxxvi.] 2, Ps. cxxxvii. [cxxxvi.] 4.

107: I do not feel sure of the meaning of this passage, but it appears to be as above, that a person going through the outward exercises of penance without inward repentance, gains no benefit, and as sinners were not admitted to a second course of penance, does away with his chance for the future. [Ed.] 108: Ps. cxxxvii. [cxxxvi.] 7.

109: Ps. cxxxvii. [cxxxvi.] 8 [LXX.].

110: This passage is another instance of the way in which St. Ambrose, like many other early writers, lost sight of the original meaning of the text in drawing allegorical lessons from it. The "daughter of Babylon," i.e. the people, had never been a "daughter of God," nor was the dashing of the children against the rock ever intended to bear the beautiful interpretation given to it by our author.

111: Ps. cxxxvii. [cxxxvi.] 9.

112: Ex. iii. 5.

Concerning Virgins - Book 1

Book I.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Book I.

Chapter I.

St. Ambrose, reflecting upon the account he will have to give of his talents, determines to write, and consoles himself with certain examples of God's mercy. Then recognizing his own deficiencies desires that he may be dealt with like the fig-tree in the Gospel, and expresses a hope that words will not fail him in his endeavour to preach Christ.

1. If, according to the decree of heavenly truth, we have to give account of every idle word which we have spoken,¹ and if every servant will incur no small blame when his lord returns, who, either like a timid money-lender or covetous owner, has hidden in the earth the talents of spiritual grace which were entrusted to him in order that they might be multiplied by increasing interest, I, who, although possessed of but moderate ability, yet have a great necessity laid on me of making increase of the sayings of God entrusted to me, must rightly fear lest an account of the profit of my words be demanded of me, especially seeing that the Lord exacts of us effort, not profit. Wherefore I determined to write something, since, too, my words are listened to with greater risk to modesty than when they are written, for a book has no feeling of modesty.

2. And so distrusting indeed my own ability, but encouraged by the instances of divine mercy, I venture to compose an address, for when God willed even the ass spoke.² And I will open my

mouth long dumb, that the angel may assist me also, engaged in the burdens of this world, for He can do away with the hindrances of unskilfulness. Who in the ass did away those of nature. In the ark of the Old Testament the priest's rod budded;³ with God it is easy that in Holy Church a flower should spring from our knots also. And why should we despair that God should speak in men, Who spoke in the thorn bush?⁴ God did not despise the bush, and would He might give light also to my thorns. Perhaps some may wonder that there is some light even in our thorns; some our thorns will not burn; there will be some whose shoes shall be put off their feet at the sound of my voice, that the steps of the mind may be freed from bodily hindrances.

3. But these things are gained by holy men. Would that Jesus would cast a glance upon me still lying under that barren fig-tree,⁵ and that my fig-tree might also after three years bear fruit.⁶ But whence should sinners have so great hope? Would that at least that Gospel dresser of the vineyard, perhaps already bidden to cut down my fig-tree, would let it alone this year also, until he dig about it and dung it, that he may perchance lift the helpless out of the dust, and lift the poor out of the mire.⁷ Blessed are they who bind their horses under the vine and olive,⁸ consecrating the course of their labours to light and joy: the fig-tree, that is, the tempting attraction of the pleasures of the world, still overshadows me, low in height, brittle for working, soft for use, and barren of fruit.

4. And perhaps some one may wonder why I, who cannot speak, venture to write. And yet if we consider what we read in the writings of the Gospel, and the deeds of the priests, and the holy prophet Zacharias is taken as an instance, he will find that there is something which the voice cannot explain, but the pen can write. And if the name John restored speech to his father,⁹ I, too, ought not to despair that although dumb I may yet receive speech, if I speak of Christ, of Whom, according to the prophet's word: "Who shall declare the generation?"¹⁰ And so as a servant I will announce the family of the Lord, for the Lord has consecrated to Himself a family even in this body of humanity replete with frailty.

Chapter II. This treatise has a favourable beginning, since it is the birthday of the holy Virgin Agnes, of whose name, modesty, and martyrdom St. Ambrose speaks in commendation, but more especially of her age, seeing that she, being but twelve years old, was superior to terrors, promises, tortures, and death itself, with a courage wholly worthy of a man.

5. And my task begins favourably, that since to-day is the birthday of a virgin, I have to speak of virgins, and the treatise has its beginning from this discourse. It is the birthday of a martyr, let us offer the victim. It is the birthday of St. Agnes, let men admire, let children take courage, let the married be astounded, let the unmarried take an example. But what can I say worthy of her whose very name was not devoid of bright praise? In devotion beyond her age, in virtue above nature, she seems to me to have borne not so much a human name, as a token of martyrdom, whereby she showed what she was to be.

6. But I have that which may assist me. The name of virgin is a title of modesty. I will call upon the martyr, I will proclaim the virgin. That panegyric is long enough which needs no elaboration, but is within our grasp. Let then labour cease, eloquence be silent. One word is praise enough. This word old men and young and boys chant. No one is more praiseworthy than he who can be praised by all. There are as many heralds as there are men, who when they speak proclaim the martyr.

7. She is said to have suffered martyrdom when twelve years old. The more hateful was the cruelty, which spared not so tender an age, the greater in truth was the power of faith which found evidence even in that age. Was there room for a wound in that small body? And she who had no room for the blow of the steel had that wherewith to conquer the steel. But maidens of that age are unable to bear even the angry looks of parents, and are wont to cry at the pricks of a needle as though they were wounds. She was fearless under the cruel hands of the executioners, she was unmoved by the heavy weight of the creaking chains, offering her whole body to the sword of the raging soldier, as yet ignorant of death, but ready for it. Or if she were unwillingly hurried to the altars, she was ready to stretch forth her hands to Christ at the sacrificial fires, and at the sacrilegious altars themselves, to make the sign of the Lord the Conqueror,¹¹ or again to place her neck and both her hands in the iron bands, but no band could enclose such slender limbs.

8. A new kind of martyrdom! Not yet of fit age for punishment but already ripe for victory, difficult to contend with but easy to be crowned, she filled the office of teaching valour while having the disadvantage of youth. She would not as a bride so hasten to the couch, as being a virgin she joyfully went to the place of punishment with hurrying step, her head not adorned with plaited hair, but with Christ. All wept, she alone was without a tear. All wondered that she was so readily prodigal of her life, which she had not yet enjoyed, and now gave up as though she had gone through it. Every one was astounded that there was now one to bear witness to the Godhead, who as yet could not, because of her age, dispose of herself. And she brought it to pass that she should be believed concerning God, whose evidence concerning man would not be accepted. For that which is beyond nature is from the Author of nature.

9. What threats the executioner used to make her fear him, what allurements to persuade her, how many desired that she would come to them in marriage! But she answered: "It would be an injury to my spouse to look on any one as likely to please me. He who chose me first for Himself shall receive me. Why are you delaying, executioner? Let this body perish which can be loved by eyes which I would not." She stood, she prayed, she bent down her neck. You could see the executioner tremble, as though he himself had been condemned, and his right hand shake, his face grow pale, as he feared the peril of another, while the maiden feared not for her own. You have then in one victim a twofold martyrdom, of modesty and of religion. She both remained a virgin and she obtained martyrdom.

Chapter III.

Virginity is praised on many grounds, but chiefly because it brought down the Word from heaven, and hence its pursuit, which existed in but few under the old covenant, has spread to countless numbers.

10. And now the love of purity draws me on, and you, my holy sister, even though not speaking in your silent habit, to say something about virginity, test that which is a principal virtue should seem to be passed by with only a slight reference. For virginity is not praiseworthy because it is found in martyrs, but because itself makes martyrs.

11. But who can comprehend that by human understanding which not even nature has included in her laws? Or who can explain in ordinary language that which is above the course of nature? Virginity has brought from heaven that which it may imitate on earth. And not unfittingly has she

sought her manner of life from heaven, who has found for herself a Spouse in heaven. She, passing beyond the clouds, air, angels, and stars, has found the Word of God in the very bosom of the Father, and has drawn Him into herself with her whole heart. For who having found so great a Good would forsake it? For "Thy Name is as ointment poured out, therefore have the maidens loved Thee, and drawn Thee."¹² And indeed what I have said is not my own, since they who marry not nor are given in marriage are as the angels in heaven. Let us not, then, be surprised if they are compared to the angels who are joined to the Lord of angels. Who, then, can deny that this mode of life has its source in heaven, which we don't easily find on earth, except since God came down into the members of an earthly body? Then a Virgin conceived, and the Word became flesh that flesh might become God.

12. But some one will say: "But Elijah is seen to have had nothing to do with the embraces of bodily love." And therefore was he carried by a chariot into heaven,¹³ therefore he appeared glorified with the Lord,¹⁴ and therefore he is to come as the forerunner of the Lord's advent.¹⁵ And Miriam taking the timbrel led the dances with maidenly modesty.¹⁶ But consider whom she was then representing. Was she not a type of the Church, who as a virgin with unstained spirit joins together the religious gatherings of the people to sing divine songs? For we read that there were virgins appointed also in the temple at Jerusalem. But what says the Apostle? "These things happened to them in a figure, that they might be signs of what was to come."¹⁷ For the figure is shown in few, the life exists in many.

13. But in truth after that the Lord, coming in our flesh, joined together the Godhead and flesh without any confusion or mixture, then the practice of the life of heaven spreading throughout the whole world was implanted in human bodies. This is that which angels ministering on earth signified should come to pass,¹⁸ which ministry should be offered to the Lord with the service of an unstained body. This is that heavenly service which the host of rejoicing angels spoke of for the earth,¹⁹ We have, then, the authority of antiquity from of old, the fulness of the setting forth from Christ Himself.

Chapter IV. The comeliness of virginity never existed amongst the heathen, neither with the vestal virgins, nor amongst philosophers, such as Pythagoras.

14. I Certainly have not this in common with the heathen, nor in regard to it am I associated with barbarians, nor practise it with other animals, with whom, although we breathe one and the same vital air, and have a common condition of an earthly body, and from whom we differ not in the mode of generation, in this point alone we nevertheless avoid the reproach of likeness, that virginity is aimed at by the heathen, but when consecrated it is violated, it is attacked by barbarians, and is unknown to others.

15. Who will allege to me the virgins of Vesta. and the priests of Pallas? What sort of chastity is that which is not of morals, but of years, which is appointed not for ever, but for a term! Such purity is all the more wanton of which the corruption is put off for a later age. They teach their virgins ought not to persevere, and are unable to do so, who have set a term to virginity. What sort of a religion is that in which modest maidens are bidden to be immodest old women? Nor is she modest who is bound by law, and she immodest who is set free by law. O the mystery! O the morals! where chastity is enforced by law and authority given for lust! And so she is not chaste, who is constrained by fear; nor honourable, who is hired for a price; nor is that modesty which,

exposed to the daily importunity of lascivious eyes, is attacked by disgraceful looks. Exemptions are bestowed upon them, prices are offered them, as though to sell one's chastity were not the greatest sign of wantonness. That which is promised for a price is given up for a price; is made over for a price; is considered to have its price. She who is wont to sell her chastity knows not how to redeem it.

16. What shall I say of the Phrygian rites, in which immodesty is the rule, and that too of the weaker sex? What of the orgies of Bacchus, where the mystery of the rites is an incentive to lust? Of what sort can the lives of priests be, then, where the adulteries of the gods are matters of religion. So then they have no sacred virgins.

17. Let us see whether perchance the precepts of philosophers have formed any, for they are wont to claim the teaching of all virtues. A certain Pythagorean virgin is spoken of in story, whom a tyrant was endeavouring to compel to reveal the secret, and lest it should be possible even in her torments for revelation to be extorted from her, she bit off her tongue and spat it in the tyrant's face, that he who would not make an end of questioning might not have aught to question.

18. But that same virgin, so constant in mind, was overcome by lust, though she could not be overcome by torments. And so she who could keep the secret of her mind could not conceal the shame of her body. She overcame nature, but observed not discipline. How she would desire that her speech had existed as a defence of her chastity! So she was not unconquered on every side, for although the tyrant could not find out that which he sought, yet he did find what he sought not.

19. How much stronger are our virgins, who overcome even those powers which they do not see; whose victory is not only over flesh and blood, but also over the prince of this world, and ruler of this age! In age, Agnes indeed was less, but in virtue greater, triumphing over more, more constant in her confidence; she did not destroy her tongue through fear, but kept it for a trophy. For there was nothing in her which she feared to betray, since that which she acknowledged was holy, not sinful. And so the former merely concealed her secret, the latter bore witness to the Lord, and confessed Him in her body, Whom her age did not yet suffer to confess.

Chapter V.

Heaven is the home of virginity, and the Son of God its Author, Who though He was a Virgin before the Virgin, yet being of the Virgin took the Virgin Church as His bride. Of her we have all been born. Some of her gifts are enumerated. Her daughters have a special excellence in that virginity is not a matter of precept, and that it is a most powerful help in the pursuit of piety.

20. It is the custom in encomiums to speak of country and parentage of the subject, that the greatness of the offspring may be enhanced by mention of the father. Now I, who have not undertaken to praise but to set forth virginity, yet think it to the purpose to make known its country and its parent. First, let us settle where is its country. Now, if one's country be there where is the home of one's birth, without doubt heaven is the native country of chastity. And so she is a stranger here, but a denizen there.

21. And what is virginal chastity but purity free from stain? And whom can we judge to be its author but the immaculate Son of God, Whose flesh saw no corruption, Whose Godhead experienced no infection?. Consider, then, how great are the merits of virginity. Christ was before the Virgin, Christ

was of the Virgin. Begotten indeed of the Father before the ages, but born of the Virgin for the ages. The former was of His own nature, the latter is for our benefit. The former always was, the latter He willed.

22. Consider, too, another merit of virginity. Christ is the spouse of the Virgin, and if one may so say of virginal chastity, for virginity is of Christ, not Christ of virginity. He is, then, the Virgin Who was espoused, the Virgin Who bare us, Who fed us with her own milk, of whom we read: "How great things hath the virgin of Jerusalem done! The teats shall not fail from the rock, nor snow from Lebanon, nor the water which is borne by the strong wind."²⁰ Who is this virgin that is watered with the streams of the Trinity, from whose rock waters flow, whose teats fail not, and whose honey is poured forth? Now, according to the Apostle, the rock is Christ.²¹ Therefore, from Christ the teats fail not, nor brightness from God, nor the river from the Spirit. This is the Trinity which waters their Church, the Father, Christ, and the Spirit.

23. But let us now come down from the mother to the daughters. "Concerning virgins," says the Apostle, "I have no commandment of the Lord."²² If the teacher of the Gentiles had none, who could have one? And in truth he had no commandment, but he had an example. For virginity cannot be commanded, but must be wished for, for things which are above us are matters for prayer rather than under mastery. "But I would have you," he says, "be without carefulness. For he who is without a wife is careful for the things which are the Lord's, how he may please God.... And the virgin taketh thought for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy in body and in spirit. For she that is married taketh thought for the things of the world, how she may please her husband."²³

Chapter VI.

St. Ambrose explains that he is not speaking against marriage, and proceeds to compare the advantages and disadvantages of the single and married state.

24. I Am not indeed discouraging marriage, but am enlarging upon the benefits of virginity. "He who is weak," says the Apostle, "eateth herbs."²⁴ I consider one thing necessary, I admire another. "Art thou bound to a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou free from a wife? Seek not a wife."²⁵ This is the command to those who are. But what does he say concerning virgins? "He who giveth his virgin in marriage doeth well, and he who giveth her not doeth better."²⁶ The one sins not if she marries, the other, if she marries not, it is for eternity. In the former is the remedy for weakness, in the latter the glory of chastity. The former is not reprov'd, the latter is praised.

25. Let us compare, if it pleases you, the advantages of married women with that which awaits virgins. Though the noble woman boasts of her abundant offspring, yet the more she bears the more she endures. Let her count up the comforts of her children, but let her likewise count up the troubles. She marries and weeps. How many vows does she make with tears. She conceives, and her fruitfulness brings her trouble before offspring. She brings forth and is ill. How sweet a pledge which begins with danger and ends in danger. which will cause pain before pleasure! It is purchased by perils, and is not possessed at her own will.

26. Why speak of the troubles of nursing, training, and marrying? These are the miseries of those who are fortunate. A mother has heirs, but it increases her sorrows. For we must not speak of adversity, lest the minds of the holiest parents tremble. Consider, my sister, how hard it must be to bear what one must not speak of. And this is in this present age. But the days shall come when

they shall say: "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare."²⁷ For the daughters of this age are conceived, and conceive; but the daughter of the kingdom refrains from wedded pleasure, and the pleasure of the flesh, that she may be holy in body and in spirit.

27. Why should I further speak of the painful ministrations and services due to their husbands from wives, to whom before slaves God gave the command to serve?²⁸ And I mention these things that they may comply more willingly, whose reward, if approved, is love; if not approved, punishment for the fault.

28. And in this position spring up those incentives to vice, in that they paint their faces with various colours, fearing not to please their husbands; and from staining their faces, come to think of staining their chastity. What madness is here, to change the fashion of nature and seek a painting, and while fearing a husband's judgment to give up their own. For she is the first to speak against herself who wishes to change that which is natural to her. So, while studying to please others, she displeases herself. What truer witness to thy unsightliness do we require, O woman, than thyself who art afraid to be seen? If thou art beautiful, why hidest thou thyself? If unsightly, why dost thou falsely pretend to beauty, so as to have neither the satisfaction of thy own conscience, nor of the error of another? For he loves another, thou desirest to please another. And art thou angry if he love another, who is taught to do so in thy own person? Thou art an evil teacher of thy own injury.

29. And next, what expense is necessary that even a beautiful wife may not fail to please? Costly necklaces on the one hand hang on her neck, on the other a robe woven with gold is dragged along the ground. Is this display purchased, or is it a real possession? And what varied enticements of perfumes are made use of! The ears are weighed down with gems, a different colour from nature is dropped into the eyes. What is there left which is her own, when so much is changed? The married woman loves her own perceptions, and does she think that this is to live?

30. But you, O happy virgins, who know not such torments, rather than ornaments, whose holy modesty, beaming in your bashful cheeks, and sweet chastity are a beauty, ye do not, intent upon the eyes of men, consider as merits what is gained by the errors of others. You, too, have indeed your own beauty, furnished by the comeliness of virtue, not of the body, to which age puts not an end, which death cannot take away, nor any sickness injure. Let God alone be sought as the judge of loveliness, Who loves even in less beautiful bodies the more beautiful souls. You know nothing of the burden and pain of childbearing, but more are the offspring of a pious soul, which esteems all as its children, which is rich in successors, barren of all bereavements, which knows no deaths, but has many heirs.

31. So the holy Church, ignorant of wedlock, but fertile in bearing, is in chastity a virgin, yet a mother in offspring. She, a virgin, bears us her children, not by a human father, but by the Spirit. She bears us not with pain, but with the rejoicings of the angels. She, a virgin, feeds us, not with the milk of the body, but with that of the Apostle, wherewith he fed the tender age of the people who were still children.²⁹ For what bride has more children than holy Church, who is a virgin in her sacraments and a mother to her people, whose fertility even holy Scripture attests, saying, "For many more are the children of the desolate than of her that hath an husband"³⁰ She has not an husband, but she has a Bridegroom, inasmuch as she, whether as the Church amongst nations, or as the soul in individuals, without any loss of modesty, she weds the Word of God as her eternal Spouse, free from all injury, full of reason.

Chapter VII.

St. Ambrose exhorts parents to train their children to virginity, and sets before them the troubles arising from their desire to have grandchildren. He says however that he does not forbid marriage, but rather defends it against heretics who oppose it. Still setting virginity before marriage, he speaks of the beauty of their spouse, and of the gifts wherewith He adorns them, and applies to these points certain vetoes of the Song of Songs.

32. You have heard, O parents, in what virtues and pursuits you ought to train your daughters, that you may possess those by whose merits your faults may be redeemed. The virgin is an offering for her mother, by whose daily sacrifice the divine power is appeased. A virgin is the inseparable pledge of her parents, who neither troubles them for a dowry, nor forsakes them, nor injures them in word or deed.³¹

33. But some one perhaps wishes to have grandchildren, and to be called grandfather. In the first place, such a one gives up what is his own, while seeking what is another's, and is already losing what is certain, while hoping to gain what is uncertain; he gives away his own riches, and still more is asked for; if he does not pay the dowry, it is exacted; if he lives long, he becomes a burden. This is to buy a son-in-law, not to gain one who would sell a sight of their daughter to her parents. Was she borne so long in her mother's womb in order that she might pass under the power of another? And so the parents take the charge of setting off their virgin that she may so be the sooner removed from them.

34. Some one may say, Do you, then, discourage marriage? Nay, I encourage it, and condemn those who are wont to discourage it, so much so, that indeed I am wont to speak of the marriages of Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel, and other women of old time, as instances of singular virtues. For he who condemns marriage, condemns the birth of children, and condemns the fellowship of the human race, continued by a series of successive generations. For how could generation succeed generation in a continual order, unless the gift of marriage stirred up the desire of offspring? Or how could one set forth that Isaac went to the altar of God as a victim of his father's piety, or that Israel, when yet in the body, saw God,³² and gave a holy name to the people while speaking against that whereby they came into being? Those men, though wicked, have one point at any rate, wherein they are up-proved even by the wise persons, that in speaking against marriage they declare that they ought not to have been born.

35. I do not then discourage marriage, but recapitulate the advantages of holy virginity. This is the gift of few only, that is of all. And virginity itself cannot exist, unless it have some mode of coming into existence. I am comparing good things with good things, that it may be clear which is the more excellent. Nor do I allege any opinion of my own, but I repeat that which the Holy Spirit spake by the prophet: "Blessed is the barren that is undefiled."³³

36. First of all, in that which those who purpose to marry desire above all things, that they may boast of the beauty of their husband, they must of necessity confess that they are inferior to virgins, to Whom alone it is suitable to say: "Thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured on Thy lips."³⁴ Who is that Spouse? One not given to common indulgences, not proud of possessing riches, but He Whose throne is for ever and ever. The king's daughters share in His honour: "At Thy right hand stood the queen in a vesture of gold, clothed with variety of virtues.

Hearken, then, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear, and forget thine own people and thy father's house; for the king hath desired thy beauty, for He is thy God."³⁵

37. And observe what a kingdom the Holy Spirit by the witness of the divine Scriptures has assigned to thee-gold, and beauty; gold, either because thou art the bride of the Eternal King, or because having an unconquered mind, thou art not taken captive by the allurements of pleasures, but rulest over them like a queen. Gold again, because as that metal is more precious when tried by fire, so the appearance of the virginal body, consecrated to the Divine Spirit, gains an increase of its own comeliness, for who can imagine a loveliness greater than the beauty of her who is loved by the King, approved by the judge, dedicated to the Lord, consecrated to God; ever a bride, ever unmarried, so that neither does love suffer an ending, nor modesty loss.

38. This is indeed true beauty, to which nothing is wanting, which alone is worthy to hear the Lord saying: "Thou art all fair, My love, and no blemish is in thee. Come hither from Lebanon, My spouse, come hither from Lebanon. Thou shalt pass and pass through from the beginning of faith, from the top of Sanir and Hermon, from the dens of the lions, from the mountains of the leopards."³⁶ By which references is set forth the perfect and irreproachable beauty of a virgin soul, consecrated to the altars of God, not moved by perishable things amidst the haunts and dens of spiritual wild beasts, but intent, by the mysteries of God, on being found worthy of the Beloved, Whose breasts are full of joy. For "wine maketh glad the heart of man."³⁷

39. "The smell of thy garments," says He, "is above all spices."³⁸ And again: "And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon."³⁹ See what progress thou settest forth, O Virgin. Thy first odour is above all spices, which were used upon the burying of the Saviour,⁴⁰ and the fragrance arises from the mortified motions of the body, and the perishing of the delights of the members. Thy second odour, like the odour of Lebanon, exhales the incorruption of the Lord's body, the flower of virginal chastity.

Chapter VIII.

Taking the passage concerning the honeycomb in the Song of Songs, he expounds it, comparing the sacred virgins to bees.

40. Let, then, your work be as it were a honeycomb, for virginity is fit to be compared to bees, so laborious is it, so modest, so continent. The bee feeds on dew, it knows no marriage couch, it makes honey. The virgin's dew is the divine word, for the words of God descend like the dew. The virgin's modesty is unstained nature. The virgin's produce is the fruit of the lips, without bitterness, abounding in sweetness. They work in common, and their fruit is in common.

41. How I wish you, my daughter, to be an imitator of these bees, whose food is flowers, whose offspring is collected and brought together by the mouth. Do imitate her, my daughter. Let no veil of deceit be spread over your words; let them have no covering of guile, that they may be pure, and full of gravity.

42. And let an eternal succession of merits be brought forth by your mouth. Gather not for yourself alone (for how do you know when your soul shall be required of you?), lest leaving your granaries heaped full with corn, which will be a help neither to your life nor to your merits, you be hurried thither where you cannot take your treasure with you. Be rich then, but towards the poor, that as

they share in your nature they may also share your goods.

43. And I also point out to you what flower is to be culled, that one it is Who said: "I am the Flower of the field, and the Lily of the valleys, as a lily among thorns,"⁴¹ which is a plain declaration that virtues are surrounded by the thorns of spiritual wickedness, so that no one can gather the fruit who does not approach with caution.

Chapter IX.

Other passages from the Song of Songs are considered with relation to the present subject, and St. Ambrose exhorting the virgin to seek for Christ, points out where He may be found. A description of His perfections follows, and a comparison is made between virgins and the angels.

44. Take, then, O Virgin, the wings of the Spirit, that you may fly far above all vices, if you wish to attain to Christ: "He dwelleth on high, but beholdeth lowly things;"⁴² and His appearance is as that of a cedar of Lebanon, which has its foliage in the clouds, its roots in the earth. For its beginning is from heaven, its ending on earth, and it produces fruit very close to heaven. Search diligently for so precious a flower, if perchance you may find it in the recesses of your breast, for it is most often to be enjoyed in lowly places.

45. It loves to grow in gardens, in which Susanna, while walking, found it, and was ready to die rather than it should be violated. But what is meant by the gardens He Himself points out, saying: "A garden enclosed is My sister, My spouse, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed;"⁴³ because in gardens of this kind the water of the pure fountain shines, reflecting the features of the image of God, test its streams mingled with mud from the wallowing places of spiritual wild beasts should be polluted. For this reason, too, that modesty of virgins fenced in by the wall of the Spirit is enclosed lest it should lie open to be plundered. And so as a garden inaccessible from without smells of the violet is scented with the olive, and is resplendent with the rose, that religion may increase in the vine, peace in the olive, and the modesty of consecrated virginity in the rose. This is the odour of which the patriarch Jacob smelt when he heard his father say: "See the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which is full."⁴⁴ For although the field of the holy patriarch was full of almost all fruits, the other brought forth its crops with greater labour, the latter flowers.

46. To work, then, O Virgin, and if you wish your garden to be sweet after this sort, enclose it with the precepts of the prophets: "Set a watch before thy mouth, and a door to thy lips,"⁴⁵ that you, too, may be able to say: "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. In His shadow I delighted and sat down, and His fruit was sweet to my palate."⁴⁶ I found Him Whom my soul loved, I held Him and would not let him go. My beloved came down into His garden to eat the fruit of His trees.⁴⁷ Come, my Beloved, let us go forth into the field.⁴⁸ Set me as a signet upon Thine heart, and as a seal upon Thine arm.⁴⁹ My Beloved is white and ruddy."⁵⁰ For it is fitting, O Virgin, that you should fully know Him Whom you love, and should recognize in Him all the mystery of His Divine Nature and the Body which He has assumed. He is white fittingly, for He is the brightness of the Father; and ruddy, for He was born of a Virgin. The colour of each nature shines and glows in Him. But remember that the marks of His Godhead are more ancient in Him than the mysteries of His body, for He did not take His origin from the Virgin, but, He Who already existed came into the Virgin.

47. He Who was spoiled by the soldiers, Who was wounded by the spear, that He might heal us by the blood of His sacred wounds, will assuredly answer you (for He is meek and lowly of heart, and gentle in aspect): "Arise, O north wind, and come, O south, and blow upon My garden, that My spices may flow out."⁵¹ For from all parts of the world has the perfume of holy religion increased, and the limbs of the consecrated Virgin have glowed. "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem."⁵² So it is not the beauty of the perishable body, which will come to an end with sickness or old age, but the reputation for good deserts, subject to no accidents and never to perish, which is the beauty of virgins.

48. And since you are worthy to be compared not now with men but with heavenly beings, whose life you are living on earth, receive from the Lord the precepts you are to observe: "Set Me as a signet upon thine heart, and as a seal upon thine arm;"⁵³ that clearer proofs of your prudence and actions may be set forth, in which Christ the Figure of God may shine, Who, equalling fully the nature of the Father, has expressed the whole which He took of the Father's Godhead. Whence also the Apostle Paul says that we are sealed in the Spirit;⁵⁴ since we have in the Son the image of the Father, and in the Spirit the seal of the Son. Let us, then, sealed by this Trinity, take more diligent heed, lest either levity of character or the deceit of any unfaithfulness unseal the pledge which we have received in our hearts.

49. But let fear secure this for the holy virgins, for whom the Church first provided such protection, who, anxious for the prosperity of her tender offspring, herself as a wall with breasts as many towers,⁵⁵ increases her care for them, until, the fear of hostile attack being at an end, she obtains by the care of a mother's love peace for her vigorous children. Wherefore the prophet says: "Peace be on thy virtue, and abundance in thy towers."⁵⁶

50. Then the Lord of peace Himself, after having embraced in His strong arms the vineyards committed to Him, and beholding their shoots putting forth buds, with glad looks, tempers the breezes to the young fruits, as Himself testifies, saying: "My vineyard is in My sight, a thousand for Solomon, and two hundred who keep the fruit thereof."⁵⁷

51. Above it is said: "Sixty strong men round about its offspring, armed with drawn swords, and expert in warlike discipline,"⁵⁸ here there are a thousand and two hundred. The number has increased, where the fruit has increased, for the more holy each is, the more is he guarded. So Elisha the prophet showed the hosts of angels who were present to guard him; so Joshua the son of Nun recognized the Captain of the heavenly host. They, then, who are able also to fight for us are able to guard the fruit that is in us. And for you, holy virgins, there is a special guardianship, for you who with unspotted chastity keep the couch of the Lord holy. And no wonder if the angels fight for you who war with the mode of life of angels. Virginal chastity merits their guardianship whose life it attains to.

52. Why should I continue the praise of chastity in more words? For chastity has made even angels. He who has preserved it is an angel; he who has lost it a devil. And hence has religion also gained its name. She is a virgin who is the bride of God, a harlot who makes gods for herself. What shall I say of the resurrection of which you already hold the rewards: "For in the resurrection they will neither be given in marriage, nor marry, but shall be," He says, "as the angels in heaven."⁵⁹ That which is promised to us is already present with you, and the object of your prayers is with you; ye are of this world, and yet not in this world. This age has held you, but has

not been able to retain you.

53. But what a great thing it is that angels because of incontinence fell from heaven into this world, that virgins because of chastity passed from the world into heaven. Blessed virgins, whom the delights of the flesh do not allure, nor the defilement of pleasures cast down. Sparing food and abstinence in drink train them in ignorance of vices, seeing they keep them from knowing the causes of vices. That which causes sin has often deceived even the just. In this way the people of God after they sat down to eat and drink denied God.⁶⁰ In this way, too, Lot knew not, and so endured his daughters' wickedness.⁶¹ So, too, the sons of Noah going backward covered their father's nakedness, which he who was wanton saw, he who was modest blushed at and dutifully hid, fearful of offending if he too saw it.⁶² How great is the power of wine, so that wine made him naked which the waters of the deluge could not.

Chapter X.

Finally, another glory of virginity is mentioned, that it is free from avarice. St. Ambrose, addressing his sister, reminds her of the great happiness of those who are free from those troubles as to luxury and vanity which come upon those who are about to marry. What then? What happiness it is that no desire of possessions inflames you! The poor man demands what you have, he does not ask for what you have not. The fruit of your labour is a treasure for the needy, and two mites, if they be all one has, are wealth on the part of the giver.

54. Listen, then, my sister, from what you escape. For it is not for me to teach nor for you to learn what you ought to guard against, for the practice of perfect virtue does not require teaching, but instructs others. You see how like she is to the litters at processions, who lays herself out to please, attracting to herself the look and gaze of all; less beautiful is she because she strives to please, for she displeases the people before she pleases her husband. But in you the rejection of all care for splendour is far more becoming, and the very fact that you do not adorn yourselves is an ornament.

55. Look at the ears pierced with wounds, and pity the neck weighed down with burdens. That the metals are different does not lighten the suffering. In one case a chain binds the neck, in another a fetter encloses the foot. It makes no difference whether the body be loaded with gold or with iron. Thus the neck is weighed down and the steps are hindered. The price makes it no better, except that you women are afraid lest that which causes you suffering be lost. What is the difference whether the sentence of another or your own condemn you? Nay, you, even more wretched than those, are condemned by public justice, since they desire to be set free, you to be bound.

56. But how wretched a position, that she who is marriageable is in a species of sale put up as it were to auction to be bid for, so that he who offers the highest price purchases her. Slaves are sold on more tolerable conditions, for they often choose their masters; if a maiden chooses it is an offence, if not it is an insult. And she, though she be beautiful and comely, both fears and wishes to be seen; she wishes it that she may sell herself for a better price; she fears lest the fact of her being seen should itself be unbecoming. But what absurdities of wishes and fears and suspicions are there as to how the suitors will turn out, lest a poor man may beguile her, or a rich one condemn her, lest a handsome suitor mock her, lest a noble one despise her.

Chapter XI.

St. Ambrose answers objections made to the uselessness of his exhortations in favour of virginity, and brings forward instances of virgins especially in various places he mentions, and speaks of their zeal in the cause.

57. Some one may say, you are always singing the praises of virgins. What shall I do who am always singing them and have no success? But this is not my fault. Then, too, virgins come from Placentia to be consecrated, or from Bononia, and Mauritania, in order to receive the veil here. You see a striking thing here. I treat the matter here, and persuade those who are elsewhere. If this be so, let me treat the subject elsewhere, that I may persuade you.

58. What is it, then, that even they who hear me not follow my teaching, and those who hear me follow me not? For I have known many virgins who had the desire, but were prevented from going forward by their mothers, and, which is more serious, mothers who were widows, to whom I will now address myself. For if your daughters desired to love a man, they could, by law, choose whom they would. Are they, then, who are allowed to choose a man not allowed to choose God?

59. Behold how sweet is the fruit of modesty, which has sprung up even in the affections of barbarians. Virgins coming from the most distant on this and that side of Mauritania desire to be consecrated here; and though all the families be in bonds, yet modesty cannot be bound. She who mourns over the hardship of slavery avows an eternal kingdom.

60. And what shall I say of the virgins of Bononia, a fertile band of chastity, who, forsaking worldly delights, inhabit the sanctuary of virginity?⁶³ Not being of the sex which lives in common, attaining in their common chastity to the number of twenty, and fruit to an hundredfold, leaving their parents' dwelling they press into the houses of Christ, as soldiers of unwearied chastity; at one time singing spiritual songs, they provide their sustenance by labour, and seek with their hands supplies for their liberality.

61. But if the attraction of searching for virgins has grown strong (for they beyond others follow up the search and watch for purity), they follow up their hidden prey with the greatest perseverance to its very chambers; or, if the flight of any one shall have seemed more free, one may see them rise on the wing, hear the rustling of their feathers, and the bursting of applause; so as to surround the one on wing with a chaste band of modesty, until rejoicing in that fair companionship, forgetful of her father's house, she enters the regions of modesty and the fenced-in home of chastity.

Chapter XII.

It is very desirable that parents should encourage the desire for the virgin life, but more praiseworthy when the love of God draws a maiden even against their will. The violence of parents and the loss of property are not to be feared, and an instance of this is related by St. Ambrose.

62. It is a good thing, then, that the zeal of parents, like favouring gales, should aid a virgin; but it is more glorious if the fire of tender age even without the incitement of those older of its own self burst forth into the flame of chastity. Parents will refuse a dowry, but you have a wealthy Spouse, satisfied with Whose treasures you will not miss the revenues of a father's inheritance. How much is poverty to chastity superior to bridal gifts!

63. And yet of whom have you heard as ever, because of her desire for chastity, having been deprived of her lawful inheritance? Parents speak against her, but are willing to be overcome.

They resist at first because they are afraid to believe; they often are angry that one may learn to overcome; they threaten to disinherit to try whether one is able not to fear temporal loss; they caress with exquisite allurements to see if one cannot be softened by the inducement of various pleasures. You are being exercised, O virgin, whilst you are being urged. And the anxious entreaties of your parents are your first battles. Conquer your affection first, O maiden. If you conquer your home, you conquer the world.

64. But suppose that the loss of your patrimony awaits you; are not the future realms of heaven a compensation for perishable and frail possessions? For if we believe the heavenly message, "there is no one who has forsaken house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive sevenfold more in this present time, and in the world to come shall have everlasting life."⁶⁴ Entrust your faith to God, who entrust your money to man; lend to Christ. The faithful keeper of the deposit of your hope pays the talent of your faith with manifold interest. The Truth does not deceive, Justice does not circumvent, Virtue does not deceive. But if you believe not God's word, at least believe instances.⁶⁵ Within my memory a girl once noble in the world, now more noble in the sight of God, being urged to a marriage by her parents and kinsfolk, took refuge at the holy altar. Whither could a virgin better flee, than thither where the Virgin Sacrifice is offered? Nor was even that the limit of her boldness. She, the oblation of modesty, the victim of chastity, was standing at the altar of God, now placing upon her head the right hand of the priest, asking his prayers, and now impatient at the righteous delay, placing the top of her head under the altar. "Can any better veil," she said, "cover me better than the altar which consecrates the veils themselves? Such a bridal veil is most suitable on which Christ, the Head of all, is daily consecrated. What are you doing, my kinsfolk? Why do you still trouble my mind with seeking marriage? I have long since provided for that. Do you offer me a bridegroom? I have found a better. Make the most you can of my wealth, boast of his nobility, extol his power, I have Him with Whom no one can compare himself, rich in the world, powerful in empire, noble in heaven. If you have such an one, I do not reject the choice; if you do not find such, you do me not a kindness, my relatives, but an injury."

66. When the others were silent, one burst forth somewhat roughly: "If," he said, "your father were alive, would he suffer you to remain unmarried?" Then she replied with more religion and more restrained piety: "And perchance he is gone that no one may be able to hinder me. Which answer concerning her father, but warning as to himself, he made good by his own speedy death. So the others, each of them, fearing the same for himself, began to assist and not to hinder her as before, and her virginity involved not the loss of the property due to her, but also received the reward of her integrity. You see, maidens, the reward of devotion, and do you, parents, be warned by the example of transgression.

1: S. Matt. xii. 36.

2: Num. xxii. 28.

3: Num. xvii. 8.

4: Exod. iii. 4.

5: S. John i. 48.

6: S. Luke xiii. 6 ff.

7: Ps. cxiii. [cxii.] 6.

8: Gen. xlix. 11.

9: S. Luke i. 63, Luke i. 64.

10: Isa. liii. 8.

11: i.e. raise her arms in the form of a cross.

12: Cant. i. 2, Cant. i. 3; S. Mark xii. 25.

13: 4 Kings ii. 11.

14: S. Matt. xvii. 3.

15: Mal. iv. 5.

16: Exod. xv. 20.

17: 1 Cor. x. 11.

18: S. Matt. iv. 11.

19: S. Luke ii. 13, Luke ii. 14.

20: Jer. xviii. 13 (very freely).

21: 1 Cor. x. 4.

22: 1 Cor. vii. 25.

23: 1 Cor. vii. 32, 1 Cor. vii. 34.

24: Rom. xiv, 2.

25: 1 Cor. vii. 27.

26: 1 Cor. vii. 38.

27: S. Luke xxiii. 29.

28: Gen. iii. 16.

29: 1 Cor. iii. 2.

30: Isa. liv. 1; Gal. iv. 27.

31: From this passage it is clear that in the days of St. Ambrose it was not yet the rule at Milan, though it was in other places, for the consecrated virgins to live together, but the older custom still continued.

32: Gen. xxxii. 28.

33: Wisd. iii. 13.

34: Ps. xlv. [xliv.] 2.

35: Ps. xlv. [xliv.] 9, Ps. xlv. [xliv.] 10, Ps. xlv. [xliv.] 11.

36: Cant. iv. 7, Cant. iv. 8.

37: Ps. civ. [ciii.] 15.

38: Cant. iv. 10.

39: Cant. iv. 11.

40: S. John xix. 39.

41: Cant. ii. 1, Cant. ii. 2.

42: Ps. cxiii. 5, Ps. cxiii. 6.

43: Cant. iv. 12.

44: Gen. xxvii. 27.

45: Ps. cxli. [cxl.] 3.

46: Cant. ii. 3.

47: Cant. iii. 4, Cant. iii. 16.

48: Cant. vii. 11.

49: Cant. viii. 6.

50: Cant. v. 10.

51: Cant. iv. 16.

52: Cant. vi. 4.

53: Cant. viii. 6.

54: Eph. i. 13.

55: Cant. viii. 10.

56: Ps. cxxii. [cxxi.] 7.

57: Cant. viii. 12.

58: Cant. iii. 7, Cant. iii. 8.

59: S. Matt. xxii. 30.

60: Exod. xxxii. 5.

61: Gen. xix. 32, Gen. xix. 33.

62: Gen. ix. 22.

63: It was very unusual for women to live together alone at this period.

64: S. Luke xviii. 29, Luke xviii. 30.

Concerning Virgins - Book 2

Book II.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Book II.

Chapter I. In this book St. Ambrose purposes to treat of the training of virgins, using examples rather than precepts, and explains why he does so in writing rather than by word of mouth.

1. In the former book I wished(though I was not able) to set forth how great is the gift of virginity, that the grace of the heavenly gift might of itself invite the reader. In the second book it is fitting that the virgin should be instructed and, as it were, be educated by the teaching of suitable precepts.

2. But, inasmuch as I am feeble in advising and unequal to teaching(for he who teaches ought to excel him who is taught), lest I should seem to have abandoned the task I have undertaken, or to have taken too much upon myself, I thought it better to instruct by examples than by precepts; for more progress may be made by means of an example, inasmuch as that which has been already done is considered to be not difficult, and that which has been tried to be expedient, and that which has been transmitted in succession to us by a kind of hereditary practice of ancestral virtue to be binding in religion.

3. But if any one rebukes me for presumption, let him rather rebuke me for zeal, because I thought that I ought not to refuse even this to the virgins who asked it of me. For I preferred rather to run the risk of perilling my own modesty, than not to fulfil the wish of those whose pursuits even our God favours with kindly approbation.

4. Nor can the mark of presumption be set on my task, since, when they had those from whom they could learn, they sought my good-will rather than my teaching, and my zeal may be excused, since when they had the guidance of a martyr for the observance of discipline, I did not think it superfluous if I could turn the persuasion of my discourse into an allurements to profession. He who teaches with facility restrains fault with severity; I, who cannot teach, entice.

5. And because many who were absent desired to have the use of my discourse, I compiled this book, in order that holding in their hands the substance of what my voice had uttered to them, they

might not think that he whom they were holding failed them. But let us go on with our plan.

Chapter II. The life of Mary is set before virgins as an example, and her many virtues are dwelt upon, her chastity, humility, hard life, love of retirement, and the like; then her kindness to others, her zeal in learning, and love of frequenting the temple. St. Ambrose then sets forth how she, adorned with all these virtues, will come to meet the numberless bands of virgins and lead them with great triumph to the bridal chamber of the Spouse.

6. Let, then, the life of Mary be as it were virginity itself, set forth in a likeness, from which, as from a mirror, the appearance of chastity and the form of virtue is reflected. From this you may take your pattern of life, showing, as an example, the clear rules of virtue: what you have to correct, to effect, and to hold fast.

7. The first thing which kindles ardour in learning is the greatness of the teacher. What is greater than the Mother of God? What more glorious than she whom Glory Itself chose? What more chaste than she who bore a body without contact with another body? For why should I speak of her other virtues? She was a virgin not only in body but also in mind, who stained the sincerity of its disposition by no guile, who was humble in heart, grave in speech, prudent in mind, sparing of words, studious in reading, resting her hope not on uncertain riches, but on the prayer of the poor, intent on work, modest in discourse; wont to seek not man but God as the judge of her thoughts, to injure no one, to have goodwill towards all, to rise up before her elders, not to envy her equals, to avoid boastfulness, to follow reason, to love virtue. When did she pain her parents even by a look? When did she disagree with her neighbours? When did she despise the lowly? When did she avoid the needy? Being wont only to go to such gatherings of men as mercy would not blush at, nor modesty pass by. There was nothing gloomy in her eyes, nothing forward in her words, nothing unseemly in her acts, there was not a silly movement, nor unrestrained step, nor was her voice petulant, that the very appearance of her outward being might be the image of her soul, the representation of what is approved. For a well-ordered house ought to be recognized on the very threshold, and should show at the very first entrance that no darkness is hidden within, as our soul hindered by no restraints of the body may shine abroad like a lamp placed within.

8. Why should I detail her sparseness of food, her abundance of services-the one abounding beyond nature, the other almost insufficient for nature? And there were no seasons of slackness, but days of fasting, one upon the other. And if ever the desire for refreshment came, her food was generally what came to hand, taken to keep off death, not to minister to comfort. Necessity before inclination caused her to sleep, and yet when her body was sleeping her soul was awake, and often in sleep either went again through what had been read, or went on with what had been interrupted by sleep, or carried out what had been designed, or foresaw what was to be carried out.

9. She was unaccustomed to go from home, except for divine service, and this with parents or kinsfolk. Busy in private at home, accompanied by others abroad, yet with no better guardian than herself, as she, inspiring respect by her gait and address, progressed not so much by the motion of her feet as by step upon step of virtue. But though the Virgin had other persons who were protectors of her body, she alone guarded her character; she can learn many points if she be her own teacher, who possesses the perfection of all virtues, for whatever she did is a lesson. Mary attended to everything as though she were warned by many, and fulfilled every obligation of virtue

as though she were teaching rather than learning.

10. Such has the Evangelist shown her, such did the angel find her, such did the Holy Spirit choose her. Why delay about details? How her parents loved her, strangers praised her, how worthy she was that the Son of God should be born of her. She, when the angel entered, was found at home in privacy, without a companion, that no one might interrupt her attention or disturb her; and she did not desire any women as companions, who had the companionship of good thoughts. Moreover, she seemed to herself to be less alone when she was alone. For how should she be alone, who had with her so many books, so many archangels, so many prophets?¹¹ And so, too, when Gabriel visited her,¹ did he find her, and Mary trembled, being disturbed, as though at the form of a man, but on hearing his name recognized him as one not unknown to her. And so she was a stranger as to men, but not as to the angel; that we might know that her ears were modest and her eyes bashful. Then when saluted she kept silence, and when addressed she answered, and she whose feelings were first troubled afterwards promised obedience.

12. And holy Scripture points out how modest she was towards her neighbours. For she became more humble when she knew herself to be chosen of God, and went forthwith to her kinswoman in the hill country, not in order to gain belief by anything external, for she had believed the word of God. "Blessed," she said, "art thou who didst believe."² And she abode with her three months. Now in such an interval of time it is not that faith is being sought for, but kindness which is being shown. And this was after that the child, leaping in his mother's womb, had saluted the mother of the Lord, attaining to reason before birth.

13. And then, in the many subsequent wonders, when the barren bore a son, the virgin conceived, the dumb spake, the wise men worshipped, Simeon waited, the stars gave notice. Mary, who was moved by the angel's entrance, was unmoved by the miracles. "Mary," it is said, "kept all these things in her heart,"³ Though she was the mother of the Lord, yet she desired to learn the precepts of the Lord, and she who brought forth God, yet desired to know God.

14. And then, how she also went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the passover, and went with Joseph. Everywhere is modesty the companion of her singular virtues in the Virgin. This, without which virginity cannot exist, must be the inseparable companion of virginity. And so Mary did not go even to the temple without the guardianship of her modesty.

15. This is the likeness of virginity. For Mary was such that her example alone is a lesson for all. If, then, the author displeases us not, let us make trial of the production, that whoever desires its reward for herself may imitate the pattern. How many kinds of virtues shine forth in one Virgin! The secret of modesty, the banner of faith, the service of devotion, the Virgin within the house, the companion for the ministry, the mother at the temple.

16. Oh! how many virgins shall she meet, how many shall she embrace and bring to the Lord, and say: "She has been faithful to her espousal, to my Son; she has kept her bridal couch with spotless modesty." How shall the Lord Himself commend them to His Father, repeating again those words of His: "Holy Father, these are they whom I have kept for Thee, on whom the Son of Man leant His head and rested; I ask that where I am there they may be with Me."⁴ And if they ought to benefit not themselves only, who lived not for themselves alone, one virgin may redeem her parents, another her brothers. "Holy Father, the world hath not known Me, but these have known Me, and

have willed not to know the world."⁵

17. What a procession shall that be, what joy of applauding angels when she is found worthy of dwelling in heaven who lived on earth a heavenly life! Then too Mary,⁶ taking her timbrel, shall stir up the choirs of virgins, singing to the Lord because they have passed through the sea of this world without suffering from the waves of this world.⁷ Then each shall rejoice, saying: "I will go to the altar of God; to God Who maketh my youth glad;"⁸ and, "I will offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay my vows unto the Most High."⁹

18. Nor would I hesitate to admit you to the altars of God, whose souls I would without hesitation call altars, on which Christ is daily offered for the redemption of the body. For if the virgin's body be a temple of God, what is her soul, which, the ashes, as it were, of the body being shaken off, once more uncovered by the hand of the Eternal Priest, exhales the vapour of the divine fire. Blessed virgins, who emit a fragrancethrough divine grace as gardens do through flowers, temples through religion, altars through the priest.

Chapter III.

St. Ambrose having set forth the Virgin Mary as a pattern for life, adduces Thecla as a model for learning how to die. Thecla suffered not from the beasts to whom she was condemned, but on the contrary received from them signs of reverence. He then proceeds to introduce a more recent example.

19. Let, then, holy Mary instruct you in the discipline of life, and Thecla teach you how to be offered, for she, avoiding nuptial intercourse, and condemned through her husband's rage, changed even the disposition of wild beasts by their reverence for virginity. For being made ready for the wild beasts, when avoiding the gaze of men, she offered her vital parts to a fierce lion, caused those who had turned away their immodest looks to turn them back modestly.

20. The beast was to be seen lying on the ground, licking her feet, showing without a sound that it could not injure the sacred body of the virgin. So the beast revered his prey, and forgetful of his own nature, put on that nature which men had lost. One could see, as it were, by some transfusion of nature, men clothed with savageness, goading the beast to cruelty, and the beast kissing the feet of the virgin, teaching them what was due from men. Virginity has in itself so much that is admirable, that even lions admire it. Food did not induce them though kept without their meal; no impulse hurried them on when excited; anger did not exasperate them when stirred up, nor did their habits lead them blindly as they were wont, nor their own natural disposition possess them with fierceness. They set an example of piety when reverencing the martyr; and gave a lesson in favor of chastity when they did nothing but kiss the virgin's feet, with their eyes turned to the ground, as though through modesty, fearing that any male, even a beast, should see the virgin naked.

21. Some one will say: "Why have you brought forward the example of Mary, as if any one could be found to imitate the Lord's mother? And why that of Thecla, whom the Apostle of the Gentiles trained? Give us a teacher of our own sort if you wish for disciples." I will, therefore, set before you a recent example of this sort, that you may understand that the Apostle is the teacher, not of one only, but of all.

Chapter IV. A virgin at Antioch, having refused to sacrifice to idols, was condemned to a house of ill-fame, whence she escaped unharmed, having changed clothes with a Christian soldier. Then when he was condemned for this, she returned and the two contended for the prize of martyrdom, which was at last given to each.

22. There was lately at Antioch a virgin who avoided being seen in public, but the more she shrank from men's eyes, the more they longed for her. For beauty which is heard of but not seen is more desired, there being two incentives to passion, love and knowledge-so long as nothing is met with which pleases less; and that which pleases is thought to be of more worth, because the eye is not in this case the judge by investigation, but the mind inflamed with love is full of longing. And so the holy virgin, lest their passions should be longer fed by the desire of gaining her, professed her intention of preserving her chastity, and so quenched the fires of those wicked men, that she was no longer loved, but informed against.

23. So a persecution arose. The maiden, not knowing how to escape, and afraid lest she might fall into the hands of those who were plotting against her chastity, prepared her soul for heroic virtue, being so religious as not to fear death, so chaste as to expect it. The day of her crown arrived. The expectation of all was at its height. The maiden is brought forward, and makes her twofold profession, of religion and of chastity. But when they saw the constancy of her profession, her fear for her modesty, her readiness for tortures, and her blushes at being looked on, they began to consider how they might overcome her religion by setting chastity before her, so that, having deprived her of that which was the greatest, they might also deprive her of that which they had left. So the sentence was that she should either sacrifice, or be sent to a house of ill-fame. After what manner do they worship their gods who thus avenge them, or how do they live themselves who give sentence after this fashion?

24. And the virgin, not hesitating about her religion, but fearful as to her chastity, began to reflect, What am I to do? Each crown, that of martyrdom and that of virginity, is grudged me to-day. But the name of virgin is not acknowledged where the Author of virginity is denied. How can one be a virgin who cherishes a harlot? How can one be a virgin who loves adulterers? How a virgin if she seeks for a lover? It is preferable to have a virgin mind than a virgin body. Each is good if each be possible; if it be not possible, let me be chaste, not to man but to God. Rahab, too, was a harlot, but after she believed in God, she found salvation.¹⁰ And Judith adorned herself that she might please an adulterer, but because she did this for religion and not for love, no one considered her an adulteress.¹¹ This instance turned out well. For if she who entrusted herself to religion both preserved her chastity and her country, perhaps I, by preserving my religion, shall also preserve my chastity. But if Judith had preferred her chastity to her religion, when her country had been lost, she would also have lost her chastity.

25. And so, instructed by such examples, and at the same time bearing in mind the words of the Lord, where He says: "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it,"¹² she wept, and was silent, that the adulterer might not even hear her speaking, and she did not choose the wrong done to her modesty, but rejected wrong done to Christ. Consider whether it was possible for her to suffer her body to be unchaste, who guarded even her speech.

26. For some time my words have been becoming bashful, and fear to laud on or describe the wicked series of what was done. Close your ears, ye virgins! The Virgin of God is taken to a house

of shame, But now unclothe your ears, ye virgins, The Virgin of Christ can be exposed to shame, but cannot be contaminated. Everywhere she is the Virgin of God, and the Temple of God, and houses of ill-fame cannot injure chastity, but chastity does away with the ill-fame of the place.

27. A great rush of wanton men is made to the place. Listen, ye holy virgins, to the miracles of the martyr, forget the name of the place. The door is shut within, the hawks cry without; some are contending who shall first attack the prey. But she, with her hands raised to heaven, as though she had come to a house of prayer, not to a resort of lust, says: "O Christ, Who didst tame the fierce lions for the virgin Daniel,¹³ Thou canst also tame the fierce minds of men. Fire became as dew to the Hebrew children,¹⁴ the water stood up for the Jews, of Thy mercy, not of its own nature.¹⁵ Susanna knelt down for punishment and triumphed over her adulterous accusers,¹⁶ the right hand withered which violated the gifts of Thy temple;¹⁷ and now thy temple itself is violated; suffer not sacrilegious incest, Thou Who didst not suffer theft. Let Thy Name be now again glorified in that I who came here for shame, may go away a virgin!"

28. Scarcely had she finished her prayer, when, lo! a man with the aspect of a terrible warrior burst in. How the virgin trembled before him to whom the trembling people gave way. But she did not forget what she had read. "Daniel," said she, "had gone to see the punishment of Susanna, and alone pronounced her guiltless,¹⁸ whom the people had condemned. A sheep may be hidden in the shape of this wolf. Christ has His soldiers also, Who is Master of legions.¹⁹ Or, perchance, an executioner has come in. Fear not, my soul, such an one makes martyrs. O Virgin! thy faith has saved thee."

29. And the soldier said to her: "Fear not, sister, I pray you. I, a brother, am come hither to save life, not to destroy it. Save me, that you yourself may be saved. I came in like an adulterer, to go forth, if you will, as a martyr. Let us change our attire, mine will fit you, and yours will fit me, and each for Christ. Your robe will make me a true soldier, mine will make you a virgin. You will be clothed well, I shall be unclothed even better that the persecutor may recognize me. Take the garment which will conceal the woman, give me that which shall consecrate me a martyr. Put on the cloak which will hide the limbs of a virgin, but preserve her modesty. Take the cap which will cover your hair and conceal your countenance. They who have entered houses of ill-fame are wont to blush. When you have gone forth, take care not to look back, remembering Lot's wife,²⁰ who lost her very nature because she looked back at what was unchaste, though with chaste eyes. And be not afraid lest any part of the sacrifice fail. I will offer the victim to God for you, do you offer the soldier to Christ for me. You have served the good service of chastity, the wages of which are everlasting life; you have the breastplate of righteousness, which protects the body with spiritual armour, the shield of faith with which to ward off wounds, and the helmet of salvation,²¹ for there is the defence of our salvation where Christ is, since the man is the head of the woman. and Christ of the virgin.

30. Whilst saying this he put off his cloak. This garment has been up to this time suspected of being that of a persecutor and adulterer. The virgin offered her neck, the soldier his cloak. What a spectacle that was, what a manifestation of grace when they were contending for martyrdom in a house of ill-fame! Let the characters be also considered, a soldier and a virgin, that is, persons unlike in natural disposition, but alike by the mercy of God, that the saying might be fulfilled: "Then the wolves and the lambs shall feed together."²² Behold the lamb and the wolf not only feed

together but are also offered together. Why should I say more? Having changed her garment, the maiden flies from the snare, not now with wings of her own, seeing she was borne on spiritual wings, and (a sight which the ages had never seen) she leaves the house of ill-fame a virgin, but a virgin of Christ.

31. But they who were looking with their eyes, yet saw not, raged like robbers for prey, or wolves for a lamb. One who was more shameless went in. But when he took in the state of the matter with his eyes, he said, What is this? A maiden entered, now a man is to be seen here. This is not the old fable of a hind instead of a maiden, but in truth a virgin become a soldier. I had heard but believed not that Christ changed water into wine; now He has begun also to change the sexes. Let us depart hence whilst we still are what we were. Am I too changed who see things differently from what I believe them to be? I came to a house of ill-fame, and see a surety.²³ And yet I go forth changed, for I shall go out chaste who came in unchaste.

32. When the affair was known, because a crown was due to such a conqueror, he was condemned for the virgin who was seized for the virgin, and so not only a virgin but a martyr came forth from the house of ill-fame. It is reported that the maiden ran to the place of punishment, and that they both contended for death. He said: "I am condemned to death, the sentence let you go free when it retained me." And she replied: "I did not choose you as my surety on pain of death, but as a guarantee for my chastity. If chastity be attacked, my sex remains; if blood is sought, I desire none to give bail for me, I have the means to pay. The sentence was pronounced on me, which was pronounced for me. Undoubtedly, if I had offered you as security for my debt, and in my absence the judge had assigned your property to the creditor, you would share the sentence with me, and I should pay your obligations with my patrimony. Were I to refuse, who would not judge me worthy of a shameful death? How much more am I bound where there is a question of death? Let me die innocent, that I may not die guilty. In this matter there is no middle course; today I shall either be guilty of your blood or a martyr in my own. If I came back quickly, who dares to shut me out? If I delayed, who dares acquit me? I owe a greater debt to the laws who am guilty not only of my own flight, but also of the death of another. My limbs are equal to death, which were not equal to dishonour. A virgin can accept a wound who could not accept contumely. I avoided disgrace, not martyrdom. I gave up my robe to you; I did not alter my profession. And if you deprive me of death, you will not have rescued but circumvented me. Beware, pray, of resisting, beware of venturing to contend with me. Take not away the kindness you have conferred on me. In denying me the execution of this sentence, you are setting up again the former one. For the sentence is changed for a former one. If the latter binds me not, the former one does. We can each satisfy the sentence if you suffer me to be slain first. From you they can exact no other penalty, but her chastity is in danger with a virgin. And so you will be more glorious if you are seen to have made a martyr of an adulteress. than to have made again an adulteress of a martyr."

33. What do you think was the end? The two contended, and both gained the victory, and the crown was not divided, but became two. So the holy martyrs, conferring benefits one on the other, gave the one the impulse and the other the result to their martyrdom.

Chapter V. The story of the two Pythagorean friends, Damon and Pythias, is related by St. Ambrose, who points out that the case mentioned in the last chapter is more praiseworthy. A comparison is instituted between the treatment of their gods by heathen without any punishment,

and Jeroboam's irreverence with its punishment.

34. And the schools of the philosophers laud Damon and Pythias-the Pythagoreans-to the skies, of whom one, when condemned to death, asked for time to set his affairs in order. whereupon, the tyrant, in his cunning, not supposing that such could be found, asked for a bondsman who should suffer the penalty if the other delayed his return. I do not know which act of the two was the more noble. The one found the bondsman, the other offered himself. And so while he who was condemned met with some delay, the bondsman with calm countenance did not refuse death. As he was being led forth his friend returned, and offered his neck to the axe. Then the tyrant, wondering that friendship was dearer to philosophers than life, asked himself to be received into friendship by those whom he had condemned. The grace of Virtue was so great that it moved even a tyrant.

35. These things are worthy of praise; but are inferior to our instance. For those two were men, with us one was a virgin, who had first to be superior to her sex; those were friends, these were unknown to each other; those offered themselves to one tyrant, these to many tyrants; and these more cruel, for in the former case the tyrant spared them, these slew them; with the former one was bound by necessity, with these the will of each was free. In this, too, the latter were the wiser, that with those the end of their zeal was the pleasure of friendship, with these the crown of martyrdom, for they strove for men, these for God.

36. And since we have mentioned that man who was condemned, it is fitting to add what he thought of his gods, that you may judge how weak they are whom their own followers deride. For he, having come into the temple of Jupiter, bade them take off the fillet of gold with which his image was crowned, and to put on one of wool instead, saying that the golden fillet was cold in winter and heavy in summer. So he derided his god as being unable to bear either a weight or cold. He, too, when he saw the golden beard of Aesculapius, bade them remove it, saying that it was not fit for the son to have a beard when the father had none. Again, he took away the golden bowls from the images which held them, saying that he ought to receive what the gods gave. For, said he, men make prayers to receive good things from the gods, and nothing is better than gold; if, however, gold be evil, the gods ought not to have it; if it be good, it is better that men should have it who know how to use it.

37. Such objects of ridicule were they, that neither could Jupiter defend his garment, nor Aesculapius his beard, for Apollo had not yet begun to grow one; nor could all those who are esteemed gods keep the golden bowls which they were holding, not fearing the charge of theft so much as not having any feeling. Who, then, would worship them, who can neither defend themselves as gods nor hide themselves as men?

38. But when in the temple of our God, that wicked king Jeroboam took away the gifts which his father had laid up, and offered to idols upon the holy altar, did not his right hand, which he stretched out, wither, and his idols, which he called upon, were not able to help him? Then, turning to the Lord, he asked for pardon, and at once his hand which had withered by sacrilege was healed by true religion. So complete an example was there set forth in one person, both of divine mercy and wrath when he who was sacrificing suddenly lost his right hand, but when penitent received forgiveness.²⁴

Chapter VI.

St. Ambrose, in concluding the second book, ascribes any good there may be in it to the merits of the virgins, and sets forth that it was right before laying down any severe precepts to encourage them by examples, as is done both in human teaching and in holy Scripture.

39. I, Who have been not yet three years a bishop, have prepared this offering for you, holy virgins, although untaught by my own experience, yet having learnt much from your mode of life. For what experience could have grown up in so short a time of being initiated in religion? If you find any flowers herein, gather them together in the bosom of your lives. These are not precepts for virgins, but instances taken from virgins. My words have sketched the likeness of your virtue, you may see the reflection of your gravity, as it were, in the mirror of this discourse. If you have received any pleasure from my ability, all the fragrance of this book is yours. And since there are as many opinions as there are persons, if there be anything simple in my treatise let all read it; if anything stronger, let the more mature prove it; if anything modest, let it cleave to the breast and tinge the cheeks; if there be anything flowery, let the flowery age of youth not disdain it.

40. We ought to stir up the love of the bride, for iris written: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God."²⁵ At bridal feasts we ought to adorn the hair at least with some ornaments of prayer, for it is written: "Smite the hands together, and strike with the foot."²⁶ We ought to scatter roses on those uninterrupted bridals. Even in these temporal marriages the bride is received with acclamation before she receives commands, lest hard commands should hurt her, before love cherished by kindness grows strong.

41. Horses learn to love the sound of patting their necks, that they may not refuse the yoke, and are first trained with words of enticement before the stripe of discipline. But when the horse has submitted its neck to the yoke, the rein pulls in, and the spur urges on, and its companions draw it, and the driver bids it. So, too, our virgin ought first to play with pious love, and admire the golden supports of the heavenly marriage couch on the very threshold of marriage, and to see the door-posts adorned with wreaths of leaves, and to taste the delight of the musicians playing within; that she may not through fear withdraw herself from the Lord's yoke, before she obeys His call.

42. "Come, then, hither from Lebanon, My spouse, come hither from Lebanon, thou shalt pass and pass through."²⁷ This verse must be often repeated by us, that at least being called by the words of the Lord, she may follow if there be any who will not trust the words of man. We have not formed this power for ourselves, but have received it; this is the heavenly teaching of the mystic song: "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for Thy breasts are better than wine, and the odor of Thy ointments is above all spices. Thy name is as ointment poured forth."²⁸ The whole of that place of delights sounds of sport, stirs up approval, calls forth love. "Therefore," it continues, "have the maidens loved Thee and have drawn Thee, let us run after the odour of Thy ointments. The King hath brought me into His chamber."²⁹ She began with kisses, and so attained to the chamber.

43. She, now so patient of hard toil, and of practised virtue, as to open the bars with her hand, go forth into the field, and abide in strongholds, at the beginning ran after the odour of the ointment; soon when she is come into the chamber the ointment is changed. And see whither she goes: "If it be a wall," it is said, "we will build upon it towers of silver."³⁰ She who sported with kisses now

builds towers that, encircled with the precious battlements of the saints, she may not only render fruitless the attacks of the enemy, but also erect the safe defences of holy merits.

1: S. Luke i. 28.

2: S. Luke i. 56.

3: S. Luke ii. 19.

4: S. John xvii. 24.

5: S. John xvii. 25.

6: Mary is the same name as the Hebrew Miriam.

7: Ex. xv. 20.

8: Ps. xliii. [xlii.] 4.

9: Ps. l. [xlix.] 14.

10: Jos. ii. 9.

11: Judith x.

12: S. Matt. x. 39.

13: Dan. vi. 22.

14: Dan. iii. 27 [50].

15: Ex. xiv. 22.

16: Hist. Sus. 45.

17: 1 [3] Kings xiii. 4.

18: Hist. Sus. 46.

19: S. Matt. xxvi. 53.

20: Gen. xix. 26.

21: Eph. vi. 14-17.

22: Isa. lxxv. 25.

23: The soldier who remained in the place of the virgin is spoken of as being her "surety."

24: 1 [3] Kings xiii. 4.

25: Deut. vi. 5.

26: Ezek. xxi 14.

27: Cant. iv. 8.

28: Cant. i. 2, Cant. i. 3.

29: Cant. i. 3, Cant. i. 4.

30: Cant. viii. 9.

Concerning Virgins - Book 3

Book III.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Book III.

Chapter I.

St. Ambrose now goes back to the address of Liberius when he gave the veil to Marcellina. Touching on the crowds pressing to the bridal feast of that Spouse Who feeds them all, he passes on to the fitness of her profession on the day on which Christ was born of a Virgin, and concludes with a fervent exhortation to love Him.

1. Inasmuch as I have digressed in what I have said in the two former books, it is now time, holy sister, to reconsider those precepts of Liberius¹ of blessed memory which you used to talk over with me, as the holier the man the more pleasing is his discourse. For he, when on the Nativity of the Saviour in the Church of St. Peter you signified your profession of virginity by your change of attire² (and what day could be better than that on which the Virgin received her child?) whilst many virgins were standing round and vying with each other for your companionship. "You," said he, "my daughter, have desired a good espousal. You see how great a crowd has come together for the birthday of your Spouse, and none has gone away without food. This is He, Who, when invited to the marriage feast, changed water into wine.³ He, too, will confer the pure sacrament of virginity on you who before were subject to the vile elements of material nature. This is He Who fed four thousand in the wilderness with five loaves and two fishes."⁴ He could have fed more; if more had been there to be fed, they would have been. And now He has called many to your espousal, but it is not now barley bread, but the Body from heaven which is supplied.

2. To-day, indeed, He was born after the manner of men, of a Virgin, but was begotten of the Father before all things, resembling His mother in body, His Father in power. Only-begotten on earth, and Only-begotten in heaven. God of God, born of a Virgin, Righteousness from the Father, Power from the Mighty One, Light of Light, not unequal to His Father; nor separated in power, not confused by extension of the Word or enlargement as though mingled with the Father, but

distinguished from the Father by virtue of His generation. He is your Brother,⁵ without Whom neither things in heaven, nor things in the sea, nor things on earth consist. The good Word of the Father, Which was, it is said, "in the beginning,"⁶ here you have His eternity. "And," it is said, "the Word was with God."⁷ Here you have His power, undivided and inseparable from the Father. "And the Word was God."⁸ Here you have His unbegotten Godhead, for your faith is to be drawn from the mutual relationship.

3. Love him, my daughter, for He is good. For, "None is good save God only."⁹ For if there be no doubt that the Son is God, and that God is good, there is certainly no doubt that God the Son is good. Love Him I say. He it is Whom the Father begat before the morning star,¹⁰ as being eternal, He brought Him forth from the womb as the Son; He uttered him from His heart,¹¹ as the Word. He it is in Whom the Father is well pleased;¹² He is the Arm of the Father, for He is Creator of all, and the Wisdom¹³ of the Father, for He proceeded from the mouth of God;¹⁴ the Power of the Father, because the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in Him bodily.¹⁵ And the Father so loved Him, as to bear Him in His bosom, and place Him at His right hand, that you may learn His wisdom, and know His power.

4. If, then, Christ is the Power of God, was God ever without power? Was the Father ever without the Son? If the Father of a certainty always was, of a certainty the Son always was. So He is the perfect Son of a perfect Father. For he who derogates from the power, derogates from Him Whose is the power. The Perfection of the Godhead does not admit of inequality. Love, then, Him Whom the Father loves, honour Him Whom the Father honours, for "he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father,"¹⁶ and "whoso denieth the Son, hath not the Father."¹⁷ So much as to the faith.

Chapter II.

Touching next upon the training of a virgin, he speaks of moderation in food and drink, and of restraint upon the impulses of the mind, introducing some teaching upon the fable of the death and resurrection of Hippolytus, and advises the avoidance of certain meats.

5. But sometimes even when faith is to be relied upon, youth is not trusted. Use wine, therefore, sparingly, in order that the weakness of the body may not increase, not for pleasurable excitement, for each alike kindles a flame, both wine and youth. Let fasts also put a bridle on tender age, and spare diet restrain the unsubdued appetites with a kind of rein. Let reason check, hope subdue, and fear curb them. For he who knows not how to govern his desires, like a man run away with by wild horses, is overthrown, bruised, torn, and injured.

6. And this is said to have happened to a youth for his love of Diana. But the fable is coloured with poet's tales, that Neptune, stirred with grief at his rival being preferred, sent madness upon his horses, whereby his great power might be set forth in that he overcame the youth, not by strength, but by fraud. And from this event a yearly sacrifice is celebrated for Diana, when a horse is offered at her altar. And they say that she was a virgin, and (of which even harlots would be ashamed) yet could love one who did not love her. But as far as I am concerned let their fables have authority, for though each be criminal, it is yet a less evil that a youth should have been so enamoured of an adulteress as to perish, than that two gods should, as they relate, contend for committing adultery, and that Jupiter avenged the grief of his daughter who played the harlot on the physician who

cured the wound of him who had violated Diana in the woods, a most excellent huntress, no doubt, not of wild beasts, but of lust: yet also of wild beasts, so that she was worshipped naked.

7. Let them ascribe, then, to Neptune the mastery over madness, in order to fix on him the crime of unchaste love. Let them ascribe to Diana the rule over the woods, wherein she dwelt, so as to establish the adultery which she practised. Let them ascribe to Aesculapius the restoration of the dead so long as they confess that when struck by lightning he himself escaped not. Let them also ascribe to Jupiter the thunderbolts which he did not possess, so that they witness to the disgrace with which he was laden.

8. And I think that one should sparingly eat all kinds of food which cause heat to the limbs, for flesh drags down even eagles as they fly. But within you let that bird of which we read, "Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's,"¹⁸ holding its course on high, swift in its virgin flight, be ignorant of the desire for unnecessary food. The gathering of banquets and salutations must be avoided.

Chapter III.

Virgins are exhorted to avoid visits, to observe modesty, to be silent during the celebration of the Mysteries after the example of Mary. Then after narrating the story of a heathen youth, and saying of a poet, St. Ambrose relates a miracle wrought by a holy priest.

9. I Will, too, that visits amongst the younger, except such as may be due to parents and those of like age, be few. For modesty is worn away by intercourse, and boldness breaks forth, laughter creeps in, and bashfulness is lessened, whilst politeness is studied. Not to answer one who asks a question is childishness, to answer is nonsense. I should prefer, therefore, that conversation should rather be wanting to a virgin, than abound. For if women are bidden to keep silence in churches, even about divine things, and to ask their husbands at home, what do we think should be the caution of virgins, in whom modesty adorns their age, and silence commends their modesty.

10. Was it a small sign of modesty that when Rebecca came to wed Isaac, and saw her bridegroom, she took a veil,¹⁹ that she might not be seen before they were united? Certainly the fair virgin feared not for her beauty, but for her modesty. What of Rachel, how she, when Jacob's kiss had been taken,²⁰ wept and groaned, and would not have ceased weeping had she not known him to be a kinsman? So she both observed what was due to modesty, and omitted not kindly affection. But if it is said to a man: "Gaze not on a maid, lest she cause thee to fall,"²¹ what is to be said to a consecrated virgin, who, if she loves, sins in mind; if she is loved, in act also?

11. The virtue of silence, especially in Church, is very great. Let no sentence of the divine lessons escape you; if you give ear, restrain your voice, utter no word with your lips which you would wish to recall, but let your boldness to speak be sparing. For in truth in much speaking there is abundance of sin.²² To the murderer it was said: "Thou hast sinned, be silent,"²³ that he might not sin more; but to the virgin it must be said, "Be silent lest thou sin." For Mary, as we read, kept in heart all things that were said concerning her Son,²⁴ and do you, when any passage is read where Christ is announced as about to come, or is shown to have come, not make a noise by talking, but attend. Is anything more unbecoming than the divine words should be so drowned by talking, as not to be heard, believed, or made known, that the sacraments should be indistinctly heard through the sound of voices, that prayer should be hindered when offered for the salvation

of all?

12. The Gentiles pay respect to their idols by silence, of which this instance is given: As Alexander, the king of the Macedonians, was sacrificing, the sleeve of a barbarian lad who was lighting the lamp for him caught fire and burnt his body, yet he remained without moving and neither betrayed the pain by a groan, nor showed his suffering by silent tears. Such was the discipline of reverence in a barbarian lad that nature was subdued. Yet he feared not the gods, who were no gods, but the king. For why should he fear those who if the same fire had caught them would have burnt?

13. How much better still is it where a youth at his father's banquet is bidden not to betray by coarse gestures his unchaste loves. And do you, holy virgin, abstain from groans, cries, coughing, and laughter at the Mystery. Can you not at the Mystery do what he did at a banquet? Let virginity be first marked by the voice, let modesty close the mouth, let religion remove weakness, and habit instruct nature. Let her gravity first announce a virgin to me, a modest approach, a sober gait, a bashful countenance, and let the march of virtue be preceded by the evidence of integrity. That virgin is not sufficiently worthy of approval who has to be enquired about when she is seen.

14. There is common story how, when the excessive croaking of frogs was resounding in the ears of the faithful people, the priest of God bade them be silent, and show reverence to the sacred words, and then at once the noise was stilled. Shall then the marshes keep silence and not the frogs? And shall irrational animals re-acknowledge by reverence what they know not by nature? While the shamelessness of men is such, that many care not to pay that respect to the religious feelings of their minds, which they do to the pleasure of their ears.

Chapter IV.

Having summed up the address of Liberius, St. Ambrose passes on to the virtues of his sister, especially her fasts, which however he advises her to moderate to some extent, and to exercise herself in other matters, after the example which he adduces. Especially he recommends the Lord's Prayer, and the repetition of Psalms by night, and the recitation of the Creed before daylight.

15. After such a fashion did Liberius of holy memory address you, in words beyond the reality of practice in most cases, but coming short of your performance, who have not only attained to the whole of discipline by your virtue, but have surpassed it in your zeal. For we are bidden to practise fasting, but only for single days; but you, multiplying nights and days, pass untold periods without food, and if ever requested to partake of some, and to lay aside your book a little while, you at once answer: "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."²⁵ Your very meals consisted but of what food came to hand, so that fasting is to be preferred to eating what was repugnant; your drink is from the spring, your weeping and prayer combine, your sleep is on your book.

16. These kings were suited to younger years, whilst he was ripening with the gray hairs of age; but when a virgin has gained the triumph over her subdued body, she should lessen her toil, that she may be preserved as teacher for a younger age. The vine laden with the fruitful branches of full growth soon breaks unless it be from time to time kept back. But whilst it is young let it grow rank, and as it grows older be pruned, so as not to grow into a forest of twigs, or die deprived of life

by its exceptive produce. A good husbandman by tending the soil keeps the vine in excellent order, protects it from cold, and guards it from being parched by the mid-day sun. And he works his land by turns, or if he will not let it lie fallow, he alternates his crops, so that the fields may rest through change of produce. Do you too, a veteran in virginity, at least sow the fields of your breast with different seeds, at one time with moderate sustenance, at another with sparing fasts, with reading, work, and prayer, that change of toil may be as a truce for rest.

17. The whole land does not produce the same harvest. On one side vines grow on the hills, on another you can see the purple olives, elsewhere the scented roses. And after leaving the plough, the strong husbandman with his fingers scrapes the soil to plant the roots of flowers, and with the rough hands wherewith he turns the bullocks striving amongst the vines, he gently presses the udders of the sheep. The land is the better the more numerous are its fruits. So do you, following the example of a good husbandman, avoid cleaving your soil with perpetual fastings as if with deep ploughings. Let the rose of modesty bloom in your garden, and the lily of the mind, and let the violet beds drink from the source of sacred blood. There is a common saying, "What you wish to perform abundantly, sometimes do not do at all." There ought to be something to add to the days of Lent, but so that nothing be done for the sake of ostentation, but of religion.

18. Frequent prayer also commends us to God. For if the prophet says, "Seven times a day have I praised Thee,"²⁶ though he was busy with the affairs of a kingdom, what ought we to do, who read: "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation"?²⁷ Certainly our customary prayers ought to be said with giving of thanks, when we rise from sleep, when we go forth, when we prepare to receive food, after receiving it, and at the hour of incense,²⁸ when at last we are going to rest.

19. And again in your bed-chamber itself, I would have you join psalms in frequent interchange with the Lord's prayer, either when you wake up, or before sleep bedews your body, so that at the very commencement of rest sleep may find you free from the care of worldly matters, meditating upon the things of God. And, indeed, he who first found out the name of Philosophy itself,²⁹ every day before he went to rest, had the flute-player play softer melodies to soothe his mind disturbed by worldly cares. But he, like a man washing tiles, fruitlessly desired to drive away worldly things by worldly means, for he was, indeed, rather besmearing himself with fresh mud, in seeking a reward from pleasure, but let us, having wiped off the filth of earthly vices, purify our utmost souls from every defilement of the flesh.

20. We ought, also, specially to repeat the Creed, as a seal upon our hearts, daily, before light, and to recur to it in thought whenever we are in fear of anything. For when is the soldier in his tent or the warrior in battle without his military oath?

Chapter V.

St. Ambrose, speaking of tears, explains David's saying, "Every night wash I my couch with my tears," and goes on to speak of Christ bearing our griefs and infirmities. Everything should be referred to His honour, and we ought to rejoice with spiritual joy, but not after a worldly fashion.

21. And who can now fail to understand that the holy prophet said for our instruction: "Every night will I wash my couch and water my bed with my tears"?³⁰ For if you take it literally for his bed, he shows that such abundance of tears should be shed as to wash the bed and water it with tears, the couch of him who is praying, for weeping has to do with the present, rewards with the future, since

it is said: "Blessed are ye that weep, for ye shall laugh;"³¹ or if we take the word of the prophet as applied to our bodies, we must wash away the offences of the body with tears of penitence. For Solomon made himself a bed of wood from Lebanon, its pillars were of silver, its bottom of gold, its back strewn with gems.³² What is that bed but the fashion of our body? For by gems is set forth the splendour of the brightness of the air, fire is set forth by the gold, water by silver, and earth by wood, of which four elements the human body consists, in which our soul rests, if it do not exist deprived of rest by the roughness of hills or the damp ground, but raised on high, above vices, supported by the wood. For which reason David also says: "The Lord will send him help upon his bed of pain."³³ For how can that be a bed of pain which cannot feel pain, and which has no feeling? But the body of pain is like the body of that death, of which it is said: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"³⁴

22. And since I have inserted a clause in which mention is made of the Lord's Body, lest any one should be troubled at reading that the Lord took a body of pain, let him remember that the Lord grieved and wept over the death of Lazarus,³⁵ and was wounded in His passion, and that from the wound there went forth blood and water,³⁶ and that He gave up His Spirit. Water for washing, Blood for drink, the Spirit for His rising again. For Christ alone is to us hope, faith, and love-hope in His resurrection, faith in the layer, and love in the sacrament.

23. And as He took a body of pain, so too He turned His bed in His weakness.³⁷ for He converted it to the benefit of human flesh. For by His Passion weakness was ended, and death by His resurrection. And yet you ought to mourn for the world but to rejoice in the Lord, to be sad for penitence but joyful for grace, though, too, the teacher of the Gentiles by a wholesome precept has bidden to weep with them that weep, and to rejoice with them that do rejoice.³⁸

24. But let him who desires to solve the whole difficulty of this question have recourse to the same Apostle. "Whatsoever ye do," says he, "in word or deed, do all in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father by Him."³⁹ Let us then refer all our words and deeds to Christ, Who brought life out of death, and created light out of darkness. For as a sick body is at one time cherished by warmth, at another soothed by cool applications, and the variation of remedies, if carried out according to the direction of the physician, is healthful, but if done in opposition to his orders increases the sickness; so whatever is paid to Christ is a remedy, whatever is done by our own will is harmful.

25. There ought then to be the joy of the mind, conscious of right, not excited by unrestrained feasts, or nuptial concerts, for in such modesty is not safe, and temptation may be suspected where excessive dancing accompanies festivities. I desire that the virgins of God should be far from this. For as a certain teacher of this world has said: "No one dances when sober unless he is mad."⁴⁰ Now if, according to the wisdom of this world, either drunkenness or madness is the cause of dancing, what a warning is given to us amongst the instances mentioned in the Divine Scriptures, where John, the forerunner of Christ, being beheaded at the wish of a dancer, is an instance that the allurements of dancing did more harm than the madness of sacrilegious anger.

Chapter VI.

Having mentioned the Baptist, St. Ambrose enters into a description of the events concerning his death, and speaks against dancing and the festivities of the wicked.

26. And since we must not cursorily pass by the mention of so great a man, let us consider who he was, by whom, on what account, how, and at what time he was slain. A just man, he is put to death by adulterers, and the penalty of a capital crime is turned off by the guilty on to the judge. Again the reward of the dancer is the death of the prophet. Lastly (a matter of honour even to all barbarians), the cruel sentence is given in the midst of banqueting and festivities, and the news of the deadly crime is carried from the banquet to the prison, and then from the prison to the banquet. How many crimes are there in one wicked act!

27. A banquet of death is set out with royal luxury,⁴¹ and when a larger concourse than usual had come together, the daughter of the queen, sent for from within the private apartments, is brought forth to dance in the sight of men. What could she have learnt from an adulteress but loss of modesty? Is anything so conducive to lust as with unseemly movements thus to expose in nakedness those parts of the body which either nature has hidden or custom has veiled, to sport with the looks, to turn the neck, to loosen the hair? Fitly was the next step an offence against God. For what modesty can there be where there is dancing and noise and clapping of hands?

28. "Then," it is said, "the king being pleased, said unto the damsel, that she should ask of the king whatsoever she would. Then he swore that if she asked he would give her even the half of his kingdom."⁴² See how worldly men themselves judge of their worldly power, so as to give even kingdoms for dancing. But the damsel, being taught by her mother, demanded that the head of John should be brought to her on a dish. That which is said that "the king was sorry,"⁴³ is not repentance on the part of the king, but a confession of guilt, which is, according to the wont of the divine rule, that they who have done evil condemn themselves by their own confession. "But for their sakes which sat with him," it is said. What is more base than that a murder should be committed in order not to displease those who sat at meat? "And," it follows, "for his oath's sake." What a new religion! He had better have forsworn himself. The Lord therefore in the Gospel bids us not to swear at all,⁴⁴ that there be no cause for perjury, and no need of offending. And so an innocent man is slain that an oath be not violated. I know which to have in the greatest horror. Perjury is more endurable than are the oaths of tyrants.

29. Who would not think when he saw some one running from the banquet to the prison, that orders had been given to set the prophet free? Who, I say, having heard that it was Herod's birthday, and of the state banquet, and the choice given to the damsel of choosing whatever she wished, would not think that the man was sent to set John free? What has cruelty in common with delicacies? What have death and pleasure in common? The prophet is hurried to suffer at a festal time by a festal order, by which he would even wish to be set free; he is slain by the sword, and his head is brought on a platter. This dish was well suited to their cruelty, in order that their insatiate savageness might be feasted.

30. Look, most savage king, at the sights worthy of thy feast. Stretch forth thy right hand, that nothing be wanting to thy cruelty, that streams of holy blood may pour down between thy fingers. And since the hunger for such unheard-of cruelty could not be satisfied by banquets, nor the thirst by goblets, drink the blood pouring from the still flowing veins of the cut-off head. Behold those eyes, even in death, the witnesses of thy crime, turning away from the sight of the delicacies. The eyes are closing, not so much owing to death, as to horror of luxury. That bloodless golden mouth, whose sentence thou couldst not endure, is silent, and yet thou fearest. Yet the tongue, which

even after death is wont to observe its duty as when living, condemned, though with trembling motion, the incest. This head is borne to Herodias: she rejoices, she exults as though she had escaped from the crime, because she has slain her judge.

31. What say you, holy women? Do you see what you ought to teach, and what also to unteach your daughters? She dances, but she is the daughter of an adulteress. But she who is modest, she who is chaste, let her teach her daughter religion, not dancing. And do you, grave and prudent men, learn to avoid the banquets of hateful men. If such are the banquets, what will be the judgment of the impious?

Chapter VII. In reply to Marcellina, who had asked what should be thought of those who to escape violence killed themselves, St. Ambrose replies by narrating the history of Pelagia, a virgin, with her mother and sister, and goes on to speak of the martyrdom of the blessed Sotheris, one of their own ancestors.

32. As I am drawing near the close of my address, you make a good suggestion, holy sister, that I should touch upon what we ought to think of the merits of those who have cast themselves down from a height, or have drowned themselves in a river, lest they should fall into the hands of persecutors, seeing that holy Scripture forbids a Christian to lay hands on himself. And indeed as regard; virgins placed in the necessity of preserving their purity, we have a plain answer, seeing that there exists an instance of martyrdom.

33. Saint Pelagia⁴⁵ lived formerly at Antioch, being about fifteen years old, a sister of virgins, and a virgin herself. She shut herself up at home at the first sound of persecution, seeing herself surrounded by those who would rob her of her faith and purity, in the absence of her mother and sisters, without any defence, but all the more filled with God. "What are we to do, unless," says she to herself, "thou, a captive of virginity, takest thought? I both wish and fear to die, for I meet not death but seek it. Let us die if we are allowed, or if they will not allow it, still let us die. God is not offended by a remedy against evil, and faith permits the act. In truth, if we think of the real meaning of the word, how can what is voluntary be violence? It is rather violence to wish to die and not to be able. And we do not fear any difficulty. For who is there who wishes to die and is not able to do so, when there are so many easy ways to death? For I can now rush upon the sacrilegious altars and overthrow them, and quench with my blood the kindled fires. I am not afraid that my right hand may fail to deliver the blow, or that my breast may shrink from the pain. I shall leave no sin to my flesh. I fear not that a sword will be wanting. I can die by my own weapons, I can die without the help of an executioner, in my mother's bosom."

34. She is said to have adorned her head, and to have put on a bridal dress, so that one would say that she was going to a bridegroom, not to death. But when the hateful persecutors saw that they had lost the prey of her chastity, they began to seek her mother and sisters. But they, by a spiritual flight, already held the field of chastity, when, as on the one side, persecutors suddenly threatened them, and on the other, escape was shut off by an impetuous river, they said, what do we fear? See the water, what hinders us from being baptized? And this is the baptism whereby sins are forgiven, and kingdoms are sought. This is a baptism after which no one sins. Let the water receive us, which is wont to regenerate. Let the water receive us, which makes virgins. Let the water receive us, which opens heaven, protects the weak, hides death, makes martyrs. We pray Thee, God, Creator of all things, let not the water scatter our bodies, deprived of the breath of life;

let not death separate our obsequies, whose lives affection has always conjoined; but let our constancy be one, our death one, and our burial also be one.

35. Having said these words, and having slightly girded up the bosom of their dress, to veil their modesty without impeding their steps, joining hands as though to lead a dance, they went forward to the middle of the river bed, directing their steps to where the stream was more violent, and the depth more abrupt. No one drew back, no one ceased to go on, no one tried where to place her steps, they were anxious only when they felt the ground, grieved when the water was shallow, and glad when it was deep. One could see the pious mother tightening her grasp, rejoicing in her pledges, afraid of a fall lest even the stream should carry off her daughters from her. "These victims, O Christ," said she, "do I offer as leaders of chastity, guides on my journey, and companions of my sufferings."

37. But who would have cause to wonder that they had such constancy whilst alive, seeing that even when dead they preserved the position of their bodies unmoved? The water did not lay bare their corpses, nor did the rapid course of the river roll them along. Moreover, the holy mother, though without sensation, still maintained her loving grasp, and held the sacred knot which she had tied, and loosed not her hold in death, that she who had paid her debt to religion might die leaving her piety as her heir. For those whom she had joined together with herself for martyrdom, she claimed even to the tomb.

38. But why use instances of people of another race to you, my sister, whom the inspiration of hereditary chastity has taught by descent from a martyred ancestor? For whence have you learnt who had no one from whom to learn, living in the country, with no virgin companion, instructed by no teacher? You have played the part then not of a disciple, for this cannot be done without teaching, but of an heir of virtue.

39. For how could it come to pass that holy Sotheris should not have been the originator of your purpose, who is an ancestor of your race? Who, in an age of persecution, borne to the heights of suffering by the insults of slaves, gave to the executioner even her face, which is usually free from injury when the whole body is tortured, and rather beholds than suffers torments; so brave and patient that when she offered her tender cheeks to punishment, the executioner failed in striking before the martyr yielded under the injuries. She moved not her face, she turned not away her countenance, she uttered not a groan or a tear. Lastly, when she had overcome other kinds of punishment, she found the sword which she desired.

1: This is Liberius, Bishop of Rome a.d. 352-366, who temporized with Arianism. [St. Hil. Pict. Fragm. VI.; St. Athan. Apol. C. Arian. 89; Hist. Arian. 41; St. Jerome, De Vir. Ill. 97, etc.] He subsequently returned to the Catholic teaching and atoned by later acts for his temporary weakness.

2: Evidently a public profession with receiving the veil, etc.

3: S. John ii. 9.

4: S. Luke ix. 13.

5: Cant. v. 1.

6: S. John i. 1.

7: S. John i. 1.

8: S. John i. 1.

9: S. Luke xviii. 19.

10: Ps. cx. [cix.] 3.

11: Ps. xlv. [xliv.] 1.

12: S. Matt. xvii. 5.

13: 1 Cor. i. 30.

14: Wisd. xxiv. 3.

15: Col. ii. 9.

16: S. John v. 23.

17: 1 John ii. 23.

18: Ps. ciii. [cii.] 5.

19: Gen. xxiv. 65.

20: Gen. xxix. 11.

21: Eccclus. ix. 5.

22: Prov. x. 19.

23: Gen. iv. 7.

24: S. Luke ii. 19.

25: S. Matt. iv. 4.

26: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 164.

27: S. Matt. xxvi. 41.

28: It is doubtful whether incense was burnt as an adjunct of Christian worship so early as the time of St. Ambrose, and the reference here may be to the offering at evening in the Jewish temple. He speaks again of incense in Expos. Ev. sec. Lucam. §28, but again there is no conclusive proof. It was certainly used as a perfume.

29: Pythagoras.

30: Ps. vi. 6.

31: S. Lukv vi. 21.

32: Cant. iii. 6.

33: Ps. xli. [xl.] 3.

34: Rom. vii. 24.

35: S. John xi. 35.

36: S. John xix. 34.

37: Ps. xli. [xl.] 3.

38: Rom. xii. 15.

39: Col. iii. 17.

40: Cicero, p. Murena.

41: S. Mark vi. 21 ff.

42: S. Mark vi. 22, Mark vi. 23.

43: S. Mark vi. 25 ff.

44: S. Matt. v. 34.

45: Cf. Ep. XXXVII. 38. St. Ambrose, being asked by his sister for his opinion concerning such virgins as had committed suicide rather than suffer themselves to be violated, would seem to say that in some cases this was allowable. St. Augustine [de Civ. Dei, I. 19] speaks with some hesitation on the same subject. There is some doubt as to who this St. Pelagia mentioned below may be. St. Chrysostom says she committed suicide by throwing herself from the roof; see Pelagia (1) in Dict. Chr. Biog.

Concerning Widows

The Treatise Concerning Widows.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Chapter XIII.

Chapter XIV.

Chapter XV. The Treatise Concerning Widows.

Chapter I.

After having written about virgins, it seemed needful to say something concerning widows, since the Apostle joins the two classes together, and the latter are as it were teachers of the former, and far superior to those who are married. Elijah was sent to a widow, a great mark of honour; yet widows are not honourable like her of Sarepta, unless they copy her virtues, notably hospitality. The avarice of men is rebuked, who forfeit the promises of God by their grasping.

1. Since I have treated of the honour of virgins in three books, it is fitting now, my brethren, that a treatise concerning widows should come in order; for I ought not to leave them without honour, nor to separate them from the commendation belonging to virgins, since the voice of the Apostle has joined them to virgins, according to what is written: "The unmarried woman and the virgin careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit."¹ For in a certain manner the inculcation of virginity is strengthened by the example of widows. They who have preserved their marriage bed undefiled are a testimony to virgins that chastity is to be preserved for God. And

it is almost a mark of no less virtue to abstain from marriage, which was once a delight, than to remain ignorant of the pleasures of wedlock. They are strong in each point, in that they regret not wedlock, the faith of which they keep, and entangle not themselves with wedded pleasures, lest they appear weak and not able to take care of themselves.

2. But in this particular virtue is contained also the prizes of liberty. For: "The wife is bound as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband fall asleep she is freed: let her marry whom she will, only in the Lord. But she will be happier if she so abide, after my judgment, for I think I also have the Spirit of God."² Evidently, then, the Apostle has expressed the difference, having said that the one is bound, and stated that the other is happier, and that he asserts not so much as the result of his own judgment, as of the infusion of the Spirit of God; that the decision should be seen to be heavenly, not human.

3. And what is the teaching of the fact that at that time when the whole human race was afflicted by famine and Elias was sent to the widow?³ And see how for each is reserved her own special grace. An angel is sent to the Virgin,⁴ a prophet to the widow. Notice, farther, that in one case it is Gabriel, in the other Elisha. The most excellent chiefs of the number of angels and prophets are seen to be chosen. But there is no praise simply in widowhood, unless there be added the virtues of widowhood. For, indeed, there were many widows, but one is preferred to all, in which fact it is not so much that others are called back from their pursuit as that they are stimulated by the example of virtue.

4. What is said at first makes the ears attentive, although the simplicity itself of the understanding has weight to attract widows to the pattern of virtue; since each seems to excel, not according to her profession, but her merit, and the grace of hospitality is not lost sight of by God, Who, as He Himself related in the Gospel, rewards a cup of cold water with the exceeding recompense of eternity, and compensates the small measure of meal and oil by an unfailing abundance of plenty ever coming in. For if one of the heathen⁵ has said that all the possessions of friends should be common, how much more ought those of relatives to be common! For we are relatives who are bound into one body.

5. But we are not bound by any prescribed limit of hospitality. For why do you think that what is of this world is private property when this world is common? Or why do you consider the fruits of the earth are private, when the earth itself is common property? "Behold," He said, "the fowls of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap."⁶ For to those to whom nothing is private property nothing is wanting, and God, the master of His own word, knows how to keep His promise. Again, the birds do not gather together, and yet they eat, for our heavenly Father feeds them. But we turning aside the warnings of a general utterance to our private advantage, God says: "Every tree which has in it the fruit of a tree yielding seed shall be to you for meat, and to every beast, and to every bird, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth."⁷ By gathering together we come to want, and by gathering together we are made empty. For we cannot hope for the promise, who keep not the saying. It is also good for us to attend to the precept of hospitality, to be ready to give to strangers, for we, too, are strangers in the world.

6. But how holy was that widow, who, when pinched by extreme hunger, observed the reverence due to God, and was not using the food for herself alone, but was dividing it with her son, that she might not outlive her dear offspring. Great is the duty of affection, but that of religion brings more

return. For as no one ought to be set before her son, so the prophet of God ought to be set before her son and her preservation. For she is to be believed to have given to him not a little food, but the whole support of her life, who left nothing for herself. So hospitable was she that she gave the whole, so full of faith that she believed at once.

Chapter II. The precepts of the Apostle concerning a widow indeed are laid down, such as, that she bring up children, attend to her parents, desire to please God, show herself irreproachable, set forth a ripeness of merits, have been the wife of one man. St. Ambrose notes, however, that a second marriage was not condemned by St. Paul, and adds that widows must have a good report for virtue with all. The reasons why younger widows are to be avoided, and what is meant by its being better to marry than to burn. St. Ambrose then goes on to speak of the dignity of widows, shown by the fact that any injury done to them is visited by the anger of God.

7. So, then, a widow is not only marked off by bodily abstinence, but is distinguished by virtue, to whom I do not give commandments, but the Apostle. I am not the only person to do them honour, but the Doctor of the Gentiles did so first, when he said: "Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let her first learn to govern her own house, and to requite her parents."⁸ Whence we observe that each inclination of affection ought to exist in a widow, to love her children and to do her duty to her parents. So when discharging her duty to her parents she is teaching her children, and is rewarded herself by her own compliance with duty, in that what she performs for others benefits herself.

8. "For this," says he, "is acceptable with God."⁹ So that if thou, O widow, carest for the things of God, thou oughtest to follow after that which thou hast learnt to be well pleasing to God. And, indeed, the Apostle somewhat farther back,¹⁰ exhorting widows to the pursuit of continence, said that they mind the things of the Lord. But elsewhere, when a widow who is approved is to be selected, she is bidden not only to bear in mind but also to hope in the Lord: "For she that is a widow indeed," it is said, "and desolate, must hope in God, and be instant in supplications and prayers night and day."¹¹ And not without reason does he show that these ought to be blameless, to whom, as virtuous works are enjoined, so, too, great respect is paid, so that they are honoured even by bishops.

9. And of what kind she ought to be who is chosen the description is given in the words of the teacher himself: "Not less than threescore years old, having been the wife of one man."¹² Not that old age alone makes the widow,¹³ but that the merits of the widow are the duties of old age. For she certainly is the more noble who represses the heat of youth, and the impetuous ardour of youthful age, desiring neither the tenderness of a husband, nor the abundant delights of children, rather than one who, now worn out in body, cold in age, of ripe years, can neither grow warm with pleasures, nor hope for offspring.

10. Nor in truth is any one excluded from the devotion of widowhood, if after entering upon a second marriage, which the precepts of the Apostle certainly do not condemn as though the fruit of chastity were lost, if she be again loosed from her husband. She will have, indeed, the merit of her chastity, even if it be tardy, but she will be more approved who has tried a second marriage, for the desire of chastity is conspicuous in her, for the other old age or shame seems to have put an end to marrying.

11. Nor yet is bodily chastity alone the strong purpose of the widow, but a large and most abundant exercise of virtue. "Well reported of for good works, if she have brought up children; if she have lodged strangers; if she have washed the saints' feet; if she have ministered to those suffering tribulation; if, lastly, she have followed after every good work."¹⁴ You see how many practices of virtue he has included. He demands, first of all, the duty of piety; secondly, the practice of hospitality and humble service; thirdly, the ministry of mercy and liberality in assisting; and, lastly, the performance of every good work.

12. And he, therefore, that the younger should be avoided,¹⁵ because they are not able to fulfil the requirements of so high a degree of virtue. For youth is prone to fall because the heat of various desires is inflamed by the warmth of glowing youth, and it is the part of a good doctor to keep off the materials of sin. For the first exercise in training the soul is to turn away sin, the second to implant virtue. Yet, since the Apostle knew that Anna, the widow of fourscore years, from her youth was a herald of the works of the Lord, I do not think that he thought that the younger should be excluded from the devotion of widowhood, especially as he said: "It is better to marry than to burn."¹⁶ For certainly he recommended marriage as a remedy, that she who would else perish might be saved; he did not prescribe the choice that one who could contain should not follow chastity, for it is one thing to succour one who is falling, another to persuade to virtue.

13. And what shall I say of human judgments, since in the judgments of God the Jews are set forth as having offended the Lord in nothing more than violating what was due to the widow and the rights of minors? This is proclaimed by the voices of the prophets as the cause which brought upon the Jews the penalty of rejection. This is mentioned as the only cause which will mitigate the wrath of God against their sin. if they honour the widow, and execute true judgment for minors, for thus we read: "Judge the fatherless, deal justly with the widow, and come let us reason together, saith the Lord."¹⁷ And elsewhere: "The Lord shall maintain the orphan and the widow."¹⁸ And again: "I will abundantly bless her widow."¹⁹ Wherein also the likeness of the Church is foreshadowed. You see, then, holy widows, that that office which is honoured by the assistance of divine grace must not be degraded by impure desire.

Chapter III.

St. Ambrose returns to the story of the widow of Sarepta, and shows that she represented the Church, hence that she was an example to virgins, married women, and widows. Then he refers to the prophet as setting forth Christ, inasmuch as he foretold the mysteries and the rain which was to come. Next he touches upon and explains the twofold sign of Gideon, and points out that it is not in every one's power to work miracles, and that the Incarnation of Christ and the rejection of the Jews were foreshadowed in that account.

14. To return to what was treated of above,²⁰ what is the meaning of the fact that when there was a very great famine in all the land, yet the care of God was not wanting to the widow, and the prophet was sent to sustain her? And when in this story the Lord warns me that He is about to speak in truth,²¹ He seems to bid my ears attend to a mystery. For what can be more true than the mystery of Christ and the Church? Not, then, without a purpose is one preferred amongst many widows. Who is such an one, to whom so great a prophet who was carried up into heaven, should be guided, especially at that time when the heaven was shut for three years and six months, when there was a great famine in the whole land? The famine was everywhere, and yet notwithstanding

this widow did not want. What are these three years? Are they not, perchance, those in which the Lord came to the earth and could not find fruit on the fig-tree, according to that which is written: "Behold, there are three years that I came seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none."²²

15. This is assuredly that widow of whom it was said: "Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not, break forth and cry, thou that avaiest not with child; for many are the children of the desolate, more than of her who hath an husband."²³ And well is she a widow of whom it is well said: "Thou shalt not remember thy shame and thy widowhood, for I am the Lord Who make thee."²⁴ And perchance therefore is she a widow who has lost her Husband indeed in the suffering of His body, but in the day of judgment shall receive again the Son of Man Whom she seemed to have lost. "For a short time have I forsaken thee,"²⁵ He says, in order that, being forsaken, she may the more gloriously keep her faith.

16. All, then, have an example to imitate, virgins, married women, and widows. And perchance is the Church therefore a virgin, married, and a widow, because they are one body in Christ. She is then that widow for Whose sake when there was a dearth of the heavenly Word on earth, the prophets were appointed, for there was a widow who was barren, yet reserved her bringing forth for its own time.

17. So that his person does not seem to us of small account, who by his word moistened the dry earth with the dew of heaven, and unlocked the closed heavens certainly not by human power. For who is he who can open the heavens except Christ, for Whom daily out of sinners food is gathered, an increase for the Church? For it is not in the power of man to say: "The barrel of meal shall not waste, and the cruse of oil shall not fail, until the day on which the Lord shall send rain on the earth,"²⁶ For though it be the rule of the prophets to speak thus, the voice is in truth that of the Lord. And so it is stated first: "For thus saith the Lord."²⁷ For it is of the Lord to vouch for a continuance of heavenly sacraments, and to promise that the grace of spiritual joy shall not fail, to grant the defences of life, the seals of faith, the gifts of virtues.

18. But what does this mean: "Until the day on which the Lord shall send rain on the earth"? except that He, too, "shall come down like rain upon a fleece, and like the drops that water the earth."²⁸ In which passage is disclosed the mystery of the old history where Gideon, the warrior of the mystic conflict, receiving the pledge of future victory, recognized the spiritual sacrament in the vision of his mind, that that rain was the dew of the Divine Word, which first came down on the fleece, when all the earth was parched with continual drought, and by a second true sign, moistened the floor of all the earth with a shower, whilst dryness was upon the fleece.²⁹

19. For the prescient man observed the sign of the future growth of the Church. For first in Judaea the dew of the divine utterance began to give moisture (for "in Jewry is God known"),³⁰ whilst the whole earth remained without the dew of faith. But when Joseph's flock began to deny God, and by venturing on various enormous offences to incur guilt before God, then when the dew of the heavenly shower was poured on the whole earth, the people of the Jews began to grow dry and parched in their own unbelief, when the clouds of prophecy and the healthful shower of the Apostles watered the holy Church gathered together from all parts of the world. This is that rain, now condensed from earthly moisture, now from mountain mists, but diffused throughout the whole world in the salutary shower of the heavenly Scriptures.

20. By this example, then, it is shown that not all can merit the miracles of divine power, but they who are aided by the pursuits of religious devotion, and that they lose the fruits of divine working who are devoid of reverence for heaven. It is also shown in a mystery that the Son of God, in order to restore the Church, took upon Himself the mystery of a human body, casting off the Jewish people, from whom the counsellor and the prophet and the miracles of the divine benefits were taken away, because that as it were by a kind of national blemish they were not willing to believe in the Son of God.

Chapter IV. By the example of Anna St. Ambrose shows what ought to be the life of widows, and shows that she was an example of chastity at every age. From this he argues that there are three degrees of the same virtue, all of which are included in the Church, and sets forth several examples in Mary, in Anna, and in Susanna. But, he adds, the state of virginity is superior to either of the others, but that a widow ought to take greater care for the preservation of her good name.

21. Scripture then teaches as how much grace is conferred by unity, and how great is the gift of divine blessing in widows. And since such honour is given them by God, we must observe what mode of life corresponds thereto; for Anna shows what widows ought to be, who, left destitute by the early death of her husband, yet obtained the reward of full praise, being intent not less on the duties of religion than on the pursuit of chastity. A widow, it is said, of fourscore and four years, a widow who departed not from the temple, a widow who served God night and day with fastings and with prayers.³¹

22. You see what sort of person a widow is said to be, the wife of one man, tested also by the progress of age, vigorous in religion, and worn out in body, whose resting-place is the temple, whose conversation is prayer, whose life is fasting, who in the times of day and night by a service of unwearied devotion, though the body acknowledge old age, yet knows no age in her piety. Thus is a widow trained from her youth, thus is she spoken of in her age, who has kept her widowhood not through the chance of time, nor through weakness of body, but by large-heartedness in virtue. For when it is said that she was for seven years from her virginity with her husband, it is a setting forth that the things which are the support of her old age began in the aims of her youth.

23. And so we are taught that the virtue of chastity is threefold, one kind that of married life, a second that of widowhood, and the third that of virginity, for we do not so set forth one as to exclude others. These result each in that which belongs to each. The training of the Church is rich in this, that it has those whom it may set before others, but has none whom it rejects, and would that it never could have any! We have so spoken of virginity as not to reject widowhood, we so reverence widows as to reserve its own honour for wedlock. It is not our precepts but the divine sayings which teach this.

24. Let us remember then how Mary, how Anna, and how Susanna are spoken of. But since not only must we celebrate their praises but also follow their manner of life, let us remember where Susanna,³² and Anna,³³ and Mary³⁴ are found, and observe how each is spoken of with her special commendation, and where each is mentioned, she that is married in the garden, the widow in the temple, the virgin in her secret chamber.

25. But in the former the fruit is later, in virginity it is earlier; old age proves them, virginity is the praise of youth, and does not need the help of years, being the fruit of every age. It becomes early

years, it adorns youth, it adds to the dignity of age, and at all ages it has the gray hairs of its righteousness, the ripeness of its gravity, the veil of modesty, which does hinder devotion and increases religion. For we see by what follows that holy Mary went every year with Joseph to Jerusalem on the solemn day of the passover.³⁵ Everywhere in company with the Virgin is eager devotion and a zealous sharer of her chastity. Nor is the Mother of the Lord puffed up, as though secure of her own merits, but the more she recognized her merit, the more fully did she pay her vows, the more abundantly did she perform her service, the more fully did she discharge her office, the more religiously did she perform her duty and fill up the mystic time.

26. How much more then does it beseem you to be intent on the pursuit of chastity, lest you leave any place for unfavourable opinion who have the evidence of your modesty and your behaviour alone. For a virgin, though in her also character rather than the body has the first claim, puts away calumny by the integrity of her body, a widow who has lost the assistance of being able to prove her virginity undergoes the inquiry as to her chastity not according to the word of a midwife, but according to her own manner of life. Scripture, then, has shown how attentive and religious should be the disposition of a widow.

Chapter V.

Liberality to the poor is recommended by the example of the widow the Gospel, whose two mites were preferred to the large gifts of the rich. The two mites are treated as mystically representing the two Testaments. What that treasure is for which we are taught to offer, after the example of the wise men, three gifts, or after that of the widow, two. St. Ambrose concludes the chapter by an exhortation to widows to be zealous in good works.

27. In the same book, too, but in another place, we are taught how fitting it is to be merciful and liberal towards the poor, and that this feeling should not be checked by the consideration of our poverty, since liberality is determined not by the amount of our possessions, but by the disposition of giving. For by the voice of the Lord that widow is preferred to all of whom it was said: "This widow hath cast in more than all."³⁶ In which instance the Lord characteristically teaches all, that none should be held back from giving assistance through shame at his own poverty, and that the rich should not flatter themselves that they seem to give more than the poor. For the piece of money out of a small stock is richer than treasures out of abundance, because it is not the amount that is given but the amount that remains which is considered. No one gives more than she who has left nothing for herself.

28. Why do you, rich woman, boast yourself by comparison with the poor, and when you are all loaded with gold, and drag along the ground a costly robe, desire to be honoured as though she were inferior and small in comparison with your riches, because you have surpassed the needy with your gifts? Rivers too overflow, when they are too full, but a draught from a brook is more pleasant. New wine foams while fermenting, and the husbandman does not consider as lost that which runs over. While the harvest is being threshed out, grains of corn fall from the groaning floor; but though the harvests fail, the barrel of meal wastes not, and the cruse full of oil gives forth.³⁷ But the draught emptied the casks of the rich, while the tiny cruse of oil of the widow gave abundance. That, then, is to be reckoned which you give for devotion, not what you cast forth disdainfully. For in fine, no one gave more than she who fed the prophet with her children's nourishment. And so since no one gave more, no one had greater merit. This has a moral

application.

29. And considering the mystical sense, one must not despise this woman casting in two mites into the treasury. Plainly the woman was noble who in the divine judgment was found worthy to be preferred to all. Perchance it is she who of her faith has given two testaments for the help of man, and so no one has done more. Nor could any one equal the amount of her gift, who joined faith with mercy. Do you, then, whoever you are, who exercise your life the practice of widowhood, not hesitate to cast into the treasury the two mites, full of faith and grace.

30. Happy is she who out of her treasure brings forth the perfect image of the King. Your treasure is wisdom, your treasure is chastity and righteousness, your treasure is a good understanding, such as was that treasure from which the Magi, when they worshipped the Lord, brought forth gold, frankincense, and myrrh;³⁸ setting forth by gold the power of a king, venerating God by the frankincense, and by myrrh acknowledging the resurrection of the body. You too have this treasure if you look into yourself: "For we have this treasure in earthen vessels."³⁹ You have gold which you can give, for God does not exact of you the precious gift of shining metal, but that gold which at the day of judgment the fire shall be unable to consume. Nor does He require precious gifts, but the good odour of faith, which the altars of your heart send forth and the disposition of a religious mind exhales.

31. From this treasure, then, not only the three gifts of the Magi but also the two mites of the widow are taken, on which the perfect image of the heavenly King shines forth, the brightness of His glory and the image of His substance. Precious, too, are those hardly earned gains of chastity which the widow gives of her labour and daily task, continually night and day working at her task, and by the wakeful labour of her profitable chastity gathering treasure; that she may preserve the couch of her deceased husband unviolated, be able to support her dear children, and to minister to the poor. She is to be preferred to the rich, she it is who shall not fear the judgment of Christ.

32. Strive to equal her, my daughters: "It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing."⁴⁰ "Covet earnestly the best gifts"⁴¹ The Lord is ever looking upon you, Jesus looks upon you when He goes to the treasury, and you think that of the gain of your good works assistance is to be given to those in need. What is it, then, that you should give your two mites and gain in return the Lord's Body? Go not, then, empty into the sight of the Lord your God,⁴² empty of mercy, empty of faith, empty of chastity; for the Lord Jesus is wont to look upon and to commend not the empty, but those who are rich in virtues. Let the maiden see you at work, let her see you ministering to others. For this is the return which you owe to God, that you should make your return to God from the progress of others. No return is more acceptable to God than the offerings of piety.

Chapter VI.

Naomi is an instance of a widow receiving back from her daughter-in-law the fruits of her own good training, and is a token that necessary support will never fail the good widow. And if her life appears sad, she is happy, since the promises of the Lord are made to her. St. Ambrose then touches upon the benefits of weeping.

33. Does the widow Naomi seem to you of small account, who supported her widowhood on the gleanings from another's harvest, and who, when heavy with age, was supported by her daughter-in-law?⁴³ It is a great benefit both for the support and for the advantage of widows, that

they so train their daughters-in-law as to have in them a support in full old age, and, as it were, payment for their teaching and reward for their training. For to her who has well taught and well instructed her daughter-in-law a Ruth will never be wanting who will prefer the widowed life of her mother-in-law to her father's house, and if her husband also be dead, will not leave her, will support her in need, comfort her in sorrow, and not leave her if sent away; for good instruction will never know want. So that Naomi, deprived of her husband and her two sons, having lost the offspring of her fruitfulness, lost not the reward of her pious care, for she found both a comfort in sorrow and a support in poverty.

34. You see, then, holy women, how fruitful a widow is in the offspring of virtues, and the results of her own merits, which cannot come to an end. A good widow, then, knows no want, and if she be weary through age, in extreme poverty, yet she has as a rule the reward of the training she has given. Though the nearest to herself have failed, she finds those not so near akin to cherish their mother, revere their parent, and by the trifling gifts for her support desire to gain the fruit of their own kindness, for richly are gifts to a widow repaid. She asks food and pays back treasures.

35. But she seems to spend sad days, and to pass her time in tears. And she is the more blessed in this, for by a little weeping she purchases for herself everlasting joys, and at the cost of a few moments gains eternity. To such it is well said: "Blessed are ye that weep, for ye shall laugh."⁴⁴ Who then would prefer the deceitful appearances of present joys to the pleasure of future freedom from anxiety? Does he seem to us an insignificant authority, the elect forefather of the Lord after the flesh, who ate ashes as it were bread, and mingled his drink with weeping,⁴⁵ and by his tears at night gained for himself the joy of redemption in the morning? Whence did he gain that great joy except that he greatly wept, and, as it were, at the price of his tears obtained the grace of future glory for himself.

36. The widow has, then, this excellent recommendation, that while she mourns her husband she also weeps for the world, and the redeeming tears are ready, which shed for the dead will benefit the living. The weeping of the eyes is fitted to the sadness of the mind, it arouses pity, lessens labour, relieves grief, and preserves modesty, and she no longer seems to herself so wretched, finding comfort in tears Which are the pay of love and proofs of pious memory.

Chapter VII. By the example of Judith is shown that courage is not wanting in widows; her preparation for her visit to Holofernes is dwelt upon, as also her chastity and her wisdom, her sobriety and moderation. Lastly, St. Ambrose, after demonstrating that she was no less brave than prudent, sets forth her modesty after her success.

37. But bravery also is usually not wanting to a good widow. For this is true bravery, which surpasses the usual nature and the weakness of the sex by the devotion of the mind, such as was in her who was named Judith,⁴⁶ who of herself alone was able to rouse up from utter prostration and defend from the enemy men broken down by the siege, smitten with fear, and pining with hunger. For she, as we read, when Holofernes, dreaded after his success in so many battles, had driven countless thousands of men within the walls; when the armed men were afraid, and were already treating about the final surrender, went forth outside the wall, both excelling that army which she delivered, and braver than that which she put to flight.

38. But in order to learn the dispositions of ripe widowhood, run through the course of the Scriptures. From the time when her husband died she laid aside the garments of mirth, and took those of mourning. Every day she was intent on fasting except on the Sabbath and the Lord's Day and the times of holy days, not as yielding to desire of refreshment, but out of respect for religion. For this is that which is said: "Whether ye eat or drink, all is to be done in the name of Jesus Christ,"⁴⁷ that even the very refreshment of the body is to have respect to the worship of holy religion. So then, holy Judith,⁴⁸ strengthened by lengthened mourning and by daily fasting, sought not the enjoyments of the world regardless of danger, and strong in her contempt for death. In order to accomplish her stratagem she put on that robe of mirth, wherewith in her husband's lifetime she was wont to be clothed, as though she would give pleasure to her husband, if she freed her country. But she saw another man whom she was seeking to please, even Him, of Whom it is said: "After me cometh a Man Who is preferred before me."⁴⁹ And she did well in resuming her bridal ornaments when about to fight, for the reminders of wedlock are the arms of chastity, and in no other way could a widow please or gain the victory.

39. Why relate the sequel? How she amongst thousands of enemies, remained chaste. Why speak of her wisdom, in that she designed such a scheme? She chose out the commander, to ward off from herself the insolence of inferiors, and prepare an opportunity for victory. She reserved the merit of abstinence and the grace of chastity. For unpolluted, as we read, either by food or by adultery, she gained no less a triumph over the enemy by preserving her chastity than by delivering her country.

40. What shall I say of her sobriety? Temperance, indeed, is the virtue of women. When the men were intoxicated with wine and buried in sleep, the widow took the sword, put forth her hand, cut off the warrior's head. and passed unharmed through the midst of the ranks of the enemy. You notice, then, how much drunkenness can injure a woman, seeing that wine so weakens men that they are overcome by women. Let a widow, then, be temperate, pure in the first place from wine, that she may be pure from adultery. He will tempt you in vain, if wine tempts you not. For if Judith had drunk she would have slept with the adulterer. But because she drank not, the sobriety of one without difficulty was able both to overcome and to escape from a drunken army.

41. And this was not so much a work of her hands, as much more a trophy of her wisdom. For having overcome Holofernes by her hand alone, she overcame the whole army of the enemies by her wisdom. For hanging up the head of Holofernes, a deed which the wisdom of the men had been unable to plan, she raised the courage of her countrymen, and broke down that of the enemy. She stirred up her own friends by her modesty, and struck terror into the enemy so that they were put to flight and slain. And so the temperance and sobriety of one widow not only subdued her own nature, but, which is far more, even made men more brave.

42. And yet she was not so elated by this success, though she might well rejoice and exult by right of her victory, as to give up the exercises of her widowhood, but refusing all who desired to wed her she laid aside her garments of mirth and took again those of her widowhood, not caring for the adornments of her triumph, thinking those things better whereby vices of the body are subdued than those whereby the weapons of an enemy are overcome.

Chapter VIII.

Though many other widows came near to Judith in virtue, St. Ambrose proposes to speak of Deborah only. What a pattern of virtue she must have been for widows, who was chosen to govern and defend men. It was no small glory to her that when her son was over the host he refused to go forth to battle unless she would go also. So that she led the army and foretold the result. In this story the conflicts and triumphs of the Church, and her spiritual weapons, are set forth, and every excuse of weakness is taken from women.

43. And in order that it may not seem as if only one widow had fulfilled this inimitable work, it seems in no Way doubtful that there were many others of equal or almost equal virtue, for good seed corn usually bears many ears filled with grains. Doubt not, then, that that ancient seed-time was fruitful in the characters of many women. But as it would be tedious to include all, consider some, and especially Deborah,⁵⁰ whose virtue Scripture records for us.

44. For she showed not only that widows have no need of the help of a man, inasmuch as she, not at all restrained by the weakness of her sex, undertook to perform the duties of a man, and did even more than she had undertaken. And, at last, when the Jews were being ruled under the leadership of the judges, because they could not govern them with manly justice, or defend them with manly strength, and so wars broke out on all sides, they chose Deborah,⁵¹ by whose judgment they might be ruled. And so one widow both ruled many thousands of men in peace, and defended them from the enemy. There were many judges in Israel, but no woman before was a judge, as after Joshua there were many judges but none was a prophet. And I think that her judgeship has been narrated, and her deeds described, that women should not be restrained from deeds of valour by the weakness of their sex. A widow, she governs the people; a widow, she leads armies; a widow, she chooses generals; a widow, she determines wars and orders triumphs. So, then, it is not nature which is answerable for the fault or which is liable to weakness. It is not sex, but valour which makes strong.

45. And in time of peace there is no complaint, and no fault is found in this woman whereas most of the judges were causes of no small sins to the people. But when the Canaanites, a people fierce in battle and rich in troops, successively joined them, showed a horrible disposition against the people of the Jews, this widow, before all others, made all the preparations for war. And to show that the needs of the household were not dependent on the public resources, but rather that public duties were guided by the discipline of home life, she brings forth from her home her son as leader of the army, that we may acknowledge that a widow can train a warrior; whom, as a mother, she taught, and, as judge, placed in command, as, being herself brave, she trained him, and, as a prophetess, sent to certain victory.

46. And lastly, her son Barak shows the chief part of the victory was in the hands of a woman when he said: "If thou wilt not go with me I will not go, for I know not the day on which the Lord sendeth His angel with me."⁵² How great, then, was the might of that woman to whom the leader of the army says, "If thou wilt not go I will not go." How great, I say, the fortitude of the widow who keeps not back her son from dangers through motherly affection, but rather with the zeal of a mother exhorts her son to go forth to victory, while saying that the decisive point of that victory is in the hand of a woman!

47. So, then, Deborah foretold the event of the battle. Barak, as he was bidden, led forth the army; Jael carried off the triumph, for the prophecy of Deborah fought for her, who in a mystery revealed

to us the rising of the Church from among the Gentiles, for whom should be found a triumph over Sisera, that is, over the powers opposed to her. For us, then, the oracles of the prophets fought, for us those judgments and arms of the prophets won the victory. And for this reason it was not the people of the Jews but Jael who gained the victory over the enemy. Unhappy, then, was that people which could not follow up by the virtue of faith the enemy, whom it had put to flight. And so by their fault salvation came to the Gentiles, by their sluggishness the victory was reserved for us.

48. Jael then destroyed Sisera, whom however the band of Jewish veterans had put to flight under their brilliant⁵³ leader, for this is the interpretation of the name Barak; for often, as we read, the sayings and merits of the prophets procured heavenly aid for the fathers. But even at that time was victory being prepared over spiritual wickedness for those to whom it is said in the Gospel: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."⁵⁴ So the commencement of the victory was from the Fathers, its conclusion is in the Church.

49. But the Church does not overcome the powers of the enemy with weapons of this world, but with spiritual arms, "which are mighty through God to the destruction of strongholds and the high places of spiritual wickedness."⁵⁵ And Sisera's thirst was quenched with a bowl of milk, because he was overcome by wisdom, for what is healthful for us as food is deadly and weakening to the power of the enemy. The weapons of the Church are faith, the weapons of the Church are prayer, which overcomes the enemy.

50. And so according to this history a woman, that the minds of women might be stirred up, became a judge, a woman set all in order, a woman prophesied, a woman triumphed, and joining in the battle array taught men to war under a woman's lead. But in a mystery it is the battle of faith and the victory of the Church.

51. You, then, who are women have no excuse because of your nature. You who are widows have no excuse because of the weakness of your sex, nor can you attribute your changeableness to the loss of the support of a husband. Every one has sufficient protection if courage is not wanting to the soul. And the very advance of age is a common defence of chastity for widows; and grief for the husband who is lost, regular work, the care of the house, anxiety for children, frequently ward off wantonness hurtful to the soul; while the very mourning attire, the funeral solemnities, the constant weeping, and grief impressed on the sad brow in deep wrinkles, restrains wanton eyes, checks lust, turns away forward looks. The sorrow of regretful affection is a good guardian of chastity, guilt cannot find an entrance if vigilance be not wanting.

Chapter IX. To an objection that the state of widowhood might indeed be endurable if circumstances were pleasant, St. Ambrose replies that pleasant surroundings are more dangerous than even trouble; and goes to show by examples taken from holy Scripture, that widows may find much happiness in their children and their sons-in-law. They should have recourse to the Apostles, who are able to help us, and should entreat for the intercessions of angels and martyrs. He touches then on certain complaints respecting loneliness, and care of property, and ends by pointing out the unseemliness of a widow marrying who has daughters either married already or of marriageable age.

52. You have learnt, then, you who are widows, that you are not destitute of the help of nature, and that you can maintain sound counsel. Nor, again, are you devoid of protection at home, who are able to claim even the highest point of public power.

53. But perhaps some one may say that widowhood is more endurable for her who enjoys prosperity, but that widows are soon broken down by adversity, and easily succumb. On which point not only are we taught by experience that enjoyment is more perilous for widows than difficulties, but by the examples in the Scriptures that even in weakness widows are not usually without aid,⁵⁶ and that divine and human support is furnished more readily to them than to others, if they have brought up children and chosen sons-in-law well. And, finally, when Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with violent fever, Peter and Andrew besought the Lord for her: "And He stood over her and commanded the fever and it left her, and immediately she arose and ministered unto them."⁵⁷

54. "She was taken," it is said, "with a great fever, and they besought him for her."⁵⁸ You too have those near you to entreat for you. You have the Apostles near, you have the Martyrs near; if associated with the Martyrs in devotion, you draw near them also by works of mercy. Do you show mercy and you will be close to Peter. It is not relationship by blood but affinity of virtue which makes near, for we walk not in the flesh but in the Spirit. Cherish, then, the nearness of Peter and the affinity of Andrew, that they may pray for you and your lusts give way. Touched by the word of God you, who lay on the earth, will then forthwith rise up to minister to Christ. "For our conversation is in heaven, whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."⁵⁹ For no one lying down can minister to Christ. Minister to the poor and you have ministered to Christ. "For what ye have done unto one of these," He says, "ye have done unto Me."⁶⁰ You, widows, have then assistance, if you choose such sons-in-law for yourselves, such patrons and friends for your posterity.

55. So Peter and Andrew prayed for the widow. Would that there were some one who could so quickly pray for us, or better still, they who prayed for the mother-in-law, Peter and Andrew his brother. Then they could pray for one related to them, now they are able to pray for us and for all. For you see that one bound by great sin is less fit to pray for herself, certainly less likely to obtain for herself. Let her then make use of others to pray for her to the physician. For the sick, unless the physician be called to them by the prayers of others, cannot pray for themselves. The flesh is weak, the soul is sick and hindered by the chains of sins, and cannot direct its feeble steps to the throne of that physician. The angels must be entreated for us, who have been to us as guards; the martyrs must be entreated, whose patronage we seem to claim for ourselves by the pledge as it were of their bodily remains. They can entreat for our sins, who, if they had any sins, washed them in their own blood; for they are the martyrs of God, our leaders, the beholders of our life and of our actions. Let us not be ashamed to take them as intercessors for our weakness, for they themselves knew the weaknesses of the body, even when they overcame.

56. So, then, Peter's mother-in-law found some to pray for her. And you, O widow, find those who will pray for you, if as a true widow and desolate you hope in God, continue instant in supplications, persist in prayers,⁶¹ treat your body as dying daily, that by dying you may live again; avoid pleasures, that you, too, being sick, may be healed. "For she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."⁶²

57. You have no longer any reason for marrying, you have some to intercede for you. Say not, "I am desolate." This is the complaint of one who wishes to marry. Say not, "I am alone." Chastity seeks solitude: the modest seek privacy, the immodest company. But you have necessary business; you have also one to plead for you. You are afraid of your adversary; the Lord Himself will intervene with the judge and say: "Judge for the fatherless, and justify the widow."⁶³

58. But you wish to take care of your inheritance. The inheritance of modesty is greater, and this a widow can guard better than one married. A slave has done wrong. Forgive him, for it is better that you should bear with another's fault than expose it. But you wish to marry. Be it so. The simple desire is no crime. I do not ask the reason, why is one invented? If you think it good, say so; if unsuitable, be silent. Do not blame God, do not blame your relatives, saying that protection fails you. Would that the wish did not fail! And say not that you are consulting the interests of your children, whom you are depriving of their mother.

59. There are some things permissible in the abstract, but not permissible on account of age. Why is the bridal of the mother being prepared at the same time with that of the daughters, and often even afterwards? Why does the grown-up daughter learn to blush in the presence of her mother's betrothed rather than her own? I confess that I advised you to change your dress, but not to put on a bridal veil; to go away from the tomb, not to prepare a bridal couch. What is the meaning of a newly-married woman who already has sons-in-law? How unseemly it is to have children younger than one's grand-children!

Chapter X.

St. Ambrose returns again to the subject of Christ, speaking of His goodness in all misery. The various ways in which the good Physician treats our diseases, and the quickness of the healing if only we do not neglect to call upon Him. He touches upon the moral meaning of the will, which he shows was manifested in Peter's mother-in-law, and lastly points out what a minister of Christ and specially a bishop ought to be, and says that they specially must rise through grace.

60. But let us return to the point, and not, while we are grieving over the wounds of our sins, leave the physician, and whilst ministering to the sores of others, let our own go on increasing. The Physician is then here asked for. Do not fear, because the Lord is great, that perhaps He will not condescend to come to one who is sick, for He often comes to us from heaven; and is wont to visit not only the rich but also the poor and the servants of the poor.⁶⁴ And so now He comes, when called upon, to Peter's mother-in-law. "And He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she arose and ministered unto them."⁶⁵ As He is worthy of being remembered, so, too, is He worthy of being longed for, worthy, too, of love, for His condescension to every single matter which affects men, and His marvellous acts. He disdains not to visit widows, and to enter the narrow rooms of a poor cottage. As God He commands, as man He visits.

61. Thanks be to the Gospel, by means of which we also, who saw not Christ when He came into this world, seem to be with Him when we read His deeds, that as they, to whom He drew near, borrowed faith from Him, so may He, when we believe His deeds, draw near to us.

62. Do you see what kinds of healing are with Him? He commands the fever, He commands the unclean spirits, at another place He lays hands on them. He was wont then to heal the sick, not only by word but also by touch. And do you then, who burn with many desires, taken either by the

beauty or by the fortune of some one, implore Christ, call in the Physician, stretch forth your right hand to Him, let the hand of God touch your inmost being, and the grace of the heavenly Word enter the veins of your inward desires, let God's right hand strike the secrets of your heart. He spreads clay on the eyes of some that they may see,⁶⁶ and the Creator of all teaches us that we ought to be mindful of our own nature, and to discern the vileness of our body; for no one can see divine things except one who through knowledge of his vileness cannot be puffed up. Another is bidden to show himself to the priest, that he may for ever be free from the scales of leprosy.⁶⁷ For he alone can preserve his purity, both of body and soul, who knows how to show himself to that priest, Whom we have received as an Advocate for our sins, and to Whom is plainly said: "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech."⁶⁸

63. And be not afraid that there will be any delay in healing. He who is healed by Christ has no hindrances. You must use the remedy which you have received; and as soon as He has given the command, the blind man sees, the paralytic walks, the dumb speaks, the deaf hears, she that has a fever ministers, the lunatic is delivered. And do you, then, who ever after an unseemly fashion languish for desire of anything, entreat the Lord, show Him your faith, and fear no delay. Where there is prayer, the Word is present, desire is put to flight, lust departs. And be not afraid of offending by confession, take it rather as a right, for you who were before afflicted by an intense disease of the body will begin to minister to Christ.

64. And in this place can be seen the disposition of the will of Peter's mother-in-law, from which she received for herself, as it were, the seed corn of what was to come, for to each his will is the cause of that which is to come. For from the will springs wisdom, which the wise man takes in marriage to himself, saying: "I desire to make her my spouse."⁶⁹ This will, then, which at first was weak and languid under the fever of various desires, afterwards by the office of the apostles rose up strong to minister unto Christ.

65. At the same time it is also shown what he ought to be who ministers to Christ, for first he must be free from the enticements of various pleasures, he must be free from inward languor of body and soul, that he may minister the Body and Blood of Christ. For no one who is sick with his own sins, and far from being whole, can minister the remedies of the healing of immortality. See what thou doest, O priest, and touch not the Body of Christ with a fevered hand. First be healed that thou mayest be able to minister. If Christ bids those who are now cleansed, but were once leprous, to show themselves to the priests,⁷⁰ how much more is it fitting for the priest himself to be pure. That widow, then, cannot take it ill that I have not spared her, since I spare not myself.

66. Peter's mother-in-law, it is written, rose up and ministered to them. Well is it said, rose up, for the grace of the apostleship was already furnishing a type of the sacrament. It is proper to the ministers of Christ to rise, according to that which is written: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead."⁷¹

Chapter XI.

Having shown that the pretexts usually alleged for second marriages have no weight, St. Ambrose declares that he does not condemn them, though from the Apostle's words he sets forth their inconveniences, though the state of those twice married is approved in the Church, and he takes occasion to advert to those heretics who forbid them. And he says that it is because the strength of

different persons varies that chastity is not commanded, but only recommended.

67. I say, then, that widows who have been in the habit of giving neither are in want of their necessary expenses, nor of help, who in very great dangers have often guarded the resources of their husbands; and further, I think that the good offices of a husband are usually made up for to them by sons-in-law and other relatives, and that God's mercy is more ready to help them, and therefore, when there is no special cause for marrying, the desire of so doing should not exist.

68. This, however, I say as a counsel, we do not order it as a precept, stirring up the wills of widows rather than binding them. for I do not forbid second marriages, only I do not advise them. The consideration of human weakness is one thing, the grace of chastity is another. I say more, I do not forbid second, but do not approve of often repeated marriages, for not everything is expedient which is lawful: "All things are lawful to me," says the Apostle, "but all things are not expedient."⁷² As, also, to drink wine is lawful, but, for the most part. it is not expedient.

69. It is then lawful to marry, but it is more seemly to abstain, for there are bonds in marriage. Do you ask what bonds? "The woman who is under a husband is bound by the law so long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband."⁷³ It is then proved that marriage is a bond by which the woman is bound and from which she is loosed. Beautiful is the grace of mutual love, but the bondage is more constant. "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband."⁷⁴ And lest this bondage should seem to be rather one of sex than of marriage, there follows: "Likewise, also, the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife." How great; then, is the constraint in marriage, which subjects even the stronger to the other; for by mutual constraint each is bound to serve. Nor if one wishes to refrain can he withdraw his neck from the yoke, for he is subject to the incontinence of the other. It is said: "Ye are bought with a price, be not ye servants of men."⁷⁵ You see how plainly the servitude of marriage is defined. It is not I who say this, but the Apostle; or, rather. it is not he, but Christ, Who spoke in him. And he spoke of this servitude in the case of good married people. For above you read: "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by his believing wife; and the unbelieving wife by her believing husband."⁷⁶ And further on: "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases."⁷⁷ If, then, a good marriage is servitude, what is a bad one, when they cannot sanctify, but destroy one another?

70. But as I exhort widows to keep the grace of their gift, so, too, I incite women to observe ecclesiastical discipline, for the Church is made up of all. Though it be the flock of Christ, yet some are fed on strong food, others are still nourished with milk, who must be on their guard against those wolves who are hidden in sheep's clothing, pretending to all appearance of continence, but inciting to the foulness of incontinence. For they know how severe are the burdens of chastity, since they cannot touch them with the tips of their fingers; they require of others that which is above measure, when they themselves cannot even observe any measure, but rather give way under the cruel weight. For the measure of the burden must always be according to the strength of him who has to bear it; otherwise, where the bearer is weak, he breaks down with the burden laid upon him; for too strong meat chokes the throats of infants.

71. And so as in a multitude of bearers their strength is not estimated by that of a few; nor do the stronger receive their tasks in accordance with the weakness of others, but each is allowed to bear as great a burden as he desires, the reward increasing with the increase of strength; so, too, a

snare is not to be set for women, nor a burden of continence beyond their strength to be taken up, but it must be left to each to weigh the matter for herself, not compelled by the authority of any command, but incited by increase of grace. And so for different degrees of virtue a different reward is set forth, and one thing is not blamed that another may be praised; but all are spoken of, in order that what is best may be preferred.

Chapter XII. The difference between matters of precept and of counsel is treated of, as shown in the case of the young man in the Gospel, and the difference of the rewards set forth both for counsels and precepts is spoken of.

72. Marriage, then, is honourable, but chastity is more honourable, for "he that giveth his virgin ill marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better."⁷⁸ That, then, which is good need not be avoided, but that which is better should be chosen. And so it is not laid upon any, but set before him. And, therefore, the Apostle said well: "Concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my counsel."⁷⁹ For a command is issued to those subject, counsel is given to friends. Where there is a commandment, there is a law; where counsel, there is grace. A commandment is given to enforce what is according to nature, a counsel to incite us to follow grace. And, therefore, the Law was given to the Jews, but grace was reserved for the elect. The Law was given that, through fear of punishment, it might recall those who were wandering beyond the limits of nature, to their observance, but grace to incite the elect both by the desire of good things, and also by the promised rewards.

73. You will see the difference between precept and counsel, if you remember the case of him in the Gospel, to whom it is first commanded to do no murder, not to commit adultery, not to bear false witness; for that is a commandment which has a penalty for its transgression. But when he said that he had fulfilled all the commandments of the Law, there is given to him a counsel that he should sell all that he had and follow the Lord,⁸⁰ for these things are not imposed as commands, but are offered as counsels. For there are two ways of commanding things, one by way of precept, the other by way of counsel. And so the Lord in one way says: "Thou shalt not kill," where He gives a commandment; in the other He says: "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast." He is, then, not bound by a commandment to whom the choice is left.

74. And so they who have fulfilled the commandments are able to say: "We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do."⁸¹ The virgin does not say this, nor he who sold all his goods, but they rather await the stored-up rewards like the holy Apostle who says: "Behold we have forsaken all and followed Thee, what shall we have therefore?"⁸² He says not, like the unprofitable servant, that he has done that which was his duty to do, but as being profitable to his Master, because he has multiplied the talents entrusted to him by the increase he has gained, having a good conscience, and without anxiety as to his merits he expects the reward of his faith and virtue. And so it is said to him and the others: "Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, shall also yourselves sit upon twelve thrones, judging the tribes of Israel."⁸³ And to those who had faithfully preserved their talents He promises rewards indeed, though smaller saying: "Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."⁸⁴ Good faith, then, is due, but mercy is in the rewards. He who has kept good faith has deserved that good faith should be kept with him; he who has made good profit, because he has not sought his own benefit, has gained a claim to a

heavenly reward.

Chapter XIII.

St. Ambrose, treating of the words in the Gospel concerning eunuchs, condemns those who make themselves such. Those only deserve praise who have through continence gained the victory over themselves, but no one is to be compelled to live this life, as neither Christ nor the Apostle laid down such a law, so that the marriage vow is not to be blamed, though that of chastity is better.

75. So, then, a commandment to this effect is not given, but a counsel is. Chastity is commanded, entire continence counselled. "But all men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs which were so born from their mothers womb,"⁸⁵ in whom exists a natural necessity not the virtue of chastity. "And there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs," of their own will, that is, not of necessity. "And there are eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men. ..." ⁸⁶ And, therefore, great is the grace of continence in them, because it is the will, not incapacity, which makes a man continent. For it is seemly to preserve the gift of divine working whole. And let them not think it too little not to be impeded by the inclination of the body, for if the reward for going through that conflict is taken from their reach, the matter of sin is also removed, and though they cannot receive the crown, no more can they be overcome. They have other kinds of virtues by which they ought to commend themselves if their faith be firm, their mercifulness abundant, avarice far from them, grace abundant. But in them there is no fault, for they are ignorant of the act of sin.

76. The case is not the same of those who mutilate themselves, and I touch upon this point advisedly, for there are some who look upon it as a holy deed to check by the evil violence of this sort. And though I am not willing to express my own opinion concerning them, though decisions of our forefathers are in existence; but then consider whether this tends not rather to a declaration of weakness than to a reputation for strength. On this principle no one should fight lest he be overcome, nor make use of his feet, fearing the danger of stumbling, nor let his eyes do their office because he fears a fall through lust. But what does it profit to cut the flesh, when there may be guilt even in a look? "For whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart."⁸⁷ And likewise she who looks on a man to lust after him commits adultery. It becomes us, then, to be chaste, not weak, to have our eyes modest, not feeble.

77. No one, then, ought, as many suppose, to mutilate himself, but rather gain the victory; for the Church gathers in those who conquer, not those who are defeated. And why should I use arguments when the words of the Apostle's command are at hand? For you find it thus written: "I would that they were mutilated who desire that you should be circumcised."⁸⁸ For why should the means of gaining a crown and of the practice of virtue be lost to a man who is born to honour, equipped for victory? how can he through courage of soul mutilate himself? "There be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake."⁸⁹

78. This, however, is not a commandment given to all, but a wish set before all. For he who commands must always keep to the exact scope of the commandments, and he who distributes tasks must observe equity in looking into them, for: "A false balance is abomination to the Lord."⁹⁰ There is, then, an excess and a defect in weight, but the Church accepts neither, for: "Excessive and defective weights and divers measures, both of them are alike abominable in the sight of the

Lord."91 There are tasks which wisdom apportions, and apportions according to the estimate of the virtue and strength of each. "He that is able to receive it let him receive it."92

79. For the Creator of all knows that the dispositions of each are different, and therefore incited virtue by rewards, instead of binding weakness by chains. And he, the teacher of the Gentiles, the good guide of our conduct, and instructor of our inmost affections, who had learnt in himself that the law of the flesh resists the law of the mind, but yields to the grace of Christ, he knows, I say, that various movements of the mind are opposed to each other; and, therefore, so expresses his exhortations to chastity, as not to do away with the grace of marriage, nor has he so exalted marriage as to check the desire of chastity. But beginning with the recommendation of chastity, he goes on to remedies against incontinence, and having set before the stronger the prize of their high calling, he suffers no one to faint by the way; approving those who take the lead so as not to make little of those who follow. For he, himself, had learnt that the Lord Jesus gave to some barley bread⁹³ lest they should faint by the way, and administered His Body to others,⁹⁴ that they might strive for the kingdom.

80. For the Lord Himself did not impose this commandment, but invited the will, and the Apostle did not lay down a rule, but gave a counsel.⁹⁵ But this not a man's counsel as to things within the compass of man's strength, for he acknowledges that the gift of divine mercy was bestowed upon him, that he might know how faithfully to set first the former, and to arrange the latter. And, therefore, he says: "I think," not, I order, but, "I think that this is good because of the present distress."⁹⁶

81. The marriage bond is not then to be shunned as though it were sinful, but rather declined as being a galling burden. For the law binds the wife to bear children in labour and in sorrow, and is in subjection to her husband, for that he is lord over her. So, then, the married woman, but not the widow, is subject to labour and pain in bringing forth children, and she only that is married, not she that is a virgin, is under the power of her husband. The virgin is free from all these things, who has vowed her affection to the Word of God, who awaits the Spouse of blessing with her lamp burning with the light of a good will. And so she is moved. by counsels, not bound by chains.

Chapter XIV.

Though a widow may have received no commandment, yet she has received so many counsels that she ought not to think little of them. St. Ambrose would be sorry to lay any snare for her, seeing that the field of the Church grows richer as a result of wedlock, but it is absolutely impossible to deny that widowhood, which St. Paul praises, is profitable. Consequently, he speaks severely about those who have proscribed widowhood by law.

82. But neither has the widow received any command, but a counsel; a counsel, however, not given once only but often repeated. For, first, it is said: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman."⁹⁷ And again: "I would that all men were even as I myself;"⁹⁸ and once more: "It is good for them if they remain even as I;"⁹⁹ and a fourth time: "It is good for the present distress."¹⁰⁰ And that it is well pleasing to the Lord, and honourable, and, lastly, that perseverance in widowhood is happier, he lays down not only as his own judgment, but also as an aspiration of the Holy Spirit. Who, then, can reject the kindness of such a counsellor? Who gives the reins to the will, and advises in the case of others that which he has found advantageous by his own experience, he

who is not easy to catch up, and is not hurt at being equalled. Who, then, would shrink from becoming holy in body and spirit, since the reward is far above the toil, grace beyond need, and the wages above the work?

83. And this, I say, not in order to lay a snare for others, but that as a good husbandman of the land entrusted to me, I may see this field of the Church to be fruitful, at one time blossoming with the flowers of purity, at another time strong in the gravity of widowhood, and yet again abounding with the fruits of wedlock. For though they be diverse, yet they are the fruits of one field; there are not so many lilies in the gardens as ears of corn in the fields, and many more fields are prepared for receiving seed than lie fallow after the crops are gathered in.

84. Widowhood is, then, good, which is so often praised by the judgment of the apostles, for it is a teacher of the faith and a teacher of chastity. Whereas they who honour the adulteries and the shame of their gods appointed penalties for celibacy and widowhood;¹⁰¹ that zealous in pursuit of crimes they might punish the study of virtues; under the pretext, indeed, of seeking increase of the population, but in reality that they might put an end to the purpose of chastity. For the soldier, when his time is ended, lays aside his arms, and leaving the rank which he held, is dismissed as a veteran to his own land, that he may obtain rest after the toils of a laborious life, and cause others to be more ready to undergo labour in the hope of future repose. The labourer, too, as he grows too old, entrusts the guiding of the plough to others, and worn out by the toil of his youth, enjoys in his old age that which his foresight has cared for, still ready to prune the vine rather than to press the grapes, so as to check the luxuriance of early life, and to cut off with his pruning knife the wantonness of youth, teaching, as it were, that blessed fruitfulness is to be aimed at even in the vine.

85. In like manner the widow, as a veteran, having served her time, though she lays aside the arms of married life, yet orders the peace of the whole house: though now freed from carrying burdens, she is yet watchful for the younger who are to be married; and with the thoughtfulness of old age she arranges where more pains would be profitable, where produce would be more abundant, which is fitted for the marriage bond. And so, if the field is entrusted to the elder rather than to the younger, why should you think that it is more advantageous to be a married woman than a widow? But, if the persecutors of the faith have also been the persecutors of widowhood, most certainly by those who hold the faith, widowhood is not to be shunned as a penalty, but to be esteemed as a reward.

Chapter XV.

St. Ambrose meets the objection of those who make the desire of having children an excuse for second marriage, and especially in the case of those who have children of their former marriage; and points out the consequent troubles of disagreements amongst the children, and even between the married persons, and gives a warning against a wrong use of Scripture instances in this matter.

86. Perhaps, however, it may seem good to some that marriage should again be entered upon for the sake of having children. But if the desire of children be a reason for marrying, certainly where there are children, the reason does not exist. And is it wise to wish to have a second trial of that fruitfulness which has already been tried in vain, or to submit to the solitude which you have

already borne? This is the case of those who have no children.

87. Then, too, she who has borne children, and has lost them (for she who has a hope of bearing children will have an intenser longing), does not she, I say, seem to herself to be covering over the deaths of her lost children by the celebration of a second marriage? Will she not again suffer what she is again seeking? and does she not shrink at the graves of her hopes, the memories of the bereavements she has suffered, the voices of the mourners? Or, when the torches are lit and night is coming on, does she not think rather that funeral rites are being prepared than a bridal chamber? Why, then, my daughter, do you seek again those sorrows which you dread, more than you look for children whom you no longer hope for? If sorrow is so grievous, one should rather avoid than seek that which causes it.

88. And what advice shall I give to you who have children? What reason have you for marrying? Perhaps foolish light-mindedness, or the habit of incontinence, or the consciousness of a wounded spirit is urging you on. But counsel is given to the sober, not to the drunken, and so my words are addressed to the free conscience which is whole in each respect. She that is wounded has a remedy, she that is upright a counsel. What do you intend to do then, my daughter? Why do you seek for heirs from without when you have your own? You are not desiring of children, for you have them, but servitude from which you are free. For this true servitude, in which love is exhausted, which no longer the charm of virginity, and early youth, full of holy modesty and grace, excites; when offences are more felt, and rudeness is more suspected, and agreement less common, which is not bound fast by love deeply rooted by time, or by beauty in its prime of youth. Duty to a husband is burdensome, so that you are afraid to love your children and blush to look at them; and a cause of disagreement arises from that which ordinarily causes mutual love to increase the tender affections of parents. You wish to give birth to offspring who will be not the brothers but the adversaries of your children. For what is to bring forth other children other than to rob the children which you have, who are deprived alike of the offices of affection and of the profit of their possessions.

89. The divine law has bound together husband and wife by its authority, and yet mutual love remains a difficult matter. For God took a rib from the man, and formed the woman so as to join them one to the other, and said: "They shall be one flesh."¹⁰² He said this not of a second marriage but of the first, for neither did Eve take a second husband, nor does holy Church recognize a second bridegroom. "For that is a great mystery in Christ and in the Church."¹⁰³ Neither, again, did Isaac know another wife besides Rebecca,¹⁰⁴ nor bury his father, Abraham, with any wife but Sarah."¹⁰⁵

90. But in holy Rachel¹⁰⁶ there was rather the figure of a mystery than a true order of marriage. Notwithstanding, in her, also, we have something which we can refer to the grace of the first marriage, since he loved her best whom he had first betrothed, and deceit did not shut out his intention, nor the intervening marriage destroy his love for his betrothed. And so the holy patriarch has taught us, how highly we ought to esteem a first marriage, since he himself esteemed his first betrothal so highly. Take care, then, my daughter, lest you be both unable to hold fast the grace of marriage, and also increase your own troubles.

1: 1 Cor. vii. 34.

2: 1 Cor. vii. 39, 1 Cor. vii. 40.

3: 1 [3] Kings xvii. 9.

4: S. Luke i. 26, Luke i. 27.

5: Pythagoras.

6: S. Matt. vi. 26.

7: Gen. i. 29, Gen. i. 30.

8: 1 Tim. v. 3, 1 Tim. v. 4.

9: 1 Tim. v. 3, 1 Tim. v. 4.

10: 1 Cor. vii. 34.

11: 1 Tim. v. 5.

12: 1 Tim. v. 9.

13: The rule of St. Paul as to age was not always strictly observed after early days, though probably so in the experience of St. Ambrose, though the Benedictine Editors think that he did not uphold the restriction, but it is spoken of in the Exhort. Virginitatis, §25, where Juliana of Bononia speaks of herself as " adhuc immaturam viduitatis stipendiis, " not yet old enough to receive widow's pay. See Dict. Chr Antiq., art. Widows.

14: 1 Tim. v. 10.

15: 1 Tim. v. 11.

16: 1 Cor. vii. 9.

17: Isa. i. 17.

18: Ps. cxlvi. [cxlv.] 9.

19: Ps. cxxxii. [cxxx.] 15 [LXX.].

20: 1 [3] Kings xvii. 14.

21: S. Luke iv. 25.

22: S. Luke xiii. 7.

23: Isa. liv. 1.

24: Isa. liv. 4.

25: Isa. liv. 7.

26: 1 [3] Kings xvii. 14.

27: 1 [3] Kings xvii. 14.

28: Ps. lxxii. [lxxi.] 6.

29: Judg. vi. 37 ff.

30: Ps. lxxvi. [lxxv.] 1.

31: S. Luke ii. 36, Luke ii. 37.

32: Sus. 63.

33: S. Luke ii. 37.

34: S. Luke i. 28.

35: S. Luke ii. 41.

36: S. Luke xxi. 3.

37: 1 [3] Kings xvii. 16.

38: S. Matt. ii. 11.

39: 2 Cor. iv. 7.

40: Gal. iv. 18.

41: 1 Cor. xii. 31.

42: Exod. xxxiv. 20.

43: Ruth ii. 2.

44: S. Luke vi. 21.

45: Ps. cii. [ci.] 9.

46: Judith viii. 11 ff.

47: 1 Cor. x. 31.

48: Judith x. 3 ff 49: S. John i. 30.

50: Jud. iv. 4 ff.

51: St. Jerome agrees with St. Ambrose in believing that Deborah literally was a judge, as indeed seems conclusive from the Scriptural account, but doubts whether she was a widow and mother of Barak, and is probably right in the latter case. Whether Lapidoth, however, was still alive is not so clear. St. Jerome, Ep. ad Furiam, §17.

52: Jud. iv. 8 [LXX].

53: The word Barak signifies lightning. It is probably the same as the Punic Barca, the surname of Hamilcar, father of Hannibal, or possibly was a family name.

54: S. Matt. xxv. 34.

55: 2 Cor. x. 4.
56: 1 Tim. v. 16.
57: S. Luke iv. 39.
58: S. Luke iv. 38.
59: Phil. iii. 20.
60: S. Matt. xxv. 40.
61: 1 Tim. v. 5.
62: 1 Tim. v. 6.
63: Isa. i. 17.
64: S. Luke iv. 18.
65: S. Luke iv. 38.
66: S. John ix. 6.
67: S. Luke v. 14.
68: Ps. cx. [cix.] 4.
69: Wisd viii. 2.
70: S. Luke xvii. 14.
71: Eph. v. 14.
72: 1 Cor. vi. 12.
73: Rom. vii. 2.
74: 1 Cor. vii. 4.
75: 1 Cor. vii. 23.
76: 1 Cor. vii. 14.
77: 1 Cor. vii. 15.
78: 1 Cor. vii. 28.
79: 1 Cor. vii. 25.
80: S. Matt. xix. 18-21.
81: S. Luke xvii. 10.
82: S. Matt. xix. 27.
83: S. Matt. xix. 28.

84: S. Matt. xxv. 21.

85: S. Matt. xxv. 11, Matt. xxv. 12.

86: There would seem to be a passage lost here.

87: S. Matt. v. 28.

88: Gal. v. 12 [very loose].

89: S. Matt. xix. 12.

90: Prov. xi. 1.

91: Prov. xx 10.

92: S. Matt. xix. 12.

93: S. John vi. 9.

94: S. Matt. xxvi. 26.

95: 1 Cor. vii. 25.

96: 1 Cor. vii. 26.

97: 1 Cor. vii. 1.

98: 1 Cor. vii. 7.

99: 1 Cor. vii. 8.

100: 1 Cor. vii. 26.

101: The reference would seem to be to the " Lex Julia et Papia Poppoea, " but the object of this law was not, as St. Ambrose seems to imply, to check celibacy, but to meet the growing licentiousness of the age, which avoided the obligations of married life while indulging in every kind of impure abominations.

102: Gen. ii. 24.

103: Eph. v. 32.

104: Gen. xxiv. 67.

105: Gen. xxv. 10.

106: Gen. xxix. 28 ff.

Concerning the Mysteries

The Book Concerning the Mysteries.¹

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX. The Book Concerning the Mysteries.¹

Chapter I.

St. Ambrose states that after the explanations he has already given of holy living, he will now explain the Mysteries. Then after giving his reasons for not having done so before, he explains the mystery of the opening of the ears, and shows how this was of old done by Christ Himself.

1. We have spoken daily upon subjects connected with morals, when the deeds of the Patriarchs or the precepts of the Proverbs were being read, in order that being taught and instructed by these you might grow accustomed to enter the ways of the ancients and to walk in their paths, and obey the divine commands; in order that being renewed by baptism you might hold to that manner of life which beseems those who are washed.

2. The season now warns us to speak of the Mysteries, and to set forth the purport of the sacraments, which if we had thought it well to teach before baptism to those who were not yet initiated, we should be considered rather to have betrayed than to have portrayed the Mysteries. And then, too, another reason is that the light itself of the Mysteries will shed itself with more effect upon those who are expecting they know not what, than if any discourse had come beforehand.

3. Open, then, your ears, inhale the good savour of eternal life which has been breathed upon you by the grace of the sacraments; which was signified to you by us, when, celebrating the mystery of the opening,² we said, "Epphatha, which is, Be opened,"³ that whosoever was coming in quest of peace might know what he was asked, and be bound to remember what he answered. 4. Christ made use of this mystery in the Gospel, as we read, when He healed him who was deaf and dumb. But He touched the mouth, because he who was healed was dumb and was a man, as regards one point that he might open his mouth with the sound of the voice given to him; as

regards the other point because that touch was seemly towards a man, but would have been unseemly towards a woman.

Chapter II.

What those who were to be initiated promised on entering the Church, of the witnesses to these promises, and wherefore they then turned themselves to the East.

5. After this the Holy of holies⁴ was opened to you, you entered the sanctuary of regeneration; recall what you were asked, and remember what you answered. You renounced the devil and his works, the world with its luxury and pleasures. That utterance of yours is preserved not in the tombs of the dead, but in the book of the living.

6. You saw there the deacon, you saw the priest, you saw the chief priest [i.e. the bishop]. Consider not the bodily forms, but the grace of the Mysteries. You spoke in the presence of the angels, as it is written: "For the priest's lips keep knowledge, and they seek the law at his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord Almighty."⁵ There is no place for deception nor for denial. He is an angel who proclaims the kingdom of Christ and eternal life. He is to be esteemed by you not according to his appearance, but according to his office. Consider what he delivered, reflect upon the rule of life he gave you, recognize his position.

7. You entered, then, that you might discern your adversary, whom you were to renounce as it were to his face, then you turned to the east; for he who renounces the devil turns to Christ, and beholds Him face to face.

Chapter III.

St. Ambrose points out that we must consider the divine presence and working in the water and the sacred ministers, and then brings forward many Old Testament figures of baptism.

8. What did you see? Water, certainly, but not water alone; you saw the deacons ministering there, and the bishop asking questions and hallowing. First of all, the Apostle taught you that those things are not to be considered "which we see, but the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."⁶ For you read elsewhere: "That the invisible things of God, since the creation of the world, are understood through those things which have been made; His eternal power also and Godhead are estimated by His works."⁷ Wherefore also the Lord Himself says: "If ye believe not Me, believe at least the works."⁸ Believe, then, that the presence of the Godhead is there. Do you believe the working, and not believe the presence? Whence should the working proceed unless the presence went before?

9. Consider, however, how ancient is the mystery prefigured even in the origin of the world itself. In the very beginning, when God made the heaven and the earth, "the Spirit," it is said, "moved upon the waters."⁹ He Who was moving upon the waters, was He not working upon the waters? But why should I say, "working"? As regards His presence He was moving. Was He not working Who was moving? Recognize that He was working in that making of the world, when the prophet says: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all their strength by the spirit of His mouth."¹⁰ Each statement rests upon the testimony of the prophet, both that He was moving and that He was working. Moses says that He was moving, David testifies that he was working.

10. Take another testimony. All flesh was corrupt by its iniquities. "My Spirit," says God, "shall not remain among men, because they are flesh."¹¹ Whereby God shows that the grace of the Spirit is turned away by carnal impurity and the pollution of grave sin. Upon which, God, willing to restore what was lacking, sent the flood and bade just Noah go up into the ark. And he, after having, as the flood was passing off, sent forth first a raven which did not return, sent forth a dove which is said to have returned with an olive twig.¹² You see the water, you see the wood [of the ark], you see the dove, and do you hesitate as to the mystery?

11. The water, then, is that in which the flesh is dipped, that all carnal sin may be washed away. All wickedness is there buried. The wood is that on which the Lord Jesus was fastened when He suffered for us. The dove is that in the form of which the Holy Spirit descended, as you have read in the New Testament, Who inspires in you peace of soul and tranquillity of mind. The raven is the figure of sin, which goes forth and does not return, if, in you, too, inwardly and outwardly righteousness be preserved.

12. There is also a third testimony, as the Apostle teaches us: "For all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea."¹³ And further, Moses himself says in his song: "Thou sentest Thy Spirit, and the sea covered them."¹⁴ You observe that even then holy baptism was prefigured in that passage of the Hebrews, wherein the Egyptian perished, the Hebrew escaped. For what else are we daily taught in this sacrament but that guilt is swallowed up and error done away, but that virtue and innocence remain unharmed?

13. You hear that our fathers were under the cloud, and that a kindly cloud, which cooled the heat of carnal passions. That kindly cloud overshadows those whom the Holy Spirit visits. At last it came upon the Virgin Mary, and the Power of the Highest overshadowed her,¹⁵ when she conceived Redemption for the race of men. And that miracle was wrought in a figure through Moses. If, then, the Spirit was in the figure, is He not present in the reality, since Scripture says to us: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."¹⁶

14. Marah was a fountain of most bitter water: Moses cast wood into it and it became sweet.¹⁷ For water without the preaching of the Cross of the Lord is of no avail for future salvation, but, after it has been consecrated by the mystery of the saving cross, it is made suitable for the use of the spiritual layer and of the cup of salvation. As, then, Moses, that is, the prophet, cast wood into that fountain, so, too, the priest utters over this font the proclamation of the Lord's cross, and the water is made sweet for the purpose of grace.

15. You must not trust, then, wholly to your bodily eyes; that which is not seen is more really seen, for the object of sight is temporal, but that other eternal, which is not apprehended by the eye, but is discerned by the mind and spirit.

16. Lastly, let the lessons lately gone through from the Kings teach you. Naaman was a Syrian, and suffered from leprosy, nor could he be cleansed by any. Then a maiden from among the captives said that there was a prophet in Israel, who could cleanse him from the defilement of the leprosy. And it is said that, having taken silver and gold, he went to the king of Israel. And he, when he heard the cause of his coming, rent his clothes, saying, that occasion was rather being sought against him, since things were asked of him which pertained not to the power of kings.

Elisha, however, sent word to the king, that he should send the Syrian to him, that he might know there was a God in Israel. And when he had come, he bade him dip himself seven times in the river Jordan.

17. Then he began to reason with himself that he had better waters in his own country, in which he had often bathed and never been cleansed of his leprosy; and so remembering this, he did not obey the command of the prophet, yet on the advice and persuasion of his servants he yielded and dipped himself. And being forthwith cleansed, he understood that it is not of the waters but of grace that a man is cleansed.¹⁸

18. Understand now who is that young maid among the captives. She is the congregation gathered out of the Gentiles, that is, the Church of God held down of old by the captivity of sin, when as yet it possessed not the liberty of grace, by whose counsel that foolish people of the Gentiles heard the word of prophecy as to which it had before been in doubt. Afterwards, however, when they believed that it ought to be obeyed, they were washed from every defilement of sin. And he indeed doubted before he was healed; you are already healed, and therefore ought not to doubt.

Chapter IV. That water does not cleanse without the Spirit is shown by the witness of John and by the very form of the administration of the sacrament. And this is also declared to be signified by the pool in the Gospel and the man who was there healed. In the same passage, too, is shown that the Holy Spirit truly descended on Christ at His baptism, and the meaning of this mystery is explained.

19. The reason why you were told before not to believe only what you saw was that you might not say perchance, This is that great mystery "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man."¹⁹ I see water, which I have been used to see every day. Is that water to cleanse me now in which I have so often bathed without ever being cleansed? By this you may recognize that water does not cleanse without the Spirit.

20. Therefore read that the three witnesses in baptism, the water, the blood, and the Spirit,²⁰ are one, for if you take away one of these, the Sacrament of Baptism does not exist. For what is water without the cross of Christ? A common element, without any sacramental effect. Nor, again, is there the Sacrament of Regeneration without water: "For except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."²¹ Now, even the catechumen believes in the cross of the Lord Jesus, wherewith he too is signed; but unless he be baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, he cannot receive remission of sins nor gain the gift of spiritual grace.

21. So that Syrian dipped himself seven times²² under the law, but you were baptized in the Name of the Trinity, you confessed the Father. Call to mind what you did: you confessed the Son, you confessed the Holy Spirit. Mark well the order of things in this faith: you died to the world, and rose again to God. And as though buried to the world in that element, being dead to sin, you rose again to eternal life. Believe, therefore, that these waters are not void of power.

22. Therefore it is said: "An angel of the Lord went down according to the season into the pool, and the water was troubled; and he who first after the troubling of the water went down into the pool was healed of whatsoever disease he was holden."²³ This pool was at Jerusalem, in which

one was healed every year, but no one was healed before the angel had descended. Because of those who believed not the water was troubled as a sign that the angel had descended. They had a sign, you have faith; for them an angel descended, for you the Holy Spirit; for them the creature was troubled, for you Christ Himself, the Lord of the creature, works.

23. Then one was healed, now all are made whole; or more exactly, the Christian people alone, for in some even the water is deceitful.²⁴ The baptism of unbelievers heals not but pollutes. The Jew washes pots and cups, as though things without sense were capable of guilt or grace. But do you wash this living cup of yours, that in it your good works may shine and the glory of your grace be bright. For that pool was as a type, that you might believe that the power of God descends upon this font.

24. Lastly, that paralytic was waiting for a man. And what man save the Lord Jesus, born of the Virgin, at Whose coming no longer the shadow should heal men one by one, but the truth should heal the whole. He it is, then, Whose coming down was being waited for, of Whom the Father said to John the Baptist: "Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him, this is He Who baptizeth with the Holy Spirit."²⁵ And John bare witness of Him, and said: "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and abiding upon Him."²⁶ And why did the Spirit descend like a dove, but in order that you might see, that you might acknowledge, that that dove also which just Noah sent forth from the ark was a likeness of this dove, that you might recognize the type of the sacrament?

25. Perhaps you may object: Since that was a real dove which was sent forth, and the Spirit descended like a dove, how is it that we say that the likeness was there and the reality here, whereas in the Greek it is written that the Spirit descended in the likeness of a dove? But what is so real as the Godhead which abides for ever? Now the creature cannot be the reality, but only a likeness, which is easily destroyed and changed. So, again, because the simplicity of those who are baptized ought to be not in appearance but in reality, and the Lord says: "Be ye wise as serpents and simple as doves."²⁷ Rightly, then, did He descend like a dove, in order to admonish us that we ought to have the simplicity of the dove. And further we read of the likeness being put for the reality, both as regards Christ: "And was found in likeness as a man;"²⁸ and as regards God the Father: "Nor have ye seen His likeness."²⁹

Chapter V.

Christ is Himself present in Baptism, so that we need not consider the person of His ministers. A brief explanation of the confession of the Trinity as usually uttered by those about to be baptized.

26. Is there, then, here any room left for doubt, when the Father clearly calls from heaven in the Gospel narrative, and says: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased"?³⁰ When the Son also speaks, upon Whom the Holy Spirit showed Himself in the likeness of a dove? When the Holy Spirit also speaks, Who came down in the likeness of a dove? When David, too, speaks: "The voice of the Lord is above the waters, the God of glory thundered, the Lord above many waters"?³¹ When Scripture testifies that at the prayer of Jerubbaal, fire came down from heaven,³² and again, when Elijah prayed, fire was sent forth and consecrated the sacrifice.³³

27. Do not consider the merits of individuals, but the office of the priests. Or, if you look at the merits, consider the priest as Elijah. Look upon the merits of Peter also, or of Paul, who handed

down to us this mystery which they had received of the Lord Jesus. To those [of old] a visible fire was sent that they might believe; for us who believe, the Lord works invisibly; for them that happened for a figure, for us for warning. Believe, then, that the Lord Jesus is present at the invocation of the priest, Who said: "Where two or three are, there am I also."³⁴ How much where the Church is, and where His Mysteries are, does He vouchsafe to impart His presence!

28. You went down, then (into the water), remember what you replied to the questions, that you believe in the Father, that you believe in the Son, that you believe in the Holy Spirit. The statement there is not: I believe in a greater and in a less and in a lowest person, but you are bound by the same guarantee of your own voice, to believe in the Son in like manner as you believe in the Father; and to believe in the Holy Spirit in like manner as you believe in the Son, with this one exception, that you confess that you must believe in the cross of the Lord Jesus alone.

Chapter VI.

Why they who come forth from the laver of baptism are anointed on the head; why, too, after baptism, their feet are washed, and what sins are remitted in each case.

29. After this, you went up to the priest, consider what followed. Was it not that of which David speaks: "Like the ointment upon the head, which went down to the beard, even Aaron's beard"?³⁵ This is the ointment of which Solomon, too, says: "Thy Name is ointment poured out, therefore have the maidens loved Thee and drawn Thee."³⁶ How many souls regenerated this day have loved Thee, Lord Jesus, and have said: "Draw us after Thee, we are running after the odour of Thy garments,"³⁷ that they might drink in the odour of Thy resurrection.

30. Consider now why this is done, for "the eyes of a wise man are in his head;"³⁸ therefore the ointment flows down to the beard, that is to say, to the beauty of youth; and therefore, Aaron's beard, that we, too, may become a chosen race, priestly and precious, for we are all anointed with spiritual grace for a share in the kingdom of God and in the priesthood.

31. You went up from the font; remember the Gospel lesson. For our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel washed the feet of His disciples. When He came to Simon Peter, Peter said: "Thou shalt never wash my feet."³⁹ He did not perceive the mystery, and therefore he refused the service, for he thought that the humility of the servant would be injured, if he patiently allowed the Lord to minister to him. And the Lord answered him: "If I wash not thy feet, thou wilt have no part with Me." Peter, hearing this, replies: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." The Lord answered: "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet but is clean every whit."⁴⁰

32. Peter was clean, but he must wash his feet, for he had sin by succession from the first man, when the serpent overthrew him and persuaded him to sin. His feet were therefore washed, that hereditary sins might be done away, for our own sins are remitted through baptism.

33. Observe at the same time that the mystery consists in the very office of humility, for Christ says: "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; how much more ought you to wash one another's feet." For, since the Author of Salvation Himself redeemed us through His obedience, how much more ought we His servants to offer the service of our humility and obedience.

Chapter VII. The washing away of sins is indicated by the white robes of the catechumens, whence the Church speaks of herself as black and comely. Angels marvel at her brightness as at

that of the flesh of the Lord. Moreover, Christ Himself commended His beauty to His Spouse under many figures. The mutual affection of the one for the other is described.

34. After this white robes were given to you as a sign that you were putting off the covering of sins, and putting on the chaste veil of innocence, of which the prophet said: "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be cleansed, Thou shalt wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow."⁴¹ For he who is baptized is seen to be purified both according to the Law and according to the Gospel: according to the Law, because Moses sprinkled the blood of the lamb with a bunch of hyssop;⁴² according to the Gospel, because Christ's garments were white as snow, when in the Gospel He showed forth the glory of His Resurrection. He, then, whose guilt is remitted is made whiter than snow. So that God said by Isaiah: "Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow."⁴³

35. The Church, having put on these garments through the layer of regeneration, says in the Song of Songs: "I am black and comely, O daughters of Jerusalem."⁴⁴ Black through the frailty of her human condition, comely through the sacrament of faith. And the daughters of Jerusalem beholding these garments say in amazement "Who is this that cometh up made white?"⁴⁵ She was black, how is she now suddenly made white?

36. The angels, too, were in doubt when Christ arose; the powers of heaven were in doubt when they saw that flesh was ascending into heaven. Then they said: "Who is this King of glory?" And whilst some said "Lift up your gates, O princes, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in."⁴⁶ In Isaiah, too, we find that the powers of heaven doubted and said: "Who is this that cometh up from Edom, the redness of His garments is from Bosor, He who is glorious in white apparel?"⁴⁷

37. But Christ, beholding His Church, for whom He Himself, as you find in the book of the prophet Zechariah, had put on filthy garments, now clothed in white raiment, seeing, that is, a soul pure and washed in the layer of regeneration, says: "Behold, thou art fair, My love, behold thou art fair, thy eyes are like a dove's,"⁴⁸ in the likeness of which the Holy Spirit descended from heaven. The eyes are beautiful like those of a dove, because in the likeness of a dove the Holy Spirit descended from heaven.

38. And farther on: "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are shorn, which are come up from the pool, which all bear twins, and none is barren among them, thy lips are as a cord of scarlet."⁴⁹ This is no slight praise. First by the pleasing comparison to those that are shorn; for we know that goats both feed in high places without risk, and securely find their food in rugged places, and then when shorn are freed from what is superfluous, The Church is likened to a flock of these, having in itself the many virtues of those souls which through the laver lay aside the superfluity of sins, and offer to Christ the mystic faith and the grace of good living, which speak of the cross of the Lord Jesus.

39. The Church is beautiful in them. So that God the Word says to her: "Thou art all fair, My love, and there is no blemish in thee," for guilt has been washed away. "Come hither from Lebanon, My spouse, come hither from Lebanon, from the beginning of faith wilt thou pass through and pass on,"⁵⁰ because, renouncing the world, she passed through things temporal and passed on to Christ. And again, God the Word says to her: "How beautiful and sweet art thou made, O love, in

thy delights! Thy stature is become like that of a palm-tree, and thy breasts like bunches of grapes."⁵¹

40. And the Church answers Him, "Who will give Thee to me, my Brother, that didst suck the breasts of my mother? If I find Thee without, I will kiss Thee, and indeed they will not despise me. I will take Thee, and bring Thee into the house of my mother; and into the secret chamber of her that conceived me. Thou shalt teach me."⁵² You see how, delighted with the gifts of grace, she longs to attain to the innermost mysteries, and to consecrate all her affections to Christ. She still seeks, she still stirs up His love, and asks of the daughters of Jerusalem to stir it up for her, and desires that by their beauty, which is that of faithful souls, her spouse may be incited to ever richer love for her.

41. So that the Lord Jesus Himself, invited by such eager love and by the beauty of comeliness and grace, since now no offences pollute the baptized, says to the Church: "Place Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a signet upon thine arm;"⁵³ that is, thou art comely, My beloved, thou art all fair, nothing is wanting to thee. Place Me as a seal upon thine heart, that thy faith may shine forth in the fulness of the sacrament. Let thy works also shine and set forth the image of God in the Whose image thou wast made. Let no persecution lessen thy love, which many waters cannot quench, nor many rivers drown.

42. And then remember that you received the seal of the Spirit; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness, and the spirit of holy fear,⁵⁴ and preserved what you received. God the Father sealed you, Christ the Lord strengthened you, and gave the earnest of the Spirit in your heart,⁵⁵ as you have learned in the lesson from the Apostle.⁵⁶

Chapter VIII. Of the mystical feast of the altar of the Lord. Lest any should think lightly of it, St. Ambrose shows that it is of higher antiquity than the sacred rites of the Jews, since it was foreshadowed in the sacrifice of Melchisedech, and far better than the manna, as being the Body of Christ.

43. The cleansed people, rich with these adornments, hastens to the altar of Christ, saying: "I will go to the altar of God, to God Who maketh glad my youth;"⁵⁷ for having laid aside the slough of ancient error, renewed with an eagle's youth, it hastens to approach that heavenly feast. It comes, and seeing the holy altar arranged, cries out: "Thou hast prepared a table in my sight." David introduces the people as speaking, where he says: "The Lord feedeth me, and nothing shall be wanting to me, in a place of good pasture hath He placed me. He hath led me forth by the water of refreshment." And later: "For though I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff have comforted me. Thou hast prepared in my sight a table against them that trouble me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and Thy inebriating cup, how excellent it is!"⁵⁸

44. We must now pay attention, lest perchance any one seeing that what is visible (for things which are invisible cannot be seen nor comprehended by human eyes), should say, "God rained down manna and rained down quails upon the Jews,"⁵⁹ but for the Church beloved of Him the things which He has prepared are those of which it is said: "That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love

Him."60 So, lest any one should say this, we will take great pains to prove that the sacraments of the Church are both more ancient than those of the synagogue, and more excellent than the manna.

45. The lesson of Genesis just read shows that they are more ancient, for the synagogue took its origin from the law of Moses. But Abraham was far earlier, who, after conquering the enemy, and recovering his own nephew, as he was enjoying his victory, was met by Melchisedech, who brought forth those things which Abraham reverently received. It was not Abraham who brought them forth, but Melchisedech, who is introduced without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days, nor ending, but like the Son of God, of Whom Paul says to the Hebrews: "that He remaineth a priest for ever," Who in the Latin version is called King of righteousness and King of peace.

46. Do you recognize Who that is? Can a man be king of righteousness, when himself he can hardly be righteous? Can he be king of peace, when he can hardly be peaceable? He it is Who is without mother according to His Godhead, for He was begotten of God the Father, of one substance with the Father; without a father according to His Incarnation, for He was born of a Virgin; having neither beginning nor end, for He is the beginning and end of all things, the first and the last. The sacrament, then, which you received is the gift not of man but of God, brought forth by Him Who blessed Abraham the father of faith, whose grace and deeds we admire.

47. We have proved the sacraments of the Church to be the more ancient, now recognize that they are superior. In very truth it is a marvellous thing that God rained manna on the fathers, and fed them with daily food from heaven; so that it is said, "So man did eat angels' food."61 But yet all those who ate that food died in the wilderness, but that food which you receive, that living Bread which came down from heaven, furnishes the substance of eternal life; and whosoever shall eat of this Bread shall never die, and it is the Body of Christ.

49. Now consider whether the bread of angels be more excellent or the Flesh of Christ, which is indeed the body of life. That manna came from heaven, this is above the heavens; that was of heaven, this is of the Lord of the heavens; that was liable to corruption, if kept a second day, this is far from all corruption, for whosoever shall taste it holly shall not be able to feel corruption. For them water flowed from the rock, for you Blood flowed from Christ; water satisfied them for a time, the Blood satiates you for eternity. The Jew drinks and thirsts again, you after drinking will be beyond the power of thirsting; that was in a shadow, this is in truth.

49. If that which you so wonder at is but shadow, how great must that be whose very shadow you wonder at. See now what happened in the case of the fathers was shadow: "They drank, it is said, of that Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were done in a figure concerning us."62 You recognize now which are the more excellent, for light is better than shadow, truth than a figure, the Body of its Giver than the manna from heaven.

Chapter IX. In order that no one through observing the outward part should waver in faith, many instances are brought forward wherein the outward nature has been changed, and so it is proved that bread is made the true body of Christ. The treatise then is brought to a termination with certain remarks as to the effects of the sacrament, the disposition of the recipients, and such like.

50. Perhaps you will say, "I see something else, how is it that you assert that I receive the Body of Christ?" And this is the point which remains for us to prove. And what evidence shall we make use of? Let us prove that this is not what nature made, but what the blessing consecrated, and the power of blessing is greater than that of nature, because by blessing nature itself is changed.

51. Moses was holding a rod, he cast it down and it became a serpent.⁶³ Again, he took hold of the tail of the serpent and it returned to the nature of a rod. You see that by virtue of the prophetic office there were two changes, of the nature both of the serpent and of the rod. The streams of Egypt were running with a pure flow of water; of a sudden from the veins of the sources blood began to burst forth, and none could drink of the river. Again, at the prophet's prayer the blood ceased, and the nature of water returned.⁶⁴ The people of the Hebrews were shut in on every side, hemmed in on the one hand by the Egyptians, on the other by the sea; Moses lifted up his rod, the water divided and hardened like walls, and a way for the feet appeared between the waves.⁶⁵ Jordan being turned back, returned, contrary to nature, to the source of its stream.⁶⁶ Is it not clear that the nature of the waves of the sea and of the river stream was changed? The people of the fathers thirsted, Moses touched the rock, and water flowed out of the rock.⁶⁷ Did not grace work a result contrary to nature, so that the rock poured forth water, which by nature it did not contain? Marah was a most bitter stream, so that the thirsting people could not drink. Moses cast wood into the water, and the water lost its bitterness, which grace of a sudden tempered.⁶⁸ In the time of Elisha the prophet one of the sons of the prophets lost the head from his axe, which sank. He who had lost the iron asked Elisha, who cast in a piece of wood and the iron swam. This, too, we clearly recognize as having happened contrary to nature, for iron is of heavier nature than water.

52. We observe, then, that grace has more power than nature, and yet so far we have only spoken of the grace of a prophet's blessing. But if the blessing of man had such power as to change nature, what are we to say of that divine consecration where the very words of the Lord and Saviour operate? For that sacrament which you receive is made what it is by the word of Christ. But if the word of Elijah had such power as to bring down fire from heaven, shall not the word of Christ have power to change the nature of the elements? You read concerning the making of the whole world: "He spake and they were made, He commanded and they were created."⁶⁹ Shall not the word of Christ, which was able to make out of nothing that which was not, be able to change things which already are into what they were not? For it is not less to give a new nature to things than to change them.

53. But why make use of arguments? Let us use the examples He gives, and by the example of the Incarnation prove the truth of the mystery. Did the course of nature proceed as usual when the Lord Jesus was born of Mary? If we look to the usual course, a woman ordinarily conceives after connection with a man. And this body which we make is that which was born of the Virgin. Why do you seek the order of nature in the Body of Christ, seeing that the Lord Jesus Himself was born of a Virgin, not according to nature? It is the true Flesh of Christ which crucified and buried, this is then truly the Sacrament of His Body.

54. The Lord Jesus Himself proclaims: "This is My Body."⁷⁰ Before the blessing of the heavenly words another nature is spoken of, after the consecration the Body is signified. He Himself speaks of His Blood. Before the consecration it has another name, after it is called Blood. And you say,

Amen, that is, It is true. Let the heart within confess what the mouth utters, let the soul feel what the voice speaks.

55. Christ, then, feeds His Church with these sacraments, by means of which the substance of the soul is strengthened, and seeing the continual progress of her grace, He rightly says to her: "How comely are thy breasts, my sister, my spouse, how comely they are made by wine, and the smell of thy garments is above all spices. A dropping honeycomb are thy lips, my spouse, honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is as the smell of Lebanon. A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed."⁷¹ By which He signifies that the mystery ought to remain sealed up with you, that it be not violated by the deeds of an evil life, and pollution of chastity, that it be not made known to thou, for whom it is not fitting, nor by garrulous talkativeness it be spread abroad amongst unbelievers. Your guardianship of the faith ought therefore to be good, that integrity of life and silence may endure unblemished.

56. For which reason, too, the Church, guarding the depth of the heavenly mysteries, repels the furious storms of wind, and calls to her the sweetness of the grace of spring, and knowing that her garden cannot displease Christ, invites the Bridegroom, saying: "Arise, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, and let my ointments flow down. Let my Brother come down to His garden, and eat the fruit of His trees."⁷² For it has good trees and fruitful, which have dipped their roots in the water of the sacred spring, and with fresh growth have shot forth into good fruits, so as now not to be cut with the axe of the prophet, but to abound with the fruitfulness of the Gospel.

57. Lastly, the Lord also, delighted with their fertility, answers: "I have entered into My garden, My sister, My spouse; I have gathered My myrrh with My spices, I have eaten My meat with My honey, I have drunk My drink with My milk."⁷³ Understand, you faithful, why He spoke of meat and drink. And there is no doubt that He Himself eats and drinks in us, as you have read that He says that in our persons He is in prison.⁷⁴

58. Wherefore, too, the Church, beholding so great grace, exhorts her sons and her friends to come together to the sacraments, saying: "Eat, my friends, and drink and be inebriated, my brother."⁷⁵ What we eat and what we drink the Holy Spirit has elsewhere made plain by the prophet, saying, "Taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that hopeth in Him."⁷⁶ In that sacrament is Christ, because it is the Body of Christ, it is therefore not bodily food but spiritual. Whence the Apostle says of its type: "Our fathers ate spiritual food and drank spiritual drink,"⁷⁷ for the Body of God is a spiritual body; the Body of Christ is the Body of the Divine Spirit, for the Spirit is Christ, as we read: "The Spirit before our face is Christ the Lord."⁷⁸ And in the Epistle of Peter we read: "Christ died for us."⁷⁹ Lastly, that food strengthens our heart, and that drink "maketh glad the heart of man,"⁸⁰ as the prophet has recorded.

59. So, then, having obtained everything, let us know that we are born again, but let us not say, How are we born again? Have we entered a second time into our mother's womb and been born again? I do not recognize here the course of nature. But here there is no order of nature, where is the excellence of grace. And again, it is not always the course of nature which brings about conception, for we confess that Christ the Lord was conceived of a Virgin, and reject the order of nature. For Mary conceived not of man, but was with child of the Holy Spirit, as Matthew says: "She was found with child of the Holy Spirit."⁸¹ If, then, the Holy Spirit coming down upon the

Virgin wrought the conception, and effected the work of generation, surely we must not doubt but that, coming down upon the Font, or upon those who receive Baptism, He effects the reality of the new birth.

1: It must be borne in mind that the name Mysteries was that by which the sacraments were commonly known in the Early Church, as it is at the present day in the Greek Church the equivalent of our word sacraments. Of course the word has also its usual wider signification.

2: This "opening" was a symbolical act, as is explained in the next section. The celebrant moistened his finger with spittle, wherewith he then touched the ear of the catechumen, saying, "Epaphtha."

3: S. Mark vii. 34.

4: "Holy of holies," a figurative name given to the baptistery. Comp. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Cat. Lect. XIX. 11; and with this whole treatise the last four Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril of Jerusalem in this series, Vol. VII. p. 144 ff.

5: Mal. ii. 7.

6: 1 Cor. v. 18.

7: Rom. i. 20.

8: S. John x. 38.

9: Gen. i. 2.

10: Ps. xxxiii. [xxxii.] 6.

11: Gen. vi. 3.

12: Gen. vii. 1 ff.

13: 1 Cor. x. 1, 1 Cor. x. 2.

14: Ex. xv. 10.

15: S. Luke i. 35.

16: S. John i. 17.

17: Ex. xv. 23 ff.

18: 2 [4] Kings v. 1 ff.

19: 1 Cor. ii. 9.

20: 1 John v. 7.

21: S. John iii. 5.

22: 2 [4] Kings v. 14.

23: S. John v. 4.

24: Jer. xv. 18.

25: S. John i. 33.

26: S. John i. 32.

27: S. Matt. x. 16.

28: Phil. ii. 8.

29: S. John v. 37.

30: S. Matt. iii. 17.

31: Ps. xxix. [xxviii.] 3.

32: Judg. vi. 21.

33: 1 [3] Kings xviii. 38.

34: S. Matt. xviii. 20.

35: Ps. cxxxiii. [cxxxii.] 2.

36: Cant. i. 2.

37: Cant. i. 3.

38: Eccles. ii. 14.

39: S. John xiii. 8.

40: S. John xiii. 9, John xiii. 10.

41: Ps. li. [l.] 9.

42: Ex. xii. 22.

43: Isa. i. 18.

44: Cant. i. 48.

45: Cant. viii. 5.

46: Ps. xxiv. [xxiii.] 8, Ps. xxiv. [xxiii.] 9.

47: Isa. lxiii. 1.

48: Cant. iv. 1.

49: Cant. iv. 2, Cant. iv. 3.

50: Cant. iv. 7, Cant. iv. 8.

51: Cant. vii. 6, Cant. vii. 7.

52: Cant. viii. 1, Cant. viii. 2.

53: Cant. viii. 6.

54: Isa. xi. 2.

55: 2 Cor. v. 5.

56: This passage evidently refers to confirmation, and to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit received therein. In the Early Church as in the Eastern Church to the present day, confirmation was administered immediately after baptism.

57: Ps. xliii. [xlii.] 4.

58: Ps. xxiii. [xxii.] 1-5. After being baptized and confirmed in the baptistery, which was detached from the church, the newly "enlightened" were led in solemn procession into the church to be present at the celebration of the Mysteries, and to receive their first communion.

59: Ex. xvi. 13.

60: 1 Cor. ii. 9.

61: Ps. lxxxviii. [lxxxvii.] 25.

62: 1 Cor. x. 4.

63: Ex. iv. 3, Ex. iv. 4.

64: Ex. vii. 20 ff.

65: Ex. xiv. 21 ff.

66: Josh. iii. 16.

67: Ex. xvii. 6.

68: Ex. xv. 25.

69: Ps. iii. 5.

70: S. Matt. xxvi. 26.

71: Cant. iv. 10 ff.

72: Cant. iv. 15; Cant. v. 1.

73: Cant. v. 1.

74: S. Matt. xxv. 36.

75: Cant. v. 1.

76: Ps. xxxiv. [xxxiii.] 9.

77: 1 Cor. x. 3.

78: Lam. iv. 20.

79: 1 Pet. ii. 21.

80: Ps. civ. [ciii.] 15.

81: S. Matt. i. 18.

Exposition On Psalm 118

Exposition of Saint Ambrose of Milan, Bishop, on Psalm 118 of David.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Prologue • Sermon 1. Aleph.
- Sermon 2. Beth.
- Sermon 3. Gimel.
- Sermon 4. Daleth.
- Sermon 5. He.
- Sermon 6. Vau.
- Sermon 7. Zain.
- Sermon 8. Heth.
- Sermon 9. Theth.
- Sermon 10. Iod.
- Sermon 11. Caph.
- Sermon 12. Lamed.
- Sermon 13. Mem.
- Sermon 14. Nun.
- Sermon 15. Samech.
- Sermon 16. Ain.
- Sermon 17. Phe.
- Sermon 18. Sade.
- Sermon 19. Koph.
- Sermon 20. Resch.
- Sermon 21. Schin.
- Sermon 22. Tau.

Prologue

Although the mystical sounds of David the Prophet resound like a trumpet, the greatness of moral teachings is revealed in the Ethics, and the sum of this psalm declares the grace. For while all moral doctrine is sweet, it especially delights the ears with the sweetness of song and the delight of singing, and soothes the soul. And rightfully in many places it spreads the moral sentiments of the psalms like the light of stars, which shine and gleam. But the one hundred and eighteenth psalm, like the sun in full light, he sets in the advanced age of the book; so that neither the semi-full beginnings of the morning, nor the certain decline of the old age of the evening, take away anything from the splendor of perfect brightness. He arranged the Hebrew letters one by one, so that just as the minds of children become accustomed to the first elements of learning, they may also learn the use of living through these elements.

However, he wrote eight verses in each letter, in order to teach both unity (for unity restrains and governs all things, to which all things are subject) and the purification of legitimate sanctification. For the eighth day is the solemn purification according to the Law (Leviticus 12:3-4), because the solemnity of circumcision is decreed to be fulfilled on the eighth day, or because the whole world was polluted by our sins and contaminated during those seven days. But when the day of resurrection comes, we, who have been made alive with the Lord Jesus, rise up and stand, offering the grace of the newness of life. And rightfully we offer living creatures as the firstborn in the likeness of the firstborn Son of God, in purity and simplicity, a spiritual sacrifice pleasing to God, not on the fourth or fifth day; lest it be an impure or incomplete sacrifice. But on the eighth day, on which we all, in the resurrection of Christ, are not only revived but also confirmed. Although full purification is immediately achieved in baptism, because the one baptized must understand the reason for the washing itself and the sacrifice, they do not offer a sacrifice until the eighth day, so that, having been informed by the knowledge of the heavenly sacraments, they may offer their sacred duty to the altars not as a novice, but as one capable of reason, when they have become more knowledgeable. Thus, the ignorance of the offerer does not pollute the mystery of the offering.

However, the title of the Psalm is Alleluia; that is, praise God. In these hymns, God is truly praised, in which there is forgiveness of sins. Finally, in the previous psalm, the passion of the Lord is mentioned; which washes away this world, to make worthy peoples who would praise God with a pure mouth. The very elements of the letters, such as all Hebrew names, are not empty and immune to rational interpretation, whose meanings we will unfold in their proper places. The one hundred and eleventh psalm is arranged in Hebrew according to the beginning letters of the verses, and it is entirely ethical; and the one hundred and tenth psalm seems to me to be written in the same way. Finally, it has twenty-two verses, and each verse explains a separate idea. Therefore, it is said to be composed in meter.

Sermon 1. Aleph.

The first letter is called Aleph, whose interpretation is doctrine. Therefore, as an attentive listener, you should assume that the following verses are full of teachings.

2. (Verse 1, 2.) Blessed are the blameless, it says, in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who search his testimonies: they seek him with their whole heart. What a

beautiful order, how full of teaching and grace! It did not say first, those who search his testimonies (for it could have been written accordingly), but first: Blessed are the blameless in the way. For life should be sought before doctrine. For a good life, without doctrine, has grace: but doctrine without life has no integrity. For wisdom will not fall into an evil soul. Therefore, it is said: The wicked will seek me, and will not find me (Prov. 1:28); because the eye of the mind is blinded by wickedness, and iniquity obscures itself, it cannot find profound mysteries. Therefore, the first duty of life is to exercise the soldierly virtues, to correct our manners. When we have established these for the proper course, so that correction of offense may exist for the sake of purity, then we may proceed to the pursuit of knowledge in its proper order and manner. Therefore, morals are first, and mystical matters second. In the former, there is life; in the latter, knowledge. So, if you seek perfection, there should be neither life without knowledge nor knowledge without life. Each should support the other. Thus, the Scripture says: 'Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of life, and illuminate yourselves with the light of knowledge' (Hosea X, 12). It does not say 'illuminate first' but rather 'sow first'; nor does it only say 'sow first for righteousness' but also 'reap for the fruit of life.' And in this way, illuminate yourselves with the light of knowledge, so that perfection is not only achieved by planting, but also by receiving the fruits. In the first psalm, he held this order, that he would teach that one should walk in the way first, and then meditate in the Law. For the one who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked, certainly has not departed from the path of piety and justice: and rightly is pronounced blessed for walking in the way; and, day and night, by exercising meditation on the Law, he has the grace of blessedness.

Following this teaching, Solomon wrote a book of Proverbs, in which he thoroughly expressed the moral part, the natural part in Ecclesiastes, and the mystical part in Song of Songs. Although if you examine carefully, you will find many mystical elements in Proverbs, and the sweetness of morality in Song of Songs. For surely it is mystical: Wisdom has built her house and set up her seven pillars, she has slaughtered her beasts, etc. (Prov. IX, 1). And this shines in the Song of Songs, both mystical and moral, in which the sweetness of flatteries and the affection of love are expressed: Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth; for thy breasts are better than wine, and the odor of thine ointments than all spices (Song of Songs 1:1).

4. Therefore, establish a betrothed virgin for a long time, and burning with just love, who knows by the assertion of many approved works, confirmed by the testimony of beloved witnesses, suspended in desires frequently, no longer enduring delays; who has done all things in order to see the bridegroom: sometimes obtaining her desires, disturbed by the unexpected arrival of the bridegroom, not seeking the beginning of a greeting, not the exchange of words; but immediately demanding what she desired. So thus the holy Church, which was espoused in the beginning of the world in paradise, prefigured in the flood, announced through the Law, called by the prophets, had long awaited the redemption of mankind, the beauty of the Gospel, eagerly hastens for the advent of the beloved, impatiently rushing into His embrace, saying: Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth. And being delighted with kisses, she adds: Because your breasts are better than wine. And to speak more morally, understand to me that flesh, which had been made wet with the venom of the serpent in Adam, which was tainted with the stench of sins, which advanced among the daughters of Zion with a high neck and nods of the eyes, and dragging the hems with her feet, and playing with her own feet, with curls of hair and composed faces, and ribbons and every affected adornment, more disgraceful: nevertheless, having been taught by many prophecies that

He would come, who, having excluded the allurements of the serpent, would infuse the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that all flesh would see the salvation of God, all flesh would come to God, having blushed with desire: but fearing that, as before, she would displease as impatient, as lustful, as luxurious, as complaining; and being tormented by the longer than she could endure expectation of the Lord's delayed coming: yet not complaining, nor trespassing, but raising pure hands in every place without anger and dispute, adorning herself in a modest and sober manner, not with twisted hair, or gold, or pearls, or precious clothing; but with those things that grace chastity and good conduct, saying in prayer: Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth; for your breasts are better than wine. Now she eagerly desired to cleave to Christ in the flesh, now she hastened to be espoused; that there might be one spirit, and the flesh might become Christ's, which before was the harlot's. Let Him kiss me, she says (let the Word of God kiss us, when the Spirit of knowledge enlightens our sense); and as though despising all her delights and pleasures, longing to cleave to heavenly commandments, she says: For the precepts of Thy oracles are light, given above all the desires of the flesh, and the pleasures of the world. For he had remembered that he, in the person of Eve, had fallen thus before, preferring the pleasure of the body to the heavenly commands. He says: Your name has emptied the ointment (Ibid., 2). That is, the whole world reeked with filthy impurities of various crimes; now everywhere breathes the sweetness of chastity, the ointment of faith, the flower of integrity. And he comes from mortals to the mystical, saying: The King brought me into his chamber; let us rejoice and exult in you, let us love your breasts above wine (Ibid., 3). A kiss is simple, but the secret of the bedroom is complex.

6. In the same Gospel there is also a beautiful passage about morals; as the Lord says: Blind Pharisee, first clean what is inside the cup and dish, so that what is outside may also be clean (Matthew 23:26). For unless each person purifies themselves inside, even if they appear righteous and just on the outside, they will be like whitewashed tombs; they may appear just on the outside, but inside they are foul. Such is doctrine without the innocence of life. But even doctrine itself cannot have reward where it does not have the grace of innocence. For to the sinner God said: Why do you declare my justices? (Psalm XLIX, 16). But let us return to the proposed psalm.

7. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that search his testimonies: that seek him with their whole heart. The first verse is moral, the second is mystical. Who says this? Certainly a prophet, who assumed human speech, and says this after the psalm in which the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is described. Where therefore the divine mysteries were revealed and he put on the joy of the Lord's resurrection, and tasted the grace of his passion; he saw the assemblies of the righteous, the people of the redeemed, the salvation of the lost, the resurrection of the dead, the sanctification of the sacraments, and exclaimed, saying: Blessed are the undefiled in the way, that is to say, behold, the cursed earth has begun to have blessedness in Adam; if, however, he does not abandon the law of the Lord: behold, the man who was formerly defiled is now undefiled. How precious it is to keep the commandment of the Lord! How precious it is also to know the mystery of his commandment!

8. But who is without blemish? Not surely the one who walks in any way, but the one who walks in Christ. For He Himself said: I am the way (John 14:6). In this way, whoever walks does not know how to err; if, however, he never departs from this way. There is also the way of the Law; and therefore, while he is without blemish, let him walk in the Law of the Lord: nor let him cease to walk in this way, lest he cease to be without blemish. Let him not turn to the right or the left, nor stagger,

nor resist, nor wait; but let him walk forgetting the things above, and desiring those things which are before, let him follow toward the destination, let him hasten to the prize, let him strive all the way to the end; for the end of the Law is Christ. Many want to walk on the way, but not until the end. The Jews do not walk until the end, those who do not walk until Christ. Manichaeus does not walk on the way, who rejects the Law: but true faith walks that both receives the Law, and acknowledges the fullness of the Law.

9. Therefore, if anyone walks in the way, let them examine the testimonies of the Lord. Although they may be mystical, they also have moral implications, for those who examine the testimonies of the Lord can walk in the way more effectively. For example, someone who is consumed by intense adulterous desire, driven by lust, indulging in wickedness, unwilling to resist the desires of their flesh, if they happen to see no one around, they rush into wrongdoing. However, even though they may find a ready opportunity for pleasure, they carefully observe everything, their eyes turned away from justice, concerned about their reputation, they frequently twist things around, feeling shame for their error while not feeling shame for their mistake. And if they happen to recognize someone who witnesses their wrongdoing, shame separates them from their immoderation. And even though they may plot temptations of lust with a servant or common prostitute where there is no risk of being caught, they abandon their intentions out of shame. How much more, then, if someone lifts the eyes of their mind and considers that everything is filled with angels: the air, the earth, the sea, the churches, over which angels preside (for the Lord sends His angels for the defense of those who will inherit the heavenly promises), can they renounce sin having conceived this thought! Where does this crowd of innocents come from, if not from those sinners? The nature of all is the same, but the discipline is different. Circumcision is nothing, and being a Gentile is nothing, but the observance of God's commandments increases the grace of nature itself. The Most High changes deserved things, who says: Darkness is all around me, and the walls cover me: the Most High will not remember my sins (Sirach 23:26).

10. Would you not fear the presence of angels if you believed they were present? Would you not be afraid, I do not say to do, but to speak or even think what is evil, if Divine Scripture had taught you that God is the witness of thoughts, the true witness of secrets, as He Himself says: 'Be my witnesses, and I too am a witness,' says the Lord God, 'and my servant whom I have chosen' (Isaiah 43:10)? Do you fear the presence of a man, but not the presence of God the Father and the Son? But you do not want to believe, nor can you beware: you do not want to hear, when it is read, because God knows the secrets of men, lest you begin to know what you fear, and fear that you may sin. Therefore, listen to the divine Scripture, that you may turn away from the crooked and evil path. Do not be like a blind person with physical eyes, or like a deaf person, who, because he cannot see or hear the present, believes that he alone exists: and in the gathering of many, while he thinks no one is present, he goes on to perpetrate what he believes to be secret; for those who do not see cannot see those who are not seen; likewise, do not estimate with the blind eyes of the mind that you commit a crime without a witness; for you could have avoided the presence of a man. There are more who rebuke than those whom you could have guarded against. You cannot escape your own accuser, whom your own conscience convicts. And if you deny others, you do not deny yourself. And if you argue against man, you confess to God. And if you wish to deny, your own thoughts silence you.

11. The angels were assisting Elisha, whom he saw; and therefore he did not fear the armies of the enemy: but his servant feared, who did not see the angels. His eyes were opened by the grace of God at the voice of the prophet, he saw the host of angels, and believed that they were present, whom before, because he did not see, he thought absent (2 Kings 6:16-17). And you read the prophet, so that you may see, read so that your eyes may be opened: do not let the legion of the enemy frighten you, and do not think that you are besieged, you who are free, who are fortified by spiritual armies, if you do not abandon the prophet. When the prophet speaks to you, because God has said: I fill heaven and earth (Jeremiah XXIII, 24): when the prophet speaks to you, because there are many with us (2 Kings VI, 16), because there are angels around us: lift up the eyes of your mind, and you will see not only angels, but also God, who says to you: Open to me, my sister, my beloved (Song of Solomon V, 2). He knocks at the door and when you are sleeping: yet if you either wake up or respond when called, and open the door of your heart, he will enter. But if you avoid reading the prophetic text, if you do not read it at home, and you do not want to hear it in Church; are you not like one who closes his eyes in order not to see what he can see, or like those who, in anger, cover their eyes with their hands? So you turn away from someone who winks at you, not by forcibly breaking off the connection, but rather by dissimulation. For when you come to Church and profess yourself a Christian, you appear with open eyes, with which you can see. But while pretending not to hear what is read, you close your eyes so that you do not see for yourself, even if you seem to see to others; you also impose on your soul's eyes certain acts of unfaithfulness and intemperance, and voluntarily bring blindness upon your heart, which is even more serious; so that seeing, you do not see, and hearing, you do not hear.

12. Do you think you are alone when you fornicate and do not remember that the eyes of the Lord see the whole world? Do you not hear him saying: Behold the hour comes... that you may be scattered, each one to his own, and leave me alone, but I am not alone, for the Father is with me (John 16:32)? Therefore, the Father is present, the Son of God is present, the ministers are present, the Cherubim and Seraphim are present, who say: Holy, holy, holy: the earth is full of your majesty. For the world is full of holy virtues, because it is full of wickedness. The world is full of remedies, because it is full of traps. Do you think that Christ does not see you in the brothel, whom he sees entering the brothel? Do you think that he does not catch you in adultery, whom he sees pondering adultery? Does he retreat from walls, who observes errors: and does he shun the secret of a crime, who watches the scene of a crime? Do you think that you enter the prostitute's house for the first time when you enter the prostitute's room? You have already entered, when your thoughts entered the prostitute. You have already entered, when you entered with a step of the mind to satisfy the desire for debauchery. You knocked on the doors of the brothel, when you opened the eyes of your mind to the beauty of lusting after a woman. And if you want to hear the truth, how did Christ not see you in the brothel; when he saw you, because by committing adultery in your heart, you made yourself a brothel? Finally, the Lord Jesus himself says: Whoever looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:28). Yet, how is he so religious in opinion, who is so disreputable in crime?

13. But I rest in you, because Jesus does not want to see you, does not want to conquer you, who does not want to accuse you, do not want to see the angels. But the devil sees, who entered with you, indeed who introduced you: his ministers see, who surrounded you, so that you would not see the angels of God: Belial saw, the legion saw, who impelled you; so that no one would recall, so

that no one would hold you back. Do not think that the conspiracy of silence gives you assistance, who desires to have a share in your punishment. He desires to see many like himself; and in that he has glory, that he has made many lost. He is the instigator, he is the accuser, he himself entered into Judas, he himself impelled him to betrayal, he himself sent him to the noose. How many will say against him on that day: You have deceived us, you have influenced (Gen. III, 13)! Do you want an example? Take Eve, who said that the author of her transgression was the serpent. But she implicated him, she did not absolve herself. To whom the Lord responds: 'I had not commanded you not to eat from the single tree, which is in the middle of paradise' (ibid., 11). Therefore, the Truth will answer and say to many: 'You have heard the Devil suggesting harmful things, but you were not able to hear me commanding things for your well-being.'

14. (Verses 3, 4, 5, 6.) And therefore let us practice righteousness: For those who work iniquity have not walked in His ways. You have commanded Your commandments to be kept diligently. Oh, that my ways may be directed to keep Your statutes! Then I will not be put to shame, when I look into all Your commandments. Not only did He command to keep His commandments, but also to keep them diligently. When did He command this? Indeed, He commanded it to Adam in paradise, to keep the commandments: but perhaps He had not commanded to keep them diligently; and therefore he fell, therefore he was swayed by the voice of his wife, therefore he was deceived by the serpent, thinking that if he deviated from the commandment in any part, he would not completely err: but since he once strayed from the path of the commandments, he completely deserted the way, and left himself naked, stripped of everything. Therefore, the Lord, because the one who was in paradise had fallen, admonished afterwards through the Law, through the Prophets, through the Gospel, through the Apostles, to diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God. Every idle word that you speak, you will give an account for it. Do not be silent: not one iota or one apex passes away from any commandment. Do not deviate from the path. If you are barely safe from a robber while walking on the road, what will you do if he finds you wandering outside the path? May your steps be guided; and in order not to be weak in guiding, pray that the Lord may direct your ways.

15. He desires: Oh, that my paths may be directed! Elsewhere it is said: Waiting, I waited for the Lord, and he heard me ... and he set my feet upon a rock, and directed my steps (Psalm 39, 2 and 3). So you also pray, that the Lord may direct the steps of your mind, so that you may be able to keep the commandments of the Lord. You will not be confounded, when you look upon all his commandments. For formerly you were confounded in Adam and Eve. Finally, you became naked and you covered yourself with leaves; because you were confounded: you hid yourself from the sight of God; because you were ashamed, so that God said to you: Adam, where are you (Genesis 3, 9)? When he says that to him, he says it to you as well; for in the Latin interpretation, Adam is called man, that is, Homo, where are you? And Adam responded: Because I was afraid, because I was naked, and completely confused in my mind, I did not dare to come into your presence. Therefore, let us not be confused, let us keep the commandments of the Lord, and let us keep them all. For if someone keeps one commandment and transgresses another, it profits them nothing. Someone may refrain from bloodshed, but not from adultery; surely, if convicted in one, they are also punished by secular laws: nor does abstaining from another crime benefit them, if they are caught in another.

16. (Verses 7, 8.) I will praise you, O Lord, with a sincere heart (reveal to me the ways in which you guide) when I learn the judgments of your justice. I will keep your statutes; do not abandon me completely. In this place, he declares his desire to know more fully the mystical realities, in order to enter into the innermost mysteries of heaven, and for the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ to be opened to him. Hence Solomon also says: Draw us after you; let us run in the fragrance of your perfumes. The King led me into his chamber (Song of Songs 1:3). And perhaps that which is said above, 'Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth' (ibid., 1), signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit coming upon, just as the angel said to Mary: 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you' (Luke 1:35). But when the King brings her into his chamber, it signifies the time of passion, the piercing of the side, the shedding of blood, the ointment of burial, the mystery of resurrection. So that she receives the kiss as a bride: let the Church be brought into the chamber of Christ, not only as one betrothed, but also as one married; not only entering the marriage chamber, but also having obtained the legitimate keys of union. And so, as it were, she says: My brother, the joining of the drop will rest with me, in the midst of the breasts (Song of Solomon 1:12). And if we seek the chamber, let Him Himself teach us, who says: But you, when you pray, enter into your chamber: and having shut the door, pray to your Father in secret (Matthew 6:6). The chamber of the Church is the body of Christ. The King has led her into all the inner mysteries, giving her the keys, in order to open for himself the treasures of the knowledge of the sacraments, to unlock the doors which were closed before, to recognize the grace of the resting one, the sleep of the departed, the power of the resurrection.

17. In that room, the bride of the Lord Jesus found the righteousness of God. What are those righteousnesses? Certainly the sacraments of baptism, as we read, for when John said to Jesus as he came to be baptized: I ought to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me; Jesus replied: Allow it now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:14-15). In that room, the bride learned the justifications of the Lord, she understood the plan of God, as it is written: For all the people who heard John, and the tax collectors, justified God, having been baptized with John's baptism; but the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the plan of God concerning themselves, because they were not baptized by him (Luke 7:29-30). Let us choose what they have rejected, and let us follow the counsel of God, for nothing can be more sublime; for it is by this divine counsel that the forgiveness of sins is obtained. Therefore, when one has learned the justice of the Lord and fears God, they will not be put to shame. Finally, even Paul says: 'I will not be put to shame in anything' (Philippians 1:20). And because no one can be perfect without the favor of God, nor safe; therefore, he should pray that God may not completely abandon him. For above, David prayed that he should not be abandoned, saying: Do not forsake me, O Lord my God (Psalm 37:22); here he says: Do not forsake me utterly, that is, greatly. Above, perhaps still imperfect and in great turmoil, he feared that he would be abandoned; but here, being stronger now, he does not fear being abandoned to be tested; rather, he prays that he may not be completely forsaken. For God often forsakes those whom he wishes to test: but he completely forsakes those whom he abandons. He completely abandoned Judas: but he did not abandon holy Job, in whose possessions, in whose body he gave power to the devil (Job II, 6); but he did not give power over his soul. For if he had given power over his soul, he would have completely abandoned him. Wasn't Job abandoned for the purpose of being tested? And once tested, he was crowned? Therefore, he abandoned Judas, to whom he said: What you are doing, do quickly (John XIII, 27). For he entirely abandoned the one whom he allowed his wickedness to take effect.

And when he saw that the other apostles were troubled because he had said, 'Where I am going, you cannot come' (John 13:33), he added, 'Let not your hearts be troubled' (John 14:1). And further: 'I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also' (John 14:3). Finally, Peter, who was afraid of being abandoned, said in a troubled manner, 'Lord, where are you going?' (John 13:36). The Lord saw him being troubled, and He replied to him: Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow later (Matthew XIV, 30 and 31). Similarly, when he was staggering on the sea, he cried out to Christ; and Christ stretched out his right hand to him, so that he would not perish completely abandoned.

19. However, no one should be inflated because they are never abandoned; or grieve because they are sometimes abandoned; for indeed the Son himself said that he was abandoned, as you have: My God, my God, look upon me; why have you forsaken me? (Psalms 21:1) And yet he was never abandoned by the Father, with whom the Father is always. For it is written: Behold, the hour is already come, that you may be scattered, each one to his own, and leave me alone: but I am not alone, because the Father is with me. (John 16:32). But according to the body in which He was handed over to suffering, that voice proceeded; because we seem to be abandoned when we are in perilous situations. Hence Paul also says of the Father God: 'Who did not spare His own Son, but handed Him over for us all' (Rom. VIII, 32). He seems to have abandoned; because he did not spare, who handed Him over to death: but He did not completely abandon, to whom it is said: 'For you will not abandon my soul to hell, nor will you allow your Holy One to see decay' (Psal. XV, 10).

Sermon 2. Beth. (Verse 9.) In what way does the young man correct his path? The discussion of the previous eight verses did not fall meaninglessly upon us; therefore, we made an effort to pursue what follows. And first, the interpretation of the second letter, which is Beth, must be considered, which, when translated into Latin, signifies confusion. But the one who corrects his path will not be confused. However, because he who corrects was previously in error (for how can one be corrected if he had not previously deviated from the truth?), certainly being placed in a position of error, and having been captivated by the indulgence and allurements of a luxurious and lascivious youth, when he reaches the sober confines of maturity, he will reflect for a long time, as if confused in mind, on how to rid himself of shameful actions and assume full integrity. He weighs and examines his fluctuating thoughts, forgetting the past and longing for what is before, in order to correct his path and hide the offense of his younger years beneath the serious countenance of mature youth. Wherefore lest anyone should doubt or hesitate, the Prophet gives counsel as if deliberating with him, for we believe that the more sound counsels are, if they appear to be examined with deeper meditation. But the very undertaking of deliberation is distinguished by a learned definition, so that it may remove the convergence of diverse thoughts, saying: In what way shall a young man correct his path? For this is the end of deliberating, by which he corrects his path. And he answered: By keeping your words. And when he turned well to the Lord, he responded with deliberation, as if this counsel had been discovered by the inspiration of the Lord, so that it would be believed to be a remedy not of human presumption, but of divine favor. For our mind, sprinkled with the seeds of heavenly words, which previously degenerated into weeds, begins to produce better growth and bear fruit. Let us therefore direct our paths, and not follow the winding twists of a serpent. For the ways of the Lord are straight, but the paths of the erring are crooked, of whom it is said: 'Oh, you who have forsaken the straight paths!' (Prov. 2:13) Indeed, the happy harvest extends in an orderly fashion, and the vineyards are set out in a certain pattern:

the course of deer is more direct, while that of foxes is circuitous. Therefore, concerning Herod, it is said: 'Go, tell that fox' (Luke 13:32), because he had deviated from the straight path and had not corrected his course in his youth. He is worthy of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, in which sinners are mourned, who refused to take up the yoke of the word in their youth. Therefore the captives have been led away; therefore they are lamented as if they were dead, because they did not know the paths of life, and they did not turn aside from the just works of the dead. Therefore, weeping for the perpetual death of the Jews, Jeremiah says: Good is it for a man, when he bears the yoke from his youth, he shall sit alone and keep silence, because he has taken it upon himself. (Lamentations III, 27 and 28).

3. Not only should we remove the yoke of a word, but we must remove it in youth. For if we remove it late, we begin to have more regret for past sins than to hold on to grace. Therefore, let us anticipate the years of youth with appropriate correction, so that we may each say more: O God, who have fed me since my youth (Gen. 48:15); rather than having the memory of a fall, let us weep, saying: O Lord, remember not the sins of my youth and my ignorance (Psalm 25:7). This is the remedy for weakness, that is the strength of health. The medicine of health is sought for the wound: grace for health. Therefore it says: It is good for a man, when he lifts the yoke in his youth (Lamentations 3:27). However, for him who after the years of his youth has carried the yoke, the perfect good is not attained immediately. For his sins stimulate him, habit of sinning vexes his conscience, and the practice of error makes him unstable. Such a man must struggle for a long time, to abolish in his youth the deep-rooted and long-standing actions. To this one there is danger, to that one there is good.

Finally, he will sit alone, as one who easily does not find an equal, endowed with exceptional rewards; and he will be silent, at rest from all worldly worries and pleasures; and he will devote himself to divine oracles, which are accustomed to be revealed to those who sit alone, like the holy David, who says: For it is you alone who established me in hope (Psalm 4:10). And indeed, he did not sit alone in secret, but he presided over the people; nevertheless, he excelled in singular grace. Elijah was sitting alone, when an angel, with even crows bringing him food, was being nourished (1 Kings 17:6 and 19:7). He was alone not only secluded from the crowds, but also separated from the merits of many. Finally, divine revelations were shining upon him, the fruit of which he obtained as a reward; for from his youth he thought it necessary to take on the yoke of the word, and not to be dragged down by sins with a long rope any longer. This younger man, by taking off in his youth the yoke of speech, not yet perfected, and still younger, separating himself from the conversations of his peers, which often corrupt good morals, and wanting to avoid the influence of sinners; in this way, he understands to sit and be silent, so that he does not falter due to the ease of his young age: but he directs his attention to the teachings of the elders, the oracles of the prophets, and the teachings of the apostles: he is praiseworthy because he prefers to know what he should speak before actually saying it; before learning to speak, he fears contracting sin due to excessive talk. I think that Pythagoras, that philosopher, imitated the youth of this prophet in establishing a sect, so that his disciples would learn to speak with such silence for five years; especially since it is certain that David, who was older than Pythagoras, said: I said, I will take heed to my ways, so that I do not sin with my tongue. I set a guard to my mouth (Psalm 39:2). And because perhaps he had spoken something carelessly at some time; therefore, he asked God to set a guard to his mouth afterwards. Who would not know that Pythagoras was before the

Pythagoreans? When he heard this, he cried out (Isaiah 40:6); he would not have cried out before he heard what he should cry out. For he answered: What shall I cry out (Ibid.)? And it was said to him: All flesh is grass, and all its glory, like the flower of the field. The grass withers and the flower falls; but the word of the Lord remains forever (Ibid., 6-8); and he cried out with prophetic voice.

Therefore, both young men are to be praised: the former, however, is late, while the latter is cautious; the former is content with himself and never alone, while the latter embraces the beautiful discipline of quietness in his youthful years; not yet abundant in himself, but fearing to trust himself to others; still seeking to gather from youth what will benefit both himself and his neighbors in old age, lest it be said to him: 'What you did not gather in your youth, how will you find in your old age?' (Sirach 25:5). So if he sits in a council of elders, he will bring his hand to his mouth; in order to listen to opinions, and to preserve for himself a more mature age: just as Mary pondered all these things in her heart when hearing the words of Christ (Luke 2:51); just as John, when reclining his head on the chest of the Lord Jesus, drank in the deep secrets of wisdom (John 13:25).

7. Here is a young man who corrected his ways in his youth. He was a fisherman with his brother; he saw the Lord Jesus, when he was folding his nets, and he heard him saying: Come . . . and I will make you fishers of men . . . and leaving his nets and his father, he followed him (Matt. IV, 19 and 20). He had begun to walk the path of the world: but upon hearing the commands of Christ, he forsook the life of the world and followed Christ: he proved that in Christ he corrected his ways, if he keeps Christ's words, saying to him: Let us love your breasts more than wine (Song of Solomon I, 1). However, he drank in such a way that he was not overcome by wine; rather, he drank for the purpose of tasting the joy of his heart, not staggering from the intoxication of his body. In the end, after drinking this wine, he opened his eyes and saw the straight path, abandoning the winding roads, saying: 'Righteousness has loved you' (Ibid., 3); that is, it is not twisted paths that follow you, but only the path of justice can lead to you. For whoever loves justice does not turn away from Christ. For how can an innocent conscience fear the judge of justice and the rewarder of merits? In this way, as this young man corrected his path, he witnessed great mysteries which, in the Song of Songs, the holy Solomon, filled with the spirit of the Lord, revealed. Imagine the Lord Jesus reclining at the banquet, with John leaning against his chest, amazed that a servant would recline above the Lord, that the sinful flesh would rest above the temple of the Word, that the soul, bound by the chains of the flesh, would contemplate the court of divine fullness. Therefore, to those who were marveling, the soul of John responds: I am dark, and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem (Song of Songs 1:4); dark due to sin, beautiful by grace. And the flesh says: I am dark, and beautiful; dark with the dust of the world, which I have gathered by struggling: beautiful with the spiritual oil, with which I have wiped away the dust and filth of this world. Dark due to vice: but now beautiful through the bath, which washes away all sins. I am dark because I have sinned: beautiful, because Christ now loves me: whom he had cast away in Eve, he received again in the Virgin, he took up from Mary.

9. The Synagogue also speaks, whose mysteries seem to be expressed here for most people: which, when it saw itself rejected on account of the impiety of the whole people, still comforted itself; because it saw Christ himself from its own people, and Peter and John and James, adhering to Christ, who had the words entrusted to him; and therefore it said: I am dark and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem; dark through disbelief, beautiful through the Law: dark through the fall;

beautiful, because the sun that is my love has loved me, and I have become the congregation of God beforehand. Do not reject me because I am dark; I am dark because the sun has abandoned me, who used to enlighten me before; I have lost the color of my face; the sharpness of my eyes, with which I used to see the sun, has become dull; I walk in darkness, because I do not know the day of Christ. Yet, do not despise me; for the one who has abandoned me can look upon me again, have mercy on me once more. He is accustomed to gathering the dispersed, seeking out the deserted, gathering the destitute. All the tribes of Israel gather, behold me adorned before the beloved: Do not look at me, for I am obscured (Ibid., 5); that is, not only do you look, because I am obscured. The sun does not look at me, and therefore I am obscured. But the sun shines on the just and the unjust: on the just through grace, on the unjust through mercy; giving to the former the reward of merits, forgiving to the latter their sins. And it did not shine on the Gentiles before, now it shines: now it rises for them who rose for me; who forgives them, will also forgive me. Do not think that because I am overshadowed, the sun has completely abandoned me, and now does not look at me, does not inquire about my condition. He has hidden from me because I have not kept his commandments; he will be reconciled when he sees repentance for my sins. The sun has not seen me because I did not receive him when he came; I did not open the windows for the light of life to enter. When I open, he will enlighten my eyes, who came to enlighten the whole world, and even to make the blind see.

10. The sons of my mother fought against me, they made me a keeper in the vineyards. I did not keep my own vineyard. Some people think that this is said about those who bind the Synagogue with the precepts of the Law, that they may keep the Law and protect their own vineyard, which they were not able to keep. Finally, he was keeping it in order to produce grapes, but he produced thorns. Therefore, what is the vineyard? David came to testify to us, saying: You have transplanted the vineyard from Egypt, you have cast out the nations, and you have planted it (Psalm 79:9). The apostles can also be understood as sons of their mother, who truly fought against the Synagogue, saying: Indeed, we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46); and they began to spread the word of God among the nations. The prophets can also be understood, who by warning and denouncing, were not successful in preserving their vineyard, the Synagogue. For it produced thorns of wickedness, which should have borne abundant fruits of virtue. And therefore it confesses that it could not guard its own people; and meritoriously it seeks late to retain whom it lost while holding him: far dissimilar to her who says: I have found him whom my soul loves, I held him, and I will not let him go (Song of Songs 3:4).

11. Finally, she invites her Bridegroom into her garden; when she seeks for this, she says to Him: Announce to me whom my soul has loved (Song of Songs 1:6). Why do you say whom my soul has loved, and not whom my soul loves? Why did you let go of the one you were holding? You loved with the faith of the fathers, you lost with unbelief: you held on with the bonds of love, you lost with the long rope of treachery. Therefore, you do not know where He feeds, where He remains; for if you knew, you would not seek. For you say: Where do you feed? Where do you stay at noon? You know that noon is the Church, which holds Christ: and do you seek him in the nights? Say, Christ, answer me either because you were dear and beloved to me before: although I have lost the privilege of such love; nevertheless, answer me as if you were pious: Where do you feed? Where do you stay? You abandoned me, you went away to the nations: you went far away from me; and you have become closer to them, from whom you were far away; but you have

become close, because they have believed in your blood: you went away from me; because I did not accept your cross, for the redemption of the world, but for the condemnation of the guilty. But those who receive you, Lord, as the author of salvation, are at midday. You shine for them, you glow for them, you burn with your grace for them, like the midday sun. To me, you were the morning, when I was still a believer but not a fully committed one, because I had not yet reached midday, like Joseph with his brothers who dined at midday. You became their midday, those who feed on your riches and trust in you. As David said, 'You will bring forth their justice like the light, and their judgement like the midday sun.' (Psalm 37:6) So you seek as if foreign what you were just about to be close to: as if poor, what you were rich in. You desire to follow those whom you used to precede; and I wish you would even follow those whom you were obliged to precede! You want to become a hired servant, whom you used to gather before the hired servants. Surely the voice of one saying these things is that of a hired servant: 'Lest I become encircled and overshadowed by the flocks of your companions.' (Cant. 1, 6) What you used to accept before as proselytes from the nations, now you yourself wish to be received among the nations as proselyte, and to be gathered as a stranger.

13. Jesus answered: Unless you know your own worth among women. What does it mean to know oneself, if not to know that each person is made in the image and likeness of God, capable of reason, and should cultivate their own land like a good farmer with a certain plow and the sickle of wisdom, so that the tough weeds are cut down and the thriving ones are pruned, and who should govern the lower part of their soul with reason? Hence it is also written in the Law: Take heed to yourself, lest there be a hidden word in your heart. He says to you, pay attention, not to your money, not to your possessions, not to your physical strength: but to your soul and your mind; from where all counsel, actions, and thoughts flow. Therefore, pay attention to yourself there, where you know yourself to be more important. Know yourself, which the ancient men assign to Apollo Pythius, as if he himself was the author of this saying; when in fact they have taken it from ours and transferred it to their own, and Moses who wrote the book of Deuteronomy was long before the philosophers who invented these things.

14. Therefore, Solomon, following divine inspiration, wrote in the Song of Songs: Unless you recognize your worth among women (Song of Songs 1:7); that is, unless you acknowledge yourself as mortal, rational, and confess your sins, quickly confess your iniquities in order to be justified; unless you turn back and accuse your previous offenses, the day of death will come, and there will be no remedy for conversion: you will be overtaken when you do not expect it. Ignite your torch before the door of the Bridegroom is closed to you, who does not usually wait long for the negligent. If you do not know, it says, a beautiful woman among women; and you may say: I am dusky and beautiful (Song of Songs 1:4): dusky am I, because I have sinned; but beautiful, because I am loved, because I am of the lineage of Abraham, a chosen lineage, beloved by God: the favor of your fathers will profit you nothing; for God is able to raise up children of Abraham from these stones. And elsewhere in the Gospel you have read (Luke 13:11-13), how the devil of wickedness bound the daughter of Abraham with his chains, whom the Lord loosed on the Sabbath day. Unless, therefore, you know yourself, it will be of no benefit to you. And if you say, 'I am the daughter of Abraham,' but you do not believe, and you do not correct your error, Abraham indeed is saved, but the nobility of your lineage will not help you unless faith saves you. Do not let the promise given to the fathers deceive you. I do not accept the person of a man, I do not accept

the prerogative of a lineage; unless I see a nobility of character congruent with the lineage, so that a just choice of lineage may be made.

15. But if you know yourself, and acknowledge that you are subject to sin; you must go among the heels of the flock. Therefore, go forth barefoot, and feed your kids in the tents of the shepherds (Song of Solomon 1:7). He who is without sin feeds, he feeds the sheep. But she who is subject to sin feeds the kids on the left; for she cannot be on the right of the good shepherd. Let her rather follow him who says to Peter: Get behind me, Satan (Mark 8:33). Following Peter, he deserved to be placed on the right hand; and therefore it is said to him: Feed my lambs (John 21:16). But listen to where he goes: To the tents, he says, of the shepherds; that is, to the nations, to the dispersion. And therefore it is said: Strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be dispersed (Zechariah 13:7); so that the whole world may be filled with the flock of Christ, signifying that the Synagogue will then be saved, when it joins itself to this dispersion, which has filled the world; for the tents of the shepherds are the kingdoms of the earth. Therefore, the prophet David, announcing the nations that would believe, says: "Kingdoms of the earth, sing to God" (Psalm 67:33). Therefore, let the younger generation know, so they may correct their ways.

16. But you say: Who can know the way of youth, so as to correct it; when the Prophet says: There are three things that are too wonderful for me, and a fourth that I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a young woman (Prov. 30:18-19). If Solomon confesses that he does not understand the ways of a man in his youth, how can a young person know? To this it will be answered that those ways of a man in his youth are not known, which are different from the ways of an eagle in the sky, and different from the path of a ship on the high seas, and the footprints of a flying eagle, which has rough claws, captures prey, and flies above the clouds, wanders in the air, and kills fish in the sea; and yet this fourth thing is not impossible, like those three; for the Lord knows those who are his own, and He desires that each one knows himself, that the people of God know themselves.

17. But let them not be known the ways of the erring, as the Lord says: I do not know you, depart from me, workers of iniquity (Luke 13:27): but let this younger one who can correct his own way, perhaps be younger in age, not in character; and let him have in the prime of his youth an old man's intellect, of which it is said: But grey hairs are wisdom to men (Wisdom 4:8), to whom maturity of counsel and gravity are abundant. And hence it is said to Jeremiah: Do not say that I am young (Jer. I, 7). And indeed he was young in age; but he prohibits him from saying that he is young, who had a more mature wisdom. When Daniel was a boy, he received the spirit by which he was deemed worthy of the first fruits of old age; so as to rebuke the old men themselves not by their long life, but by their grace; for in him was the age of old age an immaculate life (Dan. XIII, 45). To whom it suits well to say that Davidic phrase: I have understood more than the elders (Psalms 118:100). Therefore, as if by divine oracle, he pronounced it about a veteran advice and an old man's wisdom: Who is wiser than Daniel (Ezek. XXVIII, 3)?

18. Now let us consider this: is it possible for a younger person to correct their own way, or not? If it is not possible, then the Prophet is lying. But because the Prophet is not lying, it is possible. However, it is possible in such a way that what appears impossible becomes possible if the younger person keeps the words of God. But if they do not keep them, it is impossible. Hence the

saying in the Gospel: It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:24). In this book also it is said to be impossible, but we understand that it is impossible because the rich do not keep God's commandments; but if they keep them, what seemed impossible becomes possible. This is the camel that enters through the narrow gate; the gate that could not hold him when he desired it, now holds him when he keeps the divine commandments. But he keeps the words of God, because he kept them, Moses, as a wise man, chose him as an elder (Exodus 7:1); and now those who are entrusted with this office by the Spirit of God, to choose elder men, undoubtedly choose among the elders a young man who corrects his own ways, in keeping the words of God. And if they have chosen a man of senior age, they have not chosen him as an old man, but as one who guards the words of God. And if such a person is found among the younger, he must certainly be chosen. It is clear therefore from these things that it is not the length of old age that is chosen, but the guarding of the words of God. Finally, Moses himself approved Jesus and Caleb as young men above the others, whose counsel in the choice of the land, rather than that of many older men, he followed, and God preferred.

19. And thus that which we have said above concerning Jacob: God, who has shepherded me from my youth (Gen. 48:15), manifests to us a statement about him who has taken upon himself the yoke of the word in his youth (Lam. 3:27-28), and departing from Esau and his kindred, he sits alone, awaiting the time when he can bring forth discourse with discipline; and therefore he is nourished with spiritual food, still full of years but seasoned with wisdom. For it is not worthy for us to believe that such a great patriarch spoke about physical food: God who feeds me from my youth; for he did not desire bodily bread when he said: If the Lord God is with me, to give me food to eat, and clothing to wear... of all that you give me, I will give a tenth to you (Genesis 28:20-22). For if our fathers ate spiritual food and drank spiritual drink, how much more did the holy Jacob feed on spiritual food!

20. Moreover, that understanding also applies in this place, and it is not contrary to the truth; because that younger person, from the gathering of the Gentiles, who before he believed in Christ, was wandering in a twisted path; corrects his way in it because he has kept the words of God, which the Jewish people did not want to keep; and therefore that person could not find the way of salvation. Let us also consider the following verse.

21. (Verse 10.) With all my heart I have sought you; do not reject me from your commandments. If God rejects everyone whom he considers worthy of rejection, let us see if he gives any excuse to the one who wanted to follow God but was rejected. And first, how does a good God reject someone who is following, unless they themselves deserve to be rejected? Just as the Lord himself says: Foxes have dens (Matthew 8:28); and therefore he rejects them like a fox. And elsewhere: For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away (Matthew 25:29). To whom does he add, unless it be one who seeks him with all his heart; so that what is lacking in nature, he may acquire through the operation of God and by grace? Like Solomon, who sought God with all his heart, he asked for wisdom: and because he did not seek royal riches for himself, but rather the gift of divine grace, he deserved to receive the discipline of wisdom: he was filled with the Spirit of the Lord, so that he might know all the commandments (3 Kings 11 and 12). But whoever does not have it in his heart to seek the Lord, and indeed does the work of God but does so negligently, is

subject to a curse, as we read: 'Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully' (Jeremiah 48:10). Therefore, he is deservedly repelled because he is worthy of a curse, because he pollutes more and hinders the work which he thoughtlessly considered to be carried out.

22. Let us consider whether goodness is repelled by negligent work or rather retained. And let us take an image of this matter from other arts. The physician cares for the sick person, but negligently, and the laziness of the physician allows the deep wound to spread. Therefore, it is better to remove such a physician who wastes time, since the wounded person feels no improvement; so that the duty of healing is transferred to a physician who can assist the sick person more diligently and promptly! Is it not more merciful to drive away someone who is making no progress, than to hold them back at the brink of illness? Establish someone in charge of those who are building, or even those who are weaving, who should explain the main work; which of the two seems more preferable to you, if they diligently focus on it, and if they happen to notice someone who is careless about those who are working on a certain building, to drive them away, believing that it is better not to build than to have what has been built collapse due to gaping cracks; and to appoint someone in their place who will build diligently? Similarly, you would not approve of a supervisor who allows lazy people to continue in their negligence, instead of replacing them with diligent workers, as this would cause the quality of the work to deteriorate due to their carelessness. Would you not also disapprove of someone who allows the lazy to persist in their negligence?

23. Now go to those who build the commandments, and weave the law, and receive the healing of each soul. If anyone of them builds the house of God with justice, weaves the garment with diligence, heals the soul with grace, is he not doing a good work? But if someone lazy and careless occupies the place of a builder, weaver, spiritual doctor, like the high priest, like the elder, like the minister of the sacred altar; is it not more advantageous not to take on each duty that he cannot fulfill, than to undertake it while not fulfilling it diligently, and take away the place from another who can diligently protect it? What! Because even the one who is more lenient, when he himself is consulted, is repelled, so as not to create even more offense.

24. Now let us consider what it means to be repelled; for it is written: Like the wounded who sleep, cast aside in tombs, whom you no longer remember; indeed they are repelled from your hand (Ps. 87:5). Therefore, let us take note of those who are wounded and cast aside in tombs, whom you no longer remember. These are the ones who are repelled from the commandments of God. And to the sinner, God said: Why do you declare my justices (Ps. 49:16)? And because they are repelled from the commands of God, they are certainly repelled from the hand of God. And it is well foreseen lest anyone seem to be snatched from the hand of God; for no one can snatch anyone from the hand of God. Therefore, whoever is deprived of the duty or favor of the received gift is not snatched, but rejected, as the Lord Jesus said to Jerusalem: How often have I desired to gather your children and you were unwilling! Behold, your house will be left to you desolate (Matthew 23:37-38). He took away from them sanctification, the altar of incense, and the sanctuary of prayer, the propitiatory altar of sacrifices, the ministries of priests and Levites; and yet, when all these things that they had according to the commands of the Law were taken away, the Apostle says: Did God reject his inheritance... No, he says, he did not reject... but he confined everything in unbelief, that he may have mercy on all (Rom. XI, 1, 2 and 32). So there are those who, for a time, are turned away from commandments out of mercy; just as those who are

vomiting are taken care of. For just as what remains in the body that is to be vomited becomes more bitter; so too, the one who should be excluded, if retained and does not correct himself, corrupts the whole body. And rightly have you called the faithful and true angel of Laodicea: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot: but because you are lukewarm, I am about to vomit you out of my mouth (Apoc. III, 15 et 16). Open negligence is more severely condemned by judgment than imprudence. For he is cold who does not know faith; he is warm who is inflamed by the fervor of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, for the one who does not have the warmth of faith, it would be more tolerable for him not to have accepted faith than to have neglected it. For the lukewarm is worse than the cold, like the Jew who thinks he has faith when he does not. How much more tolerable does the pagan have, who can say: I did not know the Law, I did not hear the prophets, therefore I did not believe, than he who reads everything from which he would believe in Jesus and still did not believe! Neither indeed is excused, neither he who reads, nor he who refuses to read: but he sins more, who denies what he has read, than he who does not perform the works which he does not know he should do. But how great is the grace of faith and justice, that it should be in the mouth of God, who holds faith and exercises the works of justice: and how much does he lose whom the Lord Jesus vomits out of his mouth, and casts out from his bowels! How pious, however, is he who holds the righteous in his mouth, and does not vomit out the unrighteous until he declares them to be vomited out! So that those who are converted by this admonition can accomplish something worthy, by which they are not disgusted. Now let us consider the third verse.

26. (Verse 11.) In my heart, he says, I have hidden your words, so that I may not sin against you. Therefore, it is good to keep the mystery of the king secret; for it is a sin against God to consider the entrusted secret mysteries as something to be divulged to the unworthy. Therefore, there is danger not only in speaking falsehoods but also in speaking truths to those who do not deserve it. This vice is fourfold, either flattery, or greed, or boasting, or careless talk; for when someone wants to flatter the person they are speaking to, they reveal the secret. Some people even pursue profit as the reward for betrayal; they sell by keeping silent. Others, to seem to know more and boast about their knowledge, reveal what they should keep hidden. Many, while speaking without judgment, utter a word that they cannot take back. Therefore, a man is praised later, and not in vain. There was a man who concealed his conversations, like the apostle Paul, who knows what to say to each person and when to say it. Wherefore he says at Corinth: I have given you milk to drink, not meat; for you were not able as yet. But neither indeed are you now able; for you are yet carnal. For, whereas there is among you envying and contention, are you not carnal, and walk according to man? For while one saith, I indeed am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollo; are you not men? What then is Apollo, and what is Paul? The ministers of him whom you have believed; and to every one as the Lord hath given. I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore, neither he that planteth is any thing, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth, and he that watereth, are one. And every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour. For we are God's coadjutors; you are God's husbandry; you are God's building. According to the grace of God that is given to me, as a wise architect, I have laid the foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid; which is Christ Jesus. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: Every man's work shall be manifest. For the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it

shall be revealed in fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are.

27. Moreover, above all, the Lord Jesus declares in his Gospel, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a hidden treasure in a field' (Matthew XIII, 44). Surely, the kingdom of heaven cannot be obtained by gold, silver, or money, but by the words of the Lord, pure words, silver refined by fire, through which the kingdom itself is acquired. Therefore, this treasure of wisdom and knowledge is hidden in the field, in which the words of the heavenly Scriptures are planted; when a man finds it, he hides it in his heart and does not divulge it, knowing that if he were to disclose the treasure of God to the Babylonians, he would incur great offense, so that it may be said to him in prophetic words: 'They will take from your descendants, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king' (Isaiah XXXIX, 7). Through this, it is signified that the one who betrays divine mysteries cannot have a future for his soul and a seedbed of merits.

28. So be careful not to betray your riches to deceitful people: and if they pretend friendship, do not open the innermost parts of your house to them; do not unlock the royal treasures, which the Babylonians must not know; lest they come and capture your descendants, and cut off the seedbed of virtue. This is also what the Lord says in the Gospel: Do not throw your pearls before swine (Matthew VII, 6). Therefore, he does well who hides the words of the Lord in his heart, as the prophet David hid them, as Mary, who kept all the words of the Lord Jesus in her heart (Luke II, 51). For if it is good for a man to hide his words, how much more should we hide the word of God in the depths of our hearts, we must conceal it!

29. (Verse 12.) In the fourth verse, it says: Blessed are you, O Lord: teach me your commandments. For not everyone who says, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of God. Therefore, this person who has corrected his way from his youth, kept the words of God in his whole heart, sought his Lord God, was not rejected by God's commandments, and was deemed worthy to be entrusted with the secrets of wisdom, has hidden them in his heart so as not to sin against God; as if he possessed the words of God, he gives thanks, saying: Blessed are you, O Lord; and desires to have the teacher himself, desiring to know the secrets of the Law, and how to have the interpretation: If you buy a Hebrew servant and he serves you for six years (Exodus 21:2), and the rest, with which it is preceded to learn these commandments, which he presents in the sight of the children of Israel; he seeks to learn these from the Lord, which men could not teach; unless God had taught them beforehand. After the apostles learned from Christ, the Church says: The King has brought me into his chamber (Song of Songs 1:3), that is, into his secret place where the treasures of his knowledge and understanding are. Therefore, it is said to you: When you pray, go into your inner room (Matthew 6:6), which signifies the secret place of the mind and soul. In this chamber of justice, the Bride has asked to be led; after the fragrance of the ointment has spread, which always flows and never fails.

30. (Verse 13.) Therefore, as a learned prophet, he says in the fifth verse: In my lips, I have declared all the judgments of your mouth. And how does he say elsewhere: Your judgments are

like a great abyss (Psalm 36:7)? And how does the Apostle say: O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways that cannot be traced! For who has known the mind of the Lord (Romans 11:33-34)? If his judgments are unsearchable, how then are there judgments? How have you pronounced all things, says the Prophet, the judgments of your mouth? But perhaps the judgments of God are not the same as the judgments of his mouth. If they are different, it is well said: Who will be like your thoughts? (Psalm 39:6) And therefore his judgments are inscrutable; because we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But if no one says this except Christ, who can say: I and the Father are one? (John 10:30)

However, let us distinguish, and let us not fear that it contradicts itself or the venerable Scripture with contrary things. For let us consider that it did not say: The judgments of His mouth are like a deep abyss, but it said: Your judgments; and the Apostle did not say: The inscrutable judgments of His mouth, but: The inscrutable judgments of Him. For we can estimate the judgments of God, which He has not revealed to us as hidden; but the judgments of His mouth, which He has announced and spoken through the mouths of prophets. It is understood that the prophet of God is referred to, to whom it is said: Cry out; and he said, What shall I cry out? And it was inspired to him to say: All flesh is grass (Isaiah 40:6). This, of course, spoken, is a function of the mouth of God; for he has spoken the judgment of God. Therefore, prophetic oracles are now not only like an abyss, but they are also the abyss itself; for no one could open the book in heaven or on earth, except Christ. Let us now come to the sixth verse.

32. (Verse 14.) On the way, he says, I am delighted by your testimonies, just as in all riches. Some delight in gold, others in silver, others in clothing; some in possessions, vineyards, olive groves; others in works of painting, marbles; in the end, each person has their own pleasures: the spiritual person delights in the way of heavenly testimonies, as if possessing every inheritance, rich in all things; as the Apostle says: I always thank my God for you in the grace of our God, which has been given to you in Christ Jesus: for you have become rich in all things in him, in all speech, and in all knowledge (I Cor. 1, 4 and 5). The Apostles in Corinth made such great progress in their teaching that those who previously could only drink milk like infants, later abounded in all the riches of knowledge and word. Therefore, David delighted in all the riches of knowledge, science, wisdom, and in every act of good works. And if anyone now, attentive to divine things, were to draw from that threefold discipline of wisdom, theoretical, practical, and logical, with earnestness for acquiring knowledge, they would hold a more beautiful grace for carrying out rational and moral doctrine. Whoever understands the prophetic enigmas revealed by the Spirit of God, comprehends the depth of the Gospel in works and counsels, and pays attention to the moral teachings of the apostolic discourse; such a person, like a rich person in all things, will receive abundant pleasure.

33. And because bodily pleasure is pleasant, it is not compared to spiritual [pleasure] as if by the quality of grace; but rather it is called forth as a testimony to pleasantness. Indeed, the Apostle teaches that the invisible and eternal things of God are understood by us through those things which have been made (Rom. 1:20). In Song of Songs we also have written: I have likened you, my beloved, to my horses in Pharaoh's chariots, my companion. In which, when the likeness of the Church seems to be compared to the course of swift horses, the wealth of her grace is esteemed. Therefore, do not take just one horse of a rich king, but rather take the entire cavalry, as we have often said, which is like a sheep among a flock of sheep. Therefore, Pharaoh, as the most powerful and wealthy king, had powerful horses, as the Scripture says, the chariots of Pharaoh;

like the most powerful kind for use in war and for support in battle. In the end, with these chariots, Pharaoh easily captured the fleeing Hebrews. Therefore, just as horses together pull a chariot with harmony, and willingly bear the yoke, and carry themselves with grace, and become tame through the acceptance of that yoke; so too the congregation of nations boasted before the unyielding customs of the gentiles; but when it accepted the yoke of the one saying: 'Take my yoke...' Because it is light: and my burden, because it is sweet (Matt. XI, 29-30); and the Bride of Christ began to be exalted by the harmony and gentleness of the people, and to be carried throughout the whole world, like a chariot snatched up by swift horses above the world, she ascended to the Bridegroom.

34. Finally, in the later parts of the Songs, it says: I have set you as the chariot of Aminadab (Song of Songs 6:12). The Church has many chariots within itself, which the Lord guides with spiritual reins. And one soul has many thoughts, which the Lord's rein restricts and recalls, lest our chariot here be carried into a precipice. Aminadab, however, is interpreted as the father of good pleasure, whose son is read about in Numbers as the leader of the people (Numbers 2:3), who should be understood as serpent-like in interpretation; and you recognize this, if you recall, for just as the serpent hung on the tree that redeemed you.

Therefore, the soul is the charioteer of God, so that his anger, desire, fear, and all worldly desires may be restrained. The Church is also the charioteer of God, which is to be governed by the helm of Christ; so that the movements and controversies of different peoples may not disturb it. Naason is also well understood as Christ; because the rod of Aaron, turned into a serpent, devoured those Egyptian serpents (Exodus 7: 12). Therefore, let us have these riches, let us delight in them, so that reasonable horses may run for us and let us abide by their commandments.

36. (Verse 15.) And therefore he says: In your commandments I will be exercised, and I will consider your ways. For whoever is exercised in the words of the apostles knows the commandments of Jesus the Lord, and considers his ways, in which the end is Christ, who says: I am the way (John XIV, 6).

37. (Verse 16.) And in your justices I will meditate, I will not forget your words. This passage reminds us that we should be mindful of the Scriptures and meditate on His righteousness not only in word, but also in deed. For it is not those who discuss the Law, and do not do what the Law requires, but those who are doers of the Law who are justified.

Sermon 3. Gimel. Sermon 3. Gimel. The third letter according to the Hebrews is Gimel, which is called 'retribution' in Latin. Finally, this is shown in the very first verse.

2. (Verse 17.) 'Repay,' he says, 'to your servant.' Just as David said above: 'Do not repay us according to our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities' (Psalm 102:10); and here he demands retribution? That voice seems to be that of the sinner, whereas this voice belongs to those who are well conscious of themselves, who ask for the rewards of good deeds. Hence, we can also understand this, that this psalm is formed about the person of him who, born of the Virgin, presumes to sit at the right hand of the Father for the redemption of the whole world, as he himself says: 'From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power' (Matthew 26:64).

3. However, it is not strange, nor arrogant, if even David asks for compensation from the Lord his God for his outstanding efforts. It is the prerogative of faith and righteousness to claim reward from

the favor of the Lord. Indeed, Peter is reproved (Matthew 14:31) because, while walking on the waves, he hesitated more from human emotion than he presumed from apostolic authority. We are also taught in the Gospel to have faith (Luke 17:6) and not to hesitate in performing things that are above human capability. Therefore David deservedly, as though still imperfect in his previous sins, refuses and avoids being punished, but in this psalm which comes later (Psalm 102, 10), he prays to be rewarded according to the progress of his virtue and the struggles of his faith and good works. Indeed, even Paul, who previously said, 'I am not worthy to be called an apostle' (1 Corinthians 15, 9), later says, 'The crown of righteousness is reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing' (2 Timothy 4, 8). And the Apostle promises there, but here he prays even more reverently: asking, of course, not out of insolent arrogance, but out of innocent conscience, to seek reward from the one whom you serve; for to despair is an excuse for laziness, but to hope is an encouragement for labor.

4. Therefore, Pete confidently, if his merits are supported, should strive more diligently in seeking such things, because the more worthy his requests are. Which athlete, if he despairs of the crown, would descend into the stadium, or if he seeks it as the victor, would offend? Testing creates hope, hope creates confidence. Therefore, the prayer of the just is like this: the Lord takes delight in such prayer, so that you may use authority for the sake of the purity of conscience.

However, to avoid appearing arrogant, he added: 'You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings. Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.' (1 Corinthians 7:23-24)

Glorious servitude, by which Christ served for us. Blessed servitude, by which you also serve: but in such a way that the adversary cannot claim anything from your servitude for himself. Therefore, Christ loves the freedom of a good servant. Finally, in the Song of Songs it says: 'How beautiful are your cheeks like turtledoves, your neck like necklaces!' (Song of Songs 1:9). The face is freer when there is a consciousness of chastity: and it is sweet to bear the yoke of Christ, if you consider the ornaments of your neck to be light, not burdens. Therefore, always lift up your eyes to the Lord your God, and seek God that you may find. Raise your neck; you wear decorations, not chains. Many animals also delight in decorations and seem more adorned than bound. May your cheeks carry the insignia of modesty like turtle doves: the decorations of freedom raise confidence. For the yoke of Christ is light; and therefore, the neck is not pressed down but lifted up.

7. 'We will make likenesses of gold for you out of distinctions of silver,' he says, 'as long as the King is in his decline' (Ibid., 10). For from those who are of the Law and the prophets, they had believed moderately in the glory of the Lord Jesus, but his inheritance, spread abroad among the peoples, when examined more frequently, is all the more approved. For frequent persecutions of the Church have produced for us the titles of the righteous and the victories of martyrdom. So just as good gold, when it is burned, does not feel the loss, but rather its brightness increases; until Christ comes into his kingdom, and rests his head on the faith of the Church. When he came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he had nowhere to rest his head: but now faith is already fragrant; and therefore the Church says: My nard has given its fragrance (Ibid., 11). And she says it with presumption, awaiting retribution.

8. The ointment of grace is fragrant, from which the Virgin gave birth, and the Lord Jesus assumed the sacrament of the Incarnation. The bond, he says, is my cousin, the bunch of grapes is my brother Cyprus, resting among my breasts. For the Lord Jesus, taking on a body, bound himself with the bonds of love: and he bound himself not only to our members and natural passions, but also to the cross; therefore, just as the bunch of grapes rests in the faith and moral grace of the Church. Nardus Cypri, my cousin, in the vineyards of Engaddi (Cant. I, 13). Engaddi, if we seek the place, is a certain region in Judea, and it is called so, in which balsam is produced. If we seek the interpretation, Engaddi signifies 'temptation' in Latin. In those vineyards, there is a tree that, if someone punctures it, emits perfume: this is the fruit of the tree. If the tree is not punctured, it does not smell as fragrant; but when it is punctured by the hand of the artisan, then it distills tears: just as Christ, on that tree of temptation, crucified, shed tears for the people, in order to wash away our sins, and poured forth the ointment from the bowels of His mercy, saying: Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they do (Luke, XXIII, 34). Then, therefore, the spear pierced the wood, and blood and water poured forth from it, more fragrant than any ointment, a sacrifice accepted by God, pouring out the odor of sanctification throughout the whole world: and as balsam flows from a tree, so did power flow from his body. Hence, it is said that the expression 'opobalsamum' comes from there, because by the piercing of the wood, balsam bursts forth through the cavity of the wound. Therefore, Jesus, pierced, poured forth the fragrance of forgiveness of sins and redemption. For the Word was made flesh, and was bound, and He made Himself poor, though He was rich, so that we might be enriched by His poverty. He was powerful, yet He allowed Himself to be despised, so that Herod could mock Him and ridicule Him. He moved the earth and clung to the wood; He covered the heavens with darkness, and crucified the world; and He Himself was crucified. He bowed His head, and the Word went forth; He was emptied, and He filled all things. God descended, man ascended; the Word was made flesh, so that the flesh of the Word might claim a throne for itself at the right hand of God. A wound was inflicted, and ointment flowed forth; the scarab beetle was heard, and God was recognized.

9. And Christ answered: Behold, you are my good neighbor, behold, you are good (Song of Solomon 1:14). For the Church knew the mystery and preached the crucified Lord Jesus for the redemption of the whole world, she deserves to hear: Behold, you are good; you who say I am good, and you yourself are good, who have seen the glory of my beauty, and you yourself are good and beautiful. But what does it mean for Christ to say: You are good, or you are beautiful; except for that Gospel saying: Be of good cheer, daughter, your sins are forgiven (Matthew 9:22)?

10. (Verse 17.) Therefore, the one to whom Christ has forgiven sins rightly says: Pay your servant so that I may live and keep your words. He has no reason to despair about retribution, for the Lord Jesus came to save the world, not to destroy it. Therefore, He forgets the injury and remembers the grace, as He Himself testifies in the prophetic book, saying: I am, I am the one who blots out your iniquities and will not remember them; but remember me, and let us be judged. Declare your iniquities that you may be justified (Isaiah 43:25-26). Therefore, whoever confesses his sins to God, is justified; and whoever is justified, does not fear retribution, but asks for it; and whoever does not fear retribution, shall live.

11. But why did he say, 'I will live,' and not 'I am living'? Because this life is not a place of reward, but a place of death. The Prophet laments that he has been brought down to the dust of death (Psalm 21:16). The Apostle desires to be liberated from this mortal body (Romans 7:24). And do

we think that the Prophet takes delight in this life? Everything here is full of death. Death enters through the window, it enters through the door; unless the Lord sets a guard at your door. Finally, sin is born out of excessive talk. Read the commandments of the Law, and you will find written: If a living person touches a dead body, they become unclean (Numbers 19:11). How many dead bodies do we touch? Among how many dead bodies do we live? Therefore, the Author of life tells you: Leave the dead to bury their own dead (Matthew 8:22). Therefore, elsewhere it is said to you: Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead (Ephesians 5:14). How could it be said to you, 'Arise from the dead,' unless you were living among the dead? Let us consider you to be free from dead works and from the pollution of sin; how can you be free, who are in a body of death, who live among the graves of the dead? Peter needed to speak to the dead, so that they would come out of their own tombs.

12. Therefore we are in need of purification because we have touched the dead (Num. XIX, 1). The Law commands us to be cleansed: who is so great that he is above the Law? If the holy Nazarene himself touches the dead, he declares himself unclean (Num. VI, 9). And so he shaves his head and lays aside his hair as if it were not holy; and again he prays to be heard, for he could not before because of the touch of the dead: he considered the days to be irrational; for he had approached the irrational. Therefore, he must lay down the dead and superfluous of his own head, so that he may be reconciled to Christ. Therefore, if the Nazarene is purified, then we must be purified.

13. We all touch death. For who will boast of having a pure heart, or who will dare to say that they are free from sin? Perhaps there is someone who has not sinned in speech, although such a person is rare, of whom God says, as He did about the holy Job: 'He has not sinned with his lips' (Job 22:10); yet he could not always have pure thoughts of his heart, as the devil constantly attacks the human heart. Even if someone guards their heart with constant and vigilant care, they still find themselves in the midst of sinners and must also purify themselves. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips (Isaiah VI, 5 and 7); Then one of the seraphims flew to me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

14. There is not one baptism: there is one that this Church handed down, through water and the Holy Spirit, by which it is necessary for catechumens to be baptized. There is also another baptism, of which the Lord Jesus says: I have a baptism to be baptized with, which you do not know (Luke, XII, 10). And indeed he had already been baptized in the Jordan, as the previous things make clear (Matthew, III, 13): but let this be the baptism of passion, by which everyone is also cleansed by his blood. There is also baptism in the vestibule of Paradise, which was not there before: but after the sinner was excluded, it began to be a fiery sword, which God placed (Gen., III, 24), which was not there before when there was no sin. Sin began, and baptism began: by which those who desired to return to Paradise might be purified, so that when they returned they could say: We passed through fire and water (Psal. LXV, 12). Here through water, there through fire. Through water, sins are washed away; through fire, they are burned up. But what is worse, we endure both fires here and there.

15. Who is the one who baptizes with this fire! Not a priest, not a bishop, not John, who said: I baptize you in penance (Matthew III, 11); not an Angel, not an Archangel, not Dominions, not

Powers: but he, of whom John says: He who comes after me, is mightier than I, of whom I am not worthy to carry the sandals: he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. He has a winnowing fan in his hand, and will cleanse his threshing floor; and will gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire (Ibid., II and 12). Not of this baptism, which is performed by the priests of the Church, does the Lord himself testify (Matthew, XIII, 49 and 50). For after the consummation of the world, with the angels sent forth to separate the good from the evil, this will be the baptism: when by the fire of judgment, wickedness is consumed; so that in the kingdom of God the righteous may shine like the sun himself in the kingdom of his Father. And if any saint, like Peter or John, is baptized with this fire. Therefore, the great Baptist will come (for I name him thus, just as Gabriel named him: 'He will be great' - Luke 1:15). He will see many standing before the entrance of paradise, he will shake the turning key, and he will say to those on the right who do not have heavy sins: 'Enter, you who presume and do not fear fire.' For I have foretold you: 'Behold, I come like fire' - Isaiah 66:15. And through Ezekiel, I have said: 'Behold, I will set out for Jerusalem and I will blow upon you with the fire of my wrath, so that you may waste away like lead and iron' - Ezekiel 22:20.

16. Let the consuming fire come, let it burn away the lead of wickedness within us, the iron of sin, and make us pure gold. Let it burn my kidneys and my heart, so that I may think of good things, desire things that are pure. But because he is purified here, he must necessarily be purified there as well. Let him also purify us there, as the Lord will say: Enter into my rest. So that each of us, having been burned by that fiery sword, but not consumed, may enter into that delightful paradise and give thanks to his Lord, saying: You have led us into refreshment. Therefore, whoever passes through fire enters into rest. They pass from the material and worldly things to those incorruptible and eternal.

17. That is another fire in which involuntary sins, but accidental ones, are burned, which the Lord Jesus has prepared for His servants, so that He may cleanse them from this dwelling, which is mixed with the dead. That other fire, He has appointed for the devil and his angels, of which He says: 'Enter into the everlasting fire' (Matthew, 25:41); that fire in which the rich man was burning, who begged for a drop of moisture to be placed on his tongue from Lazarus' finger. But truly, Lazarus, reclining in Abraham's bosom (Luke, 16:24), was enjoying eternal life, which the Prophet promises to himself, saying: 'I shall live and keep Your words.' He says, 'I will live as if I am not yet alive; for here we live in the shadow.'

Therefore, this life in the body is the shadow and image of life, not the truth. Ultimately, man walks in an image, and we stand in the region of the shadow of death. But if someone does not focus the eyes of their mind on earthly things, but raises them to spiritual things; so that they can say: The Spirit of Christ the Lord is before our face; they will be worthy to say: In His shadow we shall live (Lamentations 4:20). For Christ is life; and therefore, whoever lives in the shadow of Christ, lives in the shadow of life. And elsewhere the Holy Lord says: 'In the shadow of your wings protect me' (Psalm 16:8). Therefore, all the saints are also in the shadow, as long as they are in the body: they do not see perfectly, they do not know perfectly, but they know in part. Paul himself says: 'For we know in part' (1 Corinthians 13:9). He himself, the vessel of election, to whom Christ gave eyes and illuminated with his grace, saw not face to face, but through a mirror. And David prays that his eyes may be opened (Inf. 2:17-18), that the shade that obstructs his sight may be removed. But who could doubt that this is the realm of the dead since the Holy One himself says: 'I will walk

before the Lord in the land of the living' (Ps. 114:9)? For here no one can please perfectly, even if it were possible for them to not have their own sins; yet by living in the very realm of the dead, they need purification to free them from the contagion of this realm.

19. Therefore, we live in the shadow, and for this reason, we guard the words of God in the shadow. And let us use an example: surely before, they were under the shadow of the Law, when men observed the Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come; just like the Jews today, who do not see the true Sabbath, but serve the copy and shadow. We also, living according to the Gospel, follow the shadow of the words of God. Nathanael appears under the fig tree (John 1:48), David says that he hopes in the shadow of the wings of the Lord Jesus (Psalm 16:8); Zacchaeus climbs a sycamore tree to see Christ (Luke 19:4). Jesus also extended his hands to us, in order to overshadow the whole world. How are we not in the shadow, who are protected by the veil of his cross? How are we not in the shadow, whom the crucified one defends from the wickedness of the world and the heat of the body? Do we not know that the Word of God, coming into this world, did not come as the Word came, which was in the beginning, which was with God: but he emptied himself, taking on the form of a servant? He came in a light cloud: and when the power of the Most High overshadowed Mary, he transformed the body of our humility to be like the body of his glory. Just as he changed form when he was born from the Virgin, so too the words of God appear to us transfigured when they are read in the Gospel, when their image is seen in the Scriptures as in a mirror, because the whole truth cannot be comprehended here. But when what is perfect comes, no longer through descent, no longer in appearance as transfigured, but they shine forth with complete and explicit truth.

20. And let it not trouble you that he says: I will keep many words; he who knows one word, knows many words. For in one there are many, and in many there is one. Therefore, it must be proven how one word can be many, and many words can be one. Nor is it difficult to teach, as the Apostle said, because he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, in whom all things were created in heaven and on earth, whether visible or invisible, whether Thrones or Dominions or Principalities or Powers; all things were created through him and for him (Colossians 1:15-16). There is therefore one Word, which operates in each individual; and when it operates in each individual, it operates in all things. This one Word, unique, poured itself out in many ways with the Father, because from His fullness we all have received. Therefore, if you see in each individual creature what is of Him, you will see that in each individual there is one Word of all, of which we are participants according to our capacity. In me the Word is human, but let the Apostle provide assistance and say: I also think that I have the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 7:40); in another, the Word is heavenly, and the word of angels is in many. There are those who possess the word of Dominion and Power, the word of Justice, the word of Chastity, the word of Prudence, the word of Piety, and even the word of Virtue. Thus, one word has many meanings, and many words have one meaning. And truly, it is not difficult to understand this; as we read, the Spirit of Wisdom can do all things.

Therefore, just as others are given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, and others the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit, others faith in the same spirit, others the gift of healing in one spirit, others the working of miracles, others the discernment of spirits, others the gift of prophecy, others the gift of tongues, others the interpretation of tongues. Yet in all these things it is the same Spirit who distributes to each one as He wills. There is the spirit of the prophets and the

spirit of the apostles. There is also the spirit of craftsmen, like Bezalel and Oholiab, whom the Lord filled with the Spirit of divine wisdom, knowledge, and craftsmanship, to make garments and the Tabernacle, as well as the altar, according to the plan that God gave them (Exodus 35:30 et seq.). And they were also given the understanding and ability to do all the work according to everything the Lord commanded. And so they did what they had not learned, nor seen, according to what the Spirit showed them. And it seems to many that there is one spirit of the apostles, another of the prophets, and different in each: but it is not different, but one is the spirit, dividing different kinds of powers. Hence, there should be no doubt that the apostolic word was given to some, the prophetic word to others, the evangelistic word to others, and yet it is one word dividing itself to each according to our ability or according to its voluntary generosity. Therefore, I see this Word, which is the head of all, here through a mirror; and therefore, I cannot keep the words here. But when I see the glory of it revealed face to face, then I will live, and living, I will also keep the divine words.

22. (Verse 18.) Therefore, in the second verse he says: Open my eyes, and I will consider the wonders of your law. He who asks for his eyes to be opened, certainly understands also the burden. For he does not ask for a physician unless he seeks a remedy for his illness. Therefore, this person says to the physician coming from heaven: Open my eyes. If the eye is disturbed, all pain is easily alleviated by an eye ointment; but if its vision is obscured by an overflow of fluid, more serious remedies are sought. So just as in the eyes of the body, there is also in the eyes of the soul a certain passion of this kind, which must necessarily become worse; unless a good physician removes that covering and the cloud of a congealed humor, which hinders, or rather covers up, so that it may not see what it used to see, is considered the gaze of the mind. The sickness has crept in from an old ferment; because we did not remove either the pagan or Jewish suffusion when we first came to the Church: we did not hear and learn the discipline of a good physician: Putting off the old man with his deeds and putting on the new, who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him (Colossians 3:9-10). Therefore, if someone covers himself, he does not uncover himself: a deeper sorrow spreads, a lasting veil weighs down the eyes; no one can take it away, neither an Angel, nor Virtues, nor Dominations, nor Powers. That veil remains, it hinders reading, it obscures vision; as the Apostle says, it is not revealed, that is, by anyone else, unless it is taken away in Christ. But when someone turns to the Lord in this way, the veil will be taken away.

Therefore, you have how you may remove the veil, which remains above the eyes of your heart. Turn to the Lord, and the veil will fall. Paul turned to the blessing of Ananias, as scales fell from his eyes; and he saw, who had not seen for three days before: at the same time, the eye of the body and soul is healed; for that physician had shown him the remedy, who is written: He sent his Word, and healed them, and delivered them from all their infirmities. There is no doctor on this earth who cures all illnesses and heals entire populations. Therefore, Father, send that doctor: let your Word come, open my eyes. And the eyes of the Apostles were closed, unless Jesus opened them. Finally, when the two of them were going to the village called Emmaus, while he interpreted the Scriptures and blessed them, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him (Luke, 24:31). Therefore, unless Jesus had opened our eyes, no one would have seen; unless Jesus removed the veil, the grace of the Gospel would not have shone. And Peter had closed eyes, and John had closed eyes, and James had closed eyes. Finally, they were burdened with sleep on the mountain, but awakened by the brightness of divine majesty, they opened the eyes of their hearts. And

because they were thirsty in the body, they could not fully see, they were overshadowed by clouds (Matthew, 27), so that the brilliance of heavenly glory would not dull their bodily eyes.

24. Who, then, is so great as to open the eyes and see the sacraments of the Law; unless Christ himself shows them? Not even Moses was so great. Indeed, at the command of the Lord, he threw down his staff, and it became a serpent, and he fled from it; he took hold of the serpent's tail, and it became a staff (Exodus, IV, 3 and 4); and yet he did not understand the mystery by which it was revealed that the Lord Jesus would descend to earth, and when he humbled himself and was laid in the tomb, he would suffer on the cross and be cast into the tomb, as a serpent made from a staff; for when he was cast into the tomb, from which, according to the oracles of the Law, he would rise again to the glory of God and return to the divine throne as the king's consort, in the form of a serpent. Therefore, let us also apprehend the tail of that crucified serpent, so that we may recognize his royal power. And she who sent the ointment onto his feet held him. Therefore, Moses also apprehended the tail of the serpent, and his mouth was opened. He would not have spoken of it unless the Lord himself had opened his mouth.

25. David opened his eyes and sought here, and in the previous [passage] he said: Who will show us good things (Psalm 4:6)? He was brought up under the Law, and he knew that the Law has a shadow of future goods: he desired to see these goods not through a shadow, but with open eyes (Hebrews 10:1). He knew that the copies and shadows served the heavenly mysteries, which those serving according to the Law of Moses served. He wanted to grasp the truth of divine worship itself; and therefore, in order to remove the veil from his eyes, he turned to the Lord in prayer, saying: Open my eyes, and I will consider the wonders of your law. He truly understood that the militia is heavenly, which everyone can know from the Law, to which the Lord nevertheless reveals it. For who can ascend from earthly things to heavenly things, from shadow to brightness, from the copy to the innermost truth, without divine guidance?

26. Who can consider that heavenly altar, that true temple, the priests and the Levites, not according to the duties of the flesh, but according to the grace of the spirit? Finally, David desired only this grace for himself, saying: One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, and that I may see the delight of the Lord, and contemplate his temple (Psalm 26:4). Who could have known that the rich man would offer a great gift, as much as his hand is able, for the forgiveness of his sin? Who could understand, if he did not have it? Who could offer, for example, a ram, because his sin was not being resolved? Who could notice, what were those impurities, which were not resolved by the Law that the Jews think, but by the spiritual law, which Paul recognized? Who could see true remissions of sins, whose example is in the Law, the truth in the Gospel, with the Lord Jesus saying: Your sins are forgiven (Luke, VII, 48); not by the blood of goats, but by the sacrifice of his own body? Therefore, let that rich man read, who by confessing the fullness of perfect majesty in Christ and by offering with his celestial hands to certain people the sin he has been forgiven. He sees the true Priest who sees the Prince of the priests; he considers the true temple who hears him saying: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up (John 2:19). It is a great temple, from which power came forth and healed everyone. Marvelous is that altar, upon which the sacrifice of the one Lamb took away the sins of the world. He, the most excellent Levite, who came not to demand a service, but to offer his own service of passion to all: to whom God is his portion, who possessed nothing here, that he might possess all things.

27. But what shall I say about the Hebrew slave, whom the Law commands to serve only six years, and in the seventh year to go out from servitude (Exod., XXI, 2)? Who is this Hebrew slave? Who can be understood as a free Hebrew? How great, so that he may see eternal years in his mind, is the true Hebrew who does not remain a slave forever, but after six years of serving, in the seventh year obtains the grace of liberty? It seems that Isaac, the patriarch, did not ignore the mystery of servitude and liberty, who said: 'You shall serve your brother, and when you shall have taken off and laid aside his yoke from your neck' (Gen. XXVII, 40), signifying the time when even if someone is placed in servitude to his brother, afterwards, after the exact years, which are collected in these six days and these months that we require here, he shall remove the yoke from his neck, which happens in the seventh year of remission. We can infer the true type of the Hebrew people in Joseph, who bore the yoke of slavery: but guilt did not seize him, prison did not confine him, Egypt did not stain him. We infer it in Peter, John, and James, who, although created and trained under the yoke of the Law, nevertheless broke the Jewish yoke of their brother when the legitimate time of rest came, when the forgiveness of sins shone upon them. And yet this was still done here in shadow by comparison with heavenly things.

28. But how great is that rest which is promised by the Law, is revealed in the Gospel, and is still kept intact, with the Lord Jesus saying: I want that where I am, they may be with me (John 17:24)! How blessed is the one who can merit the fruit of this dwelling, the fellowship of this rest! Then he will understand what it means to open his eyes, to see the wonders of God's law.

29. The reading of the Gospel, which has been finished, has well admonished us, in which the leper was healed, who said: If you wish, you can cleanse me (Luke 5:12); establishing the effect of power in the will of the Lord. To whom he responded likewise: I wish, be cleansed (ibid., 13). Preceded by the piety of the will, followed the authority of power. Jesus says to all, I wish, who do not wish to be sin. The will of Christ is common to all; to be cleansed is the act of the believer in Christ. And he touched him. He touches those whose faith is touched. Finally, he says: Someone touched me; for I perceive that virtue hath gone out from me (Luke, 8:46). You have the operation of the immaculate body, you have the remission of divinity. But in order to be more fully healed, he opened his eyes, saying: 'Go, show yourself to the priest' (Luke, 5:14). The synagogue had many priests, but the one who opens eyes does not see false priests, but sees the truth. Who is the true priest, if not the one who is a priest forever? And therefore the Father said to him: 'You are a priest forever' (Psalm 110:4). So he opened his eyes, and saw, and understood what gift he should offer for his cleansing. Blessed is he who hears these things: how much more blessed is he who sees, who is able to reveal himself to the Priest, so that he does not have to fear being seen by him, who sees himself first, with his face revealed! For unless he sees himself first, he will not dare to show himself; just as Adam who desired to hide himself, because he did not recognize himself. But now let us also consider what follows.

31. (Verse 19.) I am a stranger in the land; do not hide your commandments from me. This is not the voice of just anyone; but of one who has renounced earthly pleasures and has cast off all desire for worldly things. He is a stranger in this land, who can say: 'But our citizenship is in heaven' (Philippians 3:20); who has his portion in the Lord, who can grieve that he lives on earth for a longer time, who is wearied by the length of this life, for whom the elongation of this dwelling place is a source of disgust, which the holy person rejects, and says: 'Woe to those who dwell on the earth' (Revelation 8:13)! He who does not fear to be dissolved; and if he is dissolved,

presumes to be with Christ in the future: he is truly a stranger on earth; for he is a citizen of the saints, a member of God's household, and he stores up treasure for himself in heaven. He does not desire to return to this intelligible Egypt, as one who comes out of Egypt desires to return, nor does he fear the confines of old age and death, nor does he build barns for storing harvests, for he will live on the resources of others: but rich only in the abundance of virtues, he gathers those things which death cannot take away from him.

32. (Verse 20.) And rightly so he says: My soul has desired to desire your judgements at all times. Which it certainly does not do unless it is free from bonds, not only from the bonds of worldly anxieties, but also from the bonds of human affection. There are many bonds in this world: the bonds are the desires of life, the bonds are the pleasures of the senses, the bonds are the honors, the bonds are the bonds of marriage. Finally, the good Teacher asks you: Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife (I Cor. VII, 27). However, it is not a sin for one who takes a wife, but it binds him with the chains of the mind; because he is concerned about pleasing his wife. He would be happier if he desired to please God alone. But you see that he is bound, who does not have power over his own body. Therefore, because it is a commandment of God, which is taken from the oracle of the Law and the Apostolic word (Deut., VI, 5; and Matth., X, 37), that no one should prefer a wife, riches, honor, or obligations over God: but whoever does prefer them becomes subject to the judgments of God; therefore, he first demanded that God's commandments not be hidden from him. For whoever knows the commandments of God and keeps them, does not flee from Divine judgments, but desires them; and deservedly, as if the commandments had been revealed to him, he says: I have desired to desire your judgments at all times.

33. He did not say: I desired judgments, but: I desired to desire. For just as to live is more than simply living (for living is a common attribute even of this life, but to live is the attribute of the blessed), so to desire in order to desire the judgments of God is more than simply desiring judgments. For we desire to desire, as if desire were not within our power, but within the grace of God. For when the Lord sees that we take pleasure in desiring His judgments, He increases our sober affection. But when we sin, we do not desire to desire the judgments of God. For a sick person does not desire to be burned or cut so that they can receive healing. The one who is seriously ill avoids being burned, cut, bound, or abstaining from food. But the one who has good health confidently seeks out a doctor. Hence, the Lord also says not in vain: "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you" (Luke 22:15); not only desiring, but also desiring with doubled desire to grant the remission of sins. Let us therefore desire the judgments of God. A good conscience, when examined, is proven. And let us desire and long for in every moment, so that no moment of good may pass without the longing of desire.

34. (Ver. 21.) You rebuke the proud: cursed are those who turn away from your commandments. When the Lord Jesus redeemed the human race through obedience and restored justice, the serpent introduced sin through disobedience; we can estimate the extent of this vice, of which the author is the devil, whom the Prophet introduces saying: I will set my throne above the clouds, and I will be like the Most High (Isaiah 14:14). Therefore, since he is most wicked, he did not give honor to our Lord God; nevertheless, he educated worse disciples. For he exalted himself in such a way that he wanted to be equal and similar to the Most High: but his disciple, as signified by the Apostle, would be indignant to be considered equal and similar to God. For it is written: When the man of sin and son of perdition is revealed, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called

god (2 Thess. 2:3-4). Therefore, the teacher considers himself similar, this one superior. And so the Lord said to his disciples: You will do greater things (John, XIV, 12); so that to those whom the serpent had taken away more than he himself had lost, Christ would give greater things than he had done on earth. For he wanted to deceive the prince of the world in himself, to triumph in the disciples.

35. Therefore, willing to avenge the human race for such a great crime, he introduced the Pharisee and the publican in the temple praying (Luke, XVIII, 10 et seq.); and he taught that even if a person has other good qualities, what offends more is pride, rather than humility, for one who is not supported by any virtue; for the devil strives to overthrow those who are intent on good works. How much effort that Pharisee made, so as not to take what belonged to others, so as not to be unjust, so as not to commit adultery! How hard he labored so as not to sin, just as the tax collector sinned! How hard he labored to fast twice on the Sabbath! How hard he labored to give a tenth of everything he acquired! Who among us does these things? How many have possessions and only care about their own gain, storing up the harvest for themselves alone! The devil noticed this and infected him with a serious sore; so that he would not hold his head high, inflated with pride; and in the very thing he believed would be praiseworthy, there he would be judged more reprehensible. Indeed, be grateful to God that he was not a robber, adulterer, or unjust. How wickedly the serpent struggled against him, and bound him with heavy coils! He made himself higher, to cast him down from a greater height: he made himself lower, to overthrow him from a higher position with a heavier fall. The downfall of arrogance is a great ruin, which took away his higher status. This is the wicked struggle of the serpent, in which it twists itself in many turns.

36. He wanted to inflate both himself and Paul. Which Paul? Certainly not the apostle by men, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ (II Cor., XII, 7-8). And he had nearly been deceived, to the point that he asked for the removal of the goad of his flesh, which was humbling him. But the good Lord, who wanted to make Paul stronger through his infirmities, sent him the angel of Satan; so that the devil would be conquered by his own tricks. The Pharisee was not lying, but he was even speaking the truth: but everyone who exalts themselves, even if they speak the truth, offends (Luc., XVIII, 14). Finally, the Pharisee entered the temple, more probable than the tax collector; and yet, condemned, he left. How great a crime is pride, that even adulteries are preferred to it!

37. Finally, the Lord, who gives to others, resists the proud, and as if engages in combat with those who exalt themselves, and claims this contest for himself: and he rebukes the arrogant who show compassion to others; because there is nothing more serious than despising our poor brothers with a proud eye, rejecting them from us with intolerable disdain, judging them unworthy of our grace because they are poor: when poverty is easier for God than a more acceptable treasure.

38. Cursed, he says, are those who deviate from your commands. Above he had said: Do not hide your commands from me; and so, knowing the revealed commands, he condemns those who have deviated from heavenly commands. And he rightly says: those who deviate; for the command is straightforward, so no one should deviate from it.

However, he moves in the following way, saying: Do not hide your commandments from me. For what is hidden becomes obscure and hidden; since he said above: The commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes (Psalm 18:9). If the commandment is clear, how is it hidden; for no

one puts a lamp under a measure? Unless perhaps it is one clear commandment, but many commandments are hidden. For, he says, your judgments are like a deep abyss (Psalm 35:7). Judgment is not like an abyss, but judgments are spoken.

40. But see the order. Above he says: Do not reject me from your commandments; below he says: Do not hide your commandments from me; here he says: Cursed are those who turn aside from your commandments. Truly cursed are those who turn aside from your commandments, who ought to give thanks: first, because they are not rejected; second, because they have not deserved to have divine commandments hidden from themselves. Therefore, someone turns aside from what he desired.

41. (Verse 22.) It follows: Remove from me scorn and contempt; for I have sought your testimonies. If contempt is considered in the place of scorn, how is it written: God has chosen the despised things of this world (I Corinthians, 1:28)? But consider that it is said despised things of this world, not of God. For what is contemptible in this world is precious in the sight of God. Finally, humility is despised in this world, but is approved by the judgment of God. And if a tax collector humbles himself, he is exalted. Listen to whom God loves, and do not consider it as nothing. Whoever is holy, who lives without blemish, guards the truth, did not desire his neighbor, he is not diminished in the sight of the wicked; he has rejected everything that is evil (Psalm 14:2-4): even if he is a gentile, he is proven by God through the devotion of humility. But the proud, like the Pharisee, are considered worthless because of their arrogance. Finally, gentility is not enduring, but devotion remains forever. So be careful not to be a disgrace to Christ. I do not want anyone to curse me or despise me as a sinner; how grave it would be if Christ were to deem me worthy of disgrace! Woe to you, he says, Corozaim and Bethsaida (Luke, 10, 13). They are condemned because they did not repent of their sins. Therefore, let us act so that disgrace is taken away from us. But who is there who is not worthy of disgrace? Those who seek the testimonies of the Lord. There are indeed many who wish to bring reproach upon your servants, but they themselves are more disgraceful; for to suffer glorious reproach for your name is honorable.

42. (Vers. 23.) And therefore he says: For indeed the rulers sat and opposed me. The voice of the martyr is, who being brought to the judgment of persecutors, when he was forced to offer sacrifice to idols, and steadfastly resisted; but the judges sitting in their tribunals, surrounded by their attendants, being indignant that their commands were not obeyed, decided what punishment they considered fitting; he stood fearless, saying: The rulers sat and opposed me. Is this also the voice of the Lord, when the presbytery of the people, and the chief priests and scribes had assembled, and he had been brought before the council of the Jews, saying: Why do we still need witnesses? for we have heard from his own mouth (Mt. XXVI, 65); and he stood before the governor, and was led to the cross, what more beautiful could he say, than: The princes sat, and opposed me, that is, while I was standing, the princes sat? And because the tribunals were exalted on high supports, they did not see the Lord. So they sat, they were at the pinnacle of power, and they did not think of the Prince of princes. But this is not enough. Against me, they objected. I had come as their Redeemer, I had come to cleanse the sins of all, to restore the lost, to restore the inheritance of the holy Jacob to paradise; and they objected against me. And therefore, my imitators, my disciples, do not be ashamed of injury if you stand before princes in my name; for I have stood for your salvation.

43. Finally, Peter, along with the other apostles, was handed over to custody. And on the next day, standing before the council, he boldly declared: 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. (Acts 4:8-10)' In other words, it is you who are responsible for crucifying Christ. We consider this to be a great injustice, for we are being accused regarding the health of a sick man. This inheritance has been left by the Savior of all to his faithful servants. But they conferred among themselves, saying: What shall we do with these men (Ibid. 16)? And they let them go. Therefore Peter and the other apostles gloried, for they were considered worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. So it was right for them to say then: For indeed princes sat, and spoke against me.

44. The princes sat against Isaiah, and argued that he should be cut: but he did not fear what they said: Hear . . . O princes of Sodom (Isaiah, I, 10). They sat against Jeremiah to throw him into the pit. They sat against Zechariah, who was killed between the temple and the altar. They sat against Susanna, and judged against the chaste woman: but to show that the counsel of the princes was not good, the Lord stirred up the spirit of a young boy; and the prophet absolved the same woman, whom the princes had declared guilty of death, from the complete accusation of wrongdoing.

45. There are also other leaders who criticize us, about whom it is said: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers, against the rulers of this world of darkness, against the spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians, VI, 12). These are the ones who sit and watch, to see who is righteous in this world, who serves God diligently as a Christian, and is eager for good works and deeds. They speak ill of him, saying: Let us lay a trap for him, let us hinder him, let us prevent him from achieving what he desires, let us crush his mind, let us break his spirit with frequent and sudden adversities; and if he is approved by God because of his righteousness, let us ask to be given his temptations. For not even such a great prophet could have had the power over his many temptations if the Lord had not allowed it for the purpose of testing his soldier, so that He might crown him with greater glory. Who then stirred up king Saul against him, if not an evil spirit, as we read, who was troubled whenever David soothed the king's mind and spirit with the sound of the harp or with the strains and strings of good advice and good works (1 Samuel 16:23)? Who incited Doeg the Edomite to wickedness, so that he would betray the holy man and endanger the life of the priest (2 Samuel 22:9-10)? Who inflamed the passion of Amnon, so that he defiled the prophetic house and caused distress to his father, one with incestuous desire and the other with injury (2 Samuel 13:14)? And yet, he who prophesied to others could not foresee the evils in his own house? Who armed Absalom with fury, to exclude his father from the house, and to pursue him in deadly battle (2 Sam. 15:14)? But when the holy man was now almost weakened by the power of the kingdom, he extinguished with this one thing the poisoned arrows of the devil that were being launched against him, because even though the son sought the death of his father, he still entrusted the safety of his son to his piety with affection.

46. Therefore the leaders of the people, like Achitophel and other leaders of the warriors, sat (2 Kings 18:5). The leaders of the people dealt with Absalom against the Prophet (2 Kings 15:31). And so he says: Indeed the leaders sat, and they opposed me: but your servant was engaged in your justifications. We observe the weapons of the just, with which he repels the attacks of all

adversaries. Elsewhere he says: They surrounded me and attacked me without cause: for they detracted from me in order to show their love, but I prayed (Psalm 108:3-4): here he says that his zeal was not for practicing the arts of war, nor for deceiving the enemy with any cunning of the heart; he fought against those whom he could not see, and in him there was greater piety than military strength of the body. And so he was engaged in the justifications of God; in order to wound the devil with a contrary blow. The devil was trying to lead him away from the intention of justice and the zeal of devotion, with warlike occupations; but he was more occupied with the meditations of divine work and worship. And so the Lord protected him, in whom he had hoped, with whom he spoke, to whom he clung with all his affection. For the righteous person either speaks with God in prayer, or speaks of divine works in praise; and he always speaks of the works of God, so that his mouth does not speak the works of men. The just man speaks nothing earthly, he does nothing mortal.

47. (v. 24) Therefore he says: Truly, your testimonies are my meditation, and your counsels are my justification. Notice what he teaches, that these should be the counsels of the righteous, that they meditate on God's commands, and exercise themselves in praising God and in praying; that they may always justify the Lord. The one who does what God commands, who believes that it pleases God, justifies God. This can be understood from reading the Gospel (Luke 7:30), as the Evangelist says that the Pharisees rejected the counsel of God, not having been baptized with John's baptism. In this book, you have this: those who refused to be baptized did not justify God. Therefore, the Lord said to John, 'I must be baptized by you, and you are coming to me.' John replied, 'Allow it for now, for it is necessary for us to fulfill all righteousness' (Matthew 3:14-15). Therefore, whoever obeys God's commandments justifies God, because they do His righteousness. It is good for human plans to follow God's certain plan, as our plans are often uncertain and proven by the outcome of events.

Sermon 4. Daleth.

The fourth letter according to the Hebrews, Daleth, signifies in Latin fear, or (as we have found elsewhere) birth. But both can be fitting and consistent in meaning. Birth is indeed what is generated in this world, through which we understand the corporeal and material, which are transient, and therefore not far from fear; for fear is born from corporeal and material things. For what is earthly birth, if not fear?

Verse 25. Finally, the verse begins: My soul clings to the ground: revive me according to your word. By the ground, we understand the earth, and by the earth, we understand material things. But to the sinner it is said: You are dust, and to dust you shall return (Gen. 3:19), because he did not consider it necessary to adhere to divine commandments, but turned towards material and worldly things, which are marked by the pleasures of this secular life. Finally, expelled from paradise, that is, from that sublime and heavenly place to which Paul was caught up, whether in the body or out of the body, he did not know, therefore, cast down from that high place to the earth, Adam laments saying: My soul clings to the ground; as he elsewhere says: My soul is humbled in the dust, and my belly clings to the earth (Psalm 43:25). This is the voice of one doing penance, who remembered that while attached to God, he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body (which Paul also did not discern), so he did not feel any weakness or laziness of the body, to which the presence of the Lord clung. Therefore, the prophetic spirit, who

expressed the pain, or the Lord, who took on his weakness, represents the person of Adam and assumes his condition.

Therefore, Adam spoke: My soul clings to the ground. He who previously enjoyed the most blessed heavenly air, knew nothing of the cares and weariness of this life, is now weighed down by the anxieties of this world, enslaved to the pursuit of luxury and the desire for wealth, like a fox entering its den and hiding in earthly hiding places. He rightly clung to the dust, for he could not lift himself unless Christ lifted him up on his cross. He rightly clung to the ground, which hid him from Christ. He does not adhere to the ground to which Jesus says: Follow me (John 1:43). He does not adhere to the ground who hears and follows the Law saying: You shall walk after the Lord your God, and you shall adhere to Him (Deuteronomy 10:20).

4. Therefore, how does each person adhere to the ground, how does one adhere to God, hearing Him say: What adheres to a prostitute is one body... but the one who adheres to God is one spirit (I Cor., VI, 16 and 17). This earth on which we walk, captivates us with certain enticements of a prostitute, and smears certain false appearances of bodily pleasures; so that the truth may hide in them and deceive those who approach with a certain outward appearance. But when the inner eye of the mind is covered by the passage of time, afterwards, however, the emptiness of the charm of these pleasures can easily be detected, as the grace of this age or of the body is shaken off like a certain dust of delights.

Therefore, it is good to adhere to the Lord and not to have a stubborn neck to the yoke of the world. And so, the Church, or strong souls, says Wisdom: Your neck is like the tower of David, which is built with bulwarks: a thousand shields hang upon it, all the armor of the mighty (Song of Solomon, 4:4). For the neck that is raised towards God and is fit for the yoke of Christ, will not be curved by the enticements of the world, just as the tower of Christ's kingdom cannot be imposed with his yoke by Nebuchadnezzar. For David, that strong man, built that tower and constructed it high above the walls; so that it may serve as both a defense and a decoration: a defense, because it foresees and repels the enemy; a decoration, because it not only surpasses the lowly, but also the lofty. Yet, it serves as a defense or decoration, if it contains within itself the teachings of the word like certain ornaments, and if it also possesses the spears of powerful prophets, which are aimed at every exalted height that opposes itself to the arms of faith.

Therefore, do not drag your soul into the dust of death, to whom the Lord has also given a natural height and the strength to rise and lift itself up. Hence, this appropriate saying about the union of the soul and the body is understood: because in the mystery of our natural life, the soul is connected to the body like it crawls on the ground and clings to the earth: partly because of this earthly dwelling, partly because this body is from the earth. And so, the inn of the region and the very matter of our body agrees with this opinion. Therefore, the Apostle desires to be freed from the death of this body (Rom. VII, 24), because we are enclosed in a certain prison, and we are ensnared in the whirlpool of lust, and we are enveloped in the darkness of sins. So let us walk according to the will of God, that we may be thought to cleave unto God. For he who lives according to the desire of the flesh, is flesh: but he who lives according to the precepts of God, is spirit. Therefore, let not our soul become flesh, that is, let us not be called flesh like those who perished in the flood, of whom it is said, 'For they are flesh' (Gen., VI, 3): but rather let our flesh obey the helm of the soul, let it become soul, and let it deserve to be called by that name, as the

family of the patriarch Jacob was called, and his holy offspring. For it is written: These are the sons of Bala, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, and she bore these to Jacob, seven souls. And elsewhere: All the souls that came with Jacob to Egypt, that came out of his loins besides Jacob's wives, were sixty-six souls. And in the beginning of Exodus we read: Now all the souls that descended from Jacob were seventy-five, who were with Jacob. Therefore, those who lived with Joseph and came out of Egypt are souls.

8. But when they were angels of God, that is, imitating the life and grace of angels (for those who do not take wives or marry will be like angels in heaven), those who were seen with angels were captivated by feminine beauty, they are of the flesh, as the Lord God said: My spirit will not remain with these men forever, because they are of the flesh (Gen., VI, 3). And rightly they are compared to angels who are free from lust: they are not in the flesh, but in spirit; just like those who followed the teaching of the Apostle, to whom he said: But you are not in the flesh, but in spirit (Rom., VIII, 9). But those who are captured by the desire for women's bodies are carnal: and would that they were only carnal, and not also neighing like horses; for they would neigh at their neighbor's wife (Jeremiah 5:8).

Therefore, he who feels the dejection of his soul curved down to the ground, in order to be revived according to the word of God, which draws souls to itself and, desiring to alleviate them by its mercy, draws them away from the earth. But the soul is revived, which walks in the ways of Christ, dead to sin but alive to God, so that sin may no longer have dominion over it, after it has been buried with Christ and justified from sin. But whoever desires to be justified, should declare his ways beforehand.

10. (Verse 26.) And therefore, in the second verse, he says: I have declared my ways, and you have heard me: teach me your justifications. He thinks that it is necessary to come to the justifications of God in a beautiful order; that first he confesses his sins. For thus we are taught elsewhere: Declare your iniquities, that you may be justified (Isaiah 43:26). Therefore, we must know what it means for a man to walk in his own ways, and the ways of God. Whoever does the desires of the flesh and lives according to the lust of this world, walks in his own ways, in which he takes delight and rejoices. But whoever seeks to do the will of his Father who is in heaven, whose food is to fulfill the commandment of God, who does not seek what is pleasing to oneself, but what pleases God; that person walks the way of the Lord, the way that says: I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). So you see that he who walks in the ways of Christ lives according to the word of God. The Lord God Himself also teaches in Deuteronomy how you should walk in His ways, saying: And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep His commandments and His statutes (Deuteronomy 10:12-13)? Therefore, it is clear that there are different paths of the flesh and different paths of God: and if anyone wishes to walk the paths of God, let him first know that he must abandon the paths of the flesh, the body, and worldly wisdom.

11. Therefore, leaving them, David proclaims and does not remain silent before God. He confesses his mistakes, he does not remain silent about his lapses. He said something similar to this: I will announce my wrongdoing to the Lord (Psalm 31:5). For if the righteous person accuses themselves, they exclude the voice of the prepared accuser, who is accustomed to embitter sins

and exaggerate each person's wrongdoings. Therefore, he shuts the mouth of the person who has confessed about themselves and grants forgiveness to the one who confesses. Modesty excuses the guilty party, while shame accuses its author. For whoever does not keep silent about their own crimes, seems to regret what they have done, and to betray what they have recommended in the devil. And so Scripture says: The righteous at the beginning of speech accuses himself (Prov., XVIII, 17). Whoever accuses themselves, even though they are a sinner, begins to be righteous; because they do not spare themselves, and they confess to the justice of God, whom they believe can conceal nothing. If only Adam had wanted to accuse himself before hiding! But it is not enough for us to confess our error: rather, even if we want to be corrected, we ask the Lord to teach us His justifications, so that we may not err afterwards. Therefore, we ask to be taught by the Lord, because He is our only teacher, as Christ said (Matthew 23:18). And this request is not in vain; for blessed is not the one whom a man teaches, but the one whom You, Lord, instruct.

12. (Verse 27.) Everywhere he remembers himself, and he thinks it is not enough for the Lord our God to teach him his justifications, but he added: Show me the way of your justifications, and I will meditate on your wonders. See the order. It is first that we learn the justifications of the Lord, then that we know certain steps of justifications and the order, what should be first, what should be consequent. For to know what you do, and not to know the order of doing, is not complete knowledge: it usually offends the preposterous. Finally, he is just, who accuses himself at the beginning of the conversation; but he is unjust, who confesses what he had previously denied. The former finds the grace of modesty; the latter incurs the mark of impudence. Thus, ignorance of order disturbs the nature and form of affairs. However, he who first learns the mysteries of God, then the order of the mysteries, is trained in the wonders of God.

13. The Greek poet **δολεσχῆσαι** said: according to Latinus, I will hallucinate. In this, there seems to be some offense in the language according to common usage; for **δολεσχῆσαι** is commonly understood to mean either hallucinate or speak more than necessary, and it seems superfluous, which is displeasing to the listener. It also seems out of order, as the order of things seems to bring disgust; for example, if you want to explain a cause and maintain order, but the listener rushes to the conclusion, they will find the earlier parts distasteful. But it cannot be fully understood unless one has knowledge of its order. From this, not only the thing itself is understood, but also the weight of the deed and the emotions of the doer. Therefore, David, like a good judge and arbiter of himself, wants to be taught almost to the point of disgust and prefers to spend more time than necessary rather than skip the necessary order. For excessive and protracted meditation seems to be a form of wandering or a burdensome fixation of the mind, which is not far from exercise, either of the mind or of the body. For just as someone who exercises their limbs in the gym, exercises them for a longer time in order to strengthen them: so someone who exercises their mind in divine Scriptures, or in counsel, ought to exercise it for a longer time.

14. Isaac went out into the field (Gen. XXIV, 63). The Greek word **δολεσχῆσαι** corresponds to the Latin word *deambulare* or *exerceri*, meaning to walk or exercise. Rebecca came; she was a type prefiguring the Church. The wedding was being prepared, in which a great mystery would be celebrated. Seeing these mysteries, the patriarch went out into the field, pouring out the bitterness of his mind and walking in the innocence of his heart. He exercised his mind with various thoughts and delighted in marvelous mysteries. The holy prophet desired to imitate him, to be taught the

justifications of God and to know the way of celestial justice. He did not let his soul sleep in the slumber of this world, nor was he captivated by the allurements of worldly vanity, drifting away from the pursuit of truth.

15. (Verse 28.) In what way, therefore, He desires to be taught, He showed by saying: 'My soul has dripped forth with weariness, strengthen Thou me according to Thy words.' Some codices have 'has slumbered,' because 'has slumbered' and 'has dripped forth' are discordant in two letters. The interpreter or ancient writer could be deceived here: 'λιν' is to sleep, 'στειν' is to drip forth. The more perfect one does not slumber, who directs his mind to divine mysteries. Finally, He Himself elsewhere says: 'If I shall give sleep to My eyes, or slumber to My eyelids.' (Psalm 131:4). But he is always awake, and if the flesh sleeps, the heart is awake. Therefore, he who intended to build a temple for the Lord by the edification of heavenly words, not of stones, was not sleeping. For the word of God is the repellent of tedium, by which the sleep of the soul and the drowsiness of the mind are excluded. For sleep creeps in from the sadness and anxiety of worldly things. But he who clings to God, fleeing from cares, embraces the pleasure of eternal knowledge, fearing no change of worldly things.

16. Those who make use of easier shortcuts therefore become sluggish and lazy; but Origen, who carefully examines the interpretations of many, trickles down in his writings, following the fact that a perfected soul, like a well-composed and fortified structure, does not trickle down as the roof peaks that are well-covered and protected; on the other hand, uncomposed things quickly trickle down. Hence the saying is used: 'Stillicidia eject a man from his house in winter', in which we are tempted by the harshness of the cold and the frequent change of air. Finally, we are taught to be careful that our flight does not happen in winter or on the Sabbath (Matt. XXIV, 20). For the proven days should already find us either at the judgment or at death, lest it find us widowed of the greenness of prosperity and stripped of all the flowers of success in this world.

Let us therefore beware that none of us be cast out from the state of his own mind and from his natural dwelling-place, if he have any hollow places in his dwelling-places, from which as from foundations flowing drops undermine the man who is grounded upon no solidity of wisdom. Therefore the prophet saith: Son, let not the current flow down. (Prov., III, 21). Our soul must therefore be fortified, that it may not drip; and a firm structure must be built up of the indivisible union of virtues, that it may be able to preserve the mystery of the eternal King. Moreover, whoever is easy with words, like a full of cracks, flowing here and there, empties his interior and is flooded with external passions, unaware of how to cover himself, nor hold onto the word he has received: just like the holy Mary who kept all these words in her heart (Luke, II, 51), so that nothing would flow out of her heart.

18. The Church speaks of herself as fortified with the dowry of virtues, so that it may seem worthy of the Sponsus, who is invited to enter her hospitality. Hence, first of all, she presumes that she will be pleasing if Christ, gazing at her, beholds her well-covered and preserving faithful silence. Behold, she says, my beautiful cousin, indeed handsome: our leaning is shady, the beams of our houses are cedar, our ceilings are cypress (Song of Songs 1:15-16). The Church praises the beauty of the Sponsus, which each individual praises with silent affection, and the faithful interpreter of mysteries proclaims even more through silence. For whoever reveals secrets diminishes the glory of Christ. Therefore, let no one cast their pearls before swine, lest they

trample on precious ornaments. Therefore, do not speak in the tavern of the loquacious and garrulous, for in much talking sin is committed; but in the presence of a serious man who is sparing in speech, avoiding immoderate speech and the drunkenness of loquacity, Christ inclines his head.

19. And rightly it signifies a shady inclination, because virtue overshadows those established in the Church of the Most High. This shade David sought for protection; so that the sun would not burn him during the day, nor the moon during the night (Ps. CXX, 6). This shade is provided by the spiritual grace, fleeing from the scorching heat of this age and the summer of the world. Therefore, the shady inclination of Christ and the Church, to whom that eternal rest of God the Father aspires. In this shade, let us rest, weary from the heat of our sins. If anyone is burned by desire, let them be refreshed with the cross of the Lord, on which he reclined, in order to take up our sins. If anyone is wearied by guilt, let them be received in the embrace of Jesus, and let him comfort them with his gentle embrace. Therefore, I dare to say that the leaning of the flesh of Christ is the Church.

20. The beams of our houses are cedar. The glory of our ancestors who were just is declared by the appearance of cedar; for the just shall flourish like the palm tree, and shall be multiplied like the cedar that is in Lebanon. For as the cedar does not rot, so does the glory of our ancestors not decay with any age.

21. Our lacunaria of cypress. This type of tree never loses its greenness: it feeds its foliage in winter, spring, and summer, and does not change color. Only the wind never strips this tree of its honor: it is never divested of its old garment, nor clothed in a new flower. Likewise, apostolic grace knows no decline: but it flourishes with age. Therefore, the soul, which is vigorous with flourishing merits, does not know how to corrupt, always sustains the heights of justice and other virtues with patient magnanimity. And therefore it does not flow away or fail; because nothing in it is broken or loose, nothing is movable, nothing is slippery, nothing that could be poured out due to the fault of speech. And thus it seeks to confirm itself in its own words, as the Prophet says (Ps. 72:2); so that its feet may not be moved, nor its steps poured out. But if someone abides with a straight heart, they do not suffer, but being rooted and grounded, they remain immovable against all the waves of passion.

22. (Verse 29.) So, being confirmed in his words, he says: Remove the way of iniquity from me, and have mercy on me according to your law. He did not say: Remove me from the way of iniquity; but, Remove the way of iniquity from me; as if it were within us, and seemed to be in us. For as long as we practice something wicked, the way of iniquity remains within us, and does not depart from us; therefore, let us strive to separate it from ourselves. But because the adhesive glue of hereditary iniquity clings to human minds, the assistance of a liberator is necessary. Pray, both you and say: Unhappy am I, who will remove from me the path of wickedness? Through the grace of God and Jesus Christ our Lord; and beautifully he said the way of wickedness, not wickedness; because natural wickedness is not in us, but the footprints of our ancestors who have passed after sins. And rightfully so, because the wound is large and old, and it has been festering for a long time, it requires more advanced medical treatment, begging to be healed by the legitimate mercy of the Lord. For a wound quickly becomes irritated if it has not been healed by the laws of medicine; indeed, even a more serious treatment feels the progress. Therefore, if the infection

spreads internally, the medicines applied externally do not have an effect. Therefore, the method of medicine requires that it be treated either by cutting or by burning. For unless putrefaction is removed, or useless moisture is boiled away, in vain are the hands of medicine applied to wounds. Therefore, a good physician rightly says that such a sick person must be treated in order for medicine to be of benefit. Therefore, the law shows mercy to those who show mercy with justice and wisdom, so that they may forgive what they know can be forgiven by law; lest in showing mercy to another, they make themselves subject to the law. Agag, after being shown mercy, caused Saul to sin. For he has sinned in mercy itself, and therefore he has sinned after mercy.

24. Let us also consider, lest we make even that person worse, whom we pity unjustly. For often it is of greater authority not to punish wrongdoers than to seek revenge. Those who have committed something dishonourable are often delivered up to the passions of disgrace, and they receive no reward for their guilt. Finally, those who did not consider God the avenger of their sins, and who lived as if without a judge and without law, God delivered them, as it is said, to a reprobate sense (Romans 1:28): because they chose the path of iniquity, and they did not want to choose the path of truth.

25. (Vers. 30.) But the prophet, who wanted to convert with sincere affection, said, 'I have chosen the path of truth; I have not forgotten your commandments.' Those who err in doctrine cannot say this. An Arian cannot say it, a Sabellian cannot say it, a Manichaeian cannot say it. A greedy person who desires worldly and material things cannot say it. A busy person cannot say it, for the pursuit of truth does not involve the desire to possess. How is it that the way of truth, when that wealthy man is unable to transfer his riches with him in the world, he begins to be even needier than that beggar Lazarus after death? The way of truth is not the honor of the world, but the concern of the world. Finally, he who chooses the way of truth says shortly after: Turn my eyes away lest they see vanity (Inf. verse 37). The vanity of temporal things is the truth of eternal things. If therefore we desire to walk the way of truth, let us be more like pilgrims to the world than to God, and let us walk by faith. For the one who walks by faith is present to God, and the one who walks by appearance is present to the world, and he is a pilgrim from the Lord; but here he is quickly confounded.

26. (Verse 31.) From which [reason] David says, fleeing from a man of this sort: I have clung to your testimonies, O Lord; do not put me to shame. He clings to the testimonies of the Lord who does not reject his commandments, does not forget his judgments, and does not indulge in his own desires. He who clings to the testimonies of the Lord renounces the world, forgets the things that are behind, strives towards the things that are before, in order to attain the prize, which is the mark of victory. Therefore, he is not put to shame whom the seductive allurements of this world do not deceive; he is not put to shame, even if he commits things that should be ashamed of, who seeks forgiveness for his sins from Christ. Therefore, it is responded to him: Your sins are forgiven you . . . go in peace (Luke, VII, 48 and 50). But it is not thus confused, if the remission of sins has been accomplished in him; so that it not only takes away sins, but also the inclination to sin. Righteousness forgives iniquities, strength removes fear, temperance cleanses impurities; so that not only temporal, but also eternal forgiveness of sins is made. Let Christ enter into your soul, let Jesus dwell in your minds; so that in the dwelling of virtue, there can be no place for sin.

27. (Verse 32.) 'I ran the way of thy commandments when thou didst enlarge my heart,' says the psalmist. For he could not run the way unless his heart were enlarged. Finally, the apostle says to those who are running the way of the Lord, 'Be ye enlarged, and be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers' (2 Cor., VI, 13 and 14). And he says of himself, 'Our mouth is open unto you, O ye Corinthians, our heart is enlarged' (Ibid., 11). Therefore it is also said of Solomon: 'The largeness of his heart was as the sand of the sea' (1 Kings, IV, 29); and consider the difference: let the way be narrower, the heart broader, that it may be capable of receiving the indwelling of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; lest the Word of God should come and knock, and seeing the straits of his heart, disdain to dwell there. Finally, wisdom is sung in its departure, but it acts with confidence in the streets. The streets are wide. Therefore, wisdom is not sung in the roads, but in the breadth of the heart. In this field of the inner man, we must run, not in the narrowness of the mind, in order to comprehend. For it is written: 'Run in such a way that you may obtain the prize' (1 Corinthians 9:24). Finally, he comprehends who has run in such a way that he may say: 'I have finished my course' (2 Timothy 4:7); for he has run like a good horse.

Indeed, Christ has his own horses, of whom the Prophet says: You sent out your horses into the sea, disturbing many waters (Habakkuk, 3:15); this is because the apostles, by preaching, stirred up the peoples of the nations, who are moved like many waters and stirred up like the waves of many waters, so that they would rise up from earthly idolatrous ceremonies and believe in Christ. And he also says: I have mounted on your horses; your cavalry brings healing (Habakkuk, 3:8). Oh, the wonderful team of good horses, whose reins of peace are the reins of charity! They are bound together by the chains of harmony, and subjected to the yoke of faith, carrying the mystery of the Gospel on the four wheels, bringing the Word of God as a good charioteer, driving away the secular enticements with his whip, and the prince of this world is vanquished, the race of the righteous is complete. Oh, the great contest of rational horses! Oh wondrous mystery! The wheel within a wheel was turning, and was not hindered. The New Testament was in the Old Testament, and within it, it ran, through which it was announced. The wheels went in four directions, and did not turn back; for the spirit of life was in those who ran in the four parts of the whole world; and they ran without stumbling, for the good life of the horses was squared. So the horses ran; for the one who had ascended the horses did not sleep.

Therefore, Jesus is the charioteer of our souls, who also wants us to ascend our horses, that is, our bodies; but we must always be vigilant, lest it be said to us: Those who ascended the horses have fallen asleep (Psalm 75:7). This sea must be crossed quickly. It is hardly crossed by those who are vigilant; but if anyone should fall asleep, they will not be able to cross; rather, they will be submerged, like the Egyptian whose soul and body perished: For he cast the horse and its rider into the sea (Exodus 15:1), those who did not follow the law, but pursued.

Sermon 5. He.

The fifth letter, He, which means in Latin, is: or, as found elsewhere, I live. Both interpretations are suitable; for the one who is, lives; and the one who lives, exists. Indeed, the nations are not alive; and for this reason, they do not live, but are dead. But Jesus is yesterday and today, He is Himself, and He is forever (Heb., XIII, 8). And He who is, lives: For I myself live, says the Lord God (Ezek., XXXIII, 11). For how can He not exist, who lives? But Jesus, who also brings the dead to life and calls into existence the things that do not exist as if they did. It is no wonder if nature yields to the

Lord, that the dead may be brought to life and may begin to exist who were not. And therefore, because the way is also the life according to Him who says: I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6); let us seek the way, that we may deserve to have life. Let us hear, therefore, Him who lives in Christ. But he lives who says: But we who live, bless you, O Lord (Psalm 114:18); for even whoever has died in Christ, lives.

2. (Verse 33.) Let us hear, I say, what He has said in order to live: Establish for me, O Lord, the law of Your justifications, and I will always seek it. The soldier who proceeds on a journey does not determine the order of his provisions himself, nor does he choose the way according to his own judgment, nor does he seek luxurious shortcuts, lest he depart from the signs: but he receives the itinerary from the commander, and keeps to it; he proceeds in the prescribed order; he walks with his armor, and completes the journey on the right path; so that he may find prepared supplies for his provisions. If he walks by another route, he does not receive provisions, he does not find a prepared lodging; because the emperor orders all these things to be prepared for those who follow, and they do not deviate from the prescribed route neither to the right nor to the left. And he who follows his emperor does not fail without reason; for he walks in moderation, because the emperor considers not what is advantageous to himself, but what is possible for everyone: therefore he also arranges stations; the army walks for three days, and rests on the fourth day. Cities are chosen in which three, four, or more days are spent, if there is an abundance of water and they are frequented by commerce: and so the journey is completed without labor until one reaches that city, which is chosen as if royal, where rest is provided for weary armies.

I would like you to recognize that this law of eating was prescribed, with Christ leading and the saints accompanying. For our fathers also set out from the land of Egypt and journeyed through extensive stretches of land, with each stopping place and encampment recorded, until they reached Kadesh, that is, the holy land. These are the stopping places of the Israelites, which Moses described by command of the Lord. Therefore, we observe who ordained these encampments and how the children of Israel should walk. For God led them during the day in a pillar of cloud, to give them shade on their way, and at night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night never left its place in front of the people. But that pillar of cloud indeed led the children of Israel in appearance, but in mystery it signified the Lord Jesus who would come in a light cloud, as Isaiah said (Isaiah. XIX, 1); that is, in the Virgin Mary, who was a cloud according to the inheritance of Eve: she was light according to the integrity of virginity. She was light, who sought not to please man, but the Lord. She was light, who conceived not in iniquity, but brought forth by the coming of the Holy Spirit: not in sin, but gave birth with grace.

Another interpretation can also be taken. Christ came in a light cloud to Egypt, that is, he came in the assumption of a body into this world. He came in a cloud, which the cloud of the body overshadowed: but the flesh was light, which was not burdened by its own sins. For how could he be burdened by his own sins, who took away the sins of all peoples? Behold, says he, the Lamb of God: behold him who takes away the sin of the world (John, I, 29). Yesterday the bed was made, where Jesus stood, and he had dirty clothes; for he carried my sins. He took up our clothes, so that he might clothe us with the splendor of immortality. He came in a light cloud as justice; for iniquity sits on a leaden talent: Christ in the hearts of the righteous, in whom there were no sins. And therefore the bed was well made today: What shall I render to the Lord for all that he has

rendered to me? (Psalm 116:12) For us, the Word took on the weakness of flesh: for us, He hungered, was beaten, crucified, and died; so that for us, in whom before life was considered ignoble and degenerate, death might begin to be precious.

5. But let us return to the arrangement of the journey, and the order of the stops. And you spiritually follow this law of traveling; that you may come out of Egypt: and from there, advancing, you may pitch your tent in Socoth, let this be your first station. Socoth is the first stop, signifying the tent. Therefore, pitch the tent that is in you, and confirm the station of your mind; that you may remain rooted and founded in the faith of Christ. The next stop is in Mara, which means bitterness. Not all dwelling places are equal. From there, they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees. After the bitterness, in order to avoid the people from failing, pleasant and fruitful things had to come next. From there, it is followed by Rephidim, which is the praise of judgment. From there, it follows Sinai, which contains both the temptation of the people and the promulgation of the Law. The merits of dwelling places vary; because no one can have continuous success in this world. Therefore, the emperor provided manna to the hungry people in one place, and ordered water to flow from a rock in another place to quench the people's thirst, with magnificent provision. He gave the Law in another place, and bestowed triumphs in yet another place, so that the army, nourished by these benefits, would not feel the burden of a long journey.

Therefore, in that people there was a type, in us there is truth. Therefore, let us commit our journey to the guidance of the Lord Jesus, who first introduced the Law, and previously gave the land of promise as an inheritance to his people through Jesus. But even when Moses appeared to be the leader, Jesus was with him; however, he was not openly or plainly acting as the leader or prince of the people. For he was waiting until Moses completed his appointed time, and when it was completed, Jesus succeeded him. Therefore, if you consider the Scripture saying: 'Their days shall be one hundred twenty years' (Gen., VI, 3); you will see the mystery of the fullness of times and one hundred twenty years, after which both Moses rested on the mountain, and Jesus openly assumed the principality of the dwelling places; so that now the people may not be under the fear of the Law, but, having been raised from the dead, may enjoy the fruit of eternal life. Let us therefore walk according to the teaching of the Law: let the Law of God be our path.

While walking along this path, the Church says: I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys, like a lily among thorns (Song of Songs, II, 1); for the faith of the believing people has gone out into all the earth, and Christ has set His feet in a spacious place. And therefore He rightly says that He is the flower of the field. Paul was also a flower, who said: We are the good odor of Christ to God (2 Corinthians, II, 15). And truly a flower, who could bring forth new and old from the treasure of his heart. The Church is also called a beautiful lily: just as the lily shines, so too do the works of the saints shine. It is also very beautifully said to be a lily of the valleys; because grace shines more in the humble. But this lily is in the midst of thorns, that is, among the Jews and heretics, that is, among the anxieties of this world, which afflict the mind and soul of man. We can also take it in another sense; because just as the lily stands out among thorns, so does the Church of God shine above all gatherings.

It is worth considering that this lily is surrounded by brightness, but inside it is red, good and fragrant; because the flesh of Christ, as if enclosed by the walls of divine glory, has the heavenly protection of grace. Finally, in the later part it says: My brother is white and red (Song of Songs,

5:10). White in divine brightness, red in human appearance, which he took on through the sacrament of the incarnation. And rightly so, even the redness itself smells good; because the flesh of Christ is without sin, which those who oppose desecrated by staining their hands: the holy ones, venerating, emitted the fragrance of piety.

9. The Lord Jesus accepts this fragrance of His Church, and says, 'Behold, my good neighbor.' (Song of Solomon, I, 14 and 15). And the Church says to Christ, 'Behold, my good Brother, behold, You are good.' ... like a fruit on the trees of the forest. This type of fruit has a fragrant smell that surpasses the fragrance of other fruits. Therefore, Christ, being fixed to the tree like a fruit hanging on a tree, poured forth the good fragrance of worldly redemption; for He removed the foul odor of sin and poured forth the anointing of the drink of life. Just as, he says, an apple is in the trees of the forest, so my cousin was among the children (Ibid.); because he was comforting the inner hearts of people with the sweetness of his words on the prophets and apostles. But not only fragrance, but also pleasant food is in the apple. Therefore, Christ is a pleasant food.

10. In the shade, he said, I desired her and I sat (Song of Songs, II, 3). For he had received the law, and he followed it, and he walked in its path. Therefore, resting in the law, he rested in the shadow of Christ. A good shadow, which alone defends us from the heat of iniquity. But who doubts that the law of God is the shadow of Christ? What is the law of the feast day, the new moon, the Sabbath, but a shadow of things to come? Which day, according to the law of Moses? Let me see six days, and the seventh day again, and so on for eternal ages. Who knows the second month according to the Law of Moses; if you know the month, you will know the first day of the month, the new moon, and the true holy offerings to be made on the new moons? According to the Law of Moses, the year consists of six years, as it says: The Hebrew shall serve for six years, and in the seventh year, he shall go free (Deuteronomy, XV, 12); so that six years may be found in which someone works the land. But in the seventh year, he shall release it to the proselytes, the poor, and the beasts of the earth. In this seventh year, when all debts are forgiven to the Hebrews? In this shade rested the faith of the fathers, and the sacred devotion of the prophets. So the religious congregation or the holy soul says: In his shadow I desired and sat down (Song of Solomon, 2:3). His shadow is the Jubilee year. For who sees his mystical year, so as to recognize face to face, what must be fulfilled in the fiftieth year, according to the prescribed Law (Leviticus, 25)? The shadow is the feast days according to the Law, from the tenth day of the first month until the fourteenth day, and from there until the twenty-first day of the month (Leviticus, 23). What is that famous celebration between the first and seventh month in that anonymous time? The shadow is the sanctified freedom on the Sabbath. The shadow is the feast day of the seventh month's new moon and the memorial of the trumpets of the seventh month, the tenth day, the day of atonement (Lev. XXIII). You see that there are two festive days, the day of the thirteenth and the day of the fifteenth, the day of tabernacles for eight days. All these are in the shadow. The first day is called the shadow, and the eighth day is called the shadow, which is prescribed in the scenopegia according to the Law.

12. Establish for me some believers from the circumcision, learned in the Law, men of diligent observance, and now enlightened by the knowledge of the Gospel, nourished by spiritual grace; of whom the Church speaks, which sees Christ, which receives the Bridegroom, which is nourished by His food: In His shadow I desired, and I sat: and His fruit is sweet in my mouth (Song of Songs, 2:3). What is His sweet fruit, if not the preaching of the Lord's passion, as He Himself says:

Behold, the heritage of the Lord, children, the reward of the fruit of the womb (Psalm 126:3)? For what sweeter fruit can there be in our mouths than the forgiveness of sins? And the Church is truly a good flower which proclaims the fruit, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is said to Mary: Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb (Luke, 1:42).

Therefore, when he tasted the fruit of sweetness, he impatiently hurries towards more perfect things, saying: Bring me into the house of wine, establish love in me, strengthen me with ointments, sustain me with apples; for I am wounded with love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and strengths of the field, if you awaken and revive love, how long will you delay? (Song of Solomon, 2:4-7). He seeks him deservedly, he desires him deservedly; because our Emperor has arranged everything well in this course and journey. First of all, he thought this tent of faith should be strengthened on a foundation. Then, if there is any rough and dry and steep lodging for us, that emperor nonetheless discerns the confused, irrigates the dry, and makes the deserted fruitful. If there is any bitterness, if there is any temptation, if there is any weakness, our leader both tempers the bitter and mitigates the anxious, dissolves the hard, and strengthens the weak.

14. So when the king of the earth wants to rest his army, he chooses not a lowly village, not one in need of supplies, not a sandy and barren place, but a city noble in buildings, full, and rich in resources, either a pleasant and green countryside with pastures, or a wooded and open area suitable for camps. Therefore, if earthly kings know how to provide benefits for those who follow them, how much more does God, who is good, know how to arrange what will benefit those who love Him? First, when an unknown journey is to be undertaken, leaders of the paths are chosen, who go ahead of the procession. But these commanders consider this to be disrespectful to themselves: however, God went ahead when the Hebrews were journeying. Finally, he spoke to them in a pillar of cloud. And so that you may know that he went ahead, God said, 'He went ahead of them on the journey, by day in a pillar of cloud showing them the way: and by night in a pillar of fire, and the pillar of cloud did not fail during the day.' (Exodus 13:21-22).

15. Following this preceding column of clouds, the Church does not fail, lest she herself should fail, her shadow was refreshed; and therefore she says: 'Under his shadow I desired, and sat down: and his fruit was sweet to my taste' (Song of Solomon, 2:3); because she was fed by the Lord, led to a fruitful place, and given refreshing water. 'Bring me into the house of wine' (Song of Solomon, 2:4). With preparations made, she seeks to progress to another dwelling where she may attain the grace of mysteries and embrace the sweetness of joy. Also from here, promoting the true way, he says: 'Establish love in me' (Ibid.). Good waypoints, where the fullness of charity is. 'Strengthen me,' he says, 'with ointments, support me with apples' (Ibid., 3).

You have other mansions to which the Church succeeds with joy. These mansions are the Cross of Christ and the tombs in which the Church was wounded, but wounded by the wound of charity. For the wound is what Christ received, but the ointment is what he poured out. The apple is what hung. The Church tasted this apple and said: 'His fruit is sweet to my palate' (Song of Songs, 2:3). And so that you may know that the apple is the Lord, you have read above: 'Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my kinsman' (ibid). We also acknowledge the wound when we preach Christ crucified: but we are a pleasing odor to God; for the cross of Christ is a scandal to the Jews, foolishness to the Greeks: but to us it is the power of God and wisdom. The Church is

wounded by this wound when it proclaims the death of its Savior: but this wound is of charity. Finally, he who does not believe denies: he who loves confesses. The Manichaeans deny, the Christian confesses; and therefore it is written; The wounds of a friend are beneficial, rather than the voluntary kisses of an enemy (Prov. 27:6). Beautifully, therefore, the Church says: 'For I am wounded by love.' (Song of Songs, 2:5).

17. Let us expose our members to a good wound, let us expose them to chosen arrows. This arrow is Christ, who says: He hath made me a polished shaft (Isaiah XLIX, 2). It is good, therefore, to be wounded by this arrow. This is not a minor accomplishment: not everyone can say that they have been wounded by love. The apostles said this when they were stoned for Christ and preached Christ. Paul said this when he was thrice beaten with rods and day and night disputed with the gentiles about Christ. The martyrs say this, who are wounded for Christ: and because they have deserved to be wounded for His name, they love more.

18. So, coming to this dwelling place, the Church, to this procession, in order to offer her children for Christ, to receive the wounds of charity, finding them as nourishment of good faith, she herself tasted the fruits of piety and began to encourage others, saying: Taste and see that the Lord is sweet, as an apple (Psalm 33:8). And in the wound there is evil, but yet it is sweet (Song of Songs 2:3). She came again to the valley of the cluster, she saw a huge grape of great size, which two could hardly carry: one to go before, the other to follow. He tasted the mystery, he tasted it in Jesus the Son of Nun, he tasted it in Caleb, they said to the people: We have seen a land flowing with milk and honey (Numbers 13:28). Taste and see how sweet the Lord is.

19. And the Church adds, saying: His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me. I have adjured you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and strengths of the field, if you awaken and revive charity, how long will you desire? (Song of Solomon, 2:6-7). And these mansions are the royal way of the advancing Church. For there are many mansions in my Father's house, as the Lord Jesus testifies (John 14:2); and behold, I come and call you (ibid., 3). A good dwelling of wisdom, whether on its left or right, is a good dwelling; because it is the royal way. And for this reason, wise messengers say: We will go by the royal way, we will not turn to the right or to the left, until we pass through your borders (Num. XX, 17). This is what the messengers sent by Moses said to the king of Edom, that is, the earthly king; because all earthly things, whether on the right or on the left, are evil. An evil dwelling is foolishness, an evil dwelling is intemperance; and therefore the Hebrew passes through these dwellings: he does not turn to them, but passes through; so that he may reach the left of wisdom and the right, and abide in them, where the riches of simplicity, where glory, where the length of life is. For the length of life is in her right hand, as Solomon says: in her left hand are riches and glory (Prov. III, 16). In her right hand is life, in her left hand is rest. I wish to rest upon her left hand, to seek no pillows. Woe to those who support pillows, Ezekiel says (Ezek. XIII, 18). The good leader prepares these abodes for his Church, and directs her journey through the ways of wisdom. Finally, the wise man praises her ways: Her ways are good ways, and all her paths are peaceful (Prov. III, 17). But because wisdom, honesty, and fame are so perfect, if they have charity, for charity is the fullness of the Law (Rom. XIII, 10), it wants to be aroused and resurrected: aroused in the Old Testament, resurrected in the new. Charity is God, as we read (I John IV, 8): charity is Christ. It is aroused like a lion, and the lion's whelp, so that it may ascend from the tribe of Judah. It is resurrected like one sleeping, like one reclining; because he who is aroused from the dead is not by human, but by his own and his

Father's majesty. Where does Scripture say: 'Who will rouse him up?' (Gen. XLIX, 9) ? For neither an angel nor a power could raise up what was foreign, since he raised others up himself. Therefore, when he says here, 'If you shall have aroused or awakened love until it wishes' (Cant. II, 7), he speaks of those who can fittingly preach his resurrection, so that they may ignite the ardor of faith and devotion in those who hear. Or Christ is aroused in those who approach first: he is awakened in those who, after approaching, have fallen asleep. Therefore, Christ sleeps in the negligent, but is awakened in the holy.

21. (Verse 33.) Therefore the Church has the means by which to progress: it has the dwellings of the mansions, in which the saints rest, of whom he is speaking who says: Set a law for me, O Lord, the way of your justice. He rightly says, establish; so that it may remain motionless and fixed in his heart, and not be torn away by any whirlwind of the world, from his affection; so that the law itself may be to him, having the written work of the law in his heart. And I will seek her always, he says. For what is required for the grace of paradise, the kingdom of God, the fellowship of angels, and the dwelling of immortality, is not ordinary. Therefore, it is not sought in one day, nor in two, or a few months: but it is sought always, and sought through all things; so that many contributions of merits may come together; for διὰ παντός signifies both all time and through all things. Therefore, when he says: I will seek always, he says without end it is to be sought. But it is not enough to seek, unless you understand what you are looking for.

22. (Verse 34.) Therefore he says: Give me understanding, and I will search your law and keep it with all my heart. First, it is to be sought; then, understood and thoroughly examined in its entirety; and finally, kept in the heart. But who can keep the law of God unless they have understanding? And those who understand and examine it are led by their examination into the path of the commandments. In this, it should be noted that the law is justice, the commandment is judgment, as we also read in this letter. The way of the law is to stand in the ways of the law: it is the way of justice according to the first verse. There is therefore also the way of testimonies: I delighted in the way of your testimonies. And there is the way of commandments: I ran the way of your commandments. Let us therefore inquire about these ways, so that it may be said to us: Stand in the ways of the law and ask for the eternal paths, and see what is the better way, and walk in it (Jerem. VI, 16). Therefore, when we have all walked in the ways, we will come to the end of all the ways, which says: I am the way (John XIV, 6). Therefore Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom. X, 4). Hence I dare to say that Christ is the end of righteousness, who is righteousness; Christ is the end of testimonies, of whom it is said: Be my witnesses, and I am a witness, says the Lord, and my chosen servant (Esai. XLIII, 10).

23. Therefore, we note how much we must walk, in order to come to Christ. We must walk in the Law; for Christ is the end of the Law. Without the Law, one cannot come to Christ. Hence, it is clear that heretics, who do not accept the Law of the old Testament, even if they say they hold Christ, cannot hold the end, since they have not held the beginning. Jesus himself is the beginning and the end. Therefore, we must walk according to the spiritual Law, in order to come to the end of the Law, the Lord Jesus. We must follow the testimonies in order to attain the great testimony of the Lord Jesus. We must also walk in the commandments of the Lord in order to reach the great commandment, of which you have read: It was said to the ancients: You shall not kill . . . But I say to you (Matt. V, 21 and 22); that is, I say it above every commandment. Therefore, I do not say it presumptuously, but truly, because just as they are holy of holies: so is the commandment of

commandments.

24. But in order to preserve these things, let us seek understanding from the Lord. Let us understand what circumcision is. Jesus circumcised with the swords of Peter, and He took away the reproach of Egypt from the children of Israel. Christ is the rock. The Word of God circumcises you, with the sword of His mouth; and thus you will be free from the reproach of Egypt. Therefore, circumcision is not to be understood as of the flesh, but of the heart. If you understand the Law, you will keep it in your heart. The Jew does not keep the Law in his heart, but recites it with his lips, and does not know the Law. Finally, the people here honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me (Isaiah 29:13). How can one hold the Law who is far from the author of the Law? Let us consider what the third verse has.

25. (Verse 35.) Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I desire it. Who says this, except the one who follows Christ? No one else can say this, except the one who carries out what is written: You shall walk after the Lord your God and shall be joined to Him; for He Himself will lead you (Deuteronomy 13:4). Listen how He leads: Unless one takes up his cross and follows after me, he is not worthy of me (Matthew 10:38). Therefore, Christ precedes so that we may follow, the Word precedes. Christ is the beginning; thus Wisdom says: The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways (Prov. VIII, 22). We observe that Christ is both the beginning and the end of the ways. I am not afraid that someone may say: So you assert that Christ is created? I will respond: I say that he is created in the same way as he was made according to the law, that is, made from a woman, made under the law, that is, created by taking on flesh, according to how he was born from a Virgin. He was created to redeem creatures: he became man to free men from eternal death. He was created to show me the eternal ways by which man can return to the kingdom of God. Therefore, since he is the beginning of the ways of God, let us follow this beginning. He was the first to enter the way of the new Testament, to pave the way of devotion for us. If we fast, he fasted before us: if we endure injuries for the name of the Lord, he endured them first for our redemption. He placed his neck on the lashes, his cheeks on the palms: he ascended the cross to teach that death is not to be feared. Finally, like a forerunner, he said to Peter, 'You follow me.' (John 21:22). And so Peter completed his course, because he followed Christ.

26. (Verse 36.) The fourth verse follows: Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to covetousness. Some have usefulness: and I believe that it has been changed for this reason, because the usefulness of a good thing seems to be sought after rather than avoided. But because most people consider the gain of money to be their own usefulness; therefore, if we read usefulness, we should not understand the Prophet as turning away from the usefulness of the soul, but the usefulness of money. For the Holy One does not recognize these gains: but considers all these things as a loss; so that he may gain Christ. And rightly so. For what we think is gain from money is actually a detriment to the soul; because it is a detriment to virtue. Therefore, according to those who have received it in this way, may the Prophet desire to incline his heart to the testimonies, and not to greed; and may we also agree with approval. And may we follow the prayer of the holy one, and pray for what he prayed for, and what we pray for, let us imitate with zeal. For what does it profit me if I pray for God to turn my heart away from greed, and yet I myself seek opportunities for wealth day and night? If we pray with our words, let us also have compassion with our mind. Jesus hears and understands both of these, and knowing that they do not agree, speech and desire, he does not heed the one speaking. And therefore, the one who

wanted to pray well, would say: I will pray with my spirit, I will pray also with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, I will sing also with my mind (I Cor. XIV, 15). Thus he listens more when someone prays, if he despises greed.

27. (Verse 37.) But because we are weak and often willing to turn ourselves away from money, gold, or silver, we are captivated by the sight of them and desire someone else's field or building. The Prophet added well, saying: Turn away my eyes lest they see vanity: revive me in your way. For he who is in the way of God does not behold vanities. The perfect way is Christ. Therefore, whoever is in Christ, how can they behold vanities; since Christ, in his flesh, crucified all the vanities of this world? Let us therefore avert our eyes from vanities; lest whatever our eyes see, our soul may desire. For now let us delay the mystical things. Oh, I wish with this interpretation we could turn our attention to different spectacles of circus games and theater, hastening towards them. That which you see is vanity. You see a pantomime, it is vanity; you see gladiators, it is vanity; because you see they struggle with a green laurel. For they are the true wrestlers, who struggle against the attractions of this world. Do not let the gym of the limbs capture your eyes. You see running horses, which is vanity; because those who cannot save the one ascending run in vain. Finally, let the return itself teach you that those who do not complete the direct path run in vain, forgetting what is above and seeking what is behind.

28. Before us is Christ, before us is his triumph, to which he came, who did not run uncertainly, nor did he turn back on his course, but pushed forward. Direct your eyes to him, turn away from spectacles, turn away from all worldly pomp. If you happen to hear popular applause, turn your eyes away from them, lower your gaze, and preserve yourself in order to raise up to better things. Raise them to the sky: either the necklaces of stars at night, the beautiful circle of the moon, or look upon the sun during the day. Look at the sea, behold the earth: so that every creature, made by divine work, may feed you. What grace of form is there in the beasts themselves? How much beauty in humans? How much beauty in birds? Look at these things, and you will not see iniquity and contradiction in the city. Look at these things, and death will not enter through the windows of your eyes.

29. If you see a woman to lust after her, death enters through the window. If you see the possessions of a poor person or a widow and desire to steal them, death enters through the window. If you see another's jewelry, gold, silver, and desire to extort them, death enters through the window. Therefore, close this window when you see the beauty of another woman, so that death cannot enter. May your eyes not see another's beauty, lest your tongue speak perversely. Therefore, close your window, lest death enter. But also beware of another person's window. For through the window, the harlot enters her own house. Through her window, she enters, when her wanton eyes attempt lasciviousness. Therefore, exclude this window from the entrance of words, lest you be captured by the eyes of a prostitute: and carried away by her eyelids. But there is not only one window through which death is accustomed to enter. There is also the window of words, through which the speeches of the prostitute pass. And for this reason, guard yourself from the flattery of a foreign wife; for she enters through the window of her house. Death enters through kisses; therefore, be careful not to be bound by the snares of her lips. Death enters if a prostitute kisses you. Death enters if you quickly agree to her words. Death enters if you speak too much; for much talking brings sin. Death also enters if you remain silent, and fear to confess Christ. For confession is made with the mouth unto salvation (Rom. X, 10). Death also enters through the

caves of the ears; and therefore the ears must be guarded with thorns, so that you may exclude the enticements of a debased conversation. These are moral lessons.

30. There are also mystical eyes which you should turn away from vanity. For vanity is also a delusion of the senses, which the eyes of your soul should not see; because those who see it are condemned by the Apostle. Therefore, let us learn from the very author himself what vanity is, and what eyes they are (Ephesians IV, 17 and 18). For it is evident that there are many who are blinded by the delusion of their senses and are alienated from the way of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; the Apostle speaks of those nations. Therefore, let that pagan remain ignorant of what he has not learned, let him remain ignorant of what he has not believed: but it is not permissible for you to remain ignorant of what you confess. Christ came not in vanity, but in power: He did not inflate the human senses, but He gave life: He did not blind the heart, but He illuminated the mind. He kindled your heart so that you may understand the heavenly principles of the commandments, the nature of the soul, the grace of the future life, and the state in which we will be after these things.

Therefore, lift up your mind, use your natural talent: you have been made in the image of God, in order to behold heavenly things and not to seek earthly things. Do not bend your neck under the weight of the world: do not covet gold and silver, lest you offer yourself to be bound by the chains of the world. That is why the Lord said: 'Do not possess gold and silver' (Matthew X, 9), lest the greedy desire for gold and silver possess us. Therefore, do not entangle your neck in the snares of the devil. Greed strangles the poor in this world, but the rich are suffocated by their own snares, whose thoughts are in vanity, who walk in darkness; because they labor in things that cannot benefit them. Vanity is the concern of this life. Therefore, we ought to find our delight not in gluttony and drunkenness, not in bodily pleasures, but in the knowledge of heavenly precepts. He runs in vanity who seems to abound in worldly successes, who passes away like a shadow. Therefore, avert your eyes, so they do not see vanity.

32. But it is not enough for you to turn away; lest perhaps you desire and are unable, the devil may pour out upon you the spectacles of vanities, and insert the incentives of pleasures; seek that the Lord may turn away your eyes. And this is the grace of God, and this is the gift of the Lord; that He may turn away the eyes of our soul from the affairs of this world. For all blessedness is from the Lord. But blessed is the man, whose hope is in the name of the Lord, and has not looked upon vanities and false insanities (Ps. 39:5). He who does not consider these things is blessed; but he who considers them is insane and furious. And therefore, let each person come to their senses and turn away from the madness of worldly desires, which disturb the mind and soul in such a way that one cannot be in control of themselves.

33. If you find yourself on a rocking ship, turn your eyes away from the bilge: lest it stirs up vomit in you. If you are walking in a city and come across something of foul odor, you distance yourself and turn away. If anything should appear that your eyes dread, they are closed or averted. In the sea of this world, you fluctuate, and the bilge of vices flows in. In this ship of your body, the waves of desires move, and you do not avert the eyes of your soul; lest they see the bilge of lusts, lest they behold the filth of this world, lest the foul stench fills the nostrils of your mind, in which the Holy Spirit is accustomed to be, so that you may say: The divine Spirit who is in my nostrils (Job. XXVII, 3). May therefore the nostrils of your soul be turned away from the stench of various sins; for in

these there is, as it were, a certain sign of judgement. Hence it is said to the Bride: 'Your nostrils are like the tower of Lebanon, looking towards the face of Damascus' (Song of Solomon 7:4); because the ointment of the true Priest, which descends from the head to the beard, that is, that divine fragrance, the perfume of spiritual grace, which was from the Father in Christ, and by the mystery of the incarnation came down to earth, so that all things might be filled with the poured-out ointment, may shine forth with the lofty power of judgement, and fill the nostrils of the soul, so that it may discern what is pleasant and what is foul; the sweet smells of the saints, who can say: 'For we are the pleasing fragrance of Christ to God' (2 Corinthians 2:15); and the foul smells of sins.

34. These are the nostrils, like the lofty tower of Lebanon, towering above the world; and therefore it overlooks the face of Damascus, the noble people, smelling its faith, by which it would cleanse the stench of its sins. Therefore, the face of Damascus is the faith of the nations, not overshadowed by any covering, not covered by any clothing, naked and free, more inclined to heaven than to earth. The nostrils of the Church gaze upon and overlook this, collecting the sweet fragrance and grace of the breath. And his nose is like the tower of Lebanon; for in sacrifices the scent of the Church is sweet, in which is the offering of good odor, remission of sins.

Therefore, take these nostrils, o man; so that you may discern fragrant things from foul-smelling ones; and then the Lord will give you life. For when He sees that you seek Him, in order to turn the eyes of your mind away from vanity, He cooperates with your soul; so that if it is captivated by any appearance, it is not swayed by hardness or weakness, but rather let it be directed by the yoke of His word, and guided by its reins: so that it may be led away from worldly desires by the will of God and receive the fragrance of eternal life. For this life is not perfect: but this life is in shadow. Therefore, in order for Christ Jesus to be born from the Virgin, the power of the Most High overshadowed the future mother; because he descended into shadow, beginning to work the salvation of man, and intending to complete it with the charity of the eternal sun. Therefore, this life is a shadow: hasten to the sun, so that it may protect you from the cold of this shadow, and pour out upon you its summer warmth. And therefore, it urges us to pray, lest our flight be in winter or on the Sabbath (Matthew 24:20), not signifying a specific time or day, but prohibiting us from growing cold in merits, and being fasting in good deeds.

36. (Verse 38.) Learn now how the Lord turns His eyes away from vanity, whom He pities. From those things which follow, we can understand this; for He added: 'Appoint Your speech to Your servant in Your fear' (Ps. CX, 10). The Prophet says that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. But what is the beginning of wisdom, if not to renounce the world? For to be wise in worldly matters is foolishness. Finally, the Apostle says that the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the sight of God (I Cor. I, 20). But even the fear of the Lord, if it is not according to knowledge, is not beneficial; rather, it is harmful. For the Jews have a zeal for God, but because they do not have it according to knowledge, in their very zeal and fear, they contract a greater offense against divinity. They circumcise their infants, they keep the Sabbath, they have the fear of God; but because they do not know that the Law is spiritual, they circumcise the body, not their heart. They fear to kindle a fire on the Sabbath, when the Law of sanctification prohibits the kindling of the fire of lust on that day.

37. And what shall I say about the Jews? There are also among us those who have a fear of God, but not according to knowledge, imposing harsh precepts that human condition cannot sustain.

There is fear in it, because they appear to be consulting their discipline, demanding the work of virtue: but there is ignorance in it, because they do not sympathize with nature, they do not consider possibility. Therefore, let fear not be irrational. Indeed, true wisdom begins with fear of God, and there is no spiritual wisdom without fear of God; thus, fear should not be without wisdom. There is a certain foundation of the word, which is holy fear. For just as a statue is placed on a foundation, and it receives greater grace when it is placed on a foundation and stands firm, so the word of God, or the rational word of God, is better placed in holy fear, it is more firmly rooted, that is, in the heart of those who fear the Lord; lest the word slip from the heart of the man, lest the birds come and take it away from the indifferent and negligent affection. But indeed, the fear of God itself seems to be adapted to usefulness and stability by the word, so that it is not alien to knowledge, just as a statue with an accepted base is not alien to grace. Therefore, the fear of the word is a place, just as its place is in peace. The fear of the word is a certain station: the word of fear is discipline; for true fear of discipline does not falter towards a fall. And because we have said the foundation of the word is fear, lest anyone should think that we have added anything foreign to the Scriptures, let him take this passage from the word of God in the Song of Songs: 'His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon bases of gold' (Song of Songs 5:15), signifying that the pillars are the apostles of the Church, who are founded in the fear of the saints. For just as Peter, James, John, and Barnabas seemed to be pillars of the Church, so whoever conquers this world becomes a pillar of God, which is confirmed by the one who says: 'I have confirmed its pillars' (Psalm 74:4). And so the golden base is filled with the fear which is full of discipline, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Therefore, in the fear of the wise, the apostolic preaching is established as a golden column, like a foundation. Therefore, the fear of the just is the tribunal of Christ's speech and the golden foundation of full prudence. But the good image, like the likeness of truth, is the word of the saints. And see how the fear of the saints is like a golden foundation. Read Isaiah: see how much fear he has subjected, in order to make it blameless and good fear: the spirit, he says, of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and power, the spirit of knowledge and piety, the spirit of holy fear (Isaiah 11:2). By how much fear did he subject, so that he might have something to follow? He is informed through wisdom, instructed through understanding, guided by counsel, strengthened by virtue, governed by knowledge, adorned by piety. Take away from fear of the Lord those things, and it is an irrational and foolish fear, one of those: "Outside are battles, inside are fears" (2 Corinthians 7:5), by which even Paul would have been afflicted if he did not have the Lord as his comforter.

39. It is not in vain in Proverbs: Then you will understand the fear of the Lord (Prov. II, 5). What is "Then"? That is, when you invoke wisdom and give voice to prudence; and if you seek her like money, and search for her like treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord (Ibid., 3 and 4). And therefore, as if on a solid foundation, it says: Set your speech in fear. It is a prayer full of discipline, by which we are taught how we ought to pray: each word is a teaching on how to pray. And because he taught us to pray, the seventh verse shows the effects of this prayer.

40. (Verse 39.) Take away from me my reproach, which I have suspected. It seems to be spoken in a somewhat obscure manner: but the Apostle explained what seemed to be obscure here, when he said: Indeed, I am not aware of anything against myself, but that doesn't justify me (I Cor. 4:4). For he knew himself to be human, and thus he was careful, as much as he could, not to sin after receiving the sacraments of baptism; therefore, he was not conscious of any wrongdoing. But

because he was human, he confessed himself to be a sinner, knowing that Jesus alone is the true light, who did not sin and no deceit was found in Him; He alone was justified, who truly was without fault. Similarly, therefore, even the Prophet, although he desired to avoid sin, still desired that sin be a repeller of himself as God. He wanted to remove the reproach that he had suspected, either because he had thought in his heart and had not done it: and although penance had abolished it, he was still suspected that perhaps its reproach remained; and therefore he prays to God to remove it, who alone knows what he himself who made it can also not know. Finally, elsewhere the Prophet himself said: 'You know my reproach' (Ps. 68:20). Although this reproach is Christ's, which is not a true reproach but the glory of God; for the cross of Christ is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks.

41. Therefore, to them it is disgrace, to me it is virtue; I repel the adversary vehemently, I conquer the age. To me is wisdom, through which I evade the snares of foolishness. This disgrace Moses preferred to the treasures of Egypt. Greater, he says, esteeming the disgrace of Christ than the treasures of Egypt (Hebrews 11:26). If your disgrace is glory, Lord Jesus, how great is your glory? Therefore, by participating in your glory, what shall we be, whose disgrace we are declaring glorious? I have laid my back on the lashes, my cheeks on the palms, but I have not turned my face away from the humiliation of spitting. Behold, your disgrace, O Lord, in which the salvation of all is found, in which the redemption of the world: through which disgrace we have begun not to be ashamed, who were ashamed, not to be confounded, who were confounded. Finally, it is written: Come to him, and be enlightened, and your faces will not be ashamed (Ps. 33:6). We do not want this disgrace, the disgrace of the cross of the Lord Jesus, by which our disgraces are taken away, to be taken away from us. For just as a curse became, to erase our curses, a man became, to alleviate human weaknesses: so disgrace became, to take away the disgrace of all.

42. Not once in time, not once it took away the disgrace: it takes it away every day. We fall into sin, not just one but many: we are covered in shame and confusion. We come to baptism, all sin is erased, and with sin the disgrace. The Lord Jesus took away my disgrace with his disgrace, because he was crucified for me; because whoever is baptized in Christ, is baptized in his death (Rom. VI, 3). I have nothing to ask to be taken away. But after baptism I fall into shame, I must do penance, so that I may say: Take away my shame from me. If I do not do penance, how can I say: Take away my shame from me; when this very shame of sin is because I do not do penance? But if I do penance, as I ought, I rightly say: Take away my shame from me, which I have suspected; for your judgments are sweet.

43. Why am I afraid to confess, why am I afraid to speak of my sins? What do I fear in making mention of my shame before him, whose judgments are sweet? What is severe in others is sweet in Christ, is pleasant in Christ; for he himself is sweet. Finally, Taste and see that the Lord is sweet (Ps. XXXIII, 9). Sweet are the judgments for the one who confesses; for he himself has said: I am, I am the one who blots out your iniquities ... and I will not remember: but you remember, and let us be judged: speak of your iniquities, that you may be justified (Esai. XLIII. 25 et 26). To those who are carrying out penance, pleasant judgments are given; for he himself said: There will be rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent (Luke 15:7). Therefore, if the judgments of the Lord are pleasant, let us strive to receive the fruit of sweetness. Do you want to know how sweet are the judgments of the Lord? The wicked do not rise in judgment (Ps. 1:5). But those who rise in judgment have hope of pardon,

because they have believed. The wicked are not, they can be sinners: they have faith, and if they have not avoided sin, they believe through faith. But whoever believes in Him is not judged (John 3:18). Therefore, the judgments are sweet to those who believe. But those who do not believe are not condemned by the judgment of Christ, who came not to judge the world, but to save and redeem it. But the judgment of their own impiety has come upon those who refused to believe in the forgiveness of sins. For those who have rejected Him cannot benefit from Him. Therefore, those who do not believe in Him seem unworthy of His judgment. Understand what His judgment is, as He Himself says: 'This is the judgment, that the light has come into the world' (John, 19). Therefore, it is sweet that there is light; it is sweet that there is judgment, which precedes mercy. For it is written: 'I will sing to you, Lord, of mercy and judgment' (Psalm 101, 1).

45. (Verse 40.) And because he knew the sweet judgments, he says: Behold, I have longed for your commandments; revive me in your righteousness. He speaks of good judgments with authority. Behold, he loves the freedom of faith, he who has given freedom. He delights in being loved, who came into this world because he loved this world. He demands to be loved, who loves all, for love is his nature. He longs for God's commandments, like a good servant, like a diligent worker. He longs not for the love of a prostitute, not for money like a greedy person, not for lust like a sensualist. For the Law says of them: You shall not covet. But it commands us to love the Lord our God, and to hold Him in a tender and inward affection of desire. And because he is a friend who loves, he is a servant who fears; as if he were a friend who does all that the Lord commanded: You, He says, are my friends, if you do what I command you (John 15:14).

46. In your righteousness, revive me: he dares and says; because that is the true life, which lives according to the righteousness of God, which the apostles lived; indeed, which they live. For there are those who, while living, are dead: and there are those who, while dead, are alive. In fact, some descend into hell while still alive: others, though dead in body, live by their merits. For there are those who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man returning on the day of judgment, when the holy ones will rise with glory.

Sermon 6. Vau.

The sixth letter Vau, whose interpretation is: He is, and no other. Or whose interpretation: And he is.

2. (Verse 41.) And let thy mercy come upon me, O Lord, even thy salvation, according to thy word. The meaning of the letter, since it is somewhat obscure, I thought should be gathered from the series of the psalm. For when the Prophet asks: Let thy mercy come upon me, O Lord: let thy salvation come upon me; there is no doubt whom he requests to see, that is, in whom the fruit of mercy and salvation may come. Finally, in the preceding verses, he asks for the same thing in the eighty-fourth psalm, in which he more clearly prophesied the coming of the Lord Jesus. Indeed, it is well known that the earth which was in need of blessing is the one which had contracted sin in Adam, of which it is said: 'You are dust and to dust you shall return' (Gen. III, 19). However, God had cursed not the element of the nature of the flesh, but the flesh of the transgressors. Therefore, the flesh is blessed in Christ, so that the cursed flesh may be redeemed. The flesh is blessed, which the blessed Son of God, assuming human condition, took upon himself. And therefore he added: God, you will turn and give us life, and your people will rejoice in you. Show us, Lord, your mercy, and grant us your salvation. Let me hear what the Lord God will speak in me, for he will

speaking peace to his people, to his holy ones, and to those who turn to him with their heart. Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. (Psalm 85:7 et seq.) This whole place resounds with the name of Jesus the Lord, who raised the dead: Lazarus before his passion, many during the time of his own passion. He is mercy, as the forgiveness of sins. Therefore he says: Show, whom he may see in the body. For he could not see God in his majesty; for he saw God ever (John 1:18). The eager Prophet desires to see, whom he hopes to hold: whom if he sees, he desires to grasp with his own hands. Therefore, he says: And give us your salvation. The power of God is the salvation, the Christ of God is the salvation; and therefore those who fear it are near. Christ was far from us, far from the nations: he descended to earth, he became near, we began not to fear. For the one who fears Christ is not subjected to fear, but to devotion. This fear is of piety, not of weakness. Finally, nothing is lacking for those who fear him. But how he became near, listen: So that he may dwell, he says, in glory on our earth. Who is glory, except the Lord Jesus? Therefore, the apostle Paul says: The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory (2 Cor. 1:3). It is rightly pleasing to the Father; for the glory is of the Father. He who separates himself from the Father commits a greater offense against the Father, for he wishes to be without glory. Whoever does not consider him equal to the Father judges him to be inferior to the Father; for no other word can praise the Father more, whose highest praise and glory is Christ.

4. Therefore, it is asked that He come to greet God. He is the one who is asked, that is, the Lord Jesus, and there is no other; as the letter interpretation has it. And not only the Father is asked: He is also the one who is asked, that is, the Son, and He comes and gives salvation to the world. Therefore, He is the savior; therefore, Jesus, as the angel said: He will save His people (Matthew 1:21) . So, when the prophet called upon Him, He was present; to prove that, He says to us even now: Here I am (Isaiah 58:9) .

5. He is here, because awakened by the daughters of Judaea, as if resurrected by the daughters of Jerusalem. The Church hears the sound of his voice, and says: The voice of my cousin. Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills (Song of Songs 2:8). He is a liberator, having many noble persons, like a triumphant crowd, and signifying many actions, which we can understand more than we can express in words. For as if she has heard the coming Bridegroom conversing with some others who are also traveling, the Bride says: The voice of my cousin. While he is talking with the daughters of Jerusalem, and he asks them to wake up and revive the Bridegroom, suddenly, as if hearing the sound of a voice sent from afar, he says: The voice of my cousin, announcing what he was seeking to be announced to him before, whom he desired to be revived by others: believing that through his prayer he was now coming back revived by the Father, he joyfully says: You are my cousins. He wisely added, my cousins, so that not others, but only the cousin herself would claim his coming.

Behold, he says, that man is coming. Yet I still seek him, and he has already come: yet I am still gaining votes for him to come, and he is already next. I desire to arouse charity for myself, I consider myself wounded by charity; and charity itself hastens to me even more. I said: Come: he jumps and leaps. I ask him to come with grace: he works increases of gratitude: and while he comes, he carries with him increases of grace, and by coming he acquires; because he also desires to please his beloved. He leaps onto high things, so that he may ascend to the Bride; for the chamber of the Bride is the tribunal of Christ. He leaps over Adam, he leaps over the Synagogue. He leaps over the Gentiles, he leaps over the Jews. Let us see him leaping. He leaps

from heaven into the Virgin, from the womb into the manger, from the manger into the Jordan, from the Jordan onto the cross, from the cross into the tomb, from the tomb into heaven. Testify to me, O David, of the One leaping, testify to me of the One running; for you have said: He rejoiced as a giant to run his course: His going forth is from the end of heaven, and His circuit unto the ends thereof; and there is no one who can hide from His heat (Psalm 19:6-7). And now he leaps and now he runs from the heart of the Father over his holy ones, from the East over the West, from the North over the South. He is the one who ascends over the setting sun, he himself over the heavens of heavens towards the East. He ascends over the mountains, he himself over the hills.

7. I wish that I may say, may my soul say: Behold, he comes, and he comes not above earthly things, not above valleys; but he comes leaping over mountains; for God, the God of mountains, not of valleys. Where does he leap? He leaps over mountains. If you are a mountain, he leaps over you. He leaps over Isaiah, he leaps over Jeremiah, he leaps over Peter, John, James. Mountains surround him (Psalm 124:2): if you cannot be a mountain, nor have strength, be even a hill, so that Christ may ascend over you; and if he leaps, let him leap in such a way that his leap guards you like a shadow.

8. We have spoken about Christ and the Church; let us now speak about the soul and the Word. The soul of the righteous is the Bride of the Word. If she desires, if she longs, if she prays, and prays continually, and prays without any doubt, and directs her whole being towards the Word, she suddenly seems to hear the voice of the one whom she does not see, and in her innermost sense she recognizes the divine smell of his presence: which is often experienced by those who believe rightly. The nostrils of the soul are suddenly filled with spiritual grace, and she feels the breath of his presence blowing upon her, whom she seeks, and she says: Behold, this is the very one whom I seek, the very one whom I desire.

9. When we think about something from the Scriptures and cannot find its explanation, while we doubt, while we seek, suddenly for us, as if from over the highest mountains, the highest teachings seem to ascend: then appearing for us as if over hills, it illuminates the mind; so that it infuses into the senses what seemed difficult to find. Therefore, the Word becomes present in our hearts as if from absent. And again, when something is obscure to us, as if the Word is being withheld, and as if we desire the advent of the absent: and again, appearing, it shows itself to us as if it is present to us in what we are seeking to know. Therefore, it jumps frequently into the heart of each one: it jumps and goes out, and returns if you follow it, if you seek it, if you ask for it, if you, by the grace of the faithful, ask the Word that had come forth and passed away to be resurrected; just like that which she sought and found, which she said: My brother has passed by: my soul went out with his word (Song of Solomon 5:6).

10. Therefore, even if he jumps over the mountains, follow him; and if he jumps over the hills, follow. For in the mountains and hills are found the hunters of the Lord, who seek those who are captured for life. For thus said God through Jeremiah: Behold, I will send many fishermen, . . . and many hunters, and they will hunt them over every mountain and over every hill (Jeremiah 16:16). Therefore, let the people of God be sought and found in the doctrine, grace, and discipline of Peter and Paul; so that they may not be in the valley, where there is weeping: but in the mountains, from which Christ enlightens each one. And when we read Peter, Christ enlightens. And when we read Paul, Christ enlightens. Paul healed, Christ enlightened; for by invoking the name of the Lord

Jesus, he arose, by whose gift he was healed. Peter raised a dead woman, Christ enlightened; and therefore it is said: You wonderfully enlighten from the eternal mountains (Psalm 75:5).

11. Therefore, since we cannot be mountains ourselves, let us stand on mountains or hills; so that when the Lord sends his fishermen and hunters to hunt those who are above every mountain or hill, that is, those who have in their possession knowledge of the precepts of the Law and the Prophets, as well as of the new and old Testament, they may find us prepared, and may gather us like good stalks at the opportune time, sent as reapers; for if anyone is found outside of the mountain or hill, they will not be able to gather them like good stalks, but will be sent to separate the wheat from the chaff (to use another comparison). Therefore, the Lord has many skilled ministers of various tasks. They are both fishermen and hunters, as well as harvesters.

12. If at the time of harvest, which they are directed towards, you wait for the ripe reward, you will be able to see him leaping on the mountains, and you will see the Lord Jesus similar to a young stag, or a young deer on the mountains of Bethel (Song of Songs 2:9). Indeed, he leaps upon the Church, which is the house of bread; because he strengthens the hearts of the faithful. Justly like a young stag; because a young stag feeds on high places. Dorcas is said to be from seeing. For the vision is an increase of the author. What is sharper than Christ, who sees the Father whom no one sees? Or if anyone has seen in Christ, the Son himself revealed. Just as a fawn is like a son, who has inherited the power of his nature from his father; so that hidden things do not escape him, snakes flee, venom does not harm him. Finally, the serpent, who was produced from a man and was brought out of his hiding place, said: Why have you come before the time to torment us? (Matthew 8:29)

13. (Verse 42.) Therefore let us watch this prancing colt, so that we may not fear the serpent. David did not fear. Finally, he said of these serpents: 'I will answer those who reproach me with a word, for I have hoped in your words.' Like a good deer, who had drunk from the springs of water, he did not fear the spirals of human serpents and the poisons of malicious ones. The serpent was not harmful to him, but rather it was prey. The food was the venomous speech of the serpent, and the food of praise of which he said: 'O God, do not be silent about my praise; for the mouth of the sinner and the mouth of the deceitful one are open against me.' (Psalm 108:2). The hunter was being fattened by the words of his fellow hunters. They lifted their hissing mouths of slander and surrounded the innocent one with words of hatred. The good deer, placed among many snakes, was not afraid, the deer of friendship, and the foal of gratitude. They feigned charity, but poured out slander: 'But I,' he said, 'I was praying.' The good deer, harmless among the vipers, grazed. They flashed their forked tongues: but holy prayer fed this one, offering food to those who slandered. He responded to those speaking against him with a word; for a word is nourishment. Finally, man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Matt., IV, 4). They saw me, he said, and shook their heads (Psalm 108:25). They cursed, but I blessed. Those who spoke against me cursed; I blessed, for I proclaimed the word of the Lord.

14. How good it is to bear abuse, and not to retaliate with abuse! He gains God as his helper who does not know how to be angry with an abusive person. Finally, how great is the grace of patience in the speaker: 'They will curse, and you will bless' (2). Blessed is the one who does not feel the curses. Blessed is the one whom curses do not disturb. For the one who excludes the curses of men by the divine gift of blessing cannot be moved by a curse. The one who has the Word cannot

feel a curse, and the one who always has the Word on their lips cannot retaliate with a curse.

15. But there is also a good serpent, whom that stag does not harm. Be cunning, he says, just like serpents (Matt. 10:16). And: As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up (John 3:14). In the bronze serpent I am represented. In that wood my serpent was lifted up. Good serpent, a good serpent, who from its mouth poured forth remedies, not poisons. One who knows how to adore this serpent can fear no serpents. About this snake, she who loves says: Behold, he is behind our wall, looking through the windows, appearing above the lattice. My cousin responds and says to me: Arise, come, my dearest one, my beautiful one, my dove; for behold, winter has passed, the rain has gone, it has departed for itself, flowers have appeared on the earth (Song of Solomon 2:9, 12). The snake indeed is the one who, with winter having passed, wanted to shed his body's covering in order to bloom in beautiful appearance. Therefore, the deer and the serpent are the same. The deer, with horns of Law and Grace (its two horns are the Testaments), is swift in its stride, active in its gait, able to traverse the entire world in an instant, celebrated everywhere. The serpent is also good, whose first tooth does not bite the Law, and whose latter teeth are not wounded by the gentleness of the Gospel. It defends its head from harm, the one who came not to abolish the Law, but to protect it from the perfidious interpretations. He swings his tail freely like a whip, desiring to whip his adversaries rather than to destroy them. Like a good serpent, he easily slips into the lap of his beloved and, without any contact, devours the fire in their bones and consumes their very hearts.

16. It is well said today: Behold, I send you as lambs in the midst of wolves (Matt. X, 16). For we celebrate the feast of the saints, on which the bodies of the holy martyrs were revealed to the people, who like good serpents, having cast off the clothing of the flesh, having overcome the harshness of winter temptations, and renewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit, shone forth in the summer light, truly sent as lambs in the midst of wolves. The wolves are the persecutors, all the heretics are wolves: they do not know how to teach, they are accustomed to howl.

17. But let no one be moved, if he is sent in the midst of wolves. By the grace of Christ even the wolf himself is changed. The rapacious wolf Benjamin becomes the apostle Paul, no longer a plotter against the sheep of Christ, but a defender and guardian. It is pleasing to associate with this wolf: by this wolf, it happened that we are safe in the midst of wolves. No one now fears the wolves, when we are fed with them, as it is written: Then the wolf and the lamb will feed together (Isaiah 65:25).

18. (Verse 42.) But now let us consider what the Prophet says: 'And do not take away from my mouth the word of truth completely; for in your judgments I have hoped abundantly.' The Church, or the soul of the righteous, sees the Beloved leaping like a young stag upon the mountains, suddenly looking out from behind the wall of his house, gazing through the windows, appearing above the lattice. She rejoices and is glad, for she is also loved by the Bridegroom, who, wounded with the ornament of love, when first requested, comes to her kisses (for it is said: 'Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth'), and then does not reject the prayers and flattery of the Bride, praising her beloved breasts, and with kindness leads her into the inner chambers of his house. Finally, like one playing with love in a playful manner, he often goes out to be sought by the Bride, and then returns to be invited to kisses, standing behind the wall, looking out through the windows, appearing above the lattice. Thus, he is not entirely absent, nor does he enter as if entirely

present, but he himself calls the Bride to himself, so that their mutual encounters may become more pleasing, and they may kindle the force of love with mutual conversations: 'Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come, my dove.'

19. And even if you have a well-founded wall, not the one in the middle that separates the parts of a house, but a building constructed on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, so that its joined structure may grow into a temple and not separate its interior, but strengthen it: if, therefore, you have within you the building of God, and your windows are always open to the east, the Word comes, and stands behind your wall (for the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous), and looks through your windows. (Psalm 33:16)

20. What are these windows? We read about windows, about which Jeremiah says: 'Death entered through the windows' (Jeremiah IX, 21), through which greed entered, lust entered. Your eye is a window, death entered through your eye. If you see a woman to desire her, death entered through your eye. If you see the possession of a widow or a minor, and you desire to invade, thinking their age or sex to be defenseless (but they are not defenseless, those whom the Lord wants to be defended), death entered through the window. If you see the beauty of a woman, or the treasures of the lesser, and you arouse your desires, death enters through the window. Just as death enters through these things, life also enters. If you look upon the beauty of a young girl with sacred reverence, you will worship the Lord Jesus, who in his tender years came to the age of old age, a blameless life. And you yourself offer your daughter, so that she may be consecrated by the pious veil; if you look upon the possession of the lesser not as a greedy invader, but as a diligent parent who protects with religious affection; through these windows, Christ looks out to call the Bride, standing above the nets.

21. Excelling in goodness, because he alone is the one whom the snares of sins did not entangle. All were within the snares, in fact, we are still within the snares, because no one is without sin, except Jesus alone, whom the Father made sin for us, not knowing sin. For indeed, he delivered him to the snares, he delivered him to the nets, sending him not in sin, in which all men were, but in the likeness of sinful flesh, so that he would condemn sin in the flesh. It was a sin of the flesh, according to that, because it was condemned by hereditary curse. It was a lure and a servant of sin. The Lord Jesus came and in flesh subject to sin, he exercised the warfare of virtue. Our members have become not weapons of lust, but weapons of virtue. For where there were incentives of lust, there are now dwelling places of chastity. Therefore, he came to the snares, but voluntarily; he came to the nets, but secure.

All things were full of snares, filled with nets. Listen to the one who says: On this path on which I was walking, they hid a snare for me (Ps. 141:4). And in the book of Sirach, you are warned to know that you walk in the midst of snares (Sir. 9:20). As many vices, so many nets: as many sins, so many snares: the inherited bonds already held you captive. Jesus came to the snares, to release Adam: he came to free what had been lost. We were all held by nets, no one could rescue another, when he himself could not strip them off. Such was the necessity, therefore, of someone who, not subject to the shackles of human generation, was not affected by sins, was not seized by greed, was not bound by deceit. This person was Jesus alone, who, though surrounded by the bonds of this flesh, was not captured, was not bound: but breaking and dissolving them, he called the Church to himself even more, foreseeing that it too would learn not to be held by chains. In the

end, he was not far from the bonds, so as to undergo death for us: but yet he did not become a slave of death, but a free person among the dead; for he was free, having the power to overcome death. Finally, let him teach you himself, who said: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up (John 2:19).

23. Therefore, let us listen to what he says: Arise, come, my love (Song of Solomon 2:10), that is, rise from the dead, arise from the chains with which you were surrounded. Arise, for I have risen for you: break the bond of wickedness, for I have already broken it for you. Come, for the nets are already loosed. The Virgin has given birth, the child born of the Virgin. He owes nothing to female inheritance, as if he were not bound by the bond of woman. See the middle wall of partition, which divided the harmony of internal affections and stirred up discord in bodily passions, is now broken down, Come, therefore, without worry. I desire to see your face and hear your voice. Come, so that you may see me no longer through nets, but that you may possess the beloved lover's face-to-face with his beloved. Let these ethical things be passed. But let us look, if we can, at the extreme mystery, even with a glance or a line. But the bride was sitting inside the house, devoted to the Lord, within the wall of the Law and the prophets, founded on the construction of spiritual stones, which enclosed and fortified the royal house, full of joy and gladness. She marveled at the royal treasures, and she looked carefully, desiring to attain the wisdom that would show her these riches. She was in secret, but she sought the interpreter of her secret. The Lord Jesus came, leaping over the mountains. It seemed late to us that he was coming, but he was hurrying. Finally, he jumped and leaped over, so that he might leap over the physical and stony doctrines of the Jews. He stood behind the wall of the house, which was in the old Testament, looking through the window of the Law, through the caves of the prophets. The doors of that house were not yet open: the keys of the knowledge of the gates had not yet opened the barriers by which the internal things of the Law were closed. However, looking from above at the spiritual part, he calls it the Church; so that, rising high through the Law and the prophets, he confidently treads upon the nets of Jewish interpretation and crushes the knots with his bold step. Therefore, she is called proxima, so that she may adhere to Christ, not seeking worldly things; therefore, she is beautiful, so that she may display the beautiful feet of those who evangelize; therefore, she is a dove, so that she may seek spiritual things and leave earthly things behind.

Behold, he says, winter has passed, the rain has gone away, flowers have been seen on the earth (Song of Songs II, 11 and 12). Before the coming of Christ, there was winter: Christ came, and he made summer. Then all things were in need of flowers, devoid of virtue: Christ suffered, and all things began to be fertilized by the sprouts of new grace. The rain of dissolute luxury has gone away, and the clouds that had risen from shameful vices are now dispelled by the serene clarity of a pure conscience. Therefore, those who escape in winter do not follow the Lord's passion, do not take up their cross, and do not follow Christ. The rain hinders the flowers: but now the flowers are seen on the earth. The apostles were good flowers, who spread the fragrance of their diverse writings and works.

26. The time of harvesting has arrived (Ibid., 12); for mature grains are stored in the granaries, and the one who reaps receives wages. The voice of the turtledove has been heard (Ibid.): because it has found a nest for itself, for the Church is the house of chastity. The fig tree that was commanded to be cut down because of its barrenness has begun to bear fruit. The vine, carried out of Egypt, no longer destroyed by walls, is attacked by beasts, not by shapeless thorns

anymore, but by fragrant flowers, which used to produce thorns, it now bends with the weight of grapes (Ibid., 13).

27. Therefore, rightly celebrating the Passover of the Lord, the holy David, entering the summer seasons with a fervent spirit, who gathered various fruits in the word of God, avoiding the adversity of winter, says: And do not take away from my mouth the word of truth entirely, because I have greatly hoped in your judgments. How great is the labor to understand a word? How much danger is there if you lose it? And therefore it is said to you: Do not neglect the grace that is in you (I Tim. IV, 14). Carefully cultivate your field like a good farmer, so that your lambs may graze and your crops may flourish (Prov. XXVII, 16). Do not let a word escape from your mouth; for if words do not match actions, they distort the teaching of righteousness. A word is taken away from your mouth when it is said to a sinner: Why do you recite my commandments (Psal. XLIX, 16)? And eloquence itself is silenced if conscience is sick. The birds of the sky come; they too pick up the Word from your mouth, removing the seed of the word from the rock, so that it may not bear fruit.

28. Now let us consider whether the word of truth can also be taken away from the heart. For a rooted and deeply embedded word is difficult to remove from our minds. Finally, it is said by the Lord: Why do you proclaim my justices? (Ibid.) He did not say: Why did you think of my justices? And you take my testament through your mouth? He did not say: Through your heart. Speech is restrained by an unworthy mind, not hindered by repentance. It prohibits insolence, not excludes correction. However, care must be taken so that the inner hearts themselves are not disturbed, and malice does not pour in darkness, so that the heart, blinded by empty thoughts, loses the light of truth and is unable to grasp the brilliance of the word. Therefore, if David prays that the word may not be taken away from his mouth, and if it is taken away, not completely, that is, not wholly taken away: who is so great that he can claim to have the power of grace in his own argument; especially if his life rebukes what his teaching presumes, and if he commits what deserves to be condemned by the judgment of God? For the one who hopes in the judgments of God can keep the word of truth; for while he fears punishment, he preserves grace. And so he says: And I will always keep your law, forever and ever. He said two, when one would have been enough if he had wanted to signify one. But because the law is promised to be kept not only in the present time of this life, but also in the future after the course of this life; therefore, I think that according to those who serve the heavenly things as examples and shadows, and according to those who in the heavenly places worship God according to the true Law, it promises that they must live, so that they may keep the law here and there. Here in an example, in a mirror, in a riddle: there in the very face of truth.

30. We can also understand this; because δι■ παντ■ς not only signifies that which is always said, but also that which is done in all things; because the one who keeps the Law in all things is the one who, being educated in the Law, born under the Law, and advancing in the degree of his devotion above the Law, is liberated from the Law (for Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law) not without the law of God, but has been received into the law of Christ: or certainly if we keep the Law in all things, if we do not exceed the legitimate discipline of childhood and youth, the conduct of our young adulthood, the maturity of old age, and the path prescribed for each stage of life by no means exceeds the use of our own life. Similarly, our souls also seem to have certain ages through which they pass and journey, so that it can say: I have finished the race (II Tim. IV, 7). Finally, that age of the soul is that of which it is said: And the age of old age is a blameless life

(Wis. IV, 9). Therefore, whoever keeps the Law will not stray from it, both in the ages of our body and in the processes of our soul.

31. (Verse 45.) And I walked in spaciousness, for I sought after your testimonies. He who walks according to the commandments walks a narrow and confined path, and walks in spaciousness. From where we read: You have enlarged me in my distress (Psalm 4:2). And elsewhere: In my distress I called upon the Lord, and He heard me in spaciousness (Psalm 118:5). For the wise man walks in the innocence of his heart, and waters overflow from its source onto his streets, who does not confine his mind within earthly and physical things; but directs it towards heavenly things, so that his conduct may be in heaven. Hearing no distress, he says, 'We are under pressure, but not crushed' (2 Corinthians 4:9). And how could he be constricted when his mouth is always open? (2 Corinthians 6:11). So that believers may not be restricted? Let him explain what it means to enter into spaciousness. For he says: 'Although our bodies are under pressure, our hearts are wide open.' You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections (Ibid., 11-12).

32. They could not be confined in Paul, in whom was the depth of wisdom and the breadth of faith. For how could they be confined in him who was the vessel of eternal election? But they are confined in themselves; for the wicked are confined in themselves, strangled by the snares of their own malice. Establish for me a greedy man, constantly extending the boundaries of his estates, excluding his neighbors; does he not seem to you to be expanding, not restricting, whom even the earth itself cannot contain? No matter how much space his house extends, it is confined within the narrow limits of his own opinion, to whom what he has is not enough. But he is not of such a character who can say: And I entered into spaciousness. He also added a reason: Because I sought out your testimonies.

33. (Verse 46.) And I spoke concerning your testimonies in the presence of kings, and I was not put to shame. This voice of the martyr is fitting, who, called to sacrilege, did not blush when reproached by kings for crucifying Jesus, but rather boasted in the cross of Christ and affirmed that it is the salvation of the world through heavenly testimonies. Christ calls these people in the Bride, saying in the Song of Songs: 'Come, my dove, to the shelter of the rock, near the fortress' (Song of Songs 2:14); that is, come near the Gospel. The fortresses of your faith are the deeds of Christ: your walls are the supports of the Lord's words: the passion of the Lord's body is your strength. Show me your face, and reveal your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is beautiful. Your voice is sweet, because by your mouth confession is made unto salvation; and your face is beautiful, for it does not blush before the Author, nor is it ashamed of the Redeemer. Therefore, she shows her face, bearing the seal of the Cross, and reveals her voice, assuming the authority of preaching. For in the covering of Christ's body, by which it was redeemed from sin, she found the defense of divine grace: so that she both experiences and speaks that which is advantageous to her. Therefore, a sweet voice was speaking in divine testimonies: a beautiful face, which was not ashamed in the sight of kings.

34. We can understand those kings to whom it is said by Peter: But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession (I Pet. II, 9). For there are kings who offer in Jerusalem the gifts of their wisdom, to whom grace is given to speak the word, and with a certain royal power to bend peoples, and to soothe the souls of the saints, not being ashamed of it; because they speak nothing foreign to honesty, whom no one may rebuke and

repel, as if they were unworthy, whom Christ has made worthy ministers of the new Testament, and now they are not ashamed; because they feared not lest they should be confounded by the opposite assertions of disputers. Therefore, a king is one who is not ashamed, so that he may not be criticized or condemned in his actions or in his words. This is because both his life and his speech should be founded on truth. Therefore, even though a Prophet may be perfect enough that he does not feel ashamed in the presence of kings, he still meditates on God's precepts at all times of his life and elevates his works, doing nothing that clings to earthly desires.

Therefore he says: And I meditated on your commandments, which I loved exceedingly. And I lifted up my hands to your commandments, which I loved exceedingly: and I was exercised in your justifications. This is a most beautiful order, that we first meditate on those precepts which we love, and that meditation becomes a familiar practice for us. For through the meditation of heavenly commandments, the use of good works is acquired. For just as the end of memorizing words is memory, so the intention or end of meditating on heavenly precepts is action, and a direct act towards fulfilling divine precepts, which unless someone loves, they will not be able to fulfill. And they should not only love, but love exceedingly.

Therefore, he first said: And I meditated upon your precepts, which I loved exceedingly. And he added: And I raised my hands to your precepts, which I loved exceedingly. For after meditation, it is good to direct our actions towards the commandments of God, and to do so with charity and joy, so that our good may not be out of necessity, nor with sorrow and sadness, but voluntarily; for a reluctant servant performs, but a willing friend. However, let us strive to be told: I no longer call you servants, but friends (John 15:15), because you have carried out the commandments of God as friends according to your own will. But the one who meditates and loves, and lifts up his actions, in order to do what pleases God: he ought not to neglect or pass over divine commands, but to be exercised in them, to dwell in them as much as possible, frequently pondering the justifications of God with a solicitous affection of the mind.

Sermon 7. Zain.

The letter Zain in Hebrew signifies 'duc te' in Latin, elsewhere it signifies 'huc'. The interpretation of this is not sufficiently clear, unless perhaps so that each person may govern himself and be his own guide. Or it may direct the way, that is, where the letters of this verse call it to go. And rightly it immediately seeks its rest in the first line, because it is the seventh letter and a number of rest. But what greater rest is there than to rest in the word of God, and to be sweetened by His grace and consolation.

2. (Verse 49.) Remember, says he, O Lord, your word to your servant, in which you have given me hope. The word of God has led us, who were cast down and lowly, to heavenly grace; so that we desire eternity, despise the present, are indifferent to temporal things, and seek after future and invisible things. Therefore, the Word of God calls us to himself, as it is written: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you (Matthew 11:28). Therefore, let us follow the calling of the Lord Jesus, so that we may transition from worldly things to eternal ones, and learn to govern ourselves.

Therefore David, because he was often invited to heavenly answers, to which he hoped for a reward of faith and merits, as you have written, God saying through the prophet Nathan: I took you

from the sheepfold, from following the flock, that you should be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you (2 Samuel 7:8-9). And further: I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth (ibid. 11). Upon receiving this response, David said, 'Who am I, Lord God, and what is my house, that you have loved me in this way? Yet even the least of these things have been remembered before you, Lord, and you have spoken concerning the house of your servant in the distant future.' And further he said: 'And now, my Lord, you are God. and your words are true, and you have spoken these good things for your servant. And now, begin to bless the house of your servant, that I may be in your presence forever; for you, my Lord, have spoken, and by your blessing the house of your servant shall be blessed forever.' Therefore, with this response and others, David continues to hope and, through the authority of prophetic faith, he encounters the Lord; that he may remember his promises, of which he is accustomed not to be forgetful. For He is accustomed to fulfill whatever He has promised to the saints, being forgetful of our iniquities and not forgetful of His own promises. Indeed, it is written: I am, I am He who blots out your iniquities . . . and I will not be mindful; but you be mindful and let us be judged (Isaiah 43:25-26). He desires to forget whatever threats He has made against sinners, if they would only turn their ways. He also desires to be reconciled, so that if anyone, having pursued the proposed virtues, has competed well, he may expect the fruit of reward, or even demand it, as it is written: I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; the crown of justice is reserved for me (2 Timothy 4:7). For it is not an arrogant usurpation, but a faithful one; for it confesses that the true God cannot deceive. Therefore, it admonishes, as David says, that the Lord may remember His word; thus it prompts us to hope, so that we may renounce earthly things and cling to heavenly ones.

Therefore, David says: I have fought a good fight, I seek the reward of your word, which you promised to me; remember your promises, which you have made to your servant. I have not hoped presumptuously for what you have made me hope for. I am a servant, I expect food from the Lord; I am a soldier, I demand pay from the emperor; I am called, I ask for what was promised by the inviter. However, he modestly tempered the authority of his faith, by saying that he is a servant; for the eyes of servants are in the hands of their masters (Psalms 122:2). These words from the persona of David are well spoken.

5. Moreover, if anyone considers the information of each person, he can weigh the common promises lightly, as you have: Give Levi his men, give Levi his witnesses (Deut. 33:8). This discourse can also be applied to the chosen people, to whom through the type of Joseph, first in the type of his name, then through the tribe, the divine promise was transferred to the heirs of the first election, as Moses said: The firstborn of his bull carries the glory, his horns are like the horns of a unicorn; with them he shall gore the nations together to the ends of the earth (Ibid., 17). For this unique Word of God is foretold by the oracle that it is to be spread throughout the whole world among the nations. Therefore, the promise of the resurrection of the Church, though hesitant of its own worthiness, seems to demand the hastening of common progress.

6. (Verse 50.) And he added: This has comforted me in my lowliness, because your word has brought me life. This is the hope, this which has come to me through your word, has comforted me so that I may endure the bitter things of the present. While Paul does something against his own name, he lacks the consolation of hope; while he suffers for the name, he draws hope from consolation. And when he has become faithful, how he consoles us, listen: Who shall separate us,

he says, from the love of Christ? Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, danger, sword? As it is written: For your sake we are being put to death all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered (Rom. 8:35-36). And in what way can these things be patiently endured, he added: But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us (Ibid., 37). Therefore, if anyone wants to overcome adversity, whether it is persecution, danger, death, severe distress, attacks by robbers, confiscation of property, or whatever of those things that are considered adversities in this world, they can easily be overcome if there is a comforting hope. For even if those things happen, they cannot be considered serious to someone who says: For I believe that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come (Ibid., 38). For whoever hopes for better things is never broken by lighter things.

7. Therefore, in the time of our humility, there is consoling hope that does not disappoint: the time of temptations, I consider, is the time of the humility of our soul. For our soul is humbled when it is handed over to the tempter, to be tested by harsh labors, so that it may struggle and fight, experiencing the encounter of contrary power: but in these temptations, it is revived by the speech of God. For this is the vital substance of our soul, by which it is nourished, and fed, and governed. And nothing else is there that makes the rational soul live than speech with God. For just as the word of God is increased in our soul as it is received, understood, and comprehended, so also is His life increased; and as, on the contrary, speech with God diminishes in our soul, so His life in us also incurs a defect. Therefore, just as this connection of our soul and body is animated, nourished, and sustained by the vital spirit, so our soul is vivified by the spiritual grace of the word of God. Wherever we should study in every kind, having put all other things aside, let us gather to ourselves the conversations of God, and let us gather in our mind, in our thoughts, in our concerns, and in our actions; so that our actions may coincide with the conversations of Scripture, and our actions may not seem to disagree with the sequence of heavenly precepts, by which we may also say: For your word has given us life.

8. (Verse 51.) The third verse is: The proud acted unjustly: but I did not turn away from your law. The greatest sin in man is pride; since from there flowed the origin of our offense. With this weapon the devil first wounded and struck us. For unless man, deceived by the persuasion of the serpent, had wanted to be like God and know the true and the false, which he could not fully discern due to human frailty; and therefore, what he had received by following, so that he would not fall from that happiness of paradise by reckless usurpation: unless, I say, man, not satisfied with his own boundaries, had violated the prohibitions, the inheritance of the fatal guilt would never have come to us. And what about man? He himself, through pride, lost the grace of his own nature. Finally, while saying, 'I will set my throne above the clouds... and I will be like the Most High' (Isaiah 14:13-14), he fell from the company of the angels: condemned by the deserving reward of his crime, he sought a partner in man, into whom he could transfer his shared offense.

9. What, therefore, can be worse than this sin that begins with an injury to God? And for this reason, Scripture says: The Lord resists the proud (Prov. 3:34). As if to say, He takes on a special struggle against pride as a repeller of His own reproach; as if to say, This adversary of mine, who provokes me, owes me this contest. Hence, the Apostle declared that pride is the source of manifold guilt, saying of the heretic: He is proud, knowing nothing, but sick about questions and word battles, from which envy, contentions, sacrileges, evil suspicions, conflicts of minds of corrupted men, and opposing the truth, come forth, thinking that godliness is a means of gain (1

Tim. 6:3-5). Therefore, how much pride has been expressed as the cause of these offenses? Hence, David, wanting to commend his devotion, which was not tainted by any wickedness of the proud, says: The proud acted wickedly indeed. He not only declared the wickedness of those who acted, but also the excessive wickedness, which would befit the proud: of whom, lest he be tempted by any contamination, listen to what someone else says elsewhere: With a proud eye and an insatiable heart, I will not eat this (Psalm 100:5).

Therefore, since he had shown how great the power of evil is in pride, he ought to teach us how it should be conquered: and rightly, like a good doctor, he shows the remedy, who has emphasized the poison. Therefore, listen to how you can exclude the virus of pride: 'I have not turned aside from your law,' he says. Therefore, only God's law is able to contain the virus of pride, which has instructed the man dedicated to devotion about how he should govern himself with caution. For many, not only strangers to faith, but even those who seem to have grasped not insignificant precepts of the Scriptures, are accustomed to be tempted by the prosperous ways of the proud: seeing those who transgress the law as judges of impiety, arrogant, despisers of the faithful, exalting themselves against those who humble their hearts according to the fear of God and the heavenly precepts, abounding in this world with riches, fame, honors, powers; and the more serious offenses they have committed, the more successful they are in following the advantages of the secular world: on the other hand, just men generally suffer from poverty, the loss of children, and the sterility of their wives; thereby agitated and disturbed, they incline the sense of their minds to think that God's judgment in this matter is in some way mistaken: not holding onto the head of truth, by which it is most clearly understood that our reward for merits is not stored up in this world, but in the future.

11. But only a few notice this. In the beginning, even David himself was tested, as it is written: 'Behold, the sinners and the rich in this world have obtained riches, and I have said: Did I justify my heart in vain, and wash my hands among the innocent, and am I scourged all day long?' (Psalm 72:12-14). Therefore, each one of us, who are not yet perfect, seeing this, says: Where is the providence of God, where is justice? That arrogant man abounds with pride, that arrogant man is rich, that wicked man is happy and powerful: but the righteous man, you see how he lies low and is lacking, you see how he is in need of even basic sustenance: he is afflicted with insults by that wicked man, he is trampled upon by that insolent man, he is excluded? Surely this is no small temptation, unless you look ahead to what is to come, unless you are more fully instructed by heavenly precepts.

12. Finally, David thought that he knew these things beforehand, but he did not know, and therefore he labored with an anxious and wavering mind. Hence he says: 'And I thought I knew; this is a labor before me, until I enter into the sanctuary of God and understand in the end' (Ibid. 16 and 17). In these words, through what the proud have exalted themselves, he saw in his prophetic spirit that they would be brought lower, and he says: 'How are they made desolate, suddenly they have failed and are wiped out because of their iniquity, like a dream of one waking up' (Ibid. 19 and 20)? Therefore, the success of the wicked in this world is like a dream, not reality: their benefits appear to last only as long as they are asleep. Once they wake from their dream, those who seemed to be drinking are thirsty, those who feasted are hungry, and nothing substantial is left from that dream, only a fleeting memory. And secular men sleep well in their dreams, for although they are vigilant in the world, they sleep in God, about whom the holy Job, who marveled

at their prosperity, says: 'For they are tossed by the wind like chaff, and are scattered by the whirlwind like dust.' . . . but they die with bitterness of soul, eating nothing, having nothing good. (Job 21:18 and 25). But the righteous, having confidence in a good conscience, rejoices more in his final moments and understands that he is being freed from the labors of this life and seeks the reward of good works and deeds, saying: A crown of righteousness is stored up for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who love His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8).

13. But this, he says, who was able to say: I have not swerved from your law; in which not only the grace of good works shines forth, but also the interior purity of conscience. For the law not only informs the duty to act, but also cleanses the hidden affection of the mind. For we do not only fight according to the law of the Lord in our works, but also in the very hidden things; because the law says: Let no unjust word be hidden in your heart, so that you may not only not transgress in deeds and actions, when you see the proud glorying and when you do not stumble in speech, but also that in your innermost heart, while you argue about the judgment of God, you may not contract the offense of iniquity: which is supposed to be the more hidden, the more it is accustomed to be more frequent; because each one thinks safely that such disputations, as if surrounded by his own bowels, are trusted to his own conscience; since he himself will be his own accuser on the day of judgment; because the hidden things of the heart are revealed, as our conscience testifies to our accusations.

14. Therefore, the nature of the holy man's purpose is made clearer in this passage. First, he must remember the promises of heaven; second, he must consider the rewards that are due to the living; third, the holy man's purpose is to find comfort in the hope that he has derived from the Scriptures, even when he is faced with dangers and adversities. Fourth, the holy man's purpose is to not turn away from the law, even when he sees the wicked and sacrilegious, and the proud who unjustly abound in wealth in this world; but instead, he must persevere in its ways and avoid the contagion of the proud. For every unclean person contaminates: and the proud person is unclean, of whom it is written: Every person with a proud heart is unclean before God (Prov. XVI, 5).

15. The fourth goal of the holy man is to remember the judgments of heaven, as David asserts, who said: I have remembered thy judgments from of old, O Lord; and have been comforted. For unless each person, being instructed and informed by examples of the law, believes that God's judgments are always true, he quickly deviates from the law. But whoever reviews the past and gathers from it the series of antiquity, knows that neither the sinner escapes the punishment of his wickedness, nor the righteous is deprived of the rewards of his equity. For it is known that Adam, from the beginning, was expelled from the paradise on account of his heavenly commandment transgression and Cain, guilty of fratricide, was condemned by divine authority. It is known that Enoch, due to his devotion, was taken up to heaven and escaped the corruption of earthly evil. It is known that Noah, victorious in righteousness over the flood, became the survivor of the human race. It is known that Abraham, due to his faith, spread the seed of his posterity throughout the whole world. It is known that Israel, due to his endurance of labor, consecrated the people of believers with the seal of his own name. It is known that David himself, due to his gentleness, was honored with the royal dignity and surpassed his older brothers. It is known that Elijah, due to his zeal for God, was raised to the sky in a chariot and acquired the hospitality of a heavenly abode for the new generation.

16. Whoever knows how to recount these things has a source from which to acquire the grace of consolation. And the opposite is true: because the judgments of God are true, as you have: The judgments of God, justified in themselves, are more desirable than gold and precious stone, and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. Indeed, to the one who keeps them, divine judgments are sweet; but it is without doubt that they are bitter to the one who neglects them, because he realizes that the fulfillment of the divine sentence awaits him in the disgraceful shame of sins. But those who are truly aware of themselves are not disturbed, saying: We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with Him, so that we may also be glorified together (Rom. VIII, 17).

17. But who of us, in such a situation, consoles himself by considering the series of divine judgments? Human judgments are fearful enough for sinners; how much more so are divine judgments? Indeed, if we consider those things that are truly eternal, we see in this world that the innocent eagerly hasten to judgment, hating delays and desiring the swiftness of judgment; but the guilty flee and tremble, postponing, evading, and finally becoming sorrowful when they hear that the day of judgment is appointed. Blessed therefore is he who eagerly awaits that heavenly judgment. For he knows that the kingdom of heaven is prepared for him, along with the fellowship of angels, and also the crown of good deeds.

18. (Vers. 53.) Let us now consider what the holy man's intention is, and let us judge from what follows. Cowardice, he says, has held me back from those who forsake your law. This is not common among many; for it is the majority who are saddened if they suffer any injury from someone, if they are harmed, if they are desired, if they are discolored. But our case is different: we, the weaker ones, grieve that we have been deceived by some. But the stronger person does not grieve for his own insult, but for the sins of others; and in his own injury, he laments the downfall of the one who harms, and regrets that he was the cause of the offending error. Take the example of the Apostle; for Paul wept over someone else's sin, as he himself says: For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears (2 Corinthians 2:4). And even though he himself was sorrowful, he did not want those whom he was rebuking to be sorrowful. Finally, he added: Not to make you sad, but to make you aware of the abundant love I have for you. For he wanted them to be saddened until they reached repentance, not to a deeper sorrow; only so that those who were being rebuked, their sorrow would be turned into joy. Therefore, he says: For if I make you sad, who is there to make me glad, except the one who is made sad by me? So he reproves in order to alleviate the duration of sorrow, so that repentance may lead to salvation: he condemns in order to absolve, he excludes in order to receive, he does not forgive in order to set free. Therefore Paul, being well versed in the law, knew the commandment of the one who said: Cowardice prevented me from forsaking your law.

David was grieved, not because he was despised, not because he himself was desired, but because the law of God was abandoned; and he grieved for those who were doing this, because they were perishing to God. Just as a good father, when his sons in a fit of madness curse him, beat him, and treat him with insults, laments not his own but the illness of the sick; he is grieved by the insult, not because it is inflicted upon him, but because the sick person in his madness knows not what he does: so a good man, when he sees a sinner not respecting and honoring even the white hair of the elderly, in their presence doing something unworthy; not recognizing, in a kind of madness for sinning, the disgraceful and dishonorable acts he commits, he grieves as if for a

dying man, he groans as if for one given up by doctors; and just as a good doctor first advises and then, even if the patient suffers serious injuries, nevertheless endures them as if he himself were ill, even if he is beaten, he does not leave him; and he does not deny whatever medicine he can apply, nor does he abandon him as obstinate, but rather he strives with all his effort to heal him as one who has deserved well of himself, exercising not only the skill of his art, but also the kindness of his mind. So even when the righteous person is despised by the sinner, they are not turned away; and when they are harmed, they consider it to be the result of madness, not wickedness, and they desire to bring a remedy to their wound rather than seeking revenge, and they show sympathy and pain not for themselves, but for the one who suffers from a desperate affliction. They say that this one of the brethren suffers and is affected in such a way that they harm me; if they were to recognize me, they would surely honor me and certainly not harm me. For what has been injured by my act, so that it may have the feeling of the one who causes harm? Therefore, since there is no cause for causing harm, there cannot be a fault in the intention. Therefore, if I am just, I am affected because of love, because of affection, because of the harm to the Church, because of the detriment to the body. I can also grieve for this, that even if I have not harmed the one who harms me, and I am not conscious that I have provoked him against me with any injuries, yet I have been the cause of his fall, because he commits a sin by harming the innocent, because I have become the material of his sin.

Therefore, David is grieved, and he grieves because when one member suffers, the other members suffer with it. Therefore, perhaps it is also said: 'The righteous is an accuser at the beginning of his speech' (Prov. XVIII, 17). For even though a righteous person may have something to accuse himself of, and still be righteous (because no one is without sin except for God alone), and even though a sinner may by this very fact be righteous, because he accuses himself, according to the saying: 'Declare your iniquities, that you may be justified'; nevertheless, perhaps it does not seem absurd to some that it should also be said of him that he is righteous who accuses himself for another, even if he has nothing in himself to accuse.

22. So let us consider how the first person of the righteous man David fits into all this. He accused himself when there was no accuser. He confessed his own sin when his heart was struck, because he had numbered the people. He also said to the Lord, 'I have sinned, O Lord, what I have done is wrong; but now, O Lord, take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly' (2 Samuel 24:10). Therefore, although Scripture says that the anger of God was aroused against Israel, to excuse the king's downfall, when he saw the angel causing the destruction of the people, he presented himself to the blow, saying, 'Here I am, I have sinned, and I have done wrong. But what have these sheep done?' Let your hand be upon me, and upon the house of my father (Ibid., 17). Therefore, the righteous accuser accused himself at the beginning of his speech, and acknowledged his sin, and by confessing his own iniquity, he justified himself in himself. Also, when accused of Uriah's death by the prophet, he said: I have sinned against the Lord (II Sam. XII, 13); to which it was replied that his sin was taken away from him by the Lord because of his repentance.

23. Moreover, when Semei cursed him in another place and stoned him with a band of warriors, through whom he could have sought revenge, he bore it patiently, not even returning the insult in word. Indeed, when his general Abessa wanted to take off the head of the one who cursed him, the king said, 'What is it to me and to you, son of Sarvia? What he curses at me, the Lord has

commanded him to curse David.' (2 Kings 16:10). Therefore, he first excused his fault and referred the matter to the will of the Lord. In the second place, he turned it back against its merit, so that he indicated not that he had erred, but that he had deserved it. In the third place, he remembered that his curse not only did not harm him, but even benefited him, as it is written: 'And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants: Behold my son, who went out of my seed, seeks my life; how much more so the son of Jemini?' (Ibid., 11) He greatly broke the attack of the avenger. How indeed could he avenge the curse of a stranger for the king's injury, when his own son's parricide remained unavenged? Not indeed as a curse from strangers, nor was it right to weigh the equal punishment of the parricide with a lance. And he added: Do not curse him; for the Lord said to him, until he sees my humility, and the Lord will repay me with good for evil. There is also another just proposal far more perfect and powerful, to intervene for persecutors and excuse sinners: which we read in the Gospel, with the Lord Jesus saying when he was crucified by the unfaithful: Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

Therefore, it is clear from these teachings of heavenly doctrine that a righteous person would prefer to accuse himself rather than defame another. Finally, it is written about Joseph, to whom Mary, the mother of the Lord, was betrothed, that when he saw her with child, being a righteous man, he did not want to expose her (Matthew 1:19); and certainly he had not yet heard any oracle. Thus, not only is a righteous person removed from the cruelty of vengeance, but also from the severity of accusation: and he considers his own forgiveness to be accused of not reporting, rather than to press a foreign crime. But you will say: How did David himself say, 'The righteous will rejoice when he sees the punishment of the wicked' (Psalm 57:11)? It seems to me that he rejoices because he himself has escaped, not because the wicked are punished. Let us seek another purpose of the righteous from what follows.

25. (Verse 54.) Therefore he says: Your justifications were delightful to me in the place of my pilgrimage. With good reason they were not broken by wanderings, they avoided the arrogant, and they were not moved by their prosperous successes. He consoled himself in heavenly judgments, he was troubled by others' sins; because he had delightful justifications of God. For what we hold well, we are accustomed to sing; and what is sung, adheres better to our senses. Let us not pass over in a cursory manner the things we read, so that then, when we read them, we seem to return to their memory; but even when the book is absent from our hands, like living creatures that are proven and considered clean by the Law, even when they are not feeding, they are accustomed to ruminate, bringing forth food hidden within themselves: so too, let us bring forth spiritual sustenance by ruminating on the treasury of our memory and our innermost selves. Let hymns be for us, let songs be for us, let the psalms be our justifications of the Lord. Let us sing with the spirit, let us sing with the mind; lest if we forget, let it be said to each one of us in the time of need: You have rejected my words after you (Ps. 49:17).

Therefore, in order to drive out and eliminate forgetfulness from his holy house, Solomon made true singers for himself, who with their whole spirit would devote themselves to the searching knowledge of divinity; lest the wicked spirit be driven away by the singing of his Church, of which he learned the example of David the saint, by whose singing that evil spirit was cast out, which afflicted the heart of King Saul. The prophets also commanded skilled singers to sing, so that the grace of the Holy Spirit might be infused with sweet delight. (2 Kings 3:14). And in the Gospel, we read that the prodigal son heard music playing in his father's house, which brought joy to the

faithful but irritated the unfaithful. (Luke 15:28). Therefore, sweet is the melody that does not weaken the body but strengthens the mind and soul. Therefore, the song is called the Testament of the Lord, because we sing the forgiveness of all sins and the righteousness of the Lord in the Scriptures of the Gospel with the sweet exultation of the mind. The Lord Himself also did not hesitate to say: We have sung to you, and you did not dance (Luke 7:32). He sang to us in the Gospel the forgiveness of sins: the Jews should have raised their minds not with theatrical bodily movement, but with the Holy Spirit. They did not do so, therefore they are reproved.

27. But even the dancing of the body is considered praiseworthy in honor of God. In fact, David danced before the Ark of the Lord and Michal, the daughter of Saul, saw him dancing and playing musical instruments in the presence of the Lord. After he returned home, she said to him, 'How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today! He has exposed himself in the sight of the maidservants of his servants, as one of the rabble might shamelessly expose himself!' David said to Michal in the presence of the Lord, 'It was before the Lord, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the Lord's people Israel and Judah. I will celebrate before the Lord. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor.' And Michal, he said, had no son to the daughter of Saul until the day of his death (2 Samuel 6:20 et seq.). It is a clear example, therefore, that even the Prophet who played on the musical instruments and danced before the Ark of the Lord, was justified; and she who criticized him was condemned to barrenness.

28. But it is not enough for someone to have the justifications of God, unless they strip themselves of the earthly servitude of anxieties. Therefore, it is added: In the place of my pilgrimage (Psalm 38:13). It is fitting; for elsewhere it says: I am a stranger in this land (Ephesians 2:19). Hence, the Apostle does not want us to be strangers and foreigners in the house of God and in the calling of faith, but citizens of the saints and members of the household of God. For whoever is a servant of God is an exile from the world; whoever lives in heavenly things is a stranger to earthly things. The Hebrews wandered in this world, not sensing the nature of the fire: they had the songs of God's justice, as they sang a hymn to God in praise of His creatures.

Then he who sings, is empty, and he banishes the worries of various thoughts, and separates himself from greed, and not only soothes himself with the voice of his body, but also with the liveliness of his mind. For the same Prophet sang not as if sad with the worry of poverty, but as if free from all bodily passions: I will sing to you, O God, on the harp, O Holy Israel. My lips will rejoice when I sing to you; and my soul, which you have redeemed. (Psalm 70:22-23). Haecclætus sang joyfully, as if he were being fed by these better meals. For the soul feasted on the nourishment of devout piety. Therefore, not only hymns and psalms, but also the precepts of the Law are meant to be sung by the holy. Indeed, Moses, who received the Law, sang while he crossed the sea on foot, proclaiming the righteous acts of the Lord as the leader of the saved people.

30. (Verse 55.) There remains yet another excellent purpose of the righteous man, that he should always be attentive to the praises of God, not only during the day but also at night. And so he added: I have remembered your name, O Lord, in the night, and I have kept your law. Let us see if he also remembers, who calls the Lord by word, but does not keep the divine commandments. It

has been said enough concerning this, that not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, will be accepted by Christ, but rather he who has been able to prove his faithful disposition by good works (Matthew 7:21). Therefore, faith, honesty, and innocence prove one's memory. And as he says: I have been mindful of your name, it is complete devotion; for no one can say 'Lord Jesus' except in the Holy Spirit. Let this name be invoked day and night, so that no time for prayer allows sacred devotion to pass by in vain.

31. Therefore, if students indulge too little in secular studies, how much more should they who desire to know God not be hindered by bodily sleep, except as much as is necessary for nature? David wet his bed with tears every night; he would even rise in the middle of the night to praise the Lord. And do you think the whole night should be assigned to sleep? Then the Lord must be prayed to more, then help must be sought, sin must be avoided, when it seems that solitude is obtained; especially then when darkness surrounds me and walls cover me, considering that the Lord sees all hidden things. So you say: I am surrounded by darkness, who sees me? And whom do I fear, enclosed by walls? Because the face of the Lord is upon those who do evil (Psalms 34:16). Then if you do not see the judge, do you not see yourself? Are you not afraid of the testimony of your conscience? Do you not know that this darkness of night is not a covering, but an incentive to sin? When bodies are consumed by sleep and food, even the strength of the mind is relaxed by sleep, dissolved by sleep: then impure desire creeps in, then the heart is disturbed, the stain of uncleanness is not seen, the purity of chastity is not considered, the glory of modesty is not recognized. It was night when Judas betrayed, when Peter denied.

Therefore, especially during that time, the justifications of God should be repeated in the mind, and the exhortations should be set aside. Let those precepts about chastity not be absent: with the mind occupied by these, one may quench the flame of desire and dampen the ardor of the flesh. Keep this in mind: I will wash my bed every night (Psalm 6:7). For who, devoted to debauchery, wrapped in vice, washes his bed every night? He who commits things to be wept over does not know how to weep; and although he himself is to be lamented, he does not have tears for his own punishment. But he who disciplines his body and is a vigilant governor of himself, and groaning and sorrowing seeks how he may wash away the offense of his previous lapse with tears of penitence, he washes his bed every night. Let us not therefore sleep through the entire night: but let us dedicate the majority of them to reading and prayers.

33. Listen to the voice of the Church seeking Christ even in the nights. In my bed, she said, I sought in the nights the one whom my soul loves (Song of Songs 3:1). Take it according to the letter. She sought in the nights by praying, by begging, even by shedding tears. She sought in the nights, because she made darkness her hiding place, so that we might seek him more earnestly. Therefore, the Church gathered from the nations sought in the prophets, and for this reason believed. Finally, the coming of the Lord the witnesses of the prophets and the evangelists Paul have set. Hence it is written: For night reveals knowledge to night (Ps. XVIII, 3). He sought in the nights, in persecutions and adversities, in tribulations and harsh labors. Night is for all those who do not have perfect security; therefore the Lord says: The night is coming when no one can work (John IX, 4); while I am in this world, I am the light of this world. Therefore let us not work in darkness. For if our works shine, we do not work in darkness, but in light. There are days when Christ is present: there are nights when He denies Himself.

34. Therefore, it is not great if you then give thanks to the Lord when you are in prosperity and success: but if you then adhere to Christ when you are being persecuted, when some storm disturbs you. Have you lost a son? In that sorrow, in that night, in that destitution, remember the Lord your God; so that you may not be ungrateful, as if not heard, and transgress in your affliction. Have you been driven into exile? Remember the Lord your God; so that you may not prefer patriotism that has been forbidden to you over love for God. Having lost one's own resources due to the power of a certain rich person, are you in need of financial aid? Remember the Lord your God, lest the night of poverty take you away from the affection of devotion. For this is the commandment of the Law, that you seek more in the night, when you are heard more by the Lord, and are able to say: In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he answered me and set me in a broad place (Psalm 118:5).

35. But it is not enough to seek superficially for grace, but to insist and put effort into the task. Finally, whether it be the Church or the soul, which sought in the bed, sought in the nights, did not find at first; because perhaps it sought in the bed (Song of Songs 3:2-4): but afterwards, when it rose and went into the city (see that city to which the Lord, about to celebrate the Passover, sent his disciples saying (Matthew 26:18): Go into the city to a certain person), afterwards, as I said, it sought in the market, it found the one it loved, where oil is sold, which they used to buy while waiting for the Bridegroom (Matthew 25:9), where justice, where laws. If the law is spiritual, and the forum is indeed spiritual, where the experts of eternal law debate. That forum is not tumultuous with lawsuits, but glorious with the tribunals of Christ. Where did he seek, you may ask? In the forum: and after he sought in the streets, from which those who were invited to the banquet of the Evangelical fathers were gathered, who did not think it necessary to excuse themselves from such feasts (Luke 14:21). After he sought in the forum and in the streets, he encountered those who go around the city (Song of Solomon 3:3): and only then could he find what he sought, perhaps because in adversity and fear he finds grace more readily. Finally, in the latter passage it says: 'They found me, who go around the city... they took away my cloak' (Song of Songs 5:7). So there was a struggle; but how they did not take away the cloak above, I am struggling to find out, unless it is because she said there: 'Have you seen him whom my soul loves?' (Song of Songs 3:3). She, who was speaking about Christ, did not take off her cloak, and she found the one whom she was seeking.

36. Learn how Christ is sought. Certainly by those who do not seek superficially, but hold on forcefully, just as it says: I held him, and I did not let him go (Ibid., 4), he finds faith, he is compelled by meditation. If we accept good guardians, they are certainly angels. Therefore, whoever has passed through the angels, finds the Word; therefore, there was not much distance when he passed through them and found Jesus. So how then did they take his garment below, unless perhaps because the Church, oppressed by the progress of faith, while being stripped, is loved more by the Lord, abandoning the old man and putting on the new man, which is not covered by clothing, but the secrets of the mind are made clear; or perhaps because she put aside the garment of secular wisdom that is to come to Christ? And Noah took off the cloak after he began to be more perfect.

37. (Verse 56.) Therefore, let us be mindful of the heavenly justifications, so that while we sing them with the secret voice of the mind, we may be mindful in the night of the name of the Lord, and say, as it is written: This has been done to me; for I have sought your justifications; that is, this

memory has been made to me, so that I may be mindful even in the night of your name, not being put to sleep by drunkenness, not being dissolved in feasts into sleep, not being occupied by worldly cares; so that forgetfulness of your veneration does not creep upon me: but by daily meditation, chastening the limbs, and exercising the intention of the mind, let this solemn course be made to us by assiduity; so that we may worship the Lord Jesus also in the nights with our whole affection, to whom be glory, praise, perpetuity from ages, and now, and always, and forever and ever. Amen.

Sermon 8. Heth.

The eighth letter Heth, which in Latin is called 'pavor', usually means the fear of saints. Finally, fear fell upon Abraham when he offered a sacrifice full of spiritual mystery (Gen. XV, 12). David himself also says: 'I said in my fear: Every man is a liar' (Psal. CXV, 2). It signifies more the reverence of religion than the weakness of fear, although the fear itself may be holy according to God: For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psal. CX, 10). Therefore, those who fear God are wise; and those who are wise are blessed. For blessed is he whom you instruct, O Lord, and whom you teach out of your law (Psalm 94:12). Also, those who fear God are blessed, as the authority of the example exists, for Blessed are all who fear the Lord (Psalm 128:1). Thus, it is concluded that those who fear God are both wise and blessed. Therefore, the fear of the Lord is holy, for it is truly the terror of the saints.

Vers. 57. Finally, after this letter is sent, immediately the person of the righteous speaks, saying: My portion, O Lord: I have said to keep your law. Most codices have this verse, which is the first of the eighth letter, in the last place of the seventh letter: but according to the Hebrews, it is corrected and the Greek book of Psalms teaches us to join this verse to the eighth letter. Then the very order and number of the verses agree in such a way that the eighth letter begins from it.

Portion, he says, is mine, O Lord. How rare on earth is one who can say: My portion is the Lord; how separate from vices, how removed from all the stain of sin, who claims nothing in common with the world, who does not desire the possessions of the flesh, whom lust does not inflame, greed does not provoke, sensuality does not weaken, indulgence does not taint, ambition does not afflict, envy does not torment, and who is not preoccupied with worldly affairs, a true minister of the altar, born for God, not for himself. For Levi, as the interpretation signifies, signifies himself assumed by me, signifies also himself mine, signifies also assumed only, signifies also assumed by me. Himself is both to me Levi, and to God; how is he both to me a priest, and to God? and to me an advocate and a suppliant to the Lord: offering sacrifice for me, and also offering himself to the Lord. Finally, elsewhere Levi is called an interpretation, for me. Indeed, if he is named Levi by me, he is for me: if he offers on behalf of me, he is for me: if he intervenes on behalf of me, he is for me. But if he is called by the Lord, he is called to me, that is, not subject to others, not a tither, not generous with possessions: he is called to me, that is, as abundant for all these things, I do not seek tithes from him, nor fruits, nor gifts, nor presents, he himself is a gift to me, he is a tribute to me: not generous with his possessions to me, but he himself is my possession, he himself is my fruit, he himself is my census taken by me, or taken by him. This cannot be without divine grace. Just as possession cannot be mine unless I buy it, so Levi cannot be unless he is assumed by the Lord; for when he is assumed, it is rightly said that he is mine. Finally, when it was said to Moses to divide the inhabitations of the Jewish people into individual tribes, and to distribute a portion to

each tribe, God exempted the tribe of Levi, saying: The sons of Levi shall have no portion or inheritance among their brethren; for the Lord God is their portion (Deut. X, 9). And elsewhere: I am the Lord, their portion (Num. XVIII, 20).

5. The earthly division of these things is denied: so that they, while not claiming a worldly portion for themselves, may become a heavenly possession; or let them know only to possess this, that is, the service of faith and devotion; much richer than those who spread out the wide spaces of their possessions. However much they may extend their boundaries, the earth fails and the sea contains insane desires, and they pay greater taxes than the fruits are. But truly, this person possessing nothing, serves no one but God, his portion is above the earth, he is not limited by the earth, he is not enclosed by the sea. To whom belongs the portion of God, possessor of all nature. For in the fields, he himself is sufficient, having good fruit, which can never perish: for in houses, the habitation of the Lord is sufficient for him, and the temple of God, than which nothing can be more precious. For what is more precious than God? Or what is lacking to a man who can say: May I not glory, but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world? (Galatians VI, 4) The ruler of this world cannot claim ownership in which he finds nothing of his own.

6. Therefore, the Lord, who came to teach us so that we might become a part of God, said: 'The prince of this world is coming, and he will find nothing in me' (John 14:30). And desiring us to be imitators of himself, he said: 'Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money' (Matthew 10:9). Hence Peter, showing that his portion is in God, not in the world, said: 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have, I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk' (Acts 3:6). This is my portion, this is my inheritance. Christ is my portion. In the name, therefore, of Christ Jesus, arise and walk; that is, in my portion I am rich, in my portion I am mighty: by merit do I presume such fruits of this portion, that salvation and life may be granted: for this is the heritage of the portion which I have chosen for myself. He said this, being lame, and the one who was lame from his mother's womb arose. Therefore, how could Peter feel the losses of his portion, who was repairing the losses of nature?

7. Why do you not have silver and gold, Peter, tell us: tell also what it is that you say you have, since you said you have left everything you had. For thus you spoke to the Lord: Behold, we have left everything, and have followed you (Matthew 19:27), that is, we have not sought the things of this world, we have not sought a share of possessions: but we have chosen you as our portion. Therefore, Peter, you have left everything you had before; where do you have what you say you have? A lame man rises up, and is lifted by the sound of your voice. You give health to others, who yourself needed the help of your salvation. Therefore, you have left what you had, and you have taken what you did not have. Christ is your portion, Christ is your possession. His name is abundant to you, His name is fruitful to you, His name bestows gifts upon you, and the gifts are not of money, but of grace. Your portion is not dried by drought, not diluted by rain, not burned by cold, not shaken by storms. Let the sun not burn you by day, nor the moon by night. Keep the portion you have chosen; it is a portion that earthly parts cannot equal. For what can be compared to those things of which God says: 'And I will dwell in them' (Leviticus 26:12)? What is more magnificent than heavenly hospitality? What is more blessed than divine possession? And He says, 'I will walk among them' (2 Corinthians 6:16). Others complain about the narrowness of their own land: for you, God is a spacious possession, in whom He says He walks, that is, finding wide

spaces of habitation, who enclosed the earth in His hand; for it is written: 'Who has measured the waters with His hand, and marked off the heavens with His palm, and enclosed the entire earth in His hand' (Isaiah 40:12)? To whom the world is narrow, to him you are a spacious house. 'You are my portion,' says the Lord. This is what the martyr says. Therefore let us live, to whom death is glorious. In other words, how well Paul said this, showing that he has no share in this world! For it is written: Until this hour we hunger and thirst, we are naked, and beaten with fists, and unstable, and work with our own hands. We are cursed, and we bless; we endure persecution, and we bear; we are blasphemed, and we entreat. We have become as the refuse of this world, the off-scouring of all until now (1 Corinthians 4:11-13).

Perhaps it may move them that he said he was rubbish. He is not. But this seems to be to those who think that the highest glory or beauty is in wealth. Do not those people think that all who serve them for the sake of riches are rubbish and admire them for their wealth, fear them for their power, and praise them for their nobility? But Paul considered all these things to be more disadvantages than advantages. Therefore, he says: What were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ (Philippians 3:7-8). He thinks: This is not my opinion, but another's. For often that poor man is judged worthy of ridicule and hatred because of the filth of his clothing or the scars of wounds; because he possesses no portion of land; and yet his portion is in heaven. His soul has placed its inheritance there, because he heard Jesus saying: Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth... but store up treasures for yourselves in heaven (Matthew 6:19-20).

9. But the rich cannot hear this. They have closed ears, and they are deaf to the sound of the air: a coin resonates with them more than divine words. Finally, a certain rich man approached the Lord, who did not have the Lord as his portion. For he had many possessions: but the Lord is not counted among many, for he does not deign to have fellowship with the world. What portion of justice is there with iniquity? Therefore, this rich man says: What must I do to possess eternal life? (Luke XVIII, 18)? The Lord responded to him: Do you know the commandments? You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not bear false witness (Ibid., 20-21), showing that eternal life is in these commandments. But the man, wanting to justify himself, said: I have done all these things, what remains for me? To this the Lord said, wanting him to become a disciple of the Lord, not money, not possessions, but the true God: If you want to be perfect, go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me (Ibid., 22). But he, whose portion was gold and silver, without which he could not exist, and with which the Lord could not be his portion, was saddened. Whereupon the Lord pronounced it impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, except through divine grace alone, which is able to make possible what is impossible through human desires.

10. He also says: Whoever leaves father or mother, house, or brothers, or sisters... will receive a hundredfold in this age, and possess eternal life (Matthew XIX, 29). But perhaps you will say: Certainly, the one who, by leaving his home (by home, understand all his possessions), has followed God, has a share of the Lord, and the Lord has a share in him; he also has eternal life; and because he receives a hundredfold in this age, he becomes rich, you will say, and enters the kingdom of heaven. Then if the Lord gives a hundredfold of what they are accustomed to receiving as a simple impediment to the perception of eternal inheritance: therefore, he gives a hundred

possessions for one possession, a hundred pounds of gold for one pound.

Indeed, we know that many in this world who have given their possessions to the poor have been enriched with a more abundant treasure. And it is a beautiful place, that even stirs up compassion. But they should not demand a worldly reward of this kind from the Lord, nor hope for what belongs to the world. Rather, because they have left everything behind, God is their portion. He is truly the perfect reward of virtues, who is considered not by the enumeration of a hundredfold, but by the estimation of perfect fullness. I am your God, he says (Gen. XVII, 1). He did not say, 'I will be,' but 'I already am, I already dwell, I already possess.' He removes delay when he finds the confession of the just. Indeed, elsewhere he says, 'Today you will be with me in paradise' (Luke XXIII, 43). He promises the future, but what is future cannot be postponed by even a single day. Finally, he could have said, 'You will be with me in paradise,' but he added 'today,' so that grace would not be diminished by delay. But not only does the Lord Jesus say to them, 'Today you will be with me in paradise'; but He also says to you, 'You will be with me in paradise,' if you confess the Lord Jesus, if you ask for His patronage, if you yourself say: 'Remember me, Lord, when You come into Your kingdom' (cf. Lk 23:42). He does not say to you, 'Today you will be with me': He says to the martyr, 'Today you will be with me in paradise.' He does not say this to you because you are still in this feverish body, in this desiring body, in this still earthly desiring body. But when you can say: 'You have broken my bonds' (Psalms 116:16), that is, you have completed the course of this mortal life, you have delivered me from this deathly body, then He says to you: 'Today you will be with me in paradise.'

Therefore, human, you have among many things even this portion. The Lord has proposed to you possessions in a portion, gold in a portion, silver in a portion, honors in a portion, nobility in a portion; He has also proposed Himself in a portion. You have very many portions, choose which you think. Let not number disturb you, but let grace excite you; let not labor turn you away, but let fruit invite you. In the divine portion there are groans and labors. And so the holy Apostle, to whom God allotted a share, says: We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him (Rom. 8:17). You see that where the inheritance of Christ is, there ought to be compassion. But whoever suffers, does not suffer superficially, but rather fills up the afflictions of Christ in his own body, as both Paul and Jeremiah filled up. For Jeremiah said under this very letter: It is the mercy of the Lord that we have not been consumed; for his mercies are not yet exhausted; he will renew them like the morning light (Coloss. 1:24). My groanings are many, and my heart is faint. My lot is the Lord, I said; therefore I will hope in him (Lamentations 3:22-24). So, whoever relies on the Lord, has the Lord as their portion. Therefore, David also declares in this place that he has made the Lord his portion, saying: I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined to me (Psalm 40:1).

14. How rare it is for someone to claim this for themselves: it is not claimed by nobility, nor by wealth. Finally even that rich king said, 'Indeed, I too am a mortal human, like everyone else, and from the earthly race of him who came before, and in the womb of my mother I was formed as flesh: for ten months I was coagulated in blood, from the seed of man, and through the pleasure of sleep: and I, when born, inhaled the common air, and similarly fell onto the earth, and emitted the first cry, like everyone else, crying: I was nurtured in swaddling cloths, and with great cares.' And he added: For no king had a different beginning of birth. Therefore, the entrance into life is the same for all and the exit is similar. (Wis. VII, 1 and following). And because he saw that the

beginning of birth is common, he considered himself a part of God, and he called upon him, and the spirit of wisdom came into him (Ibid., 7). But the luxurious choose another part, who say: Let us fill ourselves with precious wine and ointments, and let the flower of time not pass us by. Let us crown ourselves with roses, before they wither (Wisdom II, 7, 8). And below: For this is our portion, and this is our lot (Ibid., 9).

15. How great it is to despise riches: but how rare is this itself! Certainly Moses could have been the successor of the king, being nurtured by the king's daughter. Therefore, he could have been not only like Pharaoh, but even Pharaoh himself, and Pharaoh could have been like Moses; for both are human beings: but all human power lies in desire. Moses did not want to be a king, when he could: but he considered the reproach of Christ preferable to the treasures of Egypt: but by fleeing power, he became more powerful; for he became like a god to the king Pharaoh. The king was Pharaoh, but he was not a god: Moses became to him a god, that is, terrible to the king himself, whom the king would fear and dread. But this was the power of holiness. In the assembly of such gods, God stands and discerns. And if you want to be a god to sinners, a terror to kings, and a source of reverence to others; so that they may seem to be subject to you as to God, because you work in the name of God: despise the things of the world, and strive to prefer the reproach of the Lord's Passion to all riches. I say reproach, because it seems shameful to them, that is, a scandal to the Jews, foolishness to the Gentiles, but to us the power of God and wisdom. But Pharaoh, thinking this reproach, that is, poverty, ignobility, insults, preferred to be of the devil rather than a portion of God: and therefore he who did not want to be subject to God, made himself subject to the intervention of man. Therefore, because David was a portion of God, the holy prophet rightly says: I said to keep your law: he certainly speaks of the spiritual law, as Paul also shows. For those who interpret the Law corporally, do not keep the Law, but pervert it.

16. (Verse 58.) Let us come to the second verse, which is as follows: I will seek your face, O Lord, with all my heart; show me mercy according to your word. We read in the Old Testament that Moses prayed to see the face of God, and it was answered to him: No one can see my face and live (Exodus 33:20). Let us first understand this mystically. Moses received the figure of the Law: the Law announces Christ through hidden mysteries, but does not demonstrate him face to face, as the Gospel does. For in the very face He spoke face to face; although in the Gospel the man born of the Virgin appeared, yet the Word showed Himself through His works. And perhaps this was declared to Moses, that the Jewish people would die, and that they would see Christ face to face and not believe. And if you refer to the Law, Christ is also the end of the Law, according to the saying of the Apostle: For Christ is the end of the Law to everyone who believes (Rom. X, 4). And the interpretation of the Law in the flesh is dead, where the Lord Christ Jesus showed its spiritual grace. Or certainly because all of us who have seen Christ, and have been baptized in Christ, have died to sin; because while living, we were held by the bonds of the Law. But where we have died in Christ, we have certainly been crucified to the Law through the body of Christ; so that we may be of another who has risen from the dead. But this is a mystery.

However, the morale of ancient history reminds us that we should remember the story of Moses, who asked God to show Himself to him and to see Him face to face. The holy prophet of the Lord knew that a visible God cannot be seen face to face, but holy devotion transcends measure, and he thought that it was even possible for God to make the incorporeal be seen with bodily eyes and understood. This error is not reprehensible, but rather a pleasing and insatiable desire, because

he desired to hold his Lord as if with his own hand and see him with the gaze of his eyes. He knew that man was made in the image and likeness of God. For when he was chosen by the Lord God to deliver the people, he was filled with the spirit of wisdom. He had seen that angel and his face in glory. Finally, in the shining light of that angel, he was struck with awe and saw the burning bush, which was not consumed. He began to see a vision and was amazed at the brightness: he was drawn by desire and grace to examine that brightness more closely in the bush. Therefore, when he experienced such great ardor, he felt such great desire, when he saw an angel in the flame of the fire from the bush, that although he was seized with fear, he dared not examine it, but he still desired to examine it: how much more did he desire to see the face of the Lord in a physical form, saying within himself, that face full of light, full of glory, full of power, full of divinity. I am unable to say or understand anything about God; for when man has reached his perfection, he begins, and when he has come to an end, he will be at a loss, as it is written, for the eternal majesty of God is incomprehensible.

Indeed, the result of the request was in vain, but the probable effect on the slave was stirring; because, by progressing beyond his own nature through devotion, he estimated the measure of the Lord's angels, as much as he desired to fulfill his own desire by gazing upon the countenance of the Lord. He knew that there was another glory, another splendor for man after death. Just as one star is in brightness with another star, so too is the resurrection of the dead: which, although it is sown in corruption, will rise in incorruption, will rise in glory, will rise in power, will rise as a spiritual body. Therefore, whoever could know these things rightly presumed that he wished to see the face of God, which he would see after the death of the body. Certainly, he had received such a form, and the Lord approved it, so that he did not differ from the angels, the minister and executor of the heavenly oracle. And therefore, since he knew that the angels daily see the face of the Father who is in heaven, he thought that he should already see it, as if forgetting his body and putting aside his flesh, just as he who was still in the body, when he was caught up to paradise, whether in the body or out of the body, said that he did not know (II Cor. XII, 3). For even when the saints have the body, they are not in the flesh, but in the spirit; for those who are in carnal desire and behavior cannot please God. But the conversation of the saints was not in the flesh, but in heaven, as Paul shows (Philippians 3:20). And what can we say about the probable desire for the divine countenance? Even men, when they hear of someone being noble, brave, or wise, desire to see them as if considering them to be above human. The emperor advances, to whom a part of the world has been entrusted with royal authority, and everyone comes running and eagerly desires to behold only him in such a great multitude, and they believe there is something more in the emperor's countenance than the brilliance of purple. Do you wonder if the face of God is desirable, when every human affection marvels at a reflection of itself? Hence it is understood that each person desires to be acquitted of any crime before the emperor. For even if there is a conscience of guilt, they hide it in the secret depths of their heart, as long as it is not enveloped in public accusation and there is no explicit mention of any crime. Finally, when someone has advocates for their case, they are prohibited from presenting themselves to the emperor and the judges: just as shameful persons, such as pimps and prostitutes, are kept away from the sight of either judge or emperor, so as not to taint the radiance of the royal countenance. But he who is well conscious of himself, guilty of no crime, appears in public as if innocent.

20. Therefore, from these things, let us understand the sentiment of holy Moses. He desired to see the face of God as if innocent, as if with a certain face of conscience: he desired to open the face of his inner mind and to know more fully. And Moses himself, and the holy David, who elsewhere says: Examine me, O Lord, and test me (Psalm 25:2). For he would not want to be examined if he recognized a fault in himself: nor to be tested, if he knew himself subject to serious passions. Therefore, being free from sin, he eagerly offered himself to God. But perhaps because the world had not yet been tainted with more frequent visitations of God, it was not perfect in the beginning, as it had just been said a little before: Take off the sandals from your feet (Exodus 3:5); certainly that sandal which he had taken from Egypt, that is, the covering of earthly conversation; therefore, the Lord says to him: No one shall see my face and live.

21. But when this was said, consider. It had not yet been said: I will make you a god to Pharaoh (Exodus VII, 1). He was still a man, and therefore it was said to him: a process was necessary for him to become a god; and therefore it was said to him: I have said to you, stop having the sins of man, and you will see my face. For whoever sees my face must be without sin. But because man cannot be without sin, he is warned in order to be able to grow into the name of god. And what shall I say about the appellation of God? Let it be angel, that is, the divine minister of authority, obeying the commands of the Lord. When you are an angel, you will see the face of the Lord. It is a great thing to see the face of God. The law tells you to present yourself three times in Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus himself says: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matthew 5:8). Tell me what is required of you to see God; what is the purpose of life that grants the privilege of seeing God? Therefore, cleanse your heart so that you may be created anew with a renewed spirit. Cast out all polluted thoughts from your heart, let nothing defile your affections: let your mind be simple, let purity be your sincerity. When they have taken off the veil of the body, the Lord deigns to reveal Himself to such individuals.

22. Now let us speak about the remaining part of the verse. 'Have mercy on me,' he says, 'according to thy word.' Mercy is indeed a portion of justice; for if you desire to give to the poor, this mercy is justice, according to that: 'He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor: his justice remaineth for ever' (Psalm 111:9). Furthermore, it is unjust that your fellow man should not be helped; especially since our Lord God has willed this land to be a possession common to all men, and to provide fruits for all: but greed distributes the rights of possessions. Therefore, it is just that if you claim something as private for yourself, which has been shared in common with the human race, indeed with all living creatures, you should at least sprinkle something from it onto the poor, so that you do not deprive those to whom you owe a share of your rights of sustenance.

23. It is also an act of mercy to forgive sin: it is both an act of mercy and an act of justice. In fact, Scripture attributes the forgiveness of sins to divine justice, as it was read today: Blessed is the tree that is made through justice, but cursed is the tree that is made by the hands of men (Wisdom 14:7-8). The passage refers to the cross of the Lord, which is connected to the worship of idols by the Gentiles. However, the justice of the cross is that the Lord Jesus Christ, by ascending that scaffold, crucified the handwriting of our sins and cleansed the sin of the whole world with his own blood. Therefore, in whom is God just, unless in Him who knew that He fashioned man from the clay of the earth, which earth is certainly subject to corruption and the fault of slippery passion? Therefore, the Lord, who made you according to His own image and likeness, that is, rational, just, and modest (for in Him you are in the image of God if you are just, so that you may be the image of

justice; if you are chaste, so that the figure of the immaculate may shine forth in you), knowing that man, by the frailty of the body, is subject to corruption, as a just one, He forgave the sins of the frail and slippery nature.

24. And so that someone may not say: Why then did Adam fall under the curse and sentence? Is God unjust? Not at all. But because He prescribed what should be avoided for someone who is as if fragile and weak (for the weak should not use, but obey commands), therefore He held the transgression more accountable than the falling. Therefore, a just judgment was passed on him; because He wanted him to know what he was not able to know. But we, who are bound by the inherited bond, who are in this flesh, which could not emerge from the prej

25. Therefore, there is just mercy, but there is also unjust mercy (23, question 4, chapter It is unjust). Finally, in the Law, it is written about someone: You shall not show pity for him (Deuteronomy 19:13). And in the books of the Kings of the Law, it is said that Saul incurred an offense because he showed mercy to Agag, the king of the enemy, whom divine judgment had commanded to be killed (1 Samuel 15:9). So, if someone, moved by the pleas of robbers and swayed by the tears of his wife, thinks he should be acquitted, even though he still desires to commit robbery, will he not deliver the innocent to destruction, while sparing the one who thinks of bringing destruction to many? Certainly, if he restrains the sword, he loosens the shackles, he releases from exile? Why does he not take away the opportunity for robbery through a more merciful way, he who could not extort the will? Then, between the two, that is, the accuser and the defendant, deciding on equal danger of death, if he did not prove the one, if the other is convicted by the accuser, the judge does not follow what is just, but while pitying the accused, condemns the one proving; or while favoring the accuser, who cannot prove, he assigns the innocent. Therefore, this cannot be called just mercy.

26. In the very Church, where it is most fitting for mercy to be shown, the form of justice must be upheld to the greatest extent possible; lest anyone, abstaining from communion for a short time, and with ready tears, or even with more abundant weeping, should force the priest to grant communion at many times, by means of facility. Moreover, does he not also grant indulgence to the unworthy, and cause many to be tempted by the contagion of backsliding? For the facility of pardon provides an incentive for wrongdoing. This is said so that we may know that mercy must be dispensed to debtors according to the word of God and according to reason. Even the doctor, if he finds a scar on the inside of a serpent's wound, when he should cut away the defect of the ulcer so that it does not spread further, still, moved by the tears of the sick person, he covers with medicine what should have been opened by a knife: is not this useless mercy, if because of the brief pain of the incision or cauterization, the entire body decays and the use of life is lost? Therefore, the priest, like a good doctor, must cut off and expose the serious wound so that it does not spread further throughout the body of the Church, and not nurture the virus of crime that was hidden; lest, thinking that one must not be excluded, he make more worthy ones who should be excluded from the Church.

27. Therefore, the Apostle urges us by divine example, saying: See therefore the goodness and severity of God: on those indeed who have fallen, severity; but on you, goodness, if you remain in goodness (Rom. 11:22), showing that the Jewish people are rightly separated from the body of the Church so that the virus of unbelief does not contaminate the Church; but the people of the

nations, received by the goodness of the Lord, glory in the gift of obedience. Therefore, divine goodness supports him as long as he remains in divine goodness. But if he himself falls away, he will be condemned according to the quality of his crime. By this grace, the Lord is described as both light and fire, so that he may shine as a light to those who walk in darkness; that the one who seeks the clarity of light may not wander any longer. However, for the one who has done many things that should not endure but burn, the Lord is fire; so that he may consume the hay and stubble of our works, and make us safe through loss, just as gold is tested more when it is refined.

Perhaps someone may ask by what reason did the Prophet write: Have mercy on me according to your word? For the word of God is righteousness. If, therefore, he relied on righteousness, why did he precede mercy? Or if he sought mercy, why did he consider it necessary to seek it in accordance with justice? For he who does good and lives well has no need of mercy; for mercy frees from sin. In conclusion, mercy is not accustomed to be bestowed by us on the rich, the powerful, and those supported by good fortune, but on the needy, the weak, and those who have fallen from wealth into poverty, captivity, or some other necessity. Therefore, he who needs mercy is a sinner; but he who is not a sinner is certainly just, and does not need the mercy of God.

29. Therefore, each person must be considered according to their circumstances, that is, according to the state in which they need mercy or possess justice. For justice is necessary for an angel in a different way than for a human. Mercy is necessary for an archangel in a different way than for a human. For the nature of angels is not subject to corruption in the same way as the nature of the human race; and therefore an angel requires God's mercy so that they cannot err and, turning away from God's grace, fall into vice. However, even though a human being may have a more steadfast resolve, they still seek the mercy of God because of the series of sins they have contracted. Therefore, even though both the angel and man are in need of God's mercy, mercy is owed to the angel in a different way than to man; for a slight fault is judged more severely in an angel. Likewise, the sin of youth in man is bound by a milder sentence compared to the sin of old age, and is relaxed more quickly.

Therefore, the prophet in this verse divides the causes, as if a man were to ask for mercy, because no one is without the stain of sin; and as if a prophet were to ask for justice; or certainly, because even though he has sinned like a man, and like a sinner he needs mercy; nevertheless, he corrected his error, performed repentance, abstained from the wrongdoing of drunkenness, and pursued the virtue of sobriety. Therefore, he asks for justice according to the word of God, because it is the judgment of the word of God that forgiveness be given to those who have turned back; if, however, the conversion has been done legitimately (Ezekiel 18:21 and 33:12).

31. (Verse 59.) I have considered my ways, and turned my feet to your testimonies. Dual sense: either because I have thought about my higher ways, full of slips and sins, and therefore, that I may be able to merit the forgiveness of sins by the conversion of morals and the pursuit of virtues. I have turned my feet to your testimonies, so that I may no longer walk in the same steps in which I have previously stumbled, but in the paths of your testimonies, where your commandments would not allow me to wander, nor would I veer off the path into crooked and winding ways. For frequently, those who are ignorant of the way, if they follow the paved roads, arrive where they desire to arrive, and are without the detour of error. But if they pretend to know what they do not know, and think that some shortcuts must be followed, frequently deviating from the public path,

they often incur the mazes of error; so that they repent of having diverted from the path: and therefore, after many labors and expenses, they strive to return to the journey which they had abandoned.

Therefore, here is one understanding, and another one like this: I have considered my ways, not only past ones, but also future ones; so that I might anticipate my actions with my thoughts, lest in the unconsidered progress of operation, I might fall into some offense in the very thoughts themselves: so that if I want to do something, I think beforehand whether that which I desire should be done, or in what way it should be done; likewise, if I want to speak to someone, whether I should speak to them; then, whether publicly or privately to speak, with some present, or none at all; just as this is, that if you want to correct a brother, you first correct him alone, secondly with two or three witnesses present, thirdly if he does not listen, before the Church. Therefore, if, disregarding order, you wish to rebuke a brother before the Church, whom you should have warned beforehand, you yourself recognize the mistake. Therefore, consider everything carefully, so that you do not regret your actions. But if you enter a road, when you come to a crossroads (for it is thus called, like a gathering of many roads), if you do not know which path you should take, you stand and contemplate within yourself whether you should choose the first, or the second, or the third, or the fourth, or certainly the fifth, if it is so, path to follow; and you do not think that you should begin the journey before you have determined in your mind and made a decision with a fuller intention of the mind. Therefore, while standing, considering what the way is, that leads into the city, towards which you think you must go. So, therefore, you must stand firm in mind and thought, you who strive for the heavenly kingdom, and consider with yourself that not every way leads there, not every way directs to that Jerusalem which is in heaven! (Prov. XIV, 12)!

There are paths that have evil outcomes, which the temptations of the devil have worn away; and thus their outcomes are the outcomes of death. These, indeed, are the paths of which you have read in Proverbs: For there are paths that seem to be straight to a man, and their ends look towards the depths of hell (Matthew 5:28). But there is a narrower path that leads to the kingdom of God. Therefore, if you desire to enter that path which leads to God, you will not look around, you will not involve yourself with yourself, you will not deliberate; lest you be easily captured by desire, if enticed by the width of the path, you should enter upon a journey that leads to hell. Therefore, think before, and consider what you are doing.

34. Whoever looks, he says, at a woman to desire her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart. This person certainly thought in order to see the woman, in order to see her for the purpose of desiring her; but let this evil thought abandon its ways. Another person did not think indeed, but suddenly looked, and was captivated, and saw, and desired, and therefore fell. But if he had considered his weak nature, and had feared beforehand that when he saw a woman, he would be captivated in his mind and heart; certainly he would not have looked at the woman, lest he desire her. Therefore, seeing that the woman did not direct her foot to the testimonies of the Lord, if she had been able to consider before her fall, perhaps she would have directed it. Therefore, let each one first consider how he sees the woman; so that he does not see her for the purpose of lusting after her, or does not pay attention to her. However, if, seeing her suddenly, or being based on good thoughts, he directs his foot to the testimonies of the Lord, he will not remain in captivity: surely that thought was beneficial to him. Finally, let the one who loves a woman, desires her, and cherishes her, consider Christ, his judgment, his testimonies about the rewards of

chastity, and let him forsake the paths of desire, and follow the ways of Christ: he will receive praise in them, if he contemplates the Lord Jesus, he despises the burning of the flesh, and extinguishes the flame of lust as if from a certain fountain, he strikes the tender and weak desires against the rock of Christ.

Therefore, let him first consider how he sees and how he speaks. It is well considered by one who said: 'Set, O Lord, a guard to my mouth' (Psalm 140:3), lest perhaps while the mind inflames the passion, the tongue slips in speech, or through reckless excessive talk, even what the mind did not think, it falls into the ease of speaking. Let him consider how he directs his foot, brings his hand forward, lest, driven by the force of anger, when he should repel an injury, he himself inflict a remarkable blow on the other. Therefore, we must consider what we do; for where thought precedes, maturity of action is applied. Thus, this foot is a trace of faith, which, pondered through meditation, turned away from bodily movements towards divine testimonies.

36. (Verse 60.) Therefore, the verse that follows teaches what benefit there is in thinking ahead about what you will do later: I am prepared, and I am not troubled, so that I may keep your commandments. When someone anticipates with thought what they are going to do, they are always ready to act, always determined and strong, so that they cannot be thrown off by sudden obstacles. No gusts of excessive ambition shake them, no storm or tempest of unfair attack dislodges them, they are not ensnared by the seductive gaze of a harlot; for the gaze of a harlot is the snare of a lover. In the possession of another person, one who is unexpectedly caught in fire loses possession of his own mind. If persecution arises, he finds it already prepared; so that where there may be disturbance of uncertain salvation, there the hoped-for crown of holy conflict may soothe with careful contemplation of future struggle. If he is frequently attacked by malicious detractors, let him consider that a disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. If even the reproaches of the blasphemous assailants have fallen upon the Son of God, how can a servant hope to be exempt from their insults? Therefore, one should prepare their mind, so that when these things happen, they may not be disturbed. They should prepare their soul and compose it with meditation, so that they may be able to say, if they can: Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Trouble, or distress, or hunger? etc. (Rom. VIII, 35). And why should we not be separated, he added: But in all these things we are more than conquerors, he says, and we overcome because of him who loved us (Ibid., 37). And rightly confirmed, he says: For I am confident that neither death, nor life, nor angels... Neither powers, nor present things, nor future things can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus (Ibid., 38 and 39).

37. The Apostle has said many things against which we struggle, but some are easy, or certainly not for this time or place; so that we ought to discuss all those things which can separate us from the love of God, unless we resist diligently. Now we do not pass over what seems obscure, because he says: Neither height nor depth (Ibid., 39): which are weighty temptations. Finally, you have in Isaiah written to King Ahaz: Ask for yourself a sign from the Lord in the depth, or in the height. He replied, "I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord" (Is. 7:11-12). The mystery was proposed to him, but he did not understand, and he feared that he might appear to be testing the Lord if he asked for a sign from above or below. But the Lord, intending to replace serious tests with divine remedy, says, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive in her womb" (Is. 7:14). This is the great sign that destroyed tests of both height and depth. For the Lord Jesus did not consider himself to be equal to God, nor did he seek what was his own, but he took the form of a servant and humbled himself

to the point of death. Therefore, he was neither exalted by power, nor disturbed by the agony of death. Therefore, this is the sign set before the king; that he may seek for himself a remedy, whereby he may neither be lifted up by the power of royalty, nor be disturbed by any exception of agony; as he was troubled in heart when he saw war being brought against him by the Assyrians. Therefore, we desire to demonstrate by the divine example of the oracle how weighty these trials were, to which only Christ could bring a remedy.

38. However, it is easy to teach a certain burden of these temptations in prophetic speech. For Saint Solomon declared these two great temptations in his own prayer and asked to be able to exclude them, saying: Do not give me riches or poverty, but give me what is necessary and what is abundant, so that I may not be filled with lies and say: Who sees me? Or that I may not snatch from the poor and profane the name of God. (Prov. 30:8-9). Can you then despise those trials that frightened Solomon, who sought and deserved wisdom? He was rich and feared being elevated; he feared becoming poor, lest the necessity of poverty would not hold the grace of abstinence. How many who seemed to be holy have fallen from the height of their own heart? How many, overcome by some necessity, could not bear an injury, despite having been strengthened by the exercise of virtues? Rarely is a man found on earth who has lost both his wealth and his children, and who is scarred with the wounds of his body, with worms flowing from his whole body, yet he could not be separated from the love of Christ. Therefore, let us control our emotions, so that an unexpected force does not disturb us unprepared. Finally, knowing that we are prone to be quickly broken, the Lord also said to the apostles: Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John XIV, 27). If desire and temptation should tempt you, read the Gospel, let Jesus Christ say to you: Let not your heart be troubled. If any terror should come upon you, Christ says to you: Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. If any persecutor inflicts any torments on you, read the Gospel, and let Jesus say to you: Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. Read the Apostle saying: For the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come (Rom. VIII, 18). If, while you are sailing on the sea, a heavy wave rises up, and a black storm rages, let Jesus say to you: It is I, be not afraid (Mark VI, 50). Therefore, when coming into any great and serious contest, say first: I am ready, and I am not troubled, so that I may keep your commands. And what should I say about worldly things? Be prepared not only for what you see, but also for what you do not see. Outwardly, there are battles; inwardly, there are fears (2 Corinthians 7:5). There is a war within yourself: it is good for your soul to be in tranquility and a certain serenity, but the better sailor is the one who guides the ship in a storm. Therefore, govern yourself when your soul is disturbed and your mind is wavering. I would praise the virtue of a captain who does not sense any storms and directs the course of the ship, unshaken by any tempest? But I would praise him even more who fights against the winds, rises against the waves, is not afraid either when the ship is lifted up by the waves or when it is brought down to the depths of the sea. In this way, the captain of his own ship is also to be praised, who overcomes adverse circumstances with patience, surpasses them with virtue, is not lifted up by favorable circumstances, and is not broken by unfavorable circumstances. You have a war against spiritual wickedness as well. Do you realize the magnitude of the battle you are facing? Therefore, contemplate and prepare yourself mentally, so that when you proceed into the fight, you may say: I am ready and not troubled; so that you may keep His commandments.

40. (Verse 61.) The fifth verse follows: The cords of the wicked have surrounded me, and I have not forgotten your law. This means that the sinners have surrounded me with cords, so that they could entangle my footsteps, making it impossible for me to avoid their attacks with quick anticipation. Therefore, those are not the cords that are written about: The cords have fallen to me in pleasant places (Psalm 16:6); for those are the cords that they use, who measure the boundaries of fields and distinguish the limits, and mark the boundaries of possessions. Therefore, those ropes are stretched out as far as each possession extends. Thus the rope of their inheritance was made for Israel. So these ropes are good. But those ropes by which sins are dragged, like a long rope, and like the strap of a yoke on a calf of iniquity. For the untamed calf boasts and shakes itself more, when it is held, it does not submit to authority, nor is it bound by a rope; but rather, when it is pulled back by the strap, it becomes aggravated. Therefore, it does not force itself to submit, nor is it truly free from the bonds. Just as, therefore, a young calf pulls the yoke's strap, which, although not held close; yet it is still held, and does not free itself and get away: so too does each sinner pull the injustices with his unruly habits, who thinks himself free; because he is not subject to the yoke, and submissive to judgement: and he does not know that he is not free, but rather like that young calf, he entangles himself in the knots of his own sins. These, therefore, are the ropes of our offenses, with which we are wrapped up and bound, just as they are also the chains of offenses. And therefore the Savior, who has the power to forgive sins, says to those who are in bondage: Go forth. I wish that He would also say to me: Go forth from your bondage: go forth from the chains of your sins: break the bonds of your error, with which you are surrounded and bound. For even though I am the most wicked of all, and the most detestable of sinners; by His command, I will be set free, who, in a single moment, delivered the condemned criminal from the punishment of robbery and established him in His kingdom.

41. Therefore, there are bonds by which we are bound, although we may appear free to ourselves. Blessed is the one who loosens these bonds for himself. And that is why David says: Let us break their bonds: and let us cast away their yoke from us (Psalm 2:3). He certainly does not say that visible bonds must be broken by hand, but rather that invisible bonds of sin must be loosened by a change of morals and a profession of faith: or by hand, that is, by the work of your hands. Give to the poor, lift up the weak, redeem captives; and you have loosened your own bonds. For almsgiving liberates from sin. Rescue him who is being led to death, that is, rescue him through intercession, rescue him through grace, you priest; or you emperor, rescue him through the granting of indulgence; and you will have loosed your sins, you have freed yourself from chains.

42. For each person is bound by the chains of their own sins, as you yourself have read: the allure of the flesh binds us with its chains (James 1:15). Greed is our chain, drunkenness is our chain, lust is our chain, pride is our chain. There are also chains of the devil. As it is written: this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years (Luke 13:16). The devil also binds us with the bond of crimes: he binds us with the bond of fornication, the bond of adultery, the bond of treachery by which Christ is denied, the bond of envy by which even our brothers are often desired, the bond of cruelty by which sometimes a companion is killed and made like. These are the chains by which each person is bound; so that he cannot lift up his soul, nor raise the gaze of his mind to heaven, unless the Lord says to him: You are released from your infirmity; and He elevates him with the gift of His blessing (Ibid., 12). These are the chains of the wicked that bind sinners harshly, that is, the devil and his ministers: or certainly it is Nemroth, that is, bitterness: or

certainly it is Esau, that is, earthly and crafty. For these were hunters who were accustomed to capturing wild animals with snares and binding mute creatures with chains. Useless hunters who capture beasts that provide a spectacle for the entertainment of the public, a service to cruelty. Finally, we find no righteous hunters in the series of divine Scriptures.

43. But there are other bonds, as I said, of the Lord Jesus, whom they follow, says the prophet: 'They are bound with cords, that is, bound with the cords of love and charity, bound with the bonds of faith. It can be understood in this way: They follow Christ, bound with the bonds of sin and guilt, the source of forgiveness, the author of redemption. Let us therefore follow the bonds of Christ, let us flee the bonds of the hunters; lest while we walk, while we are ignorant, the snares of their nets catch the foot of our mind, nor let us attach the neck of our souls with their bonds.' For they lie in wait as if they were the most cunning hunters; and when we relax our minds and let go in the face of prosperous events, and do not keep our watchful guard, then they lay even more traps, or they hide them along the path on which we walk; so that when our feet become entangled in their snares, they drag us to our downfall in order to ambush the unsuspecting traveler, or they strangle the passing merchant with a noose around their neck.

44. Therefore, do not walk with a high neck, like the daughters of Judah; for a noose is quickly tied around high necks. Do not fix your mind and soul on worldly things: but look around carefully with the eyes of your soul, for the Lord rains snares upon sinners; lest they can bind you when falling: those whom you can avoid if you do not forget the law of the Lord. Indeed, even someone who is bound, if he is conscious of his freedom, does not cease to forget his freedom, and sometimes pleads his case from the chains, defending it with the prescription of the law, and is often acquitted by judgement. Therefore, if you sin, remember the law. If you sin, remember Christ, who liberates you, saying: I am, I am the one who blots out iniquities ..., and I will not remember [them] (Isaiah 43:25). In these days and nights, hold on to your confessions of sins.

45. (V. 62.) The Prophet teaches you how to hold on to the Lord Jesus. In the middle of the night, he says, I arose to give thanks to you, for your righteous judgments. It is not enough to pray during the day, one must rise in the night, and in the middle of the night. The Lord himself spent the entire night in prayer, in order to invite you by his own example to pray; and indeed, he was seeking forgiveness for your sins: he was seeking it from the Father, and he was working by his own will. The Prophet does not tell you to only rise in the middle of the night, but to rise at night, especially in the middle of the night. For he preceded by saying: I remembered your name, Lord, in the night (Psalm 55). Everyone can remember and not rise; everyone can rise and, when they have risen, ask for what they desire according to their own will. He added: At midnight I rose, teaching that one should rise at midnight. And it is not idle what he added: To confess to you, that is, to implore God at that time above all, and to mourn our own sins: not only to seek forgiveness for the past, but also to avoid the present, and to guard against the future; for many temptations arise during that time.

46. Then the allurements of the flesh grow strong: then the tempter deceives: food is cooked and drink is digested: the stomach is sickly, the mind is drowsy, the soul is preoccupied. Therefore, either the heat of sleep is increased for the one who is at rest, or the vigor, which can guard against the attacks of errors, is not yet renewed for the one who is wakeful. Thus, then, the tempter is present, then he casts his nets, with which he can disturb the unwary mind. Then

spiritual wickednesses cast their darkness: then they strive to persuade every wicked thing, when there can be no judge of guilt, no conscious agent of crime, no witness of error. Then they pour forth various arguments to the sleeping sinner, in order to first throw down his resisting mindset, and an example is presented of some who are considered holy, that they too have sinned at some point, but afterwards obtained forgiveness and covered their past transgressions. For even though our enemy despises every change in us, nevertheless for the time being, in order to deceive a man of sober mind, he pretends that future pardon will be granted, in order to persuade him of present sins; and when he has persuaded someone to assent to error, if he sees that the person is no longer being drawn away from guilt by love of virtue but by the dread of punishment, he inserts various arguments, saying to himself: Who sees me? And darkness surrounds me, and walls ... whom I fear (Eccli. XXIII, 25 and 26)? The Most High does not see, our sins do not reach Him, He does not deem worthy to look at what is foul. We know this certainly by experience and example; for no one can be without temptation.

Therefore, just as this time is opportune for trials, so is it also a time for punishment, in which we can be taught by divine reading. For our Lord God, when he could have destroyed the firstborn of the Egyptians at any moment, did not do so in vain; yet he judged this time to be more suitable for the pain and mourning of the sinner. For it is written, 'At midnight the firstborn of the Egyptians were killed by the destroyer' (Exodus 12:29). And so, the holy prophet Moses, in order to anticipate this time and to pass over without any deceit from the Hebrews, sacrificed a lamb before the evening, that is, the Passover, so that those who ate it and celebrated the Lord's Passover would not be caught in the trap of the destroyer, lest the dark arrows of the spiritual food of the enemy oppress them defenseless and empty at night.

48. Attend to these things diligently, understand them prudently, seek them with care. These things are not said perfunctorily, but divine mysteries are revealed to you. Anticipate the snares of the tempter, restore the heavenly banquet first. Fasting has been proclaimed, be careful not to neglect it. And if daily hunger compels you to a meal, or intemperance leads you to break the fast; nevertheless, preserve yourself more for the heavenly banquet. Do not let prepared feasts draw you away, so that you may be empty of the heavenly sacrament. Stay a little longer, the end of the day is near: in fact, most days are like this, where you must immediately come to the Church at midday hours, singing hymns, celebrating offerings. Then be prepared to receive sustenance for yourself; to eat the body of the Lord Jesus, in which there is forgiveness of sins, a divine request for reconciliation, and eternal protection. Receive before the Lord Jesus the hospitality of your mind: where his body is, there Christ is. When your enemy sees that your haven is occupied by the celestial radiance of the divine presence, understanding that the place is cut off from his attempts through Christ, he will flee and depart: and you will pass through the middle of the night without any offense. It also reminds us of the evening sacrifice, so that you may never forget Christ. You cannot forget, when you go to bed, the Lord to whom you offered prayers at the close of the day, who filled you with the feasts of his body while you were hungry. Therefore, whatever you have resolved in the evening, quickly review it when you awaken. The Lord Jesus himself will awaken you: he will remind you to rise and at that time take up the weapons of prayer, with which the temptor is accustomed to attack.

49. Therefore, it was not in vain that the apostle Paul and Silas were thrown into prison, with their feet in stocks. Even in the middle of the night, they rose in spirit, prayed to the Lord, and offered a

sacrifice of praise. And so, where the duty of devotion was not lacking, the remedy of absolution was also present. Suddenly, in the middle of the night, there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, the gates were opened, and the chains of all were loosened. (Acts 16:25-26). Do you hear how, if you were bound, with what hands, with what works you would free yourself, how you cannot estimate how to guard against it? Therefore, rise up for praying. It is that hour when the tempter is accustomed to harm, and wickedness is accustomed to rush in. It is that hour when the heavenly remedy is wont to come against grave temptations. You must keep watch, lest you be overcome by any deceit: you must take care that at the time when you are able to conquer, you do not in any way lose the time for conquering. And because we said that a speech must be undertaken in the middle of the night, it seems necessary to also speak about this time of day; for night is the opposite of day. For what does light have in common with darkness? And therefore, what is adverse to itself is nocturnal or diurnal. Just as at midnight the primary tempter of the Egyptians perished, and from that it is known that the adversary operates most at that hour; so, on the contrary, divine light operates at the time of midday. And so, Abraham was keeping watch around noon, expecting some good outcomes, lifting his eyes and scanning the surroundings, because at that time he was seeking the approaching grace (Gen. XVIII, 1 and 2). Therefore, at that time, the divine guest, together with two holy angels, came to him: at that time, he received Christ as a guest: at that time, those mysteries that you read and understand, were celebrated. For when else should divine presence illuminate a faithful man more than when the light of day shines more fully? And rightfully, even Saint Joseph, having received his brothers and calling the younger brother whom he loved the most, prepared a noonday feast (Gen. 43:16). Indeed, in Saint Joseph's heart it was noon, when he served joyful meals to his brothers, ministering in shining grace, and he shared the sweet food of conversation; so that when they feared punishment for their brother's sake and were sold into slavery, he would say to them by divine judgment that it had been provided for them to be led to Egypt, so that he would not deny sustenance to those suffering from hunger (Gen. 45:5-7).

51. Therefore, we have the noon within us. Noon belongs to the one upon whom the sun of justice shines, and in whose good works or innocent thoughts Christ is nourished with a pure and sincere mind. Learn, therefore, how to make noon for yourself. 'Reveal,' it says, 'your way to the Lord, and hope in Him; and He Himself will do it, and will bring forth your justice as the light, and your judgment as noon' (Psalm 36:5-6). For where true faith is, there is the grace of true light; where there is a more extended vigilance over innocence and a long meditation in virtues, where there is the splendor of good conscience that lasts a long time, there is the noon that is understandable. There, you will also provide nourishment to Christ for your mind, and you will also be fed in His riches, in such a way that the premature and swift setting of true light does not follow, nor does some dark evening quickly occur, interrupting your studies and impeding good works. If, however, the night of temptations comes, it is not without reason that one must rise in the middle of the night and pray for a long time, and extend the times with psalms until the day comes and Christ shines upon you.

52. Therefore, be careful not to let even the middle of the day become like night for you, in which the dark and squalid ruler of the world pours upon you the fullness of temptation. Therefore, arise and awaken your mind: the one who guards you will not sleep if he does not find you asleep; he will rise if he himself has been awakened by the vigilance of your soul. And he will command the

wind, and there will be tranquility in your heart, which was tossed by the waves of various storms. Therefore, we must rise. The Bridegroom is accustomed to come in the middle of the night: beware lest he find you sleeping, beware lest you be unable to light your torch while dozing. We must rise, I say, and confess to the Lord, to give thanks. His eternal judgments are also to be confessed; whatever good happens to us, let us attribute it to his justice: whether we are wealthy or enjoy good health, let us attribute it to the justice of the Lord; for it is just that he should protect and preserve his own work, so that he may deign to clothe those whom he has cast naked by an unpurchased gift of nature into this infirmity of the body, with the strength of the soul and the gift of his mercy. Certainly, it is evident that we must not be devoid of thanksgiving at any time, neither by day, nor by night, nor at any time.

53. (Verse 63.) The seventh verse follows: I am a partaker of all who fear you, and keep your commandments. And Christ also has partakers and companions of himself. Finally, David proves it, saying: God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions. (Psalm 45:8). He has partakers of the flesh, for he took on flesh; he has partakers of prophecy, for the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from among your brethren, like me: him you shall hear in all things, whatever he shall speak to you. But every soul that does not listen to that prophet will be exterminated from the people (Deut. XVIII, 18 and 19). He is the true prophet, who without the gift of another knows the future: who spoke about things that were to come in the prophets. Is he not a prophet, who makes others prophesy? He is the one who is heard like the Law; because the Law is his. Finally, if they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not believe even if someone comes back from the dead and goes to them (Luc. XVI, 31). Therefore, the Jewish people, because they did not listen to this prophet, were exterminated from the community, so that they would cease to be the people of God, who were previously called the people of God. He has companions in baptism, because he was baptized for us; he has companions in righteousness, because he himself is righteousness, and he gave us a share in his righteousness; he has companions in truth, because he himself is truth, and he wanted us to hold onto the truth; he has companions in resurrection, because he himself is the resurrection; he has companions in a blameless life, because he himself is blameless. And whoever walks in the newness of life, whoever holds to the path of righteousness, is a participant in Christ. They also share in his sufferings; therefore, the one who desired to be a participant in him said: Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I am completing what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ in my flesh, for his body, which is the Church (Colossians 1:24). We are also participants in his burial; for whoever is buried with him through baptism into death, is a participant in him. Therefore the Apostle himself, pointing out the grace that the Lord Jesus has given us, says: For we have become partakers of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 3:14).

54. But he is also a participant in Christ, who consoles the mournful with sad affection: who does not neglect his duty to the one imprisoned: who sits by the sickbed, not seeking to snatch a share of the inheritance; but who, by diligent service, soothes the troubled with his words, and comforts the weary with his conversation: who clothes the naked, and feeds the hungry. For in these, Christ is often present, as he himself says: I was in prison and you did not come to me; I was naked and you did not cover me. For whatever good you have not done to one of these least ones, you have not done to me. (Matt. XXV, 42 et seq.) If I hate falsehood, I am a partaker of Christ, because Christ is truth: if I avoid iniquity, I am a partaker of Christ, because Christ is righteousness.

Blessed is he who can say this. For just as we say that a member is a partaker of the whole body, so too, anyone who fears God and is joined to all, should not say to another: You are not of my body, that is, a rich person should not say to a poor person, a noble person should not say to someone of low birth, a healthy person should not say to someone who is sick, a strong person should not say to someone weak, a wise person should not say to someone ignorant: You are not necessary to me; they are a partaker of the body of Christ, which is the Church. But whoever knows that those who are seen in the Church, weak, poor, ignorant, and even sinners, are in greater need of honor and greater assistance to support them: he who knows this can say, 'I am a partaker of all who fear you.' Let him have more compassion for such men than disdain them: let him have compassion for the weak; so that he knows that we are all one body and members connected to each other; so that one cannot exist without the other: and when one suffers, let him have compassion for the other. Therefore, he can rightly use the authority of this voice.

55. But see how modestly the Prophet said: I am a partaker of those who fear you. He did not say imitators, but those who fear; for the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord (Eccl. I, 16). He humbled himself among the unlearned, while surpassing the experienced in devotion. But to fear virtue is also necessary; for it is written: Fear the Lord, all you his saints (Psal. XXXIII, 10).

56. But lest this fear appear unholy to some (for there are those who fear with a lazy dread and tremble with a dull anxiety), he added: And those who keep your commandments. To show that he is a partner in holy fear. Either thus. Indeed, one can fear with a devout heart but be lazy in action; so that one may be religious in affection, but idle in deeds. However, one cannot be lazy who keeps the commandments of the Lord. Therefore, the one who fears, keeps. Therefore, it is his to keep, who fears. Therefore, the Holy One says this: I, however, cannot use this for myself; for how great are those who fear God, and I do not show them mercy? They seek help, and I do not wish to offer it; they are in need of mercy, and I do not assist them with expense. Whoever, though, does these things, can say that they are a companion of Christ, who is feared.

57. (Verse 46.) Your mercy, O Lord, fills the earth; teach me your justifications. How is the mercy of the Lord filling the earth, if not through the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, which the Prophet, foreseeing as future, celebrates as if already promised? For to the prophets, who foresee things to come, it is like remembering things that have already happened to them in the future. Therefore, the earth is full of the mercy of the Lord, because forgiveness of sins is given to all. Above all the sun is commanded to rise. And indeed this sun rises daily above all. But that mystical sun of justice rises for all, came for all, suffered for all, and rose again for all: and indeed he suffered so that he might take away the sin of the world. But if anyone does not believe in Christ, he defrauds himself of the general benefit: just as if anyone were to shut out the rays of the sun by closing the windows, the sun does not cease to rise for all, because he has defrauded himself of its warmth: but it preserves its prerogative as the sun; what is foolish excludes the grace of its shared light from itself. Above all, it is raining, and this is attributed to divine mercy; because it rains on the just and the unjust. Or certainly it can be interpreted in this way, that the earth is full of divine mercy; because the earth is the Lord's, and its fullness... He himself founded it upon the seas, and prepared it upon the rivers (Psalm 24:1-2). Indeed, through the Church, the mercy of the Lord has been spread to all nations, and the faith has been spread to all nations.

Perhaps you would say: Why was it not said that heaven is full of the mercy of the Lord? It is because there are also spiritual evils in the heavenly realms, but they do not pertain to the common right of God's indulgence and the forgiveness of sins, for which eternal fire is kept. And those things that belong to the heavenly powers or ministries, although they are supported by the help of the Lord, do not require as much of His mercy as those things that are lower and earthly; for they are not clothed in the envelope of the flesh, in which lies the frequent allure of error. And so the same Prophet says in the preceding [passage], "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth he has given to the sons of men." Therefore, the heavens are purer and more cleansed from every stain of sin and far more separate from that which is described as "the birds of the heavens." For this heaven is called, as it were, a middle place between the heavenly and earthly, wherein there are also spiritual wickednesses against the heavenly [beings]. For in that [book], not in an appellative [sense], but in true [sense] of heaven, even if we have read about the devil being present in the assembly of God's angels, I believe that he did not work any temptations of wickedness. Finally, it is written that the angels loved the daughters of men (Gen. VI, 2); because the prince of this world is held captive to earthly enticements and his ministers, in whom spiritual wickedness is imbued with certain poisons of this flesh and is infected with human crimes. Therefore, the Lord says in his Gospel: Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). It is not the same there to unjustly drive away a neighbor from his possession or defraud a widow of her inheritance with tricks, or to exclude minors from their rightful share, or to enclose within wood or any image of silver, gold, or bronze a kind of heavenly power. These things, being full of the greatest sacrilege, are vacant in heaven and frequent on earth. For by the word of the Lord the heavens were made firm (Psalm 32:6), not the earth. And therefore the justifications of God are desired to be taught by the Lord Himself; because it is difficult to find a teacher on earth who can teach those things that he himself has not seen. Therefore, the Prophet hastens with deep affection to that teacher who alone is the true master. For how can a man teach as true something he does not know, when he himself is a liar? And rightly does the Lord say that no one on earth should call anyone his teacher, for there is one master of all. And how could David seek another teacher, when he himself said about God: He who teaches knowledge to man (Psalm 93:10)? But God teaches and enlightens the minds of each individual, and pours forth the brightness of knowledge, if you open the doors of your heart and receive the brightness of heavenly grace. When you doubt, inquire diligently; for he who seeks, finds, and to him who knocks, it shall be opened. There is much obscurity in the prophetic scriptures: but if you knock with the hand of your mind on the door of the Scriptures, and diligently examine the hidden things, you will gradually begin to gather the meaning of the words; and it shall be opened to you not by another, but by the Word of God, about whom you have read in the Revelation, that the Lamb opened the sealed book, which no one else could open; because only the Lord Jesus in his Gospel revealed the enigmas of the prophets and the mysteries of the Law: he alone brought the key of knowledge, and gave us the power to open.

They say that they possess the key to knowledge, but they do not; for if they had it, they would enter, they would recognize the innermost secrets of the Scriptures. But now: Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, who have taken away the key to knowledge, and yet you yourselves do not enter, and you hinder those who are entering (Luke 11:52). For how can you possess the key to knowledge, when you deny the author of knowledge? And therefore, David, turning to Him, says: Teach me, he says, your justifications; for you are true justice. You teach what is wisely said;

because you are wisdom. You open my heart; because you have opened the book. You open that door which is in heaven; because you yourself are the gate. Through you, if anyone enters, they will possess that eternal kingdom. Through you, if anyone enters, they will not be deceived; because whoever enters the dwelling of truth cannot be deceived.

Sermon 9. Theth.

The ninth letter is Theth, which means exclusion. What is exclusion? Is it like someone being excluded from a house and thrown out of a hospice: so whoever is excluded from God's kingdom is deprived of its goods; just as those excluded virgins who did not bring oil with them; and when the Bridegroom came, their lamps went out, and while they were busy buying oil and lighting their lamps, they made a delay, and they are said to be excluded when the Bridegroom has already entered and they desire to enter (Matthew 25:2, 3 ff.)? I do not think so. For how could it be said that the holy Prophet was cast down from the good and excluded from the kingdom of God: 'You have made gladness with your servant'? Neither does it seem that the merit of the Prophet admits this understanding, nor the sequence of subjects. Do you hear him saying: 'You are sweet, O Lord, and in your gladness teach me your justifications' (Inf. verse 68)? Do you hear him saying: 'Your law of your mouth is good to me, more than a thousand gold and silver' (Ibid., 72)? And can you tell me what is excluded from the kingdom, which is not excluded from the Law? So what do we understand? The interpretation is unclear, and the words seem to obscure the meaning of the message.

They call it the merit of the Prophet, they call it his grace, they call it the series of his subjects, in order to extract something of higher understanding; and it happens in time that sometimes we are excluded from the good. For it is written: Perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). And generally, indeed, love excludes fear. Just as a soldier who loves the emperor, does not fear the wars undertaken for the emperor; just as a slave who loves his master, even though he is sent through difficult and dangerous paths, yet he despises all dangers for the love of his master; and if someone were to seek the master, he would not hesitate to offer himself; just as someone who desires to see his children who are across the sea, does not fear shipwrecks, but enters the waves of the sea out of love for his children, and undergoes the uncertain dangers of sailing: but desires for his children alleviate the fear of danger. How beautiful it is also said about the martyrs, who truly fight for Christ, who, not fearing persecutions, claws, swords, and fires, offered themselves to hostile kings. Indeed, they excluded the fear of punishments that they could have with the love of martyrdom. But we can also confirm that this sense of interpretation is from the book of Lamentations of Jeremiah. For it is also written there under this letter: The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good to wait and hope for the salvation of God. It is good for a man to bear the yoke from his youth: he will sit alone and be silent, because he has borne the yoke. (Lamentations 3:25-27). What do these things indicate other than that this interpretation seems to be a good explanation? Who indeed can sustain the Lord, unless with the ardor of charity? Who hopes, unless he desires and loves what he hopes for? For what we hope for, we wait for with patience. Therefore, he who hopes, sustains; he who sustains, certainly excludes the affect of impatience. Who carries a heavy yoke from his youth, unless he renounces pleasures and flees from luxury? Who sits alone, unless he excludes all the tumult of worldly pleasures? Therefore, he will be able to fear nothing, because the power of fear has been absorbed by the grace of charity.

There is another person who is excluded from the good, just as he who is removed from the midst of the people by Apostolic authority, because he has done evil work and has been handed over to destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved (1 Corinthians 5:5). From this we understand that the one who is commanded to do penance is excluded from the good, so that he may be humbled and his heart may be contrite. For these are usually the means of reconciliation.

5. Moreover, even the writings of Jeremiah seem to convey this under this letter. For we read about earthly Jerusalem: Its filth lies before its feet. It did not remember its last days, and it fell severely; there is no one to console it. See, Lord, its humiliation; for the enemy has been magnified (Lam. 1:9). And because Jerusalem was thus humiliated, it is rightly said to her afterwards: Your iniquity has failed, daughter of Zion (Lam. 4:22). And everyone who does penance and sheds tears for their own sins is blessed: Your iniquity has ceased. Elsewhere under this letter Jeremiah says: Those wounded by the sword were better off than those wounded by hunger. They were driven away from the birthplace of the fields. (Ibid., 9). Therefore, we are pricked when we do penance for our sins. We are also pricked by the remembrance of our sins. Hence, the prophet David says: What you say in your hearts, and are pricked in your beds (Psalm IV, 5). However, whoever is remorseful undoubtedly excludes the pleasure of error; and whoever repents excludes shame; and he separates the embarrassment of confessing his crime in order to find hope for the recovery of salvation. And deservedly David himself, when he knew his error, said, 'I have sinned, O Lord' (2 Samuel 12:13). Such a great king, such a great prophet did not hesitate to confess his own sin, and therefore it was said to him, 'The Lord has taken away your sin' (ibid.).

6. (Verse 65.) Therefore, with sin removed, he says, 'You have brought joy to your servant, Lord, as you promised.' Many things in this world seem pleasant that are not, many things seem sweet, many are very good. Luxuries seem enjoyable: but when they are exhausted, they become bitter to the inheritance. Sweet desire, when it is fervent: but the same is horrible and abominable when it is revealed. Sweet feasts, when they are consumed: but foul when they are digested. Many good things in this world, as long as we live, are valued; because they are useful to us, such as money, gold, silver, possessions: the same cannot benefit the deceased: they are all left behind here. Moreover, who dies with greater grief, when he mourns that he is being deprived of these resources. Therefore, true joy does not exist, unless it is according to the word of God; so that one may rejoice in being fortified by the supports of good merits and virtues.

7. David delights in this joy or goodness; because he carried and endured the heavy yoke from his youth, and he expected the grace of the Lord in himself, not seizing it, who often had the opportunity to kill King Saul, yet he preferred to wait for the Lord's time to assume the kingdom, rather than take it by killing the king. God is always good: therefore Paul also says: See therefore the goodness and severity of God (Rom. XI, 22); for goodness is for all, severity is for a few. Finally, the same Apostle adds: On those indeed who have fallen, severity: but on you, goodness (Ibid.). For if they had not fallen, they would surely also have enjoyed the goodness of God. For you are good for this reason, because you endure: but if you do not endure in goodness, you too will fall away. Therefore, God does not cease to be good because you have sinned and are in need of severity. For the severity of God also reverts to goodness: so that each person, corrected, may reform their ways and return to the path of virtue and good conduct. Finally, the Apostle teaches about those who have fallen: If they do not remain in unbelief, they will be grafted in. For

God is able to graft them in again (ibid., 23); so that just as dried-up branches can produce good fruits when grafted with certain shoots, so can people bear the fruits of merits. You may accuse the physician of cruelty because he believed that the rotten fibers of wounds should be cut with a knife; or because he burned harmful and serpentine ulcers with fire so that the poison would not spread further; or because the teacher whipped the lazy student to instill fear and diligence in him. For it is the lover's role to chastise, not to curse; and therefore it is an act of goodness, not of cruelty. Therefore, the Lord is always good, both when He forgives wickedness and when He punishes sins. For the Lord chastises those whom He loves. (Hebrews XII, 6).

David was also punished. Finally, he said: And I was scourged all day long (Psal. 72:14). But the wise man who understood that punishment to be for his own benefit said: You have done good to your servant, O Lord, according to your word; that is, even though that punishment seemed bitter to me for a time, to me according to the flesh, to me according to the sorrow of the body; nevertheless, according to your word, that punishment brought forth the fruit of goodness. I understand that chastisement to have been beneficial to me, that through that chastisement I have been turned away from vices, that through that chastisement nothing immoral has remained in me for long, that through that chastisement of the Lord nothing has been permitted to my adversary, nothing to death. Finally, the Lord has chastised me, and has not delivered me to death (Psalm 118:18), as the Prophet himself has mentioned. For he is chastised who is received; but those who are not received are not corrected. For in the labors of men, they are not, and they will not be scourged with men (Ps. 72:5). Therefore, he says above: How good is God to those who are upright in heart (Ibid., 1)! Therefore, he is good to all; because he desires all to have an upright heart. But whoever turns their heart away, they themselves turn away from the grace of divine goodness.

9. (Verse 66.) It follows: Teach me joy, and discipline, and knowledge; for I have believed in your commandments. According to the Apostle, we understand χρηστὸν as good, because he said: See therefore the goodness of the Lord (Rom. XI, 22). According to the Gospel, we receive χρηστὸν as sweet. For he said: Take my yoke . . . for it is light, and my burden, for it is sweet (Matt. XI, 29 et 30). For he said, τὸ φορτίον μου χρηστὸν. Therefore, he rightly seeks to be taught the goodness of God by himself, lest anyone who receives God as good in a perfunctory manner, perseveres in errors, knowing that through the mercy of God forgiveness can be given for his sins; for even though the Lord may grant indulgence, a sinful life always clings to crimes. Therefore, this common goodness is not enough: but one that always seeks improvement through discipline. And therefore, whoever understands that the goodness of God is lofty, desires to be taught discipline as well. For many are turned away from the study of discipline because they consider it severe and sad; but a more discerning mind understands that if discipline is sad for a time, it becomes pleasant in later times. But there is discipline or correction that is more severe: there is also discipline that is more moderate. It is more moderate, of which the Lord says: I will chastise them with the hearing of their tribulation (Hos. VII, 12). And there is a more severe correction which is in anger and fury. Therefore, fleeing from that correction, David says: Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger, nor chastise me in your wrath (Psalm 6:2). And Jeremiah: Correct us, Lord, in judgement, and not in wrath (Jeremiah 10:24). Therefore, every discipline, even if it has bitterness for a time, has disturbance; afterwards, however, it is accustomed to produce peaceful fruits.

11. But he who seeks to be taught virtue and discipline must also seek to be taught knowledge. For without knowledge, discipline is burdensome, correction is burdensome. Let Solomon teach you what knowledge is, who says of our Lord God: For he hath given me the true knowledge of the things that are (Wisdom 7:17). And elsewhere the same Prophet says: He that teacheth man knowledge (Psalm 93:10). But he who seeks knowledge believes in the commandments of God. But it is one thing to believe in the commandments of God, and another thing to believe in the commandments themselves. For he who believes in the commandments of God quickly becomes one who is in the commandments of God, and lives by them. Therefore, knowledge is acquired through faith, and discipline through knowledge. For that which we know can please God, our very way of life delights in it. Finally, it is written: But our conversation is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). Knowledge preceded, and conversation followed. We have said to believe in the commandments of God. But to believe in the commandments of God is to be in them, and to believe that they are true commandments. For if you do not believe in the commandments of God, you will not be able to have knowledge of them, which we are taught through the commandments of God.

13. (Verse 67.) The third verse follows: Before I humbled myself, I kept your word. Another edition has: Before I humbled myself, I did not know. Therefore, some people think that the soul of man says this: Before I humbled myself, so that I could enter into this clay of the body, I did not know your commandments which I had not read. But because the Church follows the opinions of the seventy men more, and this sense is clearer, and it does not admit any offense that could move some doubt; therefore let us accept humbled, said in this way, because it seems to be humbled by sin. For temptation often arises because of sin. Finally, Adam and Eve were certainly cast down after their fault. Therefore, sin is for the sake of our humility or humiliation. For I am not fleeing from this. For from adversity, humility can often be understood, as it is written: It is good for me that you have humbled me, that I may learn your commandments. And: Unless your law were my meditation, then perhaps I would perish in my humility. And: I am humbled greatly (Psalm 141, 7). Here, therefore, he shows that humility arises from sin. And because sin came first, therefore he shows himself humbled, that is, worn down by temptations and adversities, and delivered to anxieties: just as that person who was handed over by Paul to the destruction of the flesh was surely humbled; so that afterwards he could merit reconciliation (1 Corinthians 5, 5).

14. But although this humility, that is, as it were, a kind of abasement, is not a virtue of perturbation; nevertheless, it often generates virtue: and it becomes not a punishment, but a remedy for the offender. For if you attribute to your sins what you have been humiliated for, whatever happens, you turn it back on yourself, and you begin to be just from being guilty, because you condemn yourself. For a just accuser is at the beginning of his speech (Prov. XVIII, 17). And you cannot judge yourself unworthy through humility, since you recognize your own errors, in which by blushing you are not indeed exalted, but humbled. You see, therefore, that you have been humbled because you have sinned and have not kept the commandments of God. Therefore, be more diligent in keeping them so that you do not sin again. Do not let yourself be consumed by sorrow because you have been cast down, and let your downfall become an opportunity for correction. For just as gold is tested in the furnace, so man is tested in temptations. You see what the Prophet says: 'Before I was humbled, I sinned.' Therefore, he was rightly handed over to temptations because he was sinning. However, he was sinning because he did not hold onto the word of God. But then he found the order of correction from which the fault had

arisen. He began to be subject to divine speech, and the fault ceased.

15. (Version 68.) The fourth verse follows: You are good, O Lord, and in your goodness teach me your statutes. The secular discipline also received it, so that each one may praise their own judge. Hence the Apostle, following the order of divine Scriptures, when he stated his case, began as follows: Concerning all the things I am accused of, King Agrippa, by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate about these matters, as I begin to give an account before you (Acts 26:2). And below: Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know that you believe. Therefore if men are praised, among whom the praise of others is often praised: how much more should each person strive to win God's favor, so that they may say: You are good, Lord. For if someone says this to a man, to remind him that perhaps he is not good; by the preaching of goodness itself, even he becomes milder, and casts off the terror of harsh feelings: how much more must praise be given to God, who unless He were good, could anyone stand upon the earth? But it is proper to God to be good. Moreover, in the Gospel you have, 'A good tree produces good fruits' (Matthew 7:17). Its fruits are angels: its fruits are humans, that is, rational and holy, if they keep the commandments of the Lord. Its fruits are those born on earth: its fruits are the virtues of humans. Therefore, a good tree rightfully produces good fruits. Therefore, let the root be praised first, so that the fruits can be tested. But the Lord Jesus also says elsewhere: And your Father, who is good, will give good things to those who ask him. (Ibid., 11).

16. But although God is good, whose bitter things are even more helpful (for they are not applied to harm, but to correct), nevertheless it is asked that in his goodness he may teach us his justices. Consider a doctor applying helpful medicines to wounds; yet those that sting the poison of ulcers, or certainly cutting off putrefied flesh with a knife; even though the doctor himself is good, because he works for the patient's benefit and does what he knows will be helpful: nevertheless, because the patient either does not want or cannot endure pain due to the weakness of his condition, he asks the doctor to treat him with a certain goodness and sweetness, not applying the harshness of medicines, not cutting the fibers of wounds with a knife; or if he cannot do otherwise, to act with moderation and mitigate the force of pain with a certain subtlety. And for this reason, in the goodness of the Gospel, the justifications of God are taught better than in the severity of the Law. However, the work of justice is justification. Therefore, it is written that the Pharisees did not want to justify themselves, not being baptized with the baptism of John (Luke 7:30). For in that they did not make justification, because they did not want to perform repentance for their sins, which the Prophet desires to do in goodness, so that forgiveness of sins may be granted to them without the severity of condemnation, but with the grace of forgiveness.

17. (Verse 69.) It follows: The wickedness of the proud has multiplied upon me: but I will diligently seek your commandments with all my heart. The more someone desires to serve God, the more they arouse adversaries within themselves. And just like a strong athlete desiring to receive the crown of righteousness, they provoke and incite many who envy our progress. This is also evident in the following verses. I was peaceful with those who hated peace, says David. However, his tranquility did not benefit anything; instead, it would calm those who hated peace and suppress their desires. When I spoke to them, they would attack me without reason, meaning that even though they had no cause to attack, they did not stop their desire to attack. Thus, spiritual wickedness or people multiply, and their iniquity surpasses the righteous. For example, if a just person loses their son, which often happens in the course of life, or if they lose their inheritance, or

if they suffer various adversities or physical illnesses, then the proud say: Where is their justice? Where is mercy? Behold, because he is thus punished: behold, because his innocence profits him nothing. And so, for the sake of extracting an example of this life, three friends of Job, with the appearance of sanctity but the malice of enemies, heaped serious reproaches upon him, reproaching him with great insults; and those who had come to console began to insult.

18. But the righteous man is not moved by these things, and therefore neither was Job broken. Finally, in the loss of his children and his possessions, he said: The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away... blessed be the name of the Lord (Job 1:21). Therefore, even in adversity, let us say: You have done good to your servant (Psalm 119:65). For the Lord can change for the better what has been done, as we have the holy example of Job (Job 42:10 et seq.); and he can restore what has been lost. Can someone generate better ones even after losing their children? Is it difficult for God to give better things? Even if He doesn't give anything, it is still just to consider this, in case the future wicked ones have been snatched away, so that their hearts may not be changed by their malice. Similarly, in regards to inheritance, it is as if we don't see that many are led into danger of salvation due to the wealth of their inheritance, and that the abundance of riches is the cause of sinning for many. For he who does not have anything to give cannot be blamed for not giving; but he who has something to give and does not give, certainly begins to be liable to sin.

19. (Vers. 70.) It follows: Their heart is curdled like milk; I, however, meditate on your law. The heart of the holy ones is refined; the heart of the proud is curdled. For just as milk by nature is pure, beautiful, and sincere, but curdles through corruption, so the nature of the human mind and heart is pure, sincere, and clear before it curdles through the admixture of vices. For curdled milk forms a certain concretion, lacking the same sweetness and grace. Thus, those people who, before, preferred the appearance of diligence, grace, and charm of words, untainted by envy; if they begin to envy, their heart solidifies into a vice, and the sweetness of friendship becomes bitterness of malice, and a certain unpleasant dread of envy arises. Therefore, the heart is solidified through pride and envy, which corrupt the gentleness of nature, flowing with benevolence, by the concretion of malice. Therefore, the heart of the wicked solidifies: but the just person is humbled, pondering the precepts of the Law, which holds the mastery of humility.

20. (Verse 71.) And therefore he added: It is good for me that you have humbled me, so that I may learn your statutes. The Apostle followed this: I please myself, he says, in weaknesses, in insults, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses (II Cor. I, XII, 10) . For when he is pleased with weaknesses, and his spirit is not broken, and he does not yield to injury, he learns the justification of God and deserves, and fulfills. Therefore here, you have humbled me, that is, you have exercised with various temptations and difficulties. Which Augustine also wrote, it benefited me that I was afflicted, so that I would learn your justifications. Therefore, let the one who is humiliated not be discouraged or broken in spirit, but rather let them progress by humbling themselves; let them soften the proud with their humility, confuse the insolent with the severity of their manners, break the insolent with their patience, and sometimes redirect the greedy from the intention of argument through equanimity of loss. For thus you have read, that wisdom is justified by her children (Luke 7:35), while Christ offers himself to punishment, endures injustice, does not retreat from insults, nor turns his face away from the shame of spitting; and therefore, he taught everyone with his patience and healed them with his compassion.

21. (Verse 72.) It follows: The law of your mouth is sweeter to me than thousands of gold and silver. Not just anyone says this, but rather few say it, that is, those who value God's law above gold and silver, who are able to give up everything for the sake of God's law. But even Christ did not find many who said this, except among those whom He Himself deemed worthy to teach. Peter said this and proved it by his actions: that he valued the law more than gold. Therefore he said: I have no gold or silver (Acts 3:6). He who lies with dug-up gold does not say this out of greed. He is not a rich man who anxiously searches for daily profits, who accumulates wealth every day, who pursues the pleasures of inheritance, who tirelessly keeps watch around the sick person's bed.

22. Some people understand the law of God's mouth as the law of the Word of God, just as if you were to say the law of the right hand of God. Therefore, it is fitting that Peter also said this: 'You have the words of eternal life, and we will leave you' (John 6:69). That is, the law of your mouth is worth more than thousands of gold and silver. And can we abandon such a good thing and seek the profits of this world? But the law of God's mouth can also be called the law of Moses, through whom the Lord spoke and gave the Law.

Sermon 10. Iod.

1. The tenth letter among the Hebrew letters is Iod, which in Latin is called 'confession' or certainly 'desolation.' The interpretation does not seem discordant or dissonant. Indeed, those who are desolate confess more quickly, for the mind is accustomed to be uplifted by favorable circumstances; but when one is pressed by adversities, then one implores divine help. For even in human affairs, we know that this is the case: that when good things come, the mind becomes more elated; but when one is beset by the hostile forces of this world, and one encounters the power of some adversary, then one seeks refuge, then one seeks help; either by beseeching the one who is above to moderate their power, or by arming oneself with additional strength; so as not to be overwhelmed by more powerful forces, as if one were inferior to them.

Finally, Jeremiah under this letter says thus: 'He stretches out his hands who is afflicted in all his desires. For he saw the nations entering into his sanctuary; to whom you commanded not to enter into his Church.' (Lam. 1:10). Surely the Prophet says this about Jerusalem, whose misery he deplores, whose desolation and desertion preceded; so that confession would follow afterwards. For the Lord chastises every son whom he receives. Therefore, about to receive Jerusalem, he tormented himself with the hardships of captivity. For he had become too arrogant and had boasted with an inflated heart, so that he could not hold onto the Lord Jesus, that is, humility, grace, justice, wisdom, that is, the teachings of true faith. And therefore the Lord punished her, who as the ruler of all knows how to chastise each individual. For just as a doctor is accustomed to treating more serious wounds with harsher remedies and milder wounds with milder ones, so our God punishes more serious sins with greater severity. But chastisement itself profits for salvation. For the Lord said: I will strike, and I will heal (Deut. XXXII, 39).

3. Finally, Jeremiah the prophet began to promise hope for Jerusalem. For in the later part under this letter, he says: He will give his cheek to the one who strikes him, and he will be satisfied with insults. He will give his mouth to the grave; if there is hope in patience (Lam. III, 30 and 29). In the Gospel, the Lord Jesus, teaching the virtue and remarkable patience, says: If someone strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other (Matt. V, 39). For he desires his disciples to be patient with injuries, not retaliating easily, let alone striking. For patience is an indication of humility. And

therefore, because Jerusalem was desolate and abandoned, he says, 'Give your cheek to the one who strikes you, so that you do not submit to the injury, nor turn aside from the pain of the blow, but offer your cheek to the one who strikes.' Both can be understood, either the one who begins to strike or the one who has already struck; so that the Gospel saying is fulfilled: 'If someone strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other as well.' And this was prophetically established, so as to teach Jerusalem, that is, the Church of the Judean people, that it should be saved no other way than through the discipline of the Gospel; so that when it begins to keep the precepts of the Gospel, and to fulfill the command of the Lord Jesus with works, then it may cast off the yoke of captivity from the neck of its soul, when it subjects itself to the yoke of Christ.

4. And he will be satisfied, he says, with reproaches. He did not say: He will endure reproach; for it is easy to bear one or two insults; but he added: He will be satisfied with reproaches; so that the Lord may more easily move mercy, by the pitiful ugliness of many reproaches. You can understand this certainly from the book of Kings. For when Shimei the son of Gera reviled the holy David, calling him a bloody man, and cursed him when he fled from his son Absalom, avoiding for a time the wars of a parricide, the king remained silent, and demonstrated the highest emblem of patience. For when he understood the time of his temptation, that he was about to engage in a deadly battle, he wanted to appear more humble, in order to mitigate the offense of the Lord; he thought that in his temptation, it would be better to provoke his judgment rather than to provoke his anger, in case he sought revenge for his own injuries. Therefore, he said to Abessa, the leader of the people, who wanted to seek vengeance: What is it to me and to you, son of Sarvia? He curses me for this reason; because the Lord commanded him to curse me. Behold, my son who came forth from my womb seeks my life. But if a stranger now curses me, let him curse; for the Lord has commanded him to see my humility. And the Lord will repay me with good for this curse. This was also said by the prophet in the spirit, and proven by the outcome. For when humility is filled, sin is forgiven. Moreover, in the book of Isaiah, you have this from the Lord: 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, priests, console her, for her humiliation is fulfilled, her sin is forgiven, for she has received from the hand of the Lord double for all her sins.' Therefore, it is advertised that where there is desolation, there is humility. For humility follows desolation in the right order, patience follows humility, testing follows patience, consolation follows testing. And you have it written in the Apostle: Because tribulation produces patience, and patience produces testing, and testing produces hope, and hope does not disappoint; because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom. III, 3-5), who is certainly the comforter of our emotions. But what he says, 'He will give his mouth in the burial' (Lamentations 3:29), shows a certain excessive patience of silence, as if burying his own mouth so that he does not speak; and as if obstructing with a certain mound of virtues, so that he does not emit a voice of pain; asserting only the weight of patience, which hope nourishes; as if burying and enclosing the very voice as in a grave and tomb, which no injury can force out or awaken. We have also provided an interpretation of this letter as best we could; let us now turn to the psalm.

6. (Verse 73.) Therefore the first verse is: Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn your commandments. He has used a great commendation in the beginning, so that he may proclaim that it is the work of God; thereby more easily attracting the favor of the author towards the grace of his work. For it is a great prerogative even in human affairs that someone should favor their own works and benefits, without considering the merit of

others, but rather focus on the gift of their own grace, so as not to appear to revoke what he himself has given. Therefore, even though the substance of our body is made of clay, and we are clothed in flesh, and our body is interwoven with bones and nerves, no one will doubt that we are the most precious work of God. For if anyone wants to consider the very structure of the human body, they will find nothing more valuable on earth. For man stands in an elevated position, pleasing in appearance, having beautiful hair, not bent over like other animals, but elevated by the right of nature itself, who looks at the sky with a free gaze; not weighed down by the captive servitude of the neck, depressed towards the earth, but as one conscious of his own freedom, a rich witness of himself as the creator.

7. However, in other living creatures, the form of the limbs is praised, in which nothing else is required besides the beauty of the body. Man is more beautiful in that which is not seen, not in the body which is seen: having in himself the grace of eternity and the charm of the present. For what is seen is temporary; for what is not seen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18). In this earthly abode, clothed with a heavenly dwelling, in which it is fitting to both appear on earth and be united with God. It is indeed a great gift if one knows oneself; and a certain form of justice, to be born more for the world than for oneself. Hence Solomon says: A great and precious work is a compassionate man: but it is necessary to find a faithful man (Prov. 20:6). And truly great is the one who is both an interpreter of divine work and an imitator of God. For he is a man who could say: Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). He cultivates the land, uses the sea as a possession, and admires the ornaments of the sky as a grateful defender. The nature of things would have disappeared unless someone who would use them had been added by divine providence.

8. Finally, after God made the heavens and the earth and the seas, after He made all the creeping things, the flying things, the living things, He made man, whom He preferred to the living creatures: from which rightly followed the heavenly decree: Let us make man in our image and likeness (Gen. I, 26). The rest He spoke, and they were made: He commanded, and they were created (Psal. CXLVIII, 5); so that man may be made, a special exhortation of God approached; so that the operation of the creature in this task of God's work may be signified as if of a laboring God. Indeed, God is devoid of labor: but do not the words of Scripture, unless they show forth your diligent effort of His, reveal something else? Therefore, if God created you with a certain zeal, why do you yourself abandon your zeal? If God worked in you, who does not know how to labor, why do you yourself, fleeing, be averse to labor? Your hands, he says, have made me and fashioned me (Psalm 138:8). The Prophet cries out to God: Do not forsake your work, Lord, do not abandon it. I acknowledge you as the author, I hold you as the creator; I do not seek the help of strangers. Clothe yourself for assistance, you who are clothed with power to create. Let David himself speak, what do you feel, why do you say: Your hands have made me? But you said further: Lord, you will repay on my behalf: Lord, your mercy endures forever, do not abandon the work of your hands (Psalm 137:8). This means, beasts have not made your hands, but you said: Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that have life (Genesis 1:20), and the earth brought forth after its kind, cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth. But you, he said, have made me, you have formed me with your hands, that is, you have not formed beasts with your hands, not reptiles, not birds: But your hands have made me and formed me.

10. There is no ordinary work which is prepared: everything is arranged and prepared with wisdom. Finally Wisdom says: When he prepared the heavens, I was there (Prov. VIII, 27). The

same Prophet says of men: The voice of the Lord preparing the deer (Psal. XXVIII, 9). What is the voice of the Lord God, if not: Let us make man (Gen. I, 26). Who are these deer, if not the enemies of serpents, who walk over asps and do not feel the venom? Therefore, I do not consider that which God has prepared to be vile or corporeal. Know yourself, O man: it is said of your soul in the Song of Songs: Unless you know yourself to be beautiful among women (Canticles 1:7). Know yourself, O soul, for you are not from the earth, nor from clay; for God has breathed into you and made you a living soul (Genesis 2:6). You are a magnificent work inspired by the generation of God. Pay attention to yourself, as the Law says (Deuteronomy 4:9), this is for you, that is, for your soul. May worldly and secular things not hold you, and may earthly things not die. Hasten to that goal with all your intention, upon which you depend for inspiration. Great, says he, is the work of a merciful man, and precious is the work of a faithful man (Prov. XX, 6). Learn, O man, where you are great, where you are precious. The earth shows you as lowly, but virtue makes you glorious, faith makes you rare, and an image makes you precious. Is there anything more precious than the image of God, which should first infuse faith in you, so that a certain image of the creator may shine forth in your heart: so that anyone who questions your mind may recognize the creator? Is there anything so precious as humility, so that perceiving the nature of body and soul, you humble yourself to another and know how to rule another? The lure of the flesh inclines towards vice, because what you have given to another, you release to yourself: whatever proceeds from you, returns to you: and whatever benefits others, benefits you. The power of a lively soul includes senses, reason, and understanding, as well as judgment, so that the worthy house may seem to have such a great inhabitant, and may not lose the prerogative of its nature, nor lose the name of human. For Scripture calls him a human who is made in the image and likeness of God, but it is accustomed to call one who sins either a serpent, or a horse neighing at females, or a little fox, or a beast. Do not be like a horse or a mule, which have no understanding. In camo et freno maxillas eorum constringe, qui ad te non appropinquant (Psal. XXXI, 9) . Et: Dicite huic vulpi (Luc. XIII, 32) , de Herode ait. Generatio viperarum vocatur a Joanne plebs hominum (Luc. III, 7) . Magnum ergo opus Dei es, homo, magnum est quod dedit tibi Deus; vide ne quod Deus tribuit, amittas magnum illud munus, quod es ad imaginem Dei; et hoc in te puniatur magis. Deus enim non punit similitudinem suam: sed eum punit qui ad similitudinem Dei factus, hoc quod accepit, servare non potuit. Therefore, what ceases to be in likeness to God is punished, that is, your sin. For God does not condemn His own image, nor does He cast it into eternal fire; but rather, He avenges His image from the one who has done it harm, so that through your wickedness, you would cease to be what you were and become a beast instead of a man. The image is avenged, not condemned. It is avenged as if expelled; it is not condemned as guilty. For after you sinned, you began to be something else: you ceased to be what you were. So how then are you punished for what is found in you? For if the image and likeness of God is found in you, you are not worthy to begin with punishment, but with reward. Thus, that image by which you have been made in the image and likeness of God is not condemned, but crowned. However, you are condemned in that you have changed; so as to become a snake, a mule, a horse, a little fox. For with these names Scripture has already condemned us; because, stripped of the ornament of the heavenly image, we also lose the name of man, since we do not hold the grace of being human.

12. However, in some codices we find: Your hands have made me and fashioned me. This is not unfamiliar; for Job also said: Your hands have fashioned me and made me (Job. X, 8). Therefore, it is stated here so that God may remember that we are dust; may He pour out the gift of more

abundant grace and not abandon a weak work. The helmsman exerts more effort when the ship is tossed by waves, than when the oars glide smoothly in calm waters or when the wind's gusts, in proportion to his effort, outstrip him.

13. Your hands, he says, have formed me. He says hands in the plural, not hand. But elsewhere it says: I have stretched out the heavens by my own hand (Isaiah 45:12). And: My hand has made all these things (Isaiah 66:2). In the composition of man, it seems that what was lacking in the whole world, so that it could be made, was not lacking. One hand has established the heavens, as it is written: and both of God's hands have shaped man, as we read. The heavens were not made in the likeness, but man in the likeness. Angels for ministry, humans for image.

14. Be it that angels are also made to the image. Scripture, however, speaks about man being made to the image. For we have something which perhaps the angels do not have; where sin abounded, grace abounded even more. Christ was born for us from the Virgin. For we read: A child is born to us, and a son is given to us (Isaiah 9:6). He took on flesh for us: or rather, he took us in that flesh, for he made the Son of Man sit in the seat of God. I do not read of angels in the seat of God except those who stand, those who minister (Heb. 1:14; Rev. 8:2; Dan. 7:10). I do not read of angels, but of humans buried with Christ and raised in Christ (Rom. 6:4 and 5). Finally, the Apostle says: For he has made us alive together with Christ, by whose grace you have been saved, and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:5 and 6). Therefore, the Son of Man sits at the right hand of God, not as an angel, not as an archangel, nor as a cherub or seraph. They praise: the Son of Man is seated. The Son of Man is praised by the mouths of angels for having overcome evil angels, triumphing over the spiritual wickedness that is in the heavens; for having made men like unto angels, in whom there were previously the contagions of the dead.

15. By the word, says he, of the Lord the heavens were established, and by the breath of his mouth all their power (Psalm 32:6). Man also has received the perfection of life and the consummation of virtue by the breath of the Lord. God has breathed into him the breath of life, and man has become a living soul (Genesis 2:7). Therefore, our life began with divine inspiration, but this life is dissolved by the separation of the soul and body, while divine inspiration is not dissolved. And therefore understand that what is figurative is different from what is made or prepared. And rightly you have the script written in two ways about man. First, it is written: Let us make man in our image and likeness (Gen. I, 26 and 27). And: They will have dominion, he says, or they will have authority. And: God made man in the image of God. But in the second place it is written as follows, because God took dust from the earth, and formed man (Gen. II, 7). Where there is dust, there is shaping; but where there is no dust, there is no earth, no matter; but incorporeal, but admirable: there is no matter, but immaterial. For what is according to the likeness of God is not in the body, nor in matter, but in the rational soul. There man operates, there man is shown to be in the likeness and image of God, where justice, where wisdom, where every form of virtue is assumed.

16. If you understand the image, you will see the image; for man is not the image of God, but has been made to the likeness. There is another image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, through whom all things were made. He is not to the image, but the image: you are not the image, but made to the image. Therefore, you have in your substance something of the image and

likeness of God, which is like the divine image. Therefore, the image comes to him who is made to the image, and the image seeks him who is made to its likeness; to seal once again, to confirm once again; because you have lost what you have received. For God had breathed into you, so that you might have the grace of his inspiration, which your fault had taken away from you. You had become a living soul: listen to what he says, not to the flesh, but to the living soul. But because the sinner could not hold the seal, and being placed in guilt, he did not have what is God's, but what is of men; therefore our Lord Jesus Christ came, as you have read in the Gospel, and rising from the dead, he found the disciples shut up, and he entered while they remained closed, and he said: Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. (John 20:21-22). So you see what sort of man our hands have made, or rather, what sort of man they have remade; the one surely whom we have put on in Christ. Stripping off the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of his creator; where there is not . . . slave and free, but all and in all Christ (Colossians 3:9-11). So we put on Christ, as it is also said elsewhere: You have put on Christ (Galatians 3:27). We have received the Holy Spirit, who not only forgives our sins but also makes us his priests to forgive the sins of others. This is why the Prophet says: You have formed me and laid your hand upon me (Psalm 138:5). He formed us from clay and laid his hand upon us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Although many interpret this psalm as spoken from the perspective of the Savior. Listen, for the hand of the Lord is also called the Spirit. Job proclaims: The divine Spirit has made me (Job 33:4). Therefore, these are the hands that created man, Christ and the Spirit. Therefore, the Lord Jesus is the author of our body, who first made man in his image, and then formed him from clay, and desired to save what he had made, to preserve what he had fashioned. He wanted to make the whole man saved, as he himself said in the Gospel: 'You are angry with me, because I have made the whole man saved on the Sabbath' (John 7:23). This is specifically taught by the Church, because not only is our soul preserved, but also our flesh: the soul through knowledge of God, the flesh through resurrection: one of which was taught by the divine authority of his words, the other by the example of his own resurrection.

18. Here is therefore man of two substances. One is the substance of the made, the other of the formed: the former of God's Spirit, the latter of clay. Therefore Job says: My skin will revive (Job 19:26), because that which is made of clay is revived; for earth returns unto earth; but what was made, in order to have dominion over the other living creatures, you understand to be more excellent. For there is a common fellowship of clay even for beasts with us; and therefore the soul has been endowed with a special prerogative. Nevertheless, because he commands other living creatures; in order to be able to command, he must be subject to God. Therefore, he is taught to serve; so that he may deserve to attain the kingdom. For whoever serves Christ, pleases God. Whoever serves Christ, certainly pleases the truth, and must not know falsehood. Whoever serves justice, must reject iniquity. Whoever serves the immaculate, must observe the discipline of chastity. Whoever serves the light, must hate the darkness of sin. Therefore, because the body is weak, let us ask for the visitation of the Lord. Hence the Prophet says: What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you visit him? (Psalm VIII, 5). And now in the remaining part of the verse he says: Give me understanding, and I will learn your commandments. Recognizing himself to be a spiritual prophet, he asks for the grace of the Holy Spirit. For understanding is given by the Lord, and it is first placed among the gifts of grace, as you have learned in the reading

of the Apostle; for to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the benefit (2 Tim. 2:7); and in the first place in the prophet's grace of wisdom and spiritual understanding is required (Isaiah 11:2). Therefore, the gift of God is sought. Then see the order: Give me understanding, he says, so that I may learn your commandments. Understanding is put before knowledge, so that knowledge may follow. For unless someone understands, they cannot be learned. Therefore, understanding makes one learned, not memory. For it is of no use to read many things unless you understand them yourself. And in the Apostle, after the manifestation of the Spirit, you read the word of knowledge afterwards; so that you may know that understanding is to be preferred to memory, and that knowledge can be possessed by the one to whom understanding has previously shone forth (1 Corinthians 12:7).

20. At the same time, consider humility. If a Prophet asks for understanding to be given to him, who is so arrogant as to claim that he has intelligence in his power? He asks for understanding, so that he may know himself and be able to understand the nature of his own being. But those who debate about the nature of things, who study the stars in the sky, who cannot know themselves, think that intelligence can be granted without the gift of God. Therefore, we must also embrace humility, so that we do not become arrogant if perhaps we have come to know a certain parable from the Scriptures, or because sometimes we read plain things according to the letter; if perhaps we have understood something according to the letter, let us consider it knowledge given to us by teaching. That prophet who received the Holy Spirit, after being anointed into the kingdom, was anointed into a prophet, writing the one hundred and eighteenth psalm, asks for understanding to be given to him so that he may understand the commandments of God: and he knows that unless he receives grace from the Lord, he cannot understand his commandments. In the Gospel, I also read that the Lord Jesus presented parables, and the apostles did not understand (Matthew 13:36). Finally, they requested an explanation of the proposed parable.

21. The Lord Jesus Himself, when He said, as you have read in the Gospel according to Matthew: Blessed are the poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3); added afterwards: Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man (Matt. 7:24). Therefore, the one who only hears will not be like him, but the one who does what he hears. So, neither action without hearing, nor hearing without action can be that of a wise man, but rather the one who hears and does. Therefore, let us listen in order to understand: let us do, in order to prove that we have understood what we heard.

22. (Verse 74.) The second verse follows: Those who fear you will see me and rejoice, because I have placed all my hope in your words. Perhaps this may seem contradictory to some, because the just one says: Those who fear you will see me and rejoice; for to many the just one appears burdensome when he is seen. Finally, in the Gospel, many could not see the Lord Jesus: like the Gerasenes who begged him to leave their region (Luke 8:37); and others denied him passage when he did not want to pass through them (Luke 9:52-53). Just as there in Judaea ungodliness is expressed in form, so here the grace of the Church is revealed. For it prophesies that the entire world will be filled with divine fear; and therefore, it says that the saints rejoice with knowledge as if fearing God; for whoever sees the righteous and rejoices also wants to be righteous himself. For it is beautiful that he delights in others, what he wants to preserve in himself, if he chooses. For it is innate to good people; that the wise person, with piety in his soul, loves the chaste, the modest, and the prudent, while the merciful person loves the generous; and he loves his virtues in others.

For most people, the sight of a just person is a reminder of correction, but for the more perfect, it is a source of joy. How beautiful, then, that you may appear and prevail? Therefore, the just man is good.

23. Therefore, Paul the apostle went up to Jerusalem in order to see the righteous ones; and he stayed with Peter for fifteen days, so that he might benefit in some way from their cohabitation (Galatians 1:18). Therefore, Paul himself and Barnabas, when they entered Jerusalem, were received magnificently by the Church, by the apostles, and by the elders (Acts 15:4). But when they wanted to leave, they were begged not to depart; and, as we read later about Paul, they were escorted with tears (Acts 20:38). For if there is so much power in natural things, that the sight of an animal benefits those with jaundice; as it is said that even the horn of that creature when dead can be helpful if it has been demonstrated to those who have fallen into this condition: can we doubt that a just sight heals? Therefore, a worthless irrational animal has such great power that it can heal a person in a brief moment when it is seen: a just person, however, if indeed they are looked upon with faith by one who desires benefit from them, contributes nothing? Do the rays of his eyes seem to infuse a certain power into those who faithfully desire to see him?

24. But just as the righteous person brings joy to the heart of the innocent, as it seems: in the same way, the wicked are tormented by their knowledge of the righteous; for they are accused by the silent conduct of the saints. Chastity torments immorality, generosity torments greed, and faith torments impiety. Let us take an example of a similar lowly creature. For just as we said that a mute animal benefits when it is seen: in the same way, we perceive the wolf to be harmful if it has anticipated someone by seeing them; for they are said to lose their voice, those whom the wolf has seen first. Basiliscus, also known as the harmful snake, is said to kill any animal that it sees first. It is said that anyone who can foresee such a snake is immediately killed. The snake itself is also said to die if it is seen by a human before it can strike. Therefore, if there is such power either in the eyes of the snake or in the eyes of a human, that one can kill the other by seeing it first, then there is no power in the eyes of a just person who is filled with the grace of virtue. Especially since faith alone works wonders, such as the woman who touched the fringe of the Lord's cloak and was healed (Matthew 9:22), and the person whom the Lord Jesus looked at and immediately received the grace of healing from his eyes (Luke 9:38 and 43). But whoever sees the just person must know what they see: they do not see them in their body, nor in their clothing, nor in their possessions, nor in their appearance; but they see them within; I say they do not see them unless they see their mind, unless they understand their speech, unless their senses can comprehend them, unless they can acquire wisdom from their conversation. Therefore, they will rejoice when they have perceived these things, when they have come to know these things. So, wherever we hear of a just person, let us hasten to see them, just as that woman who heard that the Lord Jesus was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, and she entered and poured ointment on his feet (Luke 7:37-38). Let us imitate him; for who would doubt that the Church is figured in that woman? Therefore, wherever the just man sits or reclines, let us hasten to see him. It is precious to see a just man, to see him according to the image of God. What is on the outside is of no use; what is on the inside, heals. Surely, even in him who is on the outside, we frequently see him who is on the inside; so that if we see a poor man, let us honor him in the poor man, in whom he has been made like, of whom He said: You gave me to eat. For what you have given to one of them, you have given to me (Matt. 25:35 and 40). For he who crowns the image of the emperor, honors

him surely, whose image he crowned. And he who despises the statue of the emperor, seems to have done wrong to the emperor, whose statue he spat upon. The Gentiles worship wood, for they consider it the image of God. But the invisible image of God is not in what is seen, but surely in what is not seen.

26. Do you see, therefore, why we walk among many images of Christ? Let us be careful not to appear to detract from the crown of the image that Christ has imposed upon each one. Let us be careful not to take away anything from those to whom we owe assistance. But what is worse, we not only fail to honor the poor, but also dishonor them, destroy them, persecute them: and we are unaware that we heap these abuses upon the image of God when we think that those made in the likeness of God should be harmed. For whoever ridicules a poor person, aggravates the one who made them. But the one who says, 'I was hungry and you did not give me anything to eat; I was thirsty and you did not give me anything to drink... I was sick... and you did not visit me' (Matthew XXV, 42 and 43). And how much lighter are these things, compared to if someone were to say, 'You have wronged me, you have stripped me, you have beaten me?' If someone were to ask, 'When have we wronged you, when have we stripped you, when have we even beaten you?' He says: As long as you have done it to one of these least ones, you have done it to me (Ibid., 45). Therefore, let us be more diligent so that we do not bring insult to anyone, even the least of them, lest we appear to have been insulting to the Lord Himself in those least things.

27. However, by what reason he said, 'Those who fear you will see me and rejoice,' he himself explained, saying, 'Because I have hoped exceedingly in your words.' This is to say, 'They have seen me within, they have touched me within, they have beheld me within; where I have taken hope in your words, where I have received your words.' Therefore, blessed are those who see the righteous and rejoice, because they hope in the words of God. But how many there are who hate the righteous, who scrutinize the words of God, who are righteous themselves: and when the wicked hear some learned individuals, they are accustomed to avoid them because of their teaching.'

28. (Verse 75.) The third verse follows: I have known, O Lord, that Your judgments are righteous and that in Your truth You have humbled me. Whoever can understand the divine providence uses the same language as the holy prophet David; for all things are done by the judgment of God, so that one person may have a sick body, another a healthy one, one may be rich, another poor, one may die young, another old. If anyone pays attention to the divine Scriptures, they understand that these things happen by the judgment of God; for there is nothing outside of God's knowledge. We seek an example? It is not hidden; indeed, Job would never have lost his possessions if he had not been handed over to the power of the adversary. For the Lord gave the devil power over his possessions, so that he might be tested to see what disposition he would have, having lost his inheritance (Job 1:12): he gave over his children, he gave over his body (Job 2:6); so that it might be proven whether, in the face of the grief of his deceased children or the torment of his body, he would stray from constancy of mind and soul. Indeed, the Lord knew him to be strong; but He wanted to teach and test us in him, whether we could be his imitators. And finally, Abraham also was tested, when he sought to offer up his only son, an old man (Gen. XXII, 2). Surely the Lord knew Abraham's intent, but He tests with knowledge, as you have read in the Gospel, that when the Lord Jesus asked His disciples how many loaves they had, and they answered that they had only five loaves, He Himself said: What shall we do among so many people? However, he said

this, testing them; for he knew what he was about to do. (John 6:5-6) Therefore, whoever is righteous, relies on the examination of his own righteousness, because the judgments of God are just; or according to the Greek, because the judgments of God are righteousness itself.

29. But in order to acknowledge this, he made a preceding prayer; since he asked to be given understanding, to learn God's commandments. Therefore, the grace of understanding and knowledge was granted to him, and he recognized God's judgments to be just: but to recognize is the act of the perfected. Finally, it is one thing to believe, another to acknowledge. Faith is for those who fear, knowledge is for the wise. For the one who fears, does not seek reason: but the wise person investigates both knowledge and understanding, whatever he desires to perceive. I believed, he said, because of what I spoke: but the understanding one acknowledged what he spoke.

30. Therefore, where are the just judgments of God? It is through labors, tribulations, and afflictions that one reaches the heavenly reward. For just as a crown is given to athletes who compete according to the judgment of men, so a palm is awarded to Christians who compete according to the divine judgment. To the one who is victorious, it is said, I will grant them to sit with me on my throne (Revelation 3:21). Therefore, our life is tested by fire, like the brilliance of silver, in order to prove our virtue in the struggles. We have passed through fire and water, and you have brought us into a place of refreshment. Therefore, I have known that your judgments are true. For I have been humbled, so that I may see these things; because those who are exalted in heart cannot open their eyes to the truth. But when we are humbled, we recognize our sins and cleanse our offenses through humility itself. I have been humbled, he says, and he has saved me. Therefore, in truth, he who was humiliated was humiliated for salvation: and he who followed the salvation of truth did not bear the passion in vain.

31. Therefore, there is a difference between knowing and fearing, so that we may return to it. Finally, the reading of the Gospel should teach us. For the Lord said to those who believed in him from the Jews: If you remain in my word, . . . you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (John VIII, 31 and 32). If you remain, he says, you will know. You see that whoever fears God could not know from the beginning when they heard his word. Moreover, not only is fear not the same as knowledge, but faith is also not the same as knowledge. Indeed, the Apostle also taught that there are different gifts of grace. For he says that to some is given the word of wisdom through the same Spirit, to others the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to others faith in the same Spirit (I Cor. XII, 8 and 9). Therefore, if faith is given to some, knowledge is given to others; you see that where there is faith, there is not immediately knowledge; but where there is knowledge, there is both faith and prudence, and we cannot separate diligence from it.

Therefore, the holy David had knowledge as a perfect prophet; for he knew so perfectly that he humbled himself in the truth itself. Therefore, whether he was placed in adversity, he recognized the grace of testing, which is to endure what is laborious and adverse, and that God's judgment is just; and therefore, those who strive well are never abandoned or forsaken, and a crown can be bestowed on them after their labors. Or whether he was placed in prosperity and success, he also knew that the wealth of kings and various favorable outcomes are usually provided for the sake of temptation; so that the one who uses them may be tempted by the prosperity of things. Therefore, the prophet David is to be praised, because when he recognized these things, he humbled

himself; either to exclude the temptations of prosperity by his humility, or to endure the trials of adversity with constant equanimity.

33. Therefore, the Prophet would not be greatly praiseworthy if he praised the judgments of God, making use of the abundance of worldly goods. For what great thing do we do if we praise God when we are prosperous, when we are rich, when we are not plagued by any injustices? It is magnificent if, subjected to injuries, insults, you praise the judgment of God; if, afflicted by sickness, you proclaim the judgments of God; if poverty does not prevent you from praising the justice of God. Therefore, the judgments of God are always to be praised, as it is written: The daughters of Judah rejoiced because of your judgments (Psalm 47:12). Who are the daughters of Judah, if not the religious souls, the souls of the Church, who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and who, seeing the reason of your judgments, always rejoice? For he who rejoices not from any external gain but from the knowledge of reason, is established only in perpetual rejoicing.

34. (Verse 76.) The fourth verse follows: Let your mercy now be made so that it may comfort me, according to your word to your servant. Some have in this place: Let it console me. But we also read in the Apostle an exhortation made for consolation, and consolation made for exhortation (II Cor. I, 4 and 6). Therefore, the mercy of God is great, which not only grants the forgiveness of sins; but also applies the spurs of exhortation to those who are striving, so that the passions of the undertaken struggle may not be abandoned through weak fear. Therefore, he does not seek mercy as one who is overcome and yields, nor as one who prays for pardon, but as one who is girded with God's mercy, supported by greater strength, accomplishes greater things. Remarkable and unique is the virtue of the Prophet. For another would ask to be relieved of humbling hardships, that the trials around him may cease, and that the Lord might deign to calm his troubles, so that the storm of tribulation would not rage against him; but this one, like a strong and patient athlete who knows how to exercise and anoint his soul with hardships, does not desire to remove sorrows, nor to avoid confrontations, nor to cease everything that brings fatigue and labor; rather, he seeks in the time of his labor to receive the word of consolation against the storms of temptation, so that he may be able to endure with a strong mind to what is being thrown upon him, lest he be weakened by any disturbance of sorrow. Therefore, he implores the mercy of God, so that, not being abandoned without help in his undertaking, he may not abandon the military service he has begun.

35. Finally, clear evidence shows that the exhortation is of divine mercy; for God says to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will show compassion on whom I show compassion. Therefore it does not depend on the one who wills or the one who runs, but on God who shows mercy (Rom. IX, 15 and 16). Perhaps you may say: So we should not desire or strive; but God is accustomed to desert the negligent. Therefore he does not say this; but let us consider what he does say. The perseverance of a person who is unwilling or hesitant is not enough; for it is not within the power of a person, but rather it is the mercy of God who enables you to accomplish what you have begun. Moreover, it is said to Moses again: 'For this very reason I have raised you up, that I may show my power in you' (Ibid., 17). Therefore, it is concluded that we should rely on the exhortation of divine mercy. Hence it follows: 'So he has mercy on whom he wills, and he hardens whom he wills' (Ibid., 18). He encourages those he shows mercy to, and does not reject them; he does not curse those he hardens. And truly, the mercy of our God is the support of our sufferings, through which our sins are diminished. Finally, Lazarus, the poor man, because he endured many

evils in this life, found rest and consolation in the bosom of Abraham; but the rich man, who had consolation in the world, lost the fruit of rest after the course of this life. If God had shown mercy to him, He would have chastised him in this world, so that he would not be scourged afterwards. Finally, Job, though severely afflicted, indeed with many lashes of poverty, loss of children, bodily pains, and the reproaches of friends, still enjoys eternal consolation.

Therefore, the greater the tribulations, the more abundant consolation is reserved. And yet, so that you do not fall and give in, the greater the temptations you see, the more you should pray to the Word of God, so that it may bring you comfort: just as Paul also prayed, saying, Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation, who comforts us in all our tribulation, so that we may also be able to comfort those who are in any tribulation by the exhortation with which we ourselves are exhorted by God; for just as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also through Christ does consolation abound (II Cor. I, 3-5). He prays with such great force of Apostolic petition, that he may receive consolation from the Lord in every tribulation, so that not only may he himself put on endurance; but also may he console others, so that they too may be able to endure the hardships of their own mind. Therefore, if you have been found worthy in every tribulation, then at last you will be deserving to receive consolation in every tribulation. And yet not every suffering is worthy of consolation: but the suffering which is for Christ, this deserves the consolation of Christ.

Moreover, he beautifully added: According to your word, to your servant. For the Lord himself promises help to those who fight for his name, saying: Therefore, when they deliver you up, do not be anxious about how or what you will speak; for it will be given to you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you who speak, but the Father who speaks in you (Matt. 10:19-20). Therefore, so that we may not be unequal to the struggle, let us always pray for divine help, so that he may grant us encouragement. For if we have someone who exhorts us, we do not easily give up.

However, most people have this opinion: He who consoles us, and does not shy away from the truth. For there is a certain charm in the encouragement of someone who urges us on, which ignites our striving for praise and soothes us, as it were, with a kind of consolation, so that we are not discouraged by the roughness of our labors.

39. (Verse 77.) The fifth verse follows: Let your mercies come to me, and I shall live; for your law is my meditation. To whom the meditation of God's law is, to them mercy is granted, so that they may live forever. How can anyone be blessed without divine mercy? Blessed indeed is the one who meditates day and night in the law of the Lord (Psalm 1:1-2). But the one who meditates in the Law is instructed in the Law, and the one whom the Law instructs, the Lord has instructed, who spoke the Law. Therefore it is written: Blessed is the one whom you instruct, O Lord, and teach from your law (Psalm 94:12). Let us also learn to meditate on the law, not be distracted by worldly temptations, not be hindered by obstacles, but always be attentive to the law of God. For it is written: The mouth of the righteous will meditate on wisdom, and his tongue will speak justice (Psalm 36:30). This is in the Old Testament. Listen to what it says in the New Testament: The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (Romans 10:8). And this meditation is shown to be necessary for priests, as he writes to Titus, because the bishop must embrace Him who is according to the doctrine, faithful in speech, so that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict (Tit. 1:9). And writing to Timothy, he says: Attend to reading,

exhortation, and doctrine (1 Tim. 4:13). Frequent reading, without any interruption, fulfills the duty of teaching.

40. However, what it asks for in order to live, we frequently show that the life of this body does not have the grace of true life; but that true life will be, whose blessings each of the saints believes they see on the earth of the living. What we believe we will see, not at present of course, but it will be in the future.

Verse 41 (Verse 78): The sixth verse follows: Let the proud be confounded, because they acted unjustly towards me; but I will meditate on your precepts. The same Prophet said earlier: If I have rendered evil to those who repay me (Psalms 7:5). Does he curse those who acted unjustly towards him? Certainly not. For he saw that even his enemies should be shown love when the preacher of the Gospel came. Therefore, I believe that he, like a physician, wants to heal those who have been injured; so that, by considering their own wickedness, they may be ashamed of their own crimes: in which not only do they begin to prove their patience in accordance with prophecy, but also to correct their own insolence. Shame is usually a corrector of ourselves; and while we begin to feel ashamed of what we have done, so that we are not ashamed any longer, we are reminded to abandon what deserves to be blushed at. Therefore, the Prophet does not curse, but as a good doctor, he wants to know and understand what they have done; so that when they have taken themselves back into their own conscience, they may begin to blush at how great a heap of sins they have committed, and in blushing, they may be able to renounce their previous sins. Consider now to me some fornicators, unjustly seizing widows and girls, plundering the property of others; and in these things not only do they not feel shame, but they also tend to boast, as if they were carrying titles of either beauty or power: concerning whom the Apostle spoke well, that their glory is in their own shame (Philippians 3:19); they are more detestable to themselves because, despite committing such great sins, they are not ashamed. But if anyone afterward comes into the Church, believes in the Lord Jesus, hears the Gospel, is heartily contrite: then at last will he begin to recognize how atrocious and serious the sins he has committed are, and will blush for those sins he has recognized.

42. And what does it mean to be exercised in the precepts of our Lord, as He said: But I will be exercised in your precepts, in the Law you have learned (Exod. XXIII, 5)? This means that if the ox of an adversary falls or the beast, you should not consider it forsaken, but rather to be helped. And when He says: They have done injustice unjustly, consider who this is spoken to, except for the one who perhaps acts justly in doing injustice: that is, if the injured person begins to seek justice according to the precepts of Moses, he seems to be doing injustice justly, but not according to the precepts of the Gospel. And thus he says: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners (Matthew IX, 13); because the Jews use the authority of the Law to seek vengeance for themselves.

You have this also in the Apostle: Be sober and just (1 Corinthians 15:34). He clearly taught that not only should we be sober, but also justly sober. However, one can be sober but not justly sober; they may be sober from wine but not sober in fairness and justice, for drunkenness is a form of injustice. Likewise, someone can be constantly indulging in drunkenness and debauchery but still attempt to steal from others, being preoccupied with the desire to be sober from wine but not sober from theft. Such a person is not justly sober. Therefore the Apostle admonishes us to have just sobriety within us. Finally, he added: 'And do not sin.' For whoever sins, even if they are sober,

cannot be called justly sober. 'Do not be deceived,' he says, 'lest the drunkenness of another's error make you intoxicated.' Evil conversations corrupt good morals, because the drunkenness of the unbelievers' words and lips is poured into the character of the listener. And rightfully he added: Be soberly just and do not sin. For certain ones have ignorance of God; so let that one be sober, who has no ignorance of God, and does not stagger with the drunkenness of treachery: but let him be justly sober, in whom the grace of works shines forth with the sobriety of faith.

Verse 44. (Line 79.) The seventh verse follows: Let those who fear you turn to me, and those who know your testimonies. Another version, most according to the Greek, has: Let them turn to me. If we read it as 'turn to me': let those who fear God turn to me, let them be ashamed of their committed sins; or certainly let them pay the punishments of their crimes: but let them turn to the servant of God, and to the prophetic teaching; so that they may unlearn the shameful things, and by the correction of the teacher, cast off their manners, and, with the stain of their sins cleansed, put on the discipline of virtues. But if we read it thus: 'Let them be converted to me,' that is, 'because I will be exercised in your precepts,' let them be converted to me, but to me no longer sinning, no longer wandering. 'Let them be converted,' he says, 'who, renouncing their own sins, fear you; so that the Prophet may be more fully advanced to the fellowship of the righteous, and may himself impart most abundantly to those who listen from that grace which is in himself. Let them, therefore, who no longer sin, be converted from the righteous to the righteous.' But I think there is no need to repeat the evidence, since it has already been mentioned before.

45. (Verse 80.) The eighth verse follows: Make my heart immaculate in your justifications, so that I may not be confounded. The greater the Prophet is in the gift of prophecy or in the grace of the kingdom, the more he follows humility and teaches us what we should imitate; that is why the Prophet asks that his heart be made completely immaculate. Above, he requested: Create a clean heart in me, O God (Psalm 50:12). He did not say, do it, but create it; so that he may completely restore and purify his heart. Indeed, there is a great depth in this discourse. For the heart, created by the Lord, is great, as it receives the Word of the heavenly virtues and powers. Great is the heart that receives the Lord Himself saying, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them' (2 Corinthians 6:16). Therefore, in order to receive these things, it prays not to become an angel, but to have the Lord Himself as the creator of its heart, who created the heaven and the earth. And he rightly says: Immaculate; because the heart of man is stained by a kind of collection of indecent thoughts. If the thought itself pollutes, how much more do the actions themselves contaminate? Do not contaminate the innermost recesses of nature with extraordinary thoughts; lest you pollute with serious defilement, what you think you have clean. You wash your hands as if you can wash away sins, when you cannot wash your mind polluted by impure thoughts. And Pilate washed his hands: but he could not wash his heart. He remained stained with guilt, even though he had washed his hands with water. Understand that even thoughts defile: Not what goes into the mouth defiles a person: but what comes out of the mouth. For evil thoughts come out of the heart, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a person (Matthew 15:17-20). If, therefore, you are defiled inwardly, first cleanse what is inside. If you have cleansed what is inside, you have also cleansed the outside: just as if turbid water flows, you would think in vain that the lake needs to be cleansed if the fountain itself is filthy; for it will be of no benefit to have cleansed the receptacles when the fault is in the fountain. You yourself must be cleansed beforehand, so that everything that is pure may flow. Your heart is the source of your

thoughts. In that fountain, either the turbid water of impurity is vomited forth, or the clear wave of piety bursts forth.

47. You have learned that the heart must be cleansed, learn how to cleanse it. Justification cleanses this fountain, that is, the confession of sins. Finally, the tax collector who confessed his own sins was justified more than the Pharisee who left the temple; because the Pharisee preferred his fasts and gifts, as well as his innocence. Therefore, cleanse your water, that water of which it is said: Deep waters are the counsel in the heart of a man (Prov. XX, 5). Nature has given you good water, unless you pollute it with your filth: nature itself washes you, if it is pure, if it is simple, if it is also natural, if it has nothing sordid and earthly. What harm is there if the water that should cleanse, defiles? But it is not your water that defiles, it is foreign water. Finally, it has been said to you: Keep yourself away from foreign water (Prov. V, 15). Foreign water is deceitful and deceptive, and it goes against nature. Therefore he says: The sons of strangers have lied to me (Psalm XVII, 46); for if they were not strangers, surely they would not have deceived. Therefore let no one boast of having a pure heart, as Solomon said (Proverbs XX, 9): but let him who boasts, boast in the Lord (II Corinthians X, 17), who has deigned to create a pure heart for his saints, and to make it immaculate by his justifications. What the justifications are, you have heard him saying: Declare your iniquities, that you may be justified (Isaiah XLIII, 26). Therefore, those who confess their sins are justified; but those who are justified are not ashamed, because mature confession anticipates the shame of sins.

Sermon 11. Caph.

The eleventh letter is Caph, which in Latin interpretation means 'They are bent.' The sound of the interpretation itself teaches us what it means to be bent; for whoever is inclined towards the ground seems to be bent. Hence the Prophet says under this letter: 'They have bent me a little less on earth' (Inf. v. 87). But one who repents is bent; because he bends his neck while humbling himself before the Lord, and even more the inner neck, that is, the neck of the mind and heart. For regarding this neck it is said: Even if you bend your neck like a circle (Isaiah 58:5); for he who does not bend his heart, in vain does he bend his neck.

Jeremiah the prophet also teaches that humility is signified by this interpretation. For he says under this letter in Lamentations: 'For the Lord will not reject forever; for after he has caused grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men' (Lam. 3:31-33). Therefore, it is good to humble ourselves before the Lord, so that the Lord may have mercy. Furthermore, in the preceding verses under this letter, the same prophet Jeremiah, showing the lamentations and humility of the people, says: 'All her people groan as they search for bread; they trade their treasures for food to revive their strength' (Lam. 1:11). See, Lord, and behold, for she has become dishonored. Therefore, let anyone who seeks refreshment for his soul humble himself, so that he may more quickly obtain the mercy of the Lord.

3. (Vers. 81.) And therefore, like a bent soul and mind much more than body, did David begin, saying: My soul has failed in your salvation, and in your word I have hoped. Let an unusual speech not capture us, so that we judge the failure of bodily fatigue in this way. For he did not say only this: My soul has failed; but: My soul has failed in your salvation. Therefore, let us take an example of its use, if for example, we say: He has failed in her, it seems that with this word is expressed

that he has completely passed into desire for the woman. And whatever it is that we strongly desire, unless we have a more mature effect of it, it seems to weary us with a long stretch. Love, impatient, knocking on the doors of prostitutes day and night, if the desires of drinking are delayed for a long time, it itself fails in expectation, while hoping: in which case it is not the end of love, but an increase. And whatever is desirable, if it does not happen to the one desiring, it fails into that, and as if departs from the soul itself who desires. However, if hope arises closer, it gives strength to the nearby hope: but if there is the absence of the beloved, precisely because one desires the absent, he suffers from the defection of his soul. Therefore, the further that which is desired is, the more the one who desires fails. That is why he fails; each person migrates with all their endeavors to what they love. He thinks about it, clings to it, repeats it, what he has received to be loved is poured into it with a certain defection of the soul; just as a mother awaits the presence of her son, just as Tobit's wife was awaiting her son who was on a journey, failing from desire, and placed in distress, and as if weakened (Tobit 10:3 and following). For what else do words signify than a certain defect? But the more the desire grows weary, the more love increases; and the longer the one who is longed for is absent, the more the desires of the one waiting burn with a greater force of love. The flesh weakens, but desire is nourished and grows.

Therefore, we can conclude from here what it is: My soul longs for your salvation. For indeed, the soul adheres to the Spirit and the soul is united with it, and they become one spirit. For whoever is united with the Lord is one spirit (I Corinthians 6:17). Therefore, the holy and God-fearing person desires nothing else but the salvation of God, which is Jesus Christ. They long for Him, they desire Him, they devote all their strength to Him, they cherish Him in the depths of their mind, they open themselves up to Him and pour themselves out to Him. And the only thing they fear is losing Him. Therefore, the more the soul exercises itself with a greater desire to cling to its healing source, the more it weakens. So, this weakness indeed brings a decrease in frailty, but also brings an increase in virtue. Finally, he himself says elsewhere: My soul longs for you (Psalm 62:2); and he adds below: My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me (ibid., 9). For whoever is thirsty, always desires to cling to the source, and seems to desire and touch nothing else but water, so that he may be nourished by that very affection. Therefore, receiving my soul with His right hand, and imparting His power, He makes it to be what it was not, so that it may say: Yet now I live not I, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20). But learn also from the example that this is an excessive desire. My soul, he says, desires and fails in the courts of the Lord (Psalm 83:3). Before desiring, he says, and as if pouring itself entirely into desire, it is dissolved by a long rope suspended defection. Therefore, Jeremiah teaches how the soul faints in the salvation of God. And it happened, he says, in my heart as a burning fire, flaming in my bones, and I am dissolved on all sides, and I cannot bear it. Therefore, inflamed with desire, David says: My soul has fainted in your salvation, and I have hoped in your word (Jer. XX, 9).

5. He rightly hoped, he said in the Word; for hope precedes fulfillment, and therefore there follows disappointment. But he hoped in the Word that was said to come, which can be understood as the Word of God. Or certainly he hoped in the Word, who believed in the heavenly Word, by whom the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is announced, or by whom his glory is declared. Therefore the Prophet, considering what he had read and perceiving that while he was present in the body, bound by the shackles of this life, he was far from the salvation of God, he longed for it, desired it, grew weak, and was completely dissolved in affection; so that he might become entirely what he

desired. As he himself also says later: I pour out my prayer in his presence, I announce my trouble before him, in my weakness my spirit fails within me (Psalm 141:3-4). Indeed, his spirit fails, rather his own spirit fails from him, who denies himself in order to adhere to Christ. Thus his paths are known by the Lord; for they are not of the flesh, but of Christ's paths. For the way to God for those who seek Him is through Christ. And therefore let us desire that eternal thing, that salvation of God: let us not desire money, which the most greedy desire; let us not desire the beauty of another man's wife; let us not be driven by the desire for ambition; let us not aim for worldly glory; let us not be occupied with the pursuits of deceitful scheming; let us not desire to deceive our neighbor with injustice; let us not, in short, be like foxes immersed in the inner depths of earthly pleasure, as if exiles from eternal things, and being cast down from the presumption of that heavenly hope. Therefore, let our failing soul raise itself up with all its strength, so that it may cling to the saving God, who is Christ the Lord Jesus, which in interpretation is called the salvation of the Lord. For He Himself is salvation, truth, power, and wisdom. Therefore, whoever fails himself in order to adhere to virtue, loses what is his own and receives what is eternal.

7. (Vers. 82.) It follows: My eyes have failed for your word, saying: When will you comfort me? Above, it is practical, here it is theoretical: there the soul fails in salvation, because it desires Him whose Passion is preserved; here the eyes fail in the word of the Lord of the prophets. And let us see whether, just as there the soul adheres to Christ and fails into one spirit, and becomes one spirit, so here the eyes may fail, so that the mind may become one. For these are the eyes of the mind, namely the eyes of the inner man, not the eyes that function by ministry of sight. For there is an eye and a mind of the flesh: but that eye is blind, which does not see things that are divine, and which is vainly puffed up by the mind of the flesh. And there is another eye, the sense of Christ, by which the Church sees Christ; as He Himself says to His Bride: Thou hast wounded our hearts with one of thine eyes. Christ is rightly seen with one eye; because He is not seen with the fleshly eye: or because the Church, having two eyes, the moral and the mystical, sees more of Christ with the eye of faith. For the mystic eye is sharper, the moral sweeter. And perhaps these are the eyes with which Paul saw the eternal, where he began to not see earthly things. Finally, he who did not see Christ before he lost his sight, saw him after he lost the sight of his eyes. For he saw the one he said: Who are you, Lord? (Acts 9:5). Surely he saw Christ, whom he also acknowledged as Lord. And below: Lord, he said, what do you want me to do? (Ibid., 6) Did he not see him whose command he awaited? Therefore, with what eyes did Paul begin to see more, except those which he himself showed us, saying: I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the mind (I Cor. XIV, 15)? Finally, so that you may know that he saw while praying: It happened, he said, when I returned to Jerusalem, while I was praying in the temple, I had a trance, and I saw him saying to me: Hurry, and leave Jerusalem quickly; for they will not receive your testimony about me (Act. XXII, 17 and 18). Therefore, these eyes fail in the word of God, and say: When will you comfort me? These individuals were called prophets with these eyes; because through revelation they could mentally perceive things that were hidden.

9. What is it to lose sight? Let us speak about physical ones, so that we may understand the spiritual ones. When we desire someone and hope that they will come, do we not direct our eyes to where we hope they will come from? Therefore, being content with long daily expectation, we lose sight. Thus, Anna, looking around on the road, anxiously searched for the arrival of her son with her guards (Tob. X, 7). Thus, the prophet David, while running from battle, eagerly desired to

inquire about his son's well-being after placing lookout guards in the tower (II Reg. XVIII, 24). So the wife of tender age from the shore lookout, with unwearied expectation, awaits the arrival of her husband; so that whenever she sees any ship, she may think that her husband is sailing there, and she fears that another may anticipate the pleasure of seeing her beloved, and she may not be able to be the first to say: I see you, my husband; just as Anna said to her son: I see you, my son, from now on I will happily die. Therefore, just as a woman who desires to present herself to an approaching man, sets aside all domestic tasks, and reads the footprints of the traveler or the paths that he takes: so the Prophet, stripped of secular cares, directed the gaze of his inner eyes to the word of God, remaining vigilant until he lost himself. He subjected his body to service, and instructed his soul in the patience of humility, like a spider's decaying web. For he longed for the fountains of water like a deer, and he thirsted for his Lord God, desiring to see His presence and to appear before the face of God. And with excessive longing and fierce desire, he presumed himself more suitable for obtaining the grace of prophecy for those things that he sought from the Lord. And so let us turn our hearts, that we may understand the sequence of the Scriptures, and let us ask the word to come to us from the Lord, and let understanding be given. If anyone from afar perceives the Word of God with the gaze of the mind, not yet clear and distinct, he sees the ship of the Word approaching the soul as it were with certain inner eyes. But the more clearly he begins to see, the more he hastens to approach like a port of truth, so that he may be nearest to embarking.

10. Therefore, the eyes of the prophets failed in the word of God, saying: When will you console me? If these eyes are symbolic, with which we see and perceive, they should have said: When will you console us; that is, not singularly, but plurally? But because the eye of the mind and the eye of the flesh become one eye, and then a man is supported by consolation when the flesh and the mind do not desire different things, but desire one thing, they are therefore attentive to him who says: I and the Father are one (John 10:30), these also confess that their eyes are one; because they perform one and the same desire and function.

Therefore, the Prophet was lacking in words. However, we consider ourselves idle if we seem to only study with words, and we value more those who work than those who exercise the study of understanding divinity. For many people say: Behold the man and his works. As if someone who studies with words does not work; when this work is greater than the others. For if justice is a work, if temperance is a work, if courage is a work, certainly wisdom is also a work; for these four principal virtues are considered. For if Christ works according to what is just, he certainly works according to what is the Word. And he worked when he was in the beginning with the Father. Finally, through him all things were made (John 1:3), so that you may know that he is the operator of all things, and our work is Christ Jesus. Indeed, as he is the Word, the word is a great work for those who seek it. Therefore, while Martha hurried about her ministry, but Mary listened to the word of the Lord; she deserved to be preferred to what she was serving because of what she heard. For Martha said to Him: Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Speak therefore to her, that she may help me. And the Lord answering, said to her: Martha, Martha . . . Mary has chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her (Luke 10:40-42). Thus, it is determined by divine authority that knowing the word is a greater work than serving.

12. But perhaps someone may say that it is said by the Apostle: For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power (I Cor. IV, 20). I do not deny that it is written, but in what word, you may

understand; namely, the word which the Spirit has poured forth, which the sermon cannot benefit those who hear, which is a spirit and virtue without display, this word Paul does not regard as worthy of recognition; for he wishes rather to recognize the virtue of the word. Finally, the Apostle did not want his word to be such that it came in weakness, to make others stronger: in fear and trembling; that those who fear would fear nothing except the Lord Jesus; trembling they would keep His peace and tranquility. Listen, therefore, to what kind of discourse the Apostle had. And he said, 'My discourse and preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of spirit and power' (1 Corinthians 2:4); because faith is not established in the eloquence of worldly wisdom, but in the power of God. Therefore, there is power in the discourse of the saints, but in that worldly and philosophical discourse, there is vanity. Moreover, let that Prophet teach you that there is power in the discourse of the saints, who says, 'The Lord will give His word to those who preach the Gospel with great power' (Psalm 68:11); that is, so that they may preach the Gospel with great power. Therefore it is proven that there is power in the preaching of the Gospel: and the preaching of the Gospel is the speech of the saints: so there is no doubt that there is power in holy speech.

13. (Vers. 83.) The third verse follows: Since I have become like a wineskin in the smoke, I have not forgotten your justifications. This voice, the voice of the just, is the one who mortifies his body; for rightly is that person called just, who is found stripped, not naked: for the wineskin is made from the remains of a dead animal. Therefore, let us die to sin, so that we may live to God. Having been filled with the joy of the spirit, and the sweetness of gladness, we shall be spiritual remains, free from bodily weakness, and reserving for ourselves the grace of divine mysteries poured into the whole of our mind. Regarding these wineskins, it is said that new wine is put into new wineskins (Matt. IX, 17), those who want to preserve both the body and grace. Therefore, let not your wineskin leak, let it not be cracked, let it not grow old with earthly decay; lest new wine break the old wineskins, by which the wineskins are torn, grace is poured out. Let not again, by the heat of injustice and excessive force, they dry up like the sun, but let the desires of the burning hearts be tempered by a certain snowy coldness. The heat of desire is cooled, and restrained by the frost of self-control and fasting, and is elevated by morning prayer; for just as dew descends upon our earth, so God's words descend, like rain upon grass, and like snow upon hay. This snow does not harm our vessel of goodness, this snow that shines with the divine splendor of eloquence. This snow cools, it does not burn; it nourishes the seeds, it does not destroy them. This snow is the commandment of self-control, which causes bodily heat to cool, and extinguishes all inner ardor of the flesh. And perhaps for this reason, when he demonstrated the glory of his resurrection, his clothing was as white as snow: so that not only he himself could be considered free from the contamination of sin, but also whoever is resurrected, with their desires for marriage frozen, would appear to rise cold. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but will be like the angels of God in heaven. Therefore, the good vessels are cold, that is, bound by the chill of frost, and not dissolved by the heat of desire.

14. Moreover, though this body is called a vessel in many places, you can also understand from this that when Adam and Eve laid aside the heavenly image that they had previously borne, and put on the image of the earthly man, they were clothed with tunics made of skin, because they had turned their spiritual bodies into physical ones by committing sin (Gen. 3:21). Nor is it absurd to understand it when David says that he was made like a vessel in an icy storm, because even

though he was placed in the harshness of the frost, he still mortified his body so that he would not feel the severity of that winter, which the Savior says will be burdensome for those fleeing from it (Matt. 24:20). For just as skin does not feel cold like ice, because it is the skin of a dead animal; so the dead prophet, dead to sin, could not feel the cold of sin: or certainly that it be not broken by necessities, nor should the flesh resist the mind; but with a gentle motion, it should bend itself to the commands of the soul, and in this icy world it should not wither away: or because we are the body of affliction, and we should always bear the death of the Lord Jesus in our body. This is the skin that disciplines its own body, not like that fat and obese people who sat to eat and drink, and then rose up to play (Exod. XXXII, 6). Here is the vessel that inebriates not with wine, but with spirit: in which there is no bitterness of grapes, no rage of dragons, no fury of asps, but a cup inebriating how splendid it is! Therefore David glories in this, because he has become like a vessel in freezing, not sensing the operation of sin.

15. And a sin is rightly compared to a gelicidium. For just as a gelicidium is useless for any purpose, for any operation; so guilt is of no benefit to anyone, to no operation: and therefore just as a gelicidium must be avoided, so that it does not harm and burn. Therefore, it is necessary for this vessel to be filled, not empty, filled with the Spirit, filled with justifications; so that I may confess my sins myself, so that I may restrain the lust of my flesh; for we must die to the world, in order to live for God. But if we live according to the flesh, death is certainly the wisdom of the flesh: we cannot live for God; because this fleshly wisdom is hostile to God, and secular life.

16. (Verse 84.) The fourth verse follows: How many are the days of your servant? When will you provide judgement for me against those who pursue me? It can be understood as follows: How many are the days of your servant, as if to say: How long is human life, how much time, how much space? Why is envy directed at such a short life; so that we may enjoy the peaceful course of this age? Why are so many snares set against us in such a short span of time by those who pursue us? Let judgement now be at hand, in which the punishment of the treacherous takes place, in which the persecutors are rewarded with worthy recompense for their impiety. And so, how long will they be able to insult us, how long will they be able to disturb us, those who seek to afflict us in various ways? There will be no late end; for the Prophet, estimating not years but days, subtracts the swiftness of this life, saying: How many are the days of your servant? And he spoke well of the days, so that he would not only pass the annual delays in prophetic vision, but also reveal the shining course of this life with the light of virtues. And rightfully secure, he says: When will you make judgment for me against those who persecute me? You, he says, will make judgment against those who persecute me, not give judgment against me as the one being persecuted; for indeed the wicked do not rise up in judgment. But give judgment for me, he says; so that when you reward innocence, you promote faith, you crown mercy, the impious persecutors may be judged by the rewards of prophetic merits.

17. It is not absurd either that, because the days are short and few of this life, the Lord does not delay His grace around His Prophet any longer, but He Himself executes judgement upon the persecutors. For here also is judgement upon the persecutors, since whoever does not believe in Christ is already judged. And this is the judgement that the Lord Jesus gave to His servants, saying: 'You shall have power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy' (Luke 10:19). And a true judgment, in which the enemy is tormented, as he himself confessed saying: Why ... have you come before the time to torment us? (Matthew VIII, 29) ?

Therefore, the Prophet founded on the stability of virtues demands this, that not a man, but he himself who claimed a place for himself in man, be subject to him. And so the Apostle thought that he deserved condemnation for the sin of man, to be subjected, of whom he says: God will crush Satan under your feet shortly (Rom. XVI, 20). Therefore, the persecutor seeks judgment to be passed on him, so that the adversary may be crushed by the footsteps of the prophetic faith, and the Prophet may crush him like dust: and being established in the warfare of his body, although the days of life are short; he may still obtain triumph over the adversary, so that the man, reformed to his former grace, whom he previously held bound by the chains of his sins, and was wearied by the heat of burning desire, may groan for freedom and feel his power. Therefore, the adversary is subject according to the Lord's judgment. For indeed, the Lord Jesus, coming into this world through the birth of the Virgin, subjected all contrary powers to our souls, so that they may be crushed by your faith, your word, your conduct, and your works. Therefore, if you do not crush the adversary, it is your fault, for you do not use the power that has been given to you. It is up to us, therefore, to either subject the adversary or conquer it. For if our actions displease, the adversary begins to be proud, but if we adhere to good works, let us pursue the virtues of chastity, justice, and self-control, trampling upon the serpent and the scorpion. For we trample him under the feet of chastity; we crush the scorpion, so that it cannot escape: we tread in the footsteps of continence, modesty, and justice. Therefore, we can have a perpetual triumph over our adversaries even in this short life.

19. (Verse 85.) Here follows the fifth verse: The unjust ones have told me of their exercises, but not according to your law, O Lord. It is well for judgment to be made against those who persecute, who have not only hindered the works of the just, but also attempted to overthrow faith with unnecessary narration. Indeed, he says that they have told him *naenias*, which means, unnecessary talk. These unnecessary narrators, like swallows, corrupt the sweetness of discussion with the continuation of their natural loquacity, as Aristotle's opinion is.

Therefore, the heretic speaks unnecessarily, who does not speak the truth, who does not speak according to the law. But he who is founded in the law, knows how to discern falsehood from truth; with spiritual erudition of doctrine, to separate heretical teachings from the dogmas of the Gospel. Therefore, in order that many may not be deceived, the sinner is commanded by the Lord to be silent: For God said to the sinner: Why do you recount my justices (Ps. XLIX, 17)? Therefore, let perfidy be silent, which does not know how to hold the path of truth, which does not keep the commandments of God. For why do sinners take the Gospel of truth into their mouths, in whose mouths there is no truth? But all the precepts of God are truth, and Christ is the truth. Therefore, Christ is not in the disputes of the deceitful, who says to the deceitful: Your mouth has abounded with wickedness, and your tongue has woven deceit ; for the tongue that desires to build a lie surely weaves deceit with what is asserted. But this is of such a kind, and it goes together with theft. There are indeed many thieves who do not steal and rob the word of God for their own benefit, but for deception; and they twist a certain inheritance of heavenly Scriptures in their thefts, collecting adulterated gains for themselves, seeking deceit more than truth. But these are the ones who mix water with wine, like the worst innkeepers, corrupting the word of God and uttering whatever they have expressed with a treacherous and as if drunken mouth; and therefore they speak contrary to the law. Where he well seeks refuge and reproaches them, knowing what he has received from the prescription of the law.

21. (Vers. 86.) Therefore, he rightly says in the following verse: All your precepts are truth; unjustly they persecuted me, help me. Just as a good soldier does not shun wars, nor does a fighter accustomed to serious battles fear the conflict; but faithfully and wisely he prays for divine assistance, and earnestly seeks faithful supports for his pious devotion. Therefore, he does not ask for persecutions to cease; but in persecutions he asks to be aided. For he knew that all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. So he prefers to endure persecutions so that he can live a godly life in Christ. And he mentioned not only one persecution, but many persecutions, and did not specify the names of the persecutors; for there are many persecutors, not only those we can see, but also those we cannot see. Spiritual wickedness persecutes, heretics persecute, Jews persecute, Gentiles persecute. Therefore, all those who want to live a pious life are under persecutors, because where there are many persecutors, there is no time for someone striving to live piously. And perhaps when we do not suffer persecutions, we are regarded as condemned, because we do not want to live piously in Christ. For certainly, since it is a definite statement that all those who want to live a pious life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecutions (II Tim. III, 12), it seems that the one who does not suffer persecutions is forsaken, because they do not have a pious intention in Christ; for persecutions indeed follow a devoted and faithful purpose. If there are no contests, I fear that one who desires to compete may be seen as lacking. All your precepts are truth, he said (John 15:20). What precepts other than these: If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you? David heard these precepts, even though he lived before the mystery of the Incarnation, in his spirit: and as a disciple of Christ, he did not withdraw himself from sufferings, but offered himself in contests. He knew that this was fruitful for his glory, safe for the protection of his salvation, so that the righteousness of the righteous could be confirmed through frequent exercises. For faith, when unpracticed, quickly weakens, and idleness is tried by frequent inconveniences. Crafty, the lurking enemy breaks through relaxed watchfulness: but external deceit, inured to war, prepares the man, and leads him to the glorious prize of victory. Therefore, peace is the fuel for the corruption of faith.

How beautifully the times of persecution advanced for us. His mind was fixed like a beggar on intimate feelings towards God: he clung to Him, and his praying soul felt no distracting thoughts; his prayer poured forth from the depths of his being, and his conversation with the Lord became intertwined; his daily meditation had already acquired contempt for danger, and he had embraced the practice of facing death. Those peaceful times, which had not been disturbed by war, test the exercises we have lost. Therefore, dangers and the leisure of peace. In peace, more persecutions began to occur. There was no flatterer at the time of persecution, who would attempt to deceive with cunning flattery. The mind was not free to be dissolved by the pleasure of the body, and to admit the passions that are accustomed to be aroused by favorable circumstances. Therefore, when the Apostles were beaten, imprisoned, they rejoiced because by those injuries they were gaining the reward of eternal glory, who were worthy to endure injuries for the sake of Christ (Acts 5:41). They did not care about wealth, they were not interested in power and honors, nor in achieving superiority, which often unsettles even the righteous; but rather, they believed that one should be considered superior if they were beaten with more lashes.

23. Therefore, David rightly sought opportunities to triumph, and did not fear the opportunity to compete for the education of devotion, as he knew that the persecutions of the wicked lead to the growth of virtue. For he did not say, 'Because I suffer persecutions, help me,' but rather, 'They

have unjustly persecuted me, help me.' For one can indeed suffer persecutions, but not unjustly; for there is also a just persecution, if we hate the obscene, if we are hostile to the unjust, if we want to oppress the wicked in order to prevent them from harming many, if we strip the greedy of the gains of their deceit, if we despise the insolence of the proud. But whoever suffers persecution for faith, for justice, for chastity, he says well: 'They have persecuted me unjustly, help me.'

24. (Verse 87.) The seventh verse follows: The wicked have consumed me on earth: but I have not forsaken your commandments. He did not seek in vain divine assistance, who knew that he had a strong battle to fight, many battles were prepared for him, sometimes against spiritual wickedness in high places, sometimes against the heat of his blood, and the countless allurements of this body, by the varied bonds of which, and by long and weary struggles, he would have fallen in shameful defeat, had he not held fast to the root of faith. Let us learn how to guard against the enemy we carry within ourselves, a formidable enemy that is the misuse of our own bodies. It is inflamed by wine, ignited by desire, kindled by the beauty of a passing woman, nourished by hope, consumed by despair, consumed by allurements, not evaporated by their effect, troubled by fear, broken by dread, weakened by luxury, dissolved by sensuality, afflicted by toil, fatigued by anxiety, worn out by passion. Are you surprised if, among so many opposing forces of passions, even a just person can hardly hold their ground, when we are unequal even in the individual battles? Who is not conquered by lust alone, who is not subdued by greed, who is not shaken by fear, who is not weakened by indulgence, who is not softened by debauchery, who is not undermined by drunkenness?

25. Therefore, like one conscious of carnal weakness and an explorer of hostile persecution, he says: They have slightly consumed me on earth. In this very earth, where Adam first fell and, through a shameful transgression, was cast down, he turned the footsteps of all future posterity (Gen. III, 17). In this earth, where Cain, sorrowing for the preference shown to his brother's gifts, was laid low by the ruin of envy. Lastly, the voice of his brother's blood cried out from the earth (Gen. IV, 10). In this land, Noah, the holy man whom the floods of the whole world approved as vigilant amidst such great storms and waves, where he, however, relaxed his cares with an idle body, was overcome by the sleep of drunkenness, incurred the reproach of paternal piety, teaching that dangerous idleness is secure for virtue. In this land, Lot, the imitator of his venerable parent, was not stained by the impurity of the luxuriant Sodomitic people, nor was he enveloped by the burning flame of Sodom; he did indeed escape the deserved punishment of ignorance, but he did not avoid the disgraceful act of incest. This man is burned by the flames of women, whom the sulphurous flame does not consume.

26. In this world, David also said that he was almost consumed. For he barely felt his feet and steps move, because he considered secular riches and the success of earthly prosperity to abound for sinners in place of blessedness. Because of this, he was also chastised; but the lashes of the Lord are remedies for salvation. For the Lord disciplines every son whom he receives (Heb. XII, 6). Therefore, David, turned towards the love of the Lord, and instructed by His precepts, not ignorant that things that are fleeting are bestowed upon the fleeting by a chance occurrence, and that it is not the abundance of riches, but the grace of virtues that weigh the merits of a worthy life, loved the commandments of God more than he abandoned them. By them alone, he was able to overcome the impending spiritual wickedness and the rising desires of this body in the weakness of such a fragile nature. Great indeed is the virtue that, established under such great persecutions

and almost suppressed, has not forgotten its protection, nor abandoned the commands of the Lord.

27. (Vers. 88.) Therefore, because he knew that only God had profited him, directing his prayers to the Lord, he says in the following verse: According to your mercy, give me life: and I will keep the testimonies of your mouth (Sup. v. 17). We have already mentioned this plea for his own enlivening; for he did not ask for what he possessed, but for what he desired, that is, to live forever, understanding that the blessedness of life cannot be found in this fluctuating and untrustworthy body of ours, whose weakness forsakes the soul's purpose. Therefore, the mercy of God is necessary, so that there may be a continuous and perpetual vivification in this body; so that the righteous may live for God every day and die to sin. For if guilt dies in us, there will be a living for God and a persevering in the keeping of heavenly precepts, which is certainly kept by the one who is vivified by the Lord.

28. Finally, he asks to be revived by the Lord beforehand, and afterwards promises to keep the testimonies of heaven; for this common life does not keep the heavenly commandment, but the one that is supported by the eternal office through the operation of spiritual grace. We can also understand it this way: because the Prophet had already acknowledged the things that were of the Law, he prays for the mercy of the Lord's coming, so that he may receive the precepts by which the Law is fulfilled; so that he not only knows that adultery is to be avoided, but also that the desire for adultery is to be turned away from. For the Lord Jesus, the Son of the Father, spoke in the Gospel, that whoever looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matt. V, 28). How much progress has been made in the Gospel on the pursuit of chastity, by which not only the disgrace of a shameful act, but also the reproach of degenerate pursuit, is removed!

29. But who are those of whom he says that they have almost accomplished him on earth, if not the persecutors? Concerning one of them the Lord Jesus says: Go, tell that fox (Luke XIII, 32), that is, about Herod. And elsewhere, when he noticed that he was dishonestly interrogated, he said: Foxes have dens, and birds of the air have nests where they can rest (Matthew VIII, 20); because they deceitfully dwell in certain hiding places of earthly passions. And Samson also tied together two foxes, to whose tails he tied torches, and he released them into the Allophylus fields (Judges 15:4-5); by this action he symbolized that wicked and deceitful people, especially heretics, have free rein to bark with their tongues, but their escape is hindered: or they may have contentious beginnings, but the end of their deceit is consumed by fire. And so he also released three hundred foxes, because those who desire to commend themselves by preaching the treacherous cross are not able to understand its mystery; instead, they attempt to burn the fruits of others with their false and feigned preaching. However, the true cross of the Lord does not consume the merits of others, but rather enriches them. And rightly is it written in the Song of Songs: Take for us the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vineyard hath flourished. (Cant. II, 15). By which it is shown that either the Lord Jesus or the Church commands the deceitful tricks of the fraudsters to be exterminated from their vineyards; lest they harm the young vines, for they cannot harm the mature vines. For a heretic can attempt to deceive the imperfect, but he cannot overthrow the perfect.

Sermon 12. Lamed.

The twelfth letter is Lamed, whose interpretation is heart, or as another interpretation has it, servant. Hence, it seems to admonish that these things should be understood wisely or diligently preserved. For this is immediately proclaimed by the first verse. Indeed, this Prophet asks that a clean heart be created for him in the heavens, as we read (Psalm 50:12). This wise son Solomon prayed to the Lord for a wise heart to be given to him. Therefore, he who has a clean heart, he who has a wise heart, understands the sequence of subordinate verses, and the strength (1 Kings 9:9). We find the heart alone or elsewhere, that is, either singular or that nothing of this world's allurements may impede it, and that the wisdom of the flesh may not disturb it. But he who has a heart keeps the commandments of God: just as you read about Mary, who kept all the words or deeds of the Lord and Savior in her heart (Luke 2:51).

2. Therefore, let us circumcise our hearts: let us seek nothing carnal, nothing base; let us consider all earthly things base. Let us establish nothing earthly, nothing worldly, nothing corporeal, nothing light and changeable in heavenly discourse. For the words of the Lord are pure words (Psalm XI, 7); so that through them the immaculate and modest purity of heavenly mysteries may shine forth in spiritual interpretation. Let us not mix earthly things with divine things in an adulterous manner, and let us not violate that inviolable sacrament of prophetic vision, or violate the estimation of our perennial oracle of nature. For this reason, he added: Silver tested by fire, purified by earth, proven sevenfold (Ibid.); so that like good coiners, we may examine the silver of prophetic discourse with the spirit, distinguishing the Lord's money and purifying it from all earthly stain by the infusion of the healing fountain, that we may appear to think worthy of Christ, who says: Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where rust and moth consume . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:19-20). Your treasure is faith, piety, and mercy: your treasure is Christ. Do not value him from earthly things, that is, from creatures; for the Lord is the creator of all things. Cursed, it says, is the one who has hope in man (Jerem. XVII, 5): but salvation came to me through man. However, see what the Old Scripture has said: He is man, and who will know him (Ibid., 9)? Therefore, that man, not by human, but by divine power, has forgiven all sins for me, God in the body, the Lord Jesus, reconciling the world to himself, whom he redeemed from guilt. Our precious treasure is understanding. If the understanding is earthly, if it is fragile, the heretical moth will consume it, and the rust of impiety will destroy it. Therefore, let us raise and elevate our senses, and let us not judge it impossible that this weakness of the human body may attain knowledge of celestial mysteries; for now the Lord Jesus, in whom the treasures of knowledge and wisdom were hidden, has descended to us by his divine mercy, in order to unlock what is closed, reveal what is hidden, and make known what is secret. Come therefore, Lord Jesus, open to us the door of this prophetic discourse; for it is closed to many, although it appears open at first sight.

5. (Vers. 89.) Forever, says the Lord, your word remains in heaven. You also see that it should remain in you, which also remains and perseveres in heaven. Therefore, keep the word of God, and keep it in your heart, and keep it so that you do not forget. Keep the law of the Lord, and meditate; lest the justifications of the Lord slip from your heart. The interpretation of the letters teaches you to be diligent. The Prophet teaches you in the following, saying: Unless your law had been my meditation, perhaps I would have perished in my humility. I will never forget your justifications (Inferno v. 92 and 93). Therefore, meditation on the law enables us to endure and tolerate times of tribulation, times when we are humiliated by adversities, so that we are neither

broken by excessive humiliation nor by dejection. Ultimately, the Lord does not want to break us with humility to the point of despair, but rather to the point of correction.

6. Therefore, even the prophet Jeremiah under this letter in Lamentations says: To humble underfoot all the prisoners of the earth, and to turn aside the judgment of man in the face of the Most High, to condemn man when he is judged, the Lord has not spoken (Lam. 3:34 and following). And further: Evil does not come forth from the mouth of the Most High (Ibid., 38). Therefore, the humility which is from the Lord is full of righteousness, full of equity; because evil does not come forth from the mouth of the Lord. Finally, the one who was humiliated by the Lord said: I have been humiliated, and he saved me (Psalm 115:6).

Therefore, just as it must be wisely considered when humility is the cause of testing from the Lord, and when the impression of humility must also be imposed by man, which nevertheless is usually endured with patience and magnanimity, so also it must be wisely considered what it means for the word of the Lord to remain forever in heaven, or as some codices have it, 'for eternity,' because the Greek $\epsilon\kappa\tau\alpha\alpha\iota\omega\alpha\nu$ has been translated diversely by different interpreters: some as 'forever,' others as 'for eternity.' Therefore, Lord, your word remains forever in heaven. And as you yourself said: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away (Matthew 24:35). The word remains forever, not beyond the ages and ages; for ages are of time. Therefore, heaven and earth, that is, the works of this world, will pass away, and the times will remain. Another, who is spiritual, and judges the words of the law: Your word, Lord, remains forever in heaven. For the eternity of the abiding word excludes the opinion of the passing word. But how does the word remain in heaven, if it passes through the heaven itself? And how can the highest parts stand, if the foundations give way? Or how can the inhabitant remain in his dwelling, unless the dwelling also endures? But perhaps this objection arises, because it is written: 'There will be a new heaven' (Isaiah 65:17). But even this is not conclusive; for that which passes cannot remain, nor can that which begins be said to have remained. Your understanding will be divided like a moth, if you think that a word is like the sky, either to begin or to pass away.

8. So if we want to understand the virtue of prophetic sense, let us first consider ethical things that are visible and perceptible; so that we may reveal from them what is intelligible. If the word of God remains in heaven, let us imitate the heaven where the word remains, the solemn order of heavenly statutes remains, and the frequent turns of the Lord's benefits persist with solemn gifts. Indeed, abundant fertility is poured into and nourished by these lands through heavenly rains, or warmth, or the nourishment of this air. The year passes through days, and months, and the seasons of autumn and winter, and spring and the serene times of summer. Take an image of your life from the sky. Even when you do not bear fruit, still sow seeds for fruit. There are seeds that come from the sky, and they are sown on the earth. There is also a heavenly harvest; hence the Prophet says: Sow for yourselves righteousness, harvest the fruit (Hos. X, 12). And even when your works do not bloom, still nourish your seeds, so that they do not luxuriate in idleness. What flourishes in the flower of speech is diminished and dull in fruit. Cook the fruits until they are fully ripe.

9. Let us also be imitators of the celestial element itself: the sun does not always burn fiercely, it is often covered by clouds, it shivers in the face of heavy rains, and it covers the earth with thrown snow. Therefore, let not lasting frivolity be in you too; let the sad times of old age follow, and let the

gray maturity of this field suppress the desires of your body. Often, sadness is more useful, as it usually has seriousness as its companion. Is there any disobedience in the sun itself? Does not the sun maintain its daily course? Does not the moon know its continuous eclipses, and does it not neglect the tasks of its ministry? Indeed, the year returns in the same cycles, and times are restored in the same state, and the same observances are reformed. The sun illuminates the day, preserving the appointed times. The moon shines with nocturnal splendors, and its light sparkles in darkness. The globe of shining stars glows, and they perform their solemn stationing, rotation, and changing. One law for all, to safeguard the established order, not to exceed the prescribed limits. The very change remains unchanging, and the transformation does not know how to reverse its order. One obedience for all, to maintain the harmony of the prescribed constitution with distinct tasks.

10. Therefore, the Word remains in heaven because Satan fell from heaven: he did not have a place in heaven, therefore he fell. Where did he fall if not to the earth? Therefore, here adultery, murder, and drunkenness began to abound. Excluded from there, he came to us more fiercely and exercises temptations harsher than usual as if angry. Therefore, the Word remains in heaven; because the devil was cast out from there: he does not remain on earth; because he came here entirely. And see whether this Word can remain in us, where the devil has spread so many snares, who, while he was in heaven, could not himself remain there with the Word. Finally, because he himself did not hold on to the Word, he fell from heaven.

11. Therefore, in heaven, the Word remains, and that which is governed and directed according to the disposition of the Word. But because heaven itself passes away, it did not say 'to remain in the ages', but 'to remain in the age': although it passes away, so that a new heaven and a new earth, a new testament, may come to be; so that we may be able to see the glory of the Lord face to face.

12. However, because there was also a place for vices in heaven (for surely the adversary would not have fallen from there unless he had been caught in wrongdoing, for even fools, like the moon, change, and the sky itself is covered in darkness), it seems that it is not said of an element, but of celestial Virtues and Powers. For there are holy Virtues in heaven, in which there is nothing slippery or earthly. There are also in the earth heavens, which declare the glory of God. Who are these heavens? Listen to the one speaking: \"Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, let us also bear the image of the heavenly one\" (I Cor. XV, 49). These, therefore, are the heavens, which, even though situated on earth, dare to say: \"But our citizenship is in heaven\" (Philip. III, 20). These are the heavens, in which faith, gravity, self-control, knowledge, and heavenly life exist. For just as someone is called earthly, who, having fallen from that heavenly grace, is bound by the chains of his own transgression and brought down to these earthly vices, so on the contrary, someone is called heavenly, who exercises a life of angelic integrity and controls his body with self-restraint, and also composes his mind with gentle tranquility, and dispenses his wealth to the poor with merciful generosity. Therefore, there is also heaven on Earth, in which celestial powers can exist. Heaven, to me, is a throne (Isaiah LXVI, 1), more of a spiritual state than a physical element. I consider it to be the heaven to which Christ's soul came, knocking on its door, and if it opens, he enters. And he does not enter alone, but also with the Father, as he himself says: 'We will come to him and make our home with him' (John XIV, 23).

13. Therefore, you see that the Word of God both challenges the idle and awakens the sleeping. For whoever comes and knocks at the door, always wants to enter. But it is within us that he does not always enter, he does not always remain. Open your door to the one who is coming, open your soul, expand the embrace of your mind; so that he may see the riches of simplicity, the treasures of peace, the sweetness of grace. Open your heart, meet the sun of eternal light, which illuminates every man. And indeed that true light shines on all: but if someone closes their windows, they deceive themselves of eternal light. Therefore, Christ is also excluded if you close the door of your mind: although he can enter, he does not want to burst in forcefully, he does not want to compel the unwilling. He came forth from a virgin's womb, shining upon the whole world, so that he could illuminate everyone. Those who desire the brightness of perpetual radiance are captivated, which no night can disturb. For only to this sun which we see daily does a dark night succeed; but the sun of justice never sets, because wickedness does not succeed wisdom.

14. Blessed therefore is he whose door Christ knocks. Our door is faith, which, if it is strong, can encompass the whole house. Through this door Christ enters. Hence the Church says in the Canticles: 'The voice of my brother knocks at the door' (Song of Solomon 5:2). Hear the one knocking, hear the one desiring to enter: Open to me, my sister, my bride, my dove, my perfect one, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night (ibid.). Consider when God the Word knocks at your door, especially when His head is filled with the night dew. For He deigns to visit those placed in tribulation and temptations, lest anyone weakly succumb, conquered by hardships. Therefore, His head is filled with dew or drops when His body labors. Thus, one must be watchful, lest when the Bridegroom comes, He departs excluded. For if you sleep and your heart does not stay awake, He departs before knocking; but if your heart stays awake, He knocks and seeks to open the door for Himself. Therefore, we have the gate of our souls; we also have gates of which it is said: Lift up, O gates, your lintels; be lifted up, you everlasting doors, and the King of glory will come in (Ps. 24:7). Therefore, there is heaven in those things in which there are everlasting gates. If you wish to raise up these gates of your faith, the King of glory will enter, carrying the triumph of His own passion. Justice also has gates. For we also read about these, with the Lord Jesus speaking through His prophet: Open to me the gates of righteousness (Ps. 118:19). And below the prophet David says: Praise, O Jerusalem, the Lord; praise your God, O Zion; for he has strengthened the bars of your gates (Ps. 147:12-13).

15. So is the soul that has a door, it is the one that has gates. To this door comes Christ and knocks, knocks and the gates. Open therefore to him: he wants to enter, he wants to find the vigilant Bride. Do not delay the good lover, he quickly departs: and you seem to have shut out the one knocking with the sleep of your body. You exclude the enemy, when you are lazy, when you are sluggish, when you are sleepy, Christ is excluded by these bars; even if you are chaste, even if you are sober, be careful not to be negligent. He who repels Christ in any way does him a great injury.

16. Sometimes, if you delay, she also sends her hand through the window, as the Bride says: My brother sent his hand through the lattice, and my womb was stirred within me. I arose to open for my brother. My hands dripped with myrrh; my fingers with flowing myrrh (Canticles 5:4-5). First, therefore, she sends her hand as if from a window, when God is considered to be in his works. Hence he says: If you do not believe me, believe the works (John 10:38). Then love increases, and the conceived seed grows within the innermost bowels. From there, our soul desires to draw

in the fullness of the Word, which dwells in the intelligible womb as a receptacle, with its seeds infused into it. For the womb of women is not disturbed unless they are burdened with pregnancy.

Therefore, the soul rises in order to open itself to the Word of God, but while it expands and opens itself, it mortifies the works of this world by receiving the word, just as he who says: We bear about the dying of the Lord Jesus in our body (II Cor. IV, 10). Therefore, while it opens, the Bridegroom passes by. For he always wants to be sought, more often to be found, and if he finds the door closed, he knocks, and if he is excluded for a while, he withdraws. But he quickly returns and knocks again, so that he may find the bride prepared afterwards. Indeed, it can be understood in this way: My brother passed (Cant. V, 6), as we read, meaning that he penetrated the innermost marrow of his beloved, and as it was said to Mary: And a sword will pierce through your own soul; so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed (Luke II, 35). Finally, the Bride added that her soul went out in his word, which happens when the soul wanders from the body and is present to God (Cant. V, 6).

18. Therefore, we have explained as best we could what it means: Your word, Lord, remains forever in heaven. However, we can also understand it in this way, that it remains more forever in heaven, where there are Angels and Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim; for although humans are holy, their emotions often change. Now we rejoice, then we mourn, we become angry, we groan. Even in repentance, the Apostle does not want us to be sufficiently crushed, lest we be overwhelmed by sadness (II Cor. II, 7). Where there is anger, where there is heavy sadness, the Word does not remain there. Indeed, only concerning the Lord Jesus was it said by John that he saw the Holy Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and remaining on him (Mark 1:10). For even the prophets did not always prophesy, but when the grace of prophesying was poured out on them by the Spirit. Indeed, not even David knew in advance what Nathan, sent by the Lord, would announce, and certainly the lesser prophet Nathan knew what the more excellent David did not know (2 Samuel 22:5 et seq.). And another prophet said: The Lord has hidden me (2 Kings 4:27). Hence, many understand that the Word of God remains in heaven, in the heavenly powers, where there are no changes of affections. However, some understand it to refer to the very Trinity, which alone is unchangeable; therefore, the Word remains in heaven, that is, in the Father, because the Word said: I am in the Father, and the Father is in me (John 14:10).

19. (Verse 90.) From generation to generation, your truth. There are many who are called gods, but they are not. Therefore, among the Gentiles, there is falsehood; in the Church, there is truth. However, the Synagogue had this truth first, which had the words of God; for truth is also in the Old Testament, which existed before in the Jewish people. For God is known in Judah (Psalm 75:1). But God is truth, therefore in Judah there is truth. Therefore, there was truth in the fathers, in Moses, and Joshua, in Samuel, and in David. Elijah, to Elisha, and in those seven thousand men who did not bow their knees to Baal. But because the later generations of the Jews deviated from the customs of their fathers, the truth departed from them and came to the Church. It departed from them when they said of the Lord Jesus: 'Take him away, take him away, crucify him' (John 19:15); for they handed over the truth and chose wickedness. Therefore, all other generations have become devoid of the truth, and the generations of all heretics do not hold the truth. Only the Church possesses the truth with pious affection; because the generation of the Jews, which possessed it before her, lost it. Therefore, the Jewish people are the first generation of faith, and therefore younger and weaker, who could not stand on the slippery ground of

adolescence; but the Christian people are the second generation of faith; therefore stronger, and more venerable with mature old age. That generation was of the Law, this of grace. Hence, it is said elsewhere: 'They shall announce Your truth from generation to generation' (Psalm 88:2).

20. The third argument follows: You established the earth, and it remains. By your arrangement, the days remain. How God founded the earth, Scripture teaches us, with the Prophet saying: God founded the earth with wisdom, and prepared the heavens in understanding (Prov. 3:19). Therefore, the earth is like a foundation, on which we stand; although it seems to exist in a half-circle of the sky, and the word of him who is outside proclaims it, and Scripture seems to indicate this, with Job saying: Hanging the earth upon nothing (Job 26:7). Therefore, it is included in the celestial sphere; and that is why the sun is not seen at night, because it is found by rotating in the lower part of the celestial sphere. But it is not the concern of holy men to describe the axis of the sky, the spaces of the elements, and the numbers in a philosophical manner (for what benefit does this have to salvation), because holy men always focus on spiritual matters and desire to either know or teach things that will be beneficial to eternal life.

21. Finally, Ecclesiastes beautifully opens up this place for us, saying that it is spiritual, not material: 'What is the abundance for a man in all his toil that he toils under the sun? One generation goes, and another generation comes, but the earth remains forever' (Ecclesiastes 1:3-4). That is, what is the spiritual abundance for a man laboring under the sun of righteousness? And he adds: One generation goes, and another generation comes. A generation goes because the rich become poor and hungry (Psalm 34:10). Those who once abounded in grace, later, however, began to lack because of their own faithlessness. Those who were once poor peoples of the nations are now satisfied and abound through faith in Christ, as it is written: The poor will eat and be satisfied (Ps. 22:26). For they have heard him say: Those who abound... in every word (1 Cor. 1:5), not in wealth of course, not in gold and silver, but in every word and knowledge, he says (ibid.). And elsewhere it is said: In the riches of simplicity (II Cor. VIII, 2). These riches are salutary; for worldly wealth cannot bring salvation. But whoever has an abundance of spiritual goods, his fruitful land stands firm in the world, well-founded on the root of virtues, either the soul producing good fruits, or the flesh unmovable by any desires leading to downfall.

22. The sun of righteousness traverses this land, about which it is written: And the sun rises, and sets, and draws it back to its place. It rises from there to the south, and moves in a circle to the north: the Spirit moves in circles as it moves, and the Spirit turns in its orbits (Eccl. I, 5 and 6). The sun rises for the righteous, but sets for the unjust: it rises for the tranquility of a peaceful mind, but sets for anger. Therefore it is said: Let not the sun go down upon your wrath (Ephes. IV, 26). Hence it can be inferred that from the same source it rises and sets, it buries the faults of those it illuminates with grace. For it is dead to sin, so that it may live to God; that is, we are dead to sin in it, so that we may live to God forever. Behold the prefigured mystery itself. And he says, the sun rises and sets, and draws back into its place. This is what the Lord says: When I am lifted up I will draw all things to myself (John 12:32). For he drew to himself the studies of all, so that he might either crucify our sins or provoke a good talent to righteousness. Notice how he attracts to himself: Father . . . I want those whomst I am, to be with me (John 17:24). And to the thief he said: Today you will be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43). Notice how he attracts all things. He was lifted up on the cross, and the whole world believed.

23. He himself, the rising sun, goes towards the south, and turns towards the north. Indeed, he is the rising sun, who says: My name is the East (Zach. VI, 12): who always rises for the pious, never sets. He himself, the rising sun, went towards the south for the people of the Hebrews, to a more gentle people, slippery with the heat of more fervent desire, rather than hardened by the enormity of impiety: or certainly to a more noble people, which was an elect race, claiming for itself the lineage of the patriarchs. But because he persisted in vices and did not correct his error, therefore the sun of justice turned to the nations, who were deprived of heavenly teachings and were considered savage and ignoble; for the northeast wind is a heavy wind, just like the people of the nations. But those who were heavy in wickedness before, now have become lighter than eagles in faith and piety, after he came who said: Bring them from the north (Isaiah 43:6). And in the Gospel: They will come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and will recline at the table with Abraham in the kingdom of God (Luke 13:29). And behold, the last shall be first, and the first last (Matthew 20:16). Also, the Psalmist says: Mount Zion, the sides of the north, the city of the great King (Psalm 48:2); that is, those who were on the north side became the people of the eternal King, who alone is the great Lord. But perhaps you would say: How is it in the Song of Songs: Arise, north wind, and come, south wind (Song of Solomon 4:16). For many understand it as if the north wind were being cast out and the south wind were being invited in. But if they understand it this way, the icy harshness of unbelief is driven out from the Church: Let our flight not be in winter or on the Sabbath (Matthew 24:20), and the gentle warmth of spring is invited in. Or certainly: Arise, north wind, that is, rise up, you who are sleeping, and rise up from the dead (Ephesians 5:14). O people of the nations, who have long slept, awaken at last, and Christ will shine upon you. Finally, all are invited to the Church, both the people of the Synagogue and the Gentiles; but first the Synagogue, because the first apostles believed from the Jews, and through them the people of the nations later gathered.

25. Therefore, see our sun coming from the south, then turning towards the north. Jerusalem, Jerusalem (indeed it comes to her, whom He also deigned to call; but this Jerusalem is earthly, which kills prophets, that is, the Synagogue of the Jews), how many times, He said, I wanted to gather your children, like a hen gathers her chicks, and you did not want! Look, your house will be left deserted to you (Matthew 23:37-38). Therefore, he turned to the nations: and by turning, the Spirit of God turned, and in its turning, become God in all things, and in everything. Therefore, it is called the holy heaven, because the brightness of the sun always illuminates it more closely. It has its own splendor, so that it does not feel the darkness of the night. Therefore, it is called the Church and heaven, and the world, because it has saints comparable to angels and archangels, and also many earthly ones. And it is said of the world, which is founded upon the seas and prepared over the rivers. Finally, as if the world itself, the Church says: Do not look at me, for I am dark; because the sun has not looked upon me (Song of Songs 1:5); because just as the congregation of the Gentiles bound by the winter frost and freezing has been long unworthy in the eyes of the Sun of Justice, before which it should be illuminated by the clear light of His countenance. Did it not appear to you as the harshness of the winter season, when God was known only in Judea? Now, however, the fullness of summer light shines forth, when all things and in all things Christ. Is not the earth of the Lord, and its fullness? And truly the world is in the Church, in which not only Jew or Greek, not barbarian or Scythian, not slave or free: but we are all one in Christ. The sun shines for all, the day illuminates all.

26. (Verse 91.) And so he says: By your arrangement, the day remains. For unless you understand it this way, how does the day remain, when after a short moment of the day follows the setting sun, and the succession of night occurs? But there are those for whom the day is always present, namely those for whom Christ is present, who says: Walk while you have the light (John 12:35). This is the day that Abraham saw, the day of the remission of sins (John 8:56), about which the law says: This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it (Psalm 118:24). Therefore there are saints, to whom the sun never sets: because the Lord is their light, as it is written: And the Lord shall be to them an everlasting light (Isaiah 60:19).

27. And he explained the cause of the lasting day, and added: By your arrangement the day lasts; for all things serve you. Therefore, it seems to signify that future time when there will be no more Night, and there will be no need for a lamp or the light of the sun; for the Lord will illuminate them (Rev. 22:5). He says who they are above, saying: And his servants shall serve him (Ibid., 3), that is, they will do the will of the Lord. Now not all of us serve: But when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God and the Father . . . then shall be subject to him all things (1 Corinthians 15:24, 28), who hath subjected all things to himself, acquiring the faith of all through the passion of the only begotten. Therefore, the submission of minds produces diligent service. So when all have believed in the Lord Jesus, then all things will serve God, that God may be all in all: but now not all are servants of God; because many are servants of sin. For whoever commits sin is the slave of sin (John 8:34). But the Lord does not want to have fellowship with the dominion of others. Therefore, the unchangeable day remains. Therefore, he could have said, it will remain. But prophets seem to have future things present in spirit.

28. (Verse 92.) The fourth verse follows: Unless your Law had been my meditation, then perhaps I would have perished in my humility. The Prophet shone like the day, for whom the meditation of the Law was; indeed, he received the oil of light from the Law. Finally, so that the light of day could not be extinguished by the body of death, he walked in the Law, therefore he walked in the light. Otherwise, he says, I would have perished in my humility. Humility is not always a virtue, but also affliction; that is, not always voluntary, but also taken on out of necessity, when we are tried by some affliction. Otherwise, no one perishes in humility, which is more accustomed to preserving. Therefore, when we are in a time of affliction, and we are shaken by adversity, let meditation be in the law; lest the storm of temptation afflicts us unprepared. Just as an athlete, unless he has first accustomed himself to the exercise of the wrestling ground, does not dare to enter the contest. Let us anoint, therefore, with the oil of our reading, the muscles of our mind. Let the use of exercise all day and night be for us in a certain wrestling ground of heavenly Scriptures, and may the nourishing food of spiritual meals confirm the strength of our souls; so that when the adversary begins to approach and sprinkles us with the dust of his temptation, we may stand fearless, strive not blindly, and not strike the air in vain. We strike better when beaten, if we offer the other cheek to the one who strikes us, if we do not seek revenge. But to him who said: 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay' (Rom. XII, 19), let us leave the matter of revenge entirely. We strike the airy powers if we know how to chastise ourselves. Paul chastised his own flesh, in order to strike his adversaries, and he brought his body into subjection, in order to rule over his enemies (I Cor. IX, 27). Therefore, let us exercise with tireless use of meditation, let us exercise before the contest, so that we may always be prepared for the competition: and when the more frequent blows of the opponent come, now with poverty, now with theft, now with bereavement, now with bodily illness,

now with sadness of spirit, now with the terror of death, and with the bitterness of punishments; let each one of us, who is able to endure and suffer, say: Unless your law had been my meditation, perhaps I would have perished in my humility.

29. How great were the heaps they gathered together, so that the holy Job would perish in that affliction? But because he was instructed in the customs of the patriarchs, and formed by the teachings of celestial oracles and the institution of natural law, therefore he could not perish in such great temptations. Finally, when he had suddenly lost such vast resources, his most beloved children, as if he were someone whose daily meditation was in the divine law, he said: Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away; as it pleased the Lord, so it has been done; blessed be the name of the Lord (Job. I, 21). Even when his whole body was covered in sores, and he was being tempted by his wife's words, who suggested that he curse God just like Adam fell, he replied: 'You speak as one of the foolish women speaks' (Job. II, 10). If he had wanted to listen to her as if she were wise, he would not have been wise himself. He experienced also the various conversations of friends (Job 19:3), when, firm in faith and immovable in patience, he had earned the rewards from the Lord; did he not say: Unless your law had been my meditation, then perhaps I would have perished in my humility?

How gratefully does he say this today, who endured many whippings in martyrdom, the rack and hoof, lead, burning plates, and the sword! He could have perished if he had not contemplated the Law and believed in more severe punishments to come.

31. How much suffering did holy Joseph endure, how bitter, how harsh! First, he suffered the hatred of his brothers (Gen. XXXVII, 28), the trials of a wretched slavery, deprived of his parents, banished from his homeland, a slave in the service of merchants, and a despicable servant in Egypt. What greater temptation could there be for a boy of noble lineage than to be cast down from such a splendid family and serve among the Egyptians? There is solace in servitude, even in serving the righteous. The injury of servitude is alleviated by the equality of the master. Therefore, being reduced in such a manner, he considered it sufficiently pleasing if his obedience to the royal minister was approved. But even this was not sufficient for the bitterness of the temptation: his adversary returns to his own tricks, and with all deceitfulness, he stirs up his well-known powers; so that through a woman, he might weave snares for his innocent conscience. He aroused in him the stimuli of lust through the wife of his master, who demanded adulterous relations from the slave; so that if he were to agree, he would fulfill a crime: if he were to refuse, he would fall into offense, and the connection of calumny would not go unpunished. Finally, he was thrown into prison (Ibid., 20), and though innocent, he was regarded among the guilty and was subjected to even greater pressure by the one to whom he had shown his trust amidst dangers. But because insults could not break the man, the temptation changed and became much harsher in appearance than previous ones. For it was the more prosperous times that tripped up many whom bitter torments had not broken. By the command of the king, he was brought forth from prison, his dream was interpreted, and he was chosen to be superior in honor to all the Egyptians as second to the king, to distribute food to the hungry people (Gen. XLI, 14, 8 et seq.). His brothers reproached him, who had sold him out of a lack of brotherly love for the injury of servitude: so that he, being tempted by both insult and the pain of desired salvation, might cast off the affection of brotherhood. But the righteous man forgot the insult, he multiplied grace; and moreover, he

desired to show himself more of a brother in that he himself had not experienced brothers. In the end, he received his brothers with this duty, and sought his father through a pious deception. What else could the holy Joseph say better than this to the Lord: Unless your law had been my meditation, then perhaps I would have perished in my humility?

It is reported that a certain prophet (and many say it was Isaiah, when he was imprisoned) while he was being pressed by the weight of impending destruction, said to the devil: 'Say that you have not spoken these things from the Lord, and I will change the minds and affections of all towards you; so that those who are angry at your offense may grant you pardon.' But he judged it more preferable to suffer punishment for the sake of truth than to receive favor for flattery. And he certainly would not have done this unless he had been trained by meditation on the Law.

Let daily reading, then, be to us for exercise, so that what we read, we may meditate on and imitate. In this, we will train in the arena of virtue; so that when trials arise, they may not find us untrained, nor as inexperienced in spiritual nourishment, nor weakened by the fasting of reading, but rather find a time of trial. And if it can find our souls nourished with athletic feasts, if the Gospel juice is within us, if the maturity of our minds is strengthened by apostolic food, if a tenacious memory, prepared by frequent meditation, can bring forth examples of heavenly teachings at the appropriate time, no battle of temptations will be able to disturb us.

34. (Verse 93.) The fifth verse follows: I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life. According to the Apostle, the Law is a tutor for children until we come to a more mature age of perfect faith (Galatians 3:24). In the Law, there are commandments, precepts, testimonies, and righteousness. Therefore, we are given life in the Law. This is why the Apostle says: The Law is not of faith, but the one who does it shall live by it (Ibid., 12). But since he also said above, 'For no one is justified by the law' (Romans 3:20), you surely understand that justification by the law is a species and image, not the truth. So, no one is justified according to the truth in the law, but is justified according to the species. Therefore, the holy Prophet, who still lived under the justifications of the law but saw the splendor of the Gospel, as if mindful of the old discipline, preserved grace for the law as a useful pedagogue. Consider someone who surpasses his peers in wealth and honors, and who holds his teacher in high esteem, recognizing that he has been shaped by his guidance, so that he can govern his own life more maturely.

Since indeed the law itself tells us that we should by no means be ungrateful if these things at some point in time have been of benefit to us (Exod. XII, 28). For just as we have in the Old Testament, the Passover was celebrated in the borders of Egypt, when our fathers, still under the rule of Pharaoh, lamented the injustice of their miserable servitude: and afterwards, having been liberated, they celebrated the Passover again in the land of promise (Josh. V, 10): the former for a reminder, the latter for a commemoration. Therefore, if anyone were to ask a Hebrew person how the Passover was celebrated in Egypt, they would respond: Because we were still bound by the chains of slavery to Pharaoh, that lamb liberated the people of our forefathers, that lamb called us to freedom, that lamb made the depths of the sea solid; so that we could pass through Egypt. Therefore, whenever we celebrate the Passover, we must remember the old slavery and the new freedom: what we were, and what we have received. For no one can fully understand what they have received, unless they remember what came before. So let us not forget that the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, the sacrifice of the world, frees us from the heavy chains of sins, by which that

most wicked Pharaoh held us bound not only as slaves of Egypt but of this age. Let us not forget forever; so that when we come to that true promised land, where the kingdom of the living is, we may remember how much cruel harm Pharaoh has inflicted upon us here, how many sufferings we have endured in this age, from which evils we have finally been rescued; and let us give thanks to the Lord Jesus who has made the disturber of all to be a captive.

37. (Verse 94.) The sixth verse follows: I am yours, save me, O Lord; for I have sought your commandments. The voice is easy and common, but it belongs to few. For it is rare enough for someone to be able to say to God: I am yours. He says this who clings to God with all his senses, who knows no other way of thinking. He uses this voice who can say: Show us the Father, and it is enough for us (John 14:8). Does he use this voice out of greed for money, honor, power? For many, knowing God is not enough, and indeed, for many more. Such great peoples, such great nations, such great riches consider poverty to serve the Lord: and He who is above all, is meager and narrow to them: it is not enough for them to have the Son of God, in whom all things are. Finally, that rich man in the Gospel, to whom it was said: If you want to be perfect, sell everything you have and give to the poor (Matthew 19:21), judged that God was not enough for him. Finally, he was saddened, as if he were being commanded to leave more behind: what was less to choose. Therefore, he says: I am yours, who can say: Behold, we have left everything and followed you.

Therefore, this is the voice of the apostles, although not of all the apostles. For even Judas was an apostle, and he reclined at the dinner with Christ among the apostles. He himself said: I am yours, but with his voice, not his heart. Satan entered into him, and he began to say: He is not yours, Jesus, but mine. In the end, he thinks about what is his; what is his, he turns over in his heart: he feasts with you, and he feeds with me: he receives bread from you, and money from me: he drinks with you, and sells your blood to me: he is your apostle, and mine is the hired hand.

39. The secular person cannot say: I am yours; for they have many masters. Lust comes and says: You are mine; because you desire those things that belong to the body: in the love of that young girl, you sold yourself to me; in the embrace of that prostitute, I counted you as my price. Greed comes and says: The silver and gold you have is the price of your servitude: the possession you hold is the purchase of your rights, the sale of your freedom. Luxury comes and says: You are mine; a feast of one day is the price of your life: the expense of banquets, the bidding of your head, the sum of your contract, and worse, you were purchased flesh, cheaper than your own food; your one-day table is more precious than your entire lifetime. I bought you among the cups, I acquired you among the feasts. Ambition comes and tells you: You are truly mine. Don't you know that I made you rule over others so that you would serve me? Do you not know that I have given you authority so that I may subject you to my authority? Do you not realize that the Lord Savior himself said to be spoken by the prince of this world when he showed him all the kingdoms of the world: All these I will give you, if you fall down and worship me (Matthew 4:9). Therefore, he himself is subjected, who wants to have others subjected. All vices come and each one says: You are mine. How great they think they are, when they are such a lowly servant!

40. Therefore, how can you, who are of this kind, say to Christ: I am yours? He will answer you: Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21). Not everyone who says to me, 'I am yours,' is mine. You are truly mine if your conscience does not

rebuke your voice, if your mind or actions do not refute your words. I do not deny that he is mine, who does not deny himself, or certainly if he denies himself for my sake. I do not want to have a servant serving multiple masters. For how can he be mine if he says to me in word: I am yours, but denies it in deeds and aligns himself with the devil and binds himself to him? He is not mine whom desire inflames; for chastity is mine. He is not mine whom the desire to plunder the weak torments; for integrity is mine. He is not mine whom a fickle anger disturbs; for tranquility is mine. He is not mine who, drunken with the excess of wine, is intoxicated with the ambition of worldly glory, and cannot maintain a sober moderation in the face of danger. I am peace, I do not know how to fight. What do I have to do with him whom the devil possesses, and says, 'He is mine'; for he has twisted his necks to me, I find more in him my own: he claims your name for himself, and my gift?

Therefore, he is not Christ's unless he is free from sin. He is not Christ's unless he can always show himself as Christ's servant. For if someone is changeable, like I am when I am changed by sorrow or anger, then anger arises and says: He is mine. Before the hour, he was mine; I hope that he will be mine again. Sadness comes, and says: He is mine. Before the hour, it was in my possession, in my right. He could not lift his spirit above sorrow, nor lift his eyes. And if something sad happens, it will immediately return to me. So then, who is God's but the one who can say: I am aware of nothing against myself (1 Corinthians 4:4)? Therefore, the Apostle Paul said this, because he was not held accountable by anyone else. But now I am of my God, now of sorrow, now of anger, now of idle words; and therefore the one who has many lords cannot say to one: Lord Jesus, I am yours. Hence, I think Paul also said about such lords: For even if there are those who are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth. . . . yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him (I Cor. VIII, 5 and 6). Therefore, the Apostle Paul belonged entirely to the Word; therefore, he said: For you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me (II Cor. XIII, 3). Therefore, he said: I belong to Christ; and the Lord replied to him: You belong to Me. He who truly says: I belong to You, hears from the Lord: You belong to Me. Finally, the Lord said to Ananias, when He sent him to heal Paul: Go, for he is a chosen vessel for me. And because he persevered in being of Christ, as if the struggle were completed, he deserved to find the crown of righteousness.

42. Therefore, the prophet David said rightly: I am yours, who always remained in the Lord. And in what way did he say: I am yours, he added: I have searched for your justifications, that is, I have sought nothing else, but I have desired only what is yours. Others seek precious jewels, but I seek only your justifications as certain garlands of righteousness. Others join house to house, villa to villa, as if they alone could dwell in this land and claim the common element, others claim possession of the air itself: for me, in your justifications is the entire inheritance. I don't know how to possess anything except what is of your jurisdiction. In your words, the spiritual care of silver has shone upon me. God is my portion. I am yours; for my portion of inheritance is not in gold, not in silver, but in Christ Jesus.

43. (Verse 95.) The seventh verse follows: Sinners awaited me to destroy me; I understood your testimonies. This statement can apply to martyrdom, in which a holy person, having already left the judgment of the persecutor, may say: Sinners awaited me to destroy me, that is, they employed all kinds of punishments, all arts of persuasion, but they were unable to divert me from my purpose. Faith conquered the allurements of this life and the torments of the body. Sinners

expected that they would triumph over me, but thanks be to Christ who has allowed me to triumph over persecutors. Return, O defeated ones, who hoped to be victorious; return, O cast down ones, who worshipped the proud. Where is, O death, your victory? Where is, O death, your sting? (1 Corinthians 15:53) It is no longer yours, but ours, the victory; for in you we conquer, in whom we were previously conquered. Therefore, the martyr says well: Sinners expected that they would destroy me. After death, even though the body is still, he sees the choirs of those who are leading the way, the joys of angels. For those who rejoice over the conversion of one sinner, how much more in the suffering of the righteous! He sees glory and says: The righteous awaited me to lead me. He sees the Lord Jesus and says: Christ awaited me to crown me.

44. Another person who wants to understand: Many, he says, have tried to persuade and extort me to commit sins; one for adultery, another for killing a man, another for oppressing a widow or an orphan, another for something else: and they thought that I could be caught in their nets. They waited for me to be destroyed by the contagion of sin; but I did not turn my mind away from the study of divine knowledge by the allurements of sin, nor did I stray from my intention, O Lord, from the series of Your commandments: but I understood Your testimonies. For if I had not understood, those sinners would certainly have destroyed me. What I understood, I followed both in thought and in action: for understanding is not bare, but is also attested by deeds. Finally, blessed is he who understands the needy and the poor. (Psalm 41:1). He truly understands the poor, who gives to the poor. For what good is it to have pity on the needy, unless you also provide them with sustenance?

45. (Verse 96.) The eighth verse follows: I have seen the end of all perfection; your command is exceeding broad. We cannot express the full force of the Greek language in all things; the power and pomp of language is usually greater in Greek. Τέλος is said in Greek, which we translate as both 'end' and 'consummation'; but τέλος itself is the end of that consummation, just as Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom. X, IV). You have written: Behold, I am with you even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20). The end of the age, therefore, is the end of the world; and Christ is the end of all things. There are many consummations. There is a consummation when there is a resurrection unto salvation. The completed work is also called a perfect work. Complete wickedness is called consummated, that is, full, to which nothing is lacking for the pursuit and art of harming. There is a consummation of man, and many consummations, until he reaches perfection.

46. Therefore, we read both of the consummation of the age and of the end. Concerning the consummation of the age, we have set forth an example above, which is followed by the resurrection: For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive (I Cor. XV, 22). After the resurrection comes the consummation: Each in his own order; Christ the firstfruits, then those who are Christ's, who have believed in his coming; then the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when he has abolished every principality and power (Ibid., 23 and 24). Therefore, the end follows the consummation of the age according to the Apostle. Hence, it is inferred that the end follows every consummation.

47. The world is placed in the evil, as John said (1 John 5:19): therefore the world is in evil, a world full of sin. The world had perfected its malice, just as Saul had perfected his, whose son Jonathan, seeing his malice perfected in the prophet David, told him to avoid and flee (1 Samuel 20:38).

Therefore, this is the consummation of evil, the consummation of sins. The Lamb of God has come, who has taken away the sin of the world, who is Christ Jesus, the end of the Law, the beginning and the end, and the remission of sins. The Prophet saw the end of this consummation in the spirit, which would abolish the error of the age: he saw that by his blood, the sins of all would be cleansed. Therefore, he rightly said: I have seen the end of all consummation; that is to say, I have seen the one who forgives consummated adultery, I have seen the one who forgives consummated luxury and debauchery, the one who forgives consummated cruelty and savagery, and ultimately, the one who forgives all wickedness and grants forgiveness through his cross.

48. There is also consummate virtue, consummate wisdom, consummate justice, but it has an end. The end of all virtues is Christ, who is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom. X, 4). Do you see that faith is the end? Well then, he says: I have seen the end of every perfection.

49. Now that we have recognized the end of consummation, let us acknowledge what it is: Your command is broad and expansive (Matthew VII, 14). We read that the gate through which those who attain the fruit of eternal life enter is narrow. True virtue and the enduring of trials are rare. There are many who pursue the spacious path of this world, who say: The way that leads to the Lord is narrow and constricting for us, we are wearied by it, let us abandon it. How, therefore, does the Prophet say that the commandment of God is broad and very broad? Because in narrow paths a broad commandment is necessary. Finally, the Prophet himself says: In my distress, you have enlarged me (Psalm 4:2). And again: In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he heard me in a broad place (Psalm 118:5).

50. This breadth of heavenly commands enlarged the heart of the Prophet and the Apostles. Finally, he himself said: Our mouth is open to you, O Corinthians, our heart is enlarged (2 Cor. 6:11). By dispensing heavenly commands, he had enlarged his heart, and what the treachery of persecution had previously constricted, the grace of Christ had expanded. And by what reason was the command broad? So that we may not be constrained by the narrowness of the commands. Hence he says: Do not be constricted in us (ibid., 12). If this is the case for Paul, how much more so for Christ, who opened what was closed? Therefore, He says: I do not want my people to be restricted in me. In the narrow path of virtues, the breadth of my commandment must be a source of comfort for those who walk it; so that no one may fail or be worn down.

51. Therefore, let us walk in the commandment of God, for it is wide enough. For the commandment of wisdom is wide, which is sung at the end, but acts confidently in the streets; for πλατεία is the Greek word, which in Latin is called latitudo. Let us therefore widen our heart, so that we may receive the power of the Apostolic sentence, which says: Accept us (II Cor. VII, 2). Let us therefore receive his words into our heart: let us put on the bowels of mercy, kindness, humility, patience. O man, how broad you are, if you expand the bosom of your mind to the greatness of celestial precepts! How broad is the commandment of charity! Love, he says, your enemies (Matt. V, 44). He certainly includes everyone in the affection of charity, who does not exclude enemies. For who seems to be excluded, when an enemy is received? Hence the Apostle says, If possible . . . having peace with all men (Rom. I, 18). This cannot be said to the Jews, not to the Gentiles, that they may have peace with everyone. They hardly love their own people: it is not permitted to not love even the enemies of a Christian. When I say Christian, I mean perfect; for in Christ is the

fullness of divinity, whose name you usurp. Why do you reject the interpretation and perfection of the word when you bear the name? Hear the broad commandment: Bless those who persecute you and do not curse (Ibid., 14). The same one who says that it is a broad commandment, proved it before saying: They indeed reviled, but I was praying (Psalm 108:4). What were you praying, David, tell us yourself. But you said; for I read saying: They will curse, and you will bless (Ibid., 28).

Sermon 13. Mem.

1. The thirteenth letter signifies in one interpreter the internal organs, and in another the same organs themselves: and both interpretations do not disagree with the text. Indeed, immediately the first line expresses the love of the internal organs, which certainly originates from the innermost parts, and is intertwined with the warmth of the bones.

2. Finally, in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, the text of this letter contains the following: 'He sent fire from on high in my bones' (Lam. I, 12). Therefore, God is good who sends us something with which we, being diligent, may find merit in His sight. Let Him teach us whom He sends the fire: 'I came to send fire upon the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?' (Luke XII, 49). The good fire that the Savior desires to ignite in all is especially Himself, God, as we read: 'For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire' (Deut. IV, 24), who consumes our sins and pours the desire for divine knowledge into the depths of our hearts, and inflames our souls when we read the divine series of Scriptures; if perchance we grasp some hidden meaning of the prophetic reading with spiritual understanding. Cleophas said that his heart was burning with this fire when he and his companion, Christ, opened the Scriptures. The Lord spoke about this fire in the book of Ezekiel: Behold, I will go to Jerusalem and blow my wrathful fire upon you, so that you may melt away like lead, iron, and other material things. In these commonly used words, we see profound mysteries. All of this is spiritual. Let us pray that the word of God may come, enter the Church, and become a consuming fire, to burn up the hay and straw, and everything that is worldly: the heavy lead of iniquity, which is found in many, may melt in the divine fire, and the iron hardness of sin may be softened by the heavenly flame; let the vessels of gold and silver be refined, so that every sense of the wise, every word of the prudent, having been cooked by the heat of burning passions, may begin to be more precious. The good fire of charity, by which the entire body of the Church grows in mutual grace. The good fire of love, by which each saint is ignited with reverence for their author. But the one who loves God, loves not casually: but loves His law, keeps His commandments, justifies his heart, not with the sounding proclamation of words, but with the diligent imitation of actions. May God therefore teach us how His saints are loved.

3. (Verse 97.) Thus, the Prophet adds: How I have loved your commandment, O Lord; my whole day is spent in meditation. This is the voice of someone diligent in studying the Law, which instructs the perfection of man, as this whole psalm teaches. And since he knows that the greatest commandment in the Law is to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul, he also wants those whom he seeks to instruct to be perfect by imitating him, saying: How I have loved your commandment, O Lord. By this very affection, charity grows, because it calls upon the witness itself to whom the duty of love is entrusted; it testifies not only to the appearance but to the fullness of charity in such an agreement. Peter used this: You know, he says, Lord, that I love you (John 21:15). But whoever loves the Lord, loves his law, just as Mary, loving her Son, treasured all

his words in her heart with a motherly affection (Luke 2:51). I have loved you, I have done your will, it is written (Isaiah 48:14). Therefore, Christ entrusted Peter to feed his flock (John 21:18) and to do the will of the Lord, because he recognized his love. For one who loves, does what is commanded out of will, while one who fears does so out of necessity. Thus, the Lord approves the voluntary actions of his servants rather than coerced ones. Therefore, he makes free beings out of servants, so that we may offer gifts of our wills rather than obedience out of necessity.

4. A Marcionite cannot say, 'How I have loved your law,' who does not accept the law. A Jew cannot say, who is ignorant of the spiritual law: and meditates on the letter of the law without understanding its meaning. Only a Christian says, who has advanced in the knowledge of the law, who does not fear the punishment of the law with a timid heart: but with fearless affection, he investigates the divine mysteries of the true Hebrew, the true Sabbath, the true remission. Therefore, truly does he love, who, without sadness, without fear, willingly preserves precepts rather than being compelled.

5. (Verse 98.) Another verse: You have made me understand your commandments, because you are. It quickly proved the effect of prolonged meditation when he understood the Lord's command over his enemies. But who are the enemies of the Prophet, who should either embrace the men of his own people with lawful love, or invite foreigners to the grace of God through evangelization? Wild animals love their fellow beings of the same nature: how could the Prophet reject love that is in accordance with his own nature? Therefore, it is necessary to have some just cause, by which those whom it signifies may appear to be enemies by law. We can investigate this matter, if we remember that the same person said elsewhere: 'I was being consumed with anger against your enemies, and I hated them with a just hatred' (Psalm 138:21-22). Therefore, by the authority of the Gospel, he says that these are his enemies, who are enemies of God. For if someone who does not forsake their parents for the sake of God's name is not worthy of God, how much more will someone who loves his enemies not be acceptable to God? So who are his enemies? If they are gentiles, how does he predict by the prophetic spirit who would believe? Finally, he exhorts them to bless the Lord themselves, as the Psalm says, 'Let the peoples praise you, O God' (Psalm 66:4). And what great praise is it to understand those who, in venerating metals and stones, have drawn a similar rigidity of stupor?

Therefore, who are the enemies, if not heretics? For they are the attackers of faith, enemies of truth. Who, if not the Jews? For they are even more serious enemies, who have become enemies from friends. He understands about them, who understands that the Law is spiritual. So what good is the Law if you ignore the end of the Law, if you do not know the mystery, if you do not know the sacraments? For the Jews, a lamb is slaughtered from the flock for the Passover feast: for us, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Virgin, is sacrificed for the redemption of the world. What do the Jews gain by smearing the blood of the lamb on their homes and doorposts? Nothing, of course, because wood or stone cannot be of any help to them. To us, every mystery is beneficial, since we believe in detesting spiritual grace; we may stain our dwellings with the blood of a sacrificial animal and tinge our mouths with its blood, but we consecrate our bodies with the sacrament of the Lord's Cross and sanctify our speech with the confession of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. X, 10). What profit is it to the Hebrews that they pierce the ear of their slave with an awl, and circumcise the foreskin of their own body? They do not understand

thoroughly what the divine Law discerns. These are signs, not truth. But he understands, who purifies his heart through spiritual circumcision; in order to cleanse all the filth of bodily impurity. He understands, who surpasses the awl and the ear with the vigor of the mind, and raises that soul which he has pierced with the sword to reveal the hidden depths of the heart, to the reward of eternal freedom: or, by diligently serving in examining words, he sanctifies with spiritual mystery whatever word of virtue he has received with his ear. The Jew used to make unleavened bread for himself every year and does not know that he himself is the leaven of malice. But he who understands what it is to purge the old leaven so that it does not corrupt the whole mass; he purges the old man with his actions, so that a new sprinkling of truth may occur. These things were said to the Jew, and the Christian heard them; because while he pierced his ear with an awl, he could not hear: carrying a wounded ear, he stained not the ear of the Law, but the awl of his own foolishness with blood. By listening to the things that are revealed spiritually, he pierced his ear with iron; for he preferred to believe in iron rather than in the Word. Therefore, he serves, therefore he does not deserve to be free, therefore the grace of the completed time does not support him; because he did not receive the fullness of time, in which the Son of God was sent for salvation, and came for redemption, born under the Law, born of a Virgin, conqueror of death, giver of resurrection. Therefore, the wound remains in him for whom Christ did not rise. The wound that cannot be healed, unless by chance it leaves the splinter, and a sword is taken up which, for the name of Christ, does not reject, or by which it distinguishes the earthly from the spiritual, shadow from truth: let it take up the word of God, a doubly sharp sword, and from that divine mouth let it be taught to recognize the commandment of the Lord, the prescription of the Law, which does not have the observance of a temporal celebration, but infuses salutary and everlasting remedies with the juice of spiritual grace.

Therefore, throughout the entire day, meditate on the Law: your study should not be superficial. If you wish to buy land, if you want to purchase a house, act with prudence, carefully consider the laws, and do not trust yourself to be infallible. But now, you yourself need to be corrected: your price is being discussed, so consider what you are, what name you have, what you acquire for yourself, not land, not money, not jewelry: but Christ Jesus, to whom no prices, no ornaments can be compared. Consult Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, John, and Jesus, the great counselor and Son of God; in order to acquire the Father. You must engage with them, confer with them throughout the day; just as David meditated, and this was his sole meditation. His mind was not drawn to worldly pleasures, nor did he burn with the desire to amass wealth: he did not eagerly pursue expanding boundaries or exclude neighboring anxieties in the pursuit of mastering meditation; whatever time the day could offer, he claimed all of it for himself in the sole meditation on the Law.

8. But even this is not enough for the diligent person who wishes to attain the grace of blessedness. For the blessed person meditates day and night on the Law. The day becomes narrower through the meditation on doctrine. It is not a long day in time, but it is as long as the meditator in the Law. Therefore, be careful not to interpret it as meaning that for the one who meditates on the Law, every day is always present, and the light is without defect, with no darkness of night intervening. Otherwise, how would it demonstrate a more negligent person in the process of his work, whom the Prophet wished to be more diligent in the very beginnings of his work? Therefore, be a meditator of the Law and a preacher of the Gospel.

9. And perhaps those who do not receive the New Testament, read at night, and therefore did not know nor understand. Hence the Savior, so that we would not read in darkness, warns saying one must walk in the day, because he who walks in the day does not stumble (John XI, 9 and 10); for he sees the grace of the light. But whoever walks in darkness, encounters the stumbling block.

10. (Verse 99.) It follows: Above all those who teach me I understood, because your testimonies are my meditation. The scribes of the Jews profess doctrine; because they deserved to have the Law and the prophets before them. But they profess to teach, but do not teach. However, it is fitting for the people who believed from the Gentiles to say: Above all those who teach me I understood, because they did not understand. The Jew responds: Where did you get understanding? It is written: Ask your father and he will tell you: the elders, and they will declare to you (Deut. 32:7). I am your Father, ask me. But even if I ask, you will not answer me, said Jesus (Luke 22:68): and from him they cannot answer, and from him I understand above them who I did not understand; because I have learned testimonies that he does not know. I have learned: Whoever follows me... let him take up his cross (Matthew 16:24). I have learned: Love your enemies (Matt. 5:44). And for this reason, Paul wishes to be cursed for the sake of his kinsmen, enemies in terms of their faith (Rom. 9:3).

11. It seemed inappropriate for the prophet to use such humility; because he presumed to say that he understood more than all the teachers, when he received the Law of Moses from the Lord and handed down its institutions to his people (Exodus 19:7), Aaron, after completing all the rituals of sacrifices, taught the priestly discipline (Exodus 28:1, 2 et seq.), Joshua showed how circumcision could be observed (Joshua 5:2, 3 et seq.), and Samuel revealed the sacraments of prophetic anointing as well as kingship (1 Samuel 16:13). It would seem, I say, an incongruous presumption, unless he had stated the previous points, by which he rightly proved that he understood more than the teachers. He who was being taught ought to have assumed this confidence from the Lord: and the commandment that he was being taught was the Lord's, and it was the Lord himself who was teaching.

Therefore, he shows that humans cannot teach what is divine: and so those who dare to teach do not know; but the disciple who is taught recognizes. In addition to the gift of knowledge that he had received from the Holy Spirit, there is also a pleasant moral lesson, that there are many teachers who claim to teach what they do not understand, and there are many disciples who achieve through their own effort what they have not learned from their teachers. Finally, someone before us said that there is a difference between teachers and scholars; perhaps thinking this because scholars are chosen for this role by the judgment of others, while teachers take on this role by their own claim. But it is necessary for those scholars to also yield to the one who has been imbued with the heavenly doctrine of God's teaching through the meditation on testimonies.

13. (Verse 100.) It follows: I understood above the elders, because I sought out your commandments. And this is not difficult, that one whom the Lord has taught understands above the elders; indeed, by the grace of God, one progress in learning and maturity of age makes one surpass the age of old age. For when the age of old age is a blameless life, certainly the doctrine of a blameless life brings forth old age. Finally, excusing Jeremiah for being young, it was answered: Do not say: I am young; because he who would have wisdom was not considered young by divine definition, but rather he had wisdom, which shone forth by the grace of heavenly

sanctification.

14. Moreover, it does not seem to me that the Prophet praises himself and places himself above the elders when he reads: 'Do not disregard the tradition of the elders, for they too learned from their fathers' (Ecclesiasticus 8:11). For elsewhere, Sirach the Wise also said: 'In the presence of the elderly, do not talk at length' (Ecclesiasticus 32:13). But he knows whom he places himself above, namely those who are rooted in sin, steeped in impiety, and deluded by the folly of age and the madness of unfaithfulness. These are the elders of the people about whom it was said that they handed over the Lord Jesus to Pilate as governor. For the priests, scribes, and elders gathered together, as Mark says (Mark 14:53). And again: the priests held a council with the elders to hand him over (Mark 15:1). And concerning the apostles in their Acts, Peter the holy one and Luke the Evangelist testify that the elders of Israel gathered together (Acts 4:1ff). Therefore, he did not derogate from old age, but he prophesied that the ancient people of God would be unteachable by the voice of the elderly, a people of Judah in the old days, who could not acquire in their youth what they could not find in their old age. For from the beginning, they provoked the Lord with frequent offenses. Therefore, as a young man, he could not earn his favor, and as an old man, he did not deserve to recognize his coming or hold onto the gift. However, wisdom in gray hair is a sign of old age in understanding, and the knowledge of experienced counsel is preferred over the longevity of life.

15. Therefore let us seek the commandments of God; that we may understand concerning the elders. Let us avoid the slippery path of sinners; that we may be able to keep the heavenly precepts. For this is declared by the following: Concerning the elders, the younger brother Jacob understood that when the older brother Esau demanded the privilege of the blessing, he left the milder meals while he sought the wild ones (Gen. XXV, 32). Indeed, when he went on a hunting trip, the younger brother took his brother's clothes and handed them over to me, to be used by the people of the nations, in accordance with the advice of our mother (Gen. XXVII, 15 et seq.). So I, Rebecca, put on the robe of wisdom that the people of Judah had before. This robe is the good Law and the prophets. With this robe, that people were stripped, and we have been clothed. That mother Jerusalem, who is in heaven, clothed us. Therefore, we approach the Father, offering him gentler feasts, patience as food, the soothing of mercy, the sweetness of understanding. I receive blessings, I foretell spiritual grace to my older brother. He comes, he is angry: he does not find what he can receive. The mother appears, and she informs with a pious admonition. That stole, woven with good commands, remains with me.

16. (Verse 101.) 'I have kept my feet from every evil path in order to obey your word.' Truly worthy is he who understands more than the elders, since he has been honored with the divine Spirit to teach not only the understanding of truth, but also the avoidance of sin and the caution against fault. Therefore, since human weakness is prone to incline towards vice by the force of passion and by the rapid pace of temptation, he teaches how the slippery path of this way and the winding turns of this journey cannot entangle the traveler. I have forbidden, he says, my feet from the wicked path, that is, from the vanity of this world; because the world is set in wickedness. Whatever is doubtful, and has uncertain effects, is wicked; just as a doubtful light is called wicked: so whatever mixes the darkness of malice with the truth is wicked. Therefore, withdraw your feet of the soul, and the step of the mind, from the slippery things of this world, and settle down. Forbid, I say, resist desires, withstand motions that seem to rush in, like beasts and animals; so that they

may devour the tender fruits, and the newly cultivated fields of our land.

17. 'I restrained my feet,' he says. Indeed, it is not the feet of the body that are restrained, which often obey the will of a pious mind. For they should not be restrained when they go to the temple of God, hurrying to help widows, to anticipate the impious, to overthrow any fraudulent person. Therefore, there is another foot that is restrained by law. The Prophet himself teaches us who that is: 'Let not the foot of pride come to me' (Psalm 36:12). There is also the foot of iniquity, which quickly slips and cannot stand, just as the foot of the deceitful is, of whom it is written: 'There they have fallen, all who work iniquity; they are thrust down, unable to rise' (Ibid., 13). Therefore, be cautious, lest you fall; for your feet are not only the cause of sin but also of weakness. And be careful not to fall. And it may seem to you that you are standing well; but Paul says to you: And you, who stand, beware of falling (1 Corinthians 10:12). Pay close attention to your path, so that you may hear: But you, stand here with me. For if you stand with God, you will not fear falling. If you stand with God, you will be able to say: He rescued... my feet from falling (Deuteronomy 5:31). But the Lord will rescue your feet from all falling, if He knows that you keep your feet from falling. Therefore David deserved this, that God would rescue his feet from stumbling; because he himself prevented his feet from slipping, so that they would not be entangled in the precipitous and treacherous path of sinners: thus he was able to keep the divine words. For no one can keep them unless they can first stand. However, when he keeps them, he himself begins to carry the Word of God as a guard. He speaks well who knows that Christ is the way, and who prevents his feet from the evil path.

18. (Vers. 102.) I have not turned aside from Your judgments; for You have set a law for me. It has been explained what it means to keep one's foot from the evil way; to not turn aside from divine judgments, and to firmly and immovably hold the path of steadfast innocence, not to deviate from the course of discipline, but to walk not only in the ancient paths of Sinai, but also to follow the clarity of the new Law according to the Gospel.

19. The law of the Gospel is also (spoken of here by the Prophet): "Appoint, Lord, a lawgiver over them; that the Gentiles may know themselves to be but men." We understand that the coming of the Lord is prophesied, as well as the calling of the Gentiles, who were formerly buried in the mire of this body's corruption, clinging to their lusts as to filth; for they did not know the Lord. And therefore, being angry: "Let the wicked be turned into hell;" that they may not see the soul of the Lord Jesus while it is descending and ascending, and be converted unto the Lord, whom they refused to be converted unto while they lived. But concerning those nations who forget the Lord (Ibid).

Therefore, they recognized and they forgot: nevertheless, by the kindness of the prophecy, he prays that the Lord may arise, and that man may not prevail; so that earthly thoughts, and all the fervent movements of this body may rest. Let the nations be judged; for then the Lord is known, when the affections of those who fear are converted, with the weighty terror of judgment: And let the nations learn that they are men, corruptible mud, and formed by hardening clay: that those who had not received the Law before do not know (ibid., 20). The Prophet, as if disturbed by contemplating the fragility of earthly things, says: 'Why, O Lord, have you gone far away?' It is good for one who knows himself to be human to fear, but because we, who are sinners from the Gentiles, fear even more, he prays that he may not be far from his own people. So that we, who

were far away, may begin to be nearer, and may know that we are human, made in the image and likeness of God, to whom Christ himself became like through the birth of the Virgin. Therefore, it is rightly understood both in terms of weakness and in terms of grace. Let the nations know that they are human beings: the one through a certain common and carnal fellowship with animals, the other through the image of God and the dignity of the sacrament of the Lord's flesh, which seemed ignoble.

21. Therefore, rightfully so, the people of the nations did not turn away from the judgments of God, who can say: For you have given me the law. Not through Moses, not through the prophets, but you yourself, Jesus, have given me the law, that is, the Gospel. Therefore, I have not turned away from the way; for I have seen you, I have known you, following your paths, I have come to know the true way.

22. (Verse 103.) Therefore, hearing the preaching of the Gospel which the prophetic spirit foretold, he says: How sweet are your words to my throat, more than honey and the honeycomb to my mouth! And indeed sweet are they, by which the remission of sins is preached, eternal life, even the resurrection of the dead, which have tempered the perpetual death and bitter bitterness. Through these we have begun to not fear death, we who have begun to say: Where, O death, is your victory? (1 Corinthians 15:55)? And sweet things flow well through the throat; because spiritual grace is infused into the deepest bowels.

23. Honey and honeycomb, he says, are sweet to my mouth. And because your words have become sweet to us, you say to the Church: Your lips drip honey, O Bride (Song of Songs 4:11). Teach us, Solomon, what honeycomb is. For you have said: Good words are like a honeycomb (Proverbs 16:24). And truly, the good honeycomb which the Church eats is filled with the spiritual abundance of many prophets, like honeycombs overflowing with sweet honey. This is the honey of which it is said: I have eaten my bread with honey; I have drunk my wine with milk (Song of Songs 5:1). The mystical discourse of the heavenly Scriptures is like bread, which strengthens the heart of man, like a more powerful nourishment of the Word. The persuasive one, however, is ethical, sweet, and softer; because by ethical preaching, the internal mind is soothed: bitter for fevers, that is, for repentance of sins, sweetened by gentle words. The lips of the preacher drip honey, when the broken limbs of fallen souls are refreshed by being brought into contact with harsh cases or ruins.

24. There is also a more intense power of expression, like that of wine. There is also a clearer eloquence in the form of milk. 'Eat, drink, and be intoxicated,' it says, 'my nearest ones.' Good intoxication, which causes a certain excess of the mind towards better and pleasant things, so that our mind, forgetful of worries, may be delighted by the wine of joy. Good spiritual intoxication of the table. Finally: How splendid is the intoxicating cup! But you also have it elsewhere: 'Intoxicate its streams, multiply its generations,' for when the intoxication of the earth is infused with heavenly rain, it is accustomed to awaken seeds and multiply fruits. Therefore, the word of God, which descends like rain from heaven, has inebriated the veins of our earth, the souls and minds, with divine preaching, and has stirred up the pursuit of various virtues, and has nourished the fruits of faith and chaste devotion; and deservedly it is said to Him: You have visited the earth and have inebriated it (Psalm, 10). For He visited by taking on a body, in order to heal the sick; He inebriated with spiritual grace, in order to soothe the anxious with joy.

Therefore it is rightly said to the Bride: Your lips distill honey, O Bride: honey and milk are under your tongue (Song of Songs 4:11). For the mouth of the righteous distills wisdom: from the mouth of the righteous sweetness and mercy flow: in the mouth of the righteous there is no deceit, no falsehood, no bitterness of sin. The Church hears the words of the righteous, the people of God hear the precepts of the wise, and they delight in the sweetness of discourse, they are soothed by the pleasantness of moral disputation, saying: How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Because honey of bees pleases for an hour, but its taste quickly disappears, and often it harms the internal organs; however, even though the words of morals sting like honey, they do not harm. Yet, find out whom they are believed by; for it is written: Do not speak anything into the ear of a fool, lest he deride your wise words (Prov. 23:9). For the fool will vomit and reject your words, as he cannot perceive their sweetness.

26. (Verse 104.) It follows: I have understood from your commandments: therefore I have hated every way of iniquity. The consequent of this verse is: Desiring wisdom, keep the commandments (Sirach 1:33). But no one can keep them unless they understand. Finally, every word of the Law is daily given back by some elders of the Jews, and none of them can keep the commandment. For I would not say that a tree keeps the fertility of nature, which flourishes in leaves but fails in fruit: nor would I say that the earth keeps its fruits, which yields the despised fern to farmers and does not produce corn: nor does the shepherd seem to keep his flock, who does not know how to choose profitable pasture, guard against wolves, enclose his sheepfolds with dogs, or provide water when necessary. For to produce only a dumb flock without any care is the same as reading the Scriptures only for the Jewish people. Where are the spiritual pastures of the sacrament, where the letter kills, where the understandable wolves attack, where there is rest for refreshment, where is the hope of resurrection, who are the dogs that can bark as guardians of the flock, the people themselves are more ignorant than the flock.

27. Therefore, if someone says, 'I keep the commandments,' the response is: 'But you truly hate discipline, and you have cast my words behind you. If you saw a thief, you ran with him, and with adulterers you shared your portion. Your mouth overflowed with wickedness, and your tongue framed deceit. Sitting against your brother, you slandered him.' (Psalm 50:17-20). This is not to keep the commandments, but to transgress them; it is to do the opposite of what is commanded, not to understand, but to be ignorant. How can the words of God be sweet in your mouth, when there is bitterness of wickedness? How can honey and milk be under your tongue, when your tongue utters deceit: so that you conceive one thing in your heart, and pretend another in your public discourse, in order to deceive the unwary: whereas the Apostle Peter tells you to put away all malice, and all guile, and deceit, saying: As newborn babes, desire the rational milk without guile (1 Peter 2:2). For it shows us what it means to have honey and milk under the tongue; so that we may not speak ill of those who speak ill, but rather bring forth a blessing: let us not know how to hate except the path of iniquity; so that we may avoid doing what we detest, with reluctant desire. Therefore Paul guarded against evil in his flesh; because he hated it (Rom. VII, 15). Therefore John warns in his epistle not to love the world: For everything in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastfulness of life (I John II, 16).

28. It is therefore within us to both hate something good and love something good. Just as we can truly love the servants of God and truly love our enemies according to the Word of the Lord (Matthew 5:44), so can we truly hate the enemies of God, hate iniquity, hate treachery, hate evils,

hate the vanities of this world. Therefore, those things which belong to this world should be hated; so that the allurements of pleasure, which insidiously approach with soothing and idle flattery, do not ensnare with their snares. It is easily understood by the eyes the beauty of a promiscuous whore, unless they are blinded by rightful hatred, and the soul turns away from impurity in indignation. It often inflates people, and deflates the arrogance of nobility and the abundance of secular possessions, with swelling disdain; unless it is more shameful for you to be praised for others rather than your own achievements. Christ, although wealthy, became poor: He redeemed you in poverty, not in riches. He commanded those who confessed the Son of God to be silent; so that God may be recognized through works rather than words; and you call yourself noble, when you are made of earth? King David says: Remember, O Lord, that we are dust (Psalm 102:14); and you, in this perishable and muddy kind, boast and think yourself wealthy, when tomorrow you can be a beggar; for your life does not depend on your abundance, but on God's mercy. To whom be honor, glory, praise, everlastingness from age to age, now and always, and unto all ages. Amen.

Sermon 14. Nun.

1. Now, the Hebrew letter is the fourteenth, the interpretation of which is 'Only begotten' or in another interpretation 'Their Passover.' Behold, the Hebrew letters themselves testify that the Lord Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father, the Word of God. Finally, in the very first verse David says about the only Son of God: 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.' Therefore, we understand that this psalm is arranged with Hebrew letters so that our humanity, like a little child and formed from infancy by the elements of letters to which our childhood is accustomed, may grow up to the maturity of virtue. However, each individual letter is like a title of the verses that are attributed to them, declaring the sequence and content, just as here the single letter signifies and prophesies about the portion of this psalm concerning the only begotten Son of God and the brightness of his eternal light.

Moreover, there is also found in another codex the interpretation of these letters. For what are our pastures, that is, those of the faithful, if not Christ? The Prophet rejoiced that he had been placed in his pastures, saying: In a place of pasture, there he has set me (Psalm 22:2). For he himself feeds and nourishes us. The divine sacraments are good pastures. You gather there the new flower, which has given the sweet fragrance of resurrection. You gather the lily, which is the splendor of eternity. You gather the rose, which is the blood of the Lord's body. The books of the heavenly Scriptures are also good pastures, in which we are nourished by daily reading, in which we are refreshed and restored; when we taste what is written, or more frequently ponder it with our highest voice. The flock of the Lord is nourished by these pastures.

Good are also the paschal feasts of Christ, who feeds among lilies, in the splendor of the saints: good also are the paschal feasts of the mountains of the valleys. For Christ also feeds in them, like a roe deer or a young deer of the forests. The mountains are the valleys, shining with diligent humility like the lights of this world, surpassing with their merits the diverse virtues they possess. They are those of whom it is said: 'They are not of this world, just as I am not of this world' (John 17:14); for those who follow Christ are above the world. But the world is a valley of tears; for in this world there are tears and weeping. And the Lord, seeing this, has made His Covenant in this world, so that we may weep for our sins and preserve what is to be mourned.

These verses also refer to our Easter, which we are going to discuss today. In them, David says: 'I used to feed my father's sheep, showing the true light, teaching humility' (1 Samuel 17:34). In such pastures, the true David, truly humble, and with a strong hand, who did not consider himself equal to God in robbery, but emptied himself; and the man born through the birth of a Virgin humbled himself unto death, feeding the sheep of his Father through divine preaching; when he proved his coming according to the Scriptures (Luke 4:21), when he satisfied many thousands of people with five loaves and two fish. (John 6:9 and following)

5. (Verse 105.) Therefore, these are our pastures, these are the pastures of those who can say: How sweet are your words to my taste! (Sup. v. 103) These are their pastures, who say: Your word is a lamp to my feet, O Lord. For our mouth is fed by the word when we speak the commandments of God's Word. And our inner eye is fed by the light of the spiritual lamp, which shines for us in this night of the world; so that, walking not in darkness, we may not stumble with uncertain steps and may not be able to find the true way. Therefore, the steps of the feet are understandable, and the lamp is also understandable; because the Word of God is a lamp. Wasn't this Word with God in the beginning: how then is it a lamp? Wasn't this the true light, which enlightens every man coming into this world: how then is it called a lamp? Isaiah cries out: The people who were sitting in darkness have seen a great light (Isaiah 9:2): so how is it called a lamp here?

6. But let us see lest perhaps the same Word of God be a great light to some, a lamp to others. To me it is a lamp, to angels a light. To Peter it was a light when an angel appeared to him in prison, and a light shone around him (Acts 12:7). To Paul it was a light when a light from heaven shone around him as he was going to persecute the Christian people, and he heard someone saying to him: Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? (Acts 9:4). And indeed it was a great light. Finally, the light of Paul's lamp vanished, when the splendor of the divine light shone forth.

7. And truly Christ is a lamp to me, when he is recently presented to me by means of this our prayer. He shines in the mud, he gleams in the earthen vessel that treasure, which we have in earthen vessels. Send oil, lest it fail you; because the light of the lamp is oil, not earthly oil, but that oil of heavenly mercy and grace, with which the prophets were anointed. Your oil is humility, by which the hardness of our necks is softened; your oil is your mercy, by which even the bodies broken against the rocks of sins are nourished. This oil was poured on the wounded man by the Samaritan descending from Jerusalem to Jericho, who, seeing him, was moved with compassion and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. (Luke 10:33-34). This oil heals the sick; for mercy frees from sin. This oil shines in the darkness, if our works shine before men. This oil shines in the solemnities of the Church. Finally, those who lacked oil did not lack the light of faith; but they deserved to enter the bridal chamber with lamps: but those who did not bring oil in their vessels, that is, who did not have faith, prudence, and mercy, the souls confined in this body were rightly excluded from the faith. (Matthew 25:10-12). Therefore, you must always have a burning lamp or a shining torch. For if neither your lamp nor your torch shine, you are called a foolish virgin, and you will not enter the chamber of your superior Spouse, but you will remain in the darkness of blindness, as one who hates light; so that your wicked deeds may not be exposed. For everyone who does evil hates the light. (John 3:20). Have faith, have prudence, so that you always have the oil of mercy, the grace of devotion in your vessels; for the wise have received oil in their vessels with their lamps. Unite, O people, your lamps: when you fast, anoint your head. Let us pour oil into

our minds, so that our body may be radiant. May the lamp of the Word of God always shine for you: may your eye also be a lamp of your body. Your shining conscience is a good light in this body of the lamp; for it is your eye. May your eye be pure. If your conscience is clean, your flesh is clean: but if your conscience is dark, your body is also dark with the darkness of your conscience. Therefore, we are like candles, covered with our whole body, hardly having anything small from which we can shine.

8. Finally, John was a lamp, as the Lord said about him: He was a burning and shining lamp (John 5:35). A good lamp that received light from Christ, so that it could shine in this world: burning deservedly, shining deservedly; because he was a messenger of Christ, illuminating the hearts of each through the preaching of faith. But he also gave these lamps, so that they would be the light of the world, saying to the apostles: You are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). Therefore, if the glory of the saints now shines like a lamp, now like the light of the world shines in this age, what do we say about the Word of God, which is also a lamp to my feet?

9. And perhaps where there are no shadows, there is no lamp of the Word of God, but above the lamp; for He is the light. Those who see the light have no shadows. Finally, then, the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matthew 13:43). And perhaps according to the Law, the lamp is the Word of God, according to the Gospel, the light is great. The lamp is for the Jews, and the lamp is under a bushel. The Law shines, but it is not seen; for their teaching is hidden and their thoughts are of vice, and they are blind in their unbelief: but to the people from the nations, the light is. Finally, the people who sat in the region of the shadow of death, a light has risen for them (Isaiah 9:2). Open therefore your windows so that the radiance of great light may enter for you. Prepare your candlestick so that your light is not covered by the covering of your body and the measure of this earthly frailty, but rather shine above the measure of bodily weakness with the power of your soul. Or if you are tender-hearted, see that the measures themselves do not exceed the limit, so that they do not overflow, but rather be content with good seeds. Let your words not be pointless, let your speech not be idle; lest the lamp be placed under a basket. God is powerful to set your lamp on the candelabrum; so that it may shine for all those who are in the house, so that those who enter may see the light. Our main candelabrum is the Church. Put your words on your main [candelabrum], and let them shine for all those who enter the Church. Take another candelabrum as well. Consider your mouth, consider your speech. Is not your mouth a lamp, and your word a light, when it is spoken from your mouth? Let this light always shine for you, that is, let your word shine, and never be extinguished.

You ask how I may teach that it cannot be extinguished? It is written: The light of the righteous is always inexhaustible, but the light of the wicked will be extinguished. (Job. XVIII, 5). This light was the light of the lamp that shone in the tabernacle of the Testimony, and today it is the light that shines in the Church, the wise man. This is the eye of the Church, which does not speak with hands, that is, with actions, but with a mind that is not sharp to understand: You are not necessary to me. Therefore, he who said, Our conversation is in heaven, shone upon the candlestick. (Philip. III, 20). For David was already conversing with his whole mind in heaven, and yet he said: Your word is a lamp to my feet. Or perhaps, like a good teacher, he wanted to go before me so that I might learn to follow the light and walk in his footsteps. Therefore, he showed me that I should learn to follow this lamp in the darkness of that ignorance, in the darkness of that bodily covering, so that, following Christ, I would not stumble on any stumbling stone. Peter was wandering in the

darkness of ignorance, denying that Christ would die; because he still did not see that he would die and rise again for us. The Lord turned to him and said: Get behind me (Matthew 16:23). He showed him the light that he should follow, saying, 'Follow me.' Having followed the word of God, he was strengthened: afterwards he began to cleave to Christ, fearing to fall into error again. Did he not also who said, 'Your word is a lamp unto my feet,' hasten to this lamp, when he said on the sea, 'Lord'? Command me to come to you on the water (Matthew 14:28)? But because he did not follow the light, he was moved and stumbled, disturbed by the weight of a stronger force of nature.

11. Let us therefore follow this light, and let us walk as in the night to the light. Many pits, many cliffs in the darkness of this age are not seen. Prefer for yourself the light that the Prophet showed: see to where you should transfer your step, look where to place the foot of your inner mind: take care with each step: trust no one of your own, unless the light of this lantern goes before, guiding your progress. For where you think it shines, there is a whirlpool; it seems to shine but it pollutes; and where you think it is solid or dry, it is slippery there. But even if the journey is long for you, let faith be your precursor on your journey, let divine Scripture be your path. The heavenly guidance of the Word is good. Light this lamp from that lamp, so that your inner eye, which is the lamp of your body, may shine. You have many lamps, light them all, for it has been said to you: Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning (Luke XII, 35). For there are many darknesses, many lamps are necessary, so that the light of our merits may shine in such great darkness. The Law declared that these lamps should always shine in the Tabernacle of Testimony, not the ones that the Jews light every day. Those lamps shine in the shadow and are extinguished daily, because they do not see what they do, they do not understand what they read, receiving in the letter what is commanded in the spirit. For the Tabernacle of Testimony is this body of ours, in which Christ has come, through a more spacious and perfect Tabernacle, as it is written, to enter into the holy places with His own blood, and to cleanse our conscience from every work of the dead and stain, so that in our bodies, which testify to the hidden and secret thoughts of our own testimonies and qualities, the clear light of our virtues may shine like lamps. These are the burning lamps that shine day and night in the temple of God. If you preserve the temple of God in your body, if your members are members of Christ, your virtues shine, which no one can extinguish unless they extinguish your crime. May our festivals shine with the light of a chaste mind and devout solemnity.

12. Let your light always shine. Christ also rebukes those who use a lamp; if they do not always use it, saying: Let your loins be girded, and your lamps burning (Luke XII, 35). Let us not rejoice in the light for an hour. He rejoices for an hour, who hears the word in the Church and rejoices: but when he goes out, he forgets what he heard, and neglects it. This is the one who walks in his house without a lamp; therefore he walks in darkness, who does the works of darkness, in revelry and drunkenness, in beds and impurities, in contention and jealousy, clothed in the garments of the devil, not Christ. These things happen when the lamp of the Word does not shine. Therefore, let us never neglect the Word of the Lord, from which the origin of all virtues is for us, and the process of all works. If the members of our body cannot operate correctly without light (for the feet stumble without light, and the hands wander), how much more should the footsteps of our souls and the steps of our minds be directed towards the light of the Word! There are also the hands of the soul that touch well, as Thomas touched the signs of the Lord's resurrection (John 20:27), if the light of the present Word shines for us. Let this lamp be lit in every word, in every work. May our footsteps be guided by this lamp both in public and in private.

13. But now let us proceed to the rest, and may the word of God be a lamp to my feet and a light to my paths. A lamp is sufficient for walking with the feet, but it is not sufficient for illuminating the paths. Yet the same Word is both a lamp to my feet and a light to my paths, because he is the only begotten Son of God, who is a defender for those who sin and a rewarder for the strong, a forgiver of sins and a giver of rewards.

14. (Verse 106.) Therefore, to whomsoever the Word of God has become a lantern, to him the paths shine wherever he goes, just as they shone for the holy David; and thus, walking as if in light, he says: I have sworn and resolved to keep the judgments of your righteousness. I am humbled on every side. The voice of one walking in the light is to speak with authority: I have sworn and resolved. For the one who resolves is not moved, does not fear falling, because to resolve is greater than to stand. Therefore, David stands firm in the station of his mind and does not fear that he may wander in the darkness of this world; for if he feared, he would not swear; if he hesitated, he would not establish a divine judgment with an oath. No one swears well unless they can know what they are swearing. Therefore, to swear is an indication of knowledge, a testimony of conscience. And one swears well who directs their feet to the lamp of the word, who sees the light in their paths. May light be before you, if you are inclined to swear, that is, let the knowledge of the truth precede; so that the bond of the oath may not harm you. Where religion is holier, there faith in truth is fuller. Finally, for this reason the Lord, who came to teach the little ones, to instruct the new, to strengthen the perfect, said in the Gospel: Not to swear at all (Matt. 5:34); because he was speaking to the weak. Finally, he was not speaking only to the apostles, but to the crowds; for he did not want you to swear, lest you commit perjury. And he added that one should not swear at all, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by Jerusalem, nor by your own head, namely those things which are not under your power. The Lord swore, and he will not regret it. So let him swear whom he cannot regret of his oath. And what did the Lord swear? That Christ is a priest forever. Was it uncertain, was it impossible what the Lord swore? Could it be changed? Therefore, do not misuse the example of the sacrament, you who do not have the power to fulfill the sacrament.

15. So what did David swear? To keep the judgments of the justice of the Lord. Clearly in nothing perfect, nothing ready, were the judgments of divine justice moving. How much they are moved, when they see a just man bereft of children, reduced to the extreme necessity of frequent expenses and unable to have the necessities of food itself: broken by severe illness and constantly tormented by weakness, so that he cannot perform the common functions of nature? But he who is strong is not moved and he understands more that the justice of God should be preached; for the Lord corrects whom he loves. Is it not more often that a son is corrected than a slave? Therefore, the father's loving discipline is unjust, rather than the severity of the master? The father exercises the son with harsher things than the master exercises the household servant. But the harsh punishments of the father are not considered unmerciful, because he desires the son to be better than a slave. Therefore, education is full of justice.

16. The holy Job was deprived of his children, over whom the Lord had given power to the devil. Is God unjust? Far from it: rather, He is just; for in order to test his righteous one, He has made him more worthy to be tested through these trials in which his patience has been proven. For the more clearly the merit of the one crowned is revealed, the more abundant is the justice of the one crowning. He was stripped of his possessions, though he was rich, and he endured these losses,

with God permitting it. There were no longer financial losses, but losses of life; when sustenance was lacking, everything was taken away. Who would accuse the justice of God, when Job, if he had not lost all his money, would not have found such great favor? God wanted to anoint his athlete, stripped and bare, with the oil of repentance; so that by enduring the struggle, he would become stronger, and by earning the prize, he would become more worthy. His whole body was soaked with a serious wound, he sat on the dung heap, scraping away the pus flowing from the cruel sores; and this the devil had inflicted on the righteous man with the permission of the Lord. The devil would seem to have conquered himself, unless he had received the power that he had asked for, and was also overcome. Therefore, what was that temptation, what was the lack of resources, the abandonment of children, the endurance of wounds, if not an exercise of faith, a mark of patience, a glorious instruction in virtue, a full confession of victory; so that he who had the devil as an opponent, would not have him afterwards? Therefore, let no one consider just things to be harsh. They did not seem hard to him, who could say: I was born naked, I will go out naked: The Lord gave, the Lord took away... blessed be the name of the Lord (Job 1:21). For the righteous blesses the Lord when he labors, the sinner when he indulges. Therefore, the strength of our weakness should not be regarded as righteousness.

17. What difficult thing do we think anything is, whatever we cannot bear through weakness of mind? Take away persecutions, and there are no martyrs. But even God suffered persecutors, that is, the powers of the world, to arise; lest there should be lacking those who should conquer for Christ. Who then does not say, though weak: O Lord, why hast Thou given Thy people into the power of persecutors? But who today would deny that those are more blessed who have suffered than those who have never been tormented by the punishments of persecutors?

18. Therefore, the just person desires to be proved and does not fear to be tempted; for whoever resolves to keep the commandments of God does not fear temptations. Where does he resolve to do this, if not in the heart? For there we must be rooted and founded, not being tossed about or moved by every wind of doctrine. Therefore, let us establish ourselves inwardly in our heart, in our breast, in our mind, so that the prophetic saying may be fulfilled in us: The thoughts of the just are judgments (Prov. XII, 5). In these judgments, the just person walks well; and therefore he says: Test me, O Lord, and try me (Psal. XXV, 2). Lastly, responding to his own authority, he who had sworn and determined to uphold the laws of the Lord's justice, says that he wanted to prove himself, who believed that humility was to be embraced for Christ.

19. (Verse 107.) And so he says: I have been greatly humbled. Not only is he humbled, but he also rejoices in being excessively humbled. Blessed is he who boasts more in humility than in power. Power deceives, humility does not abandon. Good humility, which also finds praise of virtue in Christ. In him I revere this more than creation; for we are created for labor, redeemed for rest. Finally, he himself, calling people to his mercy, boasts of his own humility, saying: I have been made known to those who did not seek me; I have appeared to those who did not inquire of me (Isaiah 65:1). And elsewhere: I offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. (Isaiah 50:6). Therefore, David rightly wanted to humble himself, so that he might fulfill in himself what was lacking in the sufferings of Christ.

20. He himself can also be said to have spoken these words from his own person through the mouth of David: I am greatly humbled, who said in the Gospel: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Matt. XI, 28 and 29). Therefore, let us learn from him, who wished to teach us what would be helpful for salvation, and says to us: Learn from me. It is not insignificant what he says, Learn: and he added: Learn from me. No one can easily teach humility when they are inflated: even if they are endowed with human wisdom; the mind is still inflated, which pride of the flesh elevates. And whoever is content with poverty, is not content with injustice: and whoever can endure physical punishments, is tormented by verbal insults: and whoever can despise positions of power, grieves that someone else is preferred with honor. It is great in all things to hold the measure of humility. Pride casts down man first. While we desire more, we often lose what is less. Good humility, by desiring nothing and despising everything, attains everything. The Lord Jesus himself humbled himself in order to elevate us, and he humbled himself even unto the cross. For this reason, God exalted him, saying . . . that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (Philippians 2:9-10). How much the Lord has done, I dare to say, and I did not bend my knee to Him? But I bent my knee to Him after He humbled Himself. For in this way, that is, through humility, through the cross, He gathered His Church to Himself.

21. King David was a witness to the uncertain and hidden knowledge that was revealed to him, but for this reason he humbled himself even more (Psal. 50:8). But indeed Hezekiah fell from the height of his heart. That praiseworthy king, the one who was delivered from siege and illness by the benefits of the Lord and His wondrous deeds, fell due to pride and diminished the grace of his previous accomplishments. What would Joseph have been if he had not been humble? He knew that he had hindered his brothers, even though his pious love had found the misfortune of superiority. Preaching armed the brothers, humility won over strangers; preaching roused the Germans, humility made the king subject. So that truly, as if spoken in the person of Joseph, we may think what he himself said above: I am humbled, and he saved me (Psalm 114:6); although if we consider what he endured, we will find that he said it in his own person.

22. After defeating Goliath, the singing maidens came out: Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands (1 Samuel 18:7). The king's anger was aroused, and he sought to kill David. But David humbled himself before Jonathan, the king's son, and won his favor. He kept him loyal to his father's desires, saying to his father: Why do you sin against the innocent blood? (1 Samuel 19:5). And he forced out that word unwillingly because David did not deserve to be killed. Therefore, he rightly says: I was humbled, and he saved me (Psalm 114:7). And again, when the prophet came to him and declared the anger of the Lord in the matter of Bathsheba, the woman, he humbled himself and said: I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to him: Because you have repented, the Lord has taken away your sin; you shall not die. So, true humility is good. Finally, he was humbled and saved. And in another place, when the Lord was offended because of the numbered people, he sent the prophet Gad to King David. Choose for yourself what you want to happen: three years of famine on the land, or three months of fleeing from the face of your pursuing enemies, or three days of death on the land. (2 Samuel 24:13) David answered: These three options are distressing to me, but I will fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is very great, rather than fall into the hands of men. (Ibid., 14) And when the Lord had inflicted death upon Israel from morning until the hour of dinner, with seventy thousand men dead, David looked to the

Lord, and when he saw the Angel striking the people, he said: Behold, I have sinned, and I have done evil as a shepherd; and what have these sheep done? Let your hand be upon me, and upon the house of my father (Ibid., 17). And the Lord became propitious, when a sacrifice of reconciliation was offered to the Lord. Good, therefore, is humility, which has saved both the king and the people. Therefore, with the Lord reconciled, David said: It is good for me that I have been humbled (Psalm, v. 71).

23. Therefore, humility is good, especially if voluntary devotion is added to it. And so, it seeks to be enlivened according to the word, in order to live according to the word and do all things with reason, not according to the will of the flesh. Hence, this mystical saying can also be understood in a moral sense: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; this was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made (John 1:1-3). And you should be an imitator of God. How should you imitate? Can you create the sky, or the earth, or the sea? Certainly not; but that you may do all things through the word, nothing without the word; everything with reason, nothing without reason; for you are not irrational, O man, but rational.

24. (Verse 108.) The fourth verse follows: Confirm the voluntary offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me your judgments. Whoever humbles himself is made alive according to the promise of the Lord: whoever is made alive by the Spirit of God is a voluntary minister; for it matters greatly whether you do something out of your own will or out of necessity, as it pleases God. Finally, the voluntary minister receives a reward, while the one who is compelled performs service, as we have learned from the teaching of the Apostle. For he wrote: Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship (I Cor. IX 16 and 17). See the voluntary executor of divine judgment. He was free from all, and became a servant of all, certainly by choice, not by necessity; so as to gain the most (Ibid., 19-22). He also presented himself to those who were held by the bond of the Law, as if he were under the Law, even though he was not under the Law, in order to save those who lived under the Law. The weak became weak, so that he might support the weak by assuming their weakness. He became all things to all people, not out of legal necessity, but out of a willing obedience. He revealed to me the depth of this plan in the letter written to Philemon, because he desired to be someone else instead of himself, so that it would appear that he had done it out of his own will rather than out of necessity. Therefore, in interceding for Onesimus, he said: 'But you, welcome him as you would welcome me, whom I wanted to keep with me, so that he might serve me on your behalf in my imprisonment. But I wanted to do nothing without your consent, so that your goodness would not be forced, but voluntary.' What a diligent persuader, who, although he was a vessel of divine election, did not disdain to share in the advice of others, lest he should deprive another of the benefit of his own will. Therefore David rightly says, as if a prophet: 'Prove the voluntary offerings of my mouth, O Lord, offering his own mouth to the Lord as a voluntary sacrifice'; because just as that prophetic bee is accustomed to gather good flowers with its mouth, shape the honeycomb with its mouth, and compose honey with its mouth, and to choose sons from sweet herbs with its mouth. And when it is feeble in strength, it produces a lifetime through the preaching of wisdom (Prov. 6:8).' Recognize what this voluntary sacrifice of the mouth is: 'Offer a sacrifice of praise to God' (Ps. 49:14).

25. The Lord awaits voluntary ministers. Finally, in the book of Isaiah, the Lord says: Whom shall I send (Isaiah 6:8)? He could have commanded his servant, whom he found worthy to be sent, but he preferred not to deprive him of the reward of voluntary offering, and thus waited for him to offer himself. And although he knew his desire, he still awaited his voice in order to enhance the grace. Therefore, offering himself, Isaiah says: Here I am, send me (ibid.); and thus, he was later sent to the people. This is why it is said: Because Isaiah dares and says (Rom. X, 20). For indeed Christ, as a voluntary instrument, has filled with the abundant grace of His spirit.

26. I do not think this is put here in vain; because the voluntary expression of His mouth desires to please the Lord. Many prophets, but in all their voluntary expressions please. Jeremiah made an excuse, saying: Who are you, Lord? Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am young; and the Lord said to him: Do not say, 'I am young'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak (Jeremiah 1:6-7). The modest prophet pretended the age of his body so that he would not be found unequal in carrying out the heavenly commands because of his youth. But God, who judges age based on character rather than years, considered the age, and foresaw in his young body the maturity of robust wisdom in his servant. He said, 'Do not say, I am younger,' that is, He prohibited him from appraising his strength through contemplation of youthful age, to whom faith would minister the whiteness of wisdom. And again in the later part of the same passage, when the same prophet had said: You have seduced me, Lord, and I have been seduced... And I said: I will not mention his name, nor speak in his name any longer; he added: And it became like a burning fire in my heart, flaming in my bones: and I am weary of restraining myself, and I cannot bear it (Jeremiah XX, 7 and 9). Therefore, we note that even those who may consider their duty to be excusable, or have some certain reason to deny it, nevertheless our Lord either persuades them by reason, or inspires them with the desire of prophetic revelation, so that they may willingly take on their duty, and not be compelled by necessity; so that the reward of their complete devotion may be more fully attained. And Caiaphas prophesied, That it is expedient for one man to die for the people (John 11:50): but this voluntary ministry of speech was not his; for he spoke unwillingly. Finally, he did not know what he was saying.

27. What, therefore, does she desire to please the Lord with the voluntary offerings of her mouth? I have chosen to be abased in the house of the Lord, rather than to dwell in the tents of sinners (Psalm 83:11). I will hear what the Lord God speaks within me (Psalm 84:9). I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter forth propositions from the beginning of time (Psalm 77:2). I have prepared a lamp for my Christ (Psalm 131:17). She prepared her body, which was previously covered in filth and obstructed with the mire of an inherited mixture, so that it could not receive the spiritual oil, to shine for Christ. Christ shines, whose works shine in the light of Christ. Peter shone with the light of Christ when he said: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk (Acts 3:6). He who said: The Lord Jesus heals you shone with the light of Christ (Acts 9:34). The lamp of the martyrs shone with the light of Christ, those who underwent martyrdom for Christ. David shone with the light of Christ, who could say: My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God (Psalm 84:3). He had prepared his mind in Christ when he said about him, whom he had frequently desired to kill, 'May it not happen to me from the Lord, if I do this thing to my lord, the anointed one of the Lord, to lay my hand upon him.' (1 Sam. 24:7) Although he had a greater reason to safeguard his own safety by killing his pursuer, he also dissuaded others from not sparing the enemy, whom the Lord had delivered into his hands according to His promise, from his

desire to kill him. The Prophet was shining with the light of Christ, when, regarding him who had defiled his father's house with foul incest, who sought his father's life in wicked battles, the loving father still said to those going into battle: Spare my son Absalom (II Sam. XVIII, 5). He kept silent about the wickedness of the crime, but he emphasized the degree of piety and the name of kinship, so that those about to fight would not think of the king as their adversary, but as their son, and would restrain the pain of wounded piety. And after my death, he covered his face and cried out with a loud voice, saying: My son Absalom, my son (Ibid., 33). This cry did not deserve the title of parricide, but it foretold the grace of Christ. The Prophet had learned from Christ that a father who served a good son was virtuous.

28. Finally, for this reason he said, 'Teach me your judgments,' because the judgments of God are like a deep, unfathomable abyss, as the Apostle says (Rom. XI, 33). Therefore, he could not know them unless Christ taught him, because Christ is the one master of all (Matth. XXIII, 8). But these are the judgments of Christ, so that we may know that for those who have plotted against us, we should not seek revenge, but rather extend grace in response to their injustice. Finally, he did not curse those who cursed him, nor strike back at those who struck him, but rather, he even prayed for his persecutors, offering a pious intercession to the Father, saying: Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23:34). Therefore, whoever does these things, the judgments of the law will reward Christ.

29. (Verse 109.) But who can be taught the judgments of God, except the one who always directs his soul to the Lord? Who can say: My soul is always in your hands, and I have not forgotten your law. Some have: My soul is always in my own hands, that is, in my actions, that is, in my deeds. Although the just person, being in danger, says to the Lord: Because of you I die daily, I am tried daily: I am tried by the assailant, I am tried by the detractor, I am tried by those I accuse, those I refute, I am tried for truth and justice: nevertheless, I am not terrified by dangers, I have not forgotten your law; therefore, my soul is in my hands. But because many have: My soul is always in your hands; I think this needs to be explained further.

30. The prophet knows where to place the protection of his soul, from where he hopes for help: he wants to entrust his soul into the hands of God, because the heart of the king is in the hand of God (Prov. XXI, 1). Whoever has control over his own body and allows his soul to be disturbed by its passions should let his soul be guided by its ruler with appropriate vitality, he is said to be restraining himself with a blessed power, knowing how to govern himself and be the arbiter of his own rights: let him not be led into fault as a captive, nor be carried headlong into vice. The soul of this person does not perish eternally, nor does anyone snatch it from the hand of the almighty Father or the Son. For the hand of God, which has established the heavens, does not lose what it holds. So let us consider who these hands are. In the Song of Songs, you have: His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me (Song of Solomon 2:6). The Bride speaks of Christ, the soul speaks of the Word of God. But Christ is the same Word of God, and wisdom; therefore, blessed is the soul that wisdom embraces. The hand of wisdom is great, the right hand embraces the whole soul, for the whole soul is fortified, being betrothed to the Word of God; for the fullness of wisdom is to fear God. Therefore, the soul that fears God, protects itself with full defense: wisdom sends its left hand under its neck, but its right hand into its embrace. Both of its arms extend to useful things; however, each hand has its own properties. Wisdom is in the right hand, and it is the length of life; but in the left hand are riches and glory. Certainly, each hand is

endowed with gifts for good things; however, they have variety in their function, because they comprehend both present and future times; so that the left hand may be the rewarder of present things, and the right hand of future things.

32. We can also learn this about the prophecy of the holy patriarch Israel. For when he placed his right hand on Ephraim and his left hand on Manasseh, and Joseph wanted to change them by the consideration of ages, so that the right hand of the father would be placed on the head of Manasseh, the elder son. But he did not want to and said: I know, my son; and he will be a people, and he will be exalted here; but the younger brother will be greater than him (Gen. 48:19). In which is the greater? In him assuredly, because he is preeminent with a blessing, those who would come after him will say: 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh' (Genesis 48:20); or because his offspring will be a multitude of nations, which in this age he has chosen, believing in the Lord Jesus, so that he may have consolation for the future. But the offspring of Manasseh is a people of forgetting, who, having forgotten their own creator, have been exalted for a time in this age, but will give heavy punishments in the future, because they have denied their own God and Lord.

33. We have said this in order to prove that those things which are to come are better. Finally, the left side of wisdom is under the head of the Bride, but the right side, which embraces the Bride entirely, is superior. Therefore, it is like the fulcrum of present rest, on which the soul rests, leaning. It has a place to rest its head because the left side is wealth and glory. For a time, these things soothe and are partly a consolation. And therefore, the Son of Man had no place to rest his head because although he was rich, he became poor (Matthew 8:20); nor did he seek any glory of this world (2 Corinthians 8:9), because he came not to enrich himself but to help the entire human race, saying, "Are you angry with me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?" (John 7:23); that is, completely, not by bestowing material riches, not by crowning with honors, not by increasing secular glory; for these do not have the fullness of beatitude and grace. But to be completely well means to embrace the length of eternal life. For the life that is similar to the common life is not in the right hand of wisdom: but the length of life is; so that whoever receives life from wisdom, may obtain not the shortness of life, but its perpetuity, and the length of eternity.

34. The bonus garment of eternal life. The guardians of the walls wanted to take away this robe of the Bride, with which the first man had been stripped: but the soul, devoted to God, by seeking and holding onto it for a long time, and not letting go of the beloved, clothed itself with the precious wrapping of divine love. Therefore, blessed are those who are clothed in such a robe, and have deserved the garment of this kind by observing the law; because they have not forgotten the law, but have performed what the law required. For he who acts outside of the law has forgotten the law. And therefore, this pure soul ascends from the earth; because she shines with the garment of wisdom: and those virtues, who guard the gates of heaven, speak of her: Who is she who ascends, shining white, leaning on her brother (Song of Solomon, VIII, 5)? With her head placed on the left of wisdom, to open her hand to help the poor: prepared either for her own needs or for others, not using violence or robbery to obtain riches, which she acquired through good deeds driven by the desire for glory, not seeking empty secular titles. For this is to establish its head, and a certain main principle of the senses above the hand of wisdom. This, I say, the soul ascends by merits, shining white from that desert of this life, as many have, to that flourishing place of eternal delight. These are the virtues which are also spoken of in the book of Isaiah: Who is this that comes from Edom, with garments stained from Bozrah, so precious in his robe? (Isaiah 63:1)

These, I say, are the ones who marvel that from that broken and rocky wilderness it is possible for any soul to ascend without the stain of great vices; and therefore they rejoice in the discovery of a garment that does not pollute the clothing of natural innocence with the foolish ink of secular folly, but rather purifies it with the brightness of spiritual wisdom and grace.

35. (Verse 110.) Therefore, that soul now secure, now joyful, says: The sinners have set a snare for me, and I have not strayed from your commandments. Worthy is the voice of one leaving this world, because the nets of those who persecute and the snares of the tempters have been removed. Worthy is the voice for the martyrs, to whom many torments were presented, and many rewards were also offered; so that from the desire or fear of martyrdom, and from the horror of cruel death, or from the allurements of rewards, they might be called back. A heavy snare of persecution, which often breaks the holy ones with the deformity of poverty, whom the fear of death has not broken: another snare of fire, a snare of prison, and of prolonged torment: a great snare, when wealth is promised, when honors, when the friendships of tyrants. Therefore, whoever has escaped these things and has been able to reach martyrdom, rightly says: The sinners have set a snare for me; but I have not turned away from your commandments; to the one who despises the present and seeks the future, the heavenly kingdom of your divinity is opened by your promise.

36. Who are these sinners who set snares? The Apostle opened to you the author of all sins, and declared, saying: Those who desire to become rich fall into temptation and the snare of the devil (1 Timothy 6:9). Therefore, be warned that the snare of the devil is wealth, which he also laid out for the Savior. But He, who had nothing that the prince of this world could claim, coming to Him, broke the chains of his snares. Lest you think this noose is insignificant, this noose strangled the Apostle Judas. How wretched, when he was caught in the noose to betray the Lord, he realized the extent of his crime and hung himself by the noose. But he himself was also the devil's noose, not acting in repentance, but suffocating himself with the noose. Indeed, God is also merciful towards these betrayers; so that they may be provoked to repentance, turn away from wicked intentions, and repent from the devil's snares; by whom they are held captive to his will. No longer is it a hardship to fall, but a crime: for those who not only subject themselves to be captured, but also are bound to the will of the devil; when they could say: Let us break their chains (Ps. II, 3). For divine Scripture has given you the ability not only to avoid the snare of the devil, but also to break his bonds through penitence.

37. What is it to you, man, with delights and pleasures? The noose does not capture unless the bait has been started. While you seek plunder, you yourself are entangled in the noose. The bait of the noose is greed: the bait of the devil is luxury, with which he wants to ensnare us, not to nourish us. And therefore the apostle cried out: Do not touch, do not taste, all of which are for corruption by their very use (Col. II, 21 and 22). Therefore, do not touch luxury, and it will not be able to contaminate you. Do not taste the corruption of greed, and you will be immune from the snare. What do you have to do with earthly things when you have risen with Christ? Seek the things that are above, where Christ is... taste the things that are above, not the things on earth (Colossians 3:1-2). We are dead to earthly things, we hide our life with Christ in our God: we no longer live, but Christ lives in us. Why should we return to earthly things again? Behold, I have fled and expressed, says the Saint (Psalm 54, 8). See the snares of iniquity and contradiction in the city (Ibid., 10). For snares are where there is usury and deceit. He has fled from earthly dishonor;

therefore, he has attained heavenly rewards.

38. Why, I ask, do you reflect on the earth if you were snatched up into heaven in Enoch, lifted up in a chariot in Elijah, snatched up to paradise in Paul, conversed in the heavens, heard in David, so that you would take on the wings of a dove and fly? Exalted in Christ, made a bird in the Spirit; when he descended like a dove, he gave you those wings, so that you would learn to fly from the earth. Indeed, you should not hesitate as to how you should fly, with which movements of your wings. David indeed said: Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and find rest? (Psalm 54:7). And he seemed to doubt from where he could receive wings; although divine grace is accustomed to be revealed in this way, which cannot be found on earth: nevertheless, in the later verses, he clearly taught what these wings are, saying: If you sleep among the clergy of the middle, dove wings of silver, and its back parts in the appearance of gold (Psalm 67:14). Even if you sleep, your wings wake up. For there are those who watch over sleepers, as that one who said: I sleep, but my heart is awake (Song of Solomon 2:5). Even though it is night, the spirit is vigilant, as it is written: My spirit is awake for you during the night (Isaiah 26:9). Then, your wings will unfold from spiritual words, and the precious wisdom of flight will arise. Where, therefore, will you fear snares when there is a spiritual oar at your disposal? If sincerity of spirit, if purity of mind shines forth, you are a dove. Therefore it is said to you: Be. . . as simple as doves (Matth. X, 16). If the larger feathers are missing, or the smaller ones, do not despise them. Be even like a sparrow; so that with keen discernment you may be able to foresee traps, and almost caught by the allurements of sins, yet sometimes when called back you may say: Our soul is like a sparrow taken from the snare of hunters: the snare is broken, and we are set free (Psal. CXXIII, 7). Since we have considered this matter elsewhere (Book III, on Luke, chapter XII), it seems that we must now move on to something else.

It is enough for you to know that you are a bird, fitted by nature for flying, as the Lord says through the Prophet: 'Free yourselves from the snare of the hunters and from the troubling word' (Psalm 90:3); for nets are not unjustly stretched out for the birds. You are a bird, O man, who, like a bird, have been renewed in a certain youth as an eagle. And therefore nets are not unjustly stretched out for the birds. For why do you cast yourself down to the earth when you were already seeking the heavens? Nets are not unjustly stretched out for the renewed; for you have already begun to belong to Christ and to cease belonging to hunters. Beware the snares of hunters. Before, the devil captured his prey with his own right: now, why does someone attack the merchandise of the Lord's Cross? However, you can also avoid these snares, so that you do not say: the hunters caught me like a sparrow; if you escape the snare of the heart, which the devil sent into the heart of Judas, and thus armed him for the crime of betrayal. May God turn away these snares from us, which he pours upon sinners. And therefore, the Prophet says (Psalm 34:8): You will give them, Lord, the snare of their hearts, which you have prepared for them. But give us, O Lord, help; so that we may follow after you, bound by your chains. For there is nothing more powerful, nothing more pleasing, than the bonds of charity. He who is bound to you is free from the world.

40. (Verse 111.) I have inherited your testimonies forever; for they are the joy of my heart. This is also the voice of the martyrs, saying that they have received the inheritance of heavenly testimonies. Therefore, the Prophet says: I am the heir of your commandments, I have sought your succession of faith and piety by right. One cannot say this unless they keep the commandments, acquired with heaven and earth as witnesses. For the Lord has said: Hear, O heavens, and listen,

O earth (Isaiah 1:2). The Lord testifies the elements in order to prove those who refuse to keep divine commandments; so that he may close all the excuses. He also testifies men, saying: Be my witnesses, and I am a witness, says the Lord (Isaiah XLIII, 10). Therefore, the commands of the Lord are full of testimonies, and they themselves are testimonies, of which God, who does not lie, is a sufficient witness, before whom your conscience also bears witness, accusing or even defending your thoughts, faithful enough even in an unfaithful heart; because the judge of all things that have been committed cannot be deceived. For if in an earthly court even someone who has come prepared to lie, when convicted by the testimony of another, usually reveals the truth; how much more is it necessary in the heavenly court before the Lord Jesus for those who have spoken falsely to confess the truth, whom He knows to know what has happened? And he rightly says: I have sought your testimonies as an inheritance, because just as we were heirs of the sinner before, now we are heirs of Christ. That was the inheritance of sins, this is the inheritance of virtue: that bound us, this sets us free: that adjudicated us, enslaved by the interest of sins, to the enemy, this acquired us, liberated by the title of Christ's passion, to Christ. The succession of Eve's evils devoured the whole person: the glorious inheritance of Christ liberated the whole person. Not to one or a few, but to all, Jesus wrote His Testament. We are all heirs, not in proportion, but in universality. The Testament is common, and the right of all, the inheritance of all, and the stability of each. Each approaches the New Testament, and all possess it: what is claimed by coheirs does not diminish the inheritance of the heir. The benefit remains intact, and it grows even more for each individual, the more it is acquired by many. Another condition of human inheritance is this: if the profits are divided, they are diminished; and the division is the loss of the co-heir. The kingdom of Christ is undivided, the inheritance undivided. How could the inheritance be divided, when the fruit of the inheritance is undivided, which is the kingdom of heaven? Gold, silver, a property abandoned by a man to multiple people, is distributed and divided: solid gifts from Christ reach each individual: all have, and no one is cheated.

42. Therefore, let us listen to the hereditary benefits. The forgiveness of sins is the inheritance of Christ. Certainly, it is solid for each individual and profitable for the community; for whoever receives it, it does not depart from anyone, it is added to everyone. It is acquired by the body, whatever is relaxed for each person. For if the angels rejoice over one repentant sinner, because they consider it their gain in the redemption of mankind, how much more of a gain is it for the race, which is the gain of nature? The inheritance of Christ is the resurrection. Can anyone call this their loss, who finds it under the common name of grace? For when Christ rose, He rose for all; because through a man is the resurrection of the dead. So how can it be a loss for individuals, which is the renewal of the whole body and the human race? Therefore, let the Testament be recited, and let us consider its teachings. But the Holy Spirit is our witness. For when He said, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds,' then He adds: 'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more' (Hebrews 10:15 et seq.). O truly eternal testator, who fixes His laws in our hearts and writes them on our minds, so that we may think of nothing else but divine precepts and feel nothing else but the oracles of God. He gave grace, reformed nature, and to himself, who forgets nothing, he took away the memory of my sins and gave me his commandments.

43. Therefore, do not remove the law of God from your heart, and do not affix the law of sin. Do not write the enticements of the devil in your thoughts, and do not erase the commandments of

God. Behold, I have painted your walls, says the Lord to Jerusalem (Isa. XLIX, 16); this is to the studious soul of tranquility and peace, which he made in his own image. Do not, I say, take away the heavenly image, and impose the image of death. You have rejected the inheritance of the world: keep the testimonies of Christ; for in them is joy and gladness, since all weeping will be wiped away, and there will no longer be death, nor mourning, nor crying, nor outcry. The image of the Passion of Christ was a reflection of the heavenly kingdom. No one heard his voice in the streets; because in that silence of his passion, he abolished the future outcry of impious voices. He did not want to be mourned, who said to the daughters of Jerusalem: Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves (Luke 23:28). For he was about to take away all tears by the virtue of his cross, and in his own passion he displayed a foretaste of future blessedness, so that no one would weep except those who did not embrace the benefits of Christ.

44. Therefore, rightfully the Evangelical man says: I have sought your testimonies as an eternal inheritance; for they are the joy of my heart. Who would not rejoice, who has sought the heavens and the earth as an inheritance (which two elements God himself proclaimed when he gave the law), because he has sought God, of whom the Holy One says: The Lord is my portion; he has sought the Lord Jesus, he has sought the Holy Spirit; and after that, he has sought the angels, and lives with them, not only today and tomorrow, but for eternity; and for the sake of the Lord's name, he is not troubled by any wrongs? Finally, the apostles rejoiced when they were beaten, when they were thrown into prison.

45. (Verse 112.) Therefore, rejoicing in the testimonies of the Lord, he rightly said: I have inclined my heart to do your justifications forever, because of recompense. He who hopes for the recompense of good works from God and hastens to Him, inclines his heart to do the justice of Christ. What is the justice of Christ? Without us, he says, fulfilling all justice, by which sin diminishes and guilt is loosened (Matthew 3:15). And he says well, I have inclined; so that it may not be difficult for you, when you turn your mind as if to humble and plain things. Certainly, since the wisdom of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, he seems to bend his heart, who subjects himself to the law, elevating the senses of the body, and he deflects from the gaze of religion. And he, who recently elevated himself in vain and inflated in his mind of the flesh, when he humbles himself, bends. For Christ himself humbled himself, in order to establish a new Testament. When I read the Gospel, I hear that the Son of God assumed flesh from Mary, and I seem to myself to descend with Christ. For I read about him, who, though he was in the form of God, emptied himself. He emptied himself in order to receive the form of a servant, and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself even unto death. For I read him saying: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart (Matthew 11:28-29). He did not say: Learn from me because I am powerful; he did not say: Learn from me because I am glorious; but learn from me because I am humble, which you can imitate. Do not exalt yourselves, do not elevate your hearts. Therefore, he taught me to be humble and to incline my heart towards performing righteousness; not towards iniquity, but towards equity, for the sake of retribution. The reward is the kingdom of heaven, and the dwelling in paradise.

Sermon 15. Samech.

1. The letter Samech, the fifteenth letter, begins here, which has the interpretation, 'Hear.' There is also another interpretation of it, which is called, 'Firmament.' What does 'Hear' mean? It is not said in vain that it is common to all and is available to all by the right of nature itself. And therefore it is not in vain that you are admonished to hear; for even when unwilling and doing other things, we are accustomed to hear a sound or a voice. But because it is not only to hear what is available by the duty of nature, but also that which is greater, namely, to hear not only with the use of the body, but also with the understanding; therefore consider more carefully the interpretation of this letter and the series of verses that follow.

2. But in order that you may know that it is mystical to hear, so that you may hear and understand the mysteries, it is written concerning the Jews: 'With their ears they shall hear' (Isaiah 6:9); for they heard the mysteries of the law, but did not understand. Therefore the Lord says: 'Hear, O my people, and I will speak' (Psalm 49:7). The law is certainly spiritual, so listen spiritually. Finally, he who knew how to hear, says: 'I will hear what the Lord God speaks in me' (Psalm 85:9), that is, I will understand what God has spoken in me. And elsewhere it says: How great things we have heard and known (Psalm 77:3), so that it may grasp not only that it heard, but also that it understood. For no one knows, unless he first understands. Therefore, listen, lest if Peter sees you negligent, he may come and take up the sword and cut off your ear: the ear of the body which you have in excess, while you do not know how to hear and examine. And perhaps those who cannot hear at the altitude at which it is written may have had the virtue of the soul by which they examine whatever is heard amputated.

3. And rightfully others have interpreted this letter as a confirmation: because it agrees with the previous interpretation; for unless each person hears what they should follow, no one is confirmed. Therefore, in the duty of listening, there is the confirmation of all. So Jeremiah the prophet said to you in Lamentations by letter, listen. And so that you may know what you ought to hear is mystical, he added this series to this letter: The Lord has taken away all my strong men from among me. He has called a time against me, to crush my chosen ones. The Lord has trodden the Virgin Daughter of Judah down into the pit (Lam. I, 15). The Lord did not take away all the strong men of Judah at that time when the people of the Jews were led captive into the region of Babylon, but when Christ came and he did not see the captivity of his soul, not knowing how to raise the bent neck of his mind, weighed down by serious sins, and to raise up some of the burdens of faith to the light of knowledge. Therefore, the lake became a passion for the Jews, which showed the Gentiles the port of salvation; because the cross of the Lord is a precipice for unbelievers, but life for believers. He sent this message ahead, saying, 'Listen, so that you may know what is to come.' In another place, she also added this verse: Hands have been laid on you, all who pass by on the road: they hiss and wag their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem. This is the city, they say, the crown of glory, the joy of the whole earth (Lam. 2:15). It is clear that the passion of the Savior is being prophesied, and the destruction of the Jews is being lamented by Jeremiah, which can be understood not only from other passages but also from this one, because later it says: The Spirit of the Lord, the Christ, was taken prisoner in our destruction, under whose shadow, as we have said, we will live among the nations (Lam. 4:20). What is clearer than this, when both the name is expressed and the comprehension of the perfidious pursuers is declared, and the life-giving shadow and the grace to be conferred upon the nations are described?

However, the very words themselves also indicate what we read in the Gospel about the Lord's passion, because in this place his death is announced through the Prophet. For thus Matthew wrote: And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying: Thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again, save thyself, if thou be the Son of God (Matt. XXVII, 39-40). When the common people insult someone, they are accustomed to hiss. At the same time, because they did not have a voice, those who denied the Word hissed like irrational animals. And so they passed by, those who should have stood in the way. They did not stand as if they were steadfast, but they passed by as if they were movable. But the just people stood in the courts of Jerusalem, where the faithless could not stand; and so they passed by, as Mark indicated (Mark. XV, 29). Shadow passes, not truth. Its day passes like a shadow, forgotten, abandoned. But we also read about passing through unbelievers, as it is written: And let all who pass by the way plunder her (Psalm LXXIX, 13). For who but a faithless person would plunder the vineyard of Christ? But it is also written elsewhere: And those who pass by the way do not say: The blessing of the Lord be upon you (Psalm CXXVIII, 8). For when people are standing, it is said: Behold now bless the Lord (Psalm CXXXIII, 1). Nevertheless, we also read about passing through in a positive sense, as in the case of Moses: I will go over and see this great sight (Exodus III, 3). And he who saw the wicked exalted beyond the cedars of Lebanon said: I passed by, and behold, he was not there (Psalm 36:36). And no one says to the servant: Pass by, recline (Luke 17:7).

7. So let us consider what this distinction is; for perhaps it was stated absolutely, where a passage occurs in a good sense: He did not say, passing from this to that, but only passing. In an evil sense: They pass, he says, through the way (Psalm 79:13). For the way is good, which is frequented by those who come, and is not easily invaded by bandits, who are accustomed to lie in wait on the back roads: the king's highway is fortified. But Moses did not pass through the way, but stood on the way, to whom it was said: But you stand here with me (Deuteronomy 5:31). He stood with him who said: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. Those who pass through this way, stumble. But Moses did not stumble, but passed from temporal things to eternal things, from worldly things to spiritual things. And whoever has seen the wicked, does not stay, but passes through, escapes; for he does not stick with the wicked, lest they become one body, but separates himself from them. And to whom it is said: Pass by, recline, surely escapes the laborious servitude of the present, so that he may have the glorious rest of the future. And to the bride it is said: Come here from Lebanon, O bride, come here from Lebanon, you will pass through and you will pass by the beginning of faith (Canticles 4:8). She passes through and crosses over, she who hastens to the Bridegroom. She crosses over the world, and hastens to Christ.

8. Now let us discuss what it means to move the head. Who is the head of the people, if not Christ? For the head of a woman is the man, and the head of the man is Christ (I Cor. XI, 3). But even the Law is the head of the woman. In fact, the woman was under the Law as well as under the man. But the Jewish rite, which was according to the letter of the Law, was mortified, and the woman who rose from the dead was married to it. Therefore, some have mystically interpreted that, with the Jewish rite being mortified, they wanted that woman, who was intelligible according to the Law, to marry the Evangelical old rite of a dead brother; because the Law preceded the Gospel in a certain brotherly proclamation. Therefore the synagogue is a dead head, that is, its head is the dead Law, the observation of the Law having been evacuated: the letter of the Law is

void, its spiritual understanding is established. David remembers this turmoil in the forty-third psalm, saying: You have made us a byword among the nations, a shaking of the head among the peoples (Psalm 43:15); because there has been a transition from the Law to the Gospel, as it were. In the twenty-first psalm, in which the whole series of the passion is foretold, it says: All who saw me scoffed at me; they mocked me with their lips, they shook their heads. He hoped in the Lord, let Him deliver him; let Him save him, because He desires him (Psalm 21:8 and 9). Therefore, they have moved the Law, which seemed immovable; and for this reason, the end of the Law entered, Christ.

9. Those who moved their heads were the Pharisees, that is, divided from the truth; hence they also did not believe in the truth. But it can also be understood thus: They moved their head against Christ, who had come in his own; but they moved him because they did not receive him. They moved him, however, saying: Take him away, take him away, crucify him (John 19:15). And they moved their head, who were unwilling to move their own works; when they bound heavy burdens and imposed them on others: But they themselves do not want to move them with their finger (Matthew 23:4). What is mystical; because they never wanted to change the observation of bodily ritual and introduce spiritual understanding. For we read the finger as representing the spirit, as the Law is written with the finger of God (Deut. IX, 10), and therefore it is a spiritual Law. They did not want to remove their burdens, which are heavy, and take up the light yoke of Christ and his sweet burden. But because the passion of the Savior redeemed all, it is not absurd to understand that they moved their heads in this way, just as that leader of the Synagogue prophesied: It is expedient for one man to die for the people (John 11:50). He wanted to say one thing, but he meant something else. And these [people] moved their heads differently as if mocking, and they proclaimed something else; because he himself was the one who came to stir up that lazy and earthly principle of men, so that with the elimination of the outward appearance, we would seek the mystery in the words. Where he says: You have set us in a parable to the nations; shaking the head in the people (Psalm 43:15). This is certainly understood in a good sense; because he had said before: And you have dispersed us among the nations (Ibid., 12). For the Jews have been dispersed, so that the remnant of them might be saved according to the election of grace: but they have been set in a parable, so that we might learn from their outcome that the things said in the parable have been revealed, or that we might be warned to beware of faithlessness by their example. Then Jeremiah knew even more that Judea was to be mourned: and therefore he prophesied that Jerusalem was captured at that time, when it did not receive its own Redeemer. They insulted her, of whom they said, 'This is the city... the whole earth' (Lam. II, 15); because where there was once the joy of faith, there is now bitterness of unfaithfulness: or surely by moving her head, and by passing from bodily things to spiritual ones, she may deserve to hear; when she believes in Christ, that the crown is the glory.

11. But what is the crown of glory, if not the Church, which crowns its head Christ? What is the joy of the whole earth, if not the house of the Christian people, the court of the saints, of whom it is written: Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world (Psalm 18:5)? Therefore, because the Church is the crown of glory, it is said in the Canticles: Go forth... and see King Solomon in the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his espousals, and on the day of the joy of his heart (Song of Solomon 3:11). It is said to the souls that they should come out of the depths and prisons of the body, come out of the thoughts of the body,

go out from desires and cares, and from the other affections of this flesh and slippery passions, rise above the world, go out of this world, meet Christ, be prepared with burning torches shining brightly. As if angels of Christ speak these words: You cannot see His clarity, His glory, unless you come out of the cares of human frailty, daughters of Jerusalem. As if to say, why do you seek the living among the dead? Christ is not sought within this world, for He wanted His disciples to be above the world. What is the crown with which Christ is crowned, if not the crown of glory? Joseph had the crown of chastity, Paul of righteousness, Peter of faith. Each virtue has its crown. Only Christ has the crown of glory, with which the Church crowned Him. In this crown, all the crowns are found, because glory is not the portion of one crown, but the reward of all the crowns.

12. They transferred the head in the third tradition, that is, Christ, who is the head of his people. The head of Christ is Peter (Song of Songs 5:11). Hence, the eagle called him a golden rock: Symmachus called it a golden stone, which signifies stability and eminent wisdom. The Church is the body of Christ. The head of this body is gold, that is, the precious wisdom of the saints, that is, righteous and prudent men. Her hair is black as a raven (Ibid.); of which it is said elsewhere: Your hair is like a flock of goats (Song of Songs 6:4). Therefore, hair is because the power of all senses is in the head. For the eyes of the wise are in their head (Ecclesiastes 2:14). Therefore, the deep wisdom of the doctors, which can reveal that which is obscure and open the heights of senses. And such debaters are the hair of the Church, like the ravens' chicks, to whom the Lord gives food, as He gave to holy Jacob from his youth and fed him. The Lord feeds these lofty and deep ones with the abundance of doctrine through heavenly sacraments. His eyes are like doves, that is, adorned with spiritual senses, sharp and ready to see mysteries, and prepared to penetrate the secret Scriptures of God, shining with rational milk, in which there is no tainted confusion of deceit, but pure and immaculate sincerity of simple affection. Therefore, in an abundance of waters, these doves, cleansed, were mentioned in milk.

Now certainly, we understand that the teeth and cheeks, and like a scarlet net, the lips of the bride (Song of Songs 6:5), represent the virtues of the soul and the various teachings of the wise: those who diligently supply spiritual nourishment to the mind; those who bind the listener with the preaching of the Lord's cross as with a certain line of words; those who, though modest and reserved, and even though they may withdraw from discussing immodesty out of a sense of propriety, still emit the fragrance of Christ in their actions, and, just as the anointing oil descends upon the cheeks from the priestly head, the beauty of their doctrine shines forth. And the synagogue stirred up this head, and therefore the Lord took away the wonderful counselor, the prudent architect, and the wise listener: The head, he says, and the tail (Isaiah 9:14); for those who did not hold the head cannot have the last things. But let us now consider the things that are connected.

15. (Verse 113.) I have hated the wicked, and I have loved your law. The holy prophet David declared in this verse how much affection he extends towards the Lord; because although he did not persecute his enemies (since he could barely protect himself from the schemes of King Saul, from whose snares he could hardly escape with his life, and he did not consider life worth desiring, and he considered vengeance to be necessary, and he mourned the death of his impious son, and he forgave the sins of many who were persecuting him, as he himself says in Psalm 7:5, because he did not retaliate against those who were causing him harm), he still detests the transgressors of the divine law: in which, certainly, his kindness of character, the gentleness of his piety, and the

strong intention of devotion are revealed, corresponding to the discipline of the evangelical precept, which he foresaw with a prophetic spirit. For indeed the Lord Jesus commanded us to seek the love of our enemies (Matt. 5:44), and that the enemies of God, even if they are connected to us by the bonds of parents, children, or marriage and blood relationships, should be pursued with hatred. For it is written: If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yes, even his own life, he is not worthy of me (Luke 14:26).

16. But if someone with idle ears hears this, perhaps they might say: 'Lord Jesus, you gave the law saying: Love the Lord your God, love your neighbor (Deut. VI, 5); and to fulfill this law, you came: you said through the Law: Honor your father and mother (Levit. XIX, 18); and in the Gospel you command us to hate our parents (Matth. XV, 4).' How do these commandments fit together? Did you come with a gentle and humble heart? I cannot, with a sense of piety, hate the father to whom I owe my creation, the mother who carried the burdens of a pious fetus for ten long months, to whom there is more danger in giving birth and more weariness in delaying it. What do the sweetest sons deserve, that they should be excluded from paternal love; when it is impious not to be willing to die for one's children? What do dearest wives merit, who are certain companions of life, and have a shared partnership in nature? What do brothers, formed from the same bowels and produced in the same womb of nature for this purpose of life, deserve? Shall I hate then the pledges of affection? So by the gentle mercy of the Gospel you soften the severity of the unyielding Law, in such a way that by your Gospel you condemn the grace of those whom the Law condemns for their injustices?

I am unable to respond to such a statement: but you, O Lord, respond; for you do not need to be excused, since you did not need to speak. Therefore, he will respond: Shall I condemn piety, I who hate iniquity? Shall I command parents not to be loved, I who advise enemies to be loved? But haven't you read: There is a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace (Eccl. 3:8)? What does Ecclesiastes say about this? Is it not because of the fact that it happens according to the course of time, that we are able to both love and hate some people: and that it is fitting to love those whom you have loved and hate those whom you have hated? Therefore, I have not infused the hatred of parents into the hearts of their children: nor have I urged the aversion of wives into the minds of their husbands. Ask nature what I have exacted, which certainly testifies to the will of the author with the natural affection of individual relationships. To love one's children is the law of nature for fathers: for husbands, it is the divine law which turns marital love into nature, so that they become one flesh and one spirit. To love brothers is a prerogative of nature, which, in the same dwelling, gradually accustoms them to the grace of charity.

18. So I did not send him to wage internal wars of necessity, but I considered it a suspicious temptation. Was it not rightly suspected, when that cunning and crafty serpent, in order to weaken the affection of Adam, founded on the untainted and naive gift of nature, entrusted it more to female allurements than to his own perfidious arts? Thus the woman, having been led astray by a certain softness and charm of wifely devotion, turned the man, whom the serpent did not dare to tempt, by the food of her mouth and the power of love. And yet Eve did not yet have children, of whom, for their sake, as sweet as love, as easy to fall away, she often prevented many from the achievement of martyrdom? Finally, we have often known that the one whom the terrifying parade

of executioners did not frighten, nor did the cut in the divided side break, nor could the burning plates lead him away from the rigidity of triumphal bravery, him who was now established among sacred rewards, he deceived his tender wife and the offering of pitiable tears with the mercy of a single tear. Samson was captured by his wife, are you stronger? Solomon was captivated by his wife, are you wiser? Therefore, the one whose wisdom is celebrated throughout the ages became foolish because he loved his wife too much.

19. What shall I say about the brothers? She experienced that the kisses of children and the house of the Prophets are more detestable than fraternal hatred. Therefore, indeed, the father wept for the parricide, but he was more angered by the incest. Finally, although she called him a parricide, she nonetheless called him the perpetrator of incest. So there is a time for love, a time for hate, that is, a time for martyrdom, when the things that are divine must be preferred to all bonds of affection. A time for war, when we even wage war against the perfidious enemies for the sake of Christ. A time for peace, for in peace is its place (Psalm 75:3). Finally, the Gospel itself clearly explains the reason why we should hate our own, saying: 'Anyone who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me' (Matthew 10:37). He did not say that those who love their relatives are unworthy, but he said they are unworthy who love their relatives more than Christ. For if we offer love to our parents because they are the authors of our generation, how much more should we love Christ who is the author of their parents? They have given what is not in their power, but of their ministry. Christ grants salvation, who preserves the benefits of parents. But beautifully he said: I have hated the wicked, but I have loved your law; for if we love the law, we must hate the adversaries of the law, who oppose the precepts of the law with their deeds. The Greek more accurately and specifically called them 'lawbreakers'; 'lawbreaker' is called *exlex*, because they are outside the law. Therefore, he who is in the law of Christ hates them, because they do not keep the commandments of the law. For not only he who does not know the law, but also he who does not act according to the law, is a stranger to the law; because they are not hearers of the law. . . . but those who practice the law will be justified (Rom. II, 13). David himself rebukes me if I understand it differently. How could he hate unjust people, who praised a parricidal son to his warriors, so that no one would kill him? He even avenged the death of King Saul on the one who reported him dead.

Therefore, he did not hate unjust people, but unjust words. Finally, he said: I have hated the unjust, he did not add, men. Then, when Jesus says in the Gospel: Love your enemies (Matthew 5:44), and the Apostle says: Bless those who persecute you, and do not curse them (Romans 12:14), how could this man living under the discipline of the Gospel justify himself if he hated unjust people? Unless you understand that he hated injustice, not those who, although they committed injustice, could still be converted by the preaching of the Gospel. But surely unless we understand it in this way: because just as he who does not honor the father is unjust, nevertheless he is also considered hateful according to the same thing that is written: He who does not hate the father, or the mother... or brothers, or sisters, or his own soul, cannot be my disciple (Luke XIV, 26), even though he is praiseworthy: so this person also hated the unjust ones in the same way he hated the father who transgressed, or his own soul: preferring, evidently, the grace of Christ's sweetness to the pleasure of this life.

23. (Verse 114) It follows: You are my helper and my protector, and I hope in your word. Helper through the Law, protector through the Gospel. Those whom he helped through the Law, he

received in the flesh; for it is written: He carries our sins; and therefore, I hope in his word (Isaiah 53:4). However, the Greek **ἐλπισα** has, which means I have hoped upon; which is said of one who always adds to hope; and when he hopes for something, he hopes again, and advances in hope, always stretching towards higher things, and forgetting those things which are past. But beautifully he says: In your word I have hoped, that is, I have not hoped in prophets, not in the Law, but in your word I have hoped, that is, in your coming; that you come and receive sinners, forgive sins, place the weary sheep on your shoulders on the cross, O good shepherd. If anyone hopes in Christ, he ought to separate himself from the company of the treacherous.

25. (Verse 115.) And therefore he says: Depart from me, you evil ones, and I will search the commandments of my God. By the testimony of this verse, it is indicated that where there is malignity, there cannot be the keeping of heavenly commandments; for wisdom does not enter into a malicious soul (Wisdom 1:4). And elsewhere: The wicked will seek me, and will not find me (Proverbs 1:28). Christ loves a simple mind, a pure and purified soul, and there can be no companionship with sinful deeds for immaculate virtue. He hates, avoids, and spurns contagious diseases, he who says: Learn from me because I am gentle (Matt. XI, 29). He repels the wicked, he calls those who labor. Jesus says to them: Depart from me, all of you who work iniquity (Matt. VII, 23); to them he says: Come to me, all of you who labor and are burdened (Matt. XI, 28), not with wickedness of mind, but burdened with the weakness of the flesh: burdened, I say, by the inheritance of sin. I assist those who are working: I must not help the fraudulent, lest they harm more people. Let punishment restrain them: let grace correct them. For malice is the source of sin: fault is the result of weakness. I must help those who labor: I must also hate the one who deceives. Therefore, it repels evil actions. For unless you understand it this way, he seems to say: Depart from me; for I am holy, for I am pure. This is what the Pharisee said, but he was rebuked by Christ. Therefore, the Prophet does not say: I am the world, but, Create in me a clean heart, O God (Psalm 51:10).

26. (V. 116.) And therefore, having been separated from the company of the wicked, as if someone who had been mixed with them before could not be received by the Lord, he says: Receive me according to Your word, and I will live; and do not disappoint my hope. If Lazarus the poor man lives, who is in the bosom of the patriarch Abraham, how much more does he who is received by Christ live? For how can he not live forever, whom eternal life has received, whom Christ has taken entirely to Himself, who is the whole Word, whose life is hidden in Christ Jesus? But even he who sits in the bosom of Abraham, was received by Christ. But saying to God, Accept me, would seem to be an intolerable presumption, unless He had added His promise, that is, Unless You had made it possible for us, we have agreed with Your signature, who have removed our signature. We have made the signature of death, You have written the signature of life.

27. Therefore, do not disappoint your servant from his expectation, for I hope in you; for hope does not disappoint. And if we are troubled, you provide patience, so that we may endure; so that because I await you, I may not be overwhelmed by weaknesses, I may not yield to temptations, I may not be afflicted by storms, in which patience is to be tested, so that testing may result in confirmation of hope and strength, which does not disappoint; that is: We are often broken by hardships, we are weary: if hope is lacking, we are disappointed, and disturbed in our whole mind. But be this as it is, let there be some who are harsh to endure labours, firm to endure injuries: if you take away hope, patience cannot be everlasting. Patience itself is not proved, if faith is

lacking, of which hope is the root. For what proof can there be, unless for the sake of Christ's name you bear either discomforts or all dangers? Therefore, hope is the only thing that does not confuse our emotion. Where there is hope, that apostolic saying applies: The battles without, the fears within (II Cor. VII, 5), cannot harm.

28. Another interpretation is this: Do not make me ashamed. He who hopes in Christ will not be ashamed. Therefore, the one who hopes well says: In you I trust, I will not be ashamed (Psalm 24:2). And rightly so, for I trust; the strength of our hope is and the confidence of the one who hopes. Therefore, always hope, and no one will disappoint you in your expectation. Our expectation is eternal life. Our expectation is the kingdom of God, the fellowship of angels, and spiritual blessings. Hope every day. This matter has no end, it knows no truce. Hope even in adversity. If someone says to you, struck by the loss of some strong bond: What good is your justice; yet you hope, let not your faith fail. If someone says to you, What good are your daily fasts; what good is bodily chastity, purity of mind? Behold, you are wounded like the unjust and impious. Let not your faith fail. For even if you are weak, Christ, who is faithful, is concerned for you. He says to his disciples: Give them to eat, lest they faint in the way. You have the food of the apostles, eat it and you will not be lacking. Eat it beforehand so that you may afterwards come to the food of Christ, to the food of the Lord's body, to the banquet of the Sacrament, to that cup by which the affections of the faithful are inebriated; so that he may clothe himself with the joy of the remission of sins, cast off the cares of this world, the fear of death, and the anxieties of life. Therefore, with this drunkenness, the body does not sway, but rises up; the mind is not confused, but consecrated.

29. (Verse 117.) It follows: Help me, he says, and I will be saved: and I will always meditate on your justifications. He who hopes presumes to be helped: but where there is the assistance of God, there is certainly the certain aid of salvation. Above he said: You are my helper and protector (Sup. v. 112): here he asks to be helped again, as if to say: Help me without ceasing. It is not enough for me what I have asked, I ask again to be saved. Here the salvation is not great, not true: I will be saved then, when I am in paradise, when I start to live among your chosen angels, when I have escaped the snares of this earth. But let us not, by chance, neglect the help we have received in times of need, when we have been placed in prosperity. It teaches us that we should never be unmindful of the heavenly benefits, but rather meditate on the justifications of the Lord. So even when we have done something good, let us always confess our sins to Him; for this is the justification of the Lord. Finally, the Pharisees did not justify God, for they refused to be baptized with the baptism of repentance (Luke 7:30). Therefore, he justifies the one who repents of their sins. For the one who repents confesses, as it is written: 'I have sinned against you alone, and I have done evil in your sight; so that you may be justified in your words' (Psalm 51:4). And so, the tax collector went out of the temple more justified (Luke 18:14); because the Pharisee justified himself by proclaiming his own righteousness, but the tax collector justified God by confessing his own iniquities. Therefore, the one who meditates on the justifications of the Lord is always humbled. Today is not a day for humiliation, tomorrow for exaltation: but always be humble in heart and gentle in feeling. It is always more than a day and night or a whole day; for it surpasses time. Therefore, if you are counted among the angels, you should always affirm the justifications of God, and ascribe the glory you have attained not to your own merits, but always to divine mercy; lest it be said to you: What do you have that you did not receive? But if you received it, why do you boast

as if you did not receive it? For every creature, whatever good it has, has received it from Christ, who is the author of all creation. (2 Corinthians 4:7)

31. (Verse 118.) You have rejected all who stray from your statutes; for their thinking is unjust. Every proud person is unclean in the sight of the Lord; for they cannot cleanse their sins through their pride, as they heap up error with an arrogant spirit. Therefore, they are despised and scorned, because they hold divine commandments in contempt. However, the heavenly prerogative of mercy is preserved; for it rejects no one, but those who refuse to confess their own sins depart from our Lord God. Finally, he departed, who had set out on a journey, and squandered everything he had received from his father, the inheritance of faith and grace. And because he regretted his departure, he later returned to his father, whom he had left when he did not want to confess his own sin. Therefore, God is not abandoned by a distance of places, but by the wickedness of morals and the ugliness of actions. He departs from the Lord, who distances himself from Him, just as Adam desired to hide from the presence of God after hearing Him. But departing from the Lord, he could not have salvation; for it is written: Behold those who distance themselves from you, will perish (Ps. 27:72). Therefore, each person either joins or separates according to their own pursuits. In fact, it is clear that many are not separated by geographical distances, but rather connect neighboring areas, indicating that many are thirsty for the body and wander from the body, and are present to God; like the one who says to God: Whom shall I send? He answered, 'Here I am, send me.' (Isaiah 6:8) Paul also dared to approach God, because he saw nothing in himself other than material flesh. And Cain went out from the presence of God, believing that he did not need to repent for his sins after committing fratricide. But rightly he says: You have brought the transgressors to nothing. He did not say sinners, but transgressors. For what hope would there be for us when we are all under sin? Also beautifully said: You have brought all the transgressors to nothing. Whether he is rich, his riches are of no benefit to him; whether he is honored, his dignity is of no value; whether he is powerful, his power is of no use. But it is one thing to be a transgressor departing from the justifications of God: another thing to be a transgressor of the earth. That is heavier, this is lighter.

33. (Verse 119.) Therefore, to avoid being disturbed by what is subject to you, see; for he subjected these to you: I have esteemed all the sinners of the earth to be betrayers: therefore, I have always loved your testimonies. The betrayer is rightly called one who departs from the Lord. Finally, in Greek, an apostate is named from departure. Hence also that saying: Wine and women cause one to apostatize, he says (Eccli. XIX, 2). Therefore, beware of the incentives and allurements of sins, lest they lead to wickedness. But the one who prevaricates in Latin and is called a transgressor; because he passes from the law of the Lord to error, and transgresses the heavenly commands, to whom it is said to adhere to the Lord his God (Deut. X, 20). Therefore, adhere to him with undivided affection; so that no force can pull you away from him. If the adversary sees anything rare or interrupted, he immediately launches himself into your chest and heart; so that he can hold you in the snare of his deceit, and, bound by the hostile bond of authority, you are drawn away from devotion. But not only is he a transgressor who, disregarding the Church, crosses over to the worship of idols; but also anyone who does not observe the commandments of the Law. Therefore, every sinner is a transgressor. Hence that saying: Every transgression receives just retribution (Hebrews II, 2). A common name, but different merits of offenses; and therefore different prices of faults.

34. What does it mean when it says: Sinners of the earth. Therefore, there are also sinners in heaven, like the one who said: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you (Luke 15:21). There are those who say that one who does not keep the heavenly oracles is a transgressor of heaven. But whether this is true, or because he diminishes the grace he received from heaven, which the Holy Spirit poured out: or because as a bird of heaven, you should not return to the earth from heaven. Therefore, you sin against heaven if you, as a citizen of heaven, leave heaven. Therefore, there is diversity among them. Some are sinners of the heavens, others are sinners of the earth.

35. In the morning, he said, I was killing all the sinners of the earth (Psalm 100:8). How could one person kill all the sinners of the earth? But if you consider the just one, to whom the night has passed and the day has approached; you can see how, with the rising of the sun of justice upon you, you can vigilantly destroy all the incentives of wrongdoing. I wish this grace would inspire me, so that with the spiritual sword, which is the word of God, I could abolish all the incentives of vices from the Church of the Lord, and take away earthly sins, by which we are being precipitated into a certain slippery pitfall of error, so that the worker of iniquity may be expelled from the city of God. The City of God is the Church: the Church is the body of Christ. He sins against heaven, who contaminates the rights of the heavenly city, and violates the sanctity of the immaculate body with the pollution of their vices.

36. And see, lest perchance they be who are sinners of heaven and earth. For indeed Adam, when he was in paradise, was of heaven: but after the fall, he became earthly, and was expelled and cast out from paradise. Hence, the Apostle says: The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven, heavenly (I Cor. XV, 47). Let the image of the earthly be rejected by us, let the image of the heavenly be received, not expressed by paint, not drawn by wax, not shadowed by colors, but by virtue, in which Christ may recognize Himself.

37. (Verse 120.) Fix the key of your fear in my flesh; for I have feared your judgments. He who loves the testimonies of the Lord, fixes the key in his flesh, knowing that his old man, conjoined with Christ on the cross, may destroy the lust of the flesh; lest his desires become lascivious with uncontrolled fervor, lest the root of avarice establish itself with serpentine roots. Therefore, fix the key, and destroy the nourishment of sin: let all the allurements of transgressions die in your flesh; let the desire for pleasure, affixed to the cross, not have the freedom to wander. There is a certain spiritual nail that affixes these flesh to the wood of the Lord's cross. And perhaps these flesh are the flesh of the soul, just as the body is the soul. The flesh of the soul are carnal thoughts. Let the fear of the Lord and His judgments affix these flesh, and reduce them to servitude. But if these flesh reject the nails of divine fear, it is undoubtedly said: My spirit will not remain in these men; for they are flesh (Gen. VI, 3). Therefore, unless these meats are fastened to the cross and pierced with nails out of fear of our God, the spirit of God will not remain in them.

38. Just as there are thorns of fear by which we are punctured, so there are nails of fear by which we are nailed. He who is punctured is aroused: he who is nailed is mortified; so that he may cease from sin and live for God. But in order that we may know that the nails are spiritual, the stimuli are also spiritual, of which it is written: 'It is hard for you to kick against the goad' (Acts 9:5). With this goad, Paul, having been pricked, rose up from the earth and lifted himself up, so that he might dwell in heaven. The Apostle Thomas was fixed with keys, so that he could say: Unless I see in his

hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails (John 20:25). The nails were of good desire: the nails were, though not of perfect faith, yet of faith seeking increase.

39. The key is configured for those who die with Christ, so that they may rise with Christ. The key is configured for those who bear the mortification of the Lord Jesus in their body. The key is configured for those who deserve to hear Jesus saying: 'Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, jealousy is hard as the nether world' (Song of Solomon 8:6). Therefore, fasten this seal of the crucified one to your chest and your heart, fasten it also to your arm, so that your works may be dead to sin. Let nothing in these crimes revive, let no error arise again. Perhaps they attach this image not only of fear, but also of charity, because charity is as strong as death, and zeal as harsh as hell. Therefore, let not the harshness of the nails offend you, for it is the harshness of charity; nor let the strength of the nails be strong, for charity is also strong like death. For charity mortifies sin and all sins: charity, like a blow of death, destroys. Finally, we die through vices and sin, while we love the commandments of the Lord. Charity is God, the word of God is charity, which is strong and sharper than any sharpest sword, even to the division of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, penetrating into the innermost parts. It is a hard zealousness of charity, which does not yield to the infernal; since, for the zeal of God, everyone spares not even themselves. With these keys of charity, may our soul and our flesh be pierced, so that they themselves may say: 'Because of love I am wounded' (Song of Songs 5:8). Love has its own key; it has its own sword, by which the soul is wounded. Blessed is he who deserves to be wounded by this sword. These are the wounds that are preferred to kisses: the wounds of a friend are more useful than the voluntary kisses of an enemy.

40. But we offer ourselves to wounds, by which whoever has died cannot taste death. For such is the death of those who followed the Lord, of whom it is said: There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom (Matthew XVI, 28). Peter rightly did not fear this death; for he did not fear who said, even if it were necessary for him to die for Christ, he would not abandon or deny him (Matthew XXVI, 35). Therefore let us take up the cross of the Lord, which crucifies our flesh and destroys sin. There is fear that crucifies the flesh: Unless someone takes up their own cross and becomes my disciple, they are not worthy of me (Matt. X, 38). For it is only the one who has the fear of Christ who is worthy, in order to crucify the carnal sin. This fear is followed by charity, which, buried with Christ, is not torn away from Christ, dies in Christ, is buried with Christ, and rises with Christ.

Sermon 16. Ain.

The sixteenth letter is Ain, whose interpretation is "Eye" or "Fountain." The eye is used for the function of seeing, but often we see things that please us and often things that displease us. However, the eye is neither to blame nor praised for the quality of the things it sees. The eye's duty is to convey what it sees. It can be either offended or pleased by sweet or adverse things. Therefore, the eye is often called the eye of punishment, the eye of temptation, the eye of the goat, the eye of the calf, the eye of generation, or the fountain of generation.

We read in the Gospel that John was baptizing at Ennon (John 3:23). Ennon is interpreted as the eye of punishments. Therefore, no one comes to baptism unless they desire their own sins to be forgiven, and they dread the punishments of those sins in their prudent heart. Therefore, although it is called the eye of punishments, it is the punishments of the foreseeing, not of the enduring:

although it has some tolerance of the reception of punishments in the baptism of penance. The function of the eyes is to serve for looking: it is your job to take care of what you see.

3. Finally, the eye is said to be a temptation, because we are often tempted through the eyes. The eye is the snare of the prostitute, the trap of the lover. But the eye does not commit any sin; therefore the statement of the Savior is full of justice, saying: Whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:28). He did not say: Whoever looks at a woman, but looks at her to lust after her. The eye is absolved, the mind is bound. He did not say: He has committed adultery with her in his eye, but in his heart. In the eye it is seen, in the heart sin. The eye of the shepherd is on the left; so that he may not see the things on the right, which are sinful. But the holy one says: I always see the Lord in front of me, because He is on my right, so that I may not be moved (Psalm XV, 8). And to the holy apostle Peter, when he had caught nothing all night, as we read in the Gospel, the Savior said: Cast the nets to the right side of the boat (John XXI, 6). Therefore, trusting in heavenly commands, he cast the nets and gathered a great number of fish. On the left was the night: on the right, the brightness of divine discourse shone like day.

5. And there is also the eye of a calf: which is equally attributed to sinners; because just as with a constant yoke, calves draw iniquities, not breaking or cutting off their own, but pulling sin with a long rope. For an untamed calf eventually becomes tame, and pulls the yoke, but does not bear it; because it is impatient to be held: and the longer it pulls, the more it is hindered. The eye is also called the source of generation or the fountain of generation because either good or bad things are generated from the sight of the eyes. You have seen the beauty of a woman, praised the work of the artist, the charm of nature: the generation of faith, devotion is the offspring. You were content with the beauty of her form, not motivated by wealth, you took her as your wife, and you begot children of a more generous grace: the eye was the source of prosperity for you. You contemplated the sacred girl, your eyes were pressed with the august reverence of chastity: you preached the Lord Jesus, who gave an old man the gravitas of youth in his young age, and infused an immaculate life amidst the seductions of this frail flesh with human desires: he is the fountain of good things. You have seen the possessions of orphans, not to invade them, but to protect them; and you have groaned with paternal compassion, if you noticed any neglect regarding the welfare of the minor. You have repelled those who wanted to invade their boundaries; you have judged on behalf of the orphan. Your eye has been the source and origin of justice. You have judged the widow (for just as a counterfeit coin is not a real coin, so a corrupt judgement is not truly a judgement). Therefore, you have judged as a just and good judge. You have seen the wicked usurper, who thought a defenseless woman was his plunder. You have not tolerated injustice; you have provided assistance to the vulnerable, so that with your support she could carry out her chaste works without being compelled to seek marital aid. The Lord says to you: Come, let us reason together (Isaiah 1:18). Because you judged the widow, your eye became a fountain of grace for you. You saw the naked body of a poor man lying dead, and you did not pass by like the priest and the Levite in the Gospel (Luke 10:31-32), but immediately had compassion and entrusted him to the consolation of burial: your eye has become the source of redemption.

7. Against a field gaze where widow planted vineyards, happy with crops, shady with woods, or running with rivers, or bursting with springs, or pleasant with grassy banks, and inflamed by the torches of avarice you moved the boundaries of the fathers and wickedly rushed into defenseless

possession: your eye has created for you the bitter fruit of perpetual death. You have violated the rights of a nearby widow: you have compelled her, who ought to cherish her sorrow or shame within closed walls, to burst into public view, to litigate more shamelessly than unjustly: your eye has become the offspring of injustice. You saw the needy with a proud eye and an insatiable heart: you despised the prayer of the poor and passed over the one whom you should have had mercy on with disdain: your eye was a source and origin of sin.

Therefore let your eyes not be eyes of a wolf, and do not lie in wait for prey, but as it is said of the Bride: Your eyes are like pools in Heshbon, by the gates of the daughter of many: your nostrils are like the tower of Lebanon (Song of Songs 7:4). What is pools in Heshbon, if not the abundance in rational thoughts, which is in the gates of the Church, to which the multitude of teaching is rightly attributed? For the daughter of many has become the offspring of many teachings, and her nostrils excel with the fragrance of all sacrifices. For what is more sublime than the fragrance of Christ, who abolished the burning of incense? Therefore, let that eye foresee what is to come: and if it foresees adversities approaching, let it not cease to soften and mitigate with weeping and tears.

Therefore, Jeremiah, placed in captivity by the Judean people, foreseeing the future torment of perpetual captivity, which the people of Judah held to be paid by their treachery, said in Lamentations under this same letter: In this, I weep, my eyes have grown dim from weeping; because the one who used to console me has been taken far away from me (Lam. 1:15-16). Therefore, he was not grieving being taken away from his land, but rather being abandoned by Christ and losing the consolation of future life. This is truly a lamentable captivity, which seemed to have been deprived of eternal hope. In another place, under the same letter, he repeated in the Lamentations, saying: The Lord has accomplished what He has planned, His word that He commanded from ancient days. He has destroyed and has not spared, and He has made the enemy rejoice over you, and has exalted the horn of your oppressor (Lam. II, 17). Is it not clearly announcing the future judgment of Christ, as it is certain to be declared in the present psalm as well? Therefore, the eye should foresee what is to come, and either divert it with a lavish flow of tears or correct it with retribution. Finally, Jeremiah wept; because he had taken up the wicked cause of the impious people, who, with the stubbornness of treachery, denied their own author.

10. (Verse 121.) But David, foreseeing the judgment of Christ by the prophetic spirit, in which no innocent person will be endangered; no wicked person will escape, relying on a good conscience, says: I have done judgment and justice: do not hand me over to the wicked. He does not praise himself in a boastful or insolent manner, since as a skilled expert in the law, he was well aware that each person should be praised by the words of others rather than by their own. I say, there is no boasting here of the virtues preached, but rather an assertion of an innocent life by right; lest he be deemed worthy to be abandoned by the Lord because of serious sins, and handed over to the power of the wicked. Therefore, defense is not arrogance, when not any degree of honor is assumed, but formidable hardship is repelled. Lastly, Peter uses this kind of defense, saying: Behold, we have left everything and followed you: what therefore shall be for us? (Matthew 19:27). In which if any blemish of arrogant speech had been present, not only would he have attributed the sentence of grace from the Lord and Savior, but also he himself would not be subjected to judgment, but would also proclaim judgment concerning the merits of others. For indeed in a trial, if someone were to disclose what they had done for the sake of defending their innocence, it would be considered as boasting rather than a defense of their case. It is one thing to declare something

worthy of reward, and another thing to declare something deserving of injury. And yet that very same philosopher, as they say, when he was accused, was asked what punishment he deemed himself worthy of, and is said to have responded that he should be welcomed to a daily feast at the public banquets. He claimed the honor, while avoiding the hardship. He arrogated the glory, while maintaining humility. For what greater humility can there be than to fear being handed over to the power of the devil, being conscious of one's own judgment and reserved justice? He knew himself to be a man, unequal to the war against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places: He knows Enoch to have been raptured, lest his heart be changed by malice: Noah intoxicated, Lot defiled, the first priest Aaron tempted with his own sister Mary, Mary sprinkled with leprous spots first, then cured: Moses nearly destroyed, if not for the circumcision of his son and the casting of his wife's blood, Sephora, which averted all danger from him. Therefore, having been warned by these examples, he does not at all trust in his own strength: but cautious humility, by praying, appropriates divine help to himself, seeking not to be handed over to the wicked.

12. For he knows that the prince is the author of all the sins of the world. He himself divides the affections of individuals driven by the stimulus of their neighbors' anger: he himself kindles the flame of desire: he himself fuels the desires of greed, so that the more we seize, the more we desire: he himself suggests and supplies the fuel for luxury: he himself exacerbates hatred and inflames excessive ambition. This vice, which is gentle at the beginning, becomes cruel in its progress and cannot be recalled by contemplating brotherly harmony. While he grieves that divine grace is preferred to him, he goes from sacrifice to parricide. Therefore, the Apostle teaches that the instigator of this is the devil: Lest he tempt you by reason of your incontinence (I Cor. VII, 5). Likewise, we read that he is the instigator of covetousness, with Paul saying: They that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil (I Tim. VI, 9). And elsewhere: Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry (Coloss. III, 5). For we carry out the will of the devil, and we exercise his power, who works through the desires of this flesh as the stimulus of his deceit.

Therefore, whoever finds someone in possession of his vices, he claims them as subject to his authority. He commits adultery, engages in excess, and steals from others; he belongs to the devil. But the chaste, self-controlled, and merciful belong to Christ. Therefore, one cannot claim a servant of Christ for oneself, unless perhaps he has been caught in vices. Even then, he does not claim him, but rather requests that he be handed over to himself. Therefore, David says: I have done judgment and justice, not to arrogate, but to excuse; so that a sinner may not be deserted by Christ. Let an example be given to us from the apostolic reading for this reason. For I have delivered to Satan the man who has had his father's wife, because he has acted in this way, says the Apostle (I Cor. V, 4 and 5): therefore, he would not have been delivered unless he had done the works of the devil. Hence, it is not undeservedly that the prophet refuses to be delivered to the guilty, who alleges that he has not done the works of the devil, but of Christ; for Christ says: Judge the orphan, and justify the widow (Esai. I, 17). Therefore this is what I did: I executed judgment and justice, I did not despise the poor in their cause, I did not oppress the widow, I did not receive bribes from the rich, I preserved justice in all my works.

14. The end of judgment is justice. In one, the custody of truth; in the other, the fruit of equity. Both are virtues not for private benefit, but for the public good. For to preserve an unpolluted body from

sexual mixing and to carry the palm of chastity, unsoiled, in the body until the conversation of angels is the custody of integrity, private benefit, public praise: to be frugal and modest, and to keep the measure of sober parsimony, is proven by many, but profits only oneself. Fortitude excels in battles, but grows cold in peace: its work is necessary in times of need, but undesirable in times of preference; for people prefer not to fight rather than to conquer. Only justice is the one that, at all times, protects the interests of others more than its own, through daily use and public benefit, at its own expense: it provides no utility, but earns the most praise. This is the virtue that the Prophet presents to commend his merit, saying: I have done judgment and justice: do not deliver me to the wicked. Where there is justice, there is mercy. Mercy delivers from sin. So how am I delivered to sinners? Similar to that in the Song of Songs: I have taken off my tunic, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? (Song of Songs 5:3-4) I have taken off the tunic of the sinner and the veil of the earthly: why am I judged as a sinner and worldly? I have washed my feet, so that no lot of wrongdoing could adhere to the footprints: why do you give power to those who sin against me?

15. (Verse 122.) It follows: Receive your servant in good: let not the proud slander me. As one conscious of judgment and justice, he proceeds with prophetic authority; so that he does not hesitate to call himself a servant of the Lord: for a servant of the Lord owes nothing to others. This is a precious servitude, which is based on the expenses of virtues. But why does he fear being handed over to the wicked? He clearly exposes it; because they are slanderers, who hate the truth: they attack innocence, because they are proud. For what proud enemy can there be against the servants of God, who exalts himself against God and says: I will ascend into heaven, I will place my seat above the stars of heaven: I will sit on a lofty mount, above the high mountains that are from the north: I will ascend above the clouds, and I will be like the Most High (Isaiah 14:13-14)? Therefore, it is not surprising if he can burden men, who with obstinate spirit do not yield to God. How then will he preserve the measure of truth and faith in man, who promises himself to be equal to the Almighty Lord with blasphemous and shameless falsehood? How he falsely accuses individuals, who has amazed the whole earth, shaken kings, laid waste the entire world, and destroyed cities: he did not release those who were in captivity.

Let us beware, therefore, lest he destroy the walls of our soul, lest he demolish the defenses of our mind, lest he set his throne above the stars. He sets it above the stars when he deceives the chosen, when he circumvents the just, whose works shine like stars in the sky. Did not even Judas the betrayer hear among the others: You are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14)? Did not the devil extinguish his light? Moreover, those whom he could not deceive, he slanders, envying the glory of the heavenly kingdom; so that those whom he could not separate from Christ with his enticements, he may try to defraud of the fruit of their deserved honor with his slanders. Let us therefore flee from wicked slanderers, who commit sin against us, and themselves compose the most harmful accusations, reproaching us for what they themselves have done. Look, the hand of the Lord is ready, which will protect and defend you as you flee from your adversaries. Pharaoh held you captive in pride and cruelty, but you escaped from him; the hand of the Lord took you in and delivered you from danger. Pharaoh would not have released you unless you had fled to the Lord. Pharaoh said: 'I do not know the Lord, and I do not let Israel go.' (Exodus 5:2). You see how proud he is? Therefore, he is rightly received in good, who avoids evil. Therefore, God does not tolerate us being in evil: He receives us in good; nor does He allow His people to be subjected to slander.

17. (Verse 123.) My eyes have failed in your salvation, and in the word of your justice. Consider who these eyes are, who fail in Christ while awaiting his coming, namely, the eyes of the soul, not of the body, fixed with complete faithfulness; for we are preoccupied with the one we love, with our whole being, and nothing else brings us delight. Only someone who turns away all the intention of their mind from worldly anxieties and secular pleasures can say this. For how does he say this, who is occupied with theatrical deceptions? But he says this, who said above: Turn away my eyes, that they may not see vanity (Sermon 5, verse 37). But who are the eyes that fail in speaking of God, if not the eyes of the inner man, the gaze of the soul, which strive to see the word of God, and by excessive attention and expectation fail in embracing the salvation of God, patiently enduring their own deficiency, so that they may receive what belongs to the word?

18. And because the word of God can move many people, He added: the word of righteousness; so that it should not fail to move. However, it was able to move, because it is written: The greater will serve the lesser (Gen. XXV, 23). For unless you understand the mystery, it is an injury to nature. And, I gave you precepts that were not good (Ezech. XX, 25). Therefore, God gives evil precepts. And, I am the Lord who creates evil (Esai. XLV, 7). But the solution to the precepts is this: because He should not have given perfect precepts to the weak, who could not endure them. When the Jew heard: 'Go, sell what you possess... and follow me' (Matt. XIX, 21)? When the Jew heard: 'Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me' (Matt. X, 38)? But these more perfect precepts have been reserved for the Gospel. And God did not create evil, but those things which seem harsh to us, such as hardships, beatings, death, and other things that are prescribed for the correction of the wicked. For the just, indeed, no law is imposed, but for the unjust. For if guilty people feared nothing, innocent people would always be afraid.

Therefore, who are these eyes that fail in the salvation of God? We have said that it is the eye of punishment, which foresees the future punishments of sinners and announces the need for repentance. John the Baptist demonstrated this eye, saying: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruit worthy of repentance' (Luke 3:7-8). People came to John's baptism, who had the eye of punishment; but they came to Christ's baptism, who sees grace. For this is the eye which gazes upon and protects the shadow of the Lord's passion. Therefore, one thing is Ennon, another is Ain. In Ennon, one who is conscious of grave sins is baptized; but one who has a pure eye receives spiritual grace. And perhaps the eye of an imperfect soul is one of punishments; but the eye of a perfect soul is purer and more sincere, which is signified by this letter to which it is directed in the proper form; for the imperfect desires only to avoid the judgment of sin, but the perfect desires to acquire the reward of the heavenly kingdom. However, we presume that each soul has both an eye of punishment and an eye of grace: the left eye of punishment and the right eye of grace; because humans cannot be perfect from the beginning, but they ascend through the process of virtue. Therefore, before each soul comes, as it were, to the baptism of John, in order to precede the repentance of sins; and gradually, in the process, when it has wept for its sins, having been cleansed by the spiritual baptism, it receives the sacrament of Christ. And it seems to be preached in the Song of Songs that the Church, to whom it is said: You have captured our heart, my sister, my Spouse, you have captured our heart with one of your eyes (Cant. IV, 9); so that this eye of grace may be, which has acquired a fuller charity of Christ to itself.

However, most people understand in this place that the Church has two eyes: one that sees the mystical things and another that sees the moral things; because the holy Church holds not only the discipline of morals, but also teaches the secret mysteries of heaven. Therefore, it has been said of her: Your eyes are like doves, outside of your silence, which means that she both sees spiritually and knows the time to be silent and the time to speak; so that in due time she may speak her word, lest by being too importunate in speaking, she may incur the sin of impertinence in speech.

Therefore, the dove has eyes like Christ, because it is said of Him: Your eyes are like doves beside the streams of water, bathed in milk, sitting beside a full pool (Cant. V, 12). The Lord baptizes in milk, that is, in sincerity. And these are the ones who are truly baptized in milk, who believe without deceit and bring pure faith, that they may receive spotless grace. Therefore, the pure bride ascends to Christ, because she was baptized in milk. Therefore the Virtues and Powers marvel at her, saying: Who is this that rises up white (Cant. VIII, 7)? Just a little while ago she said, I am black (Cant. I, 4): now she is seen as white and rises up to heaven, and supported by the Word of God, she reaches great heights. Not undeservedly is there an abundance of waters there, where Christ is; so that the human soul may desire to be filled. The deer thirsts for these waters, and when it drinks them, it cannot thirst anymore. The Prophet thirsted for these waters when he said: My soul thirsts for you (Psal. XLI, 3). Therefore Christ sits upon an abundance of waters, and upon fullness. And for this reason, he who is baptized in milk says: And we have all received from his fullness (John 1:16). Hence, the eye of punishments is not separate from the Church; for although John was baptizing in Ennon, he was baptizing near Salim, where there was an abundance of waters, twelve fountains, and seventy palm trees (John 3:25). The Church has these fountains, that is, in the Old Testament, the twelve patriarchs, and in the new, the twelve apostles. Therefore it is said: In the Church let us bless the Lord God from the fountains of Israel (Psalm 67:27). Whoever attains the holy mysteries of Christ is washed before these fountains; for these fountains flow from the eternal fountain throughout the whole world. Where these fountains are, there is the ascent of souls. Finally, Salim is interpreted as 'He who ascends.' For he truly ascends who lays aside his own sins. Therefore, with this word, the use of purification and sanctification is expressed. Hence, Christ also says well in the Song of Songs to the Church: Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing, all of whom bear twins, and none is barren among them (Song of Songs 4:2). This is said in appearance about goats, but mystically about the flock of the Church.

23. And let those animals not seem cheap to you. Finally, listen to what the Holy Spirit says about them: Your hair is like a flock of goats, which have appeared from Mount Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep, which have come up from the washing (Song of Solomon 6:4 and 6:7). You see that this flock grazes on high places, fearless on the mountain. So where others have danger, there is no danger for the goats: where others have danger, there is nourishment for this flock, there is sweeter food, there are choicer fruits. They are seen hanging from the bushy rock by their shepherds: there the attacks of wolves cannot happen, there fruitful trees provide abundant fruit. It is possible to see them, full with rich milk, caring tenderly for their young with maternal affection. Therefore, the Holy Spirit chose them to prepare the assembly of the venerable Church.

24. And so that you may hear mystically: the crown of the Word is the height and excellence of righteous souls, for the understanding of the wise is in their head. For it is certain that wisdom is in

the height of human thought. And just as goats are shorn to remove what is unnecessary, so too the holy Church has a flock of shorn souls, that is, the virtues of many souls, in which flock you cannot find anything insensitive, nothing excessive; for faith has made the wise, and spiritual grace has cleansed them from all excess.

25. Therefore, the souls of the righteous have been rightly revealed, and revealed from the mount of Gilead, that is, from the transmigration of testimony; because the heavenly testimony migrated from the Synagogue to the Church. On this mountain, therefore, thyme, resin, and other fragrances are born, which those merchants, the Ishmaelites, brought as you have in the first book of the Old Testament. The Church has these fragrances, which the merchants gathered from the nations, carried with faith and devotion. Therefore, just as goats, having been nourished by good food and thriving in the warmth of the sun, are washed in the river, and joyfully emerge clean from the water: so too, the souls of the righteous ascend from the spiritual cleansing.

26. These are truly the ones that produce twins, in whom there is no infertility of any virtues, no sterility of any merits. They truly produce twins; because they double their senses. From where do you have written in Proverbs: And you write these things for yourself threefold, in counsel, and in knowledge (Prov. XXII, 20). It precedes the triple writing, and adds two, counsel and knowledge: but knowledge is twofold: one of incorporeal things, the other of corporeal things.

27. We have spoken about fertility; let us now speak about teeth. For many sailors, as well as those on a journey on land, when they see a beautiful place, they stay there for the sake of delight, they feed their eyes and lift their spirits; they do not think of it as merely stopping to eat, but as a gratification. Similarly, it is dear to us to contemplate the most beautiful teeth of righteous souls. For the Scripture has taught us that the teeth of the righteous are beautiful, saying literally of the patriarch Judah, but spiritually of Christ: His eyes are brighter than wine, and his teeth are like milk (Gen. 49:12). In which he preaches not the duties of human flesh, but the gifts of divine grace. Therefore, it teaches by example that teeth should not be passed over, where we have spoken of the eyes.

28. So who are the teeth of righteous souls, if not those who, receiving formless and hard food, either crush it, often cold or excessively hot, or nurture it, or temper it, depending on the quality of the nourishment? They crush it, lest the harshness of the letter in the Old Testament, and the rigid understanding of the world, unless resolved by a spiritual tooth, block the vital passages of nourishing foods, and a certain throat of the soul, with careless greediness, suffocate. Therefore, it is right for you to divide first, if the food that is consumed seems solid to you, and to separate and soften it without any harm to the soul, and to transfer it to all its limbs through natural division, so that every part of its body may be nourished by vital juice. Do not take anything putrid or dead into your mouth, so that it may not be said: 'The throat of these ones is an open grave' (Psalm 13:3), but rather receive the living word, so that it may work in the depths of your mind.

Hi teeth are whiter than milk, because they are the teeth of the righteous. Finally, even though all our ancestors were baptized in the cloud and in the sea with Moses, it is not in vain that it is written, because they all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink (I Cor. X, 3 and 4); so that a greater brightness may come to these holy teeth, which we know were cleansed after crossing the Red Sea, by the bitterness of the well of myrrh tempered through the grace of the wood (Exod. XV, 25 and 27), and then by the drink of the twelve fountains, and finally by the

spiritual wave of the rock that bountifully provided water; for the rock was Christ. Therefore they ate manna (Num. XX, 11); as often as they were washed they ate bread, as it is written, the bread of angels (Psal. LXXVII, 25). Now also in the mysteries of the Gospel you recognize that although you are baptized with your whole body, you are afterwards cleansed by spiritual food and drink.

30. Therefore, David rightly brings forth the internal purified eyes and the teeth as if enlightened by the brightness of spiritual teeth, saying: I have done judgment and justice (Sup. 5,121). For he is the true splendor of teeth, where the melodious confession resounds to a well-conscious mind. That purified eye, which no beam of serious sins has pressed down, which no mote of light rubbish has disturbed. This eye has failed in the word of justice. For whoever is joined to Christ is one spirit (I Cor. VI, 17). And Balaam sought that his soul would fail among the souls of the righteous (Num. XXIII, 10), that is, that he would forget his own error: that he would lay aside what was his own and take on what belonged to justice and equity. But let us proceed to the rest.

31. (Verse 124.) It follows: Deal with your servant according to your mercy, and teach me your ways of justice. He has paved the way and has presumed the increase of his commendation. He demanded above that he not be handed over to the wicked (Above verses 121 and 122): he asked again to be received in good; lest the proud slander him, that is: I do not deviate from judgment, but from the slander of the treacherous; for they do not know how to judge, but they know how to slander. I take refuge in you, who know how to represent judgment. And it is not good to be handed over to slanderers; for many things did the just Job suffer after he was handed over to the guilty. But that was a difficult and great struggle, which no one could easily overcome without excessive patience, except Job; however, he was not completely handed over, but was taken in with a better portion. He who says: Do not hand me over, understands greater things. But we are more in soul than in flesh; for the just are said: 'You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit' (Rom. 8:9). Therefore, he who refuses to give up his soul, wastes away in his body like a spider (Psalm 38:12).

Therefore, in this place, presuming on a certain familiarity, he says: Act with your servant according to your mercy, and teach me your justice. He seeks mercy to be shown to him, and justice to be taught. Elsewhere also, that is, in subsequent verses, you have this meaning: And do not enter into judgment with your servant (Ps. 142:2). For being aware of our sins, we ought to seek more the mercy of our God than to implore justice. He grants one pardon, he imposes another punishment. What hope do people have in contending with him whom hidden things do not deceive, whom sins cannot hide? Therefore, knowing the power of him whom the person did not fear, he says: I have sinned only against you (Psalm 50:6). No just person can deny this, because no one is without sin. The king cannot, because even though he has laws under his power, he is subject to God. In fact, he owes even more, to whom more has been entrusted.

33. Therefore, He says this: 'Do with your servant according to your mercy; for even if I have done something good, I owe more as a servant. A servant is not absolved by one act; for no one who has a servant plowing or tending sheep would say to him: 'Pass, recline', but would say to him: 'Prepare what I will eat and gird yourself and minister to me'... Does the servant have thanks if he did what was commanded of him (Luke XVII, 7 and 8)? Therefore, even when we have done what is commanded of us, we should not immediately exalt ourselves, but rather humble ourselves; for not immediately if we have done something, have we fulfilled all the duties of servitude.' Who can

match the great gifts of nature, the benefits of health and life preserved, with worthy service? Who can repay what he has received? Therefore, knowing all things, he seeks mercy rather than reward: For, it is said, no man living shall be justified in your sight (Psalm 142:2).

34. (Verse 125.) The following verse says: I am your servant: give me understanding, and I will know your testimonies. Understanding is a spiritual gift; and therefore, because it belongs to God, it is requested from the Lord. He does not request it as a stranger, who confesses himself as a servant. He says well: I am your servant. For a servant does the will of his master. A servant seeks the rewards of servitude, hopes for recompense. The servant of the Lord cannot also be a servant of sin: and therefore, he asks for understanding to be given to him, so that he may know how to avoid sin. He indeed had understanding, but not such that he believed it to be excessive: he seeks for something more abundant.

35. And there is also the intellect of nature, and there is the non-good intellect. Therefore Solomon says: But good understanding giveth grace (Prov. XIII, 15). For if every intellect were good, there would be no need for an addition. He rightly seeks the grace of his Lord, for otherwise he cannot know the secrets of the Lord unless he has received the gift of spiritual intellect. You have this in Jeremiah: Make it known unto me, O Lord, and I shall know (Jerem. XI, 18); for unless God makes His mystery known to men, we cannot know.

36. (Verse 126.) The sixth verse follows: Tempus faciendi, Domine: dissipaverunt legem tuam iniqui. It says well that it is the time to act; For there is a time to be silent, and a time to speak (Eccles. III, 7). But the time to speak has come: and by this it mentions that the time of the Lord's coming has already arrived; so that because transgression of the Law has occurred, the end of the Law may come, and its fulfillment, and the fullness of the Lord Jesus, who will forgive all sins to mankind: and having annulled the handwriting of debts, he may absolve all and free sinners. It is time to act, so that if someone's illness worsens, you run to the doctor, so that they may come quickly; otherwise, they may not be able to help later. The doctor is most needed when a serious illness strikes the weak. Therefore, when the Holy Spirit, the Prophet, sees the transgressions of the people - their luxury, indulgence, deceit, fraud, greed, and drunkenness - he intervenes for us, he runs to Christ, whom he knows alone can help with such sins: he urges him to come and does not allow any delay. Time, he said, for you, Lord, to ascend the cross for us, to undergo death. The whole world is being driven into extreme danger: come to take away the sin of the world. Let life come to the dying: let resurrection come to those already buried. May your deed come to our aid; for your commandments were not able to help. In the Law there was command, in the Gospel there is ministry.

37. The blind people could not see their own creator. The world was lame, and by the faltering step of faith, it wavered. There was no ointment to apply, nor oil, nor binding. That Evangelical woman had spent all her inheritance on doctors (Luke VIII, 43), having the appearance of a human congregation, which gathered from the nations: neither the flowing blood, nor the deadly outflow of an old passion could be restrained by the physicians of this age. The future generations of the Prince of the people had perished, and his entire inheritance had been destroyed. Seeing this, the Prophet says to Christ: 'It is time to act, Lord: not to command, he says, but to act; for he is not an ambassador or messenger, but the Lord who will save his people.' And indeed, he knew the right time and did not delay, but we did not know at what better time he would come to help.

38. Perhaps he wants to be reminded by us, he wants to be asked: in fact, if he is asked, he comes before the time. He comes to the fig tree: and he comes before the hour, as he says to his mother. She was pleading for us, she was hastening, saying: They have no wine, son. Jesus answered: What is that to me and to you, woman? My hour has not yet come (John 2:3-4). And the mother, who knew his disposition, said to the servants: Whatever he tells you, do (Ibid., 5). Jesus, who had also denied that his hour had come, did what he had been putting off. For God does all things in his own time. Whatever he does is not outside of time, but all things are opportune that he has done. And he came to me at his own time; for every time is opportune for salvation, nothing is prematurely rushed for the sake of those in danger. But he wanted to wait for the correction of the Synagogue. Therefore, he came to the fig tree before its time (Mark 11:13), that is, he came quickly to the Jews, timely to the Gentiles: he came quickly to those who were perishing, conveniently to those who were ready to believe.

39. (Verse 127.) The seventh verse follows: Because of this, I have loved your commandments more than gold and topaz. The Law is the herald of Christ: therefore, the precepts of the Law bring hope for future goods. For it is the command of the Lord: Take heed to yourself, lest you forsake the Levite throughout all the time in which you live upon the earth (Deut. XII, 19). Who is this Levite? You understand if you consider who is he who comes to serve, who is the eternal priest. He says another command: Keep the month of the new ones, and you shall make the Passover for the Lord your God (Deut. XVI, 1). And below: In the place which the Lord your God shall choose to have his name invoked, there you shall sacrifice the Passover in the evening at the setting of the sun, at the time when you came out of Egypt (Ibid., 6). Therefore, the commandments of God have indications of future redemption, signs of resurrection; hence he mentions that they are dear to him above gold and topaz. For what is more pleasing than salvation, more precious than resurrection? Or because those things which are foolish in the world, Christ has chosen; so that because through wisdom the world did not know God, through the foolishness of preaching he might bring salvation to those who believe; and therefore he says: Above the wisdom of heavenly operation, and worldly constitution, and above the adornments of the sun and moon, and the precious necklaces of the stars, I have loved the obedience of the Lord's passion. For by redeeming me, he has bestowed more on me than by creating me; for then I was born without reason, now I am saved by will. But not everyone who says: I have loved your commandments above gold and topaz. It is not said by the greedy person, who lies on gold, covets wealth, desires ornaments: but it is said by the one who is able to say: I do not have silver and gold (Acts 3:6); because I do not seek, because gold is of no benefit to me: but the heavenly precept and commandment have redeemed me.

We have spoken of the continent of sense; now let us recount the story of the topaz stone. Regarding this, we have found it written in the history of Xenocrates, who wrote as if in a treatise on stones, that it is born or found around the city of Thebes, either in a form of alabaster or topaz, as some believe; from which it is also named after the place in which it is born. However, there are those who have thought that the island is called Topazion, to which the Troglodytes arrived: because of a sudden maritime commotion, since they did not have the use of ships, they were unable to return. Then, after spending a long time, they found a stone on the island, and being delighted by its color, they brought it back home and sold it to Arabian merchants. They bought it from them and it was brought to the mother of Ptolemy II, whose name was Berenice. She,

although she abounded in royal ornaments, was amazed by its color and worked hard to make the appearance of such a precious stone last longer. Therefore, the stone sought by her diligence came into more common use.

42. We have explained how the topaz stone is recognizable, now let us speak more specifically about its quality. This stone has two colors, a mixture of tempered κρυσσις, which means a certain moderate blending. It is similar to Πρασσις and chrysopa in appearance, extending certain figures of colors in both, and is said to extend them more fully by experts. It is pale yellow and fairly pure, and golden yellow and fatty, similar to something shining, especially when struck by the brightness of the sun. It is also the most beautiful and remarkable above all in size, and, as I have said, more pleasing to the eye. Its nature is such that if you want to polish and smooth it, it becomes rougher, and its use diminishes. However, there is a certain kind of elegant work of nature, which is well distinguished and remarkable: and to be considered worthy of the highest praise, it is rarely found: and once found, it is seldom used by humans, as if it were the one that a wealthy queen admired.

43. But now, just as those Troglodytes, having found the price of their dwelling, returned home, so let us also return, having received the benefit of this delay, to the place from which we diverged. It is not fitting for us to attach certain ornaments of the royal court to our conversation any longer, when we have the cross of Christ in our hands, which the Prophet admonishes us to prefer over gold and topaz, for it recalls and corrects us from every error and fault. For who among the just does not desire the solace of Christ in death, and a share in the resurrection? Who does not hesitate, when they hear that all their sins are forgiven, to reconsider their steps? For many were accustomed to be deterred from the pursuit of conversion because, being conscious of their own sins, they presumed no hope of forgiveness; and in the Church, the more holy the precepts, the more they thought that sins were committed without forgiveness.

44. (Verse 128.) Therefore he says in the eighth verse: Therefore I have corrected myself for all your commandments: I have hated every unjust way. He was rightly corrected because he loved; for love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8). See how much it covers, how much it corrects. Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, does not act wrongly, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, does not seek its own, is not easily provoked, does not think evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. He bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Charity never fails (2 Corinthians, XIII, 4 et seq.). In the lower things, he placed three perfect ones, hope, faith, charity: but he said charity is greater, and rightly so; for charity hopes all things, believes all things (Ibid., 13). Therefore, since hope and faith are in charity, there is no doubt that charity is greater. And the Prophet responded well to himself. For he said above: The law of the Lord is blameless, converting the soul (Psalm XVIII, 8). If the Law converts the soul, surely the one who loves is loved by the Law. Then, in this very 118th psalm, it says first: Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord (Sup. v. 1). If one is undefiled who walks in the law of God, surely the one who loves the law of God is converted. Therefore, if the Law makes one undefiled, rightly charity covers a multitude of sins; because the fullness of the Law is charity.

45. 'I have hated every unjust way,' he says. If someone loves the precepts of justice, they do what they love; certainly, someone who hates injustice does not do what they hate. And it is not without

reason that he is corrected by all the commands of the Lord, who hates every path of iniquity. For unless you hate every path of iniquity, you cannot be corrected by all the commands of God. For it is possible for someone to restrain themselves from the horror of cruelty; however, being deceived by the slippery love of a prostitute, and having entered the paths of youthful incontinence, they may not be able to retract the once engraved footprint.' For many vices deceive with a more pleasing appearance, and on the contrary, sad and excessively severe cruelty turns away many others from itself. But the youth is freer in love, more careless in falling, more fragile in weakness, and harsher in correction. One restrains oneself from luxury: but is carried away by the desire for greed. For often sins of this kind are such that if you avoid one, you incur another: and the use of nature assists weakness. You hated luxury as if it were barrenness, but the desire to possess frugality frequently creeps in. Greed itself is subject to robbery. And how much more tolerable it is to waste one's own, than to plunder others! There are those who, fearing to diminish anything from their own income, even deny themselves the necessary expenses, and consider compassion to be a loss. There are those who, avoiding degenerate ignobility, are driven by the allure of secular ambition, and, like shaken reeds, are carried here and there uncertainly. There are also those who, while following the state of their ancestors, are satisfied with a worthy conversation, not even considering that their fathers' errors should be avoided; so that they do not think that faith should be changed for perfidy: because the purpose of changing for the better is not levity, but virtue: and it is not fault, but grace. However, when occupied with other games or theatrical pleasures, or other vanities, they do not attend the Church: another, enjoying the quiet of the countryside, has rare access to the Church for that reason. And so, each one converges towards the same error of indevotion with different usage. But he who hates every path of iniquity is corrected and improved in all things. And he rightly states, 'The Path of Iniquity'; for he more easily avoids iniquity, who has not entered its paths.

Sermon 17. Phe. The seventeenth letter, which in Latin means, I have erred, or, I have opened my mouth. Therefore, this lamentable series of psalms is fittingly placed under this letter: Look upon me, and have mercy on me . . . and let not all my iniquity have dominion over me. Shine your face upon your servant (below, verses 132, 133, and 135); so that to the one who was in the shadow of death, the light of the heavenly mercy might arise, Christ might come for the forgiveness of sins, the redemption of captives, and the assistance of those who labor. But because it seemed too slow to those who desired to come, my eyes directed the course of the waters (Inferno, canto 1, line 136). In the book of Lamentations, there is also a more tearful series under this letter: 'Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her.' (Lam. 1:17) She received a worthy recompense. For she, who neglected to hear him spreading forth his hands and to take shelter under his wings, later spread forth her own hands and could not find anyone to comfort her. For although Jeremiah seems to bewail the captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians before the coming of the Lord, yet with his prophetic spirit he foresaw this captivity more, which the intelligible Babylonian subjected them to the chains of perpetual error and, expelling them from the state of paternal devotion, afflicted them with the exile of a long journey and deplored them with miserable sorrow. For there is no truer homeland than faith, which made those who were far away, near, and connected the laws of the heavenly city to foreigners and strangers, as it is written: So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19).

Also Jeremiah says under this letter: All your enemies have opened their mouths against you, they hissed, they gnashed their teeth, and said: We have swallowed her; yet this is the day that we hoped for, we found her, we saw her (Lamentations 2:6). And here, just as the Jewish people opened their mouth against Christ, as you read in the twenty-first Psalm about his passion, that they opened their mouths to curse (Psalm 22:14): you acknowledge the worthy fate of retribution; that they themselves should endure such things from their enemies, and that the understandable enemy Satan would gnash his teeth against them, like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Therefore, they did not say: Blessed be the Lord who did not give us as prey to their teeth (Psalm 123:6); because they did not think to hope in the Lord. Therefore, the devil found the destruction that he presumed. He swallowed them up; because there was no offended shepherd who would pull the legs of the lamb out of the mouth of the lion, or the cartilage.

They did not want to follow, they did not want to hear: therefore, as the shepherd departs, their footsteps and ears are filled with their own desires; because they did not receive the face of the saints, and did not show mercy to the nobles (Lamentations 4:16), as Jeremiah says for the third time under this letter in Lamentations. Who are the nobles, if not those who lived not according to this dark life, but in the light of holiness. Indeed, mercy is owed to all the needy by right: but a certain greater compassion is stirred when affliction casts some of the wealthy and noble into the lowest state and necessity of poverty.

Therefore, Jeremiah grieves bitterly, as one who laments the loss of the perennial sting of death; but David grieves moderately, as if he were grieving for the deception of an error, not despairing of the remedy of correction; so that he may be saddened, but not overwhelmed.

6. (Verse 129.) Finally, strengthened by the sobriety of repentance and compelled by the hope of forgiveness, he began thus: Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul has searched for them. This is a moral discourse, so that, although he was ashamed of his error, he would nevertheless come to God with the testimonies of his own mercy. This is to say: In the beginning of his speech, speaking of my sins, I dare not lift my eyes to you, O living God; but you, O Lord, have provoked me to hope for forgiveness through the titles of such great indulgences. Your wonders are testimonies: when you were offended by the youthful thoughtlessness in Abraham's fall, you instructed him to leave his homeland and his kindred and, having been called, you educated him in the exercises of virtue. When the people of the Hebrews turned away from their father's pursuit of nobility and preferred the lowly food of Egypt over divine gifts, you not only freed them from the depths of the Red Sea, but you also raised them up with many triumphs to glory and bestowed upon them the peaceful possession of a fruitful land. You deserted yourself in the name of security: you called out in the bitterness of wars; and in order to forget your injuries, you fought. You recognized that Jesus, the leader of the heavenly host, had come for you. The triumphant people offended you by desiring to rule over the Midianites: they prayed for you to conquer the Midianites. They did not obey you in King Saul, so that the foreigners would triumph over him: they served you, with David leading the way, so that they would win victory over foreigners. For I, indeed, being a wicked shepherd, made amends by confessing my sin. Therefore, a most beautiful verse for the encouragement of the martyrs. Lastly, the prophetic soul progresses for the better, believing the wondrous testimony of God: and because it believed, it sought with diligent investigation. You seek progress, recognize it from the following verses.

7. (Verse 130.) The manifestation of your words enlightens me and gives understanding to the little ones. In the Gospel, when John sent his disciples to the Lord Jesus, he asked: Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect another (Matthew 11:3)? Jesus answered that the blind see, the lame walk, and the deaf hear; for this is evidence of his coming, as foretold by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1). Therefore, what he announced through the prophets, he revealed in the Gospel; and what he himself spoke through the prophets, he fulfilled in the Gospel. Therefore, His speech was a prophetic speech, just as it is written: Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken (Isaiah 1:2).

Therefore, understanding is given even to those who do not possess perfect wisdom, as the mute speak and the dead are raised. By these signs, it is understood by those who were ignorant and still like infants in their faith, just as the people of the nations were, that the one who was expected has indeed come. He illuminates, therefore, with the clarity of faith, the glory of his resurrection, and the power of divine works. And he gives understanding to little ones. For surely, unless the Father is giving thanks about those of which the Son himself was operating in the Gospel, that God had hidden his mysteries from the wise, and had revealed them to the little ones (Matthew XI, 25), showing that the people from the nations, or men of a lower status, would believe sooner than the scribes and leaders of the Jews, and the wealthy of this age? Therefore, the rich have become needy and hungry (Psalm XXXIII, 11), but the poor has cried out and has been heard.

9. (Verse 131.) The third verse follows: I have opened my mouth, and breathed in the spirit; for I desired your commandments. In the Gospel, we have that the Lord Jesus opened his mouth when he pronounced blessings (Matthew 5:2). But he opened his mouth in order to give the spirit to others: David opened his mouth in order to receive. Finally, Jesus says: Receive the Holy Spirit (John 20:22); Jesus says: Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it (Psalm 81:10): he says this to man; for Christ is the fullness. He who fills all things, fills your mouth. Therefore, write down what your heart says, that is, let your mouth cry out to the Lord. Your mouth cries out, and when it is silent, it shouts with the spirit (Exodus 14:15). It is not heard by men, but it resounds before God; for it is the internal cry of the soul which is heard from heaven. Anna also, when she prayed, cried out in silence (1 Samuel 1:13): she did not move her lips, but with the inner voice of her devout mind she called upon Jesus. Finally, when it came back with success, as she had prayed in silence; for the Spirit of God cried out in it, which also cries out to us when we are silent: Abba, Father (Rom., VIII, 6).

10. Therefore understand what the mouth signifies: whether the heart or the interior disposition of man. The mouth has a soul, which has members. Open this mouth not only to Christ, but also to His disciple, who offered his mouth to be filled by Christ; and thus he says: Our mouth is open to you, O Corinthians; our heart is enlarged (2 Corinthians VI, 11). Therefore he admonishes us to be imitators of Him, as He is of Christ. He who is holier has opened his mouth to Christ; he who is inferior, to the Apostle. First the prophet is read, then the apostle, and thus the Gospel, in which the words are clear, but the commands are more powerful. The law says: You shall love your neighbor (Leviticus 19:18); and the Gospel says to you: You shall love your enemy (Matthew 5:44).

11. Therefore, David, as a perfect prophet, opened his mouth to Christ; and thus in parables he opened the bones (Psalm LXXVII, 2). He opened his mouth and brought forth breath. Therefore,

he rightly says: How sweet are your words to my throat; sweeter than honey and the honeycomb to my mouth (Sup. v. 113)! The bride of Christ opened her mouth to her bridegroom: she received precepts sweeter than any honey. And thus she testifies, saying: His throat is sweetness, and all his desires (Song of Solomon V, 16). Therefore she held him, and would not let him go. I brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me. Perhaps this house is where the discipline of morals shines forth: but that chamber is where deeper mysteries reside. Therefore, he rightly desired the precepts of the Lord, in which the honey of divine grace was diffused. Is not the forgiveness of sins sweeter than any honey? Is not the resurrection of the dead more pleasant than any flower?

12. (Verse 132.) Fourth verse: Look upon me, and have mercy on me, according to the judgment of those who love your name (Exodus 14:24-25). Beautifully added: Look upon me, and have mercy on me (Genesis 19:21); for He looks and is angry, as He looked upon the camp of the Egyptians, and bound the chariot wheels, and cast them into the waves. He looked upon Sodom and Gomorrah, of which both suffered the punishment for their sins, paying the price for the offense against God. It is also written: He looks upon the earth and makes it tremble (Psalm 103:32). And conversely, He regarded the offering of Abel, but did not regard the offering of Cain (Genesis 4:4-5). This enraged Cain, and he shed his brother's blood with the crime of fratricide.

13. But what it means to regard God is most clearly declared by that very testimony: For he hath looked down on the children of the poor, and hath not despised their prayers (Ps. 101:18); for the eye of the Lord doth not reject the offerings of the just. Finally, when we turn our eyes towards someone, we divert them; as if we were judging him unworthy of our gaze, whom we despise in our affections.

14. (Verse 133.) The fifth verse follows: Direct my steps according to your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me. We are reminded to take steps for the progress of the soul by frequent testimonies of the Scriptures. For who is so foolish as to think that David was concerned about the bodily steps of his feet and sought the assistance of divine guidance for them? But he, being holy, desired his course of life to be directed; as the Scripture testifies elsewhere, saying: The steps of a man are directed by the Lord (Prov. 20:24). Finally, let us use the testimony of the very person who said in the previous passage: My steps have been less sure, because I was jealous of sinners' peace (Psalm 73:2-3). He thus reveals that his own foot slipped when he considered the peace of sinners to be admirable. They indeed seem to have tranquility, they seem to enjoy peace: but there is no peace where the mind is restless, there is no tranquility of the soul where the mind is agitated by the goads of conscience. How can there be security when there is a conflict of passions, when there is a clash of intense thoughts? Therefore, desiring to teach that peace does not exist in man, He added: My peace I leave with you. And again: My peace I give to you. Finally the Prophet said: Peace, peace, and where is peace? (Jeremiah VI, 14) It is clear, therefore, that he spoke about the wavering of his own opinion, in which the steps of his mind, not his body, had wavered.

14. And Moses said: I will go and see this great sight (Exod. III, 3). Indeed, in order to see God, he advanced by a certain progression of virtue to further things. He was a shepherd of sheep, and he became a leader of citizens. And of the Bride it is said in the Song of Songs: Your steps have been made beautiful in sandals, O daughter of Aminadab: the curves of your thighs are like jewelry, the

work of a craftsman (Cant. VII, 1). There is no doubt that these steps also signify the progress of the Church or the soul: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace (Isaiah LII, 7)! Indeed, the progress of the Gospel preaching and argumentation is said to be beautiful, as it is said elsewhere: "Go beyond the rivers" (Isaiah 47:2), that is, to pass through the flowing and slippery things of this world with a steady walk of the mind. This is clearly shown in what is said about the progress of the soul in the later parts here by David himself, asserting that his soul has passed through the torrent of iniquities (Psalm 124:5).

15. But let us return to the steps of the Bride. What does it mean that it added that the steps of the Church are beautiful in her sandals? Therefore, we read the saying to Moses: 'Take off your sandals from your feet' (Exod. III, 5); by which he seems to be warned not to be bound by bodily bonds. Therefore, it signifies the beautiful beauty of the soul in the Songs, which uses the flesh as a sandal, and does not suffer hindrance in this sandal, but surpasses in gracefulness the act of walking. Therefore, let the soul clothe itself with flesh, or let the Church embrace grace; so that it may pass through the course of this life and its transition with beauty. This is accomplished if it does not soil its footwear with bodily filth, nor become immersed in the pitfall of vices: if it disciplines its flesh; so that it does not delay in its course, and is not weighed down by the burden of fat grapes. Modesty is the good footwear of the soul. Good was made in the footsteps of chastity. But wisdom is the garment of the soul; as it is written: Honor her, and she will embrace you (Prov. IV, 8). Let us therefore use our body as a tool, for the works of virtue: for service, not for command: for obedience, not for dissent: and let us place our footsteps on the path of wisdom; so that the force of any stream does not impede our footsteps.

Therefore it was said to Moses: 'Take off your sandals' (Joshua 5:16). It was also said to Joshua son of Nun: but to Christ it was not said, rather it is written, as John the Baptist said: 'After me comes a man... whose sandals I am not worthy to carry' (Matthew 3:11); for they are well advised to take off their sandals, who cannot be without sin. But here he not only does not take off his sandals, but he also takes off the sandals of others; for he not only kept his own body free from sin, but also granted the forgiveness of sins to all. Therefore the Church is beautiful in imitation of Christ, and cleansed from every sin in her footwear.

17. And perhaps, when he speaks of wisdom among the perfect, it is beautiful in the upper members; but when even people of lower status, or those who follow the word of the learned, do not forget the series of faith, they keep the commands of the priest; it is beautiful in the footwear. Often the clergy have erred, the priest has changed his opinion, the rich have sided with the earthly king of this world; the people have preserved their own faith. Furthermore, we can also say good things about the Lord Jesus, since even in his physical actions, the Word has graceful steps when discussing moral matters. And perhaps that is why the apostles are sent out barefoot (Matthew 10:10), so that their arguments would not be overshadowed but would shine forth. Therefore, the Church is the daughter of Aminadab, which means voluntary or pleasing, because he gathered her willingly and with pleasure, and she is graceful in her sandals.

18. And rightly it was added in the Canticles: The curves of your thighs are like artistically crafted necklaces (Song of Songs, 7:1); so that the adornments of the Church of future generations might be sung. For by the thigh we recognize the sign of generation, according to that: Gird your sword upon your thigh, O mighty one (Psalm 45:4); by which it is signified that when the Son of God

emptied himself, having put on the divinity of the Word and having assumed human generation, he would come forth from the Virgin, giving salvation to all. But the term *moduli* refers to precious ornaments that are usually worn on the necks of matrons. Thus, such great progress of the Church is signified, that it is compared to the most precious ornaments and the torques of conquerors; for these torques are the ornaments of warriors. Therefore, both the generation of Christ from the Virgin and the propagation of the Church, though adorned in appearance with the torques of a skilled craftsman, have truly crowned the spiritual necks of the faithful with the insignia of genuine virtue.

Finally, this entire description of the members of the Church is full of beauty and praise. For her navel is said to be like a rounded bowl, never lacking in mixed wine (Song of Solomon 7:2); because in all doctrine, she is rounded, not lacking in the fullness of knowledge, and is never lacking in spiritual drink. And her belly is not only nourished by the abundance of wheat, that is, by the stronger foods of the heavenly mystery, but is also filled with the sweetness of moral virtues, like certain lilies.

20. And so the very queen of Christ is crowned with his blood as if well-deserving, as it is written: And the adornment of your head is like purple (Song of Songs 5). The blood of Christ is purple, which stains the souls of the saints, not only shining in color, but also in power; for it makes kings, and better kings, to whom it grants an eternal kingdom.

21. And rightly, for the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, who is poured out by the blood of Christ, exclaims how beautiful and sweet you have become, O charity, in your delights (Ib. 6)! Beautiful in the beauty of virtue, sweet in the joy of grace, free from vices, which no bitterness of sin afflicts: and charity itself, which by loving God has received His very name; for God is charity (Joan. IV, 16).

Therefore, David rightly seeks to have his steps directed according to the word of God, so that he and his actions may be pleasing, and that iniquity may not have dominion over him, which he rightly feared. For he knew that Abraham also directed his steps according to the commandments of the Lord, and although he was tempted by the desire for a beautiful wife, he remained virtuous and was not overcome. And in the testing of offering his only son, he struggled with the piety of his mind towards his homeland, but he was crowned. David himself also escaped from the fury of Saul, the incest of Ammon, the treachery of Absalom, and the wicked temptations of impure iniquity, only because he directed his steps in the piety of the Lord and did not stray from his fatherly affection. He grieved within himself for the crime of incest, and rejected the hatred of the murderer from himself. My son Absalom, my son, said, Absalom, who will give me death for you (II Samuel XVIII, 33), mindful of nature's piety, forgetful of the offense, of whom he inquired before: Is the young man alive (Ibid. 29)?

23. And perhaps it should be asked why he called the first child 'antepuerum' and later named him 'filium'; why did he not say both 'puerum' and 'filium'? If he had lived, he would have been a boy; because he sought to kill his father, he should not have received the name of piety, but of weakness. Therefore, the righteous man, as an act of religious duty, remained silent; as an act of weakness, he stained himself. But when he died, the accusation of the person defected against the pious father, and the name of nature remained.

24. (Verse 134.) It follows: Deliver me from the slander of men; that I may keep your commandments. There is not only one type of affliction for us; there is both temptation and slander; but temptation is lighter, slander is heavier: indeed, temptation can be slander, slander itself has temptation. There is also human temptation, which we can endure; but slander is serious. And therefore the Lord, He who took on what is more serious, and brought about triumphal silence in the face of slanders. (Matthew 26:63). But calumny is the more serious, because it not only constructs falsehoods; but also distorts things that are done piously; as when Joseph was not only tempted by the offering of adultery, and the allurements of his master's invitation (Gen., XXXIX, 10 et seq.): but also tempted by calumnies, with the fabrication that he himself desired to commit adultery with his mistress, and he was caught and stripped of his clothes to avoid being held as evidence of deceit and a sign of the crime; since he certainly left his cloak behind while fleeing, so that he could escape the traps of the one inflicting violence, and the bonds of the enticing craft. David himself had sensed what he feared. For with what accusations of the king Saul had he labored! With everyone being terrified, he mocked the attack of the Philistines, and in a singular contest received the highest weight of the war and the entire battle, alone refuting the common accusation with his own virtue, and turning the entire reproach back onto the enemy of the people; and yet, because the young girls said: Saul has triumphed in thousands, David in ten thousands (1 Samuel 18:7), his glory turned into envy, and he began to be oppressed with hatred. And let us speak about what came afterwards: Susanna was well aware of herself, and she could not be present among people. Two elderly priests bore false witness, the number of priests and old age took away the voice of the girl; her conscience alone was free before God. Finally, condemned by the judgement of men, she was freed by the divine will (Dan. XIII, 34 et seq.).

Therefore, the Prophet says: Deliver me from the slander of men, so that I may keep your commandments; for one who is oppressed by slander cannot easily keep divine commandments. It is necessary for sadness to often give way either to fear and be afflicted either by the fear of slander or by grief.

26. (Verse 135.) The seventh verse follows: Illuminate your face upon your servant and teach me your righteousness. The Lord illuminates his holy ones and shines in the heart of the righteous. Therefore, when you see a wise person, know that the glory of God has descended upon them, illuminating their mind with the brilliance of knowledge and divine understanding. The face of Moses was also bodily illuminated, and the glory of his countenance was transformed, causing the Jews who saw it to tremble. And so, Moses put a veil over his face to prevent the children of Israel from looking at it and being disturbed (Exodus 34:29 and following). At the same time, the mystery was declared, that the veil that was physically placed on Moses' face was mystically placed in the hearts of the Jews, because they could not see the true glory of the Law. For the splendor of Moses' face is the splendor of the Law; but the splendor of the Law is not in the letter, but in the spiritual understanding. Therefore, as long as Moses lived and spoke to the Jewish people, he had a veil on his face; but when Moses died, Joshua, Jesus, no longer addressed the elders and the people through a veil, but with his face revealed, and no one trembled (Joshua 1:10). For God Himself also said that He would be with him as He was with Moses, and would illuminate him in a similar way, with a glory of deeds, not of countenance (Ibid., 5). This is indicated by the Holy Spirit, that the true Jesus would come, and if anyone turned to Him and wanted to hear Him, they would

remove the veil from their heart and see the true Savior with a revealed face.

Therefore, God Almighty the Father, who blinded the people of the Jews in the face of Moses, not with harshness, but with foreknowledge; not with malice, but with equity and justice; for they themselves put a veil over their own hearts, because they did not want to understand the Law: for the Law is spiritual, as the Hebrews said (Rom. VII, 4) . And so, according to what he gives to each of us, in which the fault lies not with the giver, but with the one who does not love; this Lord, I say, has enlightened the heart of the people of the nations in the face of Christ Jesus, through his advent; which is clearly declared by the example of the Apostle, as we have written: For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus (I Cor. IV, 6) .

28. Therefore, David said to the Lord Jesus: Illuminate your face upon your servant. He desired to see the face of Christ, so that his mind could be enlightened. And it can be understood according to the Incarnation. For many prophets and righteous people desired to see, as the Lord himself declared. But he did not seek what was denied to Moses, to see the face of God in a corporeal form; rather, if Moses, so wise and learned, could have simply desired this more than demanding it as a mystery; however, it is human to transcend our desires. And not without good reason was his face sought to be seen as he came from the Virgin; so that it might be illuminated in the heart, as even those who said: 'Did not our hearts burn within us . . . when he opened to us the Scriptures' (Luke 24:32)? And if anyone wants to be seen as speaking to God the Father, he can understand the face of the Father, the Son; for whoever sees the Son, sees the Father also.

Yet the face of God is illuminated according to how his eyes are regarded by the righteous. And while this is to be proven spiritually, because the story of the illumination of Moses' face is mentioned, so that no one may think that it could not have happened corporally, let them know. Indeed, with the use of the sun, the appearance of the whole body is changed even for those who are pale from sickness, and the appearance of a glowing face is shown to those warmed by the heat of fire or by vapor. At dawn, the earth, dyed with a saffron color, reflects an image borrowed from the benefits of gemstones, and also the neighboring lands shine with shimmering necklaces, because they themselves radiate; and do you marvel if the face of Moses was imbued with the divine brightness of presence? Do you wonder if a righteous mind is enlightened by the shining grace of God? The prophet did not doubt, as he first asked to be illuminated, so that he could learn the justice of the Lord.

30. (Verse 136.) The eighth verse follows: The courses of waters have fallen my eyes; because I have not kept thy law. He expressed the greatly affected penitence, saying that the courses of waters have fallen his eyes: either because through them, like the paths of flowing streams, a certain flow of abundant tears has poured forth, and a continuous and constant outpouring of watery weeping; or because his eyes themselves have descended. For it has this property of the highest pain, that with tears the eyes themselves seem to descend in a certain way; because there is such a force of tears, that it is thought the eyes are dissolved into weeping, and poured out into tears.

31. Therefore, the eyes themselves seemed to descend as if in the course of running waters, by which word the strong and more express force of those who weep bitterly is declared, according to what is written in the Songs of Solomon: A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams

coming down from Lebanon (Song of Solomon 4:15). The Church has led these streams down from Lebanon: by this force sins are washed away; by this force the pure font and the breath of the Holy Spirit flow from Lebanon to the Bride; and by the beginning of faith she has passed through the age and has crossed over to the kingdom. For some, there is a fountain, for others a well, for our sake a spiritual spring. Some have a closed garden, a sealed fountain; others have the fountain of gardens, which is counted as part of the Church's dowry. Some have a descending impulse from Lebanon, and a great force that never fails. For the breasts do not fail to produce milk from the rock, nor does snow from Lebanon, nor does the water that is carried by the strong wind of the Virgin Jerusalem. The impulse descends from Lebanon, when the apostles and many believers gathered together, there suddenly came a sound from heaven, as if a great wind were being carried by the Spirit, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, giving them diverse tongues. A good impulse, which knows not how to harm, knows how to fulfill.

32. Therefore, if anyone wishes to earn this impact of descending grace from heaven, let him also himself descend with his eyes into the courses of the waters. Whoever pours forth this initial impact will merit it. He descended with his eyes into these channels of water, which she irrigated with tears on the feet of the Lord in the Gospel (Luke 7:38): and so he purchased the health of his soul and body with the price of his faith, no longer flowing with blood, but with spiritual grace (Luke 8:44).

33. Therefore, the prophet David descended; therefore, he brought back grace from sin. He descended into the channels of water, that is, he filled them up, and he accumulated the flowing streams of tears: either he filled the empty channels of the sun with weeping: or, as some moral interpretation suggests, he descended into the channels of water, he passed through them. And we could say: He transcended them, and he surpassed them: but the power of speech is diminished, in which the greater force of descending abundance is expressed, compared to ascending. See, I ask, what purpose words have, so that the Prophetic discourse does not lose its impact; although usage itself has customarily served the meaning of the writers with greater elegance. It has signified this in various ways and has almost always taken on additions. For it first said: I will wash my bed every night; I will water my couch with tears (Psalm 6:7). It said again: My tears have been my bread (Psalm 42:4). He also said: And I mixed my drink with tears (Psalm 101, 10). Here he added, saying: The coursing of the waters descended my eyes.

Following this, in the Lamentations Jeremiah expressed the emotion of sorrow, imitating the force of descending tears; for this is what he says: My eyes have run out with tears; my heart is troubled (Lam. 2:11). Like descending eyes that run out with tears. And elsewhere: My eye has been swallowed up (Lam. 3:49). But it is harder to conquer waters with tears than for eyes to be swallowed up by weeping. And again Jeremiah says the same thing: Their heart cried out to the Lord: let the walls of the daughter of Zion bring forth streams, let tears flow day and night. Do not give yourself rest, let not the pupil of your eye be silent (Thren. II, 18). Therefore, the eyes that lead down with their tears, the same led waters descend, that is, they gather themselves; so that they, increasing with their own weeping, might make themselves overflow with the force of torrents.

However, there are manuscripts that have: διεξήδουσι δὲ τῶν κατεβήσασαν οφθαλμοῦ μου, which means, The channels of water directed my eyes. But I read in my Greek manuscript

καταβησαν, which means, they descended: in which it is possible that the scribe made an error in either adding or subtracting letters in either direction.

36. He indeed had many things to weep for, either the incest of his daughter or the death of his sons: but he says that he did not weep for these things, but because he did not keep the law of the Lord. A holy man is more to blame than to be pitied for his misfortunes. He wept, therefore, when Nathan announced to him the anger of the Lord for the death of Uriah, and he acknowledged his sin of breaking the law. Finally, when his son was in distress, he neither took food nor ascended the royal throne or bed, but lay on the ground, bathing his fasting mouth with tears, desiring to alleviate not so much the death of his son as the punishment of his own sin in him (2 Samuel 12:16 et seq.). He wept, when the people were numbered, suddenly stricken in heart. Finally he said, 'I have sinned greatly, I have foolishly sinned' (2 Kings 24:10). Therefore he wept at first, because, exalted by royal power, by seeking the number of the people, he exceeded the measure of human condition. Then because he was avenged for his own error upon the people. But this punishment had been set by the Lord, not demanded by the King. Yet by committing himself to the mercy of the Lord, he proved the cause of election: at the same time, because the people suffered on account of him, he resolved the injury by offering himself for the people, thus proving his affection for piety.

Sermon 18. Sade.

Next comes the eighteenth letter, which is called in Latin *consolatio*. After the floods of tears flowing, and the heavy lamentations of sorrow, consolation was necessary to follow. For those who are in pain need consolation, and those who have suffered the punishments of serious crimes hope for forgiveness, and those who have cleansed their own sins with tears and weeping deserve rest.

All these things, whoever seeks in the divine Scriptures, finds. For first, it teaches that we should console those who are in sorrow, by the words uttered in the book of Jeremiah, when he mournfully cries out to the captives and exiles of the Jews: 'Go forth, depart, ye children; for I am forsaken, desolate. I have put off the garment of peace, and put on the garment of my supplication; and I will cry unto the Most High in my days.' Be of good courage, ye children; cry unto the Lord; and He will deliver you out of the hand of the princes of your enemies. For I have hoped in Him, who will bring you eternal salvation (Baruch 4:19 et seq.). Therefore, to those who believe in the Lord, there is consolation in the mercy of the Lord. There is also another type of consolation for those who have paid heavy penalties, as it is written in the book of Isaiah: 'Comfort, comfort my people,' says the Lord. 'Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.' (Isaiah 40:1 et 2). Even if faith was lacking, punishment was satisfied. The penalties are mitigated for those who are acquitted by commendation of their merits. The third is when the crime is washed away with tears, as in the saying: Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping. This is also easily found in this passage, as well as in many other places in the book of Psalms.

3. Therefore, the first consolation in order (On Penance, Distinction 3, Chapter First Consolation), is that God does not forget to show mercy, nor does he cast away those whom he deems worthy of correction. The second consolation is that after enduring the punishments we have suffered on

account of our sins, we attain forgiveness. Hence, some philosophers have argued that absolution is harmful to the wicked, while death is beneficial, because in absolution there is an incentive to sin, but in death there is an end to sin. However, it is clear that this is not the case, for it is written in the Proverbs of Solomon: 'He who spares the rod hates his son' (Prov. XIII, 24); but the Lord corrects those whom he loves (Prov. III, 12); And further: 'A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back of fools' (Prov. XXVI, 3); for punishment corrects and improves the one who strays. If someone is unable to be corrected, they are removed from the midst so that they do not commit worse things; for a dead person no longer knows how to err. And therefore the Ecclesiastes says: I praised the dead more than the living: and the one who is not yet born is better than both, who has not seen the evil work (Eccl. IV, 2 and 3). The dead is preferred to the living; because they have ceased to sin. The dead is preferred to the one who is not yet born, because they do not know how to sin.

Now let us also speak about those who have paid the penalty for their crimes. Have not these people already paid the price for their fault, and is the punishment no longer owed to them in full? The Lord proclaims through Isaiah: Comfort my people...because they have received from the hand of the Lord double for their sins (Isaiah 40:1 and 35). Learn where Plato has obtained these things. For the sake of education, he journeyed to Egypt to learn about the deeds of Moses, the utterances of the Law, the sayings of the prophets. He heard about the consolation of the people, who seemed to have been punished beyond the measure of their sin. And he translated this passage, presented in a certain rich style of words, into the Dialogue he wrote about Virtue. But the Lord explains more fully and openly the place which He designates in the Gospel, saying, By means of the person of Abraham He speaks thus to the rich man of this world, who recognizes Lazarus though he is now in his bosom: Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And in all these things a great gulf is fixed between us and you, so that those who would pass hence to you cannot, neither can they cross over from thence to us. But now let us hear what the righteous man says in consoling himself.

5. (Verse 137.) You are just, O Lord, and your judgment is right. You have commanded your testimonies in righteousness and in exceeding faithfulness. Truly, a just man, flowing with tears, wrapped in afflictions, paying for his sins with severe punishment, is not overcome by weariness, is not broken by fear, is not tired by labor, is not ungrateful or sad. For often the common people, not considering their own faults, think unjustly that they are enduring what they suffer: but the truly just man, who immediately accuses himself at the beginning of his speech, proclaims the justice of the Lord, that he may suffer worthy things according to his merits. But speaking of the just God, He indeed pronounces about His own injustice: but about the justice of the Lord He hopes and forgiveness. For the just one is not always angry, just as He is the avenger of fault, so He is the moderator of punishment: just as He is the defender of sins, so He is the recompenser of virtues and the best merits. Whoever wants to give a reward should consider the contest; because no one is crowned without a contest. Therefore, He often allows us to be tempted, willing to justly give rewards to one who is struggling, not to one who is asleep. A crown adorned with flowers does not suit, but one covered in dust; victory adorns not with soft pleasures, but with the hard labor of exercise.

Therefore, the just person praises the justice of God in their adversities. But a parent who has lost their tender children does not feel this, nor does one who has been deprived of the companionship of a prematurely deceased spouse, nor does a sick person in pain, nor does a shipwrecked person in danger, nor does a defendant in a trial, nor does a captive in chains. However, Jeremiah cried out, proclaiming the future calamity of the people's captivity, that he would be swallowed up in a shameful pit and be drowned in filthy filth: 'You are just, O Lord.' (Jeremiah 12:1) He cried out again when he was tormented by the pitiful servitude of the conquered people. The Lord is just; for His mouth has angered... He has made desolate the city from without, and inside there is death (Lamentations 1:18 and 20). The Hebrews cried out because of the power of their devotion, and the grace of their faith desired to be consumed by the fires of the burning furnace: You are just, O Lord, in all that You have done (Daniel 3:27); and therefore they deserved to be unharmed by the fires, proclaiming the righteousness of the Lord. Daniel the prophet also, when he was cast into the den of lions, and surrounded by the ferocity and horror of savage beasts, boldly declared that everything is right before the Lord with an undaunted shout (Daniel 6:22). Jonah, shut up inside the belly of a savage beast, barely able to catch his breath, condemned to the fate of the unjust, cried out from the belly of the whale in the sea: With a voice of praise and confession, I beg you... (Jonah 2:10). David, when fleeing from the face of Absalom with treacherous arms and driven from the land, and leaving the kingdom behind; when he offered himself for the destruction of the whole people, he said: You are just, Lord, and your judgment is right. What has this innocent flock done? I, as a shepherd, have committed evil, before the just God, let the punishment be taken by the author of the crime. The father of faith, Abraham, when asked to sacrifice his only son by the elderly, tempered the affection of paternal piety with a confession of divine justice, saying: You are just, Lord; for you do not demand another, but you require your own: I restore to you the one whom you have given. Job, imitating him, after losing his children and being stripped of his wealth, tearing his body's garment, says: Naked I came into the world, naked, he said, and I will die. The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away.... Blessed be the name of the Lord. (Job 1:21-22)

7. Therefore, let us all praise the just Lord: both he who arranges his own dying limbs in the tomb, and he who is struck by harm, or by the death of his children, let him say: You are just, O Lord. For what do we lose? The Apostle cries out: What do you have that you did not receive (1 Cor. 4:7)? Therefore, what we have, we have received; therefore, what we lose, we give back, we do not lose. The Lord is just in dangers, just in losses, just in vengeance, not only because each person justly pays the price for his own fault; but also because while one is punished, many are corrected. Ananias in the Acts of the Apostles committed the crime of withholding the price that he had received from the sale of his land (Acts 5:1ff): he could have offered nothing and escaped the crime. But so that no one would think that the apostles could be defrauded with impunity, or that the office of his mercy would be contaminated by the fraud of betrayal, he, condemned to eternal death, terrified everyone with just fear so that they would be devoted to the study of faith. Pharaoh, drowned in the waves with his people, is an example of worldly conversation; let no one persecute God's people. Finally, God was able to make him obedient to His will, but He wanted to correct everyone through his punishment. Therefore, the Lord said to him: 'I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I may show my power in you, and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.' (Exodus IX, 16). The Lord was not seeking His own praise, but the improvement of us.

Therefore, all wise men say: You are just, O Lord, and your judgment is right; for we are not delivered to our adversaries without your judgment, nor do we come into tribulations without your judgment. This is the consolation of the just: this is the judgment of the Lord. Finally, you also have: I have remembered your judgments, which are from the beginning, and have been comforted (Psalm 118:52). Therefore, take notice that the judgments of the Lord are consolations.

9. (Verse 138.) You have commanded justice and your truth excessively. Did you command excessively, or excessive truth? But excessive truth is full of praise, and to command excessively is a provision of providence and caution. For indeed he knew the weak; therefore he often reminded them not to forget.

10. (Verse 139.) The third verse follows: Your house has consumed me with zeal; because your enemies have forgotten your words. There is zeal for life, and there is zeal for death. Zeal for life means to keep divine commandments and to guard the Lord's mandates with love, as Phinehas did, of whom we read in Numbers, when the Lord said to Moses: Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, appeased my anger towards the sons of Israel, because he was zealous for my sake among them; and I did not consume the sons of Israel in my zeal, as I said. Behold, I give him a covenant of peace, and it shall be to him and to his seed after him a covenant of everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel. (Num. 25:11 et seq.). Twenty-four thousand of the people were slain: the punishment extended to all, and there was no end to the destruction. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, seized a javelin, killed two persons who had joined themselves to Baal, appeased the wrath of the Lord, obtained a victory for those to whom he had denied salvation. How salutary, therefore, is the zeal of God!

11. That vice was not limited to one time: even now the vice of the Midianites is mixed with that of the Jews. The Midianite is one who is not joined in legitimate marriage to any wife, not united in the partnership of faith. The Midianite is the perfidy of heretics, tempting the people of God. How many nations has that fatal harlot insidiously infiltrated, who with a public funeral buried the whole people in a common death! Come now, Phinehas, take up the sword of the word, kill perfidy, slay heresy; lest the entire people perish because of her. The anger of heaven presses on, strike the very womb of impiety and the generator of treachery; lest an unhappy birth be formed, lest an illegitimate conception spread the seed of deceit and wickedness; so that the Lord may establish with you a covenant of peace, and a covenant of grace, a covenant of heavenly promises. The priest, who strives to preserve the incorruptible chastity of the Church, should have zeal; and therefore the Prince of priests said: Zeal for your house has consumed me (John 2:17). Phinehas was a priest, the grandson of a priest, and the son of a priest. He had a fervent zeal and was useful in his priestly role, particularly diligent to ensure that nothing was overlooked. It is better for many to be freed by the condemnation of one or two than for many to be endangered by the acquittal of two.

12. He said, 'Zeal for your house has consumed me.' You see that zeal is the grace of God, which investigates, which intervenes, which pours itself into a just heart. Zeal for God is life. Finally, the Lord says: Zeal for your house has consumed me. Just as before in Adam, prevailing death had consumed man: so zeal has consumed, which has been brought to life in Christ. Elijah had zeal, and therefore he was taken up to heaven. He said, 'I have been zealous for the Lord.' Mathathias

Butanus had zeal, who aroused the people of God against the sacrileges of Antioch. Those who have zeal consider all their enemies to be the enemies of God, even their fathers, brothers, and sisters. Concerning everyone, they say: They have become my enemies (Psalm 138:22), as David says. What more? The Apostle of the Lord was also declared by this name, so that he would be called Judas the Zealot, as we read in the Gospel (Luke 6:15).

13. The people of the Gentiles obtained eternal life through zeal for faith, which the people of the Jews lost due to negligence and laziness. Therefore it is written: 'Zeal has taken hold of an unlearned people' (Isaiah 26:11); for the people who were learned in the Law had no fervor of faith. Zeal turned towards the Gentiles, of which the grace is so great that it surpassed the prerogative of election and the industry of learning. Finally, by taking hold of an uneducated people, it made them better. Therefore, this grace has operated in the people of the nations, so that they would merit the inheritance of the Lord, with which the Lord has worked to join the Church to Himself from the nations. Therefore, zeal is love. Indeed, love is as powerful as death, and zeal is as harsh as the grave. Harsh is the zeal that no enticement of this life overcomes. Harsh as the grave, through which we die to sin, so that we may live to God.

14. Angels without zeal are nothing, and they lose the prerogative of their substance unless they sustain it with the ardor of zeal. Finally, in the Apocalypse of John, the Lord says to the Angel of Laodicea: I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot, but because you are lukewarm, I will begin to vomit you out of my mouth; for you say: I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing; and you do not know that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I advise you to buy from me gold refined by fire (Rev. III, 15-18). This is the zeal of God, this is the vapor of faith, and the fervor of devotion, which softens and shapes us like sweet food in Christ. How great is the grace of the Lord, that He may establish us in His mouth, and partake of some of the merits of our meal, and, if we deserve it, devour us if He delights in the sweetness of our food. Blessed is the one whom wisdom devours, whom virtue drinks, whom justice receives; guilt cannot have a share in him whom forgiveness of sins absorbs; for where will error find a place when spotless integrity has received him?

15. And why should we be surprised if the Angels have such zeal for Him? God the Father Himself says: 'I will be jealous for Jerusalem with great zeal' (Zach. VIII, 2). Because God is great, therefore His zeal is great: and according to the quality of each person's power, so is their zeal either moderate or great. Jerusalem is avenged by zeal, the Church is gathered by zeal, faith is acquired by zeal, and purity is possessed by zeal. The Lord Jesus also says: 'Zeal for your house will consume me' (John II, 17); rebuking the Jews for making the house of prayer a den of thieves, and making it a house of trade as well.

16. But not only should we care for the place of the Church, but also for this inner house of God within us; lest it be a house of commerce or a den of thieves. For if we pursue gains, profits, financial benefits, we have made a house of commerce. If we invade the possessions of others, the boundaries of widows or minors, we have made a den of thieves. Therefore, let the Word of God come and cast out thieves, plunderers, and innkeepers from this house; so that your heart, your chest, may be a clean place.

17. But there is jealousy towards fault, and there is jealousy towards grace. For David himself said: I have been zealous for the sinners' peace (Psalm 72:2). And in Ecclesiasticus it is written: Do not

be jealous of a woman's embrace; lest she should reveal malice towards you through her wicked teachings (Ecclesiasticus 9:1). And a jealous woman is justly reproached for being jealous of a faithful woman. Therefore, we consider that jealousy is a certain measure and discipline, just like the discipline of virtue. And blessed is the one who knows the discipline of jealousy and hates those who forsake the grace of the Lord, abandoning their own salvation and embracing the errors of deceit.

Therefore he says: Since they have forgotten your words, my enemies. Who are these enemies? If the people of the Jews, how were they appointed as enemies under his rule? For David governed all the Jews with his own kingdom. If the Gentiles, how did they forget the words of God, when they were ignorant of the Law of the Lord? For no one can forget except what he has received. Therefore, those are my enemies, who are your enemies, who were not going to receive the Lord when he comes in their own place. These are the serious enemies, these are his own enemies whom the Prophet testifies against; not those who were his own, but those who rebel against Christ. Finally, elsewhere he says: And I wasted away over your enemies: and I hated them with a just hatred (Psalm 138, 21 and 22); considering the weapons of treachery to be more serious than warfare. For there is no enemy more serious than one who harms the creator of all. Therefore, the people of the nations were acquired with great zeal, because God was denied to his own people. For those who did not hold the memory of divine precepts could not maintain either the devotion of faith or the discipline of virtue. Thus Adam was expelled from paradise, and thus the people of the Jews were excluded from the prerogative of election.

19. (Verse 140) It follows: Your eloquence is excessively inflamed, and your servant loved it. The Lord indeed sent fire upon the earth, not so that it would burn with the fire of Sodom, as it is written, but rather so that it would not strip it of the gift of fertility, either by use or by the blossom of greenness (Gen. XIX, 24). For the Lord is more accustomed to approve and increase his work than to diminish or condemn it. And indeed it was not fitting for innocent elements to bear the punishment of our wickedness. What had nature done wrong, if the grown offspring went astray? The fault was not in the birth, if the progeny slipped by a wandering error: but the fault was in the use. Therefore, who spread fire in the New Testament? Who would kindle the secret desires of divine knowledge in the minds, who would inflame the vapor of faith and devotion, who would ignite the desire for virtue. Jeremiah, heated by this fire, says: And there was a burning fire in my bones (Jeremiah 20:9). Cleophas, who had been warmed by the fire of celestial words, and the other disciple who had journeyed with the Lord from Jerusalem to the town, said: Was not our heart burning within us . . . when he opened to us the Scriptures (Luke 24:32)?

20. Therefore this fire is the word of Christ. And the good fire, which knows how to warm, does not know how to burn, except sins alone. By this fire, that apostolic gold placed upon the good foundation is proven: by this fire, that pure silver of works is examined: by this fire, those precious stones are illuminated, but hay and straw are consumed (I Cor. III, 12 and 13). Therefore, this fire cleanses the soul, it consumes error. Hence the Lord also says: Now you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you (John XV, 3). Here is the fire that burns before the Lord; for unless one has taken the flame of devotion, they cannot have the presence of the Lord (Leviticus 6:12). Ignite this fire within your minds first, so that the light of Christ may shine upon you. By this fire, the bush was burned but not consumed (Exodus 3:2). For the divine word burns in order to correct the conscience of the sinner; it does not consume in order to destroy. This fire dulled, this fire

extinguished the fierce flames of material incendiaries. Finally, the Hebrews, having been set on fire by this flame, were neither able to fear nor feel the heat of the burning furnace (Dan. III, 50). Therefore, rightfully does the good servant love the burning Word of the Lord, with which he is clothed in charity, which excludes fear.

Moreover, he added beautifully, excessively; for every teacher indeed inflames the listener's feelings: but above all is the word of God, dividing the joints and marrow of the soul. Therefore, describe to yourself the ignited discourse of God in three ways, either that which cleanses, or that which ignites, or that which illuminates the listeners. Therefore the Lord says, \"I have searched Jerusalem with a lamp.\" (Zeph. 1:12) But he found no one in it who could be cleansed, or who could be ignited, or who could be illuminated; therefore he left it in darkness.

22. And do not be surprised if a servant loves the fiery speech of the Lord, which the Bride also loved, who said: 'Your lips are like a scarlet cord; for crimson is the color of fire, and the blood of the Lord's Cross is poured out. The scarlet lips of the Lord spoke of his own passion. In fact, in Exodus, scarlet was used in place of fire. For the world is not made of scarlet, but of four elements: however, in scarlet the image of fire is portrayed, and unless its vapor penetrated the sky, air, seas, and earth, all things would dissolve as if drained of strength.' Therefore, through the network of persuasion, we recognize a bond: through desire, or the burning ardor of passion that sparkles in the souls of the hearers, or a sign of passion. Hence, elsewhere the Bride says: His lips are lilies dripping with myrrh (Song of Songs, 5:13). For through myrrh, the ointment of passion, and by the grace of the resurrection, it is declared that you infuse the reviving scent of life into the hearts of the dead. Therefore, rightly receiving the sweetness of his conversation, the Bride exclaims and testifies: His lips are sweet, and he himself is altogether desirable (ibid., 5:16).

23. (Verse 141.) The fifth verse follows: I am a youth and despised: I have not forgotten your justifications. This little verse can apply to many of the saints who, from their earliest youth, have been exercised in hard labors. For even Joseph, when he was sold into Egypt by his brothers, was young and despised, being sold into slavery as an injustice: and later, when he was brought out of prison and made ruler of Egypt, he did not repay his brothers with injury, but instead gave them food at a reduced price, provided for his father in his old age, and, with a chariot lowered for him, he met them, adored them, and, with the other servants bearing the signs of great power, declared: I am a youth and despised: I have not forgotten your justifications.

24. David himself, when he was younger, was sent by his father to tend the sheep as though he were of lowly status, and he was not presented to the priest as one worthy to be anointed for the kingdom. But when the priest sought him out and summoned him from the pastures, he received the privilege of royal anointing. Later, when he advanced to war and Goliath, despising the entire Jewish people, challenged them to single combat, while the others were afraid, he asked the king for permission to engage with him. He was not considered capable enough for such a great contest yet, with the king saying: You cannot go against Goliath and fight with him; for you are a boy, and he is a warrior man from his youth (1 Samuel 17:33). Nor would he have been allowed, unless he had proven that in his youth he had strangled a lion with his own hands, and had killed it by pulling the legs off a stolen lamb. He also despised Goliath, because he had come forward against an armed warrior with only a staff and stones, and declared that he relied not on strength or weapons, but on the name of the Lord, in whom he had confidence for battle; so that he might

remove the disgrace of the provoked crowd. Therefore this young man, and despised, struck down the Allophylum, and having obtained victory, triumphed with the testimony of ten thousand young women singing. For he carried the figure of him who was to come, despised as though he were to appear in the earth, and without a legate, without a helper, without a messenger, he liberated the whole people of this world from the battle of his cross: to whose souls the sacrament of baptism, renewed, might applaud, that it was he, Goliath, revealed to us, and put to death by the sword of his word. Therefore the true Goliath lies slain by the humility of the Son of God: he lost the head that turned and deceived in many ways. The secure souls now sing, who previously lamented the torments of their sins. They declare with drums, that is, with their bodies dead to sin: Saul has triumphed in thousands, David in ten thousands (1 Samuel 18:7). That harsh king is indignant and the devil is angry because the young girls sang, for the son of hardness deceived few; Christ redeemed the whole world. Therefore, Christ born of the Virgin says: I am young and despised, but I have not forgotten your commandments.

26. The people of the nations also say that he, despised in the first election, still rough in faith and zealous in the first devotion, young in the sacraments of baptism, certainly or renewed by the youth of an eagle: I am young and despised: I have not forgotten your justifications. I, who was despised before, am now preferred, now placed before the chosen ones. The people of sinners formerly despised, I have the venerable associations of heavenly sacraments. Now I am received with the honor of heavenly food: my meals are not drenched with rain, nor does the hard work of the land bring forth fruits for me. I do not need to seek rivers or springs for my own water: Christ is my food, Christ is my drink: the flesh of God is food for me, and the blood of God is my drink. I no longer wait for the yearly harvest to satisfy me, Christ is served to me daily. I do not fear that any inclement weather of heaven or the barrenness of the fields will diminish him for me, if the diligent devotion of the pious persists. I no longer desire the rain of the evening, which I used to marvel at before: nor the manna which I used to prefer over all foods; for those who ate the manna hungered. My food is the one that if anyone eats, they will not hunger. My food is the one that does not fatten the body, but strengthens the heart of man.

27. Before, there had been for me wondrous bread from heaven; for it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat (John 6:31): but that bread was not the true one, but rather a shadow of the coming. The Father has kept for me that true bread from heaven. That bread of God descended from heaven for me, which gives life to this world. It did not descend for the Jews, it did not descend for the Synagogue, but it descended for the Church, for the younger people of God. For how did the bread descend for the Jews, which gave life, when all who ate that bread, which is manna, that the Jews thought to be the true bread, died in the desert? How does the Synagogue descend; when the entire Synagogue has been destroyed, and worn out by the eternal fast of faith? Finally, if they had received true bread, they would not have said: Lord, give us this bread always (Ibid., 34).

28. What do you seek, O Jew, that he should give you bread, whom he gives to all, gives daily, gives always? It is in yourself that you may receive this bread: approach this bread, and you will receive it. Concerning this bread it is said: All those who distance themselves from you, will perish (Psalm 72:27). If you distance yourself from it, you will perish; if you draw near to it, you will live. This is the bread of life: therefore, whoever eats life cannot die. How will someone die, to whom sustenance is life? How will he fail, who has the vital substance? Come to him and be satisfied, for

he is bread: come to him and drink; for he is a fountain: come to him and be enlightened; for he is light: come to him and be set free; for where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17): come to him and be forgiven; for he is the forgiveness of sins. Who is this that you seek? Hear him saying: I am the bread of life: whoever comes to me shall not hunger; and whoever believes in me shall never thirst (John 6:35). You heard him, and you saw him, and you did not believe him; therefore you are dead: or now believe, so that you may live. But you are amazed at Moses, because he led your fathers through the sea on dry ground. Moses did not command, but obtained: he did not order the sea, but served the commanding waves. You praise Moses because he drowned Pharaoh and his army: Moses prayed, and another commanded. Moses prayed, Christ acted. Moses fled, Christ pursued. Moses followed the pillar, to turn away the darkness of the night: Christ illuminated. Moses, you recognize that he tempered the bitterness of the waters. Moses, you recognize that he produced water from the rock: you do not recognize Christ, who overthrew the army of the true Egyptian king and plunged them into the deep abyss: who liberates us daily from the tumults of this world; so that the storm of this age does not overwhelm us. What good was it for our ancestors to cross the Red Sea, if they were not permitted to reach the promised land? For whoever came out of Egypt, perished in the desert. Aaron is dead, Maria is dead, and even Moses himself is dead: only Jesus of Nazareth, the likeness of the sacred name, has been preserved. Let the Jew applaud; for when he was thirsty, the rocks spewed forth water: for me, an eternal fountain of divine grace flowed from the body of God Himself. Christ drinks my bitterness, in order to grant me the sweetness of His own grace. So the Christian people say: I am young and despised; I have not forgotten your justifications. Well said, who justified God by the sacraments of baptism. For the one who is baptized justifies God; because he confesses his own sins and waits for the Lord's forgiveness of sins. David justified, who said: Against you alone have I sinned, and I have done evil in your sight: that you may be justified in your words (Psalm 50:6). The Pharisees did not justify themselves, who did not want to be baptized with the baptism of John, as you read in the Gospel (Luke 7:30). It is not only enough to justify oneself, but also not to forget the justifications of God, that is, to guard the unblemished gifts of spiritual grace and to preserve the untainted and unoffended gifts of sacred remission.

31. These are general aspects, but there is also a special privilege for each individual Christian to speak: I am young and despised; if he is humble in heart, meek and gentle. Therefore, let him say: I am young and despised. Let him prefix the general boast of his age, so that he may commend more the grace of his humility. Humility in old age is not astonishing, which is weakened by strength, broken by infirmities, burdened with sorrows, sighs heavily, boiled by the heat of cares, and overwhelmed by the sad aversion to life, forgetting the eagerness of boasting. Indeed, humility is rare in young people, and therefore remarkable. While youth is vibrant, while strength is solid, while blood boils, while worry is unknown, while weakness is ignored, while joy is abundant: then arrogance boils over, then the proud feelings of youth are elevated, then humility is almost despised, and lowliness is scorned; then submission is considered the weakness of a degenerate conscience. Therefore, a great maturity of character must be cultivated, one that surpasses nature.

Finally, if we consider, in paradise humility was lacking; and therefore it came from heaven. In paradise disobedience arose; and therefore obedience came down with the Savior. The flesh was inflated, hence the submission of meekness could not be found on earth. The whole inheritance of

the transgressor had swelled. Coming, the Lord Jesus first emptied Himself (Philip. 2:6-8), considering it not robbery to be equal with God, taking the form of a servant for Himself, and being found in appearance as a man: He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death. Let it not move you, for it is written, 'as a man'; for he did not take on the likeness of a man, but the truth. For even the Apostle himself says elsewhere: 'The Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (I Tim. II, 5). And let us bring an example from the Gospel: 'We beheld,' says John, 'his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth' (John I, 14). Was it because he said, 'as of the only begotten,' that he wanted the likeness of an only begotten more than the truth to be esteemed?

33. Therefore, Christ did not come in vain. Now man can say: I am a young man and despised; the one who was previously a proud old man in the former people. He says: I am a young man and despised, just as the Church says: I am black and beautiful (Song of Solomon 1:4). He mentioned black first to increase beauty. Likewise, here he mentioned youth to increase humility. He did not say: I am black and beautiful; lest what is black be considered beautiful. And he said, I am a young man overlooked, so that youth may not be thought despicable; but he said, Young man, and marvel at this, humble, not proud, closer to the downcast than the swollen. Thus also there: I am black with a higher sin, but beautiful with the confession of sin, and with the zeal for correction, and with the love of virtue. Therefore, although it is a connecting syllable, as grammarians call it, it still has a distinction by which confusion is separated and distinguished: if you say that Ambrosius and Bassus are inside, only one is understood; but if you assert that Ambrosius is inside and Bassus is inside, then two are certainly understood.

34. Therefore let him say: I am young, and despised; because Christ redeemed the world in the poor and despised, because Christ conquered the devil by humility. Let him say; I am despised; because God does not despise the humble heart; because that despised Lazarus now rests in the bosom of Abraham, and that boastful rich man is afflicted in hell. Moses was despised, and he did not appear suitable to himself when he was sent to free the Hebrew people. Jeremiah was despised, who said: Lord, I cannot speak; for I am a youth (Jer. 1:6). But this despised one is chosen more easily. Finally, it is said to him: Do not say that I am a youth; for you shall go to all to whom I shall send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces; for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you (Ibid., 7 and 8). That Publican was despised, who did not dare lift his eyes to heaven; and therefore he was heard more easily than that Pharisee: For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted (Luke 18:14).

35. (Verse 142.) It follows: Your justice, justice forever; and your law, truth. Indeed, individuals can perform acts of justice, but they do not endure forever. That wealthy person who has an abundance of riches in this world, perhaps has performed some acts of justice, for which they have received recompense in this present life; but those deeds have not been great, nor worthy of everlasting reward. Moreover, even if we do perform some acts of justice, we do so not continuously, but rarely. Most people do not seize others' possessions, but do not know how to be generous with their own. Others, in order to appear just, often give to the poor unjustly obtained resources. This is not eternal justice. Many righteous people have often committed serious offenses, not reaping the fruits of eternal justice. Only to God belongs the possession of justice forever, who feeds the just and the unjust; for justice is not to be repaid only with good deeds, but

it is true justice when it is also granted to enemies. And rightly Justice of God says: Love your enemies (Matthew 5:44).

Therefore, just as the justice of God is eternal, so is the law of God truth. But how do we understand this? Is it because the law of God is truth, that is, true: and what God establishes is all true, as it says below: Your commandments are all true? Or is it because the truth is the law of God; because God does not lie? Therefore, with Him truth is the law, falsehood is perversion. But it can also be understood in this way, the law of God is truth: therefore, among the Jews there is no law of God, because they do not accept the truth. The law of God is spiritual (Rom. VII, 14), as the Apostle said: therefore, those who do not receive it spiritually do not have the true law. What is not true is false: what lies, kills. Therefore, the letter that kills is false: the spirit that gives life is true.

37. Let us receive it thus: The law of God is not a type, nor a shadow, nor an example of heavenly things; but it is the heavenly things themselves. Hence it is written, because the end of the law is Christ (Rom. X, 4). Not indeed a defect, but the fullness of the law is in Christ; for he came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. Just as the Old Testament is old, but all truth is in the New Testament: so also the law given through Moses is a figure of the law. Truly, therefore, that Law of truth is an example, for in the exemplar the blood of the Lamb is shed, in truth Christ is sacrificed. And so, it is necessary that the heavenly things themselves be purified with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter into holy places made by hands, the patterns of the true ones, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. (Hebrews 9:23-24). But in order for us to know that the Lord Jesus gave a new law, you have him saying: 'I will give them a new testament', says the Lord. I will give my laws in their hearts, and I will write them in their minds, and I will not be mindful of their sins and injustices (Hebrews 10:16-17). So where forgiveness is, there is no longer an offering for sins. Therefore, it is evident that all truth is contained in the Gospel; for the law of God is written in the minds and hearts of men, not on stone tablets (so those who do not have the commandments of God in their hearts do not have the law), whether because it becomes old in the Jews or is renewed in us.

38. It is a shadow, not the truth; for when an offering is made for sins according to the Law, there is no forgiveness of sins. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (Hebrews 10:4). Therefore, that forgiveness was false until the truth of forgiveness came. What could be more clear than the statement of John the Evangelist, who said: 'For the Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ' (John 1:17)? To contrast the law, he brought forth the truth. For when there is a conjunction, however, a disjunction must be understood to have been interposed; because if the truth had been in the law, it would not have been accomplished through Christ.

39. We can thus understand: Christ is the truth; therefore, truth is the law. And if the commandment of the Lord is the law, much more so is the living and active Word of God the law.

40. (Verse 143.) The seventh verse follows: Tribulation and necessity have found me: your commandment is my meditation. Tribulations and necessities seek the just, and sometimes find him, sometimes do not find him. He is found, to whom the crown is owed: he is not found, who is not proven suitable for the struggle. Therefore, tribulation is like a certain grace. Finally, Sacrifice is the spirit of God with tribulation (Psalm 50:19). Is not grace the one that works patience?

Therefore, the one who knew the benefit of tribulation, when sought out from tribulation, was not avoided.

41. Wisdom says: Evil people will seek me, but they will not find me (Prov. 1:28); not because the Lord did not want to be found by humans, but because he offered himself to everyone, even those who did not seek him, so that they would be undeserving of seeking and finding him. However, Simeon, who was waiting for him, found him (Luke 2:25 et seq.). Andrew found him. Finally, he said to Simon: We have found the Messiah, which means Christ (John 1:41). Philip also said to Nathanael: We have found Jesus, the son of Joseph, who is from Nazareth, the one whom Moses wrote about in the Law and the prophets (John 1:45). And to show how Christ would be found, he said: Come and see (ibid., 46). Therefore, whoever seeks Christ, let them come not by the steps of the body, but by the traces of the mind: let them see him not with external eyes, but with internal ones. For the eternal is not seen by bodily appearances; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18). Therefore, Christ is not temporal, but from the Father before time, as if God, the true Son of God, and as if eternal power above time, whom no end of time can contain: as if life above time, which no day of death can find; For he who died, died to sin once: but he who lives, lives to God (Rom. VI, 10).

42. Do you hear what the Apostle said today? He said, 'He has died once for sin.' Once Christ died for you, a sinner: do not sin again after baptism. He has died once for all, and he dies once for each individual, not frequently. You are a sinner, O man; therefore, Christ, his omnipotent Father, made himself sin. He made a man who would bear our sins. Therefore, the Lord Jesus died for my sin; so that we might be righteousness in Him (II Cor. V, 21). He died for me, so that he would rise for me. He died once, he rose once. And you, having died with him, buried with him, and raised with him in baptism, beware that once you have died, you do not die again. Now you will die not to sin, but to forgiveness: so that when you rise, you will not die again. For Christ, rising from the dead, does not die anymore, death no longer has dominion over him (Rom. VI, 9). So, did death have dominion over him? In that very thing which He [Christ] said, 'I shall not rule any longer,' He showed that He had ruled. O man, do not lose such a benefit. Christ subjected Himself to the rule of death for your sake, so that He might free you from the yoke of rule. He undertook the servitude of death, so that He might grant you the freedom of eternal life.

43. Therefore, whoever seeks Christ, also seeks his tribulation, and does not shy away from suffering. In fact, even David, who was worthy of being sought through tribulation, sought tribulation himself. For if he had not sought it, he would not have found it. But what he found, he himself testifies, saying: 'I found tribulation and sorrow, and I invoked the name of the Lord' (Psalm 114:3-4). And elsewhere: 'In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he answered me and set me free' (Psalm 118:5). Good, therefore, is the tribulation that makes us worthy, who are heard by the Lord in abundance. But it is grace to be heard by our Lord God.

44. Therefore, he who seeks tribulation does not avoid it; he who does not avoid it, is found. For he does not avoid it, who contemplates the commandments of God with his understanding and his actions. Indeed, those contests find that athlete who has been trained in the exercise. However, the one who has abandoned the exercise will without a doubt not be able to be found; he is unworthy to be sought after. Therefore, David, like a good athlete, says: Distress and need have found me; for they have always found me prepared, not avoiding the battles of needs and

tribulations, but seeking them.

45. (Vers. 144.) It follows: Your testimonies are everlasting; give me understanding of them, and I shall live. Who is so great that he can understand the testimonies of the Lord? And therefore understanding must be sought from the Lord, whose power is so great; so that the beginning of understanding may be the fullness of virtue. Finally, it is written: But piety is the beginning of understanding in God (Prov. 1:7), which is the foundation of all virtues according to the discipline of human and heavenly things. Piety is a friend to God, pleasing to parents, appeases the Lord, fosters relationships, cultivates devotion to God, rewards parents, and is the support of children. Piety, I say, is the tribunal of the just, the refuge of the needy, the refuge of the wretched, and the forgiveness of sins.

46. The one who has understanding is truly pious; for he understands the slippery fragility of human nature, and quickly forgives the one who errs. He understands the common bond given to us by nature and the partnership of use; and therefore he pays to the poor as if it were a debt, not considering it as something undeserved. He understands the vicissitudes of calamities; and therefore, like a port of salvation in this world, he extends his humanity to those shipwrecked. This is the perfect virtue in humans, this is the complete praise in God.

Deservedly, Solomon also sought understanding for himself, following his father's example, and asked the Lord, saying: I am a humble child, and I do not know my entrance or my exit, and your servant is among your chosen people, a people as numerous as the sands of the sea, which cannot be counted because of their multitude. And you will give your servant a wise heart, to listen and judge your people with justice, and to discern between good and evil (III Kings 3:7-9). Whereas it pleased the Lord, because he did not desire a long life for himself, or the abundance of royal wealth, but rather wisdom to understand the Lord's judgments and justices; and thus he governed the people with a peaceful reign, because he did not presume to know, like Adam, the difference between good and evil; but he prayed to Christ to understand his grace. For what is it divine to know, that must be obtained from the Lord your God, so that you may understand. If Adam had asked, as David asked, he would by no means have fallen into the inescapable snares of error, by which his entire inheritance is being strangled. Therefore, he died, and what is more serious, the death of sin; because he first seized upon the knowledge, before receiving the understanding by which he could be made alive.

Therefore, the intellect is enlivened like the Spirit; for it is the very grace of the spiritual intellect, and therefore the Holy Spirit operates through its gift. Moreover, the good intellect is for all those who make use of it (Psal. CX, 10); by this we are taught that we must not only comprehend with our senses, but also carry out in action what we understand.

Sermon 19. Koph.

The 19th letter is Koph, whose interpretation is Conclusion; and as we have found elsewhere, Look. The letter differs, but the meaning is congruent. For the one who concludes should look around and not ignore the cause of danger, especially when it is a deadly dilemma. Each person concludes with swelling viscera and internal throat, when the passage of breath is blocked, the functions of breathing and respiration are forced. A woman is concluded when she has a retrograde flow of the uterus, by which the main part of her chest is pressed; hence serious

narrowness arises, and unless that chamber for receiving the seeds is restored to its proper place, it is accustomed to exclude life. In the same way, one who is distressed in mind, and is tormented by certain impending dangers, is said to be concluded in no lesser narrowness of the mind than of the body. For the passions and heat of souls are greater than those of bodies.

Therefore, enclosed by a swelling of the intestines, he seeks a doctor; so that he may be able to ward off danger and relieve the tightness. The approaching doctor tries everything, explores the inner parts. And so, you enclosed in the fervor of the soul, look at yourself with an inner eye. The force of illness presses, a harmful conscience burns, the weight of sins oppresses, the narrowness of the mind intercepts sensation: know yourself, and seek the medicine of prayer: ask for that doctor to come who descends from heaven, who seeks the most the sick, as he himself says: It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick (Matthew 9:12). Do you have wounds? Do not delay: there is no finding of healing with him. Do you have sores? Do not be afraid: he is accustomed to cure with a word, not with a sword. Therefore, look with those eyes, with which David sought and deserved help. I lifted up my eyes to the mountains, he says: I sought from where help would come to me (Psal. CXX, 1 and 2). I found nothing except from the Lord; for he who created the world takes care of the inhabitants of the world. Therefore, look and always look; because the eyes of the righteous are always towards the Lord. This also reminds you of Jeremiah in Lamentations itself, saying to Jerusalem: Arise and wake up in the night, at the beginning of your watch, pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up your hands to the Lord for the souls of your little ones, who faint from hunger in the streets of all the roads (Lam. II, 19). Does it not also openly indicate the narrowness of the conclusion, and advise that with the intention of the heart, in which the eye of better insight is, you provide a healing remedy for yourself? Finally, even below, again under this letter it says: For our time has come, our days are filled, our end has arrived. Those who persecuted us have become light, above the eagles of the sky. They were set on fire in the mountains; in the desert they laid traps for us (Lamentations IV, 18 and 19).

4. He demonstrated the utmost conclusion, and no remedy except in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone can bring medicine to the desperate. And as if showing Him, he says: The Spirit before our face, Christ the Lord was captured in our destruction.... In His shadow we will live among the nations (Ibid., 20) . And further: You will drink, He says, and you will become drunk (Ibid., 21) . Still: He will visit your iniquities, He will reveal your sins (Ibid., 22) . He expressed His coming and passion briefly, and the forgiveness of all sins: He declared openly the future gathering of the Gentiles! Hence that Apostolic saying: Because blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles enter in, and so all Israel shall be saved (Rom. XI, 25 and 26).

5. Come, Lord Jesus: but now not in shadow, but in the sun of righteousness. If shadow helped, if the shadow of your passion protected, if the shadow of your body saved; how much will the open brightness of virtue contribute? Through shadow leprosy was cured (Matthew VIII, 3); through the shadow also of that woman who touched the fringe of the Lord's garment, the flow of blood stopped (Luke VIII, 44): through the shadow we saw you, when you had neither form nor beauty. Your shadow was flesh, which cooled the heat of our desires, which restrained the fires of lust, which tempered the flames of greed and various passions. And what shall I say about the shadow of the Lord, when even the shadow of the apostles healed (Acts 5:15)? For when Peter came,

each person brought their sick, whom the passing shadow of the apostles restored to health.

6. Hear, for the flesh of the Lord was a shadow: Behold, the Lord sits upon a light cloud, and will come to Egypt (Isaiah 19:1). And David says: Protect me under the shadow of your wings (Psalm 17:8). Therefore, he became a shadow emptied for us, whom the sun of iniquity had burned. We saw him in the shadow when faith first advanced. But now he illuminates the whole world: and yet we still see him through the shadow of his body, which is the Church, not yet face to face; for the eyes of the body are unable to receive the brightness of divinity. This shadow also protects the entire world every day. Therefore, the conclusion is beneficial; For God has concluded all in unbelief, that he may have mercy upon all (Rom. XI, 32). But now let us consider what should be said in the conclusion, and where to begin.

7. (Verse 145.) I cried out with my whole heart, hear me, O Lord: I will seek your justifications. When we suffer bodily afflictions, we are accustomed to cry out, so that we may be able to call others to our aid. The holy Prophet was oppressed, with persecutors approaching him. Saul first, being hostile, pursued him with an armed army: afterwards, his son, a parricide, threatened him, not content with the exile of the fleeing man, he sought to take away his father's life. But he could endure less from those whom he saw in the present, than from those whom he did not see; for it is a struggle for the saints not only against flesh and blood, but also against the principalities and powers of this world, and the rulers of darkness, who lie in ambush in the night of this age like robbers, plotting against human desires. Therefore, when the holy David saw that heavy attacks were being made against him, he cried out with all his heart. For indeed, against the devil, one must not rely on the magnitude of the voice, but on the magnanimity of the heart.

8. However, there is also the voice of the heart; for there is also the voice of the blood, which reaches God. In fact, God says: 'The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the earth' (Gen. IV, 10). Therefore, our heart cries out not with the sound of the body, but with the sublimity of thoughts and the harmony of virtues. It is a great cry of faith. Furthermore, we cry out in the spirit of adoption, 'Abba, Father,' and the Spirit of God himself cries out within us. It is a great voice of justice, a great voice of purity, through which even the dead speak; and not only do they speak, but they also cry out like Abel. But truly, the unjust soul does not cry out while alive; for it is dead to God. There is nothing sublime, nothing magnificent in it: like those whose sound went forth into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. Moses spoke with a weak voice, yet he was heard more than all others. It is heard every day in the Church: it is not heard by those alone, that is, the Jews, who have ears to hear but do not hear. It is said to the prophet: Lift up your voice with strength (Isaiah 58:1).

9. However, Anna did not cry out in her heart (1 Samuel 1:13), like Moses, but spoke: perhaps because she was asking for children, that is, good things indeed, but personal, not public, she did not cry out. But because she was asking from the Lord, since she offered to the Lord whoever she would receive, she spoke to God: but Moses cried out; because he prayed not for himself, but for the whole people. Hence it was said to him by the Lord: Why do you cry out (Exodus 14:15)? He cried out with devout affection and deep feeling, and, calling out in heaven, he sought worthy miracles from the celestial beings: that he might change the elements of the world.

10. Finally, let us recount the series of events at that place: Pharaoh was pressing hard, surrounded by countless chariots, and pressing on the Hebrews; on one side the enemy,

surrounding them, and on the other side the sea, closing in on the people of God. There was no trust in weapons, no hope in strength. Only a pitiful lamentation resounded, expressing that it would be more advantageous for them to endure the heavy burdens of slavery in Egypt than to be consumed by a bitter death in the desert. This lamentation offered no defense, but caused great offense. So Moses stood there, sad, worried, anxious for the people and the dangers and complaints, waiting for the faith of the heavenly promises; and silently he pondered within himself by what means the Lord, forgetful of the wrongs, mindful of the grace, would come to his aid. The Lord said to him: Why do you cry out to me? I do not hear his sound, I recognize his voice: I read his silence, I perceive his outcry in his actions. The people cried out, and were not heard: Moses kept silent, and was heard. It was not said to the people: Why do you cry out to me? For the people were not crying out to God, who cried out against injustice and indignation. But it was said to Moses: Why do you cry out to me? That is: You alone cry out to me, who hope in me; you alone cry out to me, who stir up my power; you alone cry out to me, who await the proclamation of my name throughout the whole earth.

11. Therefore Moses cried out in his heart, and every wise person cries out in his heart. Finally, wisdom with the highest proclamation calls to the chalice, saying: Leave behind foolishness...and seek wisdom (Prov. 9:6). This proclamation is of great sublimity, of a great voice, which promises wisdom to the foolish. And the Lord Jesus cried out: If anyone thirsts, let him come to me, and let him drink (John 7:37). And truly, He cried out greatly, who called people to the kingdom of heaven, to that venerable drink by which the waves of eternal life are poured forth. And when you pray, pray with great prayers, that is, prayers that are eternal, not temporary. Pray with prayers that are divine and heavenly, so that you may be like angels in heaven. Do not pray for money, because it is rust; do not pray for gold, because it is metal; do not pray for possessions, because they are earthly; this prayer does not reach the Lord. God does not listen unless it deems worthy of His blessings; but He listens to a pious voice, full of devotion and gratitude.

12. Therefore, not only must one cry out in the heart, but one must also cry out with the whole heart. Just as it is properly cried out with the body when it is cried out with the whole mouth, so it must be cried out spiritually with the whole heart if we want to achieve great things and obtain from the Lord what we ask for. The Lord demanded this voice from the people, which the people did not know. Therefore, the Lord said: This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me (Isaiah 29:13). Therefore, whoever approaches with a sincere heart, he is heard by the Lord. Therefore, let the heart first cry out, so that the word can be heard.

13. But it is not enough to cry out to the Lord, but also to seek His justice. And he seeks justice who ascribes to divine providence that which is just in all creatures, especially in rational, and even irrational, beings. Hence, the turtle dove's zeal for chastity, which, having lost its partner, does not know how to engage in intercourse: which humans cannot preserve? Hence, for many animals, such a sober care for the preservation of offspring; so that once they recognize the gift of conception, they do not think that copulation should be repeated; lest there be an adulterous mixing of received seeds. The phoenix is unaware of carnal intercourse, it does not know the allure of desire, but it rises from its own ashes: a bird surviving itself, both the heir of its body and the offspring of its ashes. The eagle, lest it nourish degenerate offspring, carefully weighs them in its examination: and it delicately suspends the tender offspring with its pious talon, and offers them to the sun's rays alone; so that if by chance the brightness of the sun's rays should bend their eyes

towards it, it may drop them, as though degenerate, with an opened talon into the abyss: but if they are able to withstand the constant gaze of the sun's rays and assert the vigor of true nature, it may bring back the worthy offspring with a grateful burden.

14. The birds of the sky do not sow, nor do they reap, and God feeds them; for they keep the justice of the Lord, not claiming anything for themselves by avenging, but are content to alleviate hunger with the fruit-bearing wood, which is given as common food by the judgment of the Lord. Therefore, from these things we understand how the assistance of divine providence would not be lacking to humans, if we were willing to keep the justice of God. He who feeds the birds would not also feed humans, whom he made in his image and likeness? Are we not worth more than them? We are of greater value by the prerogative of nature, but inferior in the grace of devotion and the injustice of transgression.

15. (Verse 146.) The second verse follows: I have called upon you, save me: and I will keep your commandments. He repeats what he cried out to the Lord, and promises himself as the guardian of the heavenly statutes which the Lord God has sanctioned by the testaments of heaven and earth, so that the transgressors may be convicted by the testimonies of the elements. How can they behold heaven as the conscious witness of their transgression? How can they expect fruits from the earth which knows the ungrateful? Therefore, consider how great promises the Prophet makes. In clamando fidelis et promptus affectus exprimitur: in custodiendo testimonia, continentiae virtus, obsequii sedulitas declaratur.

16. (Verse 147) Here follows the third verse: I anticipated in maturity and cried out: I hoped in your words. The Greek ■v ■ωp■α■ said, which means, before the hour, pre-temporal. Therefore, whoever prays to the Lord, should not wait for specific prescribed times, not knowing that time exists in the prayers of the Lord, but should always be in them. Whether we eat or drink, let us proclaim Christ, let us ask Christ, let us think of Christ, let us speak of Christ: let Christ always be in our heart, always on our lips.

17. But perhaps you may say: How is it written, Time is for all, and a time for every matter under heaven? (Ecclesiastes III, 1) But the Lord Jesus is above heaven, not bound by any time. Let him shut his mouth, the Arian heretic. Time, he says, is for every matter under heaven: how much more is time under God, not above God? The generation from the Father has no time; for there is no work before the author, but the author is above the beginning of the work. Perhaps they may object because he said: My time has not yet come (John VII, 6). And again he said: Father, the hour is come (John XVII, 1). But this hour is the hour of passion. It is also the time of the virginal conception: Behold, a virgin shall conceive in her womb (Isaiah VII, 14): because the virgin conceived in due time, and therefore in the prescribed age.

18. Therefore, whoever asks, let him always ask; and if he does not always pray, let him always have the disposition of one praying. The Lord Jesus spent the night in prayer (Luke 6:12), not needing the help of prayer, but setting an example of imitation for you. He spent the night praying for you, so that you would learn how to pray for yourself. Therefore, repay him for what he brought to you. Listen to the prophet saying above: At midnight, I rise to praise you (Sermon 8, verse 63). And you, rise up in the middle of the night, if you are not able to watch all night long; so that while you pray at night, the splendor of the true sun may illuminate your heart; for every soul that thinks of Christ is always in light: the day shines, Christ always breathes upon you. But since the

following verse clearly expresses the time of prayer, in this verse I think it is more about the actions and works to be understood, rather than the time of prayer.

19. Whoever in youth assumes the gravity of old age hastens to the maturity of life, and governs his youthful years with a certain veteran self-restraint, and adjusts the ardor of his vigorous body with the mature character of gray hairs. For what praise can he have if he turns his exhausted body, cooled by the icy chill of old age, to the late duties of devotion, having already laid aside his former vigor? There is no crown unless there has been a struggle in a more difficult contest: to which only a few can attain, not all who have entered the stadium. He is praiseworthy, who before the contest is within himself, who restrains his reluctant flesh with the power of his mind, disciplines it with frugal parsimony, and reduces it to servitude; lest it indulge in unrestrained freedom and break the reins of the governing soul with unbridled and burning desire. Therefore, he is an old man in his hour, if he exercises the duties of sober maturity: a young man surpassing his hour, if he compresses the incentives of pleasure with the weight of old age, and extinguishes the allurements of fervent desire: For the Lord is good to those who wait for Him, as Jeremiah says (Lamentations 3:25). And it is good for a man who has borne the heavy yoke from youth: he shall sit alone, and be silent; because he has borne the yoke of the word (Ibid. 27). For whoever has borne the yoke from youth, and willingly subjected the more tender necks of mature moderation to the reins, shall sit alone, removed from the clamor of interrupting passions, and shall be silent: it shall no longer be necessary for him to quarrel with the body, to contend with various desires; for he has borne the yoke of the word, the soul that seeks God, which has made all the pleasures of youth captive to itself. And perhaps this saying of the Lord can also refer not only to the silence of defense, the contempt of absolution, and the endurance of suffering, but also to the suppression of all bodily pleasures. Hence it is written elsewhere: 'He committed no sin' (1 Peter 2:22). Therefore, he rightly remained silent, though facing the danger of death, because he did not fear the sting of death.

20. 'In verba, inquit, tua speravi.' The Greek said, 'I have hoped in what you have said,' which is to always increase in hope and to join hope with hope. The righteous always hopes, and in adversity and frequent afflictions, he does not know how to despair. But the more he has endured heavier things, the more he hopes and takes progress in hoping, according to that oracle: 'Comfort, comfort my people,' says the Lord. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and console her; for her humiliation is complete, and her sin is forgiven, for she has received from the hand of the Lord double for all her sins.' (Isaiah LX, 1 and 2). How quickly he said that the fullness of dejection is the remedy for sin, and he repeated that the cause of consolation is even greater than the sign of reconciliation, to the extent that the punishment is more numerous than the fault.

Job, burdened by many afflictions and bitterness, filled his pious hope with affection, asserting a distinct cause for the impious from the pious, whose light will be extinguished (Job. XVIII, 5). But according to Solomon, light is always for the righteous (Prov. XIII, 9). From this it is gathered that the righteous always hope in the words of God, and add hope to hope. This is expressed more clearly by Isaiah, saying: Expect tribulation upon tribulation, hope upon hope (Isa. XXVIII, 10). He spoke of those who had been nourished and carried away from the breasts, that is, those who had already passed the first nourishment of infancy and were now ready for stronger food. Let there be an example in that Isaac, having been weaned, became so great a patriarch; that even though he was still in the early stages of his life, he did not shrink from wielding the sword of his father, who

was about to sacrifice him (Gen. 22:10). Abraham had many sons, but he weaned none of them; however, it is recorded that he prepared a great feast in celebration of this weaning (Gen. 21:8). And well did Scripture say that a great feast was prepared, for it was a type of that which the hearts of the saints always feast upon.

(22. Vers. 148.) The fourth verse follows: My eyes anticipated the morning to meditate on your words. On top of that (verse 147) it says: I anticipated at the dawn, which means before the hours, before the time; here it says, in the morning: signifying another time for praying and singing to the Lord; so that may be the first, according to what it says: At midnight I rise (Sermon 8, verse 63); but in accordance with that: I anticipated the rising sun; for it is burdensome if, while you are idle on your bed, the ray of the rising sun should come upon you with unabashed impudence, and the bright light should strike your eyes still weighed down with drowsiness. He accuses us of having passed such a great amount of time on a holiday night without any act of devotion or spiritual sacrifice. Do you not know, O man, that you owe God the first fruits of your heart and voice every day? Your harvest is daily, and your fruit is daily. Therefore, go out to meet the rising sun, so that it may find you already prepared; lest the brilliance of the first day, awakening, raises your eyes, still immersed in damp sleep.

23. In my bed, in the nights, the Church says that she sought the one whom her soul loves (Song of Songs 3:1). Therefore, she deserved to find Him, to merit His grace; because she sought Him even in her bed, sought Him in the nights. Therefore, having obtained His abundance, she speaks to the Bridegroom in the subsequent verses: Come, my brother, let us go out to the field, let us rest in the villages, let us rise up early to the vineyards (Song of Songs 7:11). Notice how the Bride invites the Word of God; that He would come to the earth and take away the sins of the world. This field was previously deserted, squalid with the thorns of our sins, and horribly prickly. There was a castle, in which the exiled Adam forever bound the heirs of his progeny to exile. Therefore, the Church leads Christ to that place in order to free Adam. Then, with the exiles absolved, the field of this world began to have suitable cultivators: and he who was previously barren became fruitful through the planting of the eternal vine. Yet, it does not rejoice solely in spiritual branches: but it calls Christ to these vineyards, where there may be psalm-singing and prayer, where the harmless fruit may persist both day and night.

There, he said, I will give you my breasts, the mandrakes have given off their odor. Many people distinguish a certain difference in the sex of mandrakes; they think that they can be both male and female, but the females have a strong odor. Therefore, it signifies that the nations, which used to be weak and crippled by a certain infirmity of treachery, began to bear the fruit of good odor after they believed in the coming of the Lord. We also read that the holy Rachel received mandrakes from her sister Leah, so that she would let her sleep with the holy Jacob that night. Ruben, the firstborn son of Lia, brought Mandrakes to his mother. Lia, whose eyes were dim, received the figure of the Synagogue; for she could not see the grace of Christ with her dull and weak sight. By this, it is shown that the fruits which the firstborn Son of God had received before the Synagogue, he granted to the Church. But because Lia, in the embrace of that night, bore the heir of her posterity, she fulfilled the mystery, since, by the belief of the apostles, the remnant of the Jews was saved by the election of grace.

25. Therefore, as the Church says: 'I have kept both new and old things for you, my brother,' (Song of Songs 7:13). Who will give you as a brother the breast of my mother? Finding you outside, I will kiss you, and indeed they will not reject me. I will take you and bring you into the house of my mother, and into the secret place of her who conceived me; there you will teach me' (Song of Songs 8:1-2). Therefore, having knowledge of the new and old Scriptures and considering himself not insignificant, he not only holds the Word in the prayers of his heart in secret, but also embraces it with the singing voices of the choir, as it were with the kisses of grace.

Therefore, the Bridegroom, supported by the holy souls of praising congregations, awakens Christ with the applause of various and innumerable fruits, and especially with the fragrances of faith, grace, wisdom, and glory, supported by the riches of eternal life, which are to the left and right of the Bridegroom. He says, 'I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, not to arouse or awaken love until it pleases.' (Ibid. 4)

27. Hence the daughters of Jerusalem, the holy souls of the patriarchs and prophets, the ancients and the celestial powers, marvel at her, saying: Who is this that ascends, adorned in white, leaning upon her beloved brother? (Ibid., 5). This means that the Church shines brightly in such solemnities and that which was dark before in the daytime, now glows in the night and shines forth.

28. The Lord Himself, delighted by such a great gift of psalmody, says: 'Place me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, and jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it' (Song of Solomon 8:6-7). Because He has seen such devotion in the Church, He deems the people worthy who can carry His seal in their hearts and on their arms. For the Father himself has marked God with a sign; and he who has received his testimony has also been marked, because God is true. And therefore those who work for eternal life have been marked in the image and likeness of Christ, who is the invisible image of God. Therefore, just as God is true, you also sign the truth in your thoughts and actions, so that your mouth does not speak falsehood and your hands do not perform the works of men, which belong to this deceitful world, but rather the works of God; so that you may give generously to the poor, support the weak, and honor the dead with proper burial. In His works, charity is sought, so that no one can be separated from Christ or be in danger of death. Hence He says: Who will separate us from Christ? Tribulation or distress . . . or persecution (Rom. VIII, 35) ? And further: For I am confident that neither death, nor life, nor angels (Ibid., 38) . In this form, zeal is also a hard charity, and its wings, the wings of fire. It has wings like a dove; for the feathers of the dove are silvered, with which he flies who loves, saying: Behold, I have fled far away, and have remained in solitude (Psalm 54:8): but the wings of charity, the wings of fire, with which the ardor of love is inflamed. With this fervent vapor, the Lord made his angels spirits, and his ministers a burning fire, but not consuming. We read about the pinnacle of the temple, upon which the devil tempted the Savior to ascend (Matt. IV, 5). Therefore, there are the heights of the wing, there are the peaks of charity, which are accustomed to kindle the vapor of grace in human hearts; so that much water cannot extinguish or exclude charity, and no rivers of worldly storms can contain it.

30. Therefore, since the grace of the Church and the rewards of devotion invite us so strongly, let us anticipate the rising sun, let us hasten to meet its dawning before it says, 'Here I am' (Isaiah

58:9). The Sun of Justice desires to be anticipated, and in order to be anticipated, it waits. Hear how it waits and desires to be anticipated: To the angel of the Church in Pergamum He says... Repent, otherwise I will come to you quickly (Revelation 2:12, 16). To the angel of the Laodicean Church He says... . . . Therefore, strive and repent: Behold, I stand at the door and knock; and if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him (Rev. III, 14, 19 and 20). He could enter: indeed, not even the closed valves and bolts of the resurrected body could hold him back; suddenly he poured himself into the apostolic chambers (John XX, 19): but he desires to experience the zeal of your devotion; he already had approved apostles. Perhaps, in persecution it comes first: where there is tranquility, it desires to come first. Certainly come first this sun that you see. Arise, you who sleep, and rise from the dead; so that Christ may shine upon you (Ephes. XV, 14). If you come first to this sun before it rises, you will see Christ illuminating. He himself first shines in the secret of your heart: he himself says to you: My spirit keeps watch for you from the night (Esai. XXVI, 9), it will make the morning light shine in the nighttime, if you contemplate the words of God. For when you meditate, there is light: and seeing the light not of time, but of grace, you will say that the Light is your precepts. But when the divine words find you meditating, and the pleasant work of prayer and singing delights your mind, you will again say to the Lord Jesus: In the morning you will delight in outcomes, and in the evening (Psalm 64:9).

31. But if the Jewish people, under the leadership of Moses, use the Scriptures every day among their elders, who have been chosen for this duty, without ceasing day and night: and if you ask anything else of the elder, he knows nothing except the series of divine Scriptures (Exodus 18:14ff). Conversation about the world is absent there, only the Scriptures are discussed, each one taking his turn to read aloud. Lest that sacred sound of heavenly commands be neglected. And you, Christian, are you sleeping, with Christ as your teacher? And do you not fear that it might be said of you: This people honors me with their lips? Jew or Greek, but not of lips. If someone honors with lips, their heart is far from God: how can your heart be near, if you do not even honor with lips? How long will sleep hold you, how long will worldly things hold you, how long will the worries of this life, how long will earthly things?

32. Divide your time between God and the world: even when you cannot engage in the affairs of this world in public, and darkness prevents the night, devote yourself to God with prayers; and lest you fall asleep, sing psalms: cheat your sleep with good intention. Hasten in the morning and bring the firstfruits of your pious vow to the Church; and afterwards, if secular necessity calls, do not hesitate to say: In the morning my eyes anticipate you, meditating on your words: you will proceed confidently to your tasks. How delightful to begin with hymns and songs, about the blessings that you read in the Gospel (Matthew 5)! How fortunate that the word of Christ blesses you, and while you sing the blessings of the Lord, you take up the study of some virtue; so that you may also recognize the merit of divine blessing in yourself.

33. (Verse 149.) The fifth verse follows: Hear my voice according to your mercy, O Lord, and revive me according to your judgment. Always, even if a person is holy and just, he must pray; so that the Lord may hear him according to his mercy and not according to the merits of any virtue; because virtue is rare, but sins are many; and according to his judgment, so that he may help the weak. And especially we must pray when we are pressed by adversity with some. Hence, not in vain is the divine plea for mercy preceded by Saint David.

34. (Verse 150.) For it follows: They come near who persecute me unjustly: but they have moved far away from your law. The Greek version puts it thus: They come near who persecute me with wickedness, that is, those who persecute me with wickedness. The more they come near to me, the more they separate themselves from your law; for one who persecutes his brother is separated from the law. For the law says: You shall love the Lord your God . . . Love your neighbor (Deuteronomy 6:5). Therefore, do not hate your brother, lest it be said to you: If you do not love your brother whom you see, how can you love God whom you do not see (1 John 4:20)? Do you not know that your brother is the price of the blood of Christ? Therefore, if you do not love your brother, you do not love the price of Christ. So the persecutor approaches me to do harm: but he separates himself from the law; for what part of justice is there with injustice? But he who separates himself from the law of God separates himself from eternal life; for the law is life. Finally, the Prophet, showing the law of God, says: Behold, this is life, because he who does what the laws are, will live by them (Leviticus 18:5): which certainly belongs to the spiritual law. And perhaps he who approaches me to harm me, while he separates himself from the law, separates himself from Christ; for Christ is life. But if I were to adhere to Christ, He does not approach me; for even if He has power over my body, He cannot harm my soul. Indeed, how far separated the persecutors of the martyrs are from their merits!

36. (Verse 151.) But perhaps you may say: How do the saints cling to God? And for this reason it follows: You are near, O Lord, and all your commandments are truth. The Lord is near to all, who is everywhere present: we cannot flee from Him if we offend Him, nor deceive Him if we sin, nor lose Him if we worship Him. God sees all things, sees everything, attends to each individual, saying: I am a God who is near (Jeremiah 23:23)? And how can God be absent anywhere, when you read about the Spirit of God: The Spirit of the Lord fills the earth (Wisdom 1:7)? For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the Lord God. I fill heaven and earth, says the Lord (Jeremiah 23:24). So where is the lack of the one who fills all things? Or how can we all receive from his fullness, unless he draw near to everyone?

Finally, David, knowing that He is everywhere and fills the heaven, and the earth, and the seas, says: Where shall I go from Your Spirit, and where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me (Psalm 139:7-10). As soon as he has signified that God is everywhere, and where God is, there His Spirit is present, and wherever the Spirit of God is, there God is. In what place the indivisible connection of the Trinity is expressed. For indeed, the Son of God spoke these words through the mouth of the Prophet, speaking in the person of a man, who descended to the earth through the Incarnation, ascended to heaven through the Resurrection, and penetrated into hell through the death of the body, in order to release those who were bound. Or if you refer to the Prophet, you are informed that it is expressly stated that Christ, the Son of God, is present wherever the hand and right hand of God are, where God the Father is, and the Holy Spirit of God.

38. But when can we doubt about the sun, which, as the day progresses, spreads its rays throughout the world and bestows light upon all, even those who cannot see? Yet they feel its presence by the warmth of the air. For where is the heat of the sun lacking? Where do its rays not reach, as they illuminate the earth after the darkness of night or the obscurity of clouds? It shines

in the sky, glistens on the sea, and burns on the land. Therefore, you do not doubt about the sun, because it shines everywhere. Do you doubt about God, who shines the splendor of his glory and the image of his essence everywhere? What does not the Word of God penetrate, eternal splendor, which also illuminates the hidden depths of the mind, which the sun cannot penetrate; For the Word of God is a spiritual sword, reaching even to the divisions of the soul, and of the joints, and of the marrow. Of which, the righteous Simeon says to Mary: And your own soul a sword shall pierce, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. (Luke II, 35).

Therefore, it penetrates the soul and, like the radiance of eternal light, illuminates. But even though it diffuses through all, and in all, and surpasses all powers; because it is born of the Virgin for all, both good and evil (just as the sun rises on the good and evil), it nourishes those who draw near to it. Just as one excludes the radiance of the sun by closing the windows of their house and chooses a dark place to dwell in, so too, the one who turns away from the sun of righteousness cannot see its splendor: they walk in darkness, and in the light of all, they themselves are the cause of their blindness. Open, therefore, your windows to let the whole house shine with the true brightness of the sun: open your eyes, to see the rising sun of justice for yourself. But beware that no straw or splinter disturbs them. If there is any dirt in the eye of your mind, you will not be able to see: if there is any sickness, it will weigh you down even more; the light strikes the confused gaze of the eyes and causes greater pain. Therefore, let your eye be simple; lest your whole body becomes dark, and stagger in the light, like the footsteps of blind people.

40. If someone closes the doors of their house, is it the fault of the sun that it does not illuminate their house? Therefore, if someone considers their own mind to be locked by the bars of their sins, and foolishly turns away from the splendor of the Word, and brings upon themselves the darkness of foolishness, can they blame the sun of justice for not entering, or accuse the weakness of celestial light? The Word of God knocks at your door. 'If anyone opens to me,' He says, 'I will come in' (Apocalypse 3:20). If someone, therefore, does not open, is it not the fault of the one who does not enter, and even more so of the one who does not open? Certainly, nothing is hidden from God, nothing is closed to eternal light. But He refuses to open the gates of evil, He does not want to enter the chambers of wickedness.

41. But when the strength of our soul withdraws from the decaying portion of the body, can any member of the corrupt soul have the privilege of feeling its grace? However, the strength of the soul is diffused throughout the whole body, whether the hand, foot, or finger participates in sensation: can the wisdom of God be absent in one place and his majesty in another? Certainly, he does not detain those who flee or force those who are unwilling, but he does not disdain those who approach him. Indeed, his power, his Word, is near to everyone: for in him all things consist, and he is the head of the body, the Church, in whom all the fullness dwells. But he separates most people from himself because of their sins, of which it is said: Behold those who distance themselves from you, shall perish (Psalm 72:27). Therefore the holy Prophet says: It is good for me to cling to God (ibid., 28). And the Apostle, showing that God is not far from each of us, says: In Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:27-28). For he supplies the vital grace to everyone, and is present to all with the gift of his great goodness, but he is closer to those who have a contrite heart.

42. Which also the old history teaches in enigmas. Moses was on the top of Mount Sinai, and he was alone: the people were in the valley, at the bottom of the mountain: the elders were on the side of the mountain above the merits of the people, but separated by a great distance from the merits of Moses (Exod. XIX, 20 et seq.). Not all on the top, nor all on the bottom, but the people: Moses alone on the top of Mount Sinai, which in the Latin interpretation is called temptation. And if you ascend above the temptations, and with a contrite heart offer prayer, you will be near to God: if you are pure in heart, you will see God; Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God (Matth V, 8).

43. Therefore, he who is close to God says: You are near, Lord, and all your commandments are true. The Jew cannot say this, for he does not accept the Lord Jesus; he has separated himself and believes not in truth but in shadow. How can he say: Your commandments are true, when grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, and he does not recognize him who, in truth and fullness, redeemed the whole world through his circumcision?

Verse 44 (Line 152): The eighth verse is: In the beginning, I became aware of your testimonies; because you have established them forever. Concerning your testimonies, he said, I have taken knowledge and faith from the beginning, because they are founded forever; for testimony is faithful and it imparts wisdom to the little ones. If Adam and Eve had known that more cautious precepts had been given to them as if to little children, so that they would not arrogate to themselves the knowledge of good and evil, which they could not define with proper discernment, they could have claimed perpetual habitation in paradise. If people consider that the blood of a man cries out to God, they will abstain from taking the lives of men with their own hands. If they keep the commandments that the Lord gave in the presence of heaven and earth, saying: Hear, O heaven, and listen, O earth (Isaiah 1:2): knowing that whatever wrongdoing they have committed, they have done against the law of the Lord, they will be accused by the testimonies of the angels and Powers, and also by the testimonies of the holy men. Above these testimonies, they will establish a foundation for themselves, because they are eternal and everlasting. And so let us build our work upon the foundation of heavenly testimonies; that it may not burn like wood or straw - but may be tested like gold; that it may remain forever anchored to its foundation.

Sermon 20. Resch. Letter twenty begins. It is called 'head' in the Latin interpretation, or 'first place'. The head is where we consider the form of the human race, which nourishes and directs all the limbs and fills them with senses. For the senses of a wise person are in their head. From there, the veins are led, and the pathways of the breath, and the strength of the blood are derived to all parts of the body. It illuminates and adorns everything. Without the head, the body is without a name, not recognized, and there remains no use for living. Therefore, those who are condemned for some crime are deprived of their heads, since it is the ornament of the whole body. And because they are discovered to have committed the pollution of beastly filth or the horror of bestial savagery, through a shameful or wicked offense, they are ordered to strip themselves of the form of human condition, as though they have fallen from the intended moderation of humanity. For with the head cut off, the remaining trunk of the body is compared to the body of beasts and is deprived of the fortress of wisdom, for it could not hold onto reason. Therefore, the body is buried without its adornment; for in the head lies the vigor of life, in the head lies the grace of beauty. The snake is said to always hide its head when it is in danger, and it coils up into a circle, exposing only a small part of its body, in order to protect itself; it is able to regenerate any injured body parts, as long as

its head remains unharmed. You too should morally protect your head, and by protecting it, you will also protect it mystically. The mystical head is Christ; because all things consist in Him, and He is the head of the body, the Church (Colossians 1:17-18). Whoever loses this head will not be able to have the use of life. We only differ from animals by being formed in the image of God and the likeness of virtues. Faith separates us from the comparison of irrational animals. Preserve this head, humans; even if all the limbs are cut off, the whole body is burned by fire, submerged in the deep, disemboweled by animals, with this head preserved, life is intact, safety is secure; for no one can perish to whom Christ has not been taken away.

3. And it is the head and highest point of our study and work, the highest business, the highest hope, the highest virtues. But the highest of all is the sum of our study; that we may be humble, follow the truth, which the proud do not see, being vainly puffed up by their own fleshly mind, and not holding the head (Colossians 2:18-19). He clearly expressed what this head is, saying: From which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God (Ibid., 19). And in the book of Isaiah the Lord says through the Prophet: I will take away from Judah the head and the tail, the beginning and the end (Isaiah IX, 14). This head of Judah, which it held, it lost, because it did not receive the Lord Jesus. Where there is faith, we have both the beginning and the end. Where there is perfidy, there is neither beginning nor end. The Church has a beginning because it has Christ; for Christ is the beginning of the Church, the firstborn from the dead. He also has an end; for he is the first and the last. He is the end of the Law for righteousness to every believer. The Synagogue has neither beginning nor end; because it neither finds in the beginning what it should follow, nor in the end what it should hope for. Therefore, the proud head does not grasp, that is, the humility of Christ by which he descended even to the cross, descended even to the underworld. Therefore, the Jew did not believe; because he despised him who said: Learn from me, for I am meek and humble in heart (Matthew 11:29). This humility is the head of all virtues, which nourishes the whole body of our actions as if it were its own.

Although someone may be weak, poor, and of low birth, if they do not boast and exalt themselves, they commend themselves through their humility. Suppose someone is very wealthy and noble, but if they flaunt their noble lineage and wealth, their arrogance makes them despicable. Suppose someone is eloquent and strong, and they become excessively proud of their eloquence and virtue: is it not often the case that due to their lack of modesty, they are surpassed by someone foolish and weak? Finally, the Pharisee in the Gospel, although he was abstemious and frugal with the belongings of others, was generous with his own and not averse to fasting, as he claimed. However, because of his boasting, even the things he could have had, he lost (Luke 18:10-14). None of the many virtues he possessed could benefit him because of one vice. On the other hand, the tax collector, who couldn't list anything that could be approved, was justified because of his humility and descended from the temple more justified than that Pharisee, as it is written in the Prophet: 'He will save those of humble spirit' (Psalm 34:19).

5. However, that this is the head which this letter signifies, we are also taught clearly in the Lamentations of Jeremiah. For the Prophet says, having mentioned this letter first: Christ the Lord is the spirit before our face... Under his shadow we shall live among the nations (Lam. 4:20). Therefore, this is truly the head, which is the head of all.

6. We have spoken about the head, let us also speak about the primacy, which may differ in language and letter but converges in the same understanding. For we read about primacy in the Old Testament (Gen. 25:33), which Esau, the brother, surrendered to his brother Jacob; and that is why his name was called Edom, which means earthly and cunning. These are the brothers whom the Lord asked of Isaac their father, in order to give him heirs of his posterity from his wife Rebecca, who had not borne any emblem of offspring for twenty years. He heard him, and Rebecca conceived, and she asked the Lord, when the children seemed to struggle in her womb, and she received this answer: Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples will be separated from your womb, and one people will surpass the other, and the older will serve the younger (Ibid., 23). Is not the mystery revealed, that two peoples are signified, namely, the older people of the Jews, and the younger Christian people, who, because of the privilege of the firstborn, received the birthright of the elder? From this evidence it is clearly expressed that the earthly people, due to intemperance of gluttony, lost the primacy they had: but the people of the Church, through sobriety and self-restraint, snatched the primacy that they did not have in terms of age, by brotherly concession, and by the pious theft of paternal blessing. Therefore, what did the Christian people snatch if not the Lord Jesus? For since the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven is forced, and those who force it plunder it, as the Lord himself declared (Matthew 11:12). Good is the deception that steals eternal life. But since we consider enough to have been said about the interpretations of this letter, let us consider what the Prophet added to this letter.

7. (Verse 153.) Therefore, the first verse is: See my humility and deliver me; for I have not forgotten your law. Perhaps someone may say: The Prophet boasts about himself. And if he boasts, he boasts about his weaknesses, in which even the Apostle boasts, saying: I will boast about my weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:5). Another boasts in wealth, another in titles of nobility and his lineage, another in positions of authority and honors; the righteous boasts in humility; for true glory is to be subject to Christ. So that you may know, however, that he does not desire to boast, but to provoke the grace of the Lord in himself, the same Prophet elsewhere says: See my humility and my labor. Therefore, just as he who humbles his heart, just as he who labors greatly, desires his sins to be forgiven, here he who prays for himself.

8. Appoint someone, concerned for the salvation of the minister, whom he knows to be approved by God; appoint someone as a father for the son, when he is seriously ill; appoint a woman either for the son or for the mourning husband, fervently praying, shedding abundant tears day and night, humbling herself and prostrating on the ground, multiplying fasts, and, what is even heavier than these, speaking to the Lord a mind and soul exhausted by grief and torpid from the delay of illness and danger; 'See my humility and rescue me.'

9. Also consider that the divine Scripture anoints and trains us daily with a certain spiritual oil of heavenly teachings, and our Lord, desiring to provoke many to engage in battles, has placed various rewards of crowns. Consider, I say, Christ's athlete, wearied by countless struggles, almost overcome with fatigue, and troubled by the weight of danger; when he sees that he not only has a struggle against flesh and blood, but also against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, he says: 'See my humility and deliver me; for I have not forgotten your law; he who has fought according to his precepts has not been able to forget.'

10. Also contemplate someone appointed to martyrdom, afflicted with frequent tortures, cast into darkness, broken by heavy chains, his legs stretched with ropes, his intestines torn out on the rack, his flesh torn by nails, burnt with glowing plates, a man persevering in faith but now weary of his soul being delayed any longer from the sacred crown of death, saying: See my humility, and free me; for I have not forgotten your law. For we are taught by the testimonies of the Scriptures that not only in studies and pursuits, but also in temptations, humility can be spoken of. For it is written: "Acceptable men in the furnace of humility" (Ecclus. 2:5); for the Greek says ταπειν■σεως, which is humility. I have included this because many Latin speakers have affliction in mind. Latin distinguishes, Greek does not separate; ταπε■νωσις and humilitas are said to be virtues of humility, and humilitas of affliction. There is nothing preventing if a Latin separates; for the Greek did not translate from Latin, but the Latin from Greek.

11. Finally, even the Hebrews, as long as they were in Egypt, were in an iron furnace, that is, in the furnace of temptation, in the furnace of affliction, as they were afflicted with harsh commands. Hence it is also written: 'For God brought them out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt' (Jeremiah 11:4). The furnace was iron because no works of virtuousness shone with full light in Egypt, no gold had been tested there, no lead of wickedness had been consumed. The harsh furnace, the furnace of perpetual death: a furnace from which no one could escape, that would consume all, in which only pain and mourning existed. But truly, it was a furnace in which Ananias, Azarias, and Misael sang a hymn to the Lord (Dan. III, 51); that golden furnace, not iron: through which wisdom and devotion shone throughout the whole world. Indeed, this furnace was also in Babylon, where gold was not spiritual, unless perhaps captive; For the Lord has taken captivity captive (Ephes. IV, 8). This was gold in the holy ones of God, who were captive in body among the Babylonians; but in spirit free before God, released from the chains of human captivity, bound instead by the yoke of spiritual grace. And perhaps the same iron furnace is fragile to those who do not persevere, but golden to those who do.

12. All who desire to return to paradise must be tested by fire; for it is not written in vain that after Adam and Eve were expelled from the seat of paradise, God placed a fiery revolving sword at the exit of paradise (Gen. III, 24). All must pass through the flames, whether John the Evangelist, whom the Lord loved so much that he said of him to Peter: Thus I wish him to remain... what is it to you? You follow me (John XXI, 22). Some have doubted about his death, but we cannot doubt about his passing through fire; because he is in paradise and is not separated from Christ. Whether he is Peter, who received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, who walked on the sea, he must say: We have passed through fire and water, and you have brought us into refreshment (Psalm 65:12). But to John, the fiery sword will quickly turn; because there is no iniquity found in him whom righteousness loves. If there was any fault of human weakness in him, divine love purified it; for his wings are like wings of fire. (Song of Solomon 8:6).

13. The one who has the fire of charity here will not be able to fear the fire of the sword there. To Peter himself, who offered his own death for Christ so many times, He will say: Pass through, recline (Luke 17:7). But he will say: He has tested us with fire, just as silver is tested with fire; indeed, in whatever situation, He could not exclude charity, so how will fire exclude it? But he will be tested like silver, I will be tested like lead: until the lead melts away, I will burn. If no silver is found in me, oh my! I will be cast down to the depths of hell, or I will be burned up like straw. If any gold or silver is found in me, not through my actions, but through the mercy and grace of Christ,

through the ministry of the priesthood, I will perhaps say: Indeed, those who hope in you will not be put to shame (Psalm 25:3).

Therefore, with that fiery sword, may the injustice be burned, which sits upon a leaden talent. Therefore, the one who is the justice of God, Christ, could not feel that fire, for he did not commit sin; for he found nothing in himself that could be burned up by fire. Finally, the everlasting gates alone were lifted up, so that the king of glory might enter, not as a guilty party. And indeed, his flesh tasted death here; for otherwise, he could not have risen again. What I have read, I presume; what I have not read, I leave to the venerable scholars. I confess one thing, that whatever that flesh underwent, it did so in order to show the way for others, either for triumph by the martyr's passion, or for passage into paradise by its footsteps. Therefore, let no one assume for themselves, let no one boast of merits, let no one boast of power; but let us all hope to find mercy through the Lord Jesus, for we shall all stand before His judgment seat. I will seek forgiveness for that, I will ask for indulgence for that; for what other hope is there for sinners?

15. And he who thinks he has gold here, has lead; and he who thinks he has a grain of wheat, has straw that can be burned up. But many here seem to themselves to have gold. I do not envy them, but still the gold will be tested, it will be burned up in order to be proven. For it is written: I will test them like gold in the furnace (Zach. XIII, 9). Therefore, let them take heed, for all will be tested. So, many who think they have gold, let them also pursue humility; so that their vices may be cooked out. But here is empty boasting; therefore, the mass of gold that many think is a treasure, wiser than the mass of gold says: The furnace will test us all. Therefore, since we are to be examined, let us act in such a way that we may deserve to be approved by divine judgment. Let us hold onto the humility placed here, so that when each of us comes to the judgment of God, to those fires through which we are going to pass, he may say: See my humility, and rescue me; for if he is proud, if he is arrogant, if he is insolent, he will not be able to say this. But no one will say, 'See my pride,' but see my humility, so that by his grace I may be delivered from that fire and deserve it.

Therefore, humility is the labor and fatigue: it is also the humility of virtue and purpose, which the just maintain in both favorable and prosperous times, and in a state of leisure. Inflicted with no weariness from labor, uncertain of the outcome of no contest, he exhibits humbleness to all, and does not strive to exalt himself. Instead, he seeks to diminish the value of his own work and the merit of his own grace. Hear the just person humbling himself: 'I am,' he says, 'the least of the apostles' (I Cor. XV, 9). He claims to be the least worthy of the divine election, the least deserving of the title of teacher of the nations, because he preferred his own works. And he does not claim anything for himself, but attributes everything to the grace of God. This is certainly fitting for a righteous person.

17. By this humility Abraham was called the father of faith, who, when he participated in divine conversation, said that he was dust and ashes (Gen. XVIII, 27). The Lord himself also said: But I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people (Psal. XXI, 7), when he spoke of the suffering of his own body: who did not seek his own things, but the things of others. The Apostle wants us to become imitators of him and encourages us, saying: For this is the mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave (Philip. II, 5-7). Therefore, let us not seek nobility of birth or wealth if we desire to follow Christ. He emptied

himself, being in the form of God; though he was rich, he became poor. Do not despise the commoner because you are noble; do not look down on the servant because you are powerful; do not scorn the poor because you are wealthy. Are you nobler, more powerful, or richer than Christ? He took upon himself those things which you despise. He humbled himself even to death, and death on a cross, in order to abolish your fallen pride; so that through the obedience of one Lord Jesus, we may regain what we lost through the disobedience of one Adam. For this reason, God exalted him and gave him a name above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Since the Lord Jesus is in the glory of God the Father (Philip. 2:9-11).

18. Consider, O human, what you read. The Apostle did not labor to prove the power of Christ, but to preach obedience; to demonstrate the greatness of his humility, his progress. If you receive with simple ears, he exalted Christ. But Christ sought not his own, but what was yours, with that humility. Therefore, receive with sharp ears: morally, it profited you; mystically, it redeemed your salvation. However you wish to understand: salvation is yours. If you think that his humility has benefited Christ; to whom, then, will it not be beneficial? If he exalted him; whom will he not increase? The Lord has become the servant of all, and the creator of all has been beaten, washed feet, crucified, died. But in all these things, I see no harm to his divinity, but I recognize the advancement of his work. He who had nothing to add to his power, had something to add to the worship of his majesty. I dare to say: he had lost the function of his operation, unless humility received it. So indeed he redeemed us, but he also acquired for himself. Therefore, humility brings no loss. He who emptied himself is full. He who did not consider equality with God to be robbery, taking on the form of a servant, is in the glory of God the Father. I have received whom I did not know, I have recognized whom I did not acknowledge, I confess whom I denied. I bow the knee of my body to him, I bend the knee of my mind to him, I adore him whom I used to flee from.

19. We give thanks to you, Lord Jesus, that you created us, but you appointed us over the created wild beasts, creatures, and dumb animals. The gifts of your visitation are greater. You honored those visited by your majesty with the companionship of your glory, saying: 'I will declare your name to my brethren' (Psalm 21:23); for by taking on a body, you became a brother, and you did not cease to be the Lord. The grace of your redemption is greater: you redeemed those in danger of death with your own death, as it is written: 'It is expedient for one man to die for the people' (John 18:14). You raised the dead, saying: 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up' (John 2:19); for in that temple the right of resurrection belongs to the body of the Lord. You equated those who rise from the dead with angels, as you said: 'For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven' (Matthew 22:30). Finally, you placed the Son of Man at the right hand of God on that throne, as you yourself deigned to say: 'But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God' (Luke 22:69).

20. Therefore, the Apostle, marveling at the divine gifts of piety and at the same time showing the generosity of the Father and the Son to be one, says: But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us (Ephesians 2:4). You hear in what you should be rich, O man: virtues that you should possess, loving in God, testing within yourself; to enter into the benefits of heavenly mercy and charity. And he added: And when we were dead in sins, he made us alive together with Christ, (by grace you have been saved;) And he has raised us up, and has made us sit in heavenly places together in Christ Jesus (Ibid., 5 and 6). Indeed, Christ is honored

in the flesh. Therefore, he who sits at the right hand of God has been humbled for our sake. And so he says to us: Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart (Matthew 11:29). He did not say: Learn from me, for I am powerful, but because I am humble in heart; so that you may imitate him, so that you may say to him: Lord, I have heard your voice, I have fulfilled your commandment. You have said that we should learn humility from you: we have learned not only from your words, but also from your actions, I have done what you commanded: See my humility.

21. The athlete shows his good limbs in order to demonstrate the discipline of his training. He also shows his limbs when, after some more serious contests, he is compelled to compete again, so that the judge, seeing his tired body, does not compel him to compete. And you, show the humility of your heart, so that you may display the virtues. Show also the contests of your body, so that you may say: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race (2 Timothy 4:7), and seeing the spiritual judge of the contest, he may award the crown of righteousness, because you have fulfilled the law of the contest.

22. (Verse 154.) The second verse follows: Judge my judgment and deliver me: for the sake of your word, give me life. The innocent hasten to judgment, desiring to be quickly vindicated by the judge of their innocence. This has a practical application even in this world, which is shared with the saints. However, the one who is just before God has another reason not to fear judgment; because for him, the merciful judge is his cause, and before his redeemer he desires and hopes to be quickly absolved. For the absolution of the saints is timely. Hence the Lord says through Ezekiel to the angels who are ministers of vengeance: 'Begin from my holy ones' (Ezekiel 9:6). The Lord does not want to have a common judgement with the saints and the companions of the devil; for the devil and his ministers will not be scourged along with men. Punishment is separate, where guilt also differs. Therefore, Scripture says elsewhere: 'It is time for judgement to begin from the house of God' (1 Peter 4:17). For He who shows mercy, quickly corrects; so that they may not be afflicted for a long time with the expectation of judgment, nor excessively worn down by the wretchedness of their guilt; so that each person may also give back twice as much for their sins, in order to finally be absolved. For the punishment of the guilty is a kind of absolution of offenses.

23. We see in this age criminals chained together in a pitiful procession, and sometimes even the innocent endure such punishments, so that it is more bearable to die than to undergo such tortures. They certainly wish to be well aware of themselves being heard: even those who are burdened with grave crimes wish to expedite the punishment of death, in order to gain some small reduction in their penalties. There is also hope in the mercy of the judges. The chains of prison are even harsher than the very exile itself, and the return is not forever barred to all those who have been banished. If this is the human examination, how much more should it be sought after by all because it is Christ's! The judgment of the devil is delayed so that he may always be guilty in punishment, always bound by the chains of his wickedness, and forever endure the judgment of his own conscience. Therefore, that rich man in the Gospel (Luke 12:20), even though he is a sinner pressed by penal sufferings, is urged to escape quickly; but it is shown that the devil has not yet reached judgment, and is not yet subject to punishment, except for the fears that he himself, conscious of such great crimes, alleviates with perpetual dread, so that he may never be secure.

Indeed, to speak more truly, the holy one comes to judgment, the wicked one does not come: Because the wicked do not rise in judgment (Ps. 1, 5). This one asks to be acquitted, another for the accused to be released. But whoever is not judged, does not believe, but is punished by the judgment of his own wickedness. Among those emperors, the barbarians are not punished for the crime they have committed against their own people; because they are not subject to them, but are considered enemies with a more serious name, who are punished for their crime without interrogation. And so Christ corrects those whom He loves; He punishes strangers as deserving of the general damnation of their impiety with eternal punishment; For the last enemy to be destroyed is death (1 Cor. 15:26): and yet the Prophet modestly teaches by his own example; so that even one who distrusts his own works may hope for a more lenient judgment due to the word of God.

25. One person desires to live for wealth, another for children: this one seeks to be enlivened by the word of God, just as Simeon awaited the Lord's coming; for he saw the Lord in the temple, and said: Now you dismiss your servant... in peace; for my eyes have seen your salvation (Luke 2:29-30), declaring that his desire to live was nothing other than to see Christ. Finally, he saw, and asked to be freed from the chains of his body.

26. We can also understand this: Judge my judgment, as if the reason is more serious for us regarding our judgment than for us to be considered in error. For to the one who is erring, forgiveness is more easily given than to the one who judges wickedly against another. For it is necessary for that form of judgment to return to you, which you yourself thought should be decreed against another.

27. (Verse 155.) The third verse follows: Salvation is far from sinners; for they have not sought your righteousness. Their judgment is a long time coming, their salvation is far off: but they themselves are the authors of their own danger, for they did not draw near to the Lord. Therefore they have become distant, because they have separated themselves from salvation by their own will. Salvation does not reject them, but they reject salvation by distancing themselves. He came to the Jews, but they did not receive salvation. How did they not receive? Listen, Jesus is salvation, Jesus is called the Son of Man: For the Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost (Luke 19:10): but the Jews asked for a robber to be released to them, they rejected Jesus (John 18:10).

28. But who is it who distances himself from the Lord, except the one who does not seek His justice? But he who seeks the justice of God is near, he clings to God. And therefore, to those who seek the justice of God, the Apostle says: You who were far away have become near in the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:13). The blood of Christ is justice. Finally, He Himself says to John: Allow... us to fulfill all justice (Matthew 3:15).

29. (Verse 156.) Here follows the fourth verse: Your mercies are exceedingly abundant, O Lord: according to your judgment, give me life. Although salvation is far from sinners, let no one despair, for the mercies of the Lord are many. For those who perish in their own sin are delivered by the mercy of the Lord. 'I will have mercy,' he says, 'on whom I will have mercy.' (Exodus 33:19) He appeared openly to those who were not seeking, he called those who were fleeing, he gathered the ignorant, he offered himself to suffering for all. So, are you very merciful? For the mercy of man is towards his neighbor: the mercy of the Lord is towards all flesh; so that all flesh may ascend to the Lord, being given that mercy of the Lord. But when he says that there are many mercies of the Lord, how does he seek to be revived according to his judgments, especially when

elsewhere he himself says: And do not enter into judgment with your servant (Psalm 142:2)? But one thing is the judgment of the benefits of Christ, to which we cannot respond (for who can repay the debt of nature, the debt of salvation and grace); another judgment, by which we are judged by the estimation of our frailty. In this very judgment, however, mercy is united; so that the truth of judgment is tempered by the mercy of the Lord.

31. Perhaps because he had said, Judge my judgment (Sup. v. 154); therefore, he added that the mercies of the Lord are too many: for it is a serious matter to judge another. Hence it is also written: Judge not, that ye be not judged (Luke VI, 37). For since everyone is conscious of his own sins, how can he judge the sin of another? Let him judge (3, quaest. 7, cap. Judicet) the error of another, who does not have anything in himself to condemn: let him judge, who does not do the same things that he considers punishable in another; lest when he judges another, he brings judgment upon himself: let him judge, who is not led by any hatred, offense, or lightness in pronouncing judgment. You heard today what the true and just judge said: 'I cannot do anything from myself.' (John 5:30).

32. Some heretics used to raise questions from here, as if the Son was weak, who did nothing of his own; as if he were also subject to the divinity, and subject to the father's command: and they do not realize that this also confirms the unity of divine power, where they think there is a distance of power between the Father and the Son. The Son does nothing of his own, because through the unity of operation, neither does the Son do anything without the Father, nor the Father without the Son. Finally, the Father says to the Son: Let us make man in our image and likeness (Gen. I, 26), affirming that there is a common operation where there is a common counsel. What does Wisdom do without Wisdom, who made all things in Wisdom, as it is written: You have made all things in Wisdom (Psal. CIII, 24)? Finally, Wisdom said, When he made the heavens, I was with him... I was the one whom he applauded (Prov. VIII, 27 and 30). And the Evangelist says: All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made (John 1:3); to teach that not only is the Son the maker of all things, but also the companion of the Father's work.

33. However, I believe that this place seems to be referred to the form of judgment; for the Gospel is not only a doctrine of faith, but also a teaching of morals, and a mirror of righteous conduct. I find in the Gospel that the Lord Jesus has taken on the affections and duties of many, in order to teach how we should conduct ourselves in these duties. He has taken on the role of a shepherd and said: The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:11). Therefore, he did not deny himself to the passion of the body for a reasonable flock; so that, placing a weary sheep on the shoulders of his cross, he might refresh it with the duty of a pious burden.

34. He assumed the role of an advocate: for we have Him as an advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1). He stayed up all night in prayer for us (Luke 6:12) so that He might instruct us by His own example how we should seek pardon for our sins. For He did not stay up all night as if He could not reconcile the Father to us in any other way, but to show what kind of advocate He should be: what kind of priest, so that he should not only stand as an intercessor for the flock of Christ during the day but also during the night. He needed help to obtain what he himself could do, as he said himself: I go to the Father: and whatever you ask in my name, I will do it (John 14:12-13). Furthermore, elsewhere he says, when he raised Lazarus: I knew that you always hear me (John 11:42). Here, as if weak, he stayed overnight, who knew that he is always heard, and he cried out:

Lazarus, come out (ibid., 44). Resurrection spoke, death retreated.

He even took on the emotion of the matter, and stood before the judge as if guilty: nor did the Lord of all disdain the low status of a praetor. When questioned, he remained silent, showing that the defense of innocence lies not in the clamor of voice or the assertion of legal defense, but in the integrity of conscience. He sought not bodily safety, but the purity of the soul. In the end, he who acquitted Susanna while she was silent offered himself to death. In that case, he showed that no one should despair; in this case, that he would not deny the sacrifice of redeeming the universe. When he was finally killed, he did not complain, he did not retaliate. And the Lord of heaven and earth, out of his desire for vengeance, put aside and emitted a voice of humility, saying: If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me? (John 18:23) Like a weak person, he lamented the injustice of his killing; and even though he could have avenged himself, he preferred to complain rather than to seek revenge.

Therefore, even here the person of the judge, and the purpose undertook, saying: I can do nothing of myself (John 5:30). For a good judge (3, question 7, chapter He judges, § Good) does nothing according to his own discretion, and acts according to the intention of domestic will, but pronounces according to laws and rights, obeys the rules of law, does not indulge his own will: he brings nothing prepared and meditated from home: but as he hears, he judges; and as the nature of the matter requires, he decides. He follows the laws, he does not oppose: he examines the merits of the case, he does not change.

37. Learn, judges of the world, what attitude you should hold in judging, what sobriety, what sincerity. The Lord of all says: I cannot do anything of myself. I read elsewhere: He cannot deny himself (II Tim. II, 13). He cannot indeed, not by weakness, but by integrity; not by inability to do, but by observance in judging. What cannot he do who can do all things, except what he does not want to do? He does not want to be able to condemn, he does not want to be able to go against faith, he does not want to be able to go against truth. Finally, listen to him saying why he cannot do anything of himself: As I hear, he says, and judge (John 5:30), that is, I do not decide what pleases me from my own power, but from the religion of judgment, what is just: and therefore my judgment is true: because I do not indulge my will, but equity. Hear what the heavenly judge says: I cannot do anything of myself, but as I hear, and judge.

38. And Pilate said to the Lord Jesus: I have the power to release you, and I have the power to crucify you. You, O man, usurp a power that you do not have; when God denies that he has it, who has power over all things! Listen to what justice says: I cannot do anything from myself. Listen to what the judge of equity asserts: As I hear, so I judge. Listen to what the judge of iniquity speaks: I have the power to release you, and I have the power to crucify you. Pilate, you are constrained by your own voice, you are condemned by your own sentence. Therefore, it was not for justice but for power that you handed over the Lord to be crucified: by your power you acquitted the thief, but you killed the author of life. And yet, you did not have that power which you claim to have. Finally, the Lord Jesus says to you: You would have no power over me if it had not been given to you from above (John 19:11). A wicked power allows what is not lawful. That is the power of darkness, to not see, but to despise.

39. Listen to what the true judge says: I do not seek my own will, but the will of the one who sent me (John 5:30). He speaks as a man; he teaches as a judge; for the one who judges should not

obey his own will, but uphold what is lawful (3, quaest. 7, cap. Judicet. § Qui). Establish a judge for this world: can a rescript go against the form of the emperor? Can it exceed the rule of a noble decree? How much more should we preserve the form of divine judgment! Christ says: I do not seek my own will, that is, of man, which is either directed by hatred, or is intended by zeal, or is influenced by favor, or is perverted by the lies of others; For every man is a liar (Psalm 116:2). But he says, the will of him who sent me; that is, I have come to teach the form of divine knowledge; so that in judging, the custody of truth may be more cherished in the heart than the obedience of will (Question 3, Article 7, Chapter Judging, § In Judging). Therefore, here too it is not weakness of power, but rather the expression of justice.

40. Therefore, the judgment of the Son of God is just; for it is according to the will of God, not according to the affection of man; for God is full of mercy, and His mercy is with judgment, and His judgment is with mercy; He does not have mercy without judgment, nor does He judge without mercy. Finally, it is written: His mercy is on the scales (Isaiah 28:17). But the sons of men are liars on the scales, to deceive (Psalm 62:10). And so God examines and evaluates the merits of each individual, and as he gives grace according to measure, so he gives mercy according to measure. Hence it is said: 'They will give into your lap a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.' The same measure that you use, it will be used against you (Luke 6:38). Likewise, the deeds of each person are weighed on a balance; if good works outweigh the bad, the reward of the prize is given; if sins outweigh virtues, a harsher punishment restrains the guilty: as the Apostle Paul says to Timothy: 'The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later' (1 Timothy 5:24). Similarly, both good actions are made manifest, and those actions which are otherwise cannot be hidden.

41. Therefore, all things are made by our Lord God with a certain measure and weight. Who, he says, has placed... the rock in the balance (Isaiah 40:13)? And also: Who has measured with his hand the waters and the heavens (ibid., 12)? He who examines our things certainly bestows his things that have been examined, and he judges all things with a safe examination. He weighs mercy, he weighs vengeance; in both there is a certain weight and a fitting measure. Hence David also says: And you will give them to drink in tears, in measure (Psalm 79:6); so that they would not be overwhelmed by the weight of punishment without moderation, and they would not be able to endure. And the same prophet also says: The cup in the hand of the Lord is full of mixed wine, it is very irritating. And he poured out from this to that; however, its dregs have not been emptied out (Ps. 74, 9). And Jeremiah says: The golden cup Babylon is in the hand of the Lord, from which the nations were intoxicated (Jer. 51, 7): that is, the punishment has been paid by the nations; so that they would no longer insult, as they were harshly oppressing the people of God. Therefore, the sense of this verse of David is: The punishment that is due to the wicked is prepared and full, which the Lord turns away from the treacherous; but nevertheless, out of His mercy, He does not deign to pour it out completely to the bottom; so that they cannot bear the full extent of the punishment. Therefore, he tilts the cup, but does not empty it. What he tilts is for judgment; what he does not empty is for mercy.

42. Therefore, our Lord God tempers judgment with mercy. For who among us can subsist without divine mercy? What worthy deeds can we do for heavenly rewards? Who among us rises in this body so as to elevate their soul, perpetually clinging to Christ? To what extent is human merit bestowed, that this corruptible flesh may be clothed with incorruption, and this mortal body may be

clothed with immortality? With what labors, with what injustices can we wash away our sins? The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come (Rom. VIII, 18). Therefore, it proceeds according to the mercy of God, not according to our merits, the form of heavenly decrees onto human beings.

43. (Verse 157.) The fifth verse follows: Many are pursuing me and troubling me; I have not turned away from your testimonies. It is not surprising if at that time you do not turn away from God's testimonies; when no one afflicts you, no one pursues you. For who, with the success of prosperous events favoring him without offense, would become ungrateful? Who, abundant in riches and robust in constant health, would not attribute to the grace of God that those things have been granted to him? Finally, when the Lord praised the holy Job, the adversary said: Does Job worship the Lord for nothing? Have you not put a hedge around him? ... Stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and see if he does not curse you to your face (Job 1:9-11). So, he was even more proven when he lost his wealth and children, yet he did not turn away from the worship and favor of the Lord. But he is not the only persecutor; he has many ministers. But do not be afraid: through many tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:21). If there are many persecutions, there are many trials; where there are many crowns, there are many contests; therefore, it benefits you that there are many persecutors; so that among many persecutions, you can more easily find how you will be crowned.

44. Let us learn from the example of Sebastian, the martyr, whose birthday is today. He was born in Milan. Perhaps the persecutor had already departed or had not yet come to this area, or he was more lenient. Sebastian noticed that there was either no struggle or a tepid one. He went to Rome, where intense persecution was raging because of the zeal for the faith; there he suffered, that is, there he was crowned. Therefore, in that place where the guest arrived, he established a dwelling of eternal immortality. If there had been only one persecutor, this martyr certainly would not have been crowned.

45. But what's worse, not only are these persecutors who are visible, but also those who are invisible; and there are many more persecutors! Just as one persecutor, the king, would send instructions of persecution to many, and in each city or province there were different persecutors; so too does the devil direct many of his ministers, who not only act outwardly, but also cause persecutions within the minds of individuals. Of these things it is said concerning persecutions: All who wish to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (II Thessalonians 3:12). He said all, leaving no exceptions. For who can be exempt when the Lord Himself endured the trials of persecutions? Greed persecutes, ambition persecutes, lust persecutes, pride persecutes, fornication persecutes. Hence the Apostle says: Flee from fornication (1 Corinthians 6:18). For what reason would you flee, unless it pursued you? For there is an evil spirit of fornication, an evil spirit of greed, an evil spirit of pride.

These are severe persecutors, who frequently crush the mind of man without the terror of the sword, who conquer the souls of the faithful more with allurements than with terrors. These are the enemies to be guarded against, these are the more serious tyrants, by whom Adam was captured. Many were crowned in public persecution, but fell in this hidden persecution. 'Outside are conflicts,' he says, 'inside are fears' (2 Corinthians 7:5). Understand how grave the struggle is, which is within man; that he may wrestle with himself, may contend with his own desires. The

Apostle himself fluctuates, hesitates, is bound, and declares himself to be captive under the law of sin and death, and to be subdued in the body, and that he could not escape unless he was liberated by the grace of the Lord Jesus (Rom. VII, 23-25).

47. Indeed, just as there are many persecutions, there are also many martyrdoms. You are a witness of Christ every day. You have been tempted by the spirit of fornication; but fearing the future judgment of Christ, you did not think it necessary to defile the purity of your mind and body: you are a martyr of Christ. You have been tempted by the spirit of greed, to seize the possession of another, to disregard the rights of a defenseless widow; and yet, considering the support of heavenly precepts, you judged it better to offer help than to inflict injury: you are a witness of Christ. Finally, Christ desires such witnesses to be present, as it is written: Judge the orphan, and justify the widow: and come, let us reason together, says the Lord (Isaiah 1:17-18). You were tempted by the spirit of pride; but seeing the poor and needy, you were moved with a compassionate mind, and loved humility rather than arrogance: you are a witness of Christ; and what is more, you have given testimony not only in words, but also in deeds. For who is a more rich witness than one who confesses that the Lord Jesus came in the flesh, while keeping the precepts of the Gospel? For he who hears and does not do, denies Christ; even if he confesses with words, he denies with works. How many will say: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, and cast out demons, and performed many miracles (Matthew 7:22)? On that day, he will reply: Depart from me, all you who practice iniquity (Ibid., 23)! Therefore, he is a witness who testifies to the commands of the Lord Jesus, with the facts of the agreement.

48. So many, therefore, daily in secret are the martyrs of Christ, who confess the Lord Jesus! This is known by the Apostle as a faithful testimony of Christ, who said: For this is our glory, the testimony of our conscience (II Cor. I, 12). How many have confessed outwardly and denied inwardly! For the sake of marrying a wife, which was denied by a pagan husband from Christian parents, many pretended for a time to have faith, were revealed to have confessed outwardly, and denied inwardly. We think that the Lord our God was only so severely angered for the sake of fornication, that twenty-three thousand were killed from the people, because they mixed in sexual relations with the women of the Midianite nation: and not because they were forced by them to apostatize from the faith, to deny the Lord. Do not believe every spirit, he says, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world. He is approved by man, but condemned by the judge. How much more tolerable it would have been for him to deny it to man, and confess it to God! Although this is also reprehensible; for a perfect confession seeks both the devotion of the soul and the profession of the voice. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. X, 10).

Therefore, be faithful and strong in internal persecutions, so that you may also be approved in these external persecutions. And in the most intimate persecutions, there are kings and governors, terrible judges with power. You will give an example in the temptation of the Lord which he endured; all the kingdoms were shown to him, and it was said to him: I will give you all these if you fall down and worship me (Matthew IV, 9). Also, it is written elsewhere: Sin should not reign in your

mortal body (Romans VI, 12). Do you see before whom you stand, O man, before whom the rulers of sins, if guilt reigns? How many sins, how many vices, so many kings. And before these we are led, and before these we stand. These rulers also have a tribunal in the minds of many; but if anyone confesses Christ, immediately he makes that king captive, he casts him down from the throne of his mind. For how can the tribunal of the devil remain in him to whom the tribunal of Christ arises?

51. Therefore, those who pursue and afflict me. And perhaps Christ says this, and he says it in the voices of individuals; for the adversary himself pursues us. If you turn away from the pursuer, you reject Christ, who allows himself to be tempted in order to overcome. Wherever the devil sees him, there he prepares snares, there he sets up machines of temptations, there he weaves plots; in order to exclude him if he can. But where the devil fights, there Christ assists. Where the devil besieges, there Christ is enclosed, there he defends the ramparts of spiritual walls. Therefore, whoever flees from the persecutor also rejects the defender. But when you hear: Many are persecuting and troubling me, do not be afraid, for you can say: If God is for us, who can be against us (Rom. VIII, 31)? However, this is said by the one who deviates from the testimonies of the Lord with no crookedness of vices.

Verse 52 (Version 158): The sixth verse follows: I saw those who did not keep the covenant, and I grew weak; because your words did not keep. Blessed is the man who weakens in the love of God; for he sees those who do not keep the covenant. Another person weakens because of vicious loves, who wastes away while delayed in his beloved's love: and while the effect of burning desire is prolonged, the mind fails, the strength of the body is diminished by a certain deformity of paleness, and the limbs grow weak from wasting. Another person who desires money, until he obtains it, wastes away with a miserly and wretched affection. Another person, impatient to pursue excessive honors, if he longs for prolonged desires, is consumed with a great decay of the mind. Not such a person who says: How far removed is my flesh in a deserted land, in a pathless place, and without water! (Psalm 62:2-3) For he was chastising his own flesh and causing it to waste away, while being intent on uninterrupted desire for divine contemplation and anticipating the light of day with eager expectation, he eagerly desired to offer the pre-dawn service to the Lord with songs and hymns.

53. Therefore, a peaceful man wastes away when he sees others breaking agreements, abolishing agreements, destroying harmony, repairing disputes about peace, and returning to chaos out of ingratitude. He certainly does not do this, who keeps the commandments of the Lord; he does not do this who hears the one saying: My peace I give to you, my peace I leave with you (John 14:27). Therefore, he who keeps the agreement, obeys the commands of Christ; but he who does not keep it, despises the commandments of Christ; and what is worse, he despises what has been discovered and neglects it.

54. (Verse 159.) The seventh verse follows: See that I have loved your precepts, O Lord: in your mercy, give me life. Here too, it invites the Lord to look upon the fulness of his charity. No one says, See, unless they judge themselves, if they appear, to be pleasing. And it says beautifully, See, and according to the Law it says; for the Law commands that each person should present themselves in the presence of the Lord three times a year (Exodus 23:17). Every day he offers himself holy, every day he appears, and he does not appear empty: for he is not empty, who has

received from his fullness. David was not empty, who said: Our mouth is filled with joy (Ps. CXXV, 2); because joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And just as we have all received from the fullness of the Word, as John said (John I, 16): so also the Holy Spirit has filled the whole world from his fullness. Zacharias was not empty, but was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied the coming of the Lord Jesus (Luke 1:67). Paul was not empty, but preached in abundance and was filled, receiving the fragrance of a pleasant offering from the Ephesians, pleasing to God (Ephesians 5:2). The Corinthians were not empty, but filled with the grace of God, according to the testimony of the Apostle (1 Corinthians 1:7).

55. Therefore, David offered himself daily to God, and he did not offer in vain, who could say: I have opened my mouth, and I have drawn in my spirit (Sup., v. 131). Therefore, he said: See that I have loved your commandments. Listen to where you should offer yourself to Christ. Not in those things that are seen, but in the hidden and concealed; so that your Father, who sees in secret, may reward you and give back your faithful affection. I have loved your commandments, he says. He did not say, 'I preserved'; he did not say, 'I kept'; for the foolish did not keep the commandments of the Lord. Some manuscripts have '■συνετο■ντας', that is, the unintelligent, the non-understanding ones. Therefore, those who do not understand, do not have wisdom; they do not keep. But the one who is perfect in understanding, perfect in wisdom, loves: which is more than keeping; for keeping is often of necessity and fear, but loving is of charity. The one who proclaims the Gospel is kept safe, but the one who willingly proclaims it receives a reward; how much more is the one who loves given a reward! For we can desire what we love; we cannot refuse what we love. But even though he expects the reward of perfect charity and seeks the support of divine mercy to live in it from the Lord, he is not an arrogant demander of the deserved reward, but a humble suppliant of divine mercy.

56. (Verse 160.) The eighth verse follows: The beginning of your words is truth: all the judgments of your justice are eternal. Since the beginning of God's words is truth, truth is surely the foundation of faith. First of all, we must believe that the things we read in the divine scriptures, the oracles, are true, the oracles of the highest God. Secondly, we must learn the power of those things through a fuller knowledge. For just as the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 110:9), and love is the fullness of wisdom, for wisdom is the law, and the fullness of the law is love, so the fullness of God's words is wisdom, and the knowledge of justice. For just as a certain progression comes from the fear of the Lord to the grace of charity, so it seems that a certain progression comes from truth to the judgment of divine justice.

57. You came to the Church: you heard that there is one God, from whom the Law begins, as it is written: Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one (Deut. VI, 4): believe that there is one God, not multiple gods. But when you begin to read that the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, came in the flesh for the redemption of the whole world, skillfully distinguish that there is one God the Father, from whom all things, and we in Him: and one Lord Jesus, through whom all things, and we through Him. Know that he came for this reason, so that our emotions may be informed by the paths of virtue, so that we may learn the gentleness of his behavior as an example of good conduct, so that guilt may be eradicated through grace: and then you proceeded from confessing the truth to knowledge of justice. Faith is the beginning of the Christian, but righteousness is the fullness of the Christian. Faith is in the confession of peoples, righteousness is in the passion of martyrs.

Therefore, knowing that all judgments of God's justice will endure forever, let us be cautious not to displease God with our actions and let us begin to undergo eternal judgment. And let us not be deceived, even if we have done something good, that we will be exempt from judgment. We all must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what he has done, whether good or evil (2 Corinthians 5:10). You see that even Paul will stand, as he himself recalls. Beware of wood, beware of straw; lest you bring with you to God's judgment what the fire will consume. Beware that when you have something that needs to be proven, do not put it off in the works of many where it may cause offense. If someone's work is burned, they will suffer loss; however, they can still be saved through the fire (1 Corinthians 3:15). From this it can be inferred that the same person is both saved in part and condemned in part. Therefore, knowing that there are many judgments, let us examine all our works. It is a serious loss for a righteous person, a serious fire for a certain work: for the wicked, it is a pitiful punishment. May all judgments be filled with grace, filled with flourishing garlands, lest perhaps while our actions are being weighed, fault may prevail.

Sermon 21. Schin. The twenty-first letter begins, which in Latin is called 'On the wound.' What is 'On the wound' but a medicine by which the severity of a wound is mitigated? On the wound, oil is poured, so that all roughness of the wound is softened. On the wound, a plaster, on the wound a bandage, by which every wound is nurtured. Therefore, where there is hope of restoring health, there are remedies applied to wounds. But where every head is in pain, and every heart in melancholy, there is no wound, no scar, no wound with fervor (Isaiah 1:5-6): that is, where not a part, but the whole is in danger, and a certain corruption of the whole body is consumed with decay: there it is not to put on a plaster, or oil, or a bandage. Therefore, it is much more advantageous to have a wound that you can nurture and bind, than to have death creep inward without a wound. But there is not only a wound of the body, but also of the mind, which is softened by a certain oil of gentler speech and the sweetness of peaceful conversation. There are remedies of words, there are medicines of heavenly teachings, by which every poison of wickedness is wiped away. There are the bonds of the law which do not burn, but rather free those who are bound: there is a spiritual balm, by which certain parts of the soul that have been crushed are made whole.

3. Therefore, let us consider what a wound is, what is above the wound. The leaders have persecuted me without cause, that is the wound. I rejoice in your words, like one who has found great spoils, that is above the wound; for with the words of the Lord, the harshness of the wound is healed. In Lamentations also, you have written under this letter: You have heard their reproach, O Lord, all their schemes against me, the lips of those who rise up against me, and their meditations against me all day long, their sitting down and their rising up (Lam. 3:61-63), it is a wound. But he added: Look into their eyes: give them retribution, O Lord, according to the work of their hands (ibid., 64), it is an even greater wound; for vengeance often tends to mitigate the pain of a wound. And within the same [book], Jeremiah says: Rejoice and be glad, daughter of Edom, who dwells in Gath; and indeed, to you the cup shall pass: you shall drink and be even more intoxicated. (Lam. 4:21) It is upon the wound; for the cup of the Lord is the forgiveness of sins, in which blood is poured out, which redeemed the sins of the whole world. This cup has intoxicated the nations; so that they would not remember the pain of their own, but would forget the old error. Therefore, spiritual intoxication is a good thing, which knows how to disturb the forward motion of the body,

and knows how to lighten the mark of the mind. Good intoxication of a salutary cup, which banishes the sadness of the sinner's conscience, infuses the joy of eternal life. Therefore, Scripture says: And how glorious is your intoxicating cup!

Therefore, the medicine is placed on the wound; because the Lord Jesus Himself is the physician, who healed our wounds, pouring wine and oil, and binding up the wounds of Adam, who, descending from Jerusalem, was wounded by robbers. Therefore, let each one beware that he does not descend from Jerusalem; for everyone descends by his own sins, and ascends by his own merits. Or because we are fragile; let him who descends hasten to that Samaritan, the guardian of his work, the guardian of the Law and of grace; so that he may find a remedy for his wound: let him place the binding of heavenly words upon the wound, saying: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near (Matthew 3:2). Good binding, which connects the bones of your soul and restores them to their former strength, and without any offense to itself, restores the torn limbs.

6. (Verse 161.) On the interpretation of letters, we think we have said enough: let us now consider the verses of the holy Prophet, which he has set forth by the revelation of the Holy Spirit: Princes have persecuted me without cause, and my heart is in awe of your words. If we turn to the ancient history, both Saul and Absalom, and many alien princes, persecuted the holy David: but none of them could triumph over him. There are also princes of this world, rulers of darkness, who try to oppress you in your own heart, and carry out cruel persecutions within, promising kingdoms of the earth, honors and riches, if you were to succumb with a fragile mind and consider it necessary to obey their commands. These princes sometimes pursue for free, sometimes not for free. They pursue for free the one with whom they find nothing of their own and they strive to subjugate him. They pursue not for free the one who has given himself to their power and has entered completely into the possession of the world. For they claim rightful dominion over their own and demand payment for their injustice from them.

7. The martyr declares this well, because he endures unjust persecutions and torments, without having seized anything, oppressed anyone with violence, shed anyone's blood, or considered violating anyone's bed: who owes nothing to the laws, and is forced to endure the more severe punishments of robbers: who speaks justly and is not listened to: who speaks words of salvation and is attacked, so that he can say: When I spoke to them, they attacked me without reason (Psalm 119, 7). Therefore he suffers persecution for nothing, who is attacked without crime: he is attacked as guilty, when he is praiseworthy in such a confession: he is attacked as a sorcerer, because he glories in the name of the Lord; when piety is the foundation of all virtues. Truly he is in vain attacked, who is brought to impious and unbelieving people for impiety, since he is the teacher of faith.

8. But the one who is attacked without cause must be brave and steadfast. So how did he include: And my heart trembled at your words? To tremble is a sign of weakness, fear, and dread, but it is also a weakness for salvation: it is also the fear of the saints. Fear the Lord, you his saints (Psalm 34:9); and: Blessed is the man who fears the Lord (Psalm 112:1). How is he blessed? Because he greatly desires his commandments. Place the martyr, therefore, amidst the dangers; when, from one side, the savageness of wild beasts roars to instill terror: from another place, the clangor of heated blades resounds and the flame of a burning furnace blazes forth; on one side, let the sound

of heavy chains ring out; on the other, let the bloody executioner stand by: place, I say, one who is considering all these things, full of punishment, then pondering the divine commandments, that eternal fire, that endless burning of the wicked, that torment of the reviving punishment; let him tremble in heart, lest while he yields to present afflictions, he subject himself to eternal destruction; let him be disturbed in mind, while he contemplates with a certain sight of himself that terrible sword of the future judgment. Will you not match this trembling of confidence of a steadfast man? Into the same effect converges the confidence of one desiring eternal and divine things, and the one trembling. However, let him be stronger who hopes; let him be stronger who presumes.

9. Oh, may I deserve to be such; that if perchance a persecutor attacks, I may not consider the severity of my punishments; I will not measure the tortures, nor the penalties; I will not think of any atrocity of pain; but I will consider all these things as light: but I will tremble; lest Christ denies me, lest Christ excludes me, lest he casts me out from the council of priests, if he judges me unworthy of that assembly; let him rather see me moved by the terror of bodily punishments, but still trembling more for the future judgment. And if he says to me: O you of little faith, why did you doubt? (Matt. XIV, 31) He will still stretch out his hand and with the steadfastness of a faithful mind, he will calm the troubled waves of this world in their tumultuous mass.

10. (Verse 162.) Here follows the second verse: I rejoice in your words, like one who finds abundant spoils. Therefore, trembling is good from the words of God, if it brings about rejoicing; for whoever trembles at the words of God will later rejoice in the words of God. Therefore, whoever possesses in his palace, that is, in his heart, the words of God, excludes the words of princes from his heart; he excludes fear from fear. For if someone enters a bath, he removes the heat of the sun, and warmth excludes warmth; how much more does the terror of divine judgment exclude this human terror; the fervor of worldly grace, the fervor of eternal grace!

11. Therefore, he who has the word of God rejoices; for he has many spoils which he took from the Jews; he has the spoils of a fallen enemy (1 Samuel 17:51). Just as David took Goliath's sword and cut off his head with it, so too the true David, humble and gentle Lord Jesus, cut off the head of Goliath, which is the understanding, with his own weapons. For the weapons of the devil were the nations; but by faith the head that he had, he lost. The spoils are taken away from the defeated, his vessels are seized; because the strong one is bound. The vessel of the devil was the flesh of the sinner; but after we believed in Christ, our flesh began to be a vessel of election; as you have from the Apostle Paul, who was sent to the Gentiles, a saying from the Lord Jesus to Ananias: Go, for he is a chosen vessel for me (Acts 9:15). Therefore, he is rightly called by the name of Christ: Quickly remove the spoils, divide swiftly; because before the child knows how to call father or mother, he will receive the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria against the king of Assyria (Isaiah 8:3-4). So the king of the Assyrians, that is, those whom their own treachery had made vain, lost the spoils that he held. And so that you may know again, that Christ avenged the spoils that the devil had seized in Adam; and the men of Sabae, high men, passed over to the Lord Jesus bound with chains, and began to adore Him, because He led captive captivity. That is why he took His head; so that He Himself might be the head of the slain body. Now rightly the nations carry the royal head around the whole world; for they are the members of Christ.

12. You have known about the nations: know also about the Jews, whom the Lord Jesus has stripped of spoils; that is, He has taken away the kingdom of heaven from them, and has given it to

the nation that produces its fruit. He has taken away the power of bread, and the power of water, the prophet, and the wonderful counselor, and the wise architect, and the wise listener (Isaiah I and following). He has taken them away from them, and given them to us. I rejoice deservedly... like one who finds many spoils. Without my effort, I found spoils that I didn't have. I found the Heptateuch, I found the books of the Kings, I found the writings of the prophets, I found Ezra, I found the Psalms, I found Proverbs, I found Ecclesiastes, I found the Song of Songs, I found the wonderful counselor Christ, I found the prudent architect Paul: I found the wise listener Christian people, who know how to hear the things that are read; for he truly hears who understands the things that he hears. The spiritual law is. The Jew does not hear it, who hears physically; but he hears who hears in spirit. They have books, but they do not have the understanding of the books. They have prophets, but they do not have the ones whom those prophets prophesied about. How then do they have whom they did not receive? Therefore, it appeared to me with Moses and Elijah; because it departed from them. He who has the Word of God has many spoils. He has resurrection, he has justice, power, and wisdom, he has everything; because in him all things endure. The Hebrews plundered the Egyptians and took their vessels (Exod. XII, 36): The Christian people have the spoils of the Jews, and we have everything that they did not know how to possess. They took material gold and silver, but we have received the gold of the mind, we have acquired the silver of heavenly discourse.

13. (Verse 163.) The third verse follows: I hated injustice, and I abhorred it; but I loved your law. It is fitting for one who possesses the weapons of justice to hate injustice. When the Hebrew possessed these weapons, that is, the Law and the prophets, he abhorred the dead mouse; for the Law says: Whoever touches a dead body... will be unclean (Num. XIX, 11); and he denied the highest acts of humanity to the dead. But one who is just is not dead to the law. This is the filth of the righteous, which is injustice. For what is more unclean than the mind, by which nothing more precious has been given to man, to defile with shameful crimes and to bring forth atrocious designs? What use is it to them that they fear to visit a dead man? I wish their life did not defile the approaching one, whose death cannot contaminate anyone! Death harms no one, I wish life does not harm! For the contagion of a foul partnership is the fellowship of injustice. How, therefore, can one become contaminated, who can no longer be unjust; since even if one was, it has already ceased? Therefore, flee from injustice, lest it apprehend you. Flee from unrighteousness, which makes the living into the dead.

14. But no one escapes wickedness, except the one who loves fairness; and for this reason he says: But I have loved your law. In the law there is fairness, if you understand it in a spiritual sense, if you rise with Christ, and there consider that most sacred heavenly altar, not the earthly altar that was destroyed by hostile plundering. If you look at that Jerusalem, which is in heaven, not the one that was frequented by the people of the Jews on earth, which, triumphed over by the Roman army due to the treachery of its inhabitants, was consumed by a raging fire. If you consider the high priest, of whom it is written: Having therefore a great high priest that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God: let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities: but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin. Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid. Therefore, that prince alone is the priest, to whom the pious priests stand nearby, having deservedly entered that highest sanctuary of the heavenly by their own blood.

Therefore, that law should be cherished, in which the true Hebrew book is free from all the bondage of vices, in which there is a great Sabbath and undisturbed rest of the dead, in which the seed of the dead people is revived not by mixing, but by fraternal redemption. According to this law, the holy one hates injustice, not the unjust one who can often be converted: and he curses and rejects not the remains of the dead, but the dead iniquity.

Verse 15. (Verse 164.) The fourth verse follows: Seven times in a day I have praised you, for the judgments of your justice. And indeed, the number expresses the zeal of holy devotion: but I think it signifies more that the affection is pure, quiet, and free from every burden of sins; so that the prayer may be offered without any fiery anger or shameful desire; let us ask for nothing that harms others; let us ask for nothing that tarnishes us with worldly requests. Let us praise in hymns and songs, always true and just, those things which we sing in divine praises, confessing. Let there be no uncertain and doubtful opinion: let not the intention of the mind be swayed by matters occupied with material concerns, straying from the execution of the intended spiritual purpose. Let the justice of God always be justified with a calm soul, not with idle leisure.

16. (Verse 165.) The fifth verse follows: Peace is abundant for those who love Your name, and they are not offended. Above (Verse 162) we said that charity excludes fear; now we say that it excludes all disturbance. Indeed, one who loves God has a deep tranquility in their confirmed mind. Water, it is said, cannot exclude charity, and rivers will not overwhelm it (Song of Songs 8:7). There is much water of various passions, and rivers stirred up by worldly desires and bodily movements, which nevertheless cannot overthrow the wall of charity. Therefore, founded in charity, he says: 'Our soul has passed through the torrent.' (Psalm 123:5) Could the water of the sea exclude the charity of Moses? And to support the series of the Psalms according to the literal sense, namely, the one who loves God believed that the journey through the seas was safe for him. But those who did not love God, they suffered a worthy end drowned in the waves because of their sacrileges. Elijah and Elisha crossed the Jordan on foot (2 Kings 2:8); and this was the great reward and grace of charity. Therefore, in order to cross the waters of the Jordan River, the flows of our mind's passions were previously crossed by the footstep. Concerning this water, the Lord says: If you pass through the water, I am with you; and the rivers will not overflow you (Isaiah 43:2). He is always present with His righteous ones when they are worn down by some adversities; however, they should cross with a steady mind, without doubting; neither should they be troubled by uncertain faith.

17. Therefore, pass on with a loyal inclination of your spirit, if you believe divine power to be present with you: if not only peace, but also abundant peace should be in your mind, let no battles of conflicting desires assail you, let neither anger sting you, nor lust; and if there is a struggle, let it be external, not within. Fight against those who pursue you, though often yielding to them in silence, just because you conquer them. Their power is your victory. Then, finally, they triumph when they believe themselves to have won. Therefore, let not covetousness attack you, let not desire disturb you, let not sadness bring you down, let not lust inflame you, let not pride overthrow you, let not ambition bend you, let not fear dismay you. May abundant peace be with you, which surpasses all understanding, according to the words of the Apostle (Phil. IV, 7): than which nothing more beautiful could be said. For the ultimate end of wisdom is to have a tranquil mind, unmoved by the false tales of poets. The ultimate end is justice, so that wickedness cannot disturb the mind of the just. This is the goal of all virtue, and of physical strength itself; to restore peace after the

war is over. Therefore, even the strength to fight often serves peace: therefore, let no one disturb a peaceful state of mind.

18. Many things are generated to disturb man: and the wife, often deceived by the stratagems of the serpent, tries to agitate the mind of the man; and the father frequently ridicules the faith of the son; and the husband tests the mind of his wife with insults. But in all these things, the righteous person prevails and says: Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution (Rom. 8:35)? How often are good deeds given as a crime? How often is virtue led to shame? How often is gratitude itself ungrateful? The righteous sold their possessions, gave to the poor, left nothing for themselves; they are often despised in the Church itself; because they ceased to be rich, as it is written: If a man shall give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing (Cant. VIII, 7). Therefore, let us not be moved; for he sought not the reward of this world, nor gratitude, but the eternal life. Let us not be offended, because men consider money more than good works. For if he is rewarded in this world for a good work, and receives the fruit of his study here, it is said of him: He has received his reward (Matthew 6:2). He indeed has a good work, and grace here; but it is a small portion of the salvation to be earned. Preserve your reward for future times; and judge the increase of your reward's reproach in this world. Always consider that Apostolic saying, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come (Romans 8:18). Therefore, let the just person not be broken by injuries, not be moved by dangers, not be tested by storms; whether death approaches, or life, or the angels of heaven. Neither let them be thrown down by adversity, nor lifted up by prosperity. Let their emotions not be weak anywhere. And death tests, and life tests; beware of stumbling.

19. The one who possesses peace, which overcomes every mind, is great; he is not among the weak. Therefore, he should not suffer scandal, for it is the weakness of the weak to be stirred by scandal. Hence, the Lord says: Whoever causes one of these little ones to stumble (Matt. XVIII, 6). He not only said little ones, but also the smallest ones, who are disturbed by scandals; and therefore he is liable to severe punishment, as you have read, whoever disturbs the innocence of a weak mind. For just as someone is deserving of a more severe punishment who has persuaded a crime to an infant and has caused their young age to be reckless, so too is someone deserving of blame who has deceived a weak, foolish, and imprudent person through the persuasion of error or through the agitation of their affectionate heart. Do you want to know how weak the person is who is scandalized? They say, 'I will not eat meat...so as not to scandalize my brother' (1 Corinthians 8:13). What great weakness and a certain infancy of the soul, that it disturbs even the food of a brother! Where can a man not have a precipice, when there is even danger here? And what is worse, this kind of weakness creeps into many. You see a poor righteous person, you are tempted: you see a wealthy unjust person, you are tempted: you see a childless holy person, you are tempted: you see an unjust person who is rich in children, honors, and secular praises, you are tempted. How many pits, how many snares, and what is more serious, they strangle the majority! In the city of Sodom, hardly one Lot was found who was not tempted, yet his wife could not escape the snares of temptation. The people of the Hebrews crossed the sea, but they were unable to cross the trials. Everyone was tested except for Jesus and Caleb, who deserved to enter the promised land because they had been spared from temptation. Neither Aaron nor Mary entered, for they too were tested. Moses also did not enter, for he was the leader of the people who were being tested. He was a symbol of the Law, which could not exclude trials and could not lead to the

land of resurrection, for that was owed to the grace of the Gospel. The law could not give peace; therefore Moses, as long as he lived, was always at war: always the people of the Law are in the midst of wars: but Jesus, the leader of the people, brought their minds to peace; for the one who is under the Law is troubled by uncertainties: but the one under the Gospel hears the one saying: I leave you peace: my peace I give to you (John 14:27). Therefore, there is no stumbling block for those who love.

21. Take it another way: the cross of the Lord is a scandal to the Jews, foolishness to the Greeks. It is a scandal to the faithless; for the Jew says: So this is God, who appeared as a man, who fasted, who was beaten, who was crucified, who could not descend from the cross and save himself? Finally, they said this at the time of the Lord's passion: Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him. Let him trust in God now, let God deliver him if he desires (Matthew 27:42-43). Do not let those things tempt you, do not let those things disturb you, do not let thoughts like these intrude into your mind. Where there is peace, there is abundant peace: there the cross of Christ is not a disgrace, but salvation. The cross of Christ was not a disgrace to Peter, it only brought him glory; so much so that he honored Christ by being crucified with his feet turned upwards, fearing that if he were crucified in the same way as the Lord, it might seem that he was seeking the glory of the Lord. Therefore, the cross is a disgrace to the dishonest: but to the faithful it is grace, redemption, and resurrection; because the Lord suffered for us; because he redeemed us with his blood, and called us back to paradise by his resurrection. Whoever believes these things, how can they be disturbed, to whom the hope of the heavenly kingdom rises?

Verse 22 (Version 166): The sixth verse follows: I awaited your salvation, Lord, and I have kept your commandments. He who waits, hopes. Therefore, hope precedes charity, salvation follows, therefore hope leads to fulfillment; thus, he who has awaited salvation from the Lord has kept the commandments of the Lord. Hence, the Lord calls friends in the Gospel (John 15:14-15), not servants, who have kept his commandments. For he who loves, acts, and he who acts is deservedly rewarded with the recompense of love.

23. (Verse 167.) The seventh verse follows: My soul has kept your testimonies, and has loved them exceedingly. It is more to love than to keep, and we have said above (verse 159, number 55) that keeping is sometimes out of necessity or fear, but loving is out of charity. Therefore, when he said here 'I have kept', he added 'I have loved', so that it may be the keeping of one who loves, not one who fears. He who loves excessively, keeps excessively.

24. (Verse 168.) The eighth verse follows: I have kept your commandments and testimonies, for all my ways are before you, O Lord. Blessed is he who can say: All my ways are before you; who does not want to hide all his thoughts, all his actions: Adam hid his way, Eve hid after the fault, Cain hid the murder of his brother. In affection we have the desire to hide, not in effect. The perfidy of the one hiding is complete, although there is no hiding place before God. Therefore the Church in the Canticles reveals its secrets to Him, saying: I will take you and bring you into the house of my mother, and into the secret of her who conceived me (Song of Songs 8:2). For although God sees all the hidden things of the heart, it is still good for each person to open up and expose their soul to Him, and to encounter Him like light or heat. And the Church rightly boasts, saying: I was in His eyes like one who finds peace (Ibid., 10); for she did not fear to expose her ways. Therefore, this statement is just: For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous (Psalm 33:16). And so, it is

rightly said by those who desire to conform to that true way in faith, morals, and action to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the way and the truth: All my ways are before you, O Lord. For no way can be good unless you judge it worthy of your enlightening visitation: to whom be honor, glory, praise, perpetuity from age to age, now and always, and forever and ever. Amen.

Sermon 22. Tau.

The letter Tau begins, which in Latin interpretation signifies, 'He erred': it has another interpretation, 'He finished.' What does 'erred' mean? It is the twenty-second letter, which among the Hebrews is the last. But by this psalm, that is, the one hundred eighth, we said (Sup. in the prologue of this psalm) is signified the progress of man, who, educated by the teachings of moral doctrine, would set aside all the infancy of an unpracticed mind, but would assume the knowledge of veteran counsel and the sagacity of senile wisdom. But when there is an error, blame is assigned. Therefore, progress is also the end of blame. But see what he means. He says, he has made a mistake; he is not making a mistake, but he made a mistake. To have made a mistake is of the past; to make a mistake is of the present. He who has made a mistake has ceased to make a mistake, and condemns his previous error. For it is said of him, he has made a mistake, who is no longer in error; for the one who still remains in error is not said to have made a mistake, but to be making a mistake, since making a mistake is the characteristic of someone who persists in vice: to have made a mistake is a slip of the one who corrects.

Finally, the corrector of manners says: We were indeed once foolish, disobedient, led astray by our desires, and pleasures (Titus 3:3). He would not have said: We were once foolish, unless he had later attained the discipline of wisdom. Nor would he have said: We were led astray, unless he had abandoned the former error. Finally, in order to teach that the fall has been abolished and no trace of offense remains, he says: But when the kindness and love of our Savior God appeared, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Ibid., 4 and 5). Therefore, with the old error having been set aside, and being renewed by the Holy Spirit and every improvement of morals, he says: For we were once erring. Therefore, you see that he renounced error not as a fault, but as progress.

Finally, let the Lord Jesus himself teach you, if you do not think that you should trust in human plans or opinions. For in his Gospel he himself affirmed that a shepherd left ninety-nine sheep and sought for the one that had strayed (Luke 15:4). The one hundredth sheep is the one that he says went astray: let the perfection and fullness of the number instruct and guide you. It is rightly placed above the others, because it is more significant to have turned away from fault than to have almost not known the faults themselves. Indeed, it is both the accomplishment of perfect virtue and also heavenly grace to have cleansed minds imbued with vices from the reins of desires and to have improved them. For to improve future human attention is human, while to condemn past actions is divine power. Finally, the shepherd placed the found sheep on his shoulders (Ibid., 5). Surely you recognize the mystery of how the weary sheep is restored; for human condition cannot be restored in any other way than by the sacrament of the Lord's passion and the blood of Jesus Christ, whose dominion is upon His shoulders (Isaiah 9:6); for on that cross He carried our weaknesses, so that He might cleanse the sins of all there. The angels rejoice rightly; because he who has wandered, now no longer wanders, now has forgotten his error.

4. Therefore, it is not an error, but a completion that one interpretation teaches. And completion is the perfection of discipline. Hence, even Jeremiah in his Lamentations under this letter says: Your wickedness has come to an end, O daughter of Zion; he will not exile you again. He has visited your iniquities, O daughter of Edom; he has revealed your sins. (Lam. 4:21). Take notice that wickedness cannot cease without God's visitation, nor can correction be complete without the grace of the Lord and Savior. But how shall iniquity perish? Hear the Church saying: I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? (Song of Solomon 5:3). Therefore, the old man's garment woven with the vices of error, deposited in the regeneration of the font, knows not how it can be put on; for through the zeal of correction it had grown forgetful of its sins. So great is the power of perfect amendment, that it brings back a certain spiritual childhood, which is ignorant of the paths of error, and, even if it wished, cannot commit sin; because it has unlearned the practice of sinning. And now, I believe enough has been said about the interpretation of this letter. Let us now discover from the subjects what the opinion of the accomplished man is.

5. (Verse 169.) Therefore he says: Let my prayer come before your presence, O Lord: give understanding to me according to your word. Goodness makes prayer fly, and gives spiritual wings to prayers, by which the prayer of the saints is elevated to God. But the spirit with which we pray, lifts up the prayer of the righteous; especially if a compassionate heart, mourning with a contrite heart, commends it. However, this is the confidence of the perfected men. Finally, David himself in the preceding part of this psalm sought a lamp for his feet, so that he would not be able to wander in this earthly journey. But now, as if already at the end and conclusion, having completed the task of eating, he rises up completely. And he directs his prayer to the heavens: he sends it into the sight of the Lord and Savior, giving Him the breath of righteousness, the winds of wisdom, the oars of devotion and faith, and the supports of innocence and purity; for prayer is burdened by sin, and it becomes distant from God. However, it is burdened even more so, the more improbable the life of the one praying. But the prayer of the innocent and the groaning of one who sympathizes ascend, if they hate the Egyptian mud and decline to engage in earthly work. Finally, you have read thus (Exod. II, 23), that the Hebrews who could not bear the harsh rule of the Egyptians; and just as they refused to endure heavy and muddy tasks unworthy of their noble lineage, their groaning and voice ascended to the Lord our God. For the prayer ascends; because even though they were working, they were working unwillingly. Therefore, the mercy of God descended upon them, because their devotion ascended to God. So he ascended not corporeally; for indeed such a great prophet did not seek to approach God corporeally in his prayer, for he who thinks in this way certainly concludes that God is in a certain place and seat, and that he considers the place in which God is to be more spacious; whereas, in fact, the invisible, ineffable, and incomprehensible God fills all things, and the fullness of divinity dwells in him. It is written that Moses approached God (Exod. XXIV, 18) when he received the Law, but with customary modesty, David requests not that he himself, but that his prayer, approach God, so that it may appear that there is a certain order, namely, that those who are more perfect themselves approach God, while those of the following order have enough if their prayer approaches him.

7. But let us consider the use of our speech, what it means to approach. Imagine a teacher and a student: if the student diligently absorbs the teacher's genius or strives to follow their instruction, so much so that they seem to come closest to the likeness of their work and teaching, do we not

often say that they have approached the teacher? Therefore, if you present yourself as an imitator of Christ, as he who says, 'Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ' (1 Corinthians 4:16), if you are unfamiliar with deceit, despise lying, follow truth, do not shun justice, love chastity, then you have approached Christ, and through Christ, to God. For he himself is the way by which one reaches the Father, who is always with the Father.

8. We have learned what it means to approach prayer, that is, to lift up our actions. If you lift up your actions, you have lifted up your prayer. Whoever knows how to lift up their hands directs their prayer in the presence of God, as you have read below: Let my prayer be directed like incense in your sight. The lifting up of my hands is an evening sacrifice (Psalm 140:2). This prayer leads to life, while another prayer leads to sin: Let his prayer be turned into sin (Psalm 109:7). And even if you seek secular things, if you demand shameful things, your prayer is not directed towards God, but towards sin. Therefore, understand what you ask for.

9. Secondly, he says, give me understanding according to your word. Notice what he asks for. He did not say understanding in general, but understanding according to the word of God; for there is understanding towards death, just as there is prudence towards destruction: The children of this age are wiser than the children of light in this generation (Luke 16:8). But this prudence that belongs to the world does not contribute to eternal life. It is concerned with honors, with petty things, with accumulating questions, not with comparing merits. Finally, concerning the elements of the world, it is more adorned with superficial knowledge than true wisdom; just like all philosophy that seeks what is foreign, while not knowing its own: it scrutinizes the regions of the sky, explores the spaces of the world, which can bring it no benefit: it is ignorant of God, whom it should be the only one to inquire about.

Therefore, the true wise person says: If anyone seems to be wise among you in this age, let them become foolish, so that they may be wise; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the sight of God (I Cor., III, 18 and 19). Therefore, we must strive to be fools in this age, having nothing to do with philosophy; lest anyone deceive our faith through the elements of this world; lest anyone plunder our assertion through philosophy. For we have seen that the Arians fell into perfidy, thinking that the generation of Christ could be deduced from the customs of this age. They have abandoned the Apostle, they follow Aristotle. They have abandoned the wisdom that is with God: they have chosen the snares of disputation, and the allurements of words according to the discipline of dialectic, even though the Apostle cries out: Let no one plunder you through philosophy and empty seduction, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of this world, and not according to Christ (Coloss., II, 8).

11. I wish I could imitate that foolishness by which I am wise: that man who possesses great wealth but neglects its fruits, who devotes himself to God, and rejects even the honors bestowed upon him, who does not seek the teachings of philosophy; even if he knew them before, he pretends to be ignorant, not asking to learn. He does not seek what is his own, but rather gives to others, acquiring for himself eternal things. This man can say: Give me understanding according to your word, that is, not according to the philosophers, not according to the lawyers, not according to the merchants of this world, not according to the builders of houses, but according to your word, which is the foundation of true wisdom and good works; so that he may build upon it the gold of his heart, the silver of his speech, and the precious stones of his deeds; so that his work may not falter

or perish.

12. (Verse 170.) The second verse follows: Let my plea come before you: according to your word, set me free. See the order. First, he said: Let my prayer draw near: then he asked for understanding, according to your word. Thirdly, he said, Let my plea come before you. Does not the Lord invite us by his example, and deign to receive us with affection? When you desire to meet someone of high status, do you not first approach their home: then seek to be informed and instructed, in order to understand the mind of the head of the household? Then, before entering their home, do you not implore, so that no one rejects or excludes you? So, strike and open that heavenly kingdom: strike not with the hand of the body, but with the certain power of your prayer. It is not only the hand of the body that strikes: the voice also strikes; for it is written: The voice of my brother strikes at the door (Song of Songs 5:2). We also strike with our finger. Finally, even Thomas deserved to open the door of resurrection with his finger. And Jesus says to you: Bring your finger here... and put your hands into my side: and do not be unbelieving, but faithful (John 20:27). Press with your finger, if you cannot with your whole hand. Press the door. Christ is the door, who says: If anyone enters through me, he will be saved (John 10:9).

13. So when you have knocked on this door, see how you enter; lest perhaps, having already entered, you find yourself outside the sight of the king. Many enter the palace, and do not immediately see that earthly king: but they often observe; so that at some point they may deserve to see. They do not presume to have the opportunity to see: but when summoned, they are presented, and they offer a prayer; so that they may be received with kindness. The first step in their conversation is to avoid stumbling, to avoid offending. How much more should God be asked that the door of His mercy may be entered by our prayer! Finally, even Paul asks that the door of the word be opened to him to speak the mystery of Christ (Colossians 4:3).

14. But because the Greek has, Εἰς τὸ ἐλθεῖν τὸ ἄξιόν μου, which means: Let my dignity enter; although the writer may have been able to make a mistake, and may have made a petition, which is a supplication: let us also explain this, as best we can. For when you ask a man who is a king, you say that he should consider your honor, let your contemplation of dignity touch him; so that either he may have mercy, if pardon is to be asked for: or he may defer according to the order of dignity. And what shall I say, you ask? As each person enters, they are greeted with respect. Therefore, it is right and proper for someone devoted to God to say: Let my dignity enter before you. And the Christian also has their own dignity, as they serve such a great emperor.

15. There are great and true dignities of faith, there are various honors and orders in Christ: God placed first the apostles, second the prophets, third the teachers in the Church (I Cor. XII, 28). But these are dignities of administrators. There are also private ones, such as piety, justice, sobriety, chastity, discipline. There are also dignities of prayer: if you pray for a widow, if you pray for an orphan, if you pray for the merciful, if you pray for the excessively devout and faithful: if you pray in tribulation, if you pray with sorrow, if you, who are praying, have compassion for the sorrowful one, your prayer enters the grace of God: it enters his house, if the Church prays with you, if the whole people implores; so that the favor of the Lord may incline.

16. But what does he ask? To be liberated, to be freed; because for a long time now he has been fighting against spiritual wickedness, against the temptations of this world; because it is difficult to sustain a long-lasting warfare in this life. Finally, he says further below: Woe is me! that my

sojourning is prolonged (Psalm 119:5)! For he groans because he stretches out unceasing vigils with constant labor; and therefore he seeks to be delivered from all his adversaries, and does not desire to have fellowship with earthly men.

17. (Verse 171.) The third verse follows: My lips shall utter a hymn; when You have taught me Your statutes. He has uttered a hymn, who can say: For we are the good odor of Christ unto God (II Cor. II, 15). And he utters well, who has tasted the many and sweet precepts of the Lord. He utters a hymn, who has uttered the Word. Moreover, even David uttered a good word before: My heart has uttered a good word; I tell my works to the King (Psal. XLIV, 2), here he utters a hymn. For he has tasted the good bread, which descended from heaven: the good bread, which if anyone eats, he shall not die forever. The word of God has its feasts: some stronger, such as the Law and the Gospel; others sweeter, such as the Psalms and the Song of Songs. The Church or the pious soul would utter a hymn, to which God the Word would say: Let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet (Song of Songs 2:14). It would utter a hymn to which he would say: Your lips, my bride, distill honey; honey and milk are under your tongue (Song of Songs 4:11).

18. But no one can sing a hymn before he has learned the justice of God, and has learned it from the Lord God himself. Therefore, David specifically asks for this, that God may teach him; for he had heard and known in the spirit, 'One is your master' (Matthew 23:10); and therefore he demanded to be made a student by him everywhere, so that he might learn his justifications from him. For how can someone sing when in fear and in the dread of punishment? How can one sing, burdened by the consciousness of their sins, unless they have first obtained forgiveness and are secure? Ultimately, in the later part, you have: How can we sing the song of the Lord in a foreign land, in which we are attacked, in which we are captured by the law of sin, in which we lament and mourn the misery of our captivity?

19. And so, eat the food of heavenly Scriptures and eat, so that they may remain with you unto eternal life, and eat daily, so that you do not hunger, eat so that you may be filled, eat so that you may bring forth the abundance of heavenly words. Spiritual feasts are wont not to be harmful but to be beneficial to the satisfied; and thus the Prophet desired to be filled, who says: Let my mouth be filled with praise; that I may sing thy glory (Psalm 78:8). He who sings the glory of God, utters a hymn to the Lord from his heart.

20. (Vers. 172.) The fourth verse follows: My tongue will speak your word, for all your commandments are righteousness. Whoever learns the righteousness of God speaks the word of God, and whoever speaks the word of God does not speak idle words. Idle words are to speak the works of men. Therefore the Holy One says (Psalm 16:4) that grace is given to him by the Lord, so that his mouth does not speak the works of men, for it is an idle word: not only idle, but also dangerous, for which we will have to give an account. For every idle word that we speak, we will be held accountable for it (Matthew 12:36). For it is not a trivial matter when you consider the abundant words of God, and the works of God that He made in Genesis, in Exodus, in Leviticus, in Numbers, in Deuteronomy, in Joshua, in the Book of Judges, in the Books of Kings, and in the Books of Ezra. He made them also in the Gospel, and in the Acts of the Apostles. When you neglect these things and speak about worldly matters, and listen to earthly matters, there is a great danger. Close your ears to thorns (Sirach 28:28); would that you also enclose your tongue. But what is worse, your tongue is surrounded by thorns that prick and wound when speaking about

worldly things. Therefore, the adversary often pours secular thoughts even onto those who pray. So if we should not listen to others, or to unnecessary things, how much more should we not speak! As the venerable Scripture says to each one of us: Bind your silver and gold; and make a yoke and weight for your mouth (Ibid., 29). Bind your senses with faithful silence: bind your words, impose a yoke on your mouth; lest it boast with an untamed neck of words. Impose a weight, so that we may weigh everything we speak with careful examination. Scripture says these things to you with thorns; unless your heart is contrite and in fear of judgment? These things sting in a healthy way: they stimulate, they do not wound; although wounds can also be useful to a friend.

21. Everything, he says, is the commandment of God's justice; because they are the commandments of justice, and therefore they cannot exist without justice. The commandment of God is that you shall love your God (Deut. VI, 5). Hence Paul says: He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law; for it is written: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word (Rom. XIII, 8 and 9). If every commandment is summed up in this word, which is justice (for what is more just than loving your God and loving your neighbor), surely all of God's commandments are justice. For just as someone who is able to kill his brother, surely does not love him; who commits adultery with his brother's wife, surely does not love his brother; who steals, who covets what belongs to others, surely does not love the person whom he desires to defraud: in the same way, someone who despises his brother arrogantly, who tries to deform him, who feeds off his injuries, is estranged from the fellowship of love.

22. (Verse 173.) The fifth verse follows: Let your hand save me, for I have chosen your commandments. The coming of the Lord seems to be praying, for the hand of God is Christ. We read about the right hand of God, of whom it is said above: The right hand of the Lord has done valiantly; the right hand of the Lord has exalted me (Psalm 118:16). So why did he mention hand here? Perhaps not only because of the diversity of grace, which the writers usually do not omit, but also because of a certain characteristic of hands; that the right hand is mentioned there, where it is written that he exalted him by virtue; here the hand is mentioned, where it should be understood that he saved him by humility? The hand of the Lord can also be understood in this way, as it is said in usage: Great is the hand of that king; that is, a great army, and his hand is lower; so that we understand this also: Let your help and support be made, that you may send your angels, your aid, the support of your power to deliver your people. This is the hand of God, of which it is written: Are they not all ministering spirits, who are sent for service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? (Heb. 1, 14) Therefore, whoever chooses the commandments of God, uses confidence; so that with authority, they may seek divine assistance for themselves.

23. (Verse 174.) The sixth verse follows: I have longed for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my meditation. Some are delighted by the longevity of this life, and they desire to prolong their life until the end of old age. Others are broken by the weakness of illness, of whom no one can say: When I am weak, then I am strong (2 Corinthians 12:10). They consider themselves blessed if they enjoy the convenience of good health without any hindrance, for they have no infirmity that hinders their salvation. Moreover, no one can say: I have desired Your salvation, Lord; for they seek their own salvation more than the salvation of God, obeying physicians rather than Scriptures. However, the precepts of divine knowledge are contrary to the study of medicine (On Consolation, Distinction 5, Contraria). They revive from fasting, do not allow staying up late, and

distract from any intense meditation. Therefore, whoever surrenders themselves to physicians denies themselves. But whoever seeks the salvation of God follows Christ, who is called the salvation of God: seeking not what is of the body, but what is eternal, while being in this body. But whoever seeks the salvation of God meditates day and night in the law. For them, constant meditation is on the divine decrees, and no care for this body is directed towards the pursuit of discipline.

24. (Verse 175.) The seventh verse follows: My soul will live and praise you: and your judgments will help me. Surely it flatters itself with the reward of future life, not with the present; for how can this life be called such, of which it is written: And to the dust of death you have brought me (Psalm 21:16)? How many living are there in hell! Paul himself desired to be delivered from the body of this death, he who truly desired the salvation of God, saying: For I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, which is much better: but to remain in the flesh is more necessary than voluntary (Philippians 1:23). How then does the soul live, enclosed in the covering of death: or what is the life, which is in the shade? In the region of the shadow of death we are: our life is hidden, not free; for it will be free in the region of the living, in which the righteous assumes the confidence of pleasing; that he may please the Lord in the region of the living (Psalm 114:9). Therefore, there our soul lives, where nothing earthly, nothing weak is adorned, nothing is owed to punishment.

There he will praise the Lord, where, having laid aside the weakness of the body, he will begin to be conformed to the glory of the body of Christ. For while we are in sin, how can we fully praise? To the sinner, God said: Why do you declare my justices? (Psalm 49:16). We are placed in the shadow here: we live in the shadow: we praise in the shadow: we cannot fully praise in the shadow. We are in a foreign land: you have heard in the following: How shall we sing the song of the Lord in a foreign land? (Psalm 136:4).

26. However, the judgments of God assist the saints, as the reward of eternal life is granted through good works. Blessed is he who says: And your judgments will help me. I, being weak and a sinner, fear the judgments of God because of the conscience of my sins: they bring terror to me, they agitate me: they assist the saints. However, they will also assist the sinner, albeit in a different way. The saint will be assisted while being tested: the sinner will be assisted while being humbled, while being chastised; so that he may pay for his double sins: while his work is burned up, so that he himself may be saved, yet as if through fire. For if I am deemed worthy by judgment, I will be deemed worthy to be separated from the companionship of the wicked; since the wicked do not rise up for judgment (Psalms 1:5). And the judgments will help me; because the one who believes in the Lord is not judged. Faith will benefit him, and he will be supported towards forgiveness, even if there has been any offense in his works.

27. (Verse 176.) The last verse follows: I have gone astray like a lost sheep: revive your servant; for I have not forgotten your commandments. The Greek has: Seek your servant, that is, ζήτησον: and the writer could have been mistaken, in writing ζήσον, which means revive. Both meanings are valid, but the former is more fitting in this context: Seek your servant; for a sheep that has gone astray must be sought by the shepherd, lest it perish. Therefore he says, I have gone astray. Declare your wrongdoing, so that you may be justified (Isaiah 43:26). The fall you admit is a common participation for you and everyone else, because no one is without sin: to deny this is sacrilege; only God is without sin. To confess this to God is a remedy for impunity. 'I have erred,'

he says, 'but the one who has erred can return to the way, can be called back to the path.' And he added beautifully: Like a lost sheep; for the one who acknowledges the error does not perish.

28. He said, 'Seek, I pray you, your servant; for I have not forgotten your commandments. Come therefore, O Lord Jesus; seek your servant, seek your weary sheep: come, shepherd, seek like the sheep of Joseph. Your sheep has wandered, while you delay, while you wander in the mountains. Send away your ninety-nine sheep, and come to seek the one that has strayed. Come without dogs, come without hired workers, come without a mercenary, who does not know how to enter through the gate.' Come without an assistant, without a messenger: I have been waiting for you to come for a long time. For I know you will come: Because I have not forgotten your commands. Come not with a rod, but with charity and the gentleness of the spirit.

29. Do not hesitate to leave your ninety-nine sheep in the mountains; because fierce wolves cannot attack them when they are located in the mountains. The serpent harmed once in paradise: it lost its food after Adam was expelled from there; it can no longer harm there. Come to me, who is plagued by the attacks of heavy wolves. Come to me, who is inflicted with the venom of the dreadful ulcer from the serpent, expelled from paradise; because I have strayed from your previous flocks: for you had also placed me there, but the nocturnal wolf turned me away from the sheepfold. Search for me; for I search for you. Seek me, find me, receive me, carry me. You can find whom you seek: deign to receive whom you have found; place on your shoulders whom you have received. It is not a burden to you, but a means of carrying justice. Come therefore, Lord; for although I have strayed, I have not forgotten your commandments: I reserve hope for healing. Come, Lord; for you alone can call back the stray sheep; and those whom you have left behind, you will not grieve; indeed, they will rejoice at the return of the sinner. Come, to bring salvation on earth, joy in heaven.

30. Come therefore, and seek your sheep no longer through servants, no longer through hirelings, but through yourself. Receive me in the flesh, which has fallen in Adam. Receive me not from Sarah, but from Mary; so that the virgin may be incorruptible, but the virgin through grace may be untouched by any stain of sin. Carry me on the cross, which is salvation for wanderers, in which alone there is rest for the weary, in which alone those who die shall live.

However, it can also be said beautifully that it is life-giving, because the one whom virtue has carried on its shoulders cannot die.

Therefore, both the soul and the Church say: I have strayed like a lost sheep. But she says: I sought the one whom my soul loves (Song of Solomon 3:1); this is to say: Revive your servant, for I have not forgotten your commandments. I sought you, but I cannot find you unless you choose to be found. And indeed, you desire to be found, but you desire to be sought for a long time, to be sought more diligently. Your Church knows this, for you do not want her to seek you while sleeping; you do not want her to investigate you while lying down. Finally, you knock at the door to awaken the sleeping person: you investigate whether the heart is awake while the flesh sleeps. You want to lift up the person lying down, saying: Arise, you who sleep, and rise from the dead (Ephes. V, 14). You reach out your hand through the cave so that the person may rise; and if they rise slowly, you leave them behind. You want them to seek again and seek from many, and not forget to seek, not forget your words; and if they hold on to them, you offer yourself to be seen, you do not shy away and allow yourself to be held. When she shall embrace you, she will show her

fruits and will teach you that she has not forgotten your commandments, and she will say to you: Come, my brother, let us go out into the field... and at our gates, all the produce of the trees: new and old; my brother, I have kept them for you. (Song of Solomon 7:11 and 13). This is to say: I hold all your commandments of the old and new Testament. Only the Church can say this. No other congregation says it: not the Synagogue, holding only to the letter of the new, or the spirit of the old. The heresy of Manichaeism does not say: I have preserved for you the old things which the Prophets did not receive. It is rightly seen as whitewashed, which shines with the grace of both Testaments.

34. The Bridegroom answered her: Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm (Song of Songs 8:6), for you have kept both what is new and what is old for me. You are my seal, you are made in my image and likeness. In you shines the image of righteousness, the image of wisdom, the image of virtue. And since the image of God is in your heart, let it also be in your actions: let the likeness of the Gospel be seen in your deeds, so that you may keep my commandments in your conduct. The image of the Gospel will be in you, if you offer the other cheek to the one who strikes you; if you love your enemy; if you take up your cross and follow me. Therefore, I carried the cross for you, so that you would not hesitate to carry it for yourself.

35. The daughters of Jerusalem heard this, that the Lord Jesus was joining them to His Church; and because they were considering the greatness of the Word, they esteemed themselves unworthy of such a union. Lest perhaps they would not be able to bear the weight of such a bond, they offered excuses, saying: Our sister is young and does not have breasts. For those who want to delay marriage, they are accustomed to make excuses, pretending the weakness of young age, and asserting that she does not have breasts, which signify the time of marriage. This is a common symbol for all virgin women who are about to be married; so that when their breasts begin to develop, they are considered ready for marriage.

Therefore, troubled by the ardor of love that urges the wedding, they say: What shall we do for our sister on the day when she will speak into it? Or, as Symmachus says, when she will speak to it. This is done through the celebration of the betrothal, and it confirms the marriage. Therefore, they say, troubled because the spiritual union is being urged. They cannot excuse themselves from such a great wedding; for there is no one who does not consider the union of the soul and the Spirit, or of Christ and the Church, to be blessed. But because the fullness of the Word or of the Holy Spirit vibrates and shines, and there is nothing that can be equal to them, therefore they desire to differ; so that through that delay either the soul or the Church can be more perfect.

Therefore they say, If it is a wall, let us build dwellings upon it; and if it is a gate, let us carve cedar tablets upon it (ibid., 9). The wall is the soul of the saint. The Church also has its walls, which are already more perfect, as it says: I am a fortified city (Isaiah 27:3). This is the wall that has twelve apostolic gates, through which the entrance into the Church is open to the people of the nations. But the wall, although it encloses the perimeter of the entire city, is then more fortified when it has prepared dwellings, in which the defenders of the city can have a safe place for observing and defending. But because this city is reasonable, and all its hope is in the word of God: not iron, but silver ramparts are required for it, accustomed to repel hostile attacks with heavenly words rather than bodily pleasures. Supported by this defense, shining with this splendor, it is considered more suited for the union with Christ. And because Christ is the door, who says: If anyone enters by me,

he will be saved (John 10:9); and the Church is called the door; because through it the way to salvation is open to the people. Lest it be corrupted by the worms or moths of heretics, the daughters of Jerusalem, or Angels, or the souls of the righteous say: Let us build upon it cedar boards, that is, the good fragrance of sublime faith; for the odor of this material is sweet, which neither worm nor moth can corrupt. Therefore, the use of this material is chosen for raising the roofs and shaping the elements of letters, with which the childhood is imbued with the study of liberal education. Therefore, this material is sublime in grace, light in burden, sweet in fragrance, useful as an instrument of knowledge, and capable of serving eternal cognition.

39. But just as Christ, loving his Bride, urged her to the solemnity of the spiritual union, so too did the Church, already captivated by the beauty of the Word, hasten to the wedding. And therefore, impatient of delay and hesitation, which the daughters of Jerusalem were trying to bring about, she says: I am a wall, and my breasts are towers (Song of Sol. 8:10), that is to say: do not doubt whether I am a wall (for they had said: if she is a wall); I am, she says, a wall, and I have not small breasts, but my breasts are like towers. How do you say that I have no breasts? I have senses, like towers, which hold plenty, as it is written: 'And plenty in your towers' (Ps. CXXI, 7). By these breasts, that is, senses, she thought herself suitable for such a marriage: but the daughters of Jerusalem could not yet appreciate it; because they could not see the abundance of her senses. And he added: I was in his eyes like one finding peace (Song of Songs 8:10), meaning: Having deliberated on my senses, when I found the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, and guards the hearts and senses in Christ Jesus. I was, he says, in the eyes of the Bridegroom, like one who has peace. For it is written: Those who seek peace rightly, shall have it as a testimony (Proverbs 12:20). Therefore, for the beloved and the beloved in a hurry, the spiritual union is celebrated, eagerly sought with mutual consent.

Therefore, like a wedding song, the Spirit rejoiced in the Prophet, saying: 'Solomon had a vineyard in Beelamon; he gave his vineyard to those who keep it.' So the Spirit cries out: 'The congregation of the peoples has been planted, and the vine of eternity has been founded with deep roots, and the spiritual yoke has been placed on the gentle heart under the rule of the Word.' But it has been planted among a multitude of nations; for Beelamon in this sense is understood by Symmachus, Aquila, and other translations taught in the Greek language. The old bond has been rejected, as it could not bear fruit: a vineyard has been given to new and faithful laborers, who not only could produce fruit but also protect it. Therefore, one sheep went astray: but when it was called back, it filled the entire space of the world. One sheep had been led astray: but by the grace of the Lord, it gathered a multitude of peoples. Man went astray: but the Church is now a wall, and a strong wall it is. Adam went astray: David is the wall who did not forget the commandments of God.

Therefore, this vineyard, preserved and fortified with spiritual protection, gives a thousand fruits to Christ, but two hundred fruits to the keepers. And so the Church says: My vineyard is before me, a thousand for Solomon, and two hundred for those who keep the fruit (Ibid., 12). The perfection and fullness of Christ is the portion of the servants. You have this mystery in Genesis, where Joseph gives five portions of Benjamin to his younger brother, each one for the rest of his brothers (Gen. XLIII, 34). Therefore, the dominion of the five senses and the prerogative is bestowed upon the one whom he himself loves: just as he loved Paul, to whom he gave the principality of wisdom to call forth the nations (Acts 20:21).

Therefore, the Church, delighted with the fruits, says to Christ: You who sit in the gardens, your friends are attentive to your voice: make your voice known to me (Song of Songs 8:13). For the Church was delighted that Christ was sitting in the gardens, and his friends who were placed in the gardens were attentive to his voice. But those friends were the Archangels, or Dominions, and Thrones from heaven (for humans were expelled from Paradise due to their disobedience to the heavenly commandments, and therefore the Church was not yet able to hear his voice, which she desired), therefore she says: Make your voice known to me. So that we also, if we desire Him to sit in us, may be enclosed and fortified gardens, bearing the flowers of virtues and the sweetness of grace; so that we may be able to hear the Lord Jesus conversing with the angels. But because it was going to happen that when the Church reached its fullness, it would be tempted by various persecutions; therefore, as he delighted in the grace of the Word, he suddenly sees the plots of persecutors: and what she feared more for her Bridegroom than for herself, or because Christ is more desired in us by persecutors, therefore she says: Flee, my brother, and be like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices. (Ibid., 14). He fled for the sake of the weak, who could not bear more severe temptations. Therefore it is written that we should flee from cities to cities (Matth. X, 23): and if we are persecuted in this city, let us flee to another. Therefore, because of the weak, as we have said, let him who pursues flee: or let him flee from the weak and pass over to the mountains of spices, which can bring the fragrance of blessed resurrection for martyrdom. The mountains of spices are holy. Christ fled to them, because His Foundations are in the holy mountains (Psal. LXXXVI, 1). Therefore, they seek refuge in those who are its stable foundations. It escapes within us, it persists with them in faithful station. Therefore, Paul is the mountain of aromas, who can say: For we are the good odor of Christ to God (2 Cor. 2:15). David's mountain of aromas, whose prayer's fragrance ascended to the Lord; and therefore he said: Let my prayer be directed as incense in your sight (Psalm 140:2).

However, Symmachus and Aquila have interpreted it, that Christ says to the Church: 'Which seat is in the gardens,' that is, You sit now in the gardens, worthy of the heavenly paradise; therefore, Whisper your voice to me, to whom friends listen. I also desire to hear it. The Church began to be in the gardens after Christ suffered in the gardens.

Exposition of the Christian Faith - Book 1

Book I.

Prologue.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Chapter XIII.

Chapter XIV.

Chapter XV.

Chapter XVI.

Chapter XVII.

Chapter XVIII.

Chapter XIX.

Chapter XX.

Book I.

Prologue. The author praises Gratian's zeal for instruction in the Faith, and speaks lowly of his own merits. Taught of God Himself, the Emperor stands in no need of human instruction; yet this his devoutness prepares the way to victory. The task appointed to the author is difficult: in the accomplishment whereof he will be guided not so much by reason and argument as by authority,

especially that of the Nicene Council.

1. The Queen of the South, as we read in the Book of the Kings, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.¹ Likewise King Hiram sent to Solomon that he might prove him.² So also your sacred Majesty, following these examples of old time, has decreed to hear my confession of faith. But I am no Solomon, that you should wonder at my wisdom, and your Majesty is not the sovereign of a single people; it is the Augustus, ruler of the whole world, that has commanded the setting forth of the Faith in a book, not for your instruction, but for your approval.

2. For why, august Emperor, should your Majesty learn that Faith which, from your earliest childhood, you have ever devoutly and lovingly kept? "Before I formed thee in thy mother's belly I knew thee," saith the Scripture, "and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee."³ Sanctification, therefore, cometh not of tradition, but of inspiration; therefore keep watch over the gifts of God. For that which no man hath taught you, God hath surely given and inspired.

3. Your sacred Majesty, being about to go forth to war, requires of me a book, expounding the Faith, since your Majesty knows that victories are gained more by faith in the commander, than by valour in the soldiers. For Abraham led into battle three hundred and eighteen men,⁴ and brought home the spoils of countless foes; and having, by the power of that which was the sign of our Lord's Cross and Name,⁵ overcome the might of five kings and conquering hosts, he both avenged his neighbour and gained victory and the ransom of his brother's son. So also Joshua the son of Nun, when he could not prevail against the enemy with the might of all his army,⁶ overcame by sound of seven sacred trumpets, in the place where he saw and knew the Captain of the heavenly host.⁷ For victory, then, your Majesty makes ready, being Christ's loyal servant and defender of the Faith, which you would have me set forth in writing.

4. Truly, I would rather take upon me the duty of exhortation to keep the Faith, than that of disputing thereon; for the former means devout confession, whereas the latter is liable to rash presumption. Howbeit, forasmuch as your Majesty has no need of exhortation, whilst I may not pray to be excused from the duty of loyalty, I will take in hand a bold enterprise, yet modestly withal, not so much reasoning and disputing concerning the Faith as gathering together a multitude of witness.⁸

5. Of the Acts of Councils, I shall let that one be my chief guide which three hundred and eighteen priests, appointed, as it were, after the judgment of Abraham,⁹ made (so to speak) a trophy raised to proclaim their victory over the infidel throughout the world, prevailing by that courage of the Faith, wherein all agreed. Verily, as it seems to me, one may herein see the hand of God, forasmuch as the same number is our authority in the Councils of the Faith, and an example of loyalty in the records of old.

Chapter I. The author distinguishes the faith from the errors of Pagans,¹⁰ Jews, and Heretics, and after explaining the significance of the names "God" and "Lord," shows clearly the difference of Persons in Unity of Essence.¹¹ In dividing the Essence, the Arians not only bring in the doctrine of three Gods, but even overthrow the dominion of the Trinity.

6. Now this is the declaration of our Faith, that we say that God is One, neither dividing His Son from Him, as do the heathen,¹² nor denying, with the Jews, that He was begotten of the Father before all worlds,¹³ and afterwards born of the Virgin; nor yet, like Sabellius,¹⁴ confounding the

Father with the Word, and so maintaining that Father and Son are one and the same Person; nor again, as doth Photinus,¹⁵ holding that the Son first came into existence in the Virgin's womb: nor believing, with Arius,¹⁶ in a number of diverse Powers,¹⁷ and so, like the benighted heathen, making out more than one God. For it is written: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord thy God is one God."¹⁸

7. For God and Lord is a name of majesty, a name of power, even as God Himself saith: "The Lord is My name,"¹⁹ and as in another place the prophet declareth: "The Lord Almighty is His name."²⁰ God is He, therefore, and Lord, either because His rule is over all, or because He beholdeth all things, and is feared by all, without difference.²¹

8. If, then, God is One, one is the name, one is the power, of the Trinity. Christ Himself, indeed, saith: "Go ye, baptize the nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."²² In the name, mark you, not in the names."²³

9. Moreover, Christ Himself saith: "I and the Father are One."²⁴ "One," said He, that there be no separation of power and nature; but again, "We are," that you may recognize Father and Son, forasmuch as the perfect Father is believed to have begotten the perfect Son,²⁵ and the Father and the Son are One, not by confusion of Person, but by unity of nature.²⁶

10. We say, then, that there is one God, not two or three Gods, this being the error into which the impious heresy of the Arians doth run with its blasphemies. For it says that there are three Gods, in that it divides the Godhead of the Trinity; whereas the Lord, in saying, "Go, baptize the nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," hath shown that the Trinity is of one power. We confess Father, Son, and Spirit, understanding in a perfect Trinity both fulness of Divinity and unity of power.²⁷

11. "Every kingdom divided against itself shall quickly be overthrown," saith the Lord. Now the kingdom of the Trinity is not divided. If, therefore, it is not divided, it is one; for that which is not one is divided. The Arians, however, would have the kingdom of the Trinity to be such as may easily be overthrown, by division against itself. But truly, seeing that it cannot be overthrown, it is plainly undivided. For no unity is divided or rent asunder, and therefore neither age nor corruption has any power over it.²⁸

Chapter II. The Emperor is exhorted to display zeal in the Faith. Christ's perfect Godhead is shown from the unity of will and working which He has with the Father. The attributes of Divinity are shown to be proper to Christ, Whose various titles prove His essential unity, with distinction of Person. In no other way can the unity of God be maintained.

12. "Not every one that saith unto Me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven,"²⁹ saith the Scripture. Faith, therefore, august Sovereign, must not be a mere matter of performance, for it is written, "The zeal of thine house hath devoured me."³⁰ Let us then with faithful spirit and devout mind call upon Jesus our Lord, let us believe that He is God, to the end that whatever we ask of the Father, we may obtain in His name.³¹ For the Father's will is, that He be entreated through the Son, the Son's that the Father be entreated.³²

13. The grace of His submission makes for agreement [with our teaching], and the acts of His power are not at variance therewith. For whatsoever things the Father doeth, the same also doeth the Son, in like manner.³³ The Son both doeth the same things, and doeth them in like manner,

but it is the Father's will that He be entreated in the matter of what He Himself proposeth to do, that you may understand, not that He cannot do it otherwise, but that there is one power displayed. Truly, then, is the Son of God to be adored and worshipped, Who by the power of His Godhead hath laid the foundations of the world, and by His submission informed our affections.³⁴

14. Therefore we ought to believe that God is good, eternal, perfect, almighty, and true, such as we find Him in the Law and the Prophets, and the rest of the holy Scriptures,³⁵ for otherwise there is no God. For He Who is God cannot but be good, seeing that fulness of goodness is of the nature of God;³⁶ nor can God, Who made time, be in time; nor, again, can God be imperfect, for a lesser being is plainly imperfect, seeing that it lacks somewhat whereby it could be made equal to a greater. This, then, is the teaching of our faith-that God is not evil, that with God nothing is impossible, that God exists not in time, that God is beneath no being. If I am in error, let my adversaries prove it.³⁷

15. Seeing, then, that Christ is God, He is, by consequence, good and almighty and eternal and perfect and true; for these attributes belong to the essential nature of the Godhead. Let our adversaries, therefore, deny the Divine Nature in Christ,-otherwise they cannot refuse to God what is proper to the Divine Nature.

16. Further, that none may fall into error, let a man attend to those signs vouchsafed us by holy Scripture, whereby we may know the Son. He is called the Word, the Son, the Power of God, the Wisdom of God.³⁸ The Word, because He is without blemish; the Power, because He is perfect; the Son, because He is begotten of the Father; the Wisdom, because He is one with the Father, one in eternity, one in Divinity. Not that the Father is one Person with the Son; between Father and Son is the plain distinction that comes of generation;³⁹ so that Christ is God of God, Everlasting of Everlasting, Fulness of Fulness.⁴⁰

17. Now these are not mere names, but signs of power manifesting itself in works for while there is fulness of Godhead in the Father, there is also fulness of Godhead in the Son, not diverse, but one. The Godhead is nothing confused, for it is an unity: nothing manifold, for in it there is no difference.

18. Moreover, if in all them that believed there was, as it is written, one soul and one heart:⁴¹ if every one that cleaveth to the Lord is one spirit,⁴² as the Apostle hath said: if a man and his wife are one flesh:⁴³ if all we mortal men are, so far as regards our general nature, of one substance: if this is what the Scripture saith of created men, that, being many, they are one,⁴⁴ who can in no way be compared to Divine Persons, how much more are the Father and the Son one in Divinity, with Whom there is no difference either of substance or of will!

19. For how else shall we say that God is One? Divinity maketh plurality, but unity of power debarreth quantity of number, seeing that unity is not number, but itself is the principle of all numbers.

Chapter III. By evidence gathered from Scripture the unity of Father and Son is proved, and firstly, a passage, taken from the Book of Isaiah, is compared with others and expounded in such sort as to show that in the Son there is no diversity from the Father's nature, save only as regards the flesh; whence it follows that the Godhead of both Persons is One. This conclusion is confirmed by the authority of Baruch.

20. Now the oracles⁴⁵ of the prophets bear witness what close unity holy Scripture declares to subsist between the Father and the Son as regards their Godhead. For thus saith the Lord of Sabaoth:⁴⁶ "Egypt hath laboured, and the commerce of the Ethiopians and Sabeans: mighty men shall come over to thee, and shall be thy servants, and in thy train shall they follow, bound in fetters, and they shall fall down before thee, and to thee shall they make supplication: for God is in thee, and there is no God beside thee. For thou art God, and we knew it not, O God of Israel."⁴⁷

21. Hear the voice of the prophet: "In Thee," he saith, "is God, and there is no God beside Thee." How agreeth this with the Arians' teaching? They must deny either the Father's or the Son's Divinity, unless they believe, once for all, unity of the same Divinity.

22. "In Thee," saith he, "is God"-forasmuch as the Father is in the Son. For it is written, "The Father, Who abideth in Me, Himself speaketh," and "The works that I do, He Himself also doeth."⁴⁸ And yet again we read that the Son is in the Father, saying, "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me."⁴⁹ Let the Arians, if they can, make away with this kinship⁵⁰ in nature and unity in work.

23. There is, therefore, God in God, but not two Gods; for it is written that there is one God,⁵¹ and there is Lord in Lord,⁵² but not two Lords, forasmuch as it is likewise written: "Serve not two lords."⁵³ And the Law saith: "Hear, O Israel! The Lord thy God is one God;"⁵⁴ moreover, in the same Testament it is written: "The Lord rained from the Lord."⁵⁵ The Lord, it is said, sent rain "from the Lord." So also you may read in Genesis: "And God said,-and God made,"⁵⁶ and, lower down, "And God made man in the image of God;"⁵⁷ yet it was not two gods, but one God, that made [man]. In the one place, then, as in the other, the unity of operation and of name is maintained. For surely, when we read "God of God,"⁵⁸ we do not speak of two Gods.

24. Again, you may read in the forty-fourth psalm⁵⁹ how the prophet not only calls the Father "God" but also proclaims the Son as God, saying: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."⁶⁰ And further on: "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."⁶¹ This God Who anoints, and God Who in the flesh is anointed, is the Son of God. For what fellows in His anointing hath Christ, except such as are in the flesh? You see, then, that God is by God anointed, but being anointed in taking upon Him the nature of mankind, He is proclaimed the Son of God; yet is the principle of the Law not broken.

25. So again, when you read, "The Lord rained from the Lord," acknowledge the unity of Godhead, for unity in operation doth not allow of more than one individual God, even as the Lord Himself has shown, saying: "Believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or believe Me for the very works' sake."⁶² Here, too, we see that unity of Godhead is signified by unity in operation.

26. The Apostle, careful to prove that there is one Godhead of both Father and Son, and one Lordship, lest we should run into any error, whether of heathen or of Jewish ungodliness, showed us the rule we ought to follow, saying: "One God, the Father, from Whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him."⁶³ For just as, in calling Jesus Christ "Lord," he did not deny that the Father was Lord, even so, in saying, "One God, the Father," he did not deny true Godhead to the Son, and thus he taught, not that there was more than one God, but that the source of power was one, forasmuch as Godhead consists in Lordship, and Lordship in Godhead, as it is written: "Be ye sure that the Lord, He is God. It is He that hath

made us, and not we ourselves."⁶⁴

27. "In thee," therefore, "is God," by unity of nature, and "there is no God beside Thee," by reason of personal possession of the Substance, without any reserve or difference.⁶⁵

28. Again, Scripture speaks, in the Book of Jeremiah, of One God, and yet acknowledges both Father and Son. Thus we read: "He is our God, and in comparison with Him none other shall be accounted of. He hath discovered all the way of teaching, and given it to Jacob, His servant, and to Israel, His beloved. After these things He appeared upon earth, and conversed with men."

29. The prophet speaks of the Son, for it was the Son Himself Who conversed with men, and this is what he says: "He is our God, and in comparison with Him none other shall be accounted of." Why do we call Him in question, of Whom so great a prophet saith that no other can be compared with Him? What comparison of another can be made, when the Godhead is One? This was the confession of a people set in the midst of dangers; reverencing religion, and therefore unskilled in strife of argument.

30. Come, Holy Spirit, and help Thy prophets, in whom Thou art wont to dwell, in whom we believe. Shall we believe the wise of this world, if we believe not the prophets? But where is the wise man, where is the scribe? When our peasant planted figs, he found that whereof the philosopher knew nothing, for God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the strong.⁶⁶ Are we to believe the Jews? for God was once known in Jewry. Nay, but they deny that very thing, which is the foundation of our belief, seeing that they know not the Father, who have denied the Son.⁶⁷

Chapter IV. The Unity of God is necessarily implied in the order of Nature, in the Faith, and in Baptism. The gifts of the Magi declare (1) the Unity of the Godhead; (2) Christ's Godhead and Manhood. The truth of the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is shown in the Angel walking in the midst of the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

31. All nature testifies to the Unity of God, inasmuch as the universe is one. The Faith declares that there is one God, seeing that there is one belief in both the Old and the New Testament. That there is one Spirit, all holy,⁶⁸ grace witnesseth, because there is one Baptism, in the Name of the Trinity. The prophets proclaim, the apostles hear, the voice of one God. In one God did the Magi believe, and they brought, in adoration, gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Christ's cradle, confessing, by the gift of gold, His Royalty, and with the incense worshipping Him as God. For gold is the sign of kingdom, incense of God, myrrh of burial.⁶⁹

32. What, then, was the meaning of the mystic offerings in the lowly cattle-stalls, save that we should discern in Christ the difference between the Godhead and the flesh? He is seen as man,⁷⁰ He is adored as Lord. He lies in swaddling-clothes, but shines amid the stars; the cradle shows His birth, the stars His dominion;⁷¹ it is the flesh that is wrapped in clothes, the Godhead that receives the ministry of angels. Thus the dignity of His natural majesty is not lost, and His true assumption of the flesh is proved.

33. This is our Faith. Thus did God will that He should be known by all, thus believed the three children,⁷² and felt not the fire into the midst whereof they were cast, which destroyed and burnt up unbelievers,⁷³ whilst it fell harmless as dew upon the faithful,⁷⁴ for whom the flames kindled by

others became cold, seeing that the torment had justly lost its power in conflict with faith. For with them there was One in the form of an angel,⁷⁵ comforting them,⁷⁶ to the end that in the number of the Trinity one Supreme Power might be praised. God was praised, the Son of God was seen in God's angel, holy and spiritual grace spake in the children.⁷⁷

Chapter V. The various blasphemies uttered by the Arians against Christ are cited. Before these are replied to, the orthodox⁷⁸ are admonished to beware of the captious arguments of philosophers, forasmuch as in these especially did the heretics put their trust.

34. Now let us consider the disputings of the Arians concerning the Son of God.

35. They say that the Son of God is unlike His Father. To say this of a man would be an insult.⁷⁹

36. They say that the Son of God had a beginning in time,⁸⁰ whereas He Himself is the source and ordainer of time and all that therein is.⁸¹ We are men, and we would not be limited to time. We began to exist once, and we believe that we shall have a timeless existence. We desire after immortality-how, then, can we deny the eternity of God's Son, Whom God declares to be eternal by nature, not by grace?

37. They say that He was created.⁸² But who would reckon an author with his works, and have him seem to be what he has himself made?

38. They deny His goodness.⁸³ Their blaspheming is its own condemnation, and so cannot hope for pardon.

39. They deny that He is truly Son of God, they deny His omnipotence, in that whilst they admit that all things are made by the ministry of the Son, they attribute the original source of their being to the power of God. But what is power, save perfection of nature?⁸⁴

40. Furthermore, the Arians deny that in Godhead He is One with the Father.⁸⁵ Let them annul the Gospel, then, and silence the voice of Christ. For Christ Himself has said: "I and the Father are one."⁸⁶ It is not I who say this: Christ has said it. Is He a deceiver, that He should lie?⁸⁷ Is He unrighteous, that He should claim to be what He never was." But of these matters we will deal severally, at greater length, in their proper place.

41. Seeing, then, that the heretic says that Christ is unlike His Father, and seeks to maintain this by force of subtle disputation, we must cite the Scripture: "Take heed that no man make spoil of you by philosophy and vain deceit, according to the tradition of men, and after the rudiments of this world, not according to Christ; for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of Godhead in bodily shape."⁸⁸

42. For they store up all the strength of their poisons in dialectical disputation, which by the judgment of philosophers is defined as having no power to establish aught, and aiming only at destruction.⁸⁹ But it was not by dialectic that it pleased God to save His people; "for the kingdom of God consisteth in simplicity of faith, not in wordy contention."⁹⁰

Chapter VI. By way of leading up to his proof that Christ is not different from the Father, St. Ambrose cites the more famous leaders of the Arian party, and explains how little their witness agrees, and shows what defence the Scriptures provide against them.

43. The Arians, then, say that Christ is unlike the Father; we deny it. Nay, indeed, we shrink in dread from the word. Nevertheless I would not that your sacred Majesty should trust to argument and our disputation. Let us enquire of the Scriptures, of apostles, of prophets, of Christ. In a word, let us enquire of the Father, Whose honour these men say they uphold, if the Son be judged inferior to Him. But insult to the Son brings no honour to the good Father. It cannot please the good Father, if the Son be judged inferior, rather than equal, to His Father.

44. I pray your sacred Majesty to suffer me, if for a little while I address myself particularly to these men. But whom shall I choose out to cite? Eunomius?⁹¹ or Arius and Aetius,⁹² his instructors? For there are many names, but one unbelief, constant in wickedness, but in conversation divided against itself; without difference in respect of deceit, but in common enterprise breeding dissent. But wherefore they will not agree together I understand not.

45. The Arians reject the person of Eunomius, but they maintain his unbelief and walk in the ways of his iniquity. They say that he has too generously published the writings of Arius. Truly, a plentiful lavishing of error! They praise him who gave the command, and deny him who executed it! Wherefore they have now fallen apart into several sects. Some follow after Eunomius or Aëtius, others after Palladius or Demophilus and Auxentius, or the inheritors of this form of unbelief.⁹³ Others, again, follow different teachers. Is Christ, then, divided?⁹⁴ Nay; but those who divide Him from the Father do with their own hands cut themselves asunder.

46. Seeing, therefore, that men who agree not amongst themselves have all alike conspired against the Church of God, I shall call those whom I have to answer by the common name of heretics. For heresy, like some hydra of fable, hath waxed great from its wounds, and, being oftentimes lopped short, hath grown afresh, being appointed to find meet destruction in flames of fire.⁹⁵ Or, like some dread and monstrous Scylla, divided into many shapes of unbelief, she displays, as a mask to her guile, the pretence of being a Christian sect, but those wretched men whom she finds tossed to and fro in the waves of her unhallowed strait, amid the wreckage of their faith, she, girt with beastly monsters, rends with the cruel fang of her blasphemous doctrine.⁹⁶

47. This monster's cavern, your sacred Majesty, thick laid, as seafaring men do say it is, with hidden lairs, and all the neighbourhood thereof, where the rocks of unbelief echo to the howling of her black dogs, we must pass by with ears in a manner stopped. For it is written: "Hedge thine ears about with thorns;"⁹⁷ and again: "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers;"⁹⁸ and yet again: "A man that is an heretic, avoid after the first reproof, knowing that such an one is fallen, and is in sin, being condemned of his own judgment."⁹⁹ So then, like prudent pilots, let us set the sails of our faith for the course wherein we may pass by most safely, and again follow the coasts of the Scriptures.¹⁰⁰

Chapter VII. The likeness of Christ to the Father is asserted on the authority of St. Paul, the prophets, and the Gospel, and especially in reliance upon the creation of man in God's image.

48. The Apostle saith that Christ is the image of the Father-for he calls Him the image of the invisible God, the first-begotten of all creation. First-begotten, mark you, not first-created, in order that He may be believed to be both begotten, in virtue of His nature,¹⁰¹ and first in virtue of His eternity. In another place also the Apostle has declared that God made the Son "heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds, Who is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of

His substance."¹⁰² The Apostle calls Christ the image of the Father, and Arius says that He is unlike the Father. Why, then, is He called an image, if He hath no likeness? Men will not have their portraits unlike them, and Arius contends that the Father is unlike the Son, and would have it that the Father has begotten one unlike Himself, as though unable to generate His like.

49. The prophets say: "In Thy light we shall see light;"¹⁰³ and again: "Wisdom is the brightness of everlasting light, and the spotless mirror of God's majesty, the image of His goodness."¹⁰⁴ See what great names are declared! "Brightness," because in the Son the Father's glory shines clearly: "spotless minor," because the Father is seen in the Son:¹⁰⁵ "image of goodness," because it is not one body seen reflected in another, but the whole power [of the Godhead] in the Son. The word "image" teaches us that there is no difference; "expression," that He is the counterpart of the Father's form; and "brightness" declares His eternity.¹⁰⁶ The "image" in truth is not that of a bodily countenance, not one made up of colours, nor modelled in wax, but simply derived from God, coming out from the Father, drawn from the fountainhead.

50. By means of this image the Lord showed Philip the Father, saying, "Philip, he that sees Me, sees the Father also. How then dost thou say, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?"¹⁰⁷ Yes, he who looks upon the Son sees, in portrait, the Father.¹⁰⁸ Mark what manner of portrait is spoken of. It is Truth, Righteousness, the Power of God:¹⁰⁹ not dumb, for it is the Word; not insensible, for it is Wisdom; not vain and foolish, for it is Power; not soulless, for it is the Life; not dead, for it is the Resurrection.¹¹⁰ You see, then, that whilst an image is spoken of, the meaning is that it is the Father, Whose image the Son is, seeing that no one can be his own image.

51. More might I set down from the Son's testimony; howbeit, lest He perchance appear to have asserted Himself overmuch, let us enquire of the Father. For the Father said, "Let us make man in Our image and likeness."¹¹¹ The Father saith to the Son "in Our image and likeness," and thou sayest that the Son of God is unlike the Father.

52. John saith, "Beloved, we are sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: we know that if He be revealed, we shall be like Him."¹¹² O blind madness! O shameless obstinacy! We are men, and, so far as we may, we shall be in the likeness of God: dare we deny that the Son is like God?

53. Therefore the Father hath said: "Let us make man in Our image and likeness." At the beginning of the universe itself, as I read, the Father and the Son existed, and I see one creation. I hear Him that speaketh.¹¹³ I acknowledge Him that doeth:¹¹⁴ but it is of one image, one likeness, that I read. This likeness belongs not to diversity but to unity. What, therefore, thou claimest for thyself, thou takest from the Son of God, seeing, indeed, that thou canst not be in the image of God, save by help of the image of God.

Chapter VIII. The likeness of the Son to the Father being proved, it is not hard to prove the Son's eternity, though, indeed, this may be established on the authority of the Prophet Isaiah and St. John the Evangelist, by which authority the heretical leaders are shown to be refuted.

54. It is plain, therefore, that the Son is not unlike the Father, and so we may confess the more readily that He is also eternal, seeing that He Who is like the Eternal must needs be eternal. But if we say that the Father is eternal, and yet deny this of the Son, we say that the Son is unlike the

Father, for the temporal differeth from the eternal. The Prophet proclaims Him eternal, and the Apostle proclaims Him eternal; the Testaments, Old and New alike, are full of witness to the Son's eternity.

55. Let us take them, then, in their order. In the Old Testament-to cite one out of a multitude of testimonies-it is written: "Before Me hath there been no other God, and after Me shall there be none."¹¹⁵ I will not comment on this place, but ask thee straight: "Who speaks these words,-the Father or the Son?" Whichever of the two thou sayest, thou wilt find thyself convinced, or, if a believer, instructed. Who, then, speaks these words, the Father or the Son? If it is the Son, He says, "Before Me hath there been no other God;" if the Father, He says, "After Me shall there be none." The One hath none before Him, the Other none that comes after; as the Father is known in the Son, so also is the Son known in the Father, for whensoever you speak of the Father, you speak also by implication of His Son, seeing that none is his own father; and when you name the Son, you do also acknowledge His Father, inasmuch as none can be his own son. And so neither can the Son exist without the Father, nor the Father without the Son.¹¹⁶ The Father, therefore, is eternal, and the Son also eternal.

56. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."¹¹⁷ "Was," mark you, "with God." "Was"-see, we have "was" four times over. Where did the blasphemer find it written that He "was not." Again, John, in another passage-in his Epistle-speaketh of "That which was in the beginning."¹¹⁸ The extension of the "was" is infinite. Conceive any length of time you will, yet still the Son "was."¹¹⁹

57. Now in this short passage our fisherman hath barred the way of all heresy. For that which was "in the beginning" is not comprehended in time, is not preceded by any beginning. Let Arius, therefore, hold his peace.¹²⁰ Moreover, that which was "with God" is not confounded and mingled with Him, but is distinguished by the perfection unblemished which it hath as the Word abiding with God; and so let Sabellius keep silence.¹²¹ And "the Word was God," This Word, therefore, consisteth not in uttered speech, but in the designation of celestial excellence, so that Photinus' teaching is refuted. Furthermore, by the fact that in the beginning He was with God is proven the indivisible unity of eternal Godhead in Father and Son, to the shame and confusion of Eunomius.¹²² Lastly, seeing that all things are said to have been made by Him, He is plainly shown to be author of the Old and of the New Testament alike; so that the Manichaeon can find no ground for his assaults.¹²³ Thus hath the good fisherman caught them all in one net, to make them powerless to deceive, albeit unprofitable fish to take.

Chapter IX.

St. Ambrose questions the heretics and exhibits their answer, which is, that the Son existed, indeed, before all time, yet was not co-eternal with the Father, whereat the Saint shows that they represent the Godhead as changeable, and further, that each Person must be believed to be eternal.

58. Tell me, thou heretic,-for the surpassing clemency of the Emperor grants me this indulgence of addressing thee for a short space, not that I desire to confer with thee, or am greedy to hear thy arguments, but because I am willing to exhibit them,-tell me, I say, whether there was ever a time when God Almighty was not the Father, and yet was God. "I say nothing about time," is thy

answer. Well and subtly objected! For if thou bringest time into the dispute, thou wilt condemn thyself, seeing that thou must acknowledge that there was a time when the Son was not, whereas the Son is the ruler and creator of time.¹²⁴ He cannot have begun to exist after His own work. Thou, therefore, must needs allow Him to be the ruler and maker of His work.

59. "I do not say," answerest thou, "that the Son existed not before time;" but when I call Him "Son," I declare that His Father existed before Him, for, as you say, father exists before son."¹²⁵ But what means this? Thou deniest that time was before the Son, and yet thou wilt have it that something preceded the existence of the Son-some creature of time,-and thou showest certain stages of generation intervening, whereby thou dost give us to understand that the generation from the Father was a process in time. For if He began to be a Father, then, in the first instance, He was God, and afterwards He became a Father. How, then, is God unchangeable?¹²⁶ For if He was first God, and then the Father, surely He has undergone change by reason of the added and later act of generation.

60. But may God preserve us from this madness; for it was but to confute the impiety of the heretics that we brought in this question. The devout spirit affirms a generation that is not in time, and so declares Father and Son to be co-eternal, and does not maintain that God has ever suffered change.

61. Let Father and Son, therefore, be associated in worship, even as They are associated in Godhead; let not blasphemy put asunder those whom the close bond of generation hath joined together. Let us honour the Son, that we may honour the Father also, as it is written in the Gospel.¹²⁷ The Son's eternity is the adornment of the Father's majesty. If the Son hath not been from everlasting, then the Father hath suffered change; but the Son is from all eternity, therefore hath the Father never changed, for He is always unchangeable. And thus we see that they who would deny the Son's eternity would teach that the Father is mutable.

Chapter X.

Christ's eternity being proved from the Apostle's teaching, St. Ambrose admonishes us that the Divine Generation is not to be thought of after the fashion of human procreation, nor to be too curiously pried into. With the difficulties thence arising he refuses to deal, saying that whatev-er terms, taken from our knowledge of body, are used in speaking of this Divine Generation, must be understood with a spiritual meaning.

65. Hear now another argument, showing clearly the eternity of the Son. The Apostle says that God's Power and Godhead are eternal, and that Christ is the Power of God-for it is written that Christ is "the Power of God and the Wisdom of God."¹²⁸ If, then, Christ is the Power of God, it follows that, forasmuch as God's Power is eternal, Christ also is eternal.

63. Thou canst not, then, heretic, build up a false doctrine from the custom of human procreation, nor yet gather the wherewithal for such work from our discourse, for we cannot compass the greatness of infinite Godhead, "of Whose greatness there is no end,"¹²⁹ in our straitened speech. If thou shouldst seek to give an account of a man's birth, thou must needs point to a time. But the Divine Generation is above all things; it reaches far and wide, it rises high above all thought and feeling. For it is written: "No man cometh to the Father, save by Me."¹³⁰ Whatsoever, therefore, thou dost conceive concerning the Father-yea, be it even His eternity-thou canst not conceive

ought concerning Him save by the Son's aid, nor can any understanding ascend to the Father save through the Son. "This is My dearly-beloved Son,"¹³¹ the Father saith. "Is" mark you-He Who is, what He is, forever. Hence also David is moved to say: "O Lord, Thy Word abideth for ever in heaven,"¹³² -for what abideth fails neither in existence nor in eternity.

64. Dost thou ask me how He is a Son, if He have not a Father existing before Him? I ask of thee, in turn, when, or how, thinkest thou that the Son was begotten. For me the knowledge of the mystery of His generation is more than I can attain to,¹³³ -the mind fails, the voice is dumb-ay, and not mine alone, but the angels' also. It is above Powers, above Angels, above Cherubim, Seraphim, and all that has feeling and thought, for it is written: "The peace of Christ, which passeth all understanding."¹³⁴ If the peace of Christ passes all understanding, how can so wondrous a generation but be above all understanding?

65. Do thou, then (like the angels), cover thy face with thy hands,¹³⁵ for it is not given thee to look into surpassing mysteries! We are suffered to know that the Son is begotten, not to dispute upon the manner of His begetting. I cannot deny the one; the other I fear to search into, for if Paul says that the words which he heard when caught up into the third heaven might not be uttered,¹³⁶ how can we explain the secret of this generation from and of the Father, which we can neither hear nor attain to with our understanding?

66. But if you will constrain me to the rule of human generation, that you may be allowed to say that the Father existed before the Son, then consider whether instances, taken from the generation of earthly creatures, are suitable to show forth the Divine Generation.¹³⁷ If we speak according to what is customary amongst men, you cannot deny that, in man, the changes in the father's existence happen before those in the son's. The father is the first to grow, to enter old age, to grieve, to weep. If, then, the son is after him in time, he is older in experience than the son. If the child comes to be born, the parent escapes not the shame of begetting.¹³⁸

67. Why take such delight in that rack of questioning?¹³⁹ You hear the name of the Son of God; abolish it, then, or acknowledge His true nature. You hear speak of the womb-acknowledge the truth of undoubted begetting.¹⁴⁰ Of His heart-know that here is God's word.¹⁴¹ Of His right hand-confess His power.¹⁴² Of His face-acknowledge His wisdom.¹⁴³ These words are not to be understood, when we speak of God, as when we speak of bodies. The generation of the Son is incomprehensible, the Father begets impassibly,¹⁴⁴ and yet of Himself and in ages inconceivably remote hath very God begotten very God. The Father loves the Son,¹⁴⁵ and you anxiously examine His Person; the Father is well pleased in Him,¹⁴⁶ you, joining the Jews, look upon Him with an evil eye; the Father knows the Son,¹⁴⁷ and you join the heathen in reviling Him.¹⁴⁸

Chapter XI.

It cannot be proved from Scripture that the Father existed before the Son, nor yet can arguments taken from human reproduction avail to this end, since they bring in absurdities without end. To dare to affirm that Christ began to exist in the course of time is the height of blasphemy.

68. You ask me whether it is possible that He Who is the Father should not be prior in existence. I ask you to tell me when the Father existed, the Son as yet being not; prove this, gather it from argument or evidence of Scripture. If you lean upon arguments, you have doubtless been taught that God's power is eternal. Again, you have read the Scripture that saith: "O Israel, if thou wilt

hearken unto Me, there shall be no new God in thee, neither shalt thou worship a strange God."¹⁴⁹ The first of these commands betokens [the Son's] eternity, the second His possession of an identical nature, so that we can neither believe Him to have come into existence after the Father, nor suppose Him the Son of another Divinity. For if He existed not always with the Father, He is a "new" [God]; if He is not of one Divinity with the Father, He is a "strange" [God]. But He is not after the Father, for He is not "a new God;" nor is He "a strange God," for He is begotten of the Father, and because, as it is written, He is "God above all, blessed for ever."¹⁵⁰

69. But if the Arians believe Him to be a strange God, why do they worship Him, when it is written: "Thou shalt worship no strange God"? Else, if they do not worship the Son, let them confess thereto, and the case is at an end,-that they deceive no one by their professions of religion. This, then, we see, is the witness of the Scriptures. If you have any others to produce, it will be your business to do so.

70. Let us now go further, and gather the truth in conclusion from arguments. For although arguments usually give place, even to human evidence,¹⁵¹ still, heretic, argue as thou wilt. "Experience teaches us," you say, "that the being which generates is prior to that which is generated." I answer: Follow our customary experience through all its departments, and if the rest agree herewith, I oppose not your claim that your point be granted; but if there be no such agreement, how can you claim assent on this one point, when in all the rest you lack support? Seeing, then, that you call for what is customary, it comes about that the Son, when He was begotten of the Father, was a little child. You have seen Him an infant, crying in the cradle. As the years passed, He has gone forward from strength to strength-for if He was weak with the weakness of things begotten, He must also have fallen under the weakness, not only of birth, but of life also.

71. But perchance you run to such a pitch of folly as not to flinch from asserting these things of the Son of God, measuring Him, as you do, by the rule of human infirmity. What, then, if, while you cannot refuse Him the name of God, you are bent to prove Him, by reason of weakness, to be a man? What if, whilst you examine the Person of the Son, you are calling the Father in question, and whilst you hastily pass sentence upon the Former, you include the Latter in the same condemnation!

72. If the Divine Generation has been subject to the limits of time,-if we suppose this, borrowing from the custom of human generation, then it follows, further, that the Father bare the Son in a bodily womb, and laboured under the burden whilst ten months sped their courses. But how can generation, as it commonly takes place, be brought about without the help of the other sex? You see that the common order of generation was not the commencement, and you think that the courses of generation, which are ruled by certain necessities whereunto bodies are subject, have always prevailed. You require the customary course, I ask for difference of sex: you demand the supposition of time, I that of order: you enquire into the end, I into the beginning. Now surely it is the end that depends on the beginning, not the beginning on the end.

73. "Everything," say you, "that is begotten has a beginning, and therefore because the Son is the Son, He has a beginning, and came first into existence within limits of time. Let this be taken as the word of their own mouth; as for myself, I confess that the Son is begotten, but the rest of their declaration makes me shudder. Man, dost thou confess God, and diminish His honour by such

slander? From this madness may God deliver us.

Chapter XII.

Further objections to the Godhead of the Son are met by the same answer-to wit, that they may equally be urged against the Father also. The Father, then, being in no way confined by time, place, or anything else created, no such limitation is to be imposed upon the Son, Whose marvellous generation is not only of the Father, but of the Virgin also, and therefore, since in His generation of the Father no distinction of sex, or the like, was involved, neither was it in His generation of the Virgin.

74. The next objection is this: "If the Son has not those properties which all sons have, He is no Son." May Father, Son, and Holy Spirit pardon me, for I would propound the question in all devoutness. Surely the Father is, and abides for ever: created things, too, are as God hath ordained them. Is there any one, then, amongst these creatures which is not subject to the limitations of place, time, or the fact of having been created, or to some originating cause or creator,¹⁵² Surely, none. What, then? Is there any one of them whereof the Father stands in need? So to say were blasphemy. Cease, then, to apply to the Godhead what is proper only to created existences, or, if you insist upon forcing the comparison, bethink you whither your wickedness leads. God forbid that we should even behold the end thereof.

75. We maintain the answer given by piety. God is Almighty, and therefore God the Father needs none of those things, for in Him there is no changing, nor any place for such help as we need, we whose weakness is supported by means of things of this kind. But He Who is Almighty, plainly He is uncreate, and not confined to any place, and surpasses time. Before God was not anything-nay, even to speak about anything being before God is a grave sin. If, then, you grant that in the nature of God the Father there is nought that implies a being sustained, because He is God, it follows that nothing of this sort can be supposed to exist in the Son of God, nothing that connotes a beginning, or growth, forasmuch as He is "very God of very God."¹⁵³

76. Seeing, then, that we find not the customary order prevailing, be content, Arian, to believe in a miraculous generation of the Son. Be content, I say, and if you believe me not, at least have respect unto the voice of God saying, "To whom have ye esteemed Me to be like?"¹⁵⁴ and again: "God is not like a man that He should repent."¹⁵⁵ If, indeed, God works mysteriously, seeing that He doth not work any work, or fashion anything, or bring it to completion, by labor of hands, or in any course of days, "for He spake, and they were made; He gave the word and they were created,"¹⁵⁶ why should we not believe that He Whom we acknowledge as a Creator, mysteriously working, discerning it in His works, also begat His Son in a mysterious manner? Surely it is fitting that He should be regarded as having begotten the Son in a special and mysterious way. Let Him Who hath the grace of majesty unrivalled likewise have the glory of mysterious generation.

77. Not only Christ's generation of the Father, but His birth also of the Virgin, demands our wonder. You say that the former is like unto the manner wherein we men are conceived. I will show-nay more, I will compel you yourself to confess, that the latter also hath no likeness to the manner of our birth. Tell me how it was that He was born of Mary, with what law did His conception in a Virgin's womb agree, how there could be any birth without the seed of a man, how a maiden

could become great with child, how she became a mother before experience of such intercourse as is between wives and husbands. There was no [visible] cause,-and yet a son was begotten. How, then, came about this birth, under a new law?

78. If, then, the common order of human generation was not found in the case of the Virgin Mary, how can you demand that God the Father should beget in such wise as you were begotten in? Surely the common order is determined by difference of sex; for this is implanted in the nature of our flesh, but where flesh is not, how can you expect to find the infirmity of flesh? No man calls in question one who is better than he is: to believe is enjoined upon you, without permission to question. For it is written, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."¹⁵⁷ Language is vain to set forth, not only the generation of the Son, but even the works of God, for it is written: "All His works are executed in faithfulness;"¹⁵⁸ His works, then, are done in faithfulness, but not His generation? Ay, we call in question that which we see not, we who are bidden to believe rather than enquire of that we see.

Chapter XIII.

Discussion of the Divine Generation is continued. St. Ambrose illustrates its method by the same example as that employed by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The duty of believing what is revealed is shown by the example of Nebuchadnezzar and St. Peter. By the vision granted to St. Peter was shown the Son's Eternity and Godhead-the Apostle, then, must be believed in preference to the teachers of philosophy, whose authority was everywhere falling into discredit. The Arians, on the other hand, are shown to be like unto the heathen.

79. It will be asked: "In what sort was the Son begotten?" As one who is for ever, as the Word, as the brightness of eternal light,¹⁵⁹ for brightness takes effect in the instant of its coming into existence. Which example is the Apostle's, not mine. Think not, then, that there was ever a moment of time when God was without wisdom, any more than that there was ever a time when light was without radiance. Judge not, Arian, divine things by human, but believe the divine where thou findest not the human.

80. The heathen king saw in the fire, together with the three Hebrew children, the form of a fourth, like as of an angel,¹⁶⁰ and because he thought that this angel excelled all angels, he judged Him to be the Son of God, Whom he had not read of, but in Whom he believed. Abraham, also, saw Three, and adored One.¹⁶¹

81. Peter, when he saw Moses and Elias on the mountain, with the Son of God, was not deceived as to their nature and glory. For he enquired, not of them, but of Christ, what he ought to do, inasmuch as though he prepared to do homage to all three, yet he waited for the command of one. But since he ignorantly thought that for three persons three tabernacles should be set up, he was corrected by the sovereign voice of God the Father, saying, "This is My dearly beloved Son: hear ye Him."¹⁶² That is to say: "Why dost thou join thy fellow-servants in equality with thy Lord?" "This is My Son." Not "Moses is My Son," nor "Elias is My Son," but "This is My Son." The Apostle was not dull to understand the rebuke; he fell on his face, brought low by the Father's voice and the glorious beauty of the Son, but he was raised up by the Son, Whose wont it is to raise up them that are fallen.¹⁶³ Then he saw one only,¹⁶⁴ the Son of God alone, for the servants had withdrawn, that He might be seen to be Lord alone, Who alone was entitled Son.

82. What, then, was the purpose of that vision, which signified not that Christ and His servants were equal, but betokened a mystery, save that it should be made plain to us that the Law and the Prophets, in agreement with the Gospel, revealed as eternal the Son of God, Whom they had heralded. When we, therefore, hear of the Son coming forth of the womb, the Word from the heart, let us believe that the Son was not fashioned with hands but begotten of the Father, not the work of a craftsman but the offspring of a parent.

83. He, therefore, Who said, "This is My Son," said not, "This is a creature of time," nor "This being is of My creation, My making, My servant," but "This is My Son, Whom ye see glorified." This is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, Who appeared to Moses in the bush,¹⁶⁵ concerning Whom Moses saith, "He Who is hath sent me." It was not the Father Who spake to Moses in the bush or in the desert, but the Son. It was of this Moses that Stephen said, "This is He Who was in the church, in the wilderness, with the Angel."¹⁶⁶ This, then, is He Who gave the Law, Who spake with Moses, saying, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." This, then, is the God of the patriarchs, this is the God of the prophets.

84. It is of the Son, therefore, that we read, thy mind understandeth the reading, let thy tongue make confession. Away with arguments, where faith is required; now let dialectic hold her peace, even in the midst of her schools. I ask not what it is that philosophers say, but I would know what they do. They sit desolate in their schools. See the victory of faith over argument. They who dispute subtly are forsaken daily by their fellows; they who with simplicity believe are daily increased. Not philosophers but fishermen, not masters of dialectic but tax-gatherers, now find credence. The one sort, through pleasures and luxuries, have bound the world's burden upon themselves; the other, by fasting and mortification, have cast it off, and so doth sorrow now begin to win over more followers than pleasure.

85. Let us now see how far Arians and pagans do differ. The latter call upon gods, who are different in sex and unequal in power; the former affirm a Trinity where there is likewise inequality of power and diversity of Godhead. The pagans assert that their Gods began to exist once upon a time; the Arians lyingly declare that Christ began to exist in the course of time. Have they not all dyed their impiety in the vats of philosophy? But indeed the pagans do extol that which they worship,¹⁶⁷ the Arians maintain that the Son of God, Who is God, is a creature.

Chapter XIV. That the Son of God is not a created being is proved by the following arguments: (1) That He commanded not that the Gospel should be preached to Himself; (2) that a created being is given over unto vanity; (3) that the Son has created all things; (4) that we read of Him as begotten; and (5) that the difference of generation and adoption has always been understood in those places where both natures-the divine and the human-are declared to co-exist in Him. All of which testimony is confirmed by the Apostle's interpretation.

86. It is now made plain, as I believe, your sacred Majesty, that the Lord Jesus is neither unlike the Father, nor one that began to exist in course of time. We have yet to confute another blasphemy, and to show that the Son of God is not a created being. Herein is the quickening¹⁶⁸ word that we read as our help, for we have heard the passage read where the Lord saith: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to all creation."¹⁶⁹ He Who saith "all creation" excepts nothing. How, then, do they stand who call Christ a "creature"? If He were a creature, could He have commanded that the Gospel should be preached to Himself? It is not, therefore, a creature, but the

Creator, Who commits to His disciples the work of teaching created beings.

87. Christ, then, is no created being; for "created beings are," as the Apostle hath said, "given over to vanity."¹⁷⁰ Is Christ given over unto vanity? Again, "creation"-according to the same Apostle-"groans and travails together even until now." What, then? Doth Christ take any part in this groaning and travailing-He Who hath set us miserable mourners free from death? "Creation," saith the Apostle, "shall be set free from the slavery of corruption."¹⁷¹ We see, then, that between creation and its Lord there is a vast difference, for creation is enslaved, but "the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."¹⁷²

88. Who was it that led first into this error, of declaring Him Who created and made all things to be a creature? Did the Lord, I would ask, create Himself? We read that "all things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made."¹⁷³ This being so, did He make Himself? We read-and who shall deny?-that in wisdom hath God made all things.¹⁷⁴ If so, how can we suppose that wisdom was made in itself?

89. We read that the Son is begotten, inasmuch as the Father saith: "I brought thee forth from the womb before the morning star"¹⁷⁵ We read of the "first-born" Son,¹⁷⁶ of the "only-begotten"¹⁷⁷ -first-born, because there is none before Him; only-begotten, because there is none after Him. Again, we read: "Who shall declare His generation?"¹⁷⁸ "Generation," mark you, not "creation." What argument can be brought to meet testimonies so great and mighty as these?

90. Moreover, God's Son discovers the difference between generation and grace when He says: "I go up to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God."¹⁷⁹ He did not say, "I go up to our Father," but "I go up to My Father and your Father." This distinction is the sign of a difference, inasmuch as He Who is Christ's Father is our Creator.

91. Furthermore He said, "to My God and your God," because although He and the Father are One, and the Father is His Father by possession of the same nature, whilst God began to be our Father through the office of the Son, not by virtue of nature, but of grace-still He seems to point us here to the existence in Christ of both natures, Godhead and Manhood,-Godhead of His Father, Manhood of His Mother, the former being before all things, the latter derived from the Virgin. For the first, speaking as the Son, He called God His Father, and afterward, speaking as man, named Him as God.

92. Everywhere, indeed, we have witness in the Scriptures to show that Christ, in naming God as His God, does so as man. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"¹⁸⁰ And again: "From My mother's womb Thou art My God."¹⁸¹ In the former place He suffers as a man; in the latter it is a man who is brought forth from his mother's womb. And so when He says, "From My mother's womb Thou art My God," He means that He Who was always His Father is His God from the moment when He was brought forth from His Mother's womb.

93. Seeing, then, that we read in the Gospel, in the Apostle, in the Prophets, of Christ as begotten, how dare the Arians to say that He was created or made? But, indeed, they ought to have bethought them, where they have read of Him as created, where as made. For it has been plainly shown that the Son of God is begotten of God, born of God-let them, then, consider with care where they have read that He was made, seeing that He was not made God, but born as God, the Son of God; afterward, however, He was, according to the flesh, made man of Mary.

94. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law."¹⁸² "His Son," observe, not as one of many, not as His in common with another, but His own, and in saying "His Son," the Apostle showed that it is of the Son's nature that His generation is eternal. Him the Apostle has affirmed to have been afterwards "made" of a woman, in order that the making might be understood not of the Godhead, but of the putting on of a body-"made of a woman," then, by taking on of flesh; "made under the Law" through observance of the Law. Howbeit, the former, the spiritual generation is before the Law was, the latter is after the Law.

Chapter XV. An explanation of Acts ii. 36 and Proverbs viii. 22, which are shown to refer properly to Christ's manhood alone.

95. To no purpose, then, is the heretics' customary citation of the Scripture, that "God made Him both Lord and Christ." Let these ignorant persons read the whole passage, and understand it. For thus it is written. "God made this Jesus, Whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ."¹⁸³ It was not the Godhead, but the flesh, that was crucified. This, indeed, was possible, because the flesh allowed of being crucified. It follows not, then, that the Son of God is a created being.

96. Let us despatch, then, that passage also, which they do use to misrepresent,-let them learn what is the sense of the words, "The Lord created Me."¹⁸⁴ It is not "the Father created," but "the Lord created Me." The flesh acknowledgeth its Lord, praise declareth the Father: our created nature confesseth the first, loveth, knoweth the latter. Who, then, cannot but perceive that these words announce the Incarnation? Thus the Son speaketh of Himself as created in respect of that wherein he witnesseth to Himself as being man, when He says, "Why seek ye to kill Me, a man, Who have told you the truth?" He speaketh of His Manhood, wherein He was crucified, and died, and was buried.

97. Furthermore, there is no doubt but that the writer set down as past that which was to come; for this is the usage of prophecy, that things to come are spoken of as though they were already present or past. For example, in the twenty-first¹⁸⁵ psalm you have read: "Fat bulls (of Bashan) have beset me," and again:¹⁸⁶ "They parted My garments among them." This the Evangelist showeth to have been spoken prophetically of the time of the Passion, for to God the things that are to come are present, and for Him Who foreknoweth all things, they are as though they were past and over; as it is written, "Who hath made the things that are to be."¹⁸⁷

98. It is no wonder that He should declare His place to have been set fast before all worlds, seeing that the Scripture tells us that He was foreordained before the times and ages. The following passage discovers how the words in question present themselves as a true prophecy of the Incarnation: "Wisdom hath built her an house, and set up seven pillars to support it, and she hath slain her victims. She hath mingled her wine in the bowl, and made ready her table, and sent her servants, calling men together with a mighty voice of proclamation, saying: 'He who is simple, let him turn in to me.'"¹⁸⁸ Do we not see, in the Gospel, that all these things were fulfilled after the Incarnation, in that Christ disclosed the mysteries of the Holy Supper, sent forth His apostles, and cried with a loud voice, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink."¹⁸⁹ That which followeth, then, answereth to that which went before, and we behold the whole story of the Incarnation set forth in brief by prophecy.

99. Many other passages might readily be seen to be prophecies of this sort concerning the Incarnation, but I will not delay over books, lest the treatise appear too wordy.

Chapter XVI. The Arians blaspheme Christ, if by the words "created" and "begotten" they mean and understand one and the same thing. If, however, they regard the words as distinct in meaning, they must not speak of Him, of Whom they have read that He was begotten, as if He were a created being. This rule is upheld by the witness of St. Paul, who, professing himself a servant of Christ, forbade worship of a created being. God being a substance pure and uncompounded, there is no created nature in Him; furthermore, the Son is not to be degraded to the level of things created, seeing that in Him the Father is well pleased.

100. Now will I enquire particularly of the Arians, whether they think that begotten and created are one and the same. If they call them the same, then is there no difference betwixt generation and creation. It follows, then, that forasmuch as we also are created, there is between us and Christ and the elements no difference. Thus much, however, great as their madness is, they will not venture to say.

101. Furthermore-to concede that which is no truth, to their folly-I ask them, if there is, as they think, no difference in the words, why do they not call upon Him Whom they worship by the better title? Why do they not avail themselves of the Father's word?¹⁹⁰ Why do they reject the title of honour, and use a dishonouring name?

102. If, however, there is-as I think there is-a distinction between "created" and "begotten," then, when we have read that He is begotten, we shall surely not understand the same by the terms "begotten" and "created." Let them therefore confess Him to be begotten of the Father, born of the Virgin, or let them say how the Son of God can be both begotten and created. A single nature, above all, the Divine Being, rejects strife (within itself).

103. But in any case let our private judgment pass: let us enquire of Paul, who, filled with the Spirit of God, and so foreseeing these questionings, hath given sentence against pagans in general and Arians in particular, saying that they were by God's judgment condemned, who served the creature rather than the Creator. Thus, in fact, you may read: "God gave them over to the lusts of their own heart, that they might one with another dishonour their bodies, they who changed God's truth into a lie, and worshipped and served the thing created rather than the Creator, Who is God, blessed for ever."¹⁹¹

104. Thus Paul forbids me to worship a creature, and admonishes me of my duty to serve Christ. It follows, then, that Christ is not a created being. The Apostle calls himself "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ,"¹⁹² and this good servant, who acknowledges his Lord, will likewise have us not worship that which is created. How, then, could he have been himself a servant of Christ, if he thought that Christ was a created person? Let these heretics, then, cease either to worship Him Whom they call a created being, or to call Him a creature, Whom they feign to worship, lest under colour of being worshippers they fall into worse impiety. For a domestic is worse than a foreign foe, and that these men should use the Name of Christ to Christ's dishonour increaseth their guilt.

105. What better expounder of the Scriptures do we indeed look for than that teacher of the Gentiles, that chosen vessel-chosen from the number of the persecutors? He who had been the persecutor of Christ confesses Him. He had read Solomon more, in any case, than Arius hath, and

he was well learned in the Law, and so, because he had read, he said not that Christ was created, but that He was begotten. For he had read, "He spake, and they were made: He commanded, and they were created."¹⁹³ Was Christ, I ask, made at a word? Was He created at a command?

106. Moreover, how can there be any created nature in God? In truth, God is of an uncompounded nature; nothing can be added to Him, and that alone which is Divine hath He in His nature; filling all things,¹⁹⁴ yet nowhere Himself confounded with aught; penetrating all things, yet Himself nowhere to be penetrated; present in all His fulness at one and the same moment, in heaven, in earth, in the deepest depth of the sea,¹⁹⁵ to sight invisible, by speech not to be declared, by feeling not to be measured; to be followed by faith, to be adored with devotion; so that whatsoever title excels in depth of spiritual import, in setting forth glory and honour, in exalting power, this you may know to belong of right to God.

107. Since, then, the Father is well pleased in the Son; believe that the Son is worthy of the Father, that He came out from God, as He Himself bears witness, saying: "I went out from God, and am come;"¹⁹⁶ and again: "I went out from God."¹⁹⁷ He Who proceeded and came forth from God can have no attributes but such as are proper to God.

Chapter XVII. That Christ is very God is proved from the fact that He is God's own Son, also from His having been begotten and having come forth from God, and further, from the unity of will and operation subsisting in Father and Son. The witness of the apostles and of the centurion-which St. Ambrose sets over against the Arian teaching-is adduced, together with that of Isaiah and St. John.

108. Hence it is that Christ is not only God, but very God indeed-very God of very God, insomuch that He Himself is the Truth,¹⁹⁸ If, then, we enquire His Name, it is "the Truth;" if we seek to know His natural rank and dignity, He is so truly the very Son of God, that He is indeed God's own Son; as it is written, "Who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for our sakes,"¹⁹⁹ gave Him up, that is, so far as the flesh was concerned. That He is God's own Son declares His Godhead; that He is very God shows that He is God's own Son; His pitifulness is the earnest of His submission, His sacrifice, of our salvation.

109. Lest, however, men should wrest the Scripture, that "God gave Him up," the Apostle himself has said in another place,²⁰⁰ "Peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins;" and again:²⁰¹ "Even as Christ hath loved us, and given Himself for us." If, then, He both was given up by the Father, and gave Himself up of His own accord, it is plain that the working and the will of Father and Son is one.

110. If, then, we enquire into His natural pre-eminence, we find it to consist in being begotten. To deny that the Son of God is begotten [of God] is to deny that He is God's own Son, and to deny Christ to be God's own Son is to class Him with the rest of mankind, as no more a Son than any of the rest. If, however, we enquire into the distinctive property of His generation, it is this, that He came forth from God. For whilst, in our experience, to come out implies something already existent, and that which is said to come out seems to proceed forth from hidden and inward places, we, though it be presented but in short passages, observe the peculiar attribute of the Divine Generation, that the Son doth not seem to have come forth out of any place, but as God from God, a Son from a Father, nor to have had a beginning in the course of time, having come

forth from the Father by being born, as He Himself Who was born said: "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High."²⁰²

111. But if the Arians acknowledge not the Son's nature, if they believe not the Scriptures, let them at least believe the mighty works. To whom doth the Father say, "Let us make man?"²⁰³ save to Him Whom He knew to be His true Son? In Whom, save in one who was true, could He recognize His Image? The son by adoption is not the same as the true Son; nor would the Son say, "I and the Father are one,"²⁰⁴ if He, being Himself not true, were measuring Himself with One Who is true. The Father, therefore, says, "Let us make." He Who spake is true; can He, then, Who made be not true? Shall the honour rendered to Him Who speaks be withheld from Him Who makes?

112. But how, unless the Father knew Him to be His true Son, should He commend to Him His will, for perfect co-operation, and His works, for perfect bringing in out in actuality? Seeing that the Son worketh the works which the Father doeth, and that the Son quickens whom He will,²⁰⁵ as it is written, He is then equal in power and free in respect of His will. And thus is the Unity maintained, forasmuch as God's power consists in that the Godhead is proper to each Person, and freedom lies not in any difference, but in unity of will.

113. The apostles, being storm-tossed in the sea, as soon as they saw the waters leaping up round their Lord's feet, and beheld His fearless footsteps on the water, as He walked amid the raging waves of the sea, and the ship, which was beaten upon by the waves, had rest as soon as Christ entered it, and they saw the waves and the winds obeying Him,-then, though as yet they did not believe in their hearts they believed Him to be God's true Son, saying, "Truly Thou art the Son of God."²⁰⁶

114. To the same effect the confession of the centurion, and others who were with him, when the foundations of the world were shaken at the Lord's Passion,-and this, heretic, thou deniest! The centurion said, "Truly this was the Son of God."²⁰⁷ "Was" said the centurion-"Was not" says the Arian. The centurion, then, with bloodstained hands, but devout mind, declares both the truth and the eternity of Christ's generation; and thou, O heretic deniest its truth, and makest it matter of time! Would that thou hadst imbued thy hands rather than thy soul! But thou, unclean even of hand, and murderous of intent, seekest Christ's death, so far as in thee lies, seeing that thou thinkest of Him as mean and weak; nay, and this is a worse sin, thou, albeit the Godhead can feel no wound, still wouldst do thy diligence to slay in Christ, not His Body, but His Glory.

115. We cannot then doubt that He is very God, Whose true Godhead even executioners believed in and devils confessed. Their testimony we require not now, but it is withal greater than your blasphemies. We have called them in to witness, to put you to the blush, whilst we have also cited the oracles of God, to the end that you should believe.

116. The Lord proclaimeth by the mouth of Isaiah: "In the mouth of them that serve Me shall a new name be called upon, which shall be blessed over all the earth, and they shall bless the true God, and they who swear upon earth shall swear by the true God."²⁰⁸ These words, I say, Isaiah spake when he saw God's Glory, and thus in the Gospel it is plainly said that he saw the Glory of Christ and spoke of Him.²⁰⁹

117. But hear again what John the Evangelist hath written in his Epistle, saying: "We know that the Son of God hath appeared, and hath given us discernment, to know the Father, and to be in His

true Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. He is very God, and Life Eternal."210 John calls Him true Son of God and very God. If, then, He be very God, He is surely uncreate, without spot of lying or deceit, having in Himself no confusion, nor unlikeness to His Father.

Chapter XVIII. The errors of the Arians are mentioned in the Nicene Definition of the Faith, to prevent their deceiving anybody. These errors are recited, together with the anathema pronounced against them, which is said to have been not only pronounced at Nicaea, but also twice renewed at Ariminum.

118. Christ, therefore, is "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten of the Father, not made; of one substance with the Father."119. So, indeed, following the guidance of the Scriptures, our fathers declared, holding, moreover, that impious doctrines should be included in the record of their decrees, in order that the unbelief of Arius should discover itself, and not, as it were, mask itself with dye or face-paint.211 For they give a false colour to their thoughts who dare not unfold them openly. After the manner of the censor's rolls, then, the Arian heresy is not discovered by name,212 but marked out by the condemnation pronounced, in order that he who is curious and eager to hear it should be preserved from falling by knowing that it is condemned already, before he hears, it set forth to the end that he should believe.

120. "Those," runs the decree, "who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, and that before He was born He was not, and who say that he was made out of nothing, or is of another substance or ousia,213 or that He is capable of changing, or that with Him is any shadow of turning,-them the Catholic and Apostolic Church declares accursed."

121. Your sacred Majesty has agreed that they who utter such doctrines are rightly condemned. It was of no determination by man, of no human counsel, that three hundred and eighteen bishops met, as I showed above more at length,214 in Council, but that in their number the Lord Jesus might prove, by the sign of His Name and Passion, that He was in the midst, where His own were gathered together.215 In the number of three hundred was the sign of His Cross, in that of eighteen was the sign of the Name Jesus.

122. This also was the teaching of the First Confession in the Council of Ariminum, and of the Second Correction, after that Council. Of the Confession, the letter sent to the Emperor Constantine beareth witness, and the Council that followed declares the Correction.216

Chapter XIX.

Arius is charged with the first of the above-mentioned errors, and refuted by the testimony of St. John. The miserable death of the Heresiarch is described, and the rest of his blasphemous errors are one by one examined and disproved.

123. Arius, then, says: "There was a time when the Son of God existed not," but Scripture saith: "He was," not that "He was not." Furthermore, St. John has written: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."217 Observe how often the verb "was" appears, whereas "was not" is nowhere found. Whom, then, are we to believe?-St. John, who lay on Christ's bosom, or Arius, wallowing amid the outgush of his very bowels?-so wallowing that we might understand how Arius in his teaching showed himself like unto Judas, being visited with like punishment.

124. For Arius' bowels also gushed out-decency forbids to say where-and so he burst asunder in the midst, falling headlong, and besmirching those foul lips wherewith he had denied Christ. He was rent, even as the Apostle Peter said of Judas, because he bought a field with the price of evil-doing, and falling headlong he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out."²¹⁸ It was no chance manner of death, seeing that like wickedness was visited with like punishment, to the end that those who denied and betrayed the same Lord might likewise undergo the same torment.

125. Let us pass on to further points. Arius says: "Before He was born, the Son of God was not," but the Scripture saith that all things are maintained in existence by the Son's office. How, then, could He, Who existed not, bestow existence upon others? Again, when the blasphemer uses the words "when" and "before," he certainly uses words which are marks of time. How, then, do the Arians deny that time was ere the Son was, and yet will have things created in time to exist before the Son, seeing that the very words, "when," "before," and "did not exist once," announce the idea of time?

126. Arius says that the Son of God came into being out of nought. How, then, is He Son of God-how was He begotten from the womb of the Father-how do we read of Him as the Word spoken of the heart's abundance, save to the end that we should believe that He came forth, as it is written, from the Father's inmost, unapproachable sanctuary? Now a son is so called either by means of adoption or by nature, as we are called sons by means of adoption.²¹⁹ Christ is the Son of God by virtue of His real and abiding nature. How, then, can He, Who out of nothing fashioned all things, be Himself created out of nothing?

127. He who knows not whence the Son is hath not the Son. The Jews therefore had not the Son, for they knew not whence He was. Wherefore the Lord said to them: "Ye know not whence I came;"²²⁰ and again: "Ye neither have found out Who I am, nor know My Father," for he who denies that the Son is of the Father knows not the Father, of Whom the Son is; and again, he knows not the Son, because he knows not the Father.

128. Arius says: "[The Son is] of another Substance." But what other substance is exalted to equality with the Son of God, so that simply in virtue thereof He is Son of God? Or what right have the Arians for censuring us because we speak, in Greek, of the ousia, or in Latin, of the Substantia of God, when they themselves, in saying that the Son of God is of another "Substance," assert a divine Substantia.

129. Howbeit, should they desire to dispute the use of the words "divine Substance" or "divine Nature," they shall easily be refuted, for Holy Writ oft-times hath spoken of ousia in Greek, or Substantia in Latin, and St. Peter, as we read, would have us become partakers in the divine Nature. But if they will have it that the Son is of another "Substance," they with their own lips confute themselves, in that they both acknowledge the term "Substance," whereof they are so afraid, and rank the Son on a level with the creatures above which they feign to exalt Him.

130. Arius calls the Son of God a creature, but "not as the rest of the creatures." Yet what created being is not different from another? Man is not as angel, earth is not as heaven, the sun is not as water, nor light as darkness. Arius' preference, therefore, is empty-he hath but disguised with a sorry dye his deceitful blasphemies, in order to take the foolish.

131. Arius declares that the Son of God may change and swerve. How, then, is He God if He is changeable, seeing that He Himself hath said: "I am, I am, and I change not"?²²¹

Chapter XX.

St. Ambrose declares his desire that some angel would fly to him to purify him, as once the Seraph did to Isaiah-nay more, that Christ Himself would come to him, to the Emperor, and to his readers, and finally prays that Gratian and the rest of the faithful may be exalted by the power and spell of the Lord's Cup, which he describes in mystic language.

132. Howbeit, now must I needs confess the Prophet Isaiah's confession, which he makes before declaring the word of the Lord: "Woe is me, my heart is smitten, for I, a man of unclean lips, and living in the midst of a people of unclean lips, have seen the Lord of Sabaoth."²²² Now if Isaiah said "Woe is me," who looked upon the Lord of Sabaoth, what shall I say of myself, who, being "a man of unclean lips," am constrained to treat of the divine generation? How shall I break forth into speech of things whereof I am afraid, when David prays that a watch may be set over his mouth in the matter of things whereof he has knowledge?²²³ O that to me also one of the Seraphim would bring the burning coal from the celestial altar, taking it in the tongs of the two testaments, and with the fire thereof purge my unclean lips!

133. But forasmuch as then the Seraph came down in a vision to the Prophet, whilst Thou, O Lord, in revelation of the mystery hast come to us in the flesh,²²⁴ do Thou, not by any deputy, nor by any messenger, but Thou Thyself cleanse my conscience from my secret sins, that I too, erstwhile unclean, but now by Thy mercy made clean through faith, may sing in the words of David: "I will make music to Thee upon a harp, O God of Israel, my lips shall rejoice, in all my song to Thee, and so, too, shall my soul, whom Thou hast redeemed."²²⁵

134. And so, O Lord, leaving them that slander and hate Thee, come unto us, sanctify the ears of our sovereign ruler, Gratian, and all besides into whose hands this little book shall come-and purge my ears, that no stains of the infidelity they have heard remain anywhere. Cleanse thoroughly, then, our ears, not with water of well, river, or rippling and purling brook, but with words cleansing like water, clearer than any water, and purer than any snow-even the words Thou hast spoken-"Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow."²²⁶

135. Moreover, there is a Cup, wherewith Thou dost use to purify the hidden chambers of the soul, a Cup not of the old order,²²⁷ nor filled from a common Vine,-a new Cup, brought down from heaven to earth,²²⁸ filled with wine pressed from the wondrous cluster, which hung in fleshly form upon the tree of the Cross, even as the grape hangs upon the Vine. From this Cluster, then, is the Wine that maketh glad the heart of man,²²⁹ uplifts the sorrowful, is fragrant with, pours into us, the ecstasy of faith, true devotion, and purity.

136. With this Wine, therefore, O Lord my God, cleanse the spiritual ears of our sovereign Emperor, to the end that, just as men, being uplifted with common wine, love rest and quietness, cast out the fear of death, have no feeling of injuries,²³⁰ seek not that which belongs to others, and forget their own; and so he, too, intoxicated with thy wine, may love peace, and, confident in the exultation of faith, may never know the death of unbelief, and may display loving patience, have no part in other men's profanities,²³¹ and hold the faith of more account even than kindred and children, as it is written: "Leave all that thou hast, and come, follow Me."²³²

137. With this Wine, also, Lord Jesus, purify our senses, that we may adore Thee, and worship Thee, the Creator of things visible and invisible. Truly, Thou canst not fail of being Thyself invisible and good, Who hast given invisibility and goodness to the works of Thy Hands.

1: 1 Kings x. 1.

2: 1 Kings v. 1.

3: "By sanctification is meant the grace of regeneration, which comprises virtues inspired, including both the habit of faith and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Now these support especially the innocent soul, so that with pious affection it nurses the doctrine revealed to it, is inclined thereto, loves it, takes it to itself, and advances in it."-Hurter ad loc. The Emperor's constant zeal in defence of the Faith against the Arians is to be regarded as due to his habit of faith and to the gifts of the Spirit. The citation is from Jeremiah i. 5.

4: Gen. xiv. 14 ff.

5: The original form of the Cross was that of the letter T. The numerical value of the sign T (Tau), in Greek arithmetic was 300. Eighteen was represented by ih, the first two letters of the name 'Ihsouj, Jesus. To St. Ambrose, therefore, it seemed that there was some mysterious power in the number 318, represented by the sign of the Cross and the first two letters of the Saviour's name, thus -TIH.

6: Joshua vi. 6.

7: Joshua vi. 13 f.

8: sc. from Scripture.

9: See the note 2 on §3. St. Ambrose is here speaking of the Oecumenical Council held at Nicaea in Bithynia, a.d. 325. Different accounts are given of the numbers present. Eusebius says there were 250 bishops in the Council; Athanasius and Socrates, "more than 300;" Sozomen "about 320." The number 318, however, is also given by Athanasius as well as by Theodoret and Epiphanius. See Robertson's History of the Church, Bk. II. ch. i. The victory over the infidel is, of course, the victory of the orthodox Catholics over Arius, and the Nicene Symbol may be regarded as the "trophy" commemorating the victory, the reality of which lay in getting the clause "of one substance with the Father" (omoousion tw Parri) subscribed to. The original Nicene Creed, it may be useful to observe, was not exactly the same in form as the symbol which now is generally known by that name, and which is part of the Eucharistic office of the English Church. This latter is an enlargement of the original, and it appears to have been in use for a considerable time (not less than seventy years) before it was produced at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. It obtained general acceptance by the middle of the sixth century. Towards the end of that century (589 a.d.) an additional clause, proclaiming the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son as well as the Father, was inserted at the Council of Toledo. This insertion was repudiated by the Church in the East, and became one of the causes of the separation of Eastern from Western Christendom.

10: Or "Gentiles." The Christians regarded themselves as placed in the world much as the Hebrews had been planted in the midst of the "nations round about."

11: The Latin word is *natura*, which, at first sight, seems less abstract and metaphysical than the Greek *ousia*, or *upostasis* 12: Lit. "the nations"-*gentes*, *ta ethnē*

13: The original is *ante tempora* -"before the ages"- "before time was." Cf. 1 Cor. viii. 6; Phil. ii. 6-8; Col. i. 15 (*prwtotokoj pashj ktisewj* -"first-born of all creation," which Justin Martyr interprets as meaning *pro pantwn tw n ktismatwn aiwnwj*, rendered "worlds" in Heb. i. 2.

14: Sabellius was a presbyter in the Libyan Pentapolis (Barca), who came to Rome and there ventilated his heretical teaching, early in the third century, a.d. (about 210). He appears to have maintained that there was no real distinction of Persons in the Godhead. God, he said, was one individual Person: when different divine Persons were spoken of, no more was meant than different aspects of, or the assumption of different parts by, the same subject. Sabellius thus started from the ordinary usages of the term *proswron*

15: Photinus was a Galatian, who became Bishop of Sirmium (Mitrovitz in Slavonia) in the fourth century. He taught that Jesus Christ did not exist before His mother Mary, but was begotten of her by Joseph. The man Jesus, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting, was enlightened and guided by the influence of the Logos, or Divine Reason, whereby He became the Son of God, preeminent over all other prophets and teachers.

16: Arius was a presbyter of Alexandria; the origin of his heresy, however, is, as Cardinal Newman has shown, to be sought in Syria rather than in Egypt, in the sophistic method of the Antiochene schools more than in the mysticism of the Alexandrian. It was in the year 319 that Arius began to attract attention by his heterodox teaching, which led eventually to his excommunication. He found favour, however, with men of considerable importance in the Church, such as Eusebius of Caesarea in Palestine, Eusebius of Nicomedia, Athanasius of Anazarbus, and others. The question was finally discussed in a synod of bishops convened, on the summons of the Emperor Constantine, at Nicaea in Bithynia. The acts of that Council condemned Arianism-notwithstanding which, the heresy prevailed in the East till the reign of Theodosius the Great (379-395 a.d.); and having won the acceptance of the Goths, it was predominant in Gaul and Italy during the fifth century, and in Spain till the Council of Toledo (589 a.d.), and its influence affected Christian thought for centuries afterwards-possibly it is not even yet dead.

17: Compare Eph. i. 21; Col. i. 16. Hierarchies of "Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers," were characteristic features of the Gnostic systems of the second century. The Gnostics generally thought that the world had been created by an inferior, secondary, limited power, identified with the God of the Old Testament, whom they distinguished from the true Supreme God.

18: The A.V. of 1611 runs thus: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (*Jahveh* our God is one *Jahveh*).

19: Ex. iii. 15.

20: " Ego Dominus; hoc est nomen meum. "- Vulg., Is. xlii. 8. "I am the Lord, that is My name."-A.V. 1611, *ibid*.

21: The word *Qeoj*, "God," is derived by most authorities from *q easqai*, which means "to look upon." Here we have another derivation suggested, viz., from *deoj*, "fear," on this ground that God

inspires fear.-H. Neither derivation is correct. The best perhaps is given by Herodotus (II. 52), viz., from the verb tiqhmi , to place, set, array, the idea being that God is the principal of all order and law.

22: S. Matt. xxviii. 19.

23: A similar argument in Gal. iii. 16.

24: S. John x. 30.

25: Cf. S. Matt. v. 48.

26: Athanasian Creed, clause 4.

27: Or "perfect fulness of Divinity, and perfect unity of power."

28: S. Matt. xii. 25; Ps. cii. 25-27; Dan. iv. 3.

29: S. Matt. vii. 21.

30: Ps. lxix. 9. Cf. S. John ii. 17.

31: S. John xv. 16; S. Luke xi. 9, Luke xi. 10.

32: S. John xvi. 23, John xvi. 24, and John xiv. 14; S. Matt. vii. 7, Matt. vii. 8; S. Mark xi. 24.

33: S. John v. 19, John v. 30.

34: S. John i. 3; Heb v. 7-10.

35: Vide, e.g. , Ps. xxv. 8; Jer. x. 10; James i. 17, James i. 18; Dan. ix. 9, Dan ix. 10; S. Luke i. 37.

36: Dan. ix. 7; Ex. xxxiv. 6.

37: See James i. 13; S. Luke xviii. 27; Ps. xc. 2-4; Ps. lxxxix. 6.

38: S. John i. 1, John i. 14; John xx. 31; Rom. i. 4; S. Matt. xxviii. 18; 1 Cor. i. 24; Col. ii. 3.

39: Begetter and begotten must be personally distinct.

40: Col. i. 19; Col. ii. 9.

41: Acts iv. 32.

42: 1 Cor. vi. 17.

43: Gen. ii. 24; S. Matt. x. 8.

44: Acts xvii. 26; Gal. iii. 28.

45: Rom. iii. 2; Acts vii. 38. The Hebrew word translated "burden" in the A.V.- e.g. Isa. xiii. 1-may be rendered "oracle." The "oracles" of the Hebrew prophets were of a different order from those of Delphi or Lebadeia, which are rather comparable to the "oracles" of such persons as the witch of Endor.

46: Or "the Lord of Hosts." Cf. Isa. vi. 3, and the Te Deum , verse 5 (the Trisagion).

- 47: Isa. xlv. 14. St. Ambrose's version differs somewhat from the A.V.
- 48: S. John xiv. 10.
- 49: S. John xiv. 10.
- 50: Latin proprietas, Greek oikeiothj .
- 51: Isa. xlv. 18; 1 Cor. viii. 4, 1Cor. viii. 6.
- 52: or "Jehovah in Jehovah."
- 53: S. Matt. vi. 24.
- 54: Deut. vi. 4.
- 55: Gen. xix. 24.
- 56: Gen. i. 6, Gen. i. 7.
- 57: Gen. i. 26, Gen. i. 27.
- 58: Nicene Creed.
- 59: Ps. xlv. in Bible and Prayer-book.
- 60: Ps. xlv. 6.
- 61: Ps. xlv. 7.
- 62: S. John x. 38; John xiv. 11.
- 63: Cor. viii. 6. The Greek runs: " eie qe o sopathr, ec ou ta panta kai hmeij sij auton ." Vulg.-"Nobis tamen unus Deus Pater, ex quo omnia et nos in illum.
- 64: Ps. c. 3.
- 65: The original is " non est Deus proeter te-per proprietatem substantioe. " It must be remembered St. Ambrose was a civil magistrate before he was made bishop. His mind would be disposed therefore to regard things under a legal aspect.
- 66: 1 Cor. i. 27. The "peasant" is Jeremiah. See Jer. xxiv., but the prophet is not there spoken of as planting figs. The quotation in §28 is Baruch iii. 36-38.
- 67: "In Jewry is God known."-Ps. lxxvi. 1. Yet they deny the Son, and therefore know not the Father.-Matt. xi. 27. Cf. S. John i. 18.
- 68: The Spirit here spoken of is, according to Hurter's interpretation, not the Third Person of the Trinity, but the Triune God, Who is a Spirit (John iv. 24; 2 Cor. iii. 17).
- 69: Hymns A. and M. 76, stanza 4.
- 70: Phil. ii. 7.
- 71: Rev. i. 16; xxii. 16: S. Matt. ii. Cf. Num. xxiv. 17.

72: Dan. iv. 17.

73: Dan. iv. 22.

74: Hosea xiv. 5.

75: Dan. iv. 28.

76: S. Luke xxii. 43.

77: Dan. iv. 25. In the number of the three children was shadowed forth the number of Persons in the Trinity, whilst in the Angel, who was one, was shown the Unity of power or nature. In another way, too, St. Ambrose points out, was the Trinity typified in that event, inasmuch as God was praised, the Angel of God was present, and the Spirit, or the Grace of God spake in the children.-H.

78: In the original Catholic, i.e. "Catholics." Heresies might become widespread-the Arian heresy, indeed, counted numerous adherents in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries-but they took their rise in some member or other of the ecclesiastical body, in some one of the many local churches which together made up the one oecumenical church. On the other hand, the primitive teaching, received from the apostolic age, had been delivered without difference in every place to which it had penetrated. It was acknowledged and established before sects and heresies; its original was divine, theirs only human; it rested on the rock of Christ's authority, speaking through His apostles, whilst they were built on the sands of preeminence in sophistry and captious interpretation; it was for all times and places, therefore, but they were only for a season. In this belief those who clung to the teaching of the apostles claimed for themselves the name of "Catholics," and for the oecumenical church of which they were members that of "Catholic and Apostolic." To avoid any misunderstanding, I have used the term "orthodox," which will stand very well for "Catholic," inasmuch as "the right faith" is for all, without difference, to hold-in a word, universal, or, as it is in Greek, *kaq olou* (whence *kaqolikoj* 79: It would constitute an insult, as suggesting that the man was a bastard, or supposititious.

80: Thus the Arians were anathematized by the Nicene Council as "those who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not."

81: The original was: "Cum conditor ipse sit temporum," which, rendered more closely word for word, is, "whereas He Himself is the ordainer of times," or "ages." The Latin *tempora* is the equivalent of the Greek *aiwnes* *aiwn* also means "age"-*"for ever and ever"* is the rendering of *eij aiwnaj aiwnwn* ("unto ages of ages") or *eij ton aiwna*. The term denotes the world as a complex, the parts of which are presented to us in succession of time, from which notion is derived its use to denote a selection of the parts so presented, collectively termed an "age" or "time." Another word rendered "world" in the N.T. is *kosmos*, which frequently occurs in St. John; and St. Paul also has it, in conjunction with *aiwn* in Eph. ii. 2. "According to the course (*aiwna*) of this world (*kosmou*)." *Kosmos kosmos* and *aiwn* may be justified on the ground that we cannot think of time void of objects and events, whilst, on the other hand, we know not-at least, have never observed-any objects and events not in time. For us "time" is a necessary form of thought.

82: The Arians asserted that the Son had no existence before He was begotten and that He was "formed out of nothing" or "out of things non-existent;" i.e. that He owed His existence to the

Father's absolute fiat, just as much as the light (Gen. i. 3). Furthermore, the Son's will was mutable; He might have fallen like Satan. The Father, foreseeing that the Son would not fall, bestowed on Him the titles of "Son" and "Logos."

83: Arius' arguments against believing in Christ as the Almighty Power of God were based on the N.T. records of Christ's agony and prayer in view of death, which he thought must imply, not only changeableness of will, but also limitation of power. Had Christ been omnipotent, like the Father, He would have had no fears for Himself, but would rather have imparted strength to others.

84: Arius' teaching on this head appears to be fairly enough represented by Athanasius: "When God, being purposed to establish created Nature, saw that it could not bear the immediate touch of the Father's hand, and His operation, He in the first place made and created a single Being only, and called Him 'Song of Solomon 0' and 'Logos 0' to the end that by His intermediate ministry all things might henceforth be brought into existence." *Contra Arianos*, Oratio II. §24.

85: Christ, according to the Arians, was not truly God, though He was called God. Again, He was only so called in virtue of communication of grace from the Father. Thus He obtained His title and dignity, though the name of God was used, in speaking of Him in a transference, such as we find in Ps. lxxxii. 6; though Christ's claim to such a title far transcended any other.

86: S. John x. 30.

87: Num. xxiii. 19.

88: It would, I think, be unfair to construe this passage into an absolute condemnation of all the results of human activity, arrived at without any conscious dependence on what we mean by revelation. We must remember, too, what "philosophy" was in the world into which St. Paul was born. It was no longer the golden age of philosophic activity-with the exception of Stoicism, there was hardly a school which exerted any elevating moral influence. Besides, the "philosophy" of which St. Paul was especially thinking when he wrote the passage cited (Col. iii. 8, 9) was hardly worthy of the name. It was one of the earliest forms of Gnosticism, and among other practices inculcated worship of angels i.e. of created beings-"Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers." See Col. i. 16-18; Eph. i. 20-22. Such "philosophies," falsely so-called, would tend to bring philosophy in general into disfavour with the teachers of the Church. Yet we find Eusebius, in the fourth century, calling the Faith "the true philosophy" (H. E. IV. 8). The adoption of the term to denote what St. Luke called "the way" (Acts xix. 23) appears to have been due to the action of apologists like Justin Martyr, who set themselves to meet the wise of this world with their own weapons, on their own ground.

89: The original conception of Dialectic, as exhibited, for instance, in Plato's Republic, hardly answers to this. According to Plato, the aim of Dialectic, so far from being destructive, was distinctly edifying. The Dialectic method, as its name implies, was one which took the external form of question and answer. It had a definite, positive object, viz., the attainment by force of pure reason to the clear vision of the Absolute Good, the ultimate cause of knowledge and existence. The sphere of Dialectic was pure reason, then, and its object the ultimate truth of things. (Republic, VII. p. 532.) The method which St. Ambrose here calls "Dialectic" would have been more correctly entitled "Elenchus."

90: 1 Cor. iv. 20. Cf. 1 Cor. ii. 4, 1 Cor. ii. 5.

91: Eunomius, at one time Bishop of Cyzicus, came into prominence about 355 a.d. Like Arius, he taught that the Son was a creature, though the first and most perfect of God's creatures; His office being to guide other creatures to knowledge of the source of their existence. Religion then in his view consisted in a right and complete intellectual apprehension of a metaphysical principle, and no more. The generation of the Son he regarded as an event in time, not supra-temporal. The point where Eunomius went beyond Arius was the assertion of the comprehensibility for the human mind of the Divine Essence. Those, he said, who declared God to be in His Essence incomprehensible, who taught that He could only know in part and by token, preached an unknown God, and denied all possible knowledge of God, and therefore, since without knowledge of God there could be no Christianity, did not even deserve the name of Christians.

92: Aëtius was Eunomius' teacher. He became Bishop of Antioch, the see of which was secured for him by the Arian Eudoxius, who obtained Cyzicus for Eunomius. Aëtius and Eunomius were, however, deposed about a.d. 360.

93: Demophilus was Bishop of Constantinople under Valens (d. 378 a.d.), but on the accession of Theodosius the Great he was compelled to resign the see, which was given to Gregory of Nazianzus.

94: 1 Cor. i. 13.

95: Hercules found it impossible to slay the Hydro (a monster water snake) of the Lernean marshes by merely striking off its head, inasmuch as whenever one was cut off, two immediately grew in its place. He was compelled to sear the wound with fire. One of the heads was immortal, and Hercules could only dispose of it by crushing it under a huge rock.

96: For Scylla and Charybdis, see Homer, *Odyss.* XI.; Virgil, *Aen.* III. 424 f. The strait, bestrewn with wreckage of the faith (1 Tim. i. 19) corresponds to the strait between the rock of Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis. In order to avoid the latter, mariners were compelled to pass close under the former, whereupon the monster darted out and seized them, dragging them out of a ship as an angler whips a fish out of water (*Odyss.* XI. 251-255). The language of this passage shows plainly that St. Ambrose, in writing it, drew freely upon Virgil.

97: *Ecclus.* xxviii. 28.

98: *Phil.* iii. 2.

99: *Tit.* iii. 10, *Tit.* iii. 11.

100: Virgil, *Aen.* III. 692 f. (Aeneas' coast-voyage routed Sicily).

101: i. e., of His Sonship. St. Ambrose refers to *Col.* i. 15.

102: *Heb.* i. 2.

103: *Ps.* xxxvi. 9.

104: *Wis.* vii. 26.

105: Cf. S. John xii. 45.

106: The brightness or effulgence of a body lasts as long as that body exists; seeing, then, that the Father is eternal, the Son, Who is His brightness, must be eternal also (H.).

107: S. John xiv. 9-10.

108: Or "He who beholds the Father in the Son, beholds Him in a portrait."

109: Christ the Truth: S. John xiv. 6. Righteousness: Jer. xxxiii. 16; Jer. xxiii. 6; 1 Cor. i. 30. Power of God: 1 Cor. i. 24.

110: Christ the Word: S. John i. 1-18. Wisdom: 1 Cor. i. 24, 30. Lift and Resurrection: S. John xi. 25.

111: Gen. i. 26.

112: 2 John iii. 2.

113: The Father.

114: The Son.

115: Is. xliii. 10.

116: This holds good also of human fatherhood and sonship. The terms of a relation involve each the existence of the other-no father, no son, and equally, no son, no father.

117: S. John i. 1 f. St. Ambrose notices especially the quadruple "was" as unmistakably signifying the Son's eternity. We may also notice the climax "The Word was in the beginning. ...was with God was God. "

118: 1 John i. 1.

119: Hurter cites similar passages from the Fathers of the Church, proving the Son's pre-existence and eternity. "What is the force of those words 'In the beginning 0'? Centuries are o'erleaped, ages are swallowed up. Take any beginning you will, yet you cannot include it in time, for that, whence time is reckoned, already was. "- Hilary.

120: The Arian teaching concerning the Son was- hn pote ote ouk hn." "There was a time when He was not." This, St. Ambrose says, is irreconcilable with St. John's en arxh hn o logoj

121: Sabellianism reduced the distinction of three Persons in the Godhead to a distinction of several aspects of the same Person. They did not "divide the substance," but they "confounded the Persons."

122: Non in prolatione sermonis hoc Verbum est. That is to say, the Divine Word or Logos was not such in the sense of logoj proforikoj logoj endiaqetoj -the inherent eternal object of the Divine Consciousness.

123: The heresy of Manes or Maul made its first appearance in Persia, in the reign of Shapur I. (240-272 a.d.). According to the Persian historian Mirkhond, Mani was a member of an ancient priestly house which had preserved the holy fire and the religion of Zoroaster during the dark age

of Parthian domination. He attracted the notice of Shapur by pretensions to visions and prophetic powers, and sought to establish himself as another Daniel at the Persian Court. When the king, however, discovered Mani's hostility to the established Zoroastrianism and the Magian hierarchy, the prophet was obliged to flee. Northern India appears to have been Mani's refuge for a season, and thence, after some years of retirement, he reappeared, with an illustrated edition of his doctrines, composed and executed, as he said, by divine hands. Shapur was now dead and his successor Hormuz (272-274) was favourably disposed to Mani. But Hormuz only reigned two years, and was succeeded by a king who was a sworn foe to the new doctrine. Mani was challenged to a public disputation by the Magi. The king presided, so that Mani doubtless knew from the first what the issue would be. He was rayed alive, but he left numerous converts, and his death, which cast a certain halo of martyrdom around him, and their sufferings in persecution, really proved-as in the case of Christianity-conducive to the spread of Manichaeism. The fundamental principle of Mani's system was Dualism-the opposition of mind and matter, and the hypothesis of two co-eternal co-existent powers of good and of evil. In opposition to the Divine Essence, the Good Principle, was placed uncreated Evil, and thus the problem of sin and evil was solved. The purposes of creation and redemption were, in the Manichaean view, entirely self-seeking on the part of the Deity. The world was created by God, not out of free love, but out of the wish to protect Himself against evil, embodied in matter, which in its essence is chaotic. Redemption was the rescue of particles of the ethereal Light, buried amidst the gross darkness of matter, and yet leavening and informing it. Christ was identified with the Divine Principle and the sufferings of His members, the particles of divine Light buried in matter, were the Crucifixion, thus represented as an age-long agony. Jesus Christ was "crucified in the whole world." Mani adopted the story of Eden, but he represented the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge not as the cause of Man's fall, but as the first step in redemption, for Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, was not the true God, but the evil Demon, from whose tyranny man had to be rescued. In order to attain salvation, the body, material and therefore essentially evil, must be mortified and starved. Man really fell when Eve tempted him to indulge fleshly lust, not when he ate the forbidden fruit. The stricter sort of the Manichaeans practised a severe asceticism, abstaining from flesh meat and marriage. They would not even grind corn or make bread, for in grain there was life- i.e. an emanation of the Divine Light-though they would eat bread, quieting their conscience, however, by saying before they took it, "It was not I who reaped or ground the corn to make this bread." At the end of time they held the world was to be destroyed by fire, but matter being, on the Manichaean hypothesis, eternal, the proper inference appears to be that the conflict of Light and Chaotic Darkness would recommence, and proceed usque ad infinitum. The Manichaean system was a strange eclectic farrago, embodying, in chimerical monstrosity, features of Zoroastrianism, Judaism (in so far as the story of Eden was taken over), Gnosticism (appearing in the theory that Jehovah was the Demon and that the eating of forbidden fruit did not cause the Fall), Christianity, and Pantheism (the last, doubtless, an importation from Hindostan). The disciples of the school made their way into the Roman Empire, and we find them, 150 years after the death of Mani, opposed by Augustine of Hippo, who indeed had at one time actually numbered himself amongst them.

124: Time. We should take this term in its fullest meaning, as signifying all that exists in time-the created universe, and all that therein has been, and is, and is to come.

125: The Arians fell into the popular error of supposing that a father, as a father, existed before his son. They also required men to apply to Divine Persons, what only holds good of human beings-to impose on the Being of God those limits to which human existences (as objective facts) are subjected. The existence of the Divine Father and the Divine Son is without, beyond, above time-with the Godhead there is neither past nor future, but an everlasting present. But with man, time-categories are necessary forms of thought-everything is seen as past, present, or to come-and to the human consciousness all objects are presented in time, though the spiritual principle in man which perceives objects as related in succession, is itself supra-temporal, beholding succession, but not itself in succession.

126: i.e., how do you deal with such Scriptures as "Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."-"I am the Lord: I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."-"The Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

127: S. John v. 23.

128: Rom. i. 20-"His eternal power and Godhead." 1 Cor. i. 23-24-"We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, and to none other, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

129: Ps. cxlv. 3.

130: S. John xiv. 6.

131: S. Matt. xvii. 5; S. Mark ix. 7; S. Luke ix. 35.

132: Ps. cxix. 89.

133: Ps. cxxxix. 5.

134: Phil. iv. 7. The better-known version "The peace of God" is supported by stronger ms. authority.

135: Cf. Is. vi. 2; Exod. iii. 6. But perhaps the reference is to Job xxxi. 26-28-"If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, and my mouth hath kissed my hand, this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge, for I should have denied the God that is above." Another passage to which reference may be made is Job xl. 4-"Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand on my mouth."

136: 2 Cor. xii. 2-5.

137: The analogy, as made by the Arians, certainly was open to St. Ambrose's censure. We should remember, however, that a man is not properly a father until his child is born.

138: St. Ambrose perhaps thought that the curse laid upon human conception and birth (Gen. iii. 16) displayed itself as well in the initial as in the final stages.

139: *Questionum tormenta*. The use of racks and such-like machines (*tormenta*, fr. *torqueo* -wist) was resorted to, in the old Roman practice, in the examination (*questio*) of slaves.

140: The ref. is perhaps to Is. xlix. 5.

141: 1 Sam xiii. 14; 2 Sam. vii. 21.

142: Ps. xcvi. 2.

143: Ps. xxvii. 9.

144: Without suffering any change in Himself.

145: S. John v. 20.

146: S. Matt. iii. 17; S. Mark i. 11; S. Luke iii. 22.

147: S. John v. 22, John v. 23; John iii. 35; John xvii. 1, John xvii. 2, John xvii. 5.

148: S. Luke xxiii. 36, Luke xxiii. 37 149: Ps. lxxxi. 9, Ps. lxxxi. 10 150: Rom. ix. 5.

151: i.e. a priori determinations respecting any matter cannot be maintained if they are traversed by the statements of eye-witnesses and participators in the affair.

152: St. Ambrose here uses *causa* in the sense of *causa efficiens* - arxh thj kinhsewj .

153: Cf. Nicene Creed.

154: Isa. xlv. 5.

155: Num. xxiii. 19.

156: Ps. cxlviii. 5. Cf. Ps. xxxiii. 6, Ps. xxxiii. 9.

157: Gen. xv. 6.

158: Ps. xxxiii. 4.

159: Heb. i. 3.

160: Dan. iii. 25.

161: Gen. xviii. 1-3.

162: S. Matt. xvii. 5.

163: S. Matt. xvii. 6-8.

164: S. Matt. xvii. 8.

165: Ex. iii. 14.

166: Acts vii. 38.

167: i.e., the pagans worship false gods, but they at least have the decency to regard them as a higher order than human creatures, and not to wilfully depreciate them.

168: *proesens*. Cf. Acts. vii. 38-"lively oracles."

169: S. Mark xvi. 15.

170: Rom. viii. 20.

171: Rom. viii. 21-22.

172: 2 Cor. iii. 17.

173: S. John i. 3.

174: Ps. civ. 24.

175: Ps. cx. 3.

176: Col. i. 15.

177: S. John i. 14.

178: Is. liii. 8.

179: S. John xx. 17. The "grace" of which St. Ambrose speaks is the grace of adoption. Jesus Christ is the Son of God fusei , we are sons uioqesia "by adoption."

180: Ps. xxii. 1. Cf. S. Matt. xxvii. 46; S. Mark xv. 24.

181: Ps. xxii. 11.

182: Gal. iv. 4. See Note p. 217.

183: Acts ii. 36. Cf. 1 John iv. 3.

184: Prov. viii. 22. See Note below.

185: The 22d in the Prayer-Book and Bible. See Ps. xxii. 13-compare S. Matt. xxvii. 36; S. Luke xxiii. 35.

186: Ps. xxii. 19. Cf. S. Matt. xxvii. 35; S. Mark xv. 24; S. Luke xxiii. 34; S. John xix. 23-24.

187: Is. xlv. 11. A.V.-"Ask me of things to come." Vulgate, I.c. - Ventura interrogate me.

188: Tim. i. 9; Prov. ix. 1 f.

189: S. John vii. 37.

190: or "of the name of Father," i.e., of all the consequences of that Name.

191: Rom. i. 24, Rom. i. 25.

192: Rom. i. 1.

193: Ps. xxxiii. 9; Ps. cxlviii. 5.

194: Num. xiv. 21; Ps. lxxii. 19; Is. vi. 3; Zech. xiv. 9.

195: Ps. cxxxix. 7-10.

196: S. John viii. 42.

197: S. John xvi. 27.

198: S. John xiv. 6.

199: Rom. viii. 32.

200: Gal. i. 3, Gal. i. 4.

201: Eph. v. 2.

202: Ecclus. xxiv. 3.

203: Gen. i. 26.

204: S. John x. 30.

205: S. John v. 19, John v. 21.

206: S. Matt. xiv. 33.

207: S. Matt. xxvii. 54.

208: Is. lxxv. 16.

209: S. John xii. 41.

210: John v. 20.

211: Fucus, the word used by St. Ambrose, denoted face-paint in general, but it seems to have also had the especial meaning of a red pigment, or rouge for the cheeks. The custom of face-painting was known of old in the East (2 Kings ix. 30; Ezek. xxiii. 40), whence, most probably, it passed into Greece-it was known, in Ionia at least, when the Odyssey was written (say 900 b.c.)-and thence to Rome. See Dict. Antiq. art. "Fucus."

212: An allusion to the practice of the nota censoria. The censors, under the Republic, were vested with the power of appointing properly qualified citizens to vacancies in the Senate, and it was their duty to make up the roll of senators for each lustrum, or period of five years. Exclusion from the Senate was simply effected by omitting a senator's name from the new list, and senators so "unseated" were called proteriti, since their names had been passed over and not read out with the rest. The decrees of the Fathers of the Church laid down, as it were, the qualification for membership: all who came under the description established by these decrees were regarded as admitted-while those who, like the Arians, did not were tacitly excluded. Or we might say that the Anathema, appended to the Nicene symbol, excluded the Arians, not by name, but by description. In either way, the exclusion was tacit, like the censorial, in so far as no names were mentioned. In the case of exclusion from the Senate by the censors, it was understood that the reason for exclusion was grave immorality.

213: St. Ambrose has here rendered into Latin the anathema appended to the original Nicene Creed of 325 a.d. Notice "substance or o/sia o/sia upostasiz (found in Heb. i. 3, and translated "person" in A.V.), whilst the Latin for o/sia o/sia o/sia and upostasij in meaning. But some distinguished the two, using the term o/sia upostasij in that of "person"-so that, according to them, there would be three "hypostases" in the unity of the Godhead.

214: Cf. §§3 and 5.

215: S. Matt. xviii. 20.

216: The Council of Ariminum (Rimini on the Adriatic coast of Italy) was held in 359 a.d., Constantius being Emperor. "The Bishops who attended the Council of Ariminum," observes Hurter, "to the number of more than 400, informed the Emperor that they had resolved to allow no change in what had been determined upon at Nicaea. This is the `first confession. 0' That great confession, however, was not maintained for long. Partly overawed by the Emperor partly deceived by the Arians, the Bishops agreed to strike out the words `substance 0' and `consubstantial. 0' After this came the `correction, 0' which Ambrose calls the `second, 0' being made either by those Bishops who, recognizing their error, withdrew the decrees of the Council held at Ariminum, or by the Councils that followed-namely, the Councils of Alexandria (presided over by Athanasius), of Paris (362 a.d.), and of Rome (held under Pope Damasus, in a.d. 369)."

217: S. John i. 1-3.

218: Acts i. 18. Arius seems to have been carried off by a terrible attack of cholera or some kindred malady. See Newman, Arians of the Fourth Century, Ch. 3. §2, and Robertson, History of the Christian Church, vol 1. pp. 301-2, ed. 1875.

219: (1) "the word spoken," etc.-Ps. xlv. 1. Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum. -Vulg. echreucato h kardia mou logon agaon .-LXX. (2) "sons by adoption."-Gal. iv. 4, 5.

220: S. John viii. 14.

221: St. Ambrose' version differs in expression from the Vulg.- Ego enim Dominus et non mutator (Mal. iii. 6)-but not in substance, for Ego sum Dominus and "I am the Lord" both mean "I am He who is "-(o wn

222: Is. vi. 5. Contrast the Vulgate- Vae mihi, quia tacui, quia vir pollutus labiis ego sum, et in media papuli polluta labia habentis ego habito, et regem, Dominum exercituum vidi oculis meis; and the LXX.- w talaz egw oti katanenugmai oti anqrwpoz wn kai akaqarta xeilh exwn ... k. t. l. kai ton basilea kurion sabawq cido/ toiz ofqalmoiz mou 223: Ps. xxxix. 1, Ps. xxxix. 2; Ps. cxli. 3, Ps. cxli. 4.

224: St. Ambrose contrasts the appearance of the Seraph to Isaiah in a vision with our Lord's appearance to men in everyday life, in the flesh, see Is. vi. 6, 7, and 1 Tim. iii. 16.

225: Ps. lxxi. 22, Ps. lxxi. 23.

226: Is i. 18.

227: i.e., not of the old Dispensation-not provided for in the Mosaic ritual; also, not belonging to the old Creation, but a pledge and premonition of the new (Rev. xxi. 5).

228: Cf. S. John vi. 32, John vi. 50-51.

229: Judg. ix. 13.

230: St. Ambrose seems to refer to the phenomena of narcosis rather than those of alcoholic inebriation.

231: Cf. 1 Tim. v. 22: mhde koinwnei amartiaiz allotriaij .

232: S. Matt. xix. 21.

Exposition of the Christian Faith - Book 2

Book II.

Introduction.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Chapter XIII.

Chapter XIV.

Chapter XV.

Chapter XVI.

Book II.

Introduction.

Twelve names of the Son of God are recounted, being distributed into three classes. These names are so many proofs of the eternity not only of the Son, but of the Father also. Furthermore, they are compared with the twelve stones in the High Priest's breastplate, and their inseparability is shown by a new distribution of them. Returning to the comparison with the High Priest's breastplate, the writer sets forth the beauty of the woven-work and the precious stones of the mystic raiment, and the hidden meaning of that division into woven-work and precious stones, which being done, he expounds the comparison drawn by him, showing that faith must be woven in with works, and adds a short summary of the same faith, as concerning the Son.

1. Enough hath been said, as I think, your sacred Majesty, in the book preceding to show that the Son of God is an eternal being, not diverse from the Father, begotten, not created: we have also proved, from passages of the Scriptures, that God's true Son is God,¹ and is declared so to be by the evident tokens of His Majesty.

2. Wherefore, albeit what hath already been set forth is plentiful even to overflowing for maintaining the Faith-seeing that the greatness of a river is mostly judged of from the manner in which its springs rise and flow forth-still, to the end that our belief may be the plainer to sight, the waters of our spring ought, methinks, to be parted off into three channels. There are, then, firstly, plain tokens declaring essential inherence in the Godhead; secondly, the expressions of the likeness of the Father and the Son; and lastly, those of the undoubtable unity of the Divine Majesty. Now of the first sort are the names "begetting," "God," "Son," "The Word;"² of the second, "brightness," "expression," "mirror," "image;"³ and of the third, "wisdom," "power," "truth," "life."⁴

3. These tokens so declare the nature of the Son, that by them you may know both that the Father is eternal, and that the Son is not diverse from Him; for the source of generation is He Who is,⁵ and as begotten of the Eternal, He is God; coming forth from the Father, He is the Son;⁶ from God, He is the Word; He is the radiance of the Father's glory, the expression of His substance,⁷ the counterpart of God,⁸ the image of His majesty; the Bounty of Him Who is bountiful, the Wisdom of Him Who is wise, the Power of the Mighty One, the Truth of Him Who is true,⁹ the Life of the Living One.¹⁰ In agreement, therefore, stand the attributes of Father and Son, that none may suppose any diversity, or doubt but that they are of one Majesty. For each and all of these names would we furnish examples of their use were we not constrained by a desire to maintain our discourse within bounds.

4. Of these twelve, as of twelve precious stones, is the pillar of our faith built up. For these are the precious stones-sardius, jasper, smaragd, chrysolite, and the rest,-woven into the robe of holy Aaron,¹¹ even of him who bears the likeness of Christ,¹² that is, of the true Priest; stones set in gold, and inscribed with the names of the sons of Israel, twelve stones close joined and fitting one into another, for if any should sunder or separate them, the whole fabric of the faith falls in ruins.

5. This, then, is the foundation of our faith-to know that the Son of God is begotten; if He be not begotten, neither is He the Son. Nor yet is it sufficient to call Him Son, unless you shall also distinguish Him as the Only-begotten Son. If He is a creature, He is not God; if He is not God, He is not the Life; if He is not the Life, then is He not the Truth.

6. The first three tokens, therefore, that is to say, the names "generation," "Son," "Only-begotten," do show that the Son is of God originally and by virtue of His own nature.

7. The three that follow-to wit, the names "God," "Life," "Truth," reveal His Power, whereby He hath laid the foundations of, and upheld, the created world. "For," as Paul said, "in Him we live and move and have our being;"¹³ and therefore, in the first three the Son's natural right,¹⁴ in the other three the unity of action subsisting between Father and Son is made manifest.

8. The Son of God is also called the "image" and "effulgence" and "expression" [of God], for these names have disclosed the Father's incomprehensible and unsearchable Majesty dwelling in the Son, and the expression of His likeness in Him. These three names, then, as we see, refer to [the Son's] likeness [to the Father].¹⁵

9. We have yet the operations of Power, Wisdom, and Justice left, wherewith, severally, to prove [the Son's] eternity.¹⁶

10. This, then, is that robe, adorned with precious stones; this is the amice of the true Priest; this the bridal garment; here is the inspired weaver, who well knew how to weave that work. No common woven work is it, whereof the Lord spake by His Prophet: "Who gave to women their skill in weaving?"¹⁷ No common stones again, are they-stones, as we find them called, "of filling;"¹⁸ for all perfection depends on this condition, that there be nought lacking. They are stones joined together and set in gold-that is, of a spiritual kind; the joining of them by our minds and their setting in convincing argument. Finally Scripture teaches us how far from common are these stones, inasmuch as, whilst some brought one kind, and others another, of less precious offerings, these the devout princes brought, wearing them upon their shoulders, and made of them the "breastplate of judgment," that is, a piece of woven work. Now we have a woven work, when faith and action go together.

11. Let none suppose me to be misguided, in that I made at first a threefold division, each part containing four, and afterwards a fourfold division, each part containing three terms. The beauty of a good thing pleases the more, if it be shown under various aspects. For those are good things, whereof the texture of the priestly robe was the token, that is to say, either the Law, or the Church, which latter hath made two garments for her spouse, as it is written¹⁹ -the one of action, the other of spirit, weaving together the threads of faith and works. Thus, in one place, as we read, she makes a groundwork of gold, and afterwards weaves thereon blue, and purple, with scarlet, and white. Again, [as we read] elsewhere, she first makes little flowerets of blue and other colours, and attaches gold, and there is made a single priestly robe, to the end that adornments of diverse grace and beauty, made up of the same bright colours, may gain fresh glory by diversity of arrangement.

12. Moreover (to complete our interpretation of these types), it is certain that by refined gold and silver are designated the oracles of the Lord, whereby our faith stands firm. "The oracles of the Lord are pure oracles, silver tried in the fire, refined of dross, purified seven times."²⁰ Now blue is like the air we breathe and draw in; purple, again, represents the appearance of water; scarlet signifies fire; and white linen, earth, for its origin is in the earth.²¹ Of these four elements, again, the human body is composed.²²

13. Whether, then, you join to faith already present in the soul, bodily acts agreeing thereto; or acts come first, and faith be joined as their companion, presenting them to God-here is the robe of the minister of religion, here the priestly vestment.

14. Faith is profitable, therefore, when her brow is bright with a fair crown of good works.²³ This faith-that I may set the matter forth shortly-is contained in the following principles, which cannot be overthrown. If the Son had His origin in nothing, He is not Son; if He is a creature, He is not the Creator; if He was made, He did not make all things; if He needs to learn, He hath no foreknowledge; if He is a receiver, He is not perfect; if He progress,²⁴ He is not God. If He is unlike (the Father) He is not the (Father's) image; if He is Son by grace, He is not such by nature;²⁵ if He have no part in the Godhead, He hath it in Him to sin.²⁶ "There is none good, but Godhead."²⁷

Chapter I. The Arian argument from S. Mark x. 18, "There is none good but one, that is, God," refuted by explanation of these words of Christ.

15. The objection I have now to face, your sacred Majesty, fills me with bewilderment, my soul and body faint at the thought that there should be men, or rather not men, but beings with the outward appearance of men, but inwardly full of brutish folly—who can, after receiving at the hands of the Lord benefits so many and so great, say that the Author of all good things is Himself not good.

16. It is written, say they, that "There is none good but God alone." I acknowledge the Scripture—but there is no falsehood in the letter; would that there were none in the Arians' exposition thereof. The written signs are guiltless, it is the meaning in which they are taken²⁸ that is to blame. I acknowledge the words as the words of our Lord and Saviour—but let us bethink ourselves when, to whom, and with what comprehension He speaks.

17. The Son of God is certainly speaking as man, and speaking to a scribe,—to him, that is, who called the Son of God "Good Master," but would not acknowledge Him as God. What he believes not, Christ further gives him to understand, to the end that he may believe in God's Son not as a good master, but as the good God, for if, wheresoever the "One God" is named, the Son of God is never sundered from the fulness of that unity, how, when God alone is said to be good, can the Only-begotten be excluded from the fulness of Divine Goodness? The Arians must therefore either deny that the Son of God is God, or confess that God is good.

18. With divinely inspired comprehension, then, our Lord said, not "There is none good but the Father alone," but "There is none good but God alone," and "Father" is the proper name of Him Who begets. But the unity of God by no means excludes the Godhead of the Three Persons, and therefore it is His Nature that is extolled. Goodness, therefore, is of the nature of God, and in the nature of God, again, exists the Son of God—wherefore that which the predicate expresses belongs not to one single Person, but to the [complete] unity [of the Godhead].²⁹

19. The Lord, then, doth not deny His goodness—He rebukes this sort of disciple. For when the scribe said, "Good Master," the Lord answered, "Why callest thou Me good?"—which is to say, "It is not enough to call Him good, Whom thou believest not to be God." Not such do I seek to be My disciples—men who rather consider My manhood and reckon Me a good master, than look to My Godhead and believe Me to be the good God."

Chapter II. The goodness of the Son of God is proved from His works, namely, His benefits that He showed towards the people of Israel under the Old Covenant, and to Christians under the New. It is to one's own interest to believe in the goodness of Him Who is one's Lord and Judge. The Father's testimony to the Son. No small number of the Jewish people bear witness to the Son; the Arians therefore are plainly worse than the Jews. The words of the Bride, declaring the same goodness of Christ.

20. Howbeit, I would not that the Son should rely on the mere prerogative of His nature and the claims of peculiar rights of His Majesty. Let us not call Him good, if He merit not the title; and if He merit not this by works, by acts of lovingkindness, let Him waive the right He enjoys by virtue of His nature, and be submitted to our judgment. He Who is to judge us disdains not to be brought to judgment, that He may be "justified in His saying, and clear when He is judged."³⁰

21. Is He then not good, Who hath shown me good things? Is He not good, Who when six hundred thousand of the people of the Jews fled before their pursuers, suddenly opened the tide of the Red Sea, an unbroken mass of waters?-so that the waves flowed round the faithful, and were walls to them, but poured back and overwhelmed the unbelievers.³¹

22. Is He not good, at Whose command the seas became firm ground for the feet of them that fled, and the rocks gave forth water for the thirsty?³² so that the handiwork of the true Creator might be known, when the fluid became solid, and the rock streamed with water? That we might acknowledge this as the handiwork of Christ, the Apostle said: "And that rock was Christ."³³

23. Is He not good, Who in the wilderness fed with bread from heaven such countless thousands of the people, lest any famine should assail them, without need of toil, in the enjoyment of rest?-so that, for the space of forty years, their raiment grew not old, nor were their shoes worn,³⁴ a figure to the faithful of the Resurrection that was to come, showing that neither the glory of great deeds, nor the beauty of the power wherewith He hath clothed us, nor the stream of human life is made for nought?

24. Is He not good, Who exalted earth to heaven, so that, just as the bright companies of stars reflect His glory in the sky, as in a glass, so the choirs of apostles, martyrs, and priests, shining like glorious stars, might give light throughout the world.³⁵

25. Not only, then, is He good, but He is more. He is a good Shepherd, not only for Himself, but to His sheep also, "for the good shepherd layeth down his life for his sheep." Aye, He laid down His life to exalt ours-but it was in the power of His Godhead that He laid it down and took it again: "I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself."³⁶

26. Thou seest His goodness, in that He laid it down of His own accord: thou seest His power, in that He took it again-dost thou deny His goodness, when He has said of Himself in the Gospel, "If I am good, why is thine eye evil"?³⁷ Ungrateful wretch what doest thou? Dost thou deny His goodness, in Whom is thy hope of good things-if, indeed, thou believest this? Dost thou deny His goodness, Who hath given us what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard?"³⁸

27. It concerns my interest to believe Him to be good, for "It is a good thing to trust in the Lord."³⁹ It is to my interest to confess Him Lord, for it is written: "Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good."⁴⁰

28. It is to my interest to esteem my Judge to be good, for the Lord is a righteous Judge to the house of Israel. If, then, the Son of God is Judge, surely, seeing that the Judge is the righteous God and the Son of God is Judge, [it follows that] He who is Judge and Son of God is the righteous God.⁴¹

29. But perchance thou believest not others, nor the Son. Hear, then, the Father saying: "My heart hath brought forth out of its depth the good Word."⁴² The Word, then, is good-the Word, of Whom it is written: "And the Word was with God, and the Word was God."⁴³ If, therefore, the Word is good, and the Son is the Word of God, surely, though it displease the Arians, the Son of God is God. Let them now at least blush for shame.

30. The Jews used to say: "He is good." Though some said: "He is not," yet others said: "He is good,"-and ye do all deny His goodness.

31. He is good who forgives the sin of one man; is He not good Who has taken away the sin of the world? For it was of Him that it was said: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world."⁴⁴

32. But why do we doubt? The Church hath believed in His goodness all these ages, and hath confessed its faith in the saying: "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth; for thy breasts are better than wine;"⁴⁵ and again: "And thy throat is like the goodliest wine." Of His goodness, therefore. He nourisheth us with the breasts of the Law and Grace, soothing men's sorrows with telling them of heavenly things; and do we, then, deny His goodness, when He is the manifestation of goodness, expressing in His Person the likeness of the Eternal Bounty, even as we showed above that it was written, that He is the spotless reflection and counterpart of that Bounty?⁴⁶

Chapter III.

Forasmuch as God is One, the Son of God is God, good and true.

33. Yet what think ye, who deny the goodness and true Godhead of the Son of God, though it is written that there is no God but One?⁴⁷ For although there be gods so-called, would you reckon Christ amongst them which are called gods, but are not, seeing that eternity is of His Essence, and that beside Him there is none other that is good and true God, forasmuch as God is in Him;⁴⁸ whilst it follows from the very nature of the Father, that after Him there is no other true God, because God is One, neither confounding [the Persons of] the Father and Son, as the Sabellians do, nor, like the Arians, severing the Father and the Son. For the Father and the Son, as Father and Son, are distinct persons, but they admit no division of their Godhead.

Chapter IV. The omnipotence of the Son of God, demonstrated on the authority of the Old and the New Testament.

34. Seeing, then, that the Son of God is true and good, surely He is Almighty God. Can there be yet any doubt on this point? We have already cited the place where it is read that "the Lord Almighty is His Name."⁴⁹ Because, then, the Son is Lord, and the Lord is Almighty, the Son of God is Almighty.

35. But hear also such a passage as you can build no doubts upon:⁵⁰ "Behold, He cometh," saith the Scripture, "with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him, and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of Him. Yea, amen. I am Alpha and Omega, saith the Lord God, Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty."⁵¹ Whom, I ask, did they pierce? For Whose coming hope we but the Son's? Therefore, Christ is Almighty Lord, and God.

36. Hear another passage, your sacred Majesty,-hear the voice of Christ. "Thus saith the Lord Almighty: After His glory⁵² hath He sent me against the nations which have made spoil of you, forasmuch as he that toucheth you is as he that toucheth the pupil of His eye. For lo, I lay my hand upon them which despoiled you, and I will save you, and they shall be for a spoil, which made spoil of you, and they shall know that the Lord Almighty hath sent Me." Plainly, He Who speaks is the Lord Almighty, and He Who hath sent is the Lord Almighty. By consequence, then, almighty power appertains both to the Father and to the Son; nevertheless, it is One Almighty God, for there is

oneness of Majesty.

37. Moreover, that your most excellent Majesty may know that it is Christ which hath spoken as in the Gospel, so also in the prophet, He saith by the mouth of Isaiah, as though foreordaining the Gospel: "I Myself, Who spake, am come,"⁵³ that is to say, I, Who spake in the Law, am present in the Gospel.

38. Elsewhere, again, He saith: "All things that the Father hath are Mine."⁵⁴ What meaneth He by "all things"? Clearly, not things created, for all these were made by the Son, but the things that the Father hath-that is to say, Eternity, Sovereignty, Godhead, which are His possession, as begotten of the Father. We cannot, then, doubt that He is Almighty, Who hath all things that the Father hath (for it is written: "All things that the Father hath are Mine").

Chapter V.

Certain passages from Scripture, urged against the Omnipotence of Christ, are resolved; the writer is also at especial pains to show that Christ not seldom spoke in accordance with the affections of human nature.

39. Although it is written concerning God, "Blessed and only Potentate,"⁵⁵ yet I have no misgiving that the Son of God is thereby severed from Him, seeing that the Scripture entitled God, not the Father by Himself, the "only Potentate." The Father Himself also declares by the prophet, concerning Christ, that "I have set help upon one that is mighty."⁵⁶ It is not the Father alone, then, Who is the only Potentate; God the Son also is Potentate, for in the Father's praise the Son is praised too.

40. Aye, let some one show what there is that the Son of God cannot do. Who was His helper, when He made the heavens,-Who, when He laid the foundations of the world?⁵⁷ Had He any need of a helper to set men free, Who needed none in constituting⁵⁸ angels and principalities?⁵⁹

41. "It is written," say they: "'My Father, if it be possible, take away this cup from Me.'⁶⁰ If, then, He is Almighty, how comes He to doubt of the possibility?" Which means that, because I have proved Him to be Almighty, I have proved Him unable to doubt of possibility.

42. The words, you say, are the words of Christ. True-consider, though, the occasion of His speaking them, and in what character He speaks. He hath taken upon Him the substance of man,⁶¹ and therewith its affections. Again, you find in the place above cited, that "He went forward a little further, and fell on His face, praying, and saying: Father, if it be possible."⁶² Not as God, then, but as man, speaketh He, for could God be ignorant of the possibility or impossibility of aught? Or is anything impossible for God, when the Scripture saith: "For Thee nothing is impossible"?⁶³

43. Of Whom, howbeit, does He doubt-of Himself, or of the Father? Of Him, surely, Who saith: "Take away from Me,"-being moved as man is moved to doubt. The prophet reckons nothing impossible with God. The prophet doubts not; think you that the Son doubts? Wilt thou put God lower than man? What-God hath doubts of His Father, and is fearful at the thought of death! Christ, then, is afraid-afraid, whilst Peter fears nothing. Peter saith: "I will lay down my life for Thy sake."⁶⁴ Christ saith: "My soul is troubled."⁶⁵

44. Both records are true, and it is equally natural that the person who is the less should not fear, as that He Who is the greater should endure this feeling, for the one has all a man's ignorance of the might of death, whilst the other, as being God inhabiting a body, displays the weakness of the flesh, that the wickedness of those who deny the mystery of the Incarnation might have no excuse. Thus, then, hath He spoken, yet the Manichaeans believed not;⁶⁶ Valentinus denied, and Marcion judged Him to be a ghost.

45. But indeed He so far put Himself on a level with man, such as He showed Himself to be in the reality of His bodily frame, as to say, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt,"⁶⁷ though truly it is Christ's especial power to will what the Father wills, even as it is His to do what the Father doeth.

46. Here, then, let there be an end of the objection which it is your custom to oppose to us, on the ground that the Lord said, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt;" and again, "For this cause I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."⁶⁸

Chapter VI. The passages of Scripture above cited are taken as an occasion for a digression, wherein our Lord's freedom of action is proved from the ascription to the Spirit of such freedom, and from places where it is attributed to the Son.

47. Let us now, for the present, explain more fully why our Lord said, "If it be possible," and so call a truce, as it were, while we show that He possessed freedom of will. Ye deny-so far are ye gone in the way of iniquity-that the Son of God had a free will. Moreover, it is your wont to detract from the Holy Spirit, though you cannot deny that it is written: "The Spirit doth breathe, where He will."⁶⁹ "Where He will," saith the Scripture, not "where He is ordered." If, then, the Spirit doth breathe where He will, cannot the Son do what He will? Why, it is the very same Son of God Who in His Gospel saith that the Spirit has power to breathe where He will. Doth the Son, therefore, confess the Spirit to be greater, in that He has power to do what is not permitted to Himself?

48. The Apostle also saith that "all is the work of one and the same Spirit, distributing to each according to His will."⁷⁰ "According to His will," mark you-that is, according to the judgment of a free will, not in obedience to compulsion. Furthermore, the gifts distributed by the Spirit are no mean gifts, but such works as God is wont to do,-the gift of healing and of working deeds of power. While the Spirit, then, distributes as He will, the Son of God cannot set free whom He will. But hear Him speak when He does even as He will: "I have willed to do Thy will, O my God;"⁷¹ and again: "I will offer Thee a freewill offering."⁷²

49. The holy Apostle later knew that Jesus had it in His power to do as He would, and therefore, seeing Him walk upon the sea, said: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee over the waters."⁷³ Peter believed that if Christ commanded, the natural conditions could be changed, so that water might support human footsteps, and things discrepant be reduced to harmony and agreement. Peter asks of Christ to command, not to request: Christ requested not, but commanded, and it was done-and Arius denies it!

50. What indeed is there that the Father will have, but the Son will not, or that the Son will have, but the Father will not? "The Father quickeneth whom He will," and the Son quickeneth whom He will, even as it is written.⁷⁴ Tell me now whom the Son hath quickened, and the Father would not quicken. Since, however, the Son quickeneth whom He will, and the action [of Father and Son] is

one, you see that not only doeth the Son the Father's will, but the Father also doeth the Son's. For what is quickening but quickening through the passion of Christ? But the passion of Christ is the Father's will. Whom, therefore, the Son quickeneth, He quickeneth by the will of the Father; therefore their will is one.

51. Again, what was the will of the Father, but that Jesus should come into the world and cleanse us from our sins? Hear the words of the leper: "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."⁷⁵ Christ answered, "I will," and straightway health, the effect, followed. See you not that the Son is master of His own will, and Christ's will is the same as the Father's. Indeed, seeing that He hath said, "All things that the Father hath are Mine,"⁷⁶ nothing of a certainty being excepted, the Son hath the same will that the Father hath.

Chapter VII. The resolution of the difficulty set forth for consideration is again taken in hand. Christ truly and really took upon Him a human will and affections, the source of whatsoever was not in agreement with His Godhead, and which must be therefore referred to the fact that He was at the same time both God and an.

52. There is, therefore, unity of will where there is unity of working; for in God His will issues straightway in actual effect. But the will of God is one, and the human will another. Further, to show that life is the object of human will, because we fear death, whilst the passion of Christ depended on the Divine Will, that He should suffer for us, the Lord said, when Peter would have detained Him from suffering: "Thou savourest not of the things which be of God, but the things which be of men."⁷⁷

53. My will, therefore, He took to Himself, my grief. In confidence I call it grief, because I preach His Cross. Mine is the will which He called His own, for as man He bore my grief, as man He spake, and therefore said, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Mine was the grief, and mine the heaviness with which He bore it, for no man exults when at the point to die. With me and for me He suffers, for me He is sad, for me He is heavy. In my stead, therefore, and in me He grieved Who had no cause to grieve for Himself.

54. Not Thy wounds, but mine, hurt Thee, Lord Jesus; not Thy death, but our weakness, even as the Prophet saith: "For He is afflicted for our sakes"⁷⁸ -and we, Lord, esteemed Thee afflicted, when Thou grievedst not for Thyself, but for me.

55. And what wonder if He grieved for all, Who wept for one? What wonder if, in the hour of death, He is heavy for all, Who wept when at the point to raise Lazarus from the dead? Then, indeed, He was moved by a loving sister's tears, for they touched His human heart,-here by secret grief He brought it to pass that, even as His death made an end of death, and His stripes healed our scars, so also His sorrow took away our sorrow.⁷⁹

56. As being man, therefore, He doubts; as man He is amazed. Neither His power nor His Godhead is amazed, but His soul; He is amazed by consequence of having taken human infirmity upon Him. Seeing, then, that He took upon Himself a soul He also took the affections of a soul,⁸⁰ for God could not have been distressed or have died in respect of His being God. Finally, He cried: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"⁸¹ As being man, therefore, He speaks, bearing with Him my terrors, for when we are in the midst of dangers we think ourself abandoned by God. As man, therefore, He is distressed, as man He weeps, as man He is crucified.

57. For so hath the Apostle Paul likewise said: "Because they have crucified the flesh of Christ."⁸² And again the Apostle Peter saith: "Christ having suffered according to the flesh."⁸³ It was the flesh, therefore, that suffered; the Godhead above secure from death; to suffering His body yielded, after the law of human nature; can the Godhead die, then, if the soul cannot?" "Fear not them," said our Lord, "which can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul."⁸⁴ If the soul, then, cannot be killed, how can the Godhead?

58. When we read, then, that the Lord of glory was crucified, let us not suppose that He was crucified as in His glory.⁸⁵ It is because He Who is God is also man, God by virtue of His Divinity, and by taking upon Him of the flesh, the man Christ Jesus, that the Lord of glory is said to have been crucified; for, possessing both natures, that is, the human and the divine, He endured the Passion in His humanity, in order that without distinction He Who suffered should be called both Lord of glory and Son of man, even as it is written: "Who descended from heaven."⁸⁶

Chapter VIII.

Christ's saying, "The Father is greater than I," is explained in accordance with the principle just established. Other like sayings are expounded in like fashion. Our Lord cannot, as touching His Godhead, be called inferior to the Father.

59. It was due to His humanity, therefore, that our Lord doubted and was sore distressed, and rose from the dead, for that which fell doth also rise again. Again, it was by reason of His humanity that He said those words, which our adversaries use to maliciously turn against Him: "Because the Father is greater than I."⁸⁷

60. But when in another passage we read: "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father,"⁸⁸ how doth He go, except through death, and how comes He, save by rising again? Furthermore, He added, in order to show that He spake concerning His Ascension: "Therefore have I told you before it come to pass, in order that, when it shall have come to pass, ye may believe."⁸⁹ For He was speaking of the sufferings and resurrection of His body, and by that resurrection they who before doubted were led to believe-for, indeed, God, Who is always present in every place, passes not from place to place. As it is a man who goes, so it is He Himself Who comes. Furthermore, He says in another place: "Rise, let us go hence."⁹⁰ In that, therefore, doth He go and come, which is common to Him and to us.

61. How, indeed, can He be a lesser God when He is perfect and true God? Yet in respect of His humanity He is less-and still you wonder that speaking in the person of a man He called the Father greater than Himself, when in the person of a man He called Himself a worm, and not a man, saying: "But I am a worm, and no man;"⁹¹ and again: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter."⁹²

62. If you pronounce Him less than the Father in this respect, I cannot deny it; nevertheless, to speak in the words of Scripture, He was not begotten inferior, but "made lower,"⁹³ that is, made inferior. And how was He "made lower," except that, "being in the form of God, He thought it not a prey that He should be equal with God, but emptied Himself;"⁹⁴ not, indeed, parting with what He was, but taking up what He was not, for "He took the form of a servant."⁹⁵

63. Moreover, to the end that we might know Him to have been "made lower," by taking upon Him a body, David has shown that he is prophesying of a man, saying: "What is man, that Thou art

mindful of him, or the son of man, but that Thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels."⁹⁶ And in interpreting this same passage the Apostle says: "For we see Jesus, made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour because that He suffered death. in order that apart from God He might taste death for all."⁹⁷

64. Thus, the Son of God was made lower than, not only the Father, but angels also. And if you will turn this to His dishonour; [I ask] is then the Son, in respect of His Godhead, less than His angels who serve Him and minister to Him? Thus, in your purpose to diminish His honour, you run into the blasphemy of exalting the nature of angels above the Son of God. But "the servant is not above his master."⁹⁸ Again, angels ministered to Him even after His Incarnation, to the end that you should acknowledge Him to have suffered no loss of majesty by reason of His bodily nature, for God could not submit to any loss of Himself,⁹⁹ whilst that which He has taken of the Virgin neither adds to nor takes away from His divine power.

65. He, therefore, possessing the fulness of Divinity and glory,¹⁰⁰ is not, in respect of His Divinity, inferior. Greater and less are distinctions proper to corporeal existences; one who is greater is so in respect of rank, or qualities, or at any rate of age. These terms lose their meaning when we come to treat of the things of God. He is commonly entitled the greater who instructs and informs another, but it is not the case with God's Wisdom that it has been built up by teaching received from another, forasmuch as Itself hath laid the foundation of all teaching. But how wisely wrote the Apostle: "In order that apart from God He might taste death for all,"-lest we should suppose the Godhead, not the flesh, to have endured that Passion!

66. If our opponents, then, have found no means to prove [the Father] greater [than the Son], let them not pervert words unto false reports, but seek out their meaning. I ask them, therefore, as touching what do they esteem the Father the greater? If it is because He is the Father, then [I answer] here we have no question of age or of time-the Father is not distinguished by white hairs, nor the Son by youthfulness-and it is on these conditions that the greater dignity of a father depends."¹⁰¹ But "father" and "son" are names, the one of the parent, the other of the child-names which seem to join rather than separate; for dutifulness inspires no loss of personal worth, inasmuch as kinship binds men together, and does not rend them asunder.

67. If, then, they cannot make the order of nature a support for any questioning, let them now believe the witness [of Scripture]. Now the Evangelist testifies that the Son is not lower [than the Father] by reason of being the Son; nay, he even declares that, in being the Son, He is equal, saying, "For the Jews sought to kill Him for this cause, that not only did He break the Sabbath, but even called God His own Father, making Himself equal to God."¹⁰²

68. This is not what the Jews said-it is the Evangelist who testifies that, in calling Himself God's own Son, He made Himself equal to God, for the Jews are not presented as saying, "For this cause we sought to kill Him;" the Evangelist, speaking for himself, says, "For the Jews sought to kill Him for this cause."¹⁰³ Moreover, he has discovered the cause, [in saying] that the Jews were stirred with desire to slay Him because, when as God He broke the Sabbath, and also claimed God as His own Father, He ascribed to Himself not only the majesty of divine authority in breaking the Sabbath, but also, in speaking of His Father, the right appertaining to eternal equality.

69. Most fitting was the answer which the Son of God made to these Jews, proving Himself the Son and equal of God. "Whatsoever things," He said, "the Father hath done, the Son doeth also in like wise."¹⁰⁴ The Son, therefore, is both entitled and proved the equal of the Father—a true equality, which both excludes difference of Godhead, and discovers, together with the Son, the Father also, to Whom the Son is equal; for there is no equality where there is difference, nor again where there is but one person, inasmuch as none is by himself equal to himself. Thus hath the Evangelist shown why it is fitting that Christ should call Himself the Son of God, that is, make Himself equal with God.

70. Hence the Apostle, following this revelation, hath said: "He thought it not a prey that He should be equal with God."¹⁰⁵ For that which a man has not he seeks to carry off as a prey. Equality with the Father, therefore, which, as God and Lord, He possessed in His own substance, He had not as a spoil wrongfully seized. Wherefore the Apostle added [the words]: "He took the form of a servant." Now surely a servant is the opposite of an equal. Equal, therefore, is the Son, in the form of God, but inferior in taking upon Him of the flesh and in His sufferings as a man. For how could the same nature be both lower and equal? And how, if [the Son] be inferior, can He do the same things, in like manner, as the Father doeth? How, indeed, can there be sameness of operation with diversity of power? Can the inferior ever work such effects as the greater, or can there be unity of operation where there is diversity of substance?

71. Admit, therefore, that Christ, as touching His Godhead, cannot be called inferior [to the Father].¹⁰⁶ Christ speaks to Abraham: "By Myself have I sworn."¹⁰⁷ Now the Apostle shows that He Who swears by Himself cannot be lower than any. Thus he saith, "When God rewarded Abraham with His promise, He swore by Himself, forasmuch as He had none other that was greater, saying, Surely with blessing will I bless thee, and with multiplying will I multiply thee."¹⁰⁸ Christ had, therefore, none greater, and for that cause sware He by Himself. Moreover, the Apostle has rightly added, "for men swear by one greater than themselves," forasmuch as men have one who is greater than themselves, but God hath none.

72. Otherwise, if our adversaries will understand this passage as referred to the Father, then the rest of the record does not agree with it. For the Father did not appear to Abraham, nor did Abraham wash the feet of God the Father, but the feet of Him in Whom is the image of the man that shall be.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the Son of God saith, "Abraham saw My day, and rejoiced."¹¹⁰ It is He, therefore, Who sware by Himself, [and] Whom Abraham saw.

73. And how, indeed, hath He any greater than Himself Who is one with the Father in Godhead?¹¹¹ Where there is unity, there is no dissimilarity, whereas between greater and less there is a distinction. The teaching, therefore, of the instance from Scripture before us, with regard to the Father and the Son, is that neither is the Father greater, nor hath the Son any that is above Him, inasmuch as in Father and Son there is no difference of Godhead parting them, but one majesty.

Chapter IX. The objection that the Son, being sent by the Father, is, in that regard at least, inferior, is met by the answer that He was also sent by the Spirit, Who is yet not considered greater than the Son. Furthermore, the Spirit, in His turn, is sent by the Father to the Son, in order that Their unity in action might be shown forth. It is our duty, therefore, carefully to distinguish what utterances are to be fitly ascribed to Christ as God, and what to be ascribed to Him as man.

74. I Have no fears in the matter of that commonly advanced objection, that Christ is inferior because He was sent. For even if He be inferior, yet this is not so proved;¹¹² on the other hand, His equal title to honour is in truth proved. Since all honour the Son as they honour the Father,¹¹³ it is certain that the Son is not, in so far as being sent, inferior.

75. Regard not, therefore, the narrow bounds of human language, but the plain meaning of the words, and believe facts accomplished. Bethink you that our Lord Jesus Christ said in Isaiah that He had been sent by the Spirit.¹¹⁴ Is the Son, therefore, less than the Spirit because He was sent by the Spirit? Thus you have the record, that the Son declares Himself sent by the Father and His Spirit. "I am the beginning," He saith,¹¹⁵ "and I live for ever, and My hand hath laid the foundations of the earth, My right hand hath made the heaven to stand abidingly;"¹¹⁶ and further on: "I have spoken, and I have called; I have brought him, and have made his way to prosper. Draw ye near to Me, and hear these things: not in secret have I spoken from the beginning. When they were made, I was there: and now hath the Lord and His Spirit sent Me."¹¹⁷ Here, indeed, He Who made the heaven and the earth Himself saith that He is sent by the Lord and His Spirit. Ye see, then, that the poverty of language takes not from the honour of His mission. He, then, is sent by the Father; by the Spirit also is He sent.

76. And that you may gather that there is no separating difference of majesty, the Son in turn sends the Spirit, even as He Himself hath said: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from My Father-the Spirit of truth, who cometh forth from My Father."¹¹⁸ That this same Comforter is also to be sent by the Father He has already taught, saying, "But the Comforter, that Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name."¹¹⁹ Behold their unity, inasmuch as whom God the Father sends, the Son sends also, and Whom the Father sends, the Spirit sends also. Else, if the Arians will not admit that the Son was sent, because we read that the Son is the right hand of the Father, then they themselves will confess with respect to the Father, what they deny concerning the Son, unless perchance they discover for themselves either another Father or another Son.

77. A truce, then, to vain wranglings over words, for the kingdom of God, as it is written, consisteth not in persuasive words, but in power plainly shown forth. Let us take heed to the distinction of the Godhead from the flesh. In each there speaks one and the same Son of God, for each nature is present in Him; yet while it is the same Person Who speaks, He speaks not always in the same manner. Behold in Him, now the glory of God, now the affections of man. As God He speaks the things of God, because He is the Word; as man He speaks the things of man, because He speaks in my nature.

78. "This is the living bread, which came down from heaven."¹²⁰ This bread is His flesh, even as He Himself said: "This bread which I will give is My flesh."¹²¹ This is He Who came down from heaven, this is He Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into this world. Even the letter itself teaches us that not the Godhead but the flesh needed sanctification, for the Lord Himself said, "And I sanctify Myself for them,"¹²² in order that thou mayest acknowledge that He is both sanctified in the flesh for us, and sanctifies by virtue of His Divinity.

79. This is the same One Whom the Father sent, but "born of a woman, born under the law,"¹²³ as the Apostle hath said. This is He Who saith: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; wherefore He hath anointed Me, to bring good tidings to the poor hath He sent Me."¹²⁴ This is He Who saith: My

doctrine is not Mine, but His, Who sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself."¹²⁵ Doctrine that is of God, then, is one thing; doctrine that is of man, another; and so when the Jews, regarding Him as man, called in question His teaching,¹²⁶ and said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learnt?" Jesus answered and said, "My doctrine is not Mine," for, in teaching without elegance of letters, He seems to teach not as man, but rather as God, having not learned, but devised His doctrine.

80. For He hath found and devised all the way of discipline, as we read above, inasmuch as of the Son of God it hath been said: "This is our God, and none other shall be accounted of in comparison with Him, Who hath found all the way of discipline. After these things He was seen on earth, and conversed with men."¹²⁷ How, then, could He, as divine, not have His own doctrine-He Who hath found all the way of discipline before He was seen on earth? Or how is He inferior, of Whom it is said, "None shall be accounted of in comparison with Him"? Surely He is entitled incomparable, in comparison of Whom none other can be accounted of-yet so that He cannot be accounted of before the Father. Now if men suppose that the Father is spoken of, they shall not escape running into the blasphemy of Sabellius, of ascribing the assumption of human nature to the Father.

81. Let us proceed with what follows. "He who speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory."¹²⁸ See the unity wherein Father and Son are plainly revealed.¹²⁹ He who speaks cannot but be; yet that which He speaks cannot be solely from Him, for in Him all that is, is naturally derived from the Father.

82. What now is the meaning of the words "seeketh his own glory"? That is, not a glory in which the Father has no part-for indeed the Word of God is His glory. Again, our Lord saith: "that they may see My glory."¹³⁰ But that glory of the Word is also the glory of the Father, even as it is written: "The Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."¹³¹ In regard of His Godhead, therefore, the Son of God so hath His own glory, that the glory of Father and Son is one: He is not, therefore, inferior in splendour, for the glory is one, nor lower in Godhead, for the fulness of the Godhead is in Christ.¹³²

83. How, then, you ask, is it written, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son?"¹³³ He Who saith these words needs to be glorified, say you. Thus far you have eyes to see; the remainder of the Scripture you have not read, for it proceeds: "that Thy Son may glorify Thee." Hath ever the Father need of any, in that He is to be glorified by the Son?

Chapter X. The objection taken on the ground of the Son's obedience is disproved, and the unity of power, Godhead, and operation in the Trinity set forth, Christ's obedience to His mother, to whom He certainly cannot be called inferior, is noticed.

84. In like manner our adversaries commonly make a difficulty of the Son's obedience, forasmuch as it is written: "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient even unto death."¹³⁴ The writer has not only told us that the Son was obedient even unto death, but also first shown that He was man, in order that we might understand that obedience unto death was the part not of His Godhead but of His Incarnation, whereby He took upon Himself both the functions and the names belonging to our nature.

85. Thus we have learnt that the power of the Trinity is one, as we are taught both in and after the Passion itself: for the Son suffers through His body, which is the earnest of it; the Holy Spirit is poured upon the apostles: into the Father's hands the spirit is commended; furthermore, God is with a mighty voice proclaimed the Father. We have learnt that there is one form, one likeness, one sanctification, of the Father and of the Son, one activity, one glory, finally, one Godhead.

86. There is, therefore, but one only God, for it is written: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."¹³⁵ One God, not in the sense that the Father and the Son are the same Person, as the ungodly Sabellius affirms-but forasmuch as there is one Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. But where there is one Godhead, there is one will, one purpose.

87. Again, that thou mayest know that the Father is, and the Son is, and that the work of the Father and of the Son is one, follow the saying of the Apostle: "Now may God Himself, and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way unto you."¹³⁶ Both Father and Son are named, but there is unity of direction,¹³⁷ because unity of power. So also in another place we read: "Now may our Lord Himself, Jesus Christ, and God and our Father, Who hath loved us, and given us eternal consolation, and good hope in grace, console and strengthen your hearts."¹³⁸ How perfect a unity it is that the Apostle presents to us, insomuch that the fount of consolation is not many, but one. Let doubt be dumb, then, or, if it will not be overcome by reason, let the thought of our Lord's gracious kindness bend it.

88. Let us call to mind how kindly our Lord hath dealt with us, in that He taught us not only faith but manners also. For, having taken His place in the form of man, He was subject to Joseph and Mary.¹³⁹ Was He less than all mankind, then, because He was subject? The part of dutifulness is one, that of sovereignty is another, but dutifulness doth not exclude sovereignty. Wherein, then, was He subject to the Father's law? In His body, surely, wherein He was subject to His mother.

Chapter XI. The purpose and healing effects of the Incarnation. The profitableness of faith, whereby we know that Christ bore all infirmities for our sakes,-Christ, Whose Godhead revealed Himself in His Passion; whence we understand that the mission of the Son of God entailed no subservience, which belief we need not fear lest it displease the Father, Who declares Himself to be well pleased in His Son.

89. Let us likewise deal kindly, let us persuade our adversaries of that which is to their profit, "let us worship and lament before the Lord our Maker."¹⁴⁰ For we would not overthrow, but rather heal; we lay no ambush for them, but warn them as in duty bound. Kindliness often bends those whom neither force nor argument will avail to overcome. Again, our Lord cured with oil and wine the man who, going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among thieves; having forbore to treat him with the harsh remedies of the Law or the sternness of Prophecy.

90. To Him, therefore, let all come who would be made whole. Let them receive the medicine which He hath brought down from His Father and made in heaven, preparing it of the juices of those celestial fruits that wither not. This is of no earthly growth, for nature nowhere possesseth this compound. Of wondrous purpose took He our flesh, to the end that He might show that the law of the flesh had been subjected to the law of the mind. He was incarnate, that He, the Teacher of men, might overcome as man.

91. Of what profit would it have been to me, had He, as God, bared the arm of His power, and only displayed His Godhead inviolate? Why should He take human nature upon Him, but to suffer Himself to be tempted under the conditions of my nature and my weakness? It was right that He should be tempted, that He should suffer with me, to the end that I might know how to conquer when tempted, how to escape when hard pressed. He overcame by force of continence, of contempt of riches, of faith; He trampled upon ambition, fled from intemperance, bade wantonness be far from Him.

93. This medicine Peter beheld, and left His nets, that is to say, the instruments and security of gain, renouncing the lust of the flesh as a leaky ship, that receives the bilge, as it were, of multitudinous passions. Truly a mighty remedy, that not only removed the scar of an old wound, but even cut the root and source of passion. O Faith, richer than all treasure-houses; O excellent remedy, healing our wounds and sins!

93. Let us bethink ourselves of the profitableness of right belief. It is profitable to me to know that for my sake Christ bore my infirmities, submitted to the affections of my body, that for me, that is to say, for every man, He was made sin, and a curse,¹⁴¹ that for me and in me was He humbled and made subject, that for me He is the Lamb, the Vine, the Rock,¹⁴² the Servant, the Son of an handmaid,¹⁴³ knowing not the day of judgment, for my sake ignorant of the day and the hour.¹⁴⁴

94. For how could He, Who hath made days and times, be ignorant of the day? How could He not know the day, Who hath declared both the season of Judgment to come, and the cause?¹⁴⁵ A curse, then, He was made not in respect of His Godhead, but of His flesh; for it is written: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."¹⁴⁶ In and after the flesh, therefore, He hung, and for this cause He, Who bore our curses, became a curse.¹⁴⁷ He wept that thou, man, mightest not weep long. He endured insult, that thou mightest not grieve over the wrong done to thee.¹⁴⁸

95. A glorious remedy-to have consolation of Christ! For He bore these things with surpassing patience for our sakes-and we forsooth cannot bear them with common patience for the glory of His Name! Who may not learn to forgive, when assailed, seeing that Christ, even on the Cross, prayed,-yea, for them that persecuted Him? See you not that those weaknesses, as you please to call them, of Christ's are your strength?¹⁴⁹ Why question Him in the matter of remedies for us? His tears wash us, His weeping cleanses us,-and there is strength in this doubt, at least, that if you begin to doubt, you will despair. The greater the insult, the greater is the gratitude due.

96. Even in the very hour of mockery and insult, acknowledge His Godhead. He hung upon the Cross, and all the elements did Him homage.¹⁵⁰ The sun withdrew his rays, the daylight vanished, darkness came down and covered the land, the earth trembled; yet He Who hung there trembled not. What was it that these signs betokened, but reverence for the Creator? That He hangs upon the Cross-this, thou Arian, thou regardest; that He gives the kingdom of God-this, thou regardest not. That He tasted of death, thou readest, but that He also invited the robber into paradise,¹⁵¹ to this thou givest no heed. Thou dost gaze at the women weeping by the tomb, but not upon the angels keeping watch by it.¹⁵² What He said, thou readest: what He did, thou dost not read. Thou sayest that the Lord said to the Canaanitish woman: "I am not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,"¹⁵³ thou dost not say that He did what He was besought by her to do.

97. Thou shouldst hereby understand that His being "sent" means not that He was compelled, at the command of another, but that He acted, of free will, according to His own judgment, otherwise thou dost accuse Him of despising His Father. For if, according to thine expounding, Christ had come into Jewry, as one executing the Father's commands, to relieve the inhabitants of Jewry, and none besides, and yet before that was accomplished, set free the Canaanitish woman's daughter from her complaint, surely He was not only the executor of another's instruction, but was free to exercise His own judgment. But where there is freedom to act as one will, there can be no transgressing the terms of one's mission.

98. Fear not that the Son's act displeased the Father, seeing that the Son Himself saith: "Whatsoever things are His good pleasure, I do always," and "The works that I do, He Himself doeth."¹⁵⁴ How, then, could the Father be displeased with that which He Himself did through the Son? For it is One God, Who, as it is written, "hath justified circumcision in consequence of faith, and uncircumcision through faith."¹⁵⁵

99. Read all the Scriptures, mark all diligently, you will then find that Christ so manifested Himself that God might be discerned in man. Misunderstand not maliciously the Son's exultation in the Father, when you hear the Father declaring His pleasure in the Son.

Chapter XII. Do the Catholics or the Arians take the better course to assure themselves of the favour of Christ as their Judge? An objection grounded on Ps. cx. 1 is disposed of, it being shown that when the Son is invited by the Father to sit at His right hand, no subjection is intended to be signified-nor yet any preferment, in that the Son sits at the Father's right hand. The truth of the Trinity of Persons in God, and of the Unity of their Nature, is shown to be proved by the angelic Trisagion.

100. Howbeit, if our adversaries cannot be turned by kindness, let us summon them before the Judge. To what Judge, then, shall we go? Surely to Him Who hath the Judgment. To the Father, then? Nay, but "the Father judgeth no man, for He hath given all judgment to the Son."¹⁵⁶ He hath given, that is to say, not as of largess, but in the act of generation. See, then, how unwilling He was that thou shouldst dishonour His Son-even so that He gave Him to be thy Judge.

101. Let us see, then, before the judgment which hath the better cause, thou or I? Surely it is the care of a prudent party to a suit to gain first the favourable regard of the judge. Thou dost honour man,-dost thou not honour God? Which of the two, I ask, wins the favour of the magistrate-respect or contempt? Suppose that I am in error-as I certainly am not: is Christ displeased with the honour shown Him? We are all sinners-who, then, will deserve forgiveness, he who renders worship, or he who displays insolence?

102. If reasoning move thee not, at least let the plain aspect of the judgment move thee! Raise thine eyes to the Judge, see Who it is that is seated, with Whom He is seated, and where. Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father. If with thine eyes thou canst not perceive this, hear the words of the prophet: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand."¹⁵⁷ The Son, therefore, sitteth at the right hand of the Father. Tell me now, thou who holdest that the things of God are to be judged of from the things of this world-say whether thou thinkest Him Who sits at the right hand to be lower? Is it any dishonour to the Father that He sits at the Son's left hand? The Father honours the Son, and thou makest it to be insult! The Father would have this invitation to

be a sign of love and esteem, and thou wouldst make it an overlord's command! Christ hath risen from the dead, and sitteth at the right hand of God.

103. "But," you object, "the Father said." Good, hear now a passage where the Father doth not speak, and the Son prophesies: "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power."¹⁵⁸ This He said with regard to taking back to Himself His body-to Him¹⁵⁹ the Father said: "Sit Thou at My right hand." If indeed you ask of the eternal abode of the Godhead, He said-when Pilate asked Him whether He were the King of the Jews-"For this I was born."¹⁶⁰ And so indeed the Apostle shows that it is good for us to believe that Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, not by command, nor of any boon, but as God's most dearly beloved Son. For it is written for you: "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God; savour the things that are above."¹⁶¹ This is to savour the things that be above-to believe that Christ, in His sitting, does not obey as one who receives a command, but is honoured as the well-beloved Son. It is with regard, then, to Christ's Body that the Father saith: "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."

104. If, again, you seek to pervert the sense of these words, "I will make Thine enemies Thy footstool," I answer that the Father also bringeth to the Son such as the Son raiseth up and quickeneth. For "No man," saith Christ, "can come to Me, except the Father, Which hath sent Me, draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day."¹⁶² And you say that the Son of God is subject by reason of weakness-the Son, to Whom the Father bringeth men that He may raise them up in the last day. Seemeth this in your eyes to be subjection, I pray you, where the kingdom is prepared for the Father, and the Father bringeth to the Son and there is no place for perversion of words, since the Son giveth the kingdom to the Father, and none is preferred before Him?¹⁶³ For inasmuch as the Father rendereth to the Son, and the Son, again, to the Father, here are plain proofs of love and regard: seeing that They so render, the One to the Other, that neither He Who receiveth obtaineth as it were what was another's, nor He That rendereth loseth.

105. Moreover, the sitting at the right hand is no preferment, nor doth that at the left hand betoken dishonour, for there are no degrees in the Godhead, Which is bound by no limits of space or time, which are the weights and measures of our puny human minds. There is no difference of love, nothing that divideth the Unity.

106. But wherefore roam so far afield? Thou hast looked upon all around thee, thou hast seen the Judge, thou hast remarked the angels proclaiming Him. They praise, and thou revilest Him! Dominations and powers fall down before Him-thou speakest evil of His Name! All His Saints adore Him, but the Son of God adores not, nor the Holy Spirit. The seraphim say: "Holy, Holy, Holy!"¹⁶⁴

107. What meaneth this threefold utterance of the same name "Holy"? If thrice repeated, why is it but one act of praise? If one act of praise, why a threefold repetition? Why the threefold repetition, unless that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in holiness? The seraph spake the name, not once, lest he should exclude the Son; not twice, lest he should pass by the Holy Spirit; not four times, lest he should conjoin created beings [in the praise of the Creator]. Furthermore, to show that the Godhead of the Trinity is One, he, after the threefold "Holy," added in the singular number "the Lord God of Sabaoth." Holy, therefore, is the Father, holy the Son, holy likewise the Spirit of God, and therefore is the Trinity adored, but adores not, and is praised, but praises not.

As for me, I will rather believe as the seraphim, and adore after the manner of all the principalities and powers of heaven.

Chapter XIII. The wicked and dishonourable opinions held by Arians, Sabellians, and Manichaeans as concerning their Judge are shortly refuted. Christ's remonstrances regarding the rest of His adversaries being set forth, St. Ambrose expresses a hope of milder judgment for himself.

108. Let us proceed, then, with your accusations, and see how you gain the favour of your Judge. Speak now, speak, I say, and tell Him: "I consider Thee, O Christ, to be unlike Thy Father;" and He will answer: "Mark, if thou canst, mark, I say, and tell Me wherein thou holdest Me to differ."

109. Say again: "I judge Thee to be a created being;" and Christ will reply: "If the witness of two men is true, oughtest thou not to have believed both Me and My Father, Who hath called Me His Son?"

110. Then you will say: "I deny Thy [perfect] goodness;" and He will answer: "Be it unto thee according to thy faith; so will I not be good to thee."

111. "That Thou art Almighty, I hold not;" and He will answer, in turn: "Then can I not forgive thee thy sins."

112. "Thou art a subject being." Whereto He will reply: "Why, then, dost thou seek freedom and pardon of Him Whom thou thinkest to be subject as a slave?"

113. I see your accusation halt here. I press you not, forasmuch as I myself know my own sins. I grudge you not pardon, for I myself would obtain indulgence, but I would know the object of your prayers. Look, then, whilst I recite before the Judge your desires. I betray not your sins, but look to behold your prayers and wishes set forth in their order.

114. Speak, therefore, those desires, which all alike would have granted to them. "Lord, make me in the image of God." Whereto He will answer: "In what image? The image which thou hast denied?"

115. "Make me incorruptible." Surely His reply will be: "How can I make thee incorruptible, I, Whom thou callest a created being, and so wouldst make out to be corruptible? The dead shall rise purified from corruption-dost thou call Him corruptible Whom thou seest to be God?"

116. "Be good to me." "Why dost thou ask what thou hast denied [to Me]? I would have had thee to be good, and I said 'Be ye holy, for I Myself am holy,'¹⁶⁵ and thou settest thyself to deny that I am good? Dost thou then look for forgiveness of sins? Nay, none can forgive sins, but God alone.¹⁶⁶ Seeing, then, that to thee I am not the true and only God, I cannot by any means forgive thee thy sins."

117. Thus let the followers of Arius and Photinus speak. "I deny Thy Godhead." To whom the Lord will make answer: "'The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God'¹⁶⁷ Of whom, think you, is this said?-of Jew or Gentile, or of the devil. Whosoever he be of whom it is said, O disciple of Photinus, he is more to be borne with, who held his peace;¹⁶⁸ thou, nevertheless, hast dared to lift up thy voice to utter it, that thou mightest be proved more foolish than the fool. Thou deniest My

Godhead, whereas I said, `Ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the Most Highest?'¹⁶⁹ And thou deniest Him to be God, Whose godlike works thou seest around thee."

118. Let the Sabellian speak in his turn. "I consider Thee, by Thyself, to be at once Father and Son and Holy Spirit." To whom the Lord: "Thou hearest neither the Father nor the Son. Is there any doubt on this matter? The Scripture itself teaches thee that it is the Father Who giveth over the judgment, and the Son Who judges.¹⁷⁰ Thou hast not given ear to My words: `I am not alone, but I and the Father, Who sent Me.'"¹⁷¹

119. Now let the Manichaeon have his word. "I hold that the devil is the creator of our flesh." The Lord will answer him: "What, then, doest thou in the heavenly places? Depart, go thy way to thy creator. `My will is that they be with Me, whom my Father hath given Me.' Thou, Manichaeon, holdest thyself for a creature of the devil; hasten, then, to his abode, the place of fire and brimstone, where the fire thereof is not quenched, lest ever the punishment have an end."

120. I set aside other heretical-not persons, but portents. What manner of judgment awaits them, what shall be the form of their sentence? To all these He will, indeed, reply, rather in sorrow than in anger: "O My people, what have I done unto thee, wherein have I vexed thee? Did I not bring thee up out of Egypt, and lead thee out of the house of bondage into liberty?"¹⁷²

121. But it is not enough to have brought us out of Egypt into freedom, and to have saved us from the house of bondage: a greater boon than this, Thou hast given Thyself for us. Thou wilt say then: "Have I not borne all your sufferings?¹⁷³ Have I not given My Body for you? Have I not sought death, which had no part in My Godhead, but was necessary for your redemption? Are these the thanks I am to receive? Is it this that My Blood hath gained, even as I spake in times past by the mouth of the prophet: `What profit is there in My Blood, for that I have gone down to corruption?'¹⁷⁴ Is this the profit, that you should wickedly deny Me-you, for whom I endured those things?"

122. As for me, Lord Jesu, though I am conscious within myself of great sin, yet will I say: "I have not denied Thee; Thou mayest pardon the infirmity of my flesh. My transgression I confess; my sin I deny not.¹⁷⁵ If Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean.¹⁷⁶ For this saying, the leper obtained his request. Enter not, I pray, into judgment with Thy servant.¹⁷⁷ I ask, not that Thou mayest judge, but that Thou mayest forgive."

Chapter XIV. The sentence of the Judge is set forth, the counterpleas of the opposers are considered, and the finality of the sentence, from which there is no appeal, proved.

123. What verdict do we look for from Christ? That do I know. Do I say, what verdict will He give? Nay, He hath already pronounced sentence. We have it in our hands. "Let all," saith He, "honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father, Who hath sent Him."¹⁷⁸

124. If the sentence please you not, appeal to the Father, cancel the judgment that the Father hath given. Say that He hath a Son Who is unlike Him. He will reply: "Then have I lied, I, Who said to the Son, `Let us make man in Our image and likeness.'"¹⁷⁹

125. Tell the Father that He hath created the Son, and He will answer: "Why, then, hast thou worshipped One Whom thou thoughtest to be a created being?"

126. Tell Him that He hath begotten a Son Who is inferior to Himself, and He will reply: "Compare Us, and let Us see."

127. Tell Him that you owed no credence to the Son, whereto He will answer: "Did I not say to thee, `This is My well-beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him'?"<sup>180</sup> What mean these words "hear ye Him," if not "Hear Him when He saith: `All things that the Father hath are Mine'"?¹⁸¹ This did the apostles hear, even as it is written: "And they fell upon their faces, and were greatly afraid."¹⁸² If they who confessed Him fell to the earth, what shall they do who have denied Him? But Jesus laid His hand upon His apostles, and raised them up-you He will suffer to lie prone, that ye may see not the glory ye have denied.

128. Let us look to it, then, forasmuch as whom the Son condemneth, the Father condemneth also, and therefore let us honour the Son, even as we honour the Father, that by the Son we may be able to come to the Father.

Chapter XV.

St. Ambrose deprecates any praise of his own merits: in any case, the Faith is sufficiently defended by the authoritative support of holy Scripture, to whose voice the Arians, stubborn as the Jews, are deaf. He prays that they may be moved to love the truth; meanwhile, they are to be avoided, as heretics and enemies of Christ.

129. These arguments, your Majesty, I have set forth, briefly and summarily, in the rough, rather than in any form of full explanation and exact order. If indeed the Arians regard them as imperfect and unfinished, I indeed confess that they are scarce even begun; if they think that there be any still to be brought forward, I allow that there be well-nigh all; for whereas the unbelievers are in uttermost need of arguments, the faithful have enough and to spare. Indeed, Peter's single confession was abundant to warrant faith in Christ: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;"¹⁸³ for it is enough to know His Divine Generation, without division or diminution, being neither derivation nor creation.¹⁸⁴

130. This, indeed, is declared in the books of Holy Writ, one and all, and yet is still doubted by misbelievers: "For," as it is written, "the heart of this people is become gross, and with their ears they have been dull of hearing, and their eyes have they darkened, lest ever they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand in their heart."¹⁸⁵ For, like the Jews, the Arians' wont is to stop their ears, or make an uproar, as often as the Word of salvation is heard.

131. And what wonder, if unbelievers doubt the word of man, when they refuse to believe the Word of God? The Son of God, as you will find it written in the Gospel, said: "Father, glorify Thy Name," and from heaven was heard the voice of the Father, saying: "I have both glorified it, and again will glorify."¹⁸⁶ These words the unbelievers heard, but believed not. The Son spake, the Father answered, and the Jews said: "A peal of thunder answered Him;" others said: "An angel spake to Him."¹⁸⁷

132. Paul, moreover, as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles,¹⁸⁸ when by the Voice of Christ he received the call of grace, several companions journeying with him at the same time, alone said that he had heard Christ's Voice. Thus, your sacred Majesty, he who believes, hears-and he hears, that he may believe, whilst he who believes not, hears not, nay, he will not, he cannot hear,

lest he should believe!

133. As for me, indeed, would that they might have a will to hear, that they might believe-to hear with true love and meekness, as men seeking what is true, and not assailing all truth. For it is written that we pay no heed to "endless fables and genealogies, which do rather raise disputes than set forward the godly edification, which is in faith. But the aim of the charge is love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, whence some have erred and betaken themselves to empty babbling, desirous of being teachers of the law, without understanding the words they say, nor the things whereof they speak with assurance."¹⁸⁹ In another place also the same Apostle saith: "But foolish and ignorant questionings do thou avoid."¹⁹⁰

134. Such men, who sow disputes-that is to say, heretics-the Apostle bids us leave alone. Of them he says in yet another place, that "certain shall depart from the faith, giving heed to deceitful spirits, and the doctrines of devils."¹⁹¹

135. John, likewise, saith that heretics are Antichrists,¹⁹² plainly marking out the Arians. For this [Arian] heresy began to be after all other heresies, and hath gathered the poisons of all. As it is written of the Antichrist, that "he opened his mouth to blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name, and to make war with His saints,"¹⁹³ so do they also dishonour the Son of God, and His martyrs have they not spared. Moreover, that which perchance Antichrist will not do, they have falsified the holy Scriptures. And thus he who saith that Jesus is not the Christ, the same is Antichrist; he who denies the Saviour of the world, denies Jesus; he who denies the Son, denies the Father also, for it is written; "Every one which denieth the Son, denieth the Father likewise."¹⁹⁴

Chapter XVI.

St. Ambrose assures Gratian of victory, declaring that it has been foretold in the prophecies of Ezekiel. This hope is further stayed upon the emperor's piety, the former disasters being the punishment of Eastern heresy.¹⁹⁵ The book doses with a prayer to God, that He will now show His mercy, and save the army, the land, and the sovereign of the faithful.

136. I Must no further detain your Majesty, in this season of preparation for war, and the achievement of victory over the Barbarians. Go forth, sheltered, indeed, under the shield of faith, and girt with the sword of the Spirit; go forth to the victory, promised of old time, and foretold in oracles given by God.

137. For Ezekiel, in those far-off days, already prophesied the minishing of our people, and the Gothic wars, saying: "Prophesy, therefore, Son of Man, and say: O Gog, thus saith the Lord-Shalt thou not, in that day when My people Israel shall be established to dwell in peace, rise up and come forth from thy place, from the far north, and many nations with thee, all riders upon horses, a great and mighty gathering, and the valour of many hosts? Yea, go up against my people Israel, as clouds to cover the land, in the last days."¹⁹⁶

138. That Gog is the Goth, whose coming forth we have already seen, and over whom victory in days to come is promised, according to the word of the Lord: "And they shall spoil them, who had been their despoilers, and plunder them, who had carried off their goods for a prey, saith the Lord. And it shall be in that day, that I will give to Gog"-that is, to the Goths-"a place that is famous, for

Israel an high-heaped tomb of many men, of men who have made their way to the sea, and it shall reach round about, and close the mouth of the valley, and there [the house of Israel shall] overthrow Gog and all his multitude, and it shall be called the valley of the multitude of Gog: and the house of Israel shall overwhelm them, that the land may be cleansed."197

139. Nor, furthermore, may we doubt, your sacred Majesty, that we, who have undertaken the contest with alien unbelief, shall enjoy the aid of the Catholic Faith that is strong in you. Plainly indeed the reason of God's wrath has been already made manifest, so that belief in the Roman Empire was first overthrown, where faith in God gave way.198

140. No desire have I to recount the deaths, tortures, and banishments of confessors, the offices of the faithful made into presents for traitors.199 Have we not heard, from all along the border,-from Thrace, and through Dacia by the river, Moesia, and all Valeria of the Pannonians,-a mingled tumult of blasphemers preaching and barbarians invading? What profit could neighbours so bloodthirsty bring us, or how could the Roman State be safe with such defenders?200

141. Enough, yea, more than enough, Almighty God, have we now atoned for the deaths of confessors, the banishment of priests, and the guilt of wickedness so overweening, by our own blood, our own banishment-sufficiently plain is it that they, who have broken faith, cannot be safe. Turn again, O Lord, and set up the banners of Thy faith.

142. No military eagles, no flight of birds,201 here lead the van of our army, but Thy Name, Lord Jesus, and Thy worship. This is no land of unbelievers, but the land whose custom it is to send forth confessors-Italy; Italy, oft-times tempted, but never drawn away; Italy, which your Majesty hath long defended, and now again rescued from the barbarian. No wavering mind in our emperor, but faith firm fixed.

143. Show forth now a plain sign of Thy Majesty, that he who believes Thee to be the true Lord of Hosts, and Captain of the armies of heaven; he who believes that Thou art the true Power and Wisdom of God, no being of time nor of creation, but even as it is written, the eternal Power and Divinity of God,202 may, upheld by the aid of thy Might Supreme, win the prize of victory for his Faith.

1: or "that God's Son is true God." "very God."

2: S. John i. 14, John i. 18; Heb. i. 5; Rom. ix. 5; Rom. i. 3-4; S. John i. 1-3, John i. 14.

3: Heb. i. 3; S. John xiv. 9; Col. i. 15.

4: 1 Cor. i. 24; S. John xiv. 6; John xi. 25.

5: i.e., own. Ex. iii. 14 (LXX.)- kai eipen o eoj proz Mwushn, legwn Egw eimi o Wn 6: S. John viii. 42; John xvi. 27-8.

7: Heb i. 3. apangasma thj dochj kai xarakthr thj urostasewj auton. 'ipostasij logoj thj ousiaj is the same for both Persons.

8: "speculum Dei"-lit. "mirror of God."

9: Jer. x. 10; S. John xiv. 6; John xvii. 3; 1 John v. 20.

10: Deut. v. 26; Rom. xiv. 11; S. John xi. 25; John v. 26; 1 John i. 2; 1 John v. 20.

11: See Ex. xxviii. 15-21. The precious stones set in the breastplate are named as follows:

12: Aaron the type of Christ the Priest. See Heb. iv. 15; Heb. v. 1-5; Heb. vii. 28; Heb. viii. 7.

13: Acts xvii. 28.

14: sc. to the name and title of God.

15: See Heb. i. 3. "Splendor" is St. Ambrose's rendering of *apaugasma*

16: "The act of knowing and comprehending all things necessarily includes the expression of mind-work or wisdom, that is, the Word, and without this it cannot even be conceived of. Rightly, then, did the Fathers deduce the eternity of the Word from the eternity of the Father."-Hurter, *ad loc.*

17: St. Ambrose's rendering of this passage (Job xxxviii. 36) agrees with the LXX.- *tij de edwke gunaicin ufasmotoj sofian, h poikiltikhn elisthmhn*

18: Ex. xxxv. 27. *kai oi arxontej hnegan touj liqouj thj smaragdou kai touj liqouj thj plhrwsewj eij thn epwmida kai to logeion*

19: Proverbs xxxi. 21 (22). St Ambrose appears to follow the LXX., whose rendering of the passage is different from the Vulgate, with which our English versions agree. With what follows in the text, cf. Ex. xxviii. 33, 34, also Ex. xxviii. 5, 6.

20: Ps. xii. 6 (Ps. xi. 6 Vulg.), Ps. xii. 7 (Ps. xi. 7 Vulg.). Cf. Prov. xxx. 5.

21: These colours entered into the fashioning of the High Priest's Ephod (Ex. xxviii. 5, 6) and the Vail of the Tabernacle. Probably a little symbolism was attached to the ornaments of Ahasuerus' palace of Susa, "where were white, green, and blue" (or violet) "hangings fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds were of gold and silver upon a pavement of red and blue and white and black marble." White and green might represent the earth, blue the air, purple the sea and water generally, in the curtains: whilst in the variegated marble pavement, red would naturally symbolize fire, blue the air, white water (as colourless when pure), black earth (the soil). Notice "the air we breathe," etc.-" *Aëris quem spiramus et cujus carpinus flatum.* " Compare Virgil, *Aen.* I. 387, 388.

22: This was supposed by some of the Ionic philosophers to be the explanation of perception. We perceived earth, they supposed, by reason of the earthly constituent of our organism.

23: S. James ii. 14-26.

24: i.e. if it is possible for Him to ascend to a higher plane of existence.

25: i.e. He is a son "by adoption," as one of ourselves.

26: i.e. He may not have as yet actually sinned, but it is within the range of possibility for Him-He is, as Hurter expresses it in his note, " *auctor malitiae si non actu, saltem potentia.* "

27: S. Mark x. 18.

28: " Sensus in crimine. " The "sense of a passage" is not something in the passage itself so much as our understanding of it. In other words, the genitive after "sense" is objective, not possessive.

29: Lat.-" non quod singularitatis, sed quod unitatis est, proedicatur. " The Son is "in the nature of God" inasmuch as the eternal Fatherhood of God implies an Eternal Son-His eternal Love an eternal object of that Love.

30: Ps. li. 4 (Prayer-book).

31: "Hath shown me good things."-Ps. xiii. 6. For the passage of the Red Sea, vide Ex. xiv.

32: Ex. xvii. 6; Num. xx. 8, Num. xx. 11.

33: 1 Cor. x. 4.

34: Ex. xvi. 12 ff.; Deut. viii. 3, Deut. viii. 4; Deut. xxix. 5; Ps. lxxviii. 24, Ps. lxxviii. 25; Ps. cv. 40; S. John vi. 31; 1 Cor. x. 3.

35: Cf. S. Matt. xiii. 43; Dan. xii. 3. The radiance of these heavenly choirs is the reflection of Him Who is the Light of the World, the True Light.-S. John i. 9; John viii. 12; John xii. 46; Rev. xxi. 23; Rev. xxii. 5.

36: S. John x. 11, John x. 17, John x. 18.

37: S. Matt. xx. 15 (the rendering in the Bible is slightly different).

38: 1 Cor. ii. 9; Isa. lxiv. 4.

39: Ps. cxviii. 8.

40: Ps. cxviii. 1; Ps. cxxxvi. 1; Ps. cvi. 1; Ps. cvii. 1.

41: St. Ambrose's syllogism appears to be: The Judge is the righteous God, the Son of God is the Judge; therefore, the Son of God is the righteous God.

42: Ps. xlv. 1.

43: S. John i. 1.

44: The reff. in §§30 and 31 are to S. John vii. 12 and i. 29.

45: Song of Solomon i. 1.

46: Song vii. 9.

47: 1 Cor. viii. 4.

48: S. John xvii. 22, John xvii. 23.

49: Bk. I. ch. i.

50: No doubts, because (1) the meaning of the passage is plain; (2) it is taken from an inspired Book.

51: Rev. i. 8.

52: The quotation is from Zech. ii. 8-"after His glory." Lat.-" Post honorem. " LXX.- opisw dochj

53: Isa. lii. 6. The Vulg. agrees with St. Ambrose. The A. V. has-"They shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak: behold, it is I." R.V. margin-"here I am."

54: S. John xvi. 25.

55: 1 Tim. v. 15.

56: Ps. lxxxix. 20.

57: Job xxxviii. 4-6; Isa. xl. 12-17.

58: Cf. the Collect for the Feast of St. Michael and all Angels.

59: Col. i. 15, Col. i. 16.

60: S. Matt. xxvi. 39 ff.; S. Matt. xiv. 35 ff.; S. Luke xxii. 41 ff.

61: i.e. human nature. Cf. "Athanasian" Creed, clause 31.

62: S. Matt. xxvi. 39; S. Mark xiv. 35.

63: Job xxii. 17.

64: S. John xiii. 37.

65: S. John xii. 27.

66: The principle common to these and other like heretics (who ignored or misconstrued many passages of Scripture which plainly declare the completeness and truth of our Lord's humanity) was that matter is inherently and by its very nature evil. Mani, there fore, and the rest were easily led to think shame of attributing to Christ a real, tangible, visible body. For the doctrines of Mani, see note on I. 57. Valentinus was a Gnostic, who lived at Rome (whither he came from Alexandria) between 140 and 160 a.d. Marcion became known as a heresiarch in the papacy of Eleutherius (177-190 a.d.). For the doctrines of Valentinus and Marcion, see Robertson's Church History, Bk. I. ch. iv.

67: S. Matt. xxvi. 39.

68: S. John vi. 38.

69: S. John iii. 8. The same word in Greek at least, serves to denote "wind" and "spirit"-the invisible and yet sensible and real air, wind, or breath being taken as the best emblem of the spirit, which is known and its presence realized only by its effects Spiritus, "spirit," primarily means "breath."

70: 1 Cor. xii. 11.

71: Ps. xl. 10.

72: Ps. liv. 8.

73: S. Matt. xiv. 28.

74: S. John v. 21.

75: S. Matt. viii. 2.

76: S. John xvi. 15.

77: S. Matt. xvi. 23.

78: Isa. liii. 4.

79: It is a very beautiful doctrine of the Fathers that Christ submitted to the condition* and experiences of our life in order to restore and sanctify and endue them with the virtue of His merit. Hence Thomassini, after the Fathers, thus discourses in his treatise on the Incarnation: "The Fathers have been careful to attribute to the Word of God" (incarnate) "not only the physical parts-body and soul-out even the smallest and most particular things: grief, fear, tears; and all the emotions: conception, birth, babyhood; all the stages of life and growth: hunger, thirst, fatigue, and sadness, in order that a remedy might be applied at every place where sin had crept in, and that, as death had corrupted all, so upon all might the water of life be sprinkled." Gregory of Nazianzus strikingly observes (Or. 37): "Perchance indeed He sleeps, in order to bless sleep: perchance, again, He is weary, in order to sanctify weariness: and perchance weeps, to give dignity to tears?" Hurter ad loc., who also cites Cyril of Alexandria on S. John xii. 27-" You will find each and every human experience duly represented in Christ, and that the affections of the flesh were called out into energy, not that, as in us, they might gain the upper hand, but that, by the might of the Word dwelling in flesh, they might be tamed and kept within bounds, and our nature transformed into a better state."

80: Such as Aristotle enumerates in the Ethics, II. ch. 4 (5).

81: Ps. xxii. 1; S. Matt. xxviii. 46; S. Mark xv. 34.

82: Gal. v. 24. (St. Ambrose has made a curious use of this text).

83: 1 Pet. iv. 1.

84: S. Matt. x. 28.

85: 1 Cor. ii. 8.

86: S. John iii. 13.

87: S. John xiv. 28.

88: S. John xvi. 28.

89: S. John xiv. 20.

90: S. John xiv. 31.

91: Ps. xxii. 6.

92: Isa. liii. 7.

93: Heb. ii. 9.

94: Phil. ii. 6, Phil. ii. 7.

95: Phil. ii. 6, Phil. ii. 7.

96: Ps. viii. 5, Ps. viii. 6.

97: Heb. ii. 9.

98: S. Matt. x. 24.

99: For if that were so, God might cease to be God.

100: Col. ii. 9.

101: "In respect of age only does a father take precedence of his son amongst men, for in regard to generic nature the father is on a level with the son, and in other respects the son may even excel his father. But where the Persons are eternal, there is no difference constituted by age. Still, as St. Ambrose acutely remarks, the names `Father O' and `Song of Solomon O' indicate indeed a distinction of Persons and mutual relations of those Persons, yet not diversity of nature-rather, in fact, suppose equality and unity of nature."-Hurter in loc.

102: S. John v. 10.

103: loc. cit.

104: S. John. v. 19.

105: Phil. ii. 6. Here and in §62 I have rendered " rapinam " in accordance with Lightfoot's rendering of the original " arpagmoj ."

106: "Surely it is clear that the Son, in respect of His Godhead, is not inferior to the Father, for there is, in the Father and the Son, one and the same Godhead. Still, the Greek Fathers allow that the Father is not only greater than the Son in respect of the latter's human nature, but also in regard to personal properties, or a certain `personal dignity O'-(ac wma upostatikon 107: Gen. xxii. 16.

108: Heb. vi. 13, Heb. vi. 14.

109: 1 John iii. 2, John iii. 3; Gen. xviii. 4.

110: S. John viii. 56.

111: S. John x. 30.

112: That is to say, it does not follow, from the fact that the Son was sent, that He is inferior in nature.

113: S. John v. 23.

114: Isa. lxi. 1. "Since the Holy Scriptures frequently, in plain words, teach the equality of the Son with the Father, and the Son's actual deeds likewise testify thereto, it is not permissible to call that truth in question on the strength of a single phrase, which we are compelled to make use of, in speaking of God, by reason of the limitations of human language. For in speaking of God, and the

things of God, we make use of terms which we employ in treating of created natures, and which on that account convey the notion of imperfection which is found only in such natures."-Hurter in loc.

115: Isa. xlviii. 12.

116: Isa. xlvii. 13. "Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand hath spanned the heavens."-A.V.

117: Isa. xlviii. 15, Isa. xlviii. 16.

118: S. John xv. 26.

119: S. John xiv. 26.

120: S. John vi. 51.

121: S. John vii. 52.

122: S. John xvii. 19.

123: Gal. iv. 4.

124: S. Luke iv. 18; Isa. lxi. 1.

125: S. John vii. 16.

126: "regarding Him as man." In the original " secundum homi nem, " lit. "after the way, or manner, of man." If the Jews had accepted Jesus Christ's teachings as divine, they would not have questioned it. But they acted as though they were confronted with one who was no more than man, and whose authority therefore was properly liable to be called in question.

127: Baruch iii. 36 ff.

128: S. John. vii. 18.

129: "In these words attention is called to the Unity of Nature (or Substance) in distinct Persons, for in the very act of speaking and teaching, the Son shows that He is a Person, but He Who speaks not of Himself, but as the Father hath taught Him, shows that He is distinct from the Father, and yet He has, with the Father, one and the same doctrine, and therefore one and the same nature; for, in God. being and knowing are one and the same."-Hurter.

130: S. John xvii. 24.

131: Phil. ii. 11 (another instance of adaptation).

132: Col. i. 19; Col. ii. 9.

133: S. John xvii. 1.

134: Phil. ii. 7, Phil. ii. 8.

135: Deut. vi. 13.

136: 1 Thess. iii. 11.

137: The act of direction is one and, correspondingly, the verb "direct" is, in the Latin and the Greek, put in the singular number 138: 2 Thess. ii. 15, 2 Thess. ii. 16.

139: S. Luke ii. 51.

140: Ps. xcv. 6. St. Ambrose follows the LXX.

141: 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13.

142: S. John i. 29, John i. 36; John xv. 1; 1 Cor. x. 4.

143: S. Mark x. 45; S. John xiii. 4, John xiii. 5; Ps. lxxxvi. 16; Ps. cxvi. 14; S. Luke i. 38.

144: S. Matt. xxiv. 36. On this place Hurter observes: "We must certainly believe that Christ, as man, knew, through His human understanding, the day and the hour of judgment-though not by virtue of the natural power of that human understanding. Accordingly, unless we are without sufficient reason to charge the holy Doctor with erroneous views, these words must be explained as meaning that Christ behaved Himself as though He knew not the day of judgment, and as though He were a servant, though in reality He was not a servant but the Son of God. And truly Christ did 'for my sake O'- i.e. in order to set me an example-conceal many titles and powers which He really possessed: thus, for thirty years He did no miracle." Cf. Bk. V. §53. "He feigns ignorance, that He may make the ignorant wise."

145: See S. Matt. xxiv. 22 and 29; Ps. xcvi. 13; Ps. xcvi. 10.

146: Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13.

147: This it is that has constituted the "offence of the Cross."-Gal. v. 11; 1 Cor. i. 22.

148: i.e. the sorrows met with during our passage through the world, by reason of human unkindness. Or perhaps the possessive adjective may be taken as equivalent to a subj. genitive, and we should render by "the wrong that thou hast done."

149: 2 Cor. xii. 9; 2 Cor. xiii. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 24; 1 Pet. iv. 13.

150: S. Matt. xxvii. 51.

151: S. Luke xxiii. 43.

152: S. John xx. 11, John xx. 12.

153: S. Matt. iv. 24.

154: S. John viii. 29; John xiv. 12.

155: Rom. iii. 30.

156: S. John v. 22.

157: Ps. cx. 1.

158: S. Matt. xxvi. 64.

159: i.e. to the risen Christ. Eph. i. 20.

160: St. Ambrose's words are: " In hoc sum natus. " It is possible that St. Ambrose understands " in hoc " as meaning " wde 161: Col. iii. 2.

162: S. John vi. 44.

163: This prerogative-viz. of sitting at the right hand of the Father-in itself is sufficient to exclude any dishonourable suspicion that the Son is a subject and servant. (Hurter.) 164: Isa. vi. 3.

165: Lev. xix. 2.

166: S. Mark. ii. 7.

167: Ps. xiv. 1; Ps. liii. 1. These words mean, not so much that a man says "There is no God" because he is a fool, because he is wanting in intelligence, but rather that when a man has left off to be have himself wisely and to do good- i.e. does foolishly, that is to say, wickedly -it is because he has said in his heart, "There is no God."

168: The "fool" (i.e. wicked man) has only said in his heart, secretly, "No God"-he has not ventilated his atheism.

169: Ps. lxxxii. 6; S. John x. 34 ff.

170: S. John v. 22.

171: S. John viii. 16; John xvi. 32.

172: Micah vi. 3; Ex. xx. 2.

173: Isa. liii. 4.

174: Ps. xxx. 9.

175: Ps. xxxii. 5; Ps. li. 3.

176: S. Matt. viii. 2.

177: Ps. cxliii. 2.

178: S. John v. 23.

179: Gen. i. 26.

180: S. Matt. xvii. 5.

181: S. John xvi. 15; John xvii. 10.

182: S. Matt. xvii. 6.

183: S. Matt. xvi. 16; Mark viii. 30. Cf. Peter's other confession, S. John vi. 69, and Martha's confession in S. John xi. 27.

184: "Without division or diminution," i.e. the generation of the Son entails no division or partition of the Godhead, still less any diminution of it. The Father is none the less God. His Godhead loses nothing by His begetting His Eternal Son. Some manuscripts have " demutatam " instead of " deminutam " here- i.e. "changed" for "diminished." Certainly the begetting of the Son can make no

change whatever in the Being of the Father, for the Divine Generation is "from everlasting to everlasting," and is necessarily implied in the very Fatherhood, the personal essence of the Father. Hurter quotes St. Hilary, De Trin. 6, 10. "The Church knows of no apportionment made to the Son, but knows Him as perfect God of perfect God, as One begotten of One, not shorn off from Him, but born: she knows the Nativity to entail no diminution of Him Who begets, nor weakness in Him Who is born." The fact is a spiritual relation, metaphysical in the highest sense, transcending our intelligence, and only to be apprehended by faith, simply as a fact-as the *arxh* , or principle, which is sufficient for us. The "how" we must wait to have revealed to us hereafter, if we shall ever be able to receive it.

185: Isa. vi. 10.

186: S. John xii. 28.

187: S. John xii. 29.

188: Acts xxii. 9.

189: 1 Tim. i. 4 ff.

190: 2 Tim. ii. 23.

191: 1 Tim. iv. 1.

192: 1 John ii. 18 ff.

193: Rev. xiii. 6.

194: 1 John ii. 23.

195: The disasters here alluded to are the rout of the Roman army, in 378 a.d., at Hadrianople, and the miserable death of the Emperor Valens, who took refuge in a hut, which was surrounded and fired by the Goths, the emperor perishing in the flames. This reverse was regarded by the orthodox as a judgment upon the Arianism of Valens and others in high places.

196: Ezek. xxxviii. 14 ff.

197: Ezek. xxxix. 10 ff.

198: The success of the Goths at Hadrianople encouraged the northern barbarians to fresh invasions of the empire, within which they from now began to form permanent lodgments, and it correspond ingly discouraged the subjects of the empire, and sapped the old belief-a legacy from paganism-in the fortune of Rome.

199: Orthodox bishops and priests were expelled from their sees and offices to make room for "betrayers of the faith," i.e. men who had apostatized to Arianism. The mingled tumult of blasphemy and foreign onslaughts is a description of the condition of the eastern provinces of the empire, where Arianism was rampant, and all was overrun by the Goths. The latter was regarded by some as the result of the former. Thus St. Jerome: "Our sins are the strength of the barbarians, our vices bring defeat upon the arms of Rome."-H. The provinces here mentioned lay along the right bank of the Danube, and took in what is now Lower Hungary, Servia, and Bulgaria. The result

of the disaster of Hadrianople was to put all these countries in the power of the Goths.

200: The Goths had been driven in upon the Roman frontiers by the inroads of the Huns, who expelled them from their former habitations in S. & S. W. Russia. A treaty had been made between them and the Emperor Valens, who agreed to take them under his protection, but the bad faith with which the Goths soon found themselves treated led to hostilities, and so to the great overthrow at Hadrianople in 378.

201: No auguries-which were taken by observing the flight of birds, as omens were by noting their voices. These observances of course disappeared from the Roman army as soon as the empire became Christian. In saying that the Name of the Saviour leads the troops to war, St. Ambrose probably alludes to the Labarum or banner emblazoned with the monogram which is composed of the two first letters of the Name Xriostoj .

202: 1 Cor. i. 24.

Exposition of the Christian Faith - Book 3

Book III.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Chapter XIII.

Chapter XIV.

Chapter XV.

Chapter XVI.

Chapter XVII.

Book III.

Chapter I.

Statement of the reasons wherefore the matters, treated of shortly in the two former, are dealt with more at length in the three later books. Defence of the employment of fables, which is supported by the example of Holy Writ, wherein are found various figures of poetic fable, in particular the Sirens, which are figures of sensual pleasures, and which Christians ought to be taught to avoid, by the words of Paul and the deeds of Christ.

1. Forasmuch as your most gracious Majesty had laid command upon me to write for your own instruction some treatise concerning the Faith, and had yourself called me to your presence and encouraged my timidity, I, being as one on the eve of battle,¹ composed but two books only, for

the pointing out of certain ways and paths by which our faith progresses.

2. Seeing, however, that certain malicious minds, bent on sowing disputes, have not yet exhausted the force of their assaults, whilst your gracious Majesty's pious anxiety calls me to further labours, inasmuch as you desire to try in more things him whom you have proved in a few, I am resolved to deal somewhat more particularly with the matters whereof I have already treated in a few words, lest it should be thought, not that I have advanced those propositions in quietness and confidence, but that I, having asserted them, doubted and so abandoned their defence.

3. Again, seeing that we spoke of the Hydra and Scylla (I. vi. 46), and brought them in by way of comparison, to show how we must beware, whether of the ever-renewed outgrowths of infidelity, or the ill-omened shipwrecks made upon its shallows, if any one holds that such embellishments of an argument, borrowed from the romances of poets, are unlawful, and, from lack of opportunity to speak evil of my faith, assails something in my language, then let him know that not only phrases but complete verses of poetry have been woven into the text of Holy Writ.

4. Whence, for instance, came that verse, "His offspring truly are we,"² whereof Paul, by prophetic experience,³ taught, makes use? The course of prophetic speech avoids neither the Giants⁴ nor the Valley of the Titans,⁵ and Isaiah spake of sirens and the daughters of ostriches.⁶ Jeremiah also hath prophesied concerning Babylon, that the daughters of sirens shall dwell therein,⁷ in order to show that the snares of Babylon, that is, of the tumult of this world, are to be likened to stories of old-time lust, that seemed upon this life's rocky shores to sing some tuneful song, but deadly withal, to catch the souls of youth, - which the Greek poet himself tells us that the wise man escaped through being bound, as it were, in the chains of his own prudence.⁸ So hard a thing, before Christ's coming, was it esteemed, even for the stronger, to save themselves from the deceitful shows and allurements of pleasure.

5. But if the poet judged the enticement of worldly pleasure and licence destructive of men's minds and a sure cause of shipwreck, what ought we to think, for whom it hath been written: "Train not the flesh in concupiscence"?⁹ And again: "I chastise my body and bring it into servitude, lest whilst I preach to others, I myself become a castaway."¹⁰

6. Truly, Christ won salvation for us, not by luxury but by fasting. Moreover, it was not to obtain favour for Himself, but to instruct us, that He fasted. Nor yet did He hunger because He was overcome by the weakness of the body, but by His hunger He proved that He had verily taken upon Himself a body; that so He might teach us that He had taken not only our body, but also the weaknesses of that body, even as it is written: "Surely He hath taken our infirmities and borne our sicknesses."¹¹

Chapter II. The incidents properly affecting the body which Christ for our sake took upon Him are not to be accounted to His Godhead, in respect whereof He is the Most Highest. To deny which is to say that the Father was incarnate. When we read that God is one, and that there is none other beside Him, or that He alone has immortality, this must be understood as true of Christ also, not only to avoid the sinful heresy above-mentioned (Patripassianism), but also because the activity of the Father and the Son is declared to be one and the same.

7. It was a bodily weakness, then, that is to say, a weakness of ours, that He hungered; when He wept, and was sorrowful even unto death, it was of our nature. Why ascribe the properties and

incidents of our nature to the Godhead? That He was even, as we are told, "made," is a property of a body. Thus, indeed, we read: "Sion our mother shall say: 'He is a man,' and in her He was made man, and the Most High Himself laid her foundations."¹² "He was made man," mark you, not "He was made God."¹³

8. But what is He Who is at once the Most High and man, what but "the Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus Who gave Himself as a ransom for us"?¹⁴ This place indeed refers properly to His Incarnation, for our redemption was made by His Blood, our pardon comes through His Power, our life is secured through His Grace. He gives as the Most High, He prays as man. The one is the office of the Creator, the other of a Redeemer. Be the gifts as distinct as they may, yet the Giver is one, for it was fitting¹⁵ that our Maker should be our Redeemer.

9. Who indeed can deny that we have plain evidence that Christ is the Most High? He who knows otherwise makes the sacrament of Incarnation to be the work of God the Father.¹⁶ But that Christ is the Most High is removed beyond doubt by what Scripture hath said in another place, concerning the mystery of the Passion: "The Most High sent forth His Voice, and the earth was shaken."¹⁷ And in the Gospel you may read: "And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare His ways."¹⁸ Who is "the Highest"? The Son of God. He, then, Who is the Most High God is Christ.

10. Again, whilst God is everywhere said to be One God, the Son of God is not separated from this Unity. For He Who is the Most High is alone, as it is written: "And let them know that Thy Name is the Lord: Thou alone art Most High over all the earth."¹⁹

11. And so the adversaries' injurious conclusion is rejected with contempt and disgrace, which they drew from the Scripture speaking of God: "Who alone hath immortality and dwelleth in light unapproachable;²⁰ for these words are written of God which Name belongs equally to Father and to Son.

12. If, indeed, wheresoever they read the Name of God, they deny that there is any thought of the Son [as well as the Father], they blaspheme, inasmuch as they deny the Son's Divine Sovereignty, and they shall appear as though they shared the sinful error of the Sabellians in teaching the Incarnation of the Father. Let them, indeed explain how they can fail to interpret in a sense blasphemous to the Father the words of the Apostle: "In Whom ye did also rise again, by faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead."²¹ Let them also take warning from what follows of what they are running upon-for this is what comes after: "And though ye were dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He quickened us with Him, pardoning us all our offences, blotting out the handwriting of the Ordinance, which was opposed to us, and removed it from our midst, nailing it to His Cross, divesting Himself of the flesh."²²

13. We are not, then, to suppose that the Father Who raised the flesh is alone [God]; nor, again, are we to suppose the like of the Son, Whose Body²³ was raised again. He Who raised, did surely also quicken; and He who quickened, also pardoned sins; He who pardoned sins, also blotted out the handwriting; He Who blotted out the handwriting, also nailed it to the Cross: He who nailed it to the Cross, divested Himself of the flesh. But it was not the Father Who divested Himself of the flesh; for not the Father, but, as we read, the Word was made flesh.²⁴ You see, then, that the Arians, in dividing the Father from the Son, run into danger of saying that the Father endured the

Passion.

14. We, however, can easily show that the words treat of the Son's action, for the Son Himself indeed raised His own Body again, as He Himself said: "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it again."²⁵ And He Himself quickens us together with His Body: "For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, so also the Son quickeneth Whom He will."²⁶ And He Himself hath granted forgiveness for sins, saying, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."²⁷ He too hath nailed the handwriting of the record to His Cross, in that He was crucified, and suffered in the body. Nor did any divest Himself of the flesh, save the Son of God, Who invested Himself therewith. He, therefore, Who hath achieved the work of our resurrection is plainly pointed out to be very God.

Chapter III. That the Father and the Son must not be divided²⁸ is proved by the words of the Apostle, seeing that it is befitting to the Son that He should be blessed, only Potentate, and immortal, by nature, that is, and not by grace, as even the angels themselves are immortal, and that He should dwell in the unapproachable light. How it is that the Father and the Son are alike and equally said to be "alone."

15. When, therefore, you read the Name "God," separate neither Father nor Son, for the Godhead of the Father and the Son is one and the same, and therefore separate them not, when you read the words "blessed and only Potentate,"²⁹ for the words are spoken of God, even as you may read: "I charge thee before God, Who quickeneth all things."³⁰ Christ also indeed doth quicken, and therefore the Name of God is meetly given both to the Father and to the Son, inasmuch as the effect of their activity is in agreement. Let us go on to the words following: "I Charge thee," he says, "before God, Who quickeneth all things, and Jesus Christ."³¹

16. The Word is in God, even as it is written: "In God will I praise His Word."³² In God is His Eternal Power, even Jesus; in [speaking of] God, therefore, the Apostle hath witnessed to the unity of the Godhead, whilst by the Name of Christ he hath witnessed to the sacrament of the Incarnation.

17. Furthermore, to show that he hath spoken of the Incarnation of Christ, he added: "Who bore witness under Pontius Pilate with the good confession," [I charge thee] "keep undefiled the commandment, until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, Which in His own good time the blessed and only Potentate shall manifest, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Who alone hath immortality, and dwelleth in light unapproachable, Whom no man hath seen, nor can see."³³ Those words, then, are written with regard to God, of which Name the dignity and truth are common to [both the Father and] the Son.

18. Why, then, should there be no thought of the Son in this place, seeing that all these things hold good of the Son also? If they do not so, then deny His Godhead, and so mayest thou deny what is proper to be said of God. His Blessedness cannot be denied, Who bestows blessings, for "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven."³⁴ He cannot but be called "Blessed," Who hath given us wholesome teaching, even as it is written: "Which is according to the Gospel of the beauty of the Blessed God."³⁵ His Power cannot be denied, of Whom the Father saith: "I have laid help upon One that is mighty."³⁶ And who dare refuse to acknowledge Him to be immortal, when He Himself hath made others also immortal, as it is written of the Wisdom of God: "By her shall I possess

immortality."³⁷

19. But the immortality of His Nature is one thing, that of ours is another. Things perishable are not to be compared to things divine. The Godhead is the one only Substance that death cannot touch, and therefore it is that the Apostle, though knowing both the [human] soul and angels to be immortal, declared that God only had immortality. In truth, even the soul may die: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die,"³⁸ and an angel is not absolutely immortal, his immortality depending on the will of the Creator.³⁹

20. Do not hastily reject this, because Gabriel dies not, nor Raphaël, nor Uriel.⁴⁰ Even in their nature there is a capacity of sin, though not one of improvement by discipline,⁴¹ for every reasonable creature is exposed to influences from without itself, and liable to judgment. It is on the influences which work upon us that the award of judgment, and corruption, or advance to perfection, do depend, and therefore Ecclesiastes saith: "For God shall bring all His work to judgment."⁴² Every creature, then, has within it the possibility of corruption and death, even though it do not [at present] die or commit sin; nor, if in anything it deliver not itself over to sin, hath it this boon of its immortal nature, but of discipline or of grace. Immortality, then, that is of a gift is one thing: immortality without the possibility of change is another.⁴³

21. Do we deny the immortality of Christ's Godhead,⁴⁴ because He tasted death for all in the flesh? Then is Gabriel better than Christ, for Gabriel never died, but Christ gave up the ghost. But the servant is not above his lord,⁴⁵ and we must discern the weakness of flesh from the eternity of Godhead. Christ's Death had its source in the flesh, immortality is of the nature of Christ's sovereignty. But if the Godhead brought it to pass that the flesh saw not corruption, the flesh being surely by nature liable to corruption, how could the Godhead itself have died?

22. And how is it that the Son dwelleth not in light unapproachable, if He is in the bosom of the Father, if the Father is Light, and the Son also is Light, because God is Light?⁴⁶ Or, if we suppose some other light, beside the Light of the Godhead, to be the unapproachable Light, is, then, this Light better than the Father, so that He is not in that Light, Who, as it is written, is both with the Father and in the Father?⁴⁷ Let men, therefore, not exclude the thought of the Son, when they read only of "God"-and let them not exclude that of the Father, when they read of "the Son" only.⁴⁸

23. On earth, the Son is not without⁴⁹ the Father, and thou thinkest that the Father is without the Son in heaven? The Son is in the flesh-(when I say "He is in the flesh" or "He is on earth," I speak as though we lived in the days whose story is in the Gospel, for now we no longer know Christ "after the flesh"⁵⁰)-He is in the flesh, and He is not alone, as it is written: "And I am not alone, because the Father is with Me,"⁵¹ and think you that the Father dwells alone in the Light?

24. Lest you should regard this argument as mere speculation take this sentence of authority. "No man," saith the Scripture,⁵² "hath seen God at any time, save the Only-begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father; He hath revealed Him."⁵³ How can the Father be in solitude, if the Son be in the bosom of the Father? How doth the Son reveal Him, Whom He seeth not? The Father, then, exists not alone.

25. Observe now what the "solitude" of the Father and of the Son is. The Father is alone, because there is no other Father; the Son is alone, because there is no other Son; God is alone, because the Godhead of the Trinity is One.

Chapter IV.

We are told that Christ was only "made" so far as regards the flesh. For the redemption of mankind He needed no means of aid, even as He needed none in order to His Resurrection, whereas others, in order to raise the dead, had need of recourse to prayer. Even when Christ prayed, the prayer was offered by Him in His capacity as human; whilst He must be accounted divine from the fact that He commanded (that such and such things should be done). On this point the devil's testimony is truer than the Arians' arguments. The discussion concludes with an explanation of the reason why the title of "mighty" is given to the Son of Man.

26. It is now sufficiently made plain that the Father is not God in solitude, without the Son, and that the Son cannot be thought of as God alone, without the Father, for it is in respect of His flesh⁵⁴ that we read that the Son of God was "made," not in respect of His generation from God the Father.

27. Indeed, in what sense He was "made" He has declared by the mouth of the holy patriarch, saying: "For My soul is filled with sorrow to overflowing, and My life hath drawn near unto hell. I have been counted with them that go down into the pit; I have been made as a man free, without help, amongst the dead."⁵⁵ Here, then, we read: "I have been made as a man," not "I have been made as God;" and again: "My soul overfloweth with sorrows." "My soul," mark you, not "My Godhead." He was "made" in so far as that was concerned wherein He was due to hell,⁵⁶ wherein He was reckoned with others, for the Godhead admits of no likeness which may be ground for classing it with others. Yet mark how the majesty of Godhead shows itself in Christ, even in that flesh which was appointed to death. Although He was "made" as a man, and "made" as flesh, yet He was made free amongst the dead, "free, without help."

28. But how can the Son say here that He was without help, when it has already been said: "I have laid help upon One that is mighty"?⁵⁷ Distinguish here also the two natures present. The flesh hath need of help, the Godhead hath no need. He is free, then, because the chains of death had no hold upon Him. He was not made prisoner by the powers of darkness, it is He Who exerted power amongst them.⁵⁸ He is "without help," because He Himself, the Lord, hath by no office of messenger or ambassador, but by His own might, saved His people. How could He, Who raised others to life, require any help in order to raise His own body?

29. And though men also have raised the dead, still they did this not of their own power, but in the Name of Christ. To ask is one thing, to command is another; to obtain is different from bestowing.

30. Elijah, then, raised the dead, but he prayed-he did not command.⁵⁹ Elisha raised one to life after laying himself upon the dead body, in accordance with its posture;⁶⁰ and, again, the very contact of Elisha's corpse gave life to the dead, that the prophet might foreshow the coming of Him, Who, being sent in the likeness of sinful flesh,⁶¹ should, even after His burial, raise the dead to life.

31. Peter, again, when he healed Aeneas, said: "In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise and walk."⁶² Not in his own name, but in the Name of Christ. But "rise" is a command; on the other hand, it is an instance of confidence in one's right,⁶³ not an arrogant claim to power, and the authority of the command stood in the effective influence of the Name, not in its own might. What answer, then, make the Arians? Peter commands in the Name of Christ,-this on the one hand: on

the other, they will have it that the Son of God did not command, but requested.

32. We read, they objected, of His uttering a prayer.⁶⁴ But take note of the difference. He prays as Son of Man, He commands as Son of God. Will you not ascribe unto the Son of God what even the devil has ascribed? Will you accuse yourselves of greater wickedness than Satan's? The devil saith: "If Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread."⁶⁵ Satan saith "command," you say "entreat." The devil believes that, at the word of God's Son, the nature of an elementary substance may be exchanged for that of a composite one; you think that, unless the Son of God prefers a request, even His Will cannot be done. Again, the devil thinks that the Son of God is to be esteemed from His power,⁶⁶ you that He is to be esteemed from His infirmity. The devil's temptations are more tolerable than the Arians' disputings.

33. Let us not, then, be troubled if we find the Son of Man entitled "mighty" in one place, and yet in another, that the Lord of glory was crucified.⁶⁷ What might is greater than sovereignty over the powers of heaven? But this was in the hands of Him Who ruled over thrones, principalities, angels; for, although He was amongst the wild beasts, as it is written, yet angels ministered to Him, that you may perceive the difference between what is proper to the Incarnation, and what is proper to Sovereignty. So far as His flesh is concerned, then, He endures the assault of wild beasts; in regard of His Godhead,⁶⁸ He is adored by angels.

34. We have learnt, then, that He was made man, and that His being made must be referred to His manhood. Furthermore, in another passage of Scripture, you may read: "Who was made for Him of the seed of David,"⁶⁹ that is to say, in respect of the flesh He was "made" of the seed of David, but He was God begotten of God before the worlds.

Chapter V.

Passages brought forward from Scripture to show that "made" does not always mean the same as "created;" whence it is concluded that the letter of Holy Writ should not be made the ground of captious arguments, after the manner of the Jews, who, however, are shown to be not so bad as the heretics, and thus the principle already set forth is confirmed anew.

35. At the same time, becoming⁷⁰ does not always imply creation; for we read: "Lord, Thou art become our refuge,"⁷¹ and "Thou hast become my salvation."⁷² Plainly, here is no statement of the fact or purpose of a creation, but God is said to have become my "refuge" and have turned to my "salvation,"⁷³ even as the Apostle hath said: "Who became for us⁷⁴ Wisdom from God, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption,"⁷⁵ that is, that Christ was "made" for us, of the Father, not created. Again, the writer has explained in the sequel in what sense he says that Christ was made Wisdom for us: "But we preach the Wisdom of God in doctrine of mystery, which Wisdom is hidden, foreordained by God before the existence of the world⁷⁶ for our glory, and which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known they would never have crucified the Lord of glory."⁷⁷ When the mystery of the Passion is set forth, surely there is no speaking of an eternal process of generation.

36. The Lord's Cross, then, is my wisdom; the Lord's Death my redemption; for we are redeemed with His precious blood, as the Apostle Peter hath said.⁷⁸ With His blood, then, as man, the Lord redeemed us, Who also, as God, hath forgiven sins.⁷⁹

37. Let us not, therefore, lay snares as it were in words, and eagerly seek out entanglements therein; let us not, because misbelievers make out the written word to mean that it means not, set forth only what this letter bears on the face of it, instead of the underlying sense. This way went the Jews to destruction, despising the deep-hidden meaning, and following only after the bare form of the word, for "the letter killeth, but the Spirit maketh alive."⁸⁰

38. And yet, of these two grievous impieties, to ascribe to the Godhead what is true only of manhood is perchance more detestable than to attribute to spirit what belongs only to letter. The Jews feared to believe in manhood taken up into God, and therefore have lost the grace of redemption, because they reject that on which salvation depends; the Arians degrade the majesty of Godhead to the weakness of humanity. Detestable as are the Jews, who crucified the Lord's flesh, more detestable still do I hold them who have believed that the Godhead of Christ was nailed to the Cross. So one who oftentimes had dealings with Jews said: "An heretic avoid, after once reproving him"⁸¹

39. Nor, again, are these men careful to avoid doing dishonour to the Father, in their impious application of the fact, that Christ was "made" Wisdom for us, to His incomprehensible generation, that transcends all limits and divisions of time; for, leaving it out of account that dishonour done to the Son is an insult to the Father, they do even carry their blasphemy in assault upon the Father, of Whom it is written: "Let God be made truthful, but every man a liar."⁸² If indeed they think that the Son is spoken of, they do not foreclose against His generation,⁸³ but in that they rest on the authority of this text they do confess that which they reject, namely, that Christ is God, and true God.

40. It would be a lengthy matter were I to pass in review each several place where we read of His being "made," not indeed by nature, but by way of gracious dispensation. Moses, for example, saith: "Thou art made my Helper and Protector, to save me;"⁸⁴ and David: "Be unto me for a God of salvation, and an house of refuge, that Thou mayest save me;"⁸⁵ and Isaiah: "He is become an Helper for every city that is lowly."⁸⁶ Of a surety the holy men say not to God: "Thou hast been created," but "By Thy grace Thou art made a Protector and Helper unto us."

Chapter VI. In order to dispose of an objection grounded on a text in St. John, St. Ambrose first shows that the Arian interpretation lends countenance to the Manichaeans; then, after setting forth the different ways of dividing the words in this same passage, he shows plainly that it cannot, without dishonour to the Father, be understood with such reference to the Godhead as the Arians give it, and expounds the true meaning thereon.

41. We have no reason, therefore, to fear the argument which the Arians, in their reckless manner of expounding, use to construct, showing that the Word of God was "made," for, say they, it is written: "That which has been made in Him is life."⁸⁷

42. First of all, let them understand that if they make the words "That which has been made" to refer to the Godhead, they entangle themselves in the difficulties raised by the Manichaeans, for these people argue: "If that which has been made in Him is life, then there is something which has not been made in Him, and is death," so that they may impiously bring in two principles. But this teaching the Church condemns.

43. Again, how can the Arians prove that the Evangelist actually said this? The most part of those who are learned in the Faith read the passage as follows: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that has been made." Others read thus: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made." Then they proceed: "What has been made," and to this they join the words "in Him;" that is to say, "But whatsoever is has been made in Him." But what mean the words "in Him"? The Apostle tells us, when he says: "In Him we have our being, and live, and move."⁸⁸

44. Howbeit, let them read the passage as they will, they cannot diminish the majesty of God the Word, in referring to His Person,⁸⁹ as subject, the words "That which was made,"⁹⁰ without also doing dishonour to God the Father, of Whom it is written: "But he who doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."⁹¹ See then-here we read of man's works being wrought in God, and yet for all that we cannot understand the Godhead as the subject of them. We must either recognize the works as wrought through Him, as the Apostle's affirmation sheweth that "all things are through Him, and were created in Him, and He is before all, and all things exist together in Him,"⁹² or, as the witness of the text here cited teaches us, we ought to regard the virtues whereby the fruit of life eternal is gained, as wrought in God-chastity, piety, devoutness, faith, and others of this kind, whereby the will of God is expressed.⁹³

45. Just as the works, then, are the expression of the will and power of God the Father, so are they of Christ's, even as we read: "Created in Christ in good works;"⁹⁴ and in the psalm: "Peace be made in Thy power;"⁹⁵ and again: "In wisdom hast Thou made them all."⁹⁶ "In wisdom hast Thou made," mark you-not "Thou hast made wisdom;" for since all things have been made in wisdom, and Christ is the Wisdom of God, then this Wisdom is plainly not an accident, but a substance, and an everlasting one, but if the Wisdom hath been made, then is it made in a worse condition than all things, forasmuch as it could not, by itself, be made Wisdom. If, then, being made is oftentimes referred to something accidental, not to the essence of a thing, so may creation also be referred to some end had in view.⁹⁷

Chapter VII.

Solomon's words, "The Lord created Me," etc., mean that Christ's Incarnation was done for the redemption of the Father's creation, as is shown by the Son's own words. That He is the "beginning" may be understood from the visible proofs of His virtuousness, and it is shown how the Lord opened the ways of all virtues, and was their true beginning.

46. Hereby we are brought to understand that the prophecy of the Incarnation, "The Lord created me the beginning of His ways for His works,"⁹⁸ means that the Lord Jesus was created of the Virgin for the redeeming of the Father's works. Truly, we cannot doubt that this is spoken of the mystery of the Incarnation, forasmuch as the Lord took upon Him our flesh, in order to save the works of His hands from the slavery of corruption, so that He might, by the sufferings of His own body, overthrow him who had the power of death. For Christ's flesh is for the sake of things created, but His Godhead existed before them, seeing that He is before all things, whilst all things exist together in Him.⁹⁹

47. His Godhead, then, is not by reason of creation, but creation exists because of the Godhead; even as the Apostle showed, saying that all things exist because of the Son of God, for we read as follows: "But it was fitting that He, through Whom and because of Whom are all things, after bringing many sons to glory, should, as Captain of their salvation, be made perfect through suffering."¹⁰⁰ Has he not plainly declared that the Son of God, Who, by reason of His Godhead, was the Creator of all, did in after time, for the salvation of His people, submit to the taking on of the flesh and the suffering of death?

48. Now for the sake of what works the Lord was "created" of a virgin, He Himself, whilst healing the blind man, has shown, saying: "In Him must I work the works of Him that sent Me."¹⁰¹ Furthermore He said in the same Scripture, that we might believe Him to speak of the Incarnation: "As long as I am in this world, I am the Light of this world,"¹⁰² for, so far as He is man, He is in this world for a season, but as God He exists at all times. In another place, too, He says: "Lo, I am with you even unto the end of the world."¹⁰³

49. Nor is there any room for questioning with respect to "the beginning," seeing that when, during His earthly life, He was asked, "Who art Thou?" He answered: "The beginning, even as I tell you."¹⁰⁴ This refers not only to the essential nature of the eternal Godhead, but also to the visible proofs of virtues, for hereby hath He proved Himself the eternal God, in that He is the beginning of all things, and the Author of each several virtue, in that He is the Head of the Church, as it is written: "Because He is the Head of the Body, of the Church;¹⁰⁵ Who is the beginning, first-begotten from the dead."¹⁰⁶

50. It is clear, then, that the words "beginning of His ways," which, as it seems, we must refer to the mystery of the putting on of His body, are a prophecy of the Incarnation. For Christ's purpose in the Incarnation was to pave for us the road to heaven. Mark how He says: "I go up to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God."¹⁰⁷ Then, to give you to know that the Almighty Father appointed His ways to the Son, after the Incarnation,¹⁰⁸ you have in Zechariah the words of the angel speaking to Joshua clothed in filthy garments: "Thus saith the Lord Almighty: If thou wilt walk in My ways and observe My precepts."¹⁰⁹ What is the meaning of that filthy garb save the putting on of the flesh?

51. Now the ways of the Lord are, we may say, certain courses taken in a good life, guided by Christ, Who says, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life."¹¹⁰ The way, then, is the surpassing power of God, for Christ, is our way, and a good way, too, is He, a way which hath opened the kingdom of heaven to believers.¹¹¹ Moreover, the ways of the Lord are straight, as it is written: "Make Thy ways known unto me, O Lord."¹¹² Chastity is a way, faith is a way, abstinence is a way. There is, indeed, a way of virtue, and there is a way of wickedness; for it is written: "And see if there be any way of wickedness in me."¹¹³

52. Christ, then, is the beginning of our virtue. He is the beginning of purity, Who taught maidens not to look for the embraces of men,¹¹⁴ but to yield the purity of their bodies and minds to the service of the Holy Spirit rather than to a husband. Christ is the beginning of frugality, for He became poor, though He was rich.¹¹⁵ Christ is the beginning of patience, for when He was reviled, He reviled not again, when He was struck, He did not strike back. Christ is the beginning of humility, for He took the form of a servant, though in the majesty of His power He was equal with God the Father.¹¹⁶ From Him each several virtue has taken its origin.

53. For this cause, then, that we might learn these divers virtues, "a Son was given us, Whose beginning was upon His shoulder."¹¹⁷ That "beginning" is the Lord's Cross-the beginning of strong courage, wherewith a way has been opened for the holy martyrs to enter the sufferings of the Holy War.

Chapter VIII. The prophecy of Christ's Godhead and Manhood, contained in the verse of Isaiah just now cited, is unfolded, and its force in refuting various heresies demonstrated.

54. This beginning did Isaiah see, and therefore he says: "A Child is born, a Son is given to us," as also did the Magi, and therefore worshipped they, when they saw the little One in the stable, and said: "A Child is born," and, when they saw the star, declared, "A Son is given to us." On the one hand, a gift from earth-on the other, a gift from heaven-and both are One Person, perfect in respect of each, without any changeableness in the Godhead, as without any taking away from the fulness of the Manhood. One Person did the Magi adore, to one and the same they offered their gifts, to show that He Who was seen in the stall was the very Lord of heaven.

55. Mark how the two verbs differ in their import: "A Child is born, a Son is given." Though born of the Father, yet is He not born, but given to us, forasmuch as the Son is not for our sakes, but we for the Son's. For indeed He was not born to us, being born before us, and the maker of all things created: nor is He now brought to life for the first time, Who was always, and was in the beginning;¹¹⁸ on the other hand, that which before-time was not is born to us. Again we find it thus recorded, how that the angel, when he spoke to the shepherds, said that He had been born: "Who is this day born to us a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David."¹¹⁹ To us, then, was born that which was not before-that is, a child of the Virgin, a body from Mary-for this was made after man had been created, whereas [the Godhead] was before us.

56. Some manuscripts read as follows: "A Child is born to us a Son is given to us;"¹²⁰ that is to say, He, Who is Son of God, is born as Mary's child for us, and given to us. As for the fact that He is "given," listen to the prophet's words: "And grant us Thy salvation."¹²¹ But that which is above us is given: what is from heaven is given: even as indeed we read concerning the Spirit, that "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, Who is given unto us."¹²²

57. But note how this passage is as water upon fire to a crowd of heresies. "A Child is born to us," not to the Jews; "to us," not to the Manichaeans; "to us," not to the Marcionites. The prophet says "to us," that is, to those who believe, not to unbelievers. And He indeed, in His pitifulness, was born for all, but it is the disloyalty of heretics that hath brought it to pass that the birth of Him Who was born for all should not profit all. For the sun is bidden to rise upon the good and the bad, but to them that see not there is no appearance of sunrise.

58. Even as the Child, then, is born not unto all, but unto the faithful: so the Son is given to the faithful and not to the unbelieving. He is given to us, not to the Photinians; for they affirm that the Son of God was not given unto us, but was born and first began to exist amongst us. To us is He given, not to the Sabellians, who will not hear of a Son being given, maintaining that Father and Son are one and the same. Unto us is He given, not unto the Arians, in whose judgment the Son was not given for salvation, but sent over subject and inferior, to whom, moreover, He is no "Counsellor," inasmuch as they hold that He knows nought of the future, no Son, since they believe not in His eternity, though of the Word of God it is written: "That which was in the

beginning;" and again: "In the beginning was the Word."¹²³ To return to the passage we set before us to discuss. "In the beginning," saith the Scripture, "before He made the earth, before He made the deeps, before He brought forth the springs of water, before all the hills He begat Me."¹²⁴

Chapter IX. The preceding quotation from Solomon's Proverbs receives further explanation.

59. Perchance you will ask how I came to cite, as referring to the Incarnation of Christ, the place, "The Lord created Me," seeing that the creation of the universe took place before the Incarnation of Christ? But consider that the use of holy Scripture is to speak of things to come as though already past, and to make intimation of the union of two natures, Godhead and Manhood, in Christ, lest any should deny either His Godhead or His Manhood.

60. In Isaiah, for example, you may read: "A Child is born unto us, and a Son is given unto us;" so here also [in the Proverbs] the prophet sets forth first the creation of the flesh, and joined thereto the declaration of the Godhead, that you might know that Christ is not two, but One, being both begotten of the Father before the worlds, and in the last times¹²⁵ created of the Virgin. And thus the meaning is: I, Who am begotten before the worlds, am He Who was created of mortal woman, created for a set purpose.

61. Again, immediately before the declaration, "The Lord created Me," He says, "I will tell of the things which are from eternity," and before saying, "He begat," He premised, "In the beginning, before He made the earth, before all hills." In its extent, the preposition "before" reaches back into the past without end or limit, and so "Before Abraham was, I am,"¹²⁶ clearly need not mean "after Adam," just as "before the Morning Star"¹²⁷ need not mean "after the angels." But when He said "before," He intended, not that He was included in any one's existence, but that all things are included in His, for thus it is the custom of Holy Writ to show the eternity of God. Finally, in another passage you may read: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made, Thou art from everlasting to everlasting."¹²⁸

62. Before all created things, then, is the Son begotten; within all and for the good of all is He made; begotten of the Father, above the Law,¹²⁹ brought forth of Mary, under the Law.¹³⁰

Chapter X.

Observations on the words of John the Baptist (John i. 30), which may be referred to divine fore-ordinance, but at any rate, as explained by the foregoing considerations, must be understood of the Incarnation. The precedence of Christ is mystically expounded, with reference to the history of Ruth.

63. But [say they] it is written: "After me cometh a Man, Who is made before me, because He was before me;"¹³¹ and so they argue: "See, He Who was aforetime is `made.'" Let us take the words by themselves. "After me cometh a Man." He, then, Who came is a Man, and this is the Man Who "was made." But the word "man" connotes sex, and sex is attributed to human nature, but never to the Godhead.

64. I might argue: The Man [Christ Jesus] was in pre-existence so far as His body was foreknown, though His power is from everlasting-for both the Church and the Saints were foreordained before the worlds began. But here I lay aside this argument, and urge that the being made concerns not

the Godhead, but the nature of the Incarnation, even as John himself said: "This is He of Whom I said: After me cometh a Man, Who was made before me."

65. The Scripture, then, having, as I showed above, discovered the twofold nature in Christ, that you might understand the presence of both Godhead and Manhood, here begins with the flesh; for it is the custom of Holy Writ to begin without fixed rule sometimes with the Godhead of Christ, and descend to the visible tokens of Incarnation; sometimes, on the other hand, to start from its humility, and rise to the glory of the Godhead, as oftentimes in the Prophets and Evangelists, and in St. Paul. Here, then, after this use, the writer begins with the Incarnation of our Lord, and then proclaims His Divinity, not to confound, but to distinguish, the human and the divine. But Arians, like Jew vintners,¹³² mix water with the wine, confounding the divine generation with the human, and ascribing to the majesty of God what is properly said only of the lowliness of the flesh.

66. I have no fears of a certain objection they are likely to put forward, namely, that in the words cited we have "a man"-for some have, "Who cometh after me." But here, too, let them observe what precedes. "The Word," it is said, "was made flesh."¹³³ Having said that the Word was made flesh, the Evangelist added no mention of man. We understand "man" there in the mention of "flesh," and "flesh" by the mention of "man." After the statement made, then, that "the Word was made flesh," there was no need here to particularly mention "man," whom he already intended by using the name "flesh."

67. Later on, St. John uses the lamb, that "taketh away the sins of the world," as an example; and to teach you plainly the Incarnation of Him, of Whom he had spoken before, he says: "This is He of Whom I said before: After me cometh a Man, Who is made before me," to wit, of Whom I said that He was "made" as being man, not as being God. However, to show that it was He Who was before the worlds, and none other, that became flesh, lest we should suppose two Sons of God, he adds: "because He was before me." If the words "was made" had referred to the divine generation, what need was there that the writer should add this, and repeat himself? But, having first said, with regard to the Incarnation only, "After me cometh a Man, Who is made before me," he added: "because He was before me," because it was needful to teach the eternity of [Christ's] Godhead; and this is the reason why St. John acknowledged Christ's priority, that He, Who is His own Father's eternal Power, may be presented as on that account duly preferred.¹³⁴

68. But the abounding activity of the spiritual understanding makes it a pleasing exercise to sally forth and drive into a corner the Arians, who will understand the term "made" in this passage, not of the manhood, but of the Godhead [of Christ]. What ground, indeed, is left for them to take their stand upon, when the Baptist has declared that "after me cometh One Who is made before me," that is, Who, though in the course of earthly life He comes after me, yet is placed above the degree of my worth and grace, and Who has title to be worshipped as God. For the words "cometh after me" belong to an event in time, but "was before me" signify Christ's eternity; and "is made before me" refer to His pre-eminence, forasmuch as, indeed, the mystery of the Incarnation is above human deserving.¹³⁵

69. Again, St. John Baptist also taught in less weighty language what ideas they were he had combined, saying: "After me cometh a Man, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear," setting forth at least the more excellent dignity [of Christ], though not the eternity of His Divine Generation. Now these words are so fully intended of the Incarnation, that Scripture hath given us, in an earlier

book, a human counterpart of the mystic sandal. For, by the Law, when a man died, the marriage bond with his wife was passed on to his brother, or other man next of kin, in order that the seed of the brother or next of kin might renew the life of the house, and thus it was that Ruth, though she was foreign-born, but yet had possessed a husband of the Jewish people, who had left a kinsman of near relation, being seen and loved of Boaz whilst gleaning and maintaining herself and her mother-in-law with that she gleaned, was yet not taken of Boaz to wife, until she had first loosed the shoe from [the foot of] him whose wife she ought, by the Law, to have become.¹³⁶

70. The story is a simple one, but deep are its hidden meanings, for that which was done was the outward betokening of somewhat further. If indeed we should rack the sense so as to fit the letter exactly, we should almost find the words an occasion of a certain shame and horror, that we should regard them as intending and conveying the thought of common bodily intercourse; but it was the foreshadowing of One Who was to arise from Jewry-whence Christ was, after the flesh-Who should, with the seed of heavenly teaching, revive the seed of his dead kinsman, that is to say, the people, and to Whom the precepts of the Law, in their spiritual significance, assigned the sandal of marriage, for the espousals of the Church.

71. Moses was not the Bridegroom, for to him cometh the word, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot,"¹³⁷ that he might give place to his Lord. Nor was Joshua, the son of Nun, the Bridegroom, for to him also it was told, saying, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot,"¹³⁸ lest, by reason of the likeness of his name, he should be thought the spouse of the Church. None other is the Bridegroom but Christ alone, of Whom St. John said: "He Who hath the bride is the Bridegroom."¹³⁹ They, therefore, loose their shoes, but His shoe cannot be loosed, even as St. John said: "I am not worthy to loose the latchet of His shoe."¹⁴⁰

72. Christ alone, then, is the Bridegroom to Whom the Church, His bride, comes from the nations, and gives herself in wedlock; aforetime poor and starving, but now rich with Christ's harvest; gathering in the hidden bosom of her mind handfuls of the rich crop and gleanings of the Word, that so she may nourish with fresh food her who is worn out, bereaved by the death of her son, and starving, even the mother of the dead people,-leaving not the widow and destitute, whilst she seeks new children.

73. Christ, then, alone is the Bridegroom, grudging not even to the synagogue the sheaves of His harvest. Would that the synagogue had not of her own will shut herself out! She had sheaves that she might herself have gathered, but, her people being dead, she, like one bereaved by the death of her son, began to gather sheaves, whereby she might live, by the hand of the Church-the which sheaves they who come in joyfulness shall carry, even as it is written: "Yet surely shall they come with joy, bringing their sheaves with them."¹⁴¹

74. Who, indeed, but Christ could dare to claim the Church as His bride, whom He alone, and none other, hath called from Libanus, saying: "Come hither from Libanus, my bride; come hither from Libanus"?¹⁴² Or of Whom else could the Church have said: "His throat is sweetness, and He is altogether desirable"?¹⁴³ And seeing that we entered upon this discussion from speaking of the shoes of His feet,-to Whom else but the Word of God incarnate can those words apply? "His legs are pillars of marble, set upon bases of gold."¹⁴⁴ For Christ alone walks in the souls and makes His path in the minds of His saints, in which, as upon bases of gold and foundations of precious stone the heavenly Word has left His footprints ineffaceably impressed.

75. Clearly we see, then, that both the man and the type point to the mystery of the Incarnation.

Chapter XI.

St. Ambrose returns to the main question, and shows that whenever Christ is said to have "been made" (or "become"), this must be understood with reference to His Incarnation, or to certain limitations. In this sense several passages of Scripture-especially of St. Paul-are expounded. The eternal Priesthood of Christ, prefigured in Melchizedek. Christ possesses not only likeness, but oneness with the Father.

76. When, therefore, Christ is said to have been "made," to have "become," the phrase relates, not to the substance of the Godhead, but often to the Incarnation-sometimes indeed to a particular office; for if you understand it of His Godhead, then God was made into an object of insult and derision inasmuch as it is written: "But thou hast rejected thy Christ,¹⁴⁵ and brought Him to nought; thou hast driven Him to wander;" and again: "And He was made the derision of His neighbours."¹⁴⁶ Of His neighbours, mark you-not of them of His household, not of them who clave to Him, for "he who cleaveth to the Lord is one Spirit;"¹⁴⁷ he who is neighbour doth not cleave to Him. Again, "He was made a derision," because the Lord's Cross is to Jews a stumbling-block, and to Greeks is foolishness:¹⁴⁸ for to them that are wise He is, by that same Cross, made higher than the heavens, higher than angels, and is made the Mediator of the better covenant, even as He was Mediator of the former.

77. Mark how I repeat the phrase; so far am I from seeking to avoid it. Yet take notice in what sense He is "made."

78. In the first place, "having made purification, He sitteth on the right hand of Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels."¹⁴⁹ Now where purification is, there is a victim; where there is a victim, there is also a body; where a body is, there is oblation; where there is the office of oblation, there also is sacrifice made with suffering.

79. In the next place, He is the Mediator of a better covenant. But where there is testamentary disposition, the death of the testator must first come to pass,¹⁵⁰ as it is written a little further on. Howbeit, the death is not the death of His eternal Godhead, but of His weak human frame.

80. Furthermore, we are taught how He is made "higher than the heavens." "Unspotted," saith the Scripture,¹⁵¹ "separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; not having daily need, as the priests have need, to offer a victim first for his own sins, and then for those of the people. For this He did by sacrificing Himself once and for all." None is said to be made higher, save he who has in some respect been lower; Christ, then, is, by His sitting at the right hand of the Father, made higher in regard of that wherein, being made lower than the angels, He offered Himself to suffer.

81. Finally, the Apostle himself saith to the Philippians, that "being made in the likeness of man, and found in outward appearance as a man, He humbled Himself, being made obedient even unto death."¹⁵² Mark that, in regard whereof He is "made," He is made, the Apostle saith, in the likeness of man, not in respect of Divine Sovereignty, and He was made obedient unto death, so that He displayed the obedience proper to man, and obtained the kingdom appertaining of right to Godhead.

82. How many passages need we cite further in evidence that His "being made" must be understood with reference to His Incarnation, or to some particular dispensation? Now whatsoever is made, the same is also created, for "He spake and they were made; He gave also the word, and they were created."¹⁵³ "The Lord created me." These words are spoken with regard to His Manhood; and we have also shown, in our First Book, that the word "created" appears to have reference to the Incarnation.

83. Again, the Apostle himself, by declaring that no worship is to be rendered to a created existence, has shown that the Son has not been created, but begotten, of God.¹⁵⁴ At the same time he shows in other places what there was in Christ that was created, in order to make plain in what sense he has read in Solomon's book: "The Lord created Me."

84. Let us now review a whole passage¹⁵⁵ in order. "Seeing, then, that the sons have parts of flesh and blood, He too likewise was made to have part in the same, to the end that by death He might overthrow him who had the power of death."¹⁵⁶ Who, then, is He Who would have us to be partakers in His own flesh and blood? Surely the Son of God. How, save by means of the flesh, was He made partaker with us,¹⁵⁷ or by what, save by bodily death, brake He the chains of death? For Christ's endurance of death was made the death of Death.¹⁵⁸ This text, then, speaks of the Incarnation.

85. Let us see what follows: "For He did not indeed [straightway] put on Him the nature of angels, but that of Abraham's seed. And thus was He able to be made like to His brethren in all things throughout, that He might become a compassionate and faithful Prince, a Priest unto God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people; for in that He Himself suffered He is able also to help them that are tempted. Wherefore, brethren most holy, ye who have each his share in a heavenly calling, look upon the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus, regard His faithfulness to His Creator, even as Moses was in his house."¹⁵⁹ These, then, are the Apostle's words.

86. You see what it is in respect whereof the writer calls Him created.: "In so far as He took upon Him the seed of Abraham;" plainly asserting the begetting of a body. How, indeed, but in His body did He expiate the sins of the people? In what did He suffer, save in His body-even as we said above: "Christ having suffered in the flesh"? In what is He a priest, save in that which He took to Himself from the priestly nation?¹⁶⁰

87. It is a priest's duty to offer something, and, according to the Law, to enter into the holy places by means of blood; seeing, then, that God had rejected the blood of bulls and goats, this High Priest was indeed bound to make passage and entry into the holy of holies in heaven through His own blood, in order that He might be the everlasting propitiation for our sins. Priest and victim, then, are one; the priesthood and sacrifice are, however, exercised under the conditions of humanity, for He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek.¹⁶¹

88. Let no man, therefore, when he beholds an order of human establishment, contend that in it resides the claim of Divinity;¹⁶² for even that Melchizedek, by whose office Abraham offered sacrifice, the Church doth certainly not hold to be an angel (as some Jewish triflers do), but a holy man and priest of God, who, prefiguring our Lord,¹⁶³ is described as "without father or mother, without history of his descent, without beginning and without end,"¹⁶⁴ in order to show beforehand

the coming into this world of the eternal Son of God, Who likewise was incarnate and then brought forth without any father, begotten as God without mother, and was without history of descent, for it is written: "His generation who shall declare?"¹⁶⁵

89. This Melchizedek, then, have we received as a priest of God made upon the model of Christ, but the one we regard as the type, the other as the original. Now a type is a shadow of the truth, and we have accepted the royalty of the one in the name of a single city, but that of the other as shown in the reconciliation of the whole world; for it is written: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself;"¹⁶⁶ that is to say, [in Christ was] eternal Godhead: or, if the Father is in the Son, even as the Son is in the Father, then Their unity in both nature¹⁶⁷ and operation is plainly not denied.

90. But how, indeed, could our adversaries justly deny this, even if they would, when the Scripture saith: "But the Father, Who abideth in Me, even He doeth the works;" and "The works that I do, He Himself worketh"?¹⁶⁸ Not "He also doeth the works," but one should regard it as similarity rather than unity of work; in saying, "The things that I do, He Himself doeth," the Apostle has left it clear that we ought to believe that the work of the Father and the work of the Son is one.

91. On the other hand, when He would have similarity, not unity, of works, to be understood, He said: "He that believeth in Me, the works which I do, shall he do also."¹⁶⁹ Skillfully inserting here the word "also," He hath allowed us similarity, and yet hath not ascribed natural unity. One, therefore, is the work of the Father and the work of the Son, whether the Arians please so to think or not.

Chapter XII. The kingdom of the Father and of the Son is one and undivided, so likewise is the Godhead of each.

92. I Would now ask how they suppose the kingdom of the Father and the Son to be divided, when the Lord hath said, as we showed above: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be speedily overthrown."¹⁷⁰

93. Indeed, it was to debar the impious teaching of Arian enmity that Saint Peter himself asserted the dominion of the Father and the Son to be one, saying: "Wherefore, my brethren, labour to make your calling and election sure, for so doing you shall not go astray, for thus your entrance into the eternal realm of God and our Lord and Saviour¹⁷¹ Jesus Christ shall be granted with the greater abundance of grace."¹⁷²

94. Now, if it be thought that Christ's dominion alone is spoken of, and the place be therefore understood in such sense that the Father and the Son are regarded as divided in authority-yet it will be still acknowledged that it is the dominion of the Son, and that an eternal one, and thus not only will two kingdoms, separate, and so liable to fail, be brought in, but, furthermore, inasmuch as no kingdom is to be compared with God's kingdom, which they cannot, however greatly they may desire to, deny to be the kingdom of the Son, they must either turn back upon their opinion, and acknowledge the kingdom of the Father and the Son to be one and the same; or they must ascribe to the Father the government of a lesser kingdom-which is blasphemy; or they must acknowledge Him, Whom they wickedly declare to be inferior in respect of Godhead, to possess an equal kingdom, which is inconsistent.

95. But this [their teaching] squares not, agrees not, holds not [with its premisses]. Let them confess, then, that the kingdom is one, even as we confess and prove, not indeed on our own evidence, but upon testimony vouchsafed from heaven.

96. To begin with, learn, from further testimonies [of Scripture], how that the kingdom of heaven is also the kingdom of the Son: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that there are some amongst those which stand here with us, who shall not taste death, until they see the Son of Man coming into His kingdom."¹⁷³ There is therefore no room for doubt that the kingdom appertaineth to the Son of God.

97. Now learn that the kingdom of the Son is the very same as the kingdom of the Father: "Verily, I say unto you that there be some of those which stand around us, who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God coming in power."¹⁷⁴ So far, indeed, is it one kingdom, that the reward is one, the inheritor is one and the same, and so also the merit, and He Who promises [the reward].

98. How can it but be one kingdom, above all when the Son Himself hath said of Himself: "Then shall the righteous shine like the sun in the kingdom of My Father"?¹⁷⁵ For that which is the Father's, by fitness to His majesty, is also the Son's, by unity in the same glory."¹⁷⁶ The Scripture, therefore, hath declared the kingdom to be the kingdom both of the Father and of the Son.

99. Now learn that where the kingdom of God is named, there is no putting aside of the authority either of the Father or of the Son, because both the kingdom of the Father and the kingdom of the Son is included under the single name of God, saying: "When ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God."¹⁷⁷ Do we deny that the prophets are in the kingdom of the Son, when even to a dying robber who said, "Remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom," the Lord made answer: "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."¹⁷⁸ What, indeed, do we understand by being in the kingdom of God, if not the having escaped eternal death? But they who have escaped eternal death see the Son of Man coming into His kingdom.

100. How, then, can He not have in His power that which He gives, saying: "To thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven"?¹⁷⁹ See the gulf between [the one and the other]. The servant opens, the Lord bestows; the One through Himself, the other through Christ; the minister receives the keys, the Lord appoints powers: the one is the right of a giver, the other the duty of a steward.

101. See now yet another proof that the kingdom, the government, of the Father and the Son is one. It is written in the Epistle to Timothy: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the government of God, our Saviour, and Christ Jesus, our Hope."¹⁸⁰ One, therefore, the kingdom of the Father and the Son is plainly declared to be, even as Paul the Apostle also asserted, saying: "For know this, that no shameless person, none that is impure, or covetous (which meaneth idolatry), hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."¹⁸¹ It is, therefore, one kingdom, one Godhead.

102. Oneness in Godhead the Law hath proved, which speaks of one God,¹⁸² as also the Apostle, by saying of Christ; "In Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."¹⁸³ For if, as the Apostle saith, all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily, is in Christ, then must the Father and the Son be confessed to be of one Godhead; or if it is desired to sunder the Godhead of the Son

from the Godhead of the Father, whilst the Son possesses all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, what is supposed to be further reserved, seeing that nothing remains over and above the fulness of perfection? Therefore the Godhead is one.

Chapter XIII. The majesty of the Son is His own, and equal to that of the Father, and the angels are not partakers, but beholders thereof.

103. Now, we having already laid down that the Father and the Son are of one image and likeness,¹⁸⁴ it remains for us to show that They are also of one majesty. And we need not go far afield for proof, inasmuch as the Son Himself has said of Himself: "When the Son of Man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His majesty."¹⁸⁵ Behold, then, the majesty of the Son declared! What lacketh He yet, Whose uncreated majesty cannot be denied?¹⁸⁶ Majesty, then, belongeth to the Son.

104. Let our adversaries now hold it proved beyond doubt that the majesty of the Father and of the Son is one, forasmuch as the Lord Himself hath said: "For he who shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of Him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in His majesty and His Father's, and the majesty of the holy angels."¹⁸⁷ What is the force of the words "and the majesty of the holy angels," but that the servants derive honour from the worship of their Lord?

105. The Son, therefore, ascribed His majesty to His Father as well as to Himself, not, indeed, in such sort that the angels should share in that majesty on equal terms with the Father and the Son, but that they should behold the surpassing glory of God; for truly not even angels possess a majesty of their own, after the manner in which Scripture speaks of the Son: "When He shall sit upon the throne of His majesty," but they stand in the presence, that they may see the glory of the Father and the Son, in such degrees of vision as they are either worthy of or able to bear.

106. Furthermore, the God-given words themselves declare their own meaning, that you may understand that glory of the Father and the Son not to be held in common with them by angels, for thus they run: "But when the Son of Man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him." Again, to show that His Father's majesty and glory and His own majesty and glory are one and the same, our Lord Himself saith in another book: "And the Son of Man shall confound him, when He shall come in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels."¹⁸⁸ The angels come in obedience, He comes in glory: they are His retainers, He sits upon His throne: they stand, He is seated-to borrow terms of the daily dealings of human life, He is the Judge: they are the officers of the court. Note that He did not place first His Father's divine majesty, and then, in the second place, His own and the angels', lest He should seem to have made out a sort of descending order, from the highest to lower natures. He placed His own majesty first, and then spoke of His Father's, and the majesty of the angels (because the Father could not appear lower than they), in order that He might not, by placing mention of Himself between that of His Father and that of the angels, seem to have made out some ascending scale, leading from angels to the Father through increase of His own dignity; nor, again, be believed to have, contrariwise, shown a descent from the Father to angels, entailing diminution of that dignity. Now we who confess one Godhead of the Father and the Son suppose no such order of distinction as the Arians do.¹⁸⁹

Chapter XIV. The Son is of one substance with the Father.

108. And now, your Majesty, with regard to the question of the substance, why need I tell you that the Son is of one substance with the Father, when we have read that the Son is the image of the Father's substance, that you may understand that there is nothing wherein, so far as Godhead is regarded, the Son differs from the Father.

109. In virtue of this likeness Christ said: "All things that the Father hath are Mine."¹⁹⁰ We cannot, then, deny substance to God, for indeed He is not unsubstantial, Who hath given to others the ground of their being, though this be different in God from what it is in the creature. The Son of God, by Whose agency all things endure,¹⁹¹ could not be unsubstantial.

110. And therefore, the Psalmist saith: "My bones are not hidden, which Thou didst make in secret, and my substance in the underworld."¹⁹² For to His power and Godhead, the things that before the foundation of the world were done, though their magnificence was [as yet] invisible, could not be hidden. Here, then, we find mention of "substance."

111. But it may be objected that the mention of His substance is the consequence of His Incarnation. I have shown that the word "substance" is used more than once, and that not in the sense of inherited possessions, as you would construe it. Now, if it please you, let us grant that, in accordance with the mystic prophecy, the substance of Christ was present in the underworld-for truly He did exert His power in the lower world to set free, in the soul which animated His own body, the souls of the dead, to loose the bands of death, to remit sins.¹⁹³

112. And, indeed, what hinders you from understanding, by that substance, His divine substance, seeing that God is everywhere, so that it hath been said to Him: "If I go up into heaven, Thou art there; if I go down into hell, Thou art present."¹⁹⁴

113. Furthermore, the Psalmist hath in the words following made it plain that we must understand the divine substance to be mentioned when he saith: "Thine eyes did see My being, [as] not the effect of working;"¹⁹⁵ inasmuch as the Son is not made, nor one of God's works, but the begotten Word of eternal power. He called Him "axatergston," meaning that the Word neither made nor created, is begotten of the Father without the witnessing presence of any created being. Howbeit, we have abundance of testimony besides this. Let us grant that the substance here spoken of is the bodily substance, provided you also yourself say not that the Son of God is something effected by working, but confess His uncreated Godhead.

114. Now I know that some assert that the mystic incarnate form was uncreated, forasmuch as nothing was done therein through intercourse with a man, because our Lord was the offspring of a virgin. If, then, many have, on the strength of this passage, asserted that neither that which was brought forth of Mary was produced by creative operation, dare you, disciple of Arius, think that the Word of God is something so produced?

115. But is this the only place where we read of "substance"? Hath it not also been said in another passage: "The gates of the cities are broken down, the mountains are fallen, and His substance is revealed"?¹⁹⁶ What, does the word mean something created here also? Some, I know, are accustomed to say that the substance is substance in money. Then, if you give this meaning to the word, the mountains fell, in order that some one's possessions of money might be seen.

116. But let us remember what mountains fell, those, namely, of which it hath been said: "If ye shall have faith as a grain of mustard seed ye shall say to this mountain: Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea!"¹⁹⁷ By mountains, then, are meant high things that exalt themselves.¹⁹⁸

117. Moreover, in the Greek, the rendering is this: "The palaces are fallen." What palaces, save the palace of Satan, of whom the Lord said: "How shall His kingdom stand?"¹⁹⁹ We are reading, therefore, of the things which are the devil's palaces as being very mountains, and therefore in the fall of those palaces from the hearts of the faithful, the truth stands revealed, that Christ, the Son of God, is of the Father's eternal substance. What, again, are those mountains of bronze, from the midst of which four chariots come forth?²⁰⁰

118. We behold that height, lifting up itself against the knowledge of God, cast down by the word of the Lord, when the Son of God said: "Hold thy peace, and come forth, thou foul spirit."²⁰¹ Concerning whom the prophet also said: "Behold, I am come to thee, thou mount of corruption!"²⁰²

119. Those mountains, then, are fallen,²⁰³ and it is revealed that in Christ was the substance of God, in the words of those who had seen Him: "Truly Thou art the Son of God,"²⁰⁴ for it was in virtue of divine, not human power, that He commanded devils. Jeremiah also saith: "Make mourning upon the mountains, and beat your breasts upon the desert tracks, for they have failed; forasmuch as there are no men, they have not heard the word of substance: from flying fowl to beasts of burden, they trembled, they have failed."²⁰⁵

120. Nor has it escaped us, that in another place also, setting forth the frailties of man's estate, in order to show that He had taken upon Himself the infirmity of the flesh, and the affections of our minds, the Lord said, by the mouth of His prophet: "Remember, O Lord, what My substance is,"²⁰⁶ because it was the Son of God speaking in the nature of human frailty.²⁰⁷

121. Of Him the Scripture saith, in the passage cited,²⁰⁸ in order to discover the mysteries of the Incarnation: "But Thou hast rejected, O Lord, and counted for nought-Thou hast cast out Thy Christ.²⁰⁹ Thou hast overthrown the covenant made with Thy Servant, and trampled His holiness in the earth."²¹⁰ What was it, in regard whereof the Scripture called Him "Servant," but His flesh?-seeing that "He did not hold equality with God as a prey, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made into the likeness of men, and found in fashion as a man."²¹¹ So, then, in that He took upon Himself My nature, He was a servant, but by virtue of His own power He is the Lord.

122. Furthermore, what meaneth it that thou readest: "Who hath stood in the truth (substantia) of the Lord?" and again: "Now if they had stood in My truth, and had given ear to My words, and had taught My people, I would have turned them from their follies and transgressions"?²¹²

Chapter XV. The Arians, inasmuch as they assert the Son to be "of another substance," plainly acknowledge substance in God. The only reason why they avoid the use of this term is that they will not, as Eusebius of Nicomedia has made it evident, confess Christ to be the true Son of God.

123. How can the Arians deny the substance of God?²¹³ How can they suppose that the word "substance" which is found in many places of Scripture ought to be debarred from use, when they themselves do yet, by saying that the Son is "eteroousioj," that is, of another substance, admit

substance in God?

124. It is not the term itself, then, but its force and consequences, that they shun, because they will not confess the Son of God to be true [God].²¹⁴ For though the process of the divine generation cannot be comprehended in human language, still the Fathers judged that their faith might be fitly distinguished by the use of such a term, as against that of "eteroousioj," following the authority of the prophet, who saith: "Who hath stood in the truth (substantia) of the Lord, and seen His Word?"²¹⁵ Arians, therefore, admit the term "substance" when it is used so as to square with their blasphemy; contrariwise, when it is adopted in accordance with the pious devotion of the faithful, they reject and dispute against it.

125. What other reason can there be for their unwillingness to have the Son spoken of as "omoousioj," of the same substance, with the Father, but that they are unwilling to confess Him the true Son of God? This is betrayed in the letter of Eusebius of Nicomedia. "If," writes he, "we say that the Son is true God and uncreate, then we are in the way to confess Him to be of one substance (omoousioj) with the Father." When this letter had been read before the Council assembled at Nicaea, the Fathers put this word in their exposition of the Faith. because they saw that it daunted their adversaries; in order that they might take the sword, which their opponents had drawn, to smite off the head of those opponents' own blasphemous heresy.²¹⁶

126. Vain, however, is their plea, that they avoid the use of the term, because of the Sabellians;²¹⁷ whereby they betray their own ignorance, for a being is of the same substance (omoousion) with another, not with itself. Rightly, then, do we call the Son "omoousioj" (of the same substance), with the Father, forasmuch as that term expresses both the distinction of Persons and the unity of nature.

127. Can they deny that the term "ousia" is met with in Scripture, when the Lord has spoken of bread, that is, "epiousioj,"²¹⁸ and Moses has written "umeij esesqe moi laoj periousioj"?²¹⁹ What does "ousia" mean, whence comes the name, but from "ousaaei,"²²⁰ "that which endures for ever? For He Who is, and is for ever, is God; and therefore the Divine Substance, abiding everlastingly, is called ousia. Bread is epiousioj, because, taking the substance of abiding power from the substance of the Word, it supplies this to heart and soul, for it is written: "And bread strengtheneth man's heart."²²¹

128. Let us, then, keep the precepts of our forefathers, nor with rude and reckless daring profane the symbols bequeathed to us. That sealed book of prophecy, whereof we have heard, neither elders, nor powers, nor angels, nor archangels, ventured to open; for Christ alone is reserved the peculiar right of opening it.²²² Who amongst us dare unseal the book of the priesthood, sealed by confessors, and long hallowed by the testimony of many?²²³ They who have been constrained to unseal, nevertheless have since, respecting the deceit put upon them, sealed again; they who dared not lay sacrilegious hands upon it, have stood forth as martyrs and confessors. How can we deny the Faith held by those whose victory we proclaim?

Chapter XVI. In order to forearm the orthodox against the stratagems of the Arians, St. Ambrose discloses some of the deceitful confessions used by the latter, and shows by various arguments, that though they sometimes call the Son "God," it is not enough, unless they also admit His equality with the Father.

129. Let none fear, let none tremble; he who threatens gives the advantage to the faithful. The soothing balms of deceitful men are poisoned-then must we be on our guard against them, when they pretend to preach that they do deny. Thus were those aforetime, who lightly trusted to them, deceived, so that they fell into the snares of treachery, when they thought all was good faith.

130. "Let him be accursed," say they, "who says that Christ is a creature, after the manner of the rest of created beings." Plain folks have heard this, and put faith in it, for, as it is written, "the simple man believes every word."²²⁴ Thus have they heard and believed, being taken in by the first sound thereof, and, like birds, eager for the bait of faith, have not noted the net spread for them, and so, pursuing after faith, have caught the hook of ungodly deceit. Wherefore "be ye wise as serpents," saith the Lord, "and harmless as doves."²²⁵ Wisdom is put foremost, in order that harmlessness may be unharmed.

131. For those are serpents, such as the Gospel intends, who put off old habits, in order to put on new manners: "Putting off the old man, together with his acts, and putting on the new man, made in the image of Him Who created him."²²⁶ Let us learn then, the ways of those whom the Gospel calls the serpents, throwing off the slough of the old man, that so, like serpents, we may know how to preserve our life and beware of fraud.

132. It would have been sufficient to say, "Accursed be he who saith that Christ is a created being." Why, then, Arian, dost thou mingle poison with the good that is in thy confession, and so defile the whole body of it? For by addition of "after the manner of the rest of created beings," you deny not that Christ is a being created, but that He is a created being like [all] others-for created being you do entitle Him, albeit you assign to Him dignity transcending the rest of creation. Furthermore, Arius, the first teacher of this ungodly doctrine, said that the Son of God was a perfect created being, and not as the rest of created beings. See you, then, how that you have adopted language bequeathed you from your father. To deny that Christ is a being created is enough: why add "but not as the rest of beings created"? Cut away the gangrened part, lest the contagion spread-it is poisonous, deadly.

133. Again, you say sometimes that Christ is God. Nay, but so call Him true God, as meaning, that you acknowledge Him to possess the fulness of the Father's Godhead-for there are gods, so called, alike in heaven or upon earth. The name "God," then, is not to be used as a mere manner of address and mention, but with the understanding that you affirm, of the Son, that same Godhead which the Father hath, as it is written: "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son also to have life in Himself;"²²⁷ that is to say, He hath given it to Him, as to His Son, through begetting Him-not by grace, as to one indigent.

134. "And He hath given Him power to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man."²²⁸ Note well this addition, that you may not take occasion, upon a word, to preach falsehood. You read that He is the Son of Man; do you therefore deny that He accepts [the power given]? Deny God, then, if all things proper to God are not given to the Son, for whereas He has said, "All things that the Father hath are Mine,"²²⁹ why not acknowledge that all the properties and attributes of Divinity are in the Son [as they are in the Father]? For He who saith, "All things that the Father hath are Mine," what does He except as having not?

135. Why is it that you recount "with insistence" and in such sincere language, Christ's raising the dead to life, walking upon the waters, healing the sicknesses of men? These powers, indeed, He has given to His bondmen to display as well as Himself. They do the more arouse my wonder when seen present in men, forasmuch as God hath given them power so great. I would hear somewhat concerning Christ that is His distinctly and peculiarly, and cannot be held in common with Him by created beings, now that He is begotten, the only Son of God, very God of very God, sitting at the Father's right hand.

136. Wheresoever I read of the Father and Son sitting side by side, I find the Son always upon the right hand. Is that because the Son is above the Father? Nay, we say not so; but He Whom God's love honours is dishonoured by man's ungodliness. The Father knew that doubts as concerning the Son must needs be sown, and He hath given us an example of reverence for us to follow after, lest we dis-honour the Son.

Chapter XVII. An objection based on St. Stephen's vision of the Lord standing is disposed of, and from the prayers of the same saint, addressed to the Son of God, the equality of the Son with the Father is shown.

137. There is just one place, in which Stephen hath said that he saw the Lord Jesus standing at the right hand of God.²³⁰ Learn now the import of these words, that you may not use them to raise a question upon. Why (you would ask) do we read every where else of the Son as sitting at the right hand of God, but in one place of His standing? He sits as Judge of quick and dead; He stands as His people's Advocate. He stood, then, as a Priest, whilst He was offering to His Father the sacrifice of a good martyr; He stood, as the Umpire, to bestow, as it were, upon a good wrestler the prize of so mighty a contest.

138. Receive thou also the Spirit of God, that thou mayest discern those things, even as Stephen received the Spirit; and thou mayest say, as the martyr said: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."²³¹ He who hath the heavens opened to him, seeth Jesus at the right hand of God: he whose soul's eye is closed, seeth not Jesus at the right hand of God. Let us, then, confess Jesus at God's right hand, that to us also the heavens may be opened. They who confess otherwise close the gates of heaven against themselves.

139. But if any urge in objection that the Son was standing, let them show upon this passage that the Father was seated, for though Stephen said that the Son of Man was standing, still he did not further say here that the Father was sitting.

140. Howbeit, to make it more abundantly clear and known that the standing implied no dishonour, but rather sovereignty, Stephen prayed to the Son, being desirous to commend himself the more to the Father, saying: "Lord Jesu, receive my spirit."²³² Again, to show that the sovereignty of the Father and of the Son is one and the same, he prayed again, saying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."²³³ These are the words that the Lord, in His own Passion, speaks to the Father, as the Son of Man-these the words of Stephen's prayer, in his own martyrdom to the Son of God. When the same grace is sought of both the Father and the Son, the same power is affirmed of each.

141. Otherwise, if our opponents will have it that Stephen addressed himself to the Father, let them consider what, on their own showing, they affirm. We indeed are unmoved by their arguments; howbeit, let them, to whom the letter and sequence is all important, take notice that the

first petition is addressed to the Son. Now we, even on their understanding of the passage, prove from it the unity of the Father's and the Son's majesty; for when the Son is addressed in prayer as well as the Father, the equality which the prayer assigns points to unity in action. But if they will not allow that the Son was addressed with the title "Lord," we see that they do indeed seek to deny that He is Lord.

142. Seeing, however, that so great a martyr's crown has been brought forth, let us abate the eagerness of disputation, and bring to-day's discourse to a close. Let us sing the praises of the holy martyr, as is fitting always after a mighty conflict-the martyr bleeding indeed from the enemy's blows, but rewarded with the crown bestowed by Christ.

1: Lat. " In procinctu, " which is primarily a military phrase, procinctus meaning "girding up" or "girdle," the expression having reference to the girding on of armour for the battle. " Testamen tum facere in procinctu " means "to make one's will on the eve of battle." The expression passed into a proverb for readiness in general. E.g. " clementiam in procinctu habere, " "to be ready to show mercy." Here, however, St. Ambrose uses the phrase more in its original sense, with reference to the impending conflict of the Goths and Romans, in which Gratian was expecting to take part, though, as a matter of fact, the battle of Hadrianople had been fought, and Valens was dead, before he arrived on the scene of action.

2: Acts xvii. 28.

3: Meaning that Paul, gifted with a prophet's insight into divine truth, recognized in these words of the heathen poet a testimony to God, and therefore had no scruples about citing them to this Athenian audience.

4: The Anakim, or "sons of Anak." Cf. Deut. ix. 2; Josh. xi. 21-22.

5: The Valley of Rephaim. 2 Sam. v. 18.

6: Isa. xiii. 22-a passage referring to the desolation of Babylon In this verse of Isaiah the LXX. has " onokentaupoi " and " exinoi " (onocentaurs and hedgehogs), the "sirens" (seirhnej) coming in ver. 21b, in combination with "demons" (daimonia 7: Jer. I. 39.-The LXX. (Jer. xxvii. 39) has " fugatepej seirhnwn 8: Odyssey, XII. 178-180, 192-197.

9: Rom. xiii. 14-"Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."-A.V.

10: 1 Cor. ix. 27.

11: Isa. liii. 4. Cf. S. Matt. viii. 17.

12: Ps. lxxxvii. 5. The R. V. renders "Yea of Zion it shall be said. This one and that one was born in her." The verse is rather prophetic of the universality of Christ's Church than of the Incarnation.

13: He could not "be made" God if we use the Name "God" in its proper sense, but St. Ambrose probably had in his mind the sense which the Arians attached to the name, as applicable to the Son. According to them, it was a sort of "courtesy-title."

14: 1 Tim. ii. 5.

15: Cf. Anselm. " Cur Deus Homo? " I. 5; II. 6.

- 16: The Incarnation was a sacrament, being the outward visible sign of the divine love.
- 17: Ps. xviii. 7, Ps. xviii. 14.
- 18: S. Luke i. 76.
- 19: Ps. lxxxiii. 18.
- 20: 1 Tim. vi. 16.
- 21: Col. ii. 12.
- 22: Col. ii. 13-14.
- 23: "Body"-in the orig. "templum." Cf. 1 Cor. vi. 19.
- 24: S. John i. 14.
- 25: S. John ii. 19.
- 26: S. John v. 21.
- 27: S. Luke v. 20.
- 28: That is, in respect of substance or natures though the Persons must be distinguished.
- 29: 1 Tim. vi. 15.
- 30: 1 Tim. vi. 13.
- 31: That is to say, God and Christ Jesus are united in the work of quickening.
- 32: Ps. lvi. 10.
- 33: 1 Tim. vi. 13-16.
- 34: Ps. xxxii. 1.
- 35: 1 Tim. i. 11.
- 36: Ps. lxxxix 19.
- 37: Wisd. viii. 13.
- 38: Ezek. xviii. 20.
- 39: "That is to say, immortality is not of the essential nature of an angel as it is of the essential Nature of God. For God's existence is such that He necessarily exists, He cannot but exist; His existence is not derived from another, but is from the power of His essential Nature, or rather is that very Nature. Not so with the angel, whose existence is a gift of God, and so the angel's existence is no part of the idea of an angel, but is a property which is, so to speak, added on from without and accessory to the conception of such a being. Hence, in so far as an angel's existence issues not of the mere force of his essential properties, but only of the Creator's Will, we may say that by virtue of the said Will, not by force of his own nature, he continues in existence, and so far is immortal, although in another sense immortality may be called a natural property of an angel,

inasmuch as there is no created power whereby he may be destroyed, and nothing in him that renders him liable to be destroyed by God-nay rather, everything about him demands that, once he is created, he should be for ever preserved in being."-H.

40: Hurter observes that St. Ambrose understands mortality in a wide sense, as including the capacity of any and every sort of change. Immortality, then, in accordance with this definition, would connote perfect absence of change. Hurter cites St. Bernard, §81 in Cant.: "Omnis mutatio quaedam mortis imitatio ...Si tot mortes quot mutationes, ubi immortalitas?" and Plutarch, in Eusebius, Proepar. Ev. XI. 12. Plutarch's view perhaps owed something to study of the reliques of Heractus. Many fathers expounded 1 Tim. vi. 16 on this definition of immortality as=immutability. This definition would exclude angels, who are naturally fallible (as the rebellion of Lucifer and the third part of the host of heaven proved)-or if they are now no longer fallible, they owe it not to their own natural constitution but to grace. In so far then as angels are mutable, whether for better or worse, they are not immortal.

41: Angels being by nature mutable, either for better or for worse, that is, capable of good or evil, and so of death, are de facto sinless, and hence need not, are not meet to be placed under, penal discipline. Or the meaning may be that the angelic nature was not created to be gradually taught in the way of holiness as human nature was.

42: Eccl. xii. 14. Hurter observes that God would not judge rational creatures, were they not capable of advance or retrogression, of becoming better or falling into degradation, and had, as a matter of fact, advanced or fallen back.

43: The Arians regarded the Son as immortal de gratia; the Orthodox esteem Him immortal de jure, with true, absolute immortality.

44: i.e. Is Christ God in the true sense of the Name, or not?

45: S. Matt. x. 24 46: 1 John i. 5.

47: S. John i. 1; John xvii. 5, John xvii. 21.

48: S. John xvi. 32.

49: I.c. S. John x. 30.

50: 2 Cor. v. 16.

51: S. John viii 16.

52: S. John i. 18.

53: Greek echghsato , "explained," "expounded." The Incarnation has taught us something about God and about man that we never knew before and never could have known by ourselves.

54: Phil. ii. 7; Gal. iv. 4; S. John i. 1, John i. 2 cpd. with 14.

55: Ps. lxxxviii. 4. See the R.V.

56: "Due" by His own and the Father's Will. Some reference also, perhaps, to the preaching to the spirits in Hades, a necessary part of our Lord's work and ministry. 1 Pet. iii. 19.

57: Ps. lxxxix. 20. See ch. ii. p. 243.

58: 1 Pet. iii. 19; Acts ii. 24.

59: 1 Kings xvii. 20 ff.

60: 2 Kings iv. 34.

61: Rom. viii. 3. Note "in the likeness of sinful flesh," not "in sinful flesh." Cf. Phil. ii. 7; for the miracle referred to, see 2 Kings xiii. 21.

62: Acts iii. 6; ix. 34.

63: See S. Mark xvi. 17, Mark xvi. 18.

64: S. John xi. 41.

65: S. Luke iv. 3.

66: Rom. i. 4.

67: 1 Cor. ii. 8.

68: S. Mark i. 13. Cf. Eph. i. 21.

69: Rom. i. 3.

70: i.e. we are not to infer from the fact that the Word became flesh, that the Word is a created being. For that which becomes is already existing-that which is created did not exist before it was made.

71: Ps. xc. i. The R.V. runs: "Lord, thou hast been our refuge" (hast been, and still art).

72: Ps. cxviii. 14. The "becoming" is rather in us. It is we who have come into being, to find a refuge and salvation in the Lord.

73: Lat. " conversus and salutem. "

74: 1 Cor. i. 30.

75: Note that it is Christ Himself Who is our justification, etc., not a certain course of life; in other words the saving power is not so much in the mere example of Christ's life on earth, but primarily and necessarily in Himself, now seated in heaven at the Father's right hand, interceding for us, and communicating His grace, especially through the sacraments.

76: Cf. 1 Pet. i. 19-21; Eph. i. 4; Col. i. 26, Col. i. 27.

77: 1 Cor. ii. 6 ff.

78: 1 Pet. i. 19.

79: S. Mark ii. 8-12.

80: 2 Cor. iii. 6.

81: Titus iii. 10.

82: Rom. iii. 4.

83: Because generation is quite distinct from absolute creation.

84: Ex. xv. 2.

85: Ps. xxxi. 3.

86: Isa. xxv. 4.

87: S. John i. 4. Observe that St. Ambrose follows a different punctuation to that of our Bible. St. Ambrose's stopping is the same as that adopted by Westcott (Commentary on S. John) and by Westcott and Hort in their edition of the Creek text of the N.T.

88: Acts xvii. 28.

89: Latin "substantia," which here seems to be used in the sense of the Greek "upostasij

90: Loc. cit.

91: S. John iii. 21.

92: Col. i. 16. See the Greek.

93: Or, "which are done in," i.e. "in accordance with, under the impulse of, the Will of God."

94: Eph. ii. 10.

95: Ps. cxxii. 7.

96: Ps. civ. 24.

97: A thing may be said to be "created" relatively, as well as absolutely- i.e. it may be "created" when newly appointed for a certain purpose, as when men were "created" consuls, which did not mean that before the convening of the centuries they were absolutely non-existent.

98: Prov. viii. 22.

99: Col. i. 16.

100: Heb. ii. 10.

101: S. John ix. 4. "In him" is, in our Bible, attached to the preceding verse.

102: S. John ix. 5.

103: S. Matt. xxviii. 20.

104: S. John viii. 25. St. Ambrose's words: " Principium quod et looquor vobis. "

105: Col. 1:18.

106: Cf. Eph. iv. 15, Eph. iv. 16.

107: S. John xx. 17.

108: " secundum incarnationem, " "as a result of the Incarnation."

109: Zech. iii. 7.

110: S. John xiv. 6.

111: Cf. the " Te Deum, " ver. 17.

112: Ps. xxv. 4.

113: Ps. cxxxix. 24.

114: Cf. 1 Cor. vii. 29 and 1 Cor. vii. 34. It seems unwarrantable to suppose a reference to 2 Cor. xi 2.

115: 1 Cor. viii. 9.

116: 1 Pet. ii. 23; Phil. ii. 7.

117: Isa. ix. 6. St. Ambrose' version is "Filius datus est nobis, cujus principium super humeros ejus."

118: S. John i. 1.

119: S. Luke ii. 11.

120: This is the right rendering. See Driver's Life and Times of Isaiah, p. 30, note 2.

121: Ps. lxxxv.

122: Rom. v. 5.

123: S. John i. 1, John i. 2.

124: Prov. viii. 23 ff.

125: 1 Pet. i. 21; Heb. i. 1, Heb. i. 2; Gal. iv. 4.

126: S. John viii. 58.

127: Ps. cx. 3.

128: Ps. xc. 2.

129: S. Mark ii. 28.

130: Gal. iv. 4.

131: S. John i. 30.

132: Cf. Athanasius, Third Oration Against the Arians, §35-"But should any man, noticing the divinity revealed in the action of the Word, deny the reality of the body, or marking the things peculiar to the body, deny the presence of the Word in flesh or judging from His human experiences and behaviour, conceive a low esteem of the Word, such a person, like the Jew vintner, mixing water with his wine, will hold the Cross a scandal, and, like a heathen philosopher, regard the preaching as folly-which is just the state of the ungodly followers of Arius." Horace, Sat.

I. v. 3, 4-" inde Forum Appi, Differetum nautis, cauponibus atque malignis. "

133: S. John i. 14.

134: The explanation of St. John Baptist's words in the Fourth Gospel is to be found, indeed, in the same Gospel (i. 27) and in the other three Gospels. See Matt. iii. 11 S. Mark i. 7; S. Luke iii. 16. In S. John i. 30, the Baptist says of Jesus Christ not merely " proteroj mouhn " but " prwtj

135: Or the meaning may be understood by reference to the fact that in the Man Christ Jesus there was seen, and felt, grace, authority, and power such as was more than earthly, more than human. "Full of grace are Thy lips, because God hath blessed thee for ever." So it was that He spake as never man spake, teaching with authority, and not as the scribes.

136: Deut. xxv. 5-10; Ruth iv. 5-7.

137: Ex. iii. 5.

138: Josh. v. 16.

139: S. John iii. 29.

140: S. John i. 27.

141: Ps. cxxvi. 7.

142: Song of Solomon iv. 8.

143: Song of Solomon v. 26.

144: Song of Solomon v. 15.

145: Or, as E.V.-"Thine Anointed" (xristoj from xriw =anoint).

146: Ps. lxxxix. 37 and Ps. lxxxix. 40.

147: 1 Cor. vi. 17.

148: 1 Cor. i. 23.

149: Heb. i. 3, Heb. i. 4.

150: Heb. vii. 22; Heb. xi. 16 151: Heb. vii. 26, Heb. vii. 27.

152: Phil. ii. 7, Phil. ii. 8.

153: Ps. cxlviii. 5.

154: Rom. i. 25.

155: Viz.: the complete section Heb. ii. 14-Heb. iii. 1, Heb. iii. 2.

156: Heb. ii. 14.

157: Particeps noster -our partner, companion, sharing all our labours (and taking the lion's share, too). Isa. liii. 4.

158: 1 Cor. xv. 54, 1 Cor. xv. 55.

159: Heb. ii. 16-Heb. iii. 2.

160: "Priestly nation."-Ex. xix. 5; 1 Pet. ii. 9. We must not understand especial reference to the priestly tribe of Levi only, but to the whole people of Israel. Cf. Heb. vii.

161: Ps. cx. 4.

162: Gen. xiv. 18 ff.

163: Orig. "typum gerens Domini"-"bearing the stamp of our Lord," marked with His mark, as a coin is stamped with the image and superscription of the king or other authority who issues it.

164: Heb. vii. 1 ff.

165: Isa. liii. 8.

166: 2 Cor. v. 19.

167: Lat. substantia.

168: S. John xiv. 10.

169: S. John xiv. 12.

170: Matth. xii. 25.

171: Orig. "conservator." This title must have reference to the present work of Christ.

172: 1 Pet. ii. 10, 1 Pet. ii. 11.

173: S. Matt. xvi. 28.

174: S. Mark viii. 39.

175: S. Matt. xiii. 43.

176: S. John xvii. 5.

177: S. Luke xiii. 28.

178: S. Luke xxiii. 42, Luke xxiii. 43.

179: S. Matt. xvi. 19.

180: 1 Tim. i. 1.

181: Eph. v. 5.

182: Deut. vi. 4.

183: Col. ii. 9. "Bodily," i.e. manifested in bodily form, in human flesh and blood.

184: Bk. I. vii.

185: S. Matt. xxv. 31.

186: The majesty of the Universal Judge cannot take its rise in or be derived from any human or any created source-it must transcend all created existences, even angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim-it must be eternal, divine.

187: S. Luke ix. 26.

188: S. Mark viii. 38.

189: i.e. no such gradation as will lead without a break from angels to the Father through the Son, ignoring the difference of creature and Creator.

190: S. John xvi. 15.

191: Latin, "subsistunt" subsists persist, last through changes. Even the ephemeris thus persists, subsists, or endures, for its few hours of life.

192: "Non est occultatum os meum quod fecisti in abscondito, et substantia mea in inferioribus terroe." The Prayer-book version runs: "My bones are not hid from Thee, though I be made secretly, and fashioned beneath in the earth."-Ps. cxxxix. 14. "My bones were not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, [when] I was curiously wrought [as] in the lower parts of the earth."-Perowne.

193: 1 Pet. iii. 19.

194: Ps. cxxxix. 7. See R.V. "Hell" is "Sheol," a word also rendered "grave." It means the "place of darkness," the gloomy underworld, where the spirits of the departed were believed to abide. It is the place from which Samuel's spirit was called up by the witch of Endor.-1 Sam. xxviii.

195: Ps. cxxxix. 15.

196: Nahum ii. 6.-The LXX. shows-"pulai tw n polewn dihnnoxhsan kai ta basileia diepese. kai h upostasij apekalufuh 197: S. Matt. xvii. 19.

198: 2 Cor. x. 5.

199: Regnum is used in Latin to denote a domain as well as in the general sense of "kingdom." Virg., Ecl. I. 70; S. Matt. xii. 26.

200: Zech. vi. 1.

201: S. Mark i. 25.

202: Jer. li. 25. The "mount of corruption" is Babylon.

203: i.e. those cities and nations and persons who have exalted themselves, lifted themselves up as high mountains, challenging, as it were, the majesty of heaven. Cf. Ps. lxxviii. 16, R.V.

204: S. Luke iv. 41.

205: Jer. ix. 10. St. Ambrose follows the text of the LXX. with one or two variations in the punctuation. What St. Ambrose renders as "vox substantioe" ("word of substance" or "voice of substance") appears in the LXX. as "fwnh uparxew" (which vox substantioe represents verbatim), and in Vulg. as "vox possidentis" ("the voice of the possessor"- i.e. landowner); in the A.V. and R.

V. as "the voice of the cattle."- uparcij 206: Ps. lxxxix. 46.

207: The text will then be prophetic of the Agony in the Garden and upon the Cross.

208: Ps. lxxxix. 37, Ps. lxxxix. 38.

209: Or, "thine Anointed." Cf. Ps. xxii. 1; S. Matt. xxvii. 46.

210: "Holiness." E. V.-"crown."

211: Phil. ii. 6, Phil. ii. 7.

212: St. Ambrose's " substantia " is, in the LXX., uposthma -"standing-ground." R.V. "council."-Jer. xxiii. 18-22.

213: i.e. how can they say there is no Divine Substance, that the use of the term "substance" is illegitimate?

214: Or to be the true Son of God, Son by nature, not by adoption.

215: Jer. xxiii. 18.

216: Cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 51.

217: The Sabellians reduced the distinction of Persons in the Trinity to a distinction of three different self-manifestations of one and the same Person, appearing at different times in different aspects or characters, as "one man in his time plays many parts." They, therefore, would mean, if they said that the Son was omoousioj omoo/sioi there must be some ousia , identical with neither, but in which both, so to speak, had a share, by virtue of participation in which they existed and were what they were-a theory which adapted the Platonic doctrine of Universal Ideas to expound the mysteries of the Godhead. It was the perverse use of the term by such persons as Paul of Samosata (condemned by the Synod of Antioch, 269 a.d.) that caused it to be received at first with suspicion even by the orthodox at the Nicene Synod in 325 a.d. The true doctrine would be to this effect, that in relation to the Persons, the Godhead is not a separate, more comprehensive entity, existing independently, and the fount of existence to each and all of the Persons-not as the Platonic autanurwpoj (ideal or archetypal man), for example, to the polloia anurwpoi (sundry individuals), but is in each of the Persons fully and completely, yet without destruction of its unity. The Godhead is a prwth Ousia omoousioi .

218: S. Matt. vi. 11. epiousioj 219: Ex. xix. 6.

220: The derivation is philologically incorrect, for ousia is formed upon the fem. of the pres. part. of einai , but for all that it embodies a certain truth, inasmuch as ousia in its abstract use denotes simple existence, without reference to conditions.

221: Ps. civ. 15. The term epiousioj

222: Rev. v. 5.

223: A reference to the Synod of Ariminum. See Bk. I. xiii. 122.

224: Prov. xiv. 15.

225: S. Matt. x. 16.

226: Col. iii. 9, Col. iii. 10.

227: S. John v. 26.

228: S. John v. 27.

229: S. John xvi. 15.

230: Acts vii. 55.

231: Acts vii. 55.

232: Acts vii. 58.

233: Acts vii. 51.

Exposition of the Christian Faith - Book 4

Book IV.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Book IV.

Chapter I. The marvel is, not that men have failed to know Christ, but that they have not listened to the words of the Scriptures. Christ, indeed, was not known, even of angels, save by revelation, nor again, by His forerunner. Follows a description of Christ's triumphal ascent into heaven, and the excellence of its glory over the assumption of certain prophets. Lastly, from exposition of the conversation with angels upon this occasion, the omnipotence of the Son is proved, as against the Arians.

1. On consideration, your Majesty, of the reason wherefore men have so far gone astray, or that many-alas!-should follow diverse ways of belief concerning the Son of God, the marvel seems to be, not at all that human knowledge has been baffled in dealing with superhuman things, but that it has not submitted to the authority of the Scriptures.

2. What reason, indeed, is there to wonder, if by their worldly wisdom men failed to comprehend the mystery of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden,¹ that mystery of which not even angels have been able to take knowledge, save by revelation?

3. For who could by force of imagination, and not by faith, follow the Lord Jesus, now descending from the highest heaven to the shades below, now rising again from Hades to the heavenly places;

in a moment self-emptied, that He might dwell amongst us, and yet never made less than He was, the Son being ever in the Father and the Father in the Son?

4. Even Christ's forerunner, though only in so far as representing the synagogue,² doubted concerning Him, even he who was appointed to go before the face of the Lord, and at last sending messengers, enquired: "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?"³

5. Angels, too, stood spellbound in wonder at the heavenly mystery. And so, when the Lord rose again, and the heights of heaven could not bear the glory of His rising from the dead, Who of late, so far as regarded His flesh, had been confined in the narrow bounds of a sepulchre, even the heavenly hosts doubted and were amazed.

6. For a Conqueror came, adorned with wondrous spoils, the Lord was in His holy Temple, before Him went angels and archangels, marvelling at the prey wrested from death, and though they knew that nothing can be added to God from the flesh, because all things are lower than God, nevertheless, beholding the trophy of the Cross, whereof "the government was upon His shoulder," and the spoils borne by the everlasting Conqueror, they, as if the gates could not afford passage for Him Who had gone forth from them, though indeed they can never o'erspan His greatness-they sought some broader and more lofty passage for Him on His return-so entirely had He remained undiminished by His self-emptying.

7. However, it was meet that a new way should be prepared before the face of the new Conqueror-for a Conqueror is always, as it were, taller and greater in person than others; but, forasmuch as the Gates of Righteousness, which are the Gates of the Old and the New Testament, wherewith heaven is opened, are eternal, they are not indeed changed, but raised, for it was not merely one man but the whole world that entered, in the person of the All-Redeemer.

8. Enoch had been translated, Elias caught up, but the servant is not above his Master. For "No man hath ascended into heaven, but He Who came down from heaven;"⁴ and even of Moses, though his corpse was never seen on earth, we do nowhere read as of one abiding in celestial glory, unless it was after that the Lord, by the earnest of His own Resurrection, burst the bonds of hell and exalted the souls of the godly. Enoch, then, was translated, and Elias caught up; both as servants, both in the body, but not after resurrection from the dead, nor with the spoils of death and the triumphal train of the Cross, had they been seen of angels.

9. And therefore [the angels] descrying the approach of the Lord of all, first and only Vanquisher of Death, bade their princes that the gates should be lifted up, saying in adoration, "Lift up the gates, such as are princes amongst you, and be ye lifted Up, O everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in."⁵

10. Yet there were still, even amongst the hosts of heaven, some that were amazed, overcome with astonishment at such pomp and glory as they had never yet beheld, and therefore they asked: "Who is the King of glory?"⁶ Howbeit, seeing that the angels (as well as ourselves) acquire their knowledge step by step, and are capable of advancement, they certainly must display differences of power and understanding, for God alone is above and beyond the limits imposed by gradual advance, possessing, as He does, every perfection from everlasting.

11. Others, again,-those, to wit, who had been present at His rising again, those who had seen or who already recognized Him,-made reply: "It is the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

12. Then, again, sang the multitude of angels, in triumphal chorus: "Lift up the gates, O ye that are their princes, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in."

13. And back again came the challenge of them that stood astonished: "Who is that King of glory? For we saw Him having neither form nor comeliness;⁷ if then it be not He, who is that King of glory?"

14. Whereto answer they which know: "The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory." Therefore, the Lord of Hosts, He is the Son. How then do the Arians call Him fallible, Whom we believe to be Lord of Hosts, even as we believe of the Father? How can they draw distinctions between the sovereign powers of Each, when we have found the Son, even as also the Father, entitled "Lord of Sabaoth"? For, in this very passage, the reading in many copies is: "The Lord of Sabaoth, He is the King of glory." Now the translators have, for the "Lord of Sabaoth," rendered in some places "the Lord of Hosts," in others "the Lord the King," and in others "the Lord Omnipotent." Therefore, since He Who ascended is the Son, and, again, He Who ascended is the Lord of Sabaoth, it surely follows that the Son of God is omnipotent!

Chapter II.

None can ascend to heaven without faith; in any case, he who hath so ascended thither will be cast out wherefore, faith must be zealously preserved. We ourselves each have a heaven within, the gates whereof must be opened and be raised by confession of the Godhead of Christ, which gates are not raised by Arians, nor by those who seek the Son amongst earthly things, and who must therefore, like the Magdalene, be sent back to the apostles, against whom the gates of hell shall not prevail. Scriptures are cited to show that the servant of the Lord must not diminish aught of his Master's honour.

15. What shall we do, then? How shall we ascend unto heaven? There, powers are stationed, principalities drawn up in order, who keep the doors of heaven, and challenge him who ascends. Who shall give me passage, unless I proclaim that Christ is Almighty? The gates are shut,-they are not opened to any and every one; not every one who will shall enter, unless he also believes according to the true Faith. The Sovereign's court is kept under guard.

16. Suppose, however, that one who is unworthy hath crept up, hath stolen past the principalities who keep the gates of heaven, hath sat down at the supper of the Lord; when the Lord of the banquet enters, and sees one not clad in the wedding garment of the Faith, He will cast him into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth,⁸ if he keep not the Faith and peace.

17. Let us, therefore, keep the wedding garment which we have received, and not deny Christ that which is His own, Whose omnipotence angels announce, prophets foretel, apostles witness to, even as we have already shown above.⁹

18. Perchance, indeed, the prophet hath spoken of His entering in not only with regard to the gates of the universal heaven; for there be other heavens also where-into the Word of God passeth, whereof it is said: "We have a great Priest, a High Priest, Who hath passed through the heavens,

Jesus, the Son of God."¹⁰ What are those heavens, but even the heavens whereof the prophet sayeth that "the heavens declare the glory of God"?¹¹

19. For Christ standeth at the door of thy soul. Hear Him speaking. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man open to Me, I will come in to him, and I will sup with him, and he with Me."¹² And the Church saith, speaking of Him: "The voice of my brother soundeth at the door."¹³

20. He stands, then-but not alone, for before Him go angels, saying: "Lift up the gates, O ye the princes." What gates? Even those of the which the Psalmist sings in another place also: "Open to me the gates of righteousness."¹⁴ Open, then, thy gates to Christ, that He may come into thee-open the gates of righteousness, the gates of chastity, the gates of courage and wisdom.

21. Believe the message of the angels: "Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in, the Lord of Sabaoth." Thy gate is the loud confession made with faithful voice; it is the door of the Lord, which the Apostle desires to have opened for him, as he says: "That a door of the word may be opened for me, to proclaim the mystery of Christ."¹⁵

22. Let thy gate, then, be opened to Christ, and let it be not only opened, but lifted up, if, indeed, it be eternal and not condemned to ruin; for it is written: "And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors." The lintel was lift up for Isaiah, when the seraph touched his lips and he saw the Lord of Sabaoth.

23. Thy gates shall be lifted up, then, if thou believest the Son of God to be eternal, omnipotent, above and beyond all praise and understanding, knowing all things, both past and to come, whilst if thou judgest Him to be of limited power and knowledge, and subordinate, thou liftest not up the everlasting doors.

24. Be thy gates lifted up, then, that Christ may come in unto thee, not such a Christ as the Arians take Him to be-petty, and weak, and menial-but Christ in the form of God, Christ with the Father; that He may enter such as He is, exalted above the heaven and all things; and that He may send forth upon thee His holy Spirit. It is expedient for thee that thou shouldst believe that He hath ascended and is sitting at the right hand of the Father, for if in impious thought thou detain Him amongst things created and earthly, if He depart not for thee, ascend not for thee, then to thee the Comforter shall not come, even as Christ Himself hath told us: "For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."¹⁶

25. But if thou shouldst seek Him amongst earthly beings, even as Mary of Magdala sought Him, take heed lest He say to thee, as unto her: "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended unto My Father."¹⁷ For thy gates are narrow-they give me no passage-they cannot be lifted up, and therefore I cannot come in.

26. Go thy way, therefore, to my brethren-that is, to those everlasting doors, which, as soon as they see Jesus, are lifted up. Peter is an "everlasting door," against whom the gates of hell shall not prevail.¹⁸ John and James, the sons of thunder, to wit,¹⁹ are "everlasting doom." Everlasting are the doors of the Church, where the prophet, desirous to proclaim the praises of Christ, says: "That I may tell all thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Sion."²⁰

27. Great, therefore, is the mystery of Christ, before which even angels stood amazed and bewildered. For this cause, then, it is thy duty to worship Him, and, being a servant, thou oughtest not to detract from thy Lord. Ignorance thou mayest not plead, for to this end He came down, that

thou mayest believe; if thou believest not, He has not come down for thee, has not suffered for thee. "If I had not come," saith the Scripture, "and spoken with them, they would have no sin: but now have they no excuse for their sin. He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also."²¹ Who, then, hates Christ, if not he who speaks to His dishonour?-for as it is love's part to render, so it is hate's to withdraw honour.²² He who hates, calls in question; he who loves, pays reverence.

Chapter III. The words, "The head of every man is Christ ...and the head of Christ is God" misused by the Arians, are now turned back against them, to their confutation. Next, another passage of Scripture, commonly taken by the same heretics as a ground of objection, is called in to show that God is the Head of Christ, in so far as Christ is human, in regard of His Manhood, and the unwisdom of their opposition upon the text, "He who planteth He who watereth are one," is displayed. After which explanations, the meaning of the doctrine that the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, and that the faithful are in Both, is expounded.

28. Now let us examine some other objections raised by the Arians. It is written, say they, that "the head of every man is Christ, and the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."²³ Let them, if they please, tell me what they mean by this objection-whether to join together, or to dissociate, these four terms. Suppose they mean to join them, and say that God is the Head of Christ in the same sense and manner as man is the head of woman. Mark what a conclusion they fall into. For if this comparison proceeds on the supposed equality of the terms of it, and these four-woman, man, Christ, and God-are viewed together as in virtue of a likeness resulting from their being of one and the same nature, then woman and God will begin to come under one definition.

29. But if this conclusion be not satisfactory, by reason of its impiety, let them divide, on what principle they will. Thus, if they will have it that Christ stands to God the Father in the same relation as woman to man, then surely they pronounce Christ and God to be of one substance, inasmuch as woman and man are of one nature in respect of the flesh, for their difference is in respect of sex. But, seeing that there is no difference of sex between Christ and His Father, they will acknowledge then that which is one, and common to the Son and the Father, in respect of nature, whereas they will deny the difference lying in sex.

30. Does this conclusion content them? Or will they have woman, man, and Christ to be of one substance, and distinguish the Father from them? Will this, then, serve their turn? Suppose that it will, then observe what they are brought to. They must either confess themselves not merely Arians, but very Photinians, because they acknowledge only the Manhood of Christ, Whom they judge fit only to be placed on the same scale with human beings. Or else they must, however contrary to their leanings, subscribe to our belief, by which we dutifully and in godly fashion maintain that which they have come at by an impious course of thought, that Christ is indeed, after His divine generation,²⁴ the power of God, whilst after His putting on of the flesh, He is of one substance with all men in regard of His flesh, excepting indeed the proper glory of His Incarnation,²⁵ because He took upon Himself the reality, not a phantom likeness, of flesh.

31. Let God, then, be the Head of Christ, with regard to the conditions of Manhood. Observe that the Scripture says not that the Father is the Head of Christ; but that God is the Head of Christ, because the Godhead, as the creating power, is the Head of the being created. And well said [the Apostle] "the Head of Christ is God;" to bring before our thoughts both the Godhead of Christ and

His flesh, implying, that is to say, the Incarnation in the mention of the name of Christ, and, in that of the name of God, oneness of Godhead and grandeur of sovereignty.

32. But the saying, that in respect of the Incarnation God is the Head of Christ, leads on to the principle that Christ, as Incarnate, is the Head of man, as the Apostle has clearly expressed in another passage, where he says: "Since man is the head of woman, even as Christ is the Head of the Church;"²⁶ whilst in the words following he has added: "Who gave Himself for her."²⁷ After His Incarnation, then, is Christ the head of man, for His self-surrender issued from His Incarnation.

33. The Head of Christ, then, is God, in so far as His form of a servant, that is, of man, not of God, is considered, But it is nothing against the Son of God, if, in accordance with the reality of His flesh, He is like unto men, whilst in regard of His Godhead He is one with the Father, for by this account of Him we do not take aught from His sovereignty, but attribute compassion to Him.

34. But who can with a good conscience deny the one Godhead of the Father and the Son, when our Lord, to complete His teaching for His disciples, said: "That they may be one, even as we also are one."²⁸ The record stands for witness to the Faith, though Arians turn it aside to suit their heresy; for, inasmuch as they cannot deny the Unity so often spoken of, they endeavour to diminish it, in order that the Unity of Godhead subsisting between the Father and the Son may seem to be such as is unity of devotion and faith amongst men, though even amongst men themselves community of nature makes unity thereof.

35. Thus with abundant clearness we disprove the objection commonly raised by Arians, in order to loosen the Divine Unity, on the ground that it is written: "But he who planteth and he who watereth are one." This passage the Arians, if they were wise, would not quote against us; for how can they deny that the Father and the Son are One, if Paul and Apollos are one, both in nature and in faith? At the same time, we do grant that these cannot be one throughout, in all relations, because things human cannot bear comparison with things divine.²⁹

36. No separation, then, is to be made of the Word from God the Father, no separation in power, no separation in wisdom, by reason of the Unity of the Divine Substance. Again, God the Father is in the Son, as we oftentimes find it written, yet [He dwells in the Son] not as sanctifying one who lacks sanctification, nor as filling a void, for the power of God knows no void. Nor, again, is the power of the one increased by the power of the other, for there are not two powers, but one Power; nor does Godhead entertain Godhead, for there are not two Godheads, but one Godhead. We, contrariwise, shall be One in Christ through Power received [from another] and dwelling in us.

37. The letter [of the unity] is common, but the Substance of God and the substance of man are different. We shall be, the Father and the Son. [already] are, one; we shall be one by grace, the Son is so by substance. Again, unity by conjunction is one thing, unity by nature another. Finally, observe what it is that Scripture hath already recorded: "That they may all be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee."³⁰

38. Mark now that He said not "Thou in us, and we in Thee," but "Thou in Me, and I in Thee," to place Himself apart from His creatures. Further He added: "that they also may be in Us," in order to separate here His dignity and His Father's from us, that our union in the Father and the Son may appear the issue, not of nature, but of grace, whilst with regard to the unity of the Father and the Son it may be believed that the Son has not received this by grace, but possesses by natural

right of His Sonship.

Chapter IV. The passage quoted adversely by heretics, namely, "The Son can do nothing of Himself," is first explained from the words which follow; then, the text being examined, word by word, their acceptance in the Arian sense is shown to be impossible without incurring the charge of impiety or absurdity, the proof resting chiefly on the creation of the world and certain miracles of Christ.

39. Again, another objection that the Arians bring up, denying that the Power of the Father and the Son can be one and the same, is rested on His saying: "Verily, verily, I say unto you; the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He hath seen the Father doing."³¹ And therefore they affirm that the Son has done nothing of Himself, and can do nothing, save what He hath seen the Father doing.

40. O wise foreknowledge of the arguments of unbelievers, which made further provision of means whereby to answer questions, by adding the words that follow: "For whatsoever the Father doeth, the same doeth the Son also, in like fashion,"³² for this indeed is the sequel. Why, then, is it written: "The Son doeth the same things," and not "such like things," but that thou mightest judge that in the Son there is unity in the Father's works, not imitation of them?

41. But to put their proofs in turn upon trial: I would have them answer the question, whether the Son sees the works of the Father. Does He see, I ask, or not? If He sees them, then He also does them; if He does them, let heretics cease to deny the omnipotence of Him Whom they confess able to do all things that He has seen the Father doing.

42. But what are we to understand by "hath seen"? Has the Son any need of bodily eyes? Nay, if they will affirm this of the Son, they will make out in the Father also a need of bodily activity,³³ in order that the Son may see that which He Himself is to do.

43. Furthermore, what mean the words: "The Son can do nothing of Himself"? Let us put this question, and debate it. Now is there anything impossible to God's Power and Wisdom? These, observe, are names of the Son of God, Whose Might is certainly not a gift received from another, but just as He is the Life,³⁴ not depending upon another's quickening action, but Himself quickening others, because He is the Life; so also He is Wisdom,³⁵ not as one that is ignorant acquiring wisdom, but making others wise from His own store; so, too, He is Power,³⁶ not as having through weakness obtained increase of strength, but being Himself Power, and bestowing power upon the strong.

44. How, then, does Power assert, as it were, under oath: "Verily, verily I say unto you," which means: "Of a truth, of a truth, I tell you"?³⁷ Truly, then, Thou speakest, Lord Jesus, and dost affirm, repeating indeed thy solemn declaration, that Thou canst do nothing, save what Thou hast seen the Father doing. Thou didst make the universe. Did Thy Father then make another universe, for Thee to take as a model? So must Thy blasphemers confess that there are two, or a multitude of universes, as philosophers affirm, and thus also entangle themselves in this heathen error,³⁸ or, if they will follow the truth, let them say that what Thou hast made, Thou didst make, without any pattern.

45. Tell me, Lord, when Thou sawest Thy Father incarnate, and walking upon the sea, for I know not, I hold it impious to believe this thing of the Father, knowing that Thou only hast taken our flesh upon Thee. When sawest Thou the Father at a marriage-feast, turning water into wine?³⁹ Nay, but I have read that Thou alone art the only Son, begotten of the Father. I have been taught that Thou alone, in the mystery of the Incarnation, wast born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin. The things, then, which we have cited as Thy doings, the Father did not, but Thou alone, without guidance of any work done by Thy Father, for the purchase of the world's salvation with Thy Blood, didst come forth spotless from the Virgin's womb.

46. When they say, "The Son can do nothing of Himself," they indeed except nothing, so that one blasphemer has even said: "He cannot make even a gnat,"⁴⁰ mocking with so headstrong profanity and with insolence so overweening the majesty of Supreme Power; yet perhaps they may think the mystery of Thine Incarnate Life a needful exception. But say, Lord Jesu, what earth the Father made without Thee. For without Thee He made no heaven, seeing that it is written: "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established."

47. But neither did the Father make the earth without Thee, for it is written: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made."⁴¹ For if the Father made aught without Thee, God the Word, then not all things were made by the Word, and the Evangelist lies. Whereas if all things were made by the Word, and if by Thee all things begin to be, which before were not, then surely Thou Thyself, of Thyself, hast made what Thou didst not see made by the Father; though perchance our adversaries may have recourse to that theory of Plato, and place before Thee the ideas supposed by philosophers, which, indeed, we know have been exploded by philosophers themselves. On the other hand, if Thou Thyself hast of Thyself made all things, vain are the assertions of the unbelieving, which ascribe progress in learning to the Maker of all, Who of Himself supplies the teaching of His craft.

48. But if heretics deny that either the heavens or the earth were made by Thee, let them take heed into what a gulf they are by their own madness hurling themselves, seeing that it is written: "Perish the gods, which have not made heaven and earth."⁴² Shall He then perish, O Arian, Who has found and saved that which had perished? But to purpose.

Chapter V.

Continuing the exposition of the disputed passage, which he had begun, Ambrose brings forward four reasons why we affirm that something cannot be, and shows that the first three fail to apply to Christ, and infers that the only reason why the Son can do nothing of Himself is His Unity in Power with the Father.

49. In what sense can the Son do nothing of Himself? Let us ask what it is that He cannot do. There are many different sorts of impossibilities. One thing is naturally impossible, another is naturally possible, but impossible by reason of some weakness. Again, there are things which are rendered possible by strength, impossible by unskilfulness or weakness, of body and mind. Further, there are things which it is impossible to change, by reason of the law of an unchangeable purpose, the endurance of a firm will, and, again, faithfulness in friendship.

50. To make this clearer, let us consider the matter in the light of examples. It is impossible for a bird to pursue a course of learning in any science or become trained to any art: it is impossible for

a stone to move in any direction, inasmuch as it can only be moved by the motion of another body. Of itself, then, a stone is incapable of moving, and passing from its place. Again, an eagle cannot be taught in the ways of human learning.

51. It is, to take another example, impossible for a sick man to do a strong man's work; but in this case the reason of the impossibility is of a different kind, for the man is rendered unable, by sickness, to do what he is naturally capable of doing. In this case, then, the cause of the impossibility is sickness, and this kind of impossibility is different from the first, since the man is hindered by bodily weakness from the possibility of doing.⁴³

52. Again, there is a third cause of impossibility. A man may be naturally capable, and his bodily health may allow of his doing some work, which he is yet unable to do by reason of want of skill, or because his rank in life disqualifies him; because, that is, he lacks the required learning or is a slave.⁴⁴

53. Which of these three different causes of impossibility, think you, which we have enumerated (setting aside the fourth) can we meetly assign to the case of the Son of God? Is He naturally insensible and immovable, like a stone? He is indeed a stone of stumbling to the wicked, a cornerstone for the faithful;⁴⁵ but He is not insensible, upon Whom the faithful affection of sentient peoples are stayed. He is not an immovable rock, "for they drank of a Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."⁴⁶ The work of the Father, then, is not rendered impossible to Christ by diversity of nature.

54. Perchance we may suppose some things were made impossible for Him by reason of weakness. But He was not weakly Who could heal the weaknesses of others by His word of authority. Seemed He weak when bidding the paralytic take up his bed and walk?⁴⁷ He charged the man to perform an action of which health was the necessary condition, even whilst the patient Was yet praying a remedy for his disease. Not weak was the Lord of hosts when He gave sight to the blind,⁴⁸ made the crooked to stand upright, raised the dead to life,⁴⁹ anticipated the effects of medicine at our prayers, and cured them that besought Him, and when to touch the fringe of His robe was to be purified.⁵⁰

55. Unless, peradventure, you thought it was weakness, you wretches, when you saw His wounds. Truly, they were wounds piercing His Body, but there was no weakness betokened by that wound, whence flowed the Life of all, and therefore was it that the prophet said: "By His stripes we are healed."⁵¹ Was He, then, Who was not weak in the hour when He was wounded, weak in regard of His Sovereignty? How, then, I ask? When He commanded the devils, and forgave the offences of sinners?⁵² Or when He made entreaty to the Father?

56. Here, indeed, our adversaries may perchance enquire: "How can the Father and the Son be One, if the Son at one time commands, at another entreats?" True, They are One; true also, He both commands and prays: yet whilst in the hour when He commands He is not alone, so also in the hour of prayer He is not weak. He is not alone, for whatsoever things the Father doeth, the same things doeth the Son also, in like manner. He is not weak, for though in the flesh He suffered weakness for our sins yet that was the chastisement of our peace upon Him,⁵³ not lack of sovereign Power in Himself.

57. Moreover, that thou mayest know that it is after His Manhood that He entreats, and in virtue of His Godhead that He commands, it is written for thee in the Gospel that He said to Peter: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."⁵⁴ To the same Apostle, again, when on a former occasion he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," He made answer: "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build My Church, and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."⁵⁵ Could He not, then, strengthen the faith of the man to whom, acting on His own authority, He gave the kingdom, whom He called the Rock, thereby declaring him to be the foundation of the Church? Consider, then, the manner of His entreaty, the occasions of His commanding. He entreats, when He is shown to us as on the eve of suffering: He commands, when He is believed to be the Son of God.

58. We see, then, that two sorts of impossibility furnish no explanation,⁵⁶ inasmuch as the Power of God can be neither insensible nor weakly. Will you then proffer the third kind [as an account of the matter], namely, that He can do nothing, just as an unskilled apprentice can do nothing without his master's instructions, or a slave can do nothing without his lord. Then didst Thou speak falsely, Lord Jesu, in calling Thyself Master and Lord, and Thou didst deceive Thy disciples by Thy words: "Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am."⁵⁷ Nay, but Thou, O Truth, wouldst never have deceived men, least of all them whom Thou didst call friends.⁵⁸

59. Yet if our enemies sunder Thee from the Creator, as being unskilled, let them see how they affirm that skill was lacking to Thee, that is to say, to the Divine Wisdom; for all that, however, they cannot divide the unity of substance that Thou hast with the Father. It is not, indeed, by nature, but by reason of ignorance, that the difference exists between the craftsman and the unskilled; but neither is handicraft attributable to the Father, nor ignorance to Thee, for there is no such thing as ignorant wisdom.

60. Therefore, if insensibility is no attribute of the Son, and if neither weakness, nor ignorance, nor servility, let unbelievers put it to their minds for meditation that both by nature and sovereignty the Son is One with the Father, and by its working His power is not at cross-purpose with the Father, inasmuch as "all things that the Father hath done, the Son doeth likewise," for no one can do in like fashion the same work that another has done, unless he shares in the unity of the same nature, whilst he is also not inferior in method of working.

61. Yet I would still enquire what it is that the Son cannot do, unless He see the Father doing it. I will take the fool's line, and propound some examples drawn from things of a lower world. "I am become a fool; ye have compelled me."⁵⁹ What indeed is more foolish than to debate over the majesty of God, which rather occasions questionings, than godly instruction which is in faith.⁶⁰ But to arguments let arguments reply; let words make answer to them, but love to us, the love which is in God, issuing of a pure heart and good conscience and faith unfeigned. And so I stickle not to introduce even the ludicrous for the confutation of so vain a thesis.

62. How, then, does the Son see the Father? A horse sees a painting, which naturally it is unable to imitate. Not thus does the Son behold the Father. A child sees the work of a grown man, but he cannot reproduce it; certainly not thus, again, does the Son see the Father.

63. If, then, the Son can, by virtue of a common hidden power of the same nature which He has with the Father, both see and act in an invisible manner, and by the fulness of His Godhead

execute every decree of His Will, what remains for us but to believe that the Son, by reason of indivisible unity of power, does nothing, save what He has seen the Father doing, forasmuch as because of His incomparable love the Son does nothing of Himself, since He wills nothing that is against His Father's Will? Which truly is the proof not of weakness but of unity.⁶¹

Chapter VI. The fourth kind of impossibility (§49) is now taken into consideration, and it is shown that the Son does nothing that the Father approves not, there being between Them perfect unity of will and power.

64. The Son, moreover, to consider now our fourth premiss, is not self-assertive, for He, the Divine Assessor,⁶² hath done nought that is not in agreement with His Father's Will. Further, the Father hath seen the things that the Son made, and pronounced them very good; for so it is written in Genesis: "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good."⁶³

65. Now, did the Father say on that occasion, "Let there be such light as I Myself have made," or "Let there be light"-light having as yet not existed; or did the Son ask what sort of light the Father made?⁶⁴ Nay, the Son made light, according to His own Will, and so far in accordance with the Father's good pleasure, that He approved. It is of new, original work by the Son that the place speaks.

66. Again, if, as Arian, expositions of the Scriptures make out, it is a discredit to the Son to have made what He saw, whereas the Scriptures present Him as having made what He [before] saw not, and to have given being to things which as yet were not, what should they say of the Father, Who praised that He had seen, as though He could not have foreseen the things that were to be made?

67. The Son, therefore, sees the Father's work in like manner as the Father sees the Son's, and the Father praises not the work as one would praise work of another's doing, but recognizes it as His own, for "whatsoever things the Father hath done, the same doeth the Son, in like manner." [So was it written, that] you might understand one and the same work to be the work both of the Father and of the Son. And thus the Son does nothing save what is approved of by the Father, praised by the Father, willed by the Father, because His whole Being is of the Father; and He is not as the created being, which commits many faults, oftentimes offending the Will of its Creator, in lusting after and falling into sin. Nought, then, is of the Son's doing, save what is pleasing to the Father, forasmuch as one Will, one Purpose, is Theirs, one true Love, one effect of action.

68. Furthermore, to prove to you that it comes of Love, that the Son can do nothing of Himself save what He hath seen the Father doing, the Apostle has added to the words, "Whatsoever the Father hath done, the same things doeth the Son also, in like manner," this reason: "For the Father loveth the Son," and thus Scripture refers the Son's inability to do, whereof it testifies, to unity in Love that suffers no separation or disagreement.

69. But if the inseparableness of the Persons in Love rest, as it truly does, upon [identity of] nature, thou surely they are also inseparable, for the same reason, in action, and it is impossible that the work of the Son should not be in agreement with the Father's Will, when what the Son works, the Father works also, and what the Father works, the Son works also, and what the Son speaks, the Father speaks also, as it is written: "My Father, Who dwelleth in Me, He it is that speaketh, and the

works that I do He Himself doeth."⁶⁵ For the Father appointed nought save by the exercise of His Power and Wisdom, forasmuch as He made all things wisely, as it is written: "In wisdom hast Thou made them all"⁶⁶ and likewise, God the Word made nought without the Father's participation.

70. Not without the Father does He work; not without His Father's Will did He offer Himself for that most holy Passion, the Victim slain for the salvation of the whole world;⁶⁷ not without His Father's Will concurring did He raise the dead to life. For example, when He was at the point to raise Lazarus to life, He lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank Thee, for that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou dost always hear Me, but for the sake of the multitude that standeth round I spake, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me,"⁶⁸ in order that, though speaking agreeably to His assumed character of man, in the flesh,⁶⁹ He might still express His oneness with the Father in will and operation, in that the Father hears all and sees all that the Son wills, and therefore also the Father sees the Son's doings, hears the utterances of His Will, for the Son made no request, and yet said that He had been heard.

71. Again, we cannot suppose that the Father hears not all, whatsoever the Son's will resolves; and to show that He is always heard by the Father, not as a servant, not as a prophet, but as Son, He said: "And I knew that Thou dost always hear Me, but for the sake of the multitude which standeth round I spake, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

72. It is for our sakes, therefore, that He renders thanks, lest we should suppose that the Father and the Son are one and the same Person, when we hear of one and the same work being wrought by the Father and the Son. Further, to show us that His rendering of thanks had not been the tribute due from one wanting in power, that, on the contrary, He, as Son of God, ever claimed for Himself the possession of divine authority, He cried, "Lazarus, come forth." Here, surely, is the voice of command, not of prayer.

Chapter VII. The doctrine had in view for enforcement is corroborated by the truth that the Son is the Word of the Father-the Word, not in the sense in which we understand the term, but a living and active Word. This being so, we cannot deny Him to be of the same Will, Power, and Substance with the Father.

73. To return, however, to what we had in hand before, and finish the task set before us. The Son, as the Word, carries out His Father's Will. Now, a word, as we understand and use it, is an utterance. There are syllables and sounds, which, however, are not at variance with the thought of our mind, and what we apprehend and are affected by inwardly we give token of by the testimony of the spoken word, which, as it were, works [for us]. But the words we speak have no direct efficacy in themselves, it is the Word of God alone, which is neither an utterance, nor an "inward concept," as they call it, but works efficaciously, is living, and has healing power.

74. Wouldst thou know what is the nature of the Word-hear the Scriptures. "For the Word of God is living and mighty, yea, working effectually, sharp and keener than any the sharpest sword, piercing even to the sundering of soul and spirit, of limbs and marrow."⁷⁰

75. Hearest thou, then, the Word of God, and wilt separate Him from the Father's Will and Power? Thou hearest Him called the living Word, the healing Word-seek not then to compare Him with the word of our mouth; for if the word we utter, through it have not eyes to see, nor ears to hear, yet speaks, and still the knowledge of what it speaks is wrought by virtue of hidden mysteries of man's

nature, how can he escape the charge of blasphemy, who requires that some sort of bodily vision and hearing shall go along with the Godhead in the Word of God, and thinks that the Son can do nothing of Himself, save what He shall have seen the Father doing, though (as we have said) there is in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit the same Will, both to do and not to do, and the same Power, by reason of unity in the same substance.

76. But if, though men are, as a rule, different in respect of their thoughts and feelings, they yet agree as to the meaning of a single proposition, what ought we to think as concerning the Father and the Son of God, seeing that in the Substance of the Godhead there is that is imitated by human love?

77. Let us, however, suppose-as our adversaries would have it-that the Son does, as it were, copy the pattern of that which He has seen His Father doing. But even this, we must confess, means that He is of the same substance, for none can completely imitate the working of another, unless he be one with him in the same nature.

Chapter VIII. The heretical objection, that the Son cannot be equal to the Father, because He cannot beget a Son, is turned back upon the authors of it. From the case of human nature it is shown that whether a person begets offspring or not, has nothing to do with his power. Most of all must this be true since, otherwise, the Father Himself would have to be pronounced wanting in power. Whence it follows that we have no right to judge of divine things by human, and must take our stand upon the authority of Holy Writ, otherwise we must deny all power either to the Father or to the Son.

78. There is a fool's demurrer, your Majesty, which certain persons are given to raising, in order to show the Father and the Son to be not equal together, saying that the Father is Almighty, because He hath begotten the Son, but that the Son is not Almighty, because He hath not been able to beget.

79. But see how wild is their blasphemy, how their philosophers' logic confutes itself. For the raising of this question must lead either to their confessing with their own mouths that the Son is co-eternal with the Father, or, if they impose a beginning upon the Son's existence, to their assigning of necessity a beginning to the Father's power. When, therefore, they deny that the Son is Almighty, they are on the road to assert-which is impious-that the Father began to be Almighty by help of the Son.

80. For if the Father is Almighty by reason of begetting the Son, then, certainly, either the Son is co-eternal with the Father, because if the Father is eternally Almighty, then the Son also is eternal, or, if there was a time when there was not an eternal Son, there was by consequence a time when there was not an Almighty Father. For when they would make out that there was a time when the Son began to be, they are sliding back into [the error of] saying that the Father's Power also has not been from everlasting, but began to be in consequence of the generation of the Son. So, in their desire to do dishonour to the Son of God, they do so increase His honour as to seem to make Him, contrary to all right belief, the source of His Father's Power, though the Son saith, "All things that the Father hath are Mine"⁷¹ -that is to say, not the things which He has bestowed upon the Father, but which He has received from the Father, by right as the Son Whom the Father has begotten.

81. And therefore we do declare the Son to be Eternal Power;⁷² if, then, His Power and Godhead be eternal, surely His Sovereignty is eternal also. He, then, who dishonours the Son dishonours the Father, and is an enemy and offender against duty and love. Let us honour the Son, in Whom the Father is well pleased, for it is the Father's pleasure that praise be given to the Son, in Whom He Himself is well pleased.

82. Let us, however, make answer to the conclusion they strive to establish; but we seem to have sought, in pursuit of a personal appeal, to escape from the difficulty of treating the question before us. The Father, they say, has begotten a Son; the Son has not. What proof is this that they are not equal? To beget is the Father's natural function, as a Father, and no necessary outcome of His Sovereign Power.⁷³ Furthermore, dutiful regard places persons on an equality with each other, and does not sunder them. Again, our own experience of what holds good amongst us frail mortals teaches us that it may frequently happen that weak men have sons, whilst stronger men have not; that slaves have children, whilst their masters are childless; and that the poor beget offspring, whilst rich men are unblest with any.

83. But if our adversaries say that this too may be the result of infirmity, inasmuch as men may desire to beget children, but be unable to do so; then, though things divine are not to be judged of and determined by things human, yet let them understand that with men also, as with God, whether one has children or no, is not dependent upon or derived of his authoritative power, but upon the personal attributes of a father, and that begetting lies not in the power of our will, but is contingent upon our qualities of body; for if it were a matter of sovereign authority, then the mightier king would have the greater number of sons. To have sons, then, or to be childless, therefore, is not in necessary connection or relation to sovereign authority. Is it, then, so with nature?

84. If you [my Arian adversaries] regard what you object as natural weakness, and rely upon examples taken from the nature of mankind, remember that the Father's nature is the same as the Son's, and therefore you do either confess the Son to be a true Son, and dishonour the Father in the Person of the Son, by reason of Their unity in one and the same Nature (for as the Father is by Nature God, so also is the Son; whereas the Apostle says that the "gods many" are not so by nature, but are only so called); or, if you deny Him to be a true Son, that is to say, possessing the same Nature, then He is not begotten, and if the Son is not begotten, the Father did not beget Him.

85. The conclusion we come at, therefore, on the line of your persuasion, is that God the Father is not Almighty, because He could not beget, if He did not beget the Son, but created Him. But forasmuch as the Father is Almighty, He being, as you hold, the Almighty in so far as He is the only Author of Being, then surely He has begotten His Son, and not created Him. Howbeit, we ought to believe His word before yours. He says: "I have begotten,"⁷⁴ and that more than once, witnessing to Himself as begetting.

86. It is no sign, then, of infirmity, whether of nature or authority, in Christ, that He has not begotten, for to beget, as we have already said oftentimes, bears no relation to supremacy of authority, but to a personal property in a nature.⁷⁵ For if the Omnipotence of the Father is thereby constituted, that He hath a Son, then He might have been more Almighty had He begotten more Sons.

87. Then is His power exhausted in the begetting of One? Nay, but I will show that Christ also hath sons, whom He begets every day, but with that generation, or rather regeneration, which is related to personal authority rather than nature, for adoption is the exercise and bestowal of authority, and generation the manifestation of a property, as Scripture itself hath taught us: for John saith that "He was in this world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came to His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power⁷⁶ to become sons of God, to them which believe in His Name."⁷⁷

88. We say, therefore, that it is the function and exercise of His Authority that He has made us sons of God, whereas the oracles of God discover that His generation is in relation to personal attribute, for the Wisdom of God saith: "I came forth out of the mouth of the Most High,"⁷⁸ that is to say not of compulsion, but free, not under bond of authority, but born in a hidden birth, according to personal powers of Supreme Sovereignty and rightfulness of authority. Again, concerning the same Wisdom, Which is the Lord Jesus, the Father saith in another place: "Out of the womb I begat Thee, before the morning star."⁷⁹

89. Now this He said, not to make us think of a bodily womb,⁸⁰ but to show that true generation is His proper activity,⁸¹ for if we understand the words as speaking of generation from a body, then [we imply] the Father Almighty conceived and brought forth in travail. But far be it from us that we should make this weak bodily frame the measure of God's greatness. The word "womb" represents the hidden mystery, the inner sanctuary of the Father's being, into which neither angels nor archangels nor powers nor dominations, nor any created nature, hath been able to enter. For the Son is always with the Father, and in the Father-with the Father, by virtue of the distinction, without division, proper to the Eternal Trinity;⁸² in the Father, by reason of the essential unity of the Divine Nature.

90. What room here, then, for one to sit in judgment upon the Godhead, to call in question the Father and the Son,-the One for begetting, the Other for not begetting. No man condemns his servant or handmaid for begetting (or bearing) offspring; but those Arians condemn Christ for not begetting-they do condemn Him, for they privately pass sentence of condemnation upon Him, when they take from His glory and dignity. The question, why they have not begotten offspring, does not lead those who are joined in marriage into loss of their love, or denial of each other's merits, but the Arians, because Christ hath not begotten a Son, make light of His sovereignty.

91. Why, ask they, is the Son not a Father? Because, on the other side, the Father is not a Son. Why has not Christ begotten? Even because the Father is not begotten. Yet the Son stands none the lower, because He is not a Father; nor the Father, because He is not a Son, for the Son said: "All things that the Father hath are Mine"⁸³ -so truly is generation involved in the Father's personal attributes, and comes not by mere right of sovereignty.

92. The Substance of the Trinity is, so to say, a common Essence in that which is distinct,⁸⁴ an incomprehensible, ineffable Substance. We hold the distinction, not the confusion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; a distinction without separation; a distinction without plurality;⁸⁵ and thus we believe in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as each existing from and to eternity in this divine and wonderful Mystery: not in two Fathers, nor in two Sons, nor in two Spirits. For "there is one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him."⁸⁶ There is One born of the Father, the Lord Jesus, and therefore He is the

Only-begotten."There is also One Holy Spirit,"⁸⁷ as the same Apostle hath said. So we believe,so we read, so we hold. We know the fact of distinction, we know nothing of the hidden mysteries; we pry not into the causes, but keep the outward signs vouchsafed unto us.

93. O monstrous wickedness, that they who have no power over their own procreation should claim and usurp power to enquire into the Divine Generation! Let them deny, them, that the Son is equal to the Father, forasmuch as He hath not begotten; let them deny that the Son is equal to the Father, because He hath a Father! But if they talked after this fashion about men, who sometimes desire to beget sons, yet cannot, we should call it an insult, just as we should so call it, if of two men, one having sons and the other childless, the latter were said to be inferior to the former on that ground. So monstrous also, I say, does it seem, in regard simply to men, that one should therefore be esteemed the more lightly because he hath a father. Peradventure, indeed, the Arians suppose that Christ is in the position of one in a family, and frets because He is not set free and independent of His Father's authority, and is not empowered to administer the estate. But Christ is not under tutelage; nay, rather has He abolished all tutelage.⁸⁸

94. How then, let them tell us, would they have these things to be?-a true generation, the true Son begotten of God the Father, that is, of the Substance of the Father, or of another substance? If they say "begotten of the Father, that is, of the Substance of God," well and good, for then they acknowledge the Son as begotten of the Substance of the Father. If, then, they are of one Substance, surely they are also of one sovereign Power. Whereas, if the Son is begotten of another substance, how can the Father be Almighty, and the Son not Almighty? For what advantage hath God, if He have made His Son of another substance, when confessedly the Son, on His part, hath of another substance made us sons of God? The Son, therefore, is either of one Substance with the Father, or of one sovereign Power.

95. Our adversaries' question, then, falls flat, because they cannot judge Christ-or rather, because He is clear, when He is judged.⁸⁹ They are worthy, however, to be condemned upon their own sentence, who raise this question against us, for if the Son be therefore not equal to the Father, because He hath not begotten a Son, then by all means let them who sow discussions of this kind⁹⁰ confess, if they have not children, that their very servants are to be preferred before themselves, inasmuch as they cannot be the equals of those who have children-whereas, if they have children, let them regard the merit thereof as due not to themselves, but of right to their sons.

96. The objection, then, holds not together, that the Son cannot be equal to the Father, by reason of the Father having begotten the Son, whilst the Son has begotten no Son of Himself, for the spring: begets the stream, though the stream begets no spring out of itself, and light begets radiance, and not radiance light, yet the nature of radiance and light is one.⁹¹

Chapter IX.

Various quibbling arguments, advanced by the Arians to show that the Son had a beginning of existence, are considered and refuted, on the ground that whilst the Arians plainly prove nothing, or if they prove anything, prove it against themselves, (inasmuch as He Who is the beginning of all cannot Himself have a beginning), their reasonings do not even hold true with regard to facts of human existence. Time could not be before He was, Who is the Author of time-if indeed at some time He was not in existence, then the Father was without His Power and Wisdom. Again, our own

human experience shows that a person is said to exist before he is born.

97. Now that our opponents have failed to maintain their objection against the truth of His Son's equality with the Father, on the ground of His Generation, let them see that their well known device of controversy, their stock misrepresentation, is frustrated. Their common use is to propound this riddle: "How can the Son be equal with the Father? If He is a Son, then before He was begotten He was not in existence. If He was in existence, why was He begotten?" And men who advance difficulties raised by Arius yet sturdily deny that they are Arians.

98. Accordingly, they demand our answer, intending, if we say, "The Son existed before He was begotten," to meet us with a subtle retort, that "If so, then, before He was begotten, He was created, and there is no difference between Him and the rest of created beings, for He began to be a creature before He began to be the Son." To which they add: "Why was He begotten, when He was already in existence? Because He was imperfect, and in order that He might afterwards be made more perfect?" Whilst if we reply that the Son did not exist before He was begotten, they will immediately reply: "Then by being begotten He was brought into existence, not having existed before He was begotten," so as to lead on from this to the conclusion that "the Son existed, when He did not exist."⁹²

99. But let those who propound this difficulty and endeavour to enwrap the truth in a cloud tell us themselves whether the Father exerts His power of begetting within or without limits of time. If they say "within limits of time," then they will attribute to the Father what they object against the Son, so as to make the Father seem to have begun to be what He was not before. If their answer is "without such limits," then what is left them but to resolve for themselves the problem they have propounded, and acknowledge that the Son is not begotten under limits and conditions of time, since they deny that the Father so begets?

100. If the Son, then, is not begotten within limits of time, we are free to judge that nothing can have existed before the Son, Whose being is not confined by time. If, indeed, there was anything in being before the Son, then it instantly follows that in Him were not created all things in heaven or in earth, and the Apostle is shown to have erred in so setting it down in his Epistle,⁹³ whereas, if before He was begotten there was nothing, I see not wherefore He, before Whom none was, should be said to have been after any.

101. With the consideration whereof we must join another most blasphemous objection of theirs, which covers a subtle purpose to confuse the sense and understanding of simple folk. They ask whether everything that comes to an end had also at any time a beginning. If they are told that what has an end also had a beginning, then they return to the charge with the question whether the Father has ceased to beget His Son. This by our consent being granted them, they conclude that the generation of the Son had a beginning. The which if you allow, it seems to follow that if the Generation had a beginning, it appears to have begun in Him Who was begotten; so that one, who had not existed before, may be called "begotten"-their intent being to close the inquiry by laying down as conclusive that there was a time when the Son existed not.

102. Besides this, there are other vain objections, such as persons of their glibness of tongue would readily urge. If, say they, the Son is the Word of the Father, then He is called "begotten," inasmuch as He is the Word. But then since He is the Word, He is not a work. Now the Father has

spoken "in divers manners,"⁹⁴ whence it follows that He has begotten many Sons, if He has spoken His Word, not created it as a work of His hands. O fools, talking as though they knew not the difference between the word uttered and the Divine Word, abiding eternally, born of the Father-born, I say, not uttered only-in Whom is no combination of syllables, but the fulness of the eternal Godhead and life without end!⁹⁵

103. Follows another blasphemy, whereby they enquire whether it was of His own free will, or on compulsion, that the Father begat [His Son], intending, if we say, "Of His own free will," that we should appear as though we acknowledged that the Father's Will preceded the [Divine] Generation, and to answer that there being something that preceded the existence of the Son, the Son is not co-eternal with the Father, or that He, like the rest of the world, is a being created, forasmuch as it is written, "He hath made all things, as many as He would,"⁹⁶ though this is spoken, not of the Father and the Son, but of those creatures which the Son made. Whereas if we answered that the Father begat [His Son] on compulsion, we should seem to have attributed infirmity to the Father.

104. But in the eternal Generation there is no foregoing condition, neither of will, nor of unwillingness, and therefore I can neither say that the Father begat of His free Will, nor yet that He begat on compulsion, for to beget depends not upon possibility as determined by will, but rather appears to stand in a certain right and property of the hidden being of the Father. For just as the Father is not good because He wills to be so, or is compelled to be so, but is above these conditions-is good, that is, by nature,-even so the putting forth of His generative power is neither of will nor of necessity.

105. Yet let us grant their proposal, Granted that the Generation depends on the Will of Him Who generates; when do they say that this act of will took place? If it was in the beginning, then, plainly; the Son was in the beginning. If the Will is eternal, then the Son also is eternal. If the Will began to exist, then God the Father, as He was, was so displeased with Himself, that He made a change in His condition, that is to say, without His Son He was displeasing to Himself; in His Son He began to be well pleased.

106. To follow out the consequences thereof. If the Father conceived, after the manner of human nature, a desire to beget, then did He also pass through all the experiences which befall men before the birth takes place-but we find that generation is not determined merely by will, but is an object of wish.

107. Thus do they betray their own ungodliness, who would have it that Christ's generation had a beginning, in order that it may seem, not that true begetting of the Word abiding, but the utterance of words that pass and are forgotten, and that by intrusion of [the premiss of] a multitude of sons, they may [be warranted to] deny Christ's personal possession of the divine attributes, to the end that He may be regarded as neither the only-begotten nor the first-begotten Son; and lastly, that given the belief that His existence had a beginning, it may also be deemed as appointed to have an end.

108. But neither had the Son of God any beginning, seeing that He already was at the beginning, nor shall He come to an end, Who is the Beginning and the End of the Universe;⁹⁷ for being the Beginning, how could He take and receive that which He already had,⁹⁸ or how shall He come to

an end, being Himself the End of all things, so that in that End we have an abiding-place without end? The Divine Generation is not an event occurring in the course of time, and within its limits, and therefore before it time is not, and in it time has no place.

109. Again, their aimless and futile question finds no loophole for entry, even when directed upon the creation itself;⁹⁹ nay, indeed, temporal existences appear, in certain cases, to admit of no division of time. For instance, light generates radiance, but we can neither conceive that the radiance begins to exist after the light, nor that the light is in existence before the radiance, for where there is a light,¹⁰⁰ there is radiance, and where there is radiance there is also a light; and thus we can neither have a light without radiance, nor radiance without light, because both the light is in the radiance, and the radiance in the light. Thus the Apostle was taught to call the Son "the Radiance of the Father's Glory,"¹⁰¹ for the Son is the Radiance of His Father's light, co-eternal, because of eternity of Power; inseparable, by unity of brightness.

110. If then we can neither understand the mystery of, nor dissociate, these created objects in the sky above us, which we see, can we comprehend Him Whom we see not, Who is above every created existence, God, as He is in the very Holy of Holies of His own Generation? Can we make time a barrier between Him and the Son, when all time is the creation of the Son?

111. Let them cease therefore, and say no more that before He was begotten the Son was not. For the word "before" is a mark of time, whereas the Generation is before all times,¹⁰² and therefore that which comes after aught comes not before it, and the work cannot be before the maker, seeing that necessarily objects made take their commencement from the craftsman who makes them. How can the customary action of any created object be regarded as existing prior to the maker of it, whilst all time is a creation, and every creation has taken its being from its creator?

112. I would, therefore, further examine our opponents, who esteem themselves so cunning, and have them make good the application of their theory to human existence, seeing that they use it to disparage the glory of God's Existence, and keep far away from any confession of an inscrutable mystery in the Divine Generation. I would have them find ground for their objection in the facts of human generation. Of God's Son they assert that before He was begotten He was not,-that is to say, they say this of the Wisdom, the Power, the Word of God, Whose Generation knows nothing prior to itself. But if, as they would have us believe, there was a time when the Son existed not (the which it is blasphemy to affirm), then there was a time when God lacked the fulness of Divine Perfection, if afterwards He passed through a process of begetting a Son.

113. To show them, however, the weakness and transparency of their objection, though it has no real relation to any truth, divine or human, I will prove to them that men have existed before they were born. Else, let them show that Jacob, who whilst yet hidden in the secret chamber of his mother's womb supplanted his brother, had not been appointed and ordained, ere ever he was born;¹⁰³ let them show that Jeremiah had not likewise been so, before his birth, -Jeremiah, to whom the message comes: "Before I formed thee in thy mother's womb, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth from the belly, I sanctified thee, and appointed thee for a prophet amongst the nations."¹⁰⁴ What testimony can we have stronger than the case of this great prophet, who was sanctified before he was born, and known before he was shaped?

114. What, again, shall I say of John, of whom his holy mother testifies that, whilst he yet lay in her womb, he perceived in spirit¹⁰⁵ the presence of his Lord, and leaped for joy, as we remember it to be written, his mother saying: "For lo, as soon as the voice of the salutation entered mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy."¹⁰⁶ Was he, then, who prophesied, in existence or not? Nay, surely he was—surely he was in being who worshipped his Maker; he was in being who spake in his mother's womb. And so Elisabeth was filled with the spirit of her son, and Mary sanctified by the Spirit of hers, for thus you may find it recorded, that "the babe leaped in her womb, and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost."¹⁰⁷

115. Consider the proper force of each word. Elisabeth was indeed the first to hear the voice of Mary, but John was first to feel His Lord's gracious Presence. Sweet is the harmony of prophecy with prophecy, of woman with woman, of babe with babe. The women speak words of grace, the babes move hiddenly, and as their mothers approach one another, so do they engage in mysterious converse of love; and in a twofold miracle, though in diverse degrees of honour, the mothers prophesy in the spirit of their little ones. Who, I ask, was it that performed this miracle? Was it not the Son of God, Who made the unborn to be?

116. Thus your objection fails of reconciliation with the truths of human existence—can it attain thereto with divine mysteries? What mean you by your principle that "before He was begotten He was not"? Was the Father engaged for some time in conception, so that certain epochs passed away before the Son was begotten? Was He, like women, in travail of birth, so that just this travail? What would you? Why seek we to pry into divine mysteries? The Scriptures tell me the necessary effects of the Divine Generation,¹⁰⁸ not how it is done.

Chapter X. The objection that Christ, on the showing of St. John, lives because of the Father, and therefore is not to be regarded as equal with the Father, is met by the reply that for the Life of the Son, in respect of His Godhead, there has never been a time when it began; and that it is dependent upon none, whilst the passage in question must be understood as referring to the His human life, as is shown by His speaking there of His body and blood. Two expositions of the passage are given, the one of which is shown to refer to Christ's Manhood, whilst the second teaches His equality with the Father, as also His likeness with men. Rebuke is administered to the Arians for the insult which they are seeking to inflict upon the Son, and the sense in which the Son can be said to live "because of" the Father is explained, as also the union of life with our the divine Life. A further objection, based upon the Son's prayer that He may be glorified by the Father, is briefly refuted.

118. There are not a few who raise this further objection, that it is written: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, liveth also by Me."¹⁰⁹ "How," ask they, "is the Son equal with the Father, when He has said that He lives by the Father?"

119. Let those who oppose us on this ground tell us first what the Life of the Son is. Is it a life bestowed by the Father upon one lacking life? But how could the Son ever fail to possess life, He Himself being the Life, as He says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."¹¹⁰ Truly, His life is eternal, even as His power is eternal. Was there a time, then, when (so to speak) Life possessed not itself?

120. Bethink you what is read this day concerning the Lord Jesus, that "He died for our sakes, to the end that whether we wake or whether we sleep, we may live with Him."¹¹¹ He Whose Death is Life, is not His Godhead Life, seeing that the Godhead is Life eternal?

121. But is His Life truly in the Father's power? Why, He showed that even His bodily life was not in the power of any other, as we have it on record: "I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and again I have power to take it. This commandment have I received of My Father."¹¹²

122. Is His divine Life then to be regarded as depending upon the power of another, when His bodily life was subject to no other power but His own? For it would have been the power of another, but for the Unity of power. But just as He gives us to understand that His laying down His life was done of His own power, and of His free Will, so also He teaches us, in laying it down in obedience to His Father's command, the unity of His own with the Father's Will.

123. If, then, there has neither been slime when the Life of the Son took a commencement, nor any power to which it has been subjected, let us consider what His meaning was when He said: "Even as the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father"? Let us expound His meaning as best we can; nay, rather let Him expound it Himself.

124. Take notice, then, what He said in an earlier part of His discourse. "Verily, verily, I say unto you." He first teaches thee how thou oughtest to listen. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye shall have no life in you."¹¹³ He first premised that He was speaking as Son of Man; dost thou then think that what He hath said, as Son of Man, concerning His Flesh and His Blood, is to be applied to His Godhead?

125. Then He added: "For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink [indeed]."¹¹⁴ Thou hearest Him speak of His Flesh and of His Blood, thou perceivest the sacred pledges, [conveying to us the merits and power] of the Lord's death,¹¹⁵ and thou dishonourest His Godhead. Hear His own words: "A spirit hath not flesh and bones."¹¹⁶ Now we, as often as we receive the Sacramental Elements, which by the mysterious efficacy of holy prayer are transformed into the Flesh and the Blood, "do show the Lord's Death."¹¹⁷

126. Then, after calling on us to take notice that He speaks as Son of Man, and frequent repeated mention of His Flesh and His Blood, He adds: "Even as the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, he also liveth by Me." How then do they suppose that we are to understand these words?-for the comparison can be shown as a double one. The first comparison being after the following manner: "Even as the living Father hath sent Me, I live by the Father;" the second: "Even as the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so also he that eateth Me, he too liveth by Me."

127. If our adversaries choose the former, the meaning is this, that, "as I am sent by the Father and am come down from the Father, so (in accordance therewith) I live by the Father." But in what character was He sent, and came down, save as Son of Man, even as He Himself said before: "No man hath ascended into heaven, save He that hath come down from heaven as Son of Man."¹¹⁸ Then, just as He was sent and came down as Son of Man, so as Son of Man He lives by the Father. Furthermore, he that eateth Him, as eating the Son of Man, doth himself also live by the Son of Man. Thus, He has compared the effect of His Incarnation to His coming.

128. But if they choose the second method, do we not infer both the equality of the Son with the Father, and His likeness to men, together, though in clear mutual distinction? For what is the meaning of the words, "Even as He Himself liveth by the Father, so we also live by Him," but that the Son so quickeneth a man, as the Father hath in the Son quickened human nature?¹¹⁹ "For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, so also the Son quickeneth whom He will,"¹²⁰ as the Lord Himself hath already said.

129. Thus the equality of the Son to the Father is established simply upon unity in the action of quickening, since the Son so quickeneth as the Father doth. Acknowledge therefore the eternity of His Life and Sovereignty. Again, our likeness with the Son is discovered, and a certain unity with Him in the flesh,¹²¹ because that, like as the Son of God was quickened in the flesh¹²² by the Father, so also is man quickened; for thus it is written, that as God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, so we also, as men, are quickened by the Son of God.¹²³

130. According to this interpretation, then, immortality is not only applied to our condition by grace of bounty, but is also proclaimed as the property of Godhead-the latter, because it is the Godhead which quickeneth; the former, because manhood is quickened in Christ.

131. But if any would apply the force of either comparison to Christ's Godhead, then the Son of God is put on one footing with men, so that the Son of God lives by the Father just as we live by the Son of God. But the Son of God bestows eternal life by free gift, we cannot so do. If then He be placed on a level with us, He too does not bestow this gift. Let Arius' disciples then have the due reward of their faith-which is, not to obtain eternal life of the Son.

132. I would now go further. If our opponents are pleased to apply the teaching of this passage to the principle of the eternity of the Divine Substance, let them hear a third exposition: Does not our Lord plainly appear to say that as the Father is a living Father, so too the Son also lives?-and who can but observe that here we must understand a reference to unity of Life, forasmuch as the same Life is the Life of the Father and the Life of the Son? "For as the Father hath Life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son also to have Life in Himself."¹²⁴ He hath given-by reason of unity with Him. He hath given, not to take away, but that He may be glorified in the Son. He hath given, not that He, the Father, might keep guard over it, but that the Son might have it in possession.

133. But the Arians think that they must oppose hereto the fact that He had said, "I live by the Father." Of a certainty (suppose that they conceive the words as referring to His Godhead) the Son lives by the Father, because He is the Son begotten of the Father,-by the Father, because He is of one Substance with the Father,-by the Father, because He is the Word given forth from the heart of the Father,¹²⁵ because He came forth from the Father, because He is begotten of the "bowels of the Father,"¹²⁶ because the Father is the Fountain and Root of the Son's being.

134. But peradventure they may urge: "If you hold that the Son, in saying, 'And I live by the Father,' spoke of the unity of life subsisting between the Father and the Son, does it not follow that He discovered the unity of life between the Son and mankind in saying that 'he that eateth Me, the same liveth by Me'?"

135. Even so. Just as I confess the unity of celestial Life subsisting in Father and Son by reason of the unity of the substance of the Godhead, so too, save as concerns the prerogatives of the Divine Nature or those which are the effect of the Incarnation of our Lord, I affirm of the Son a

participation of spiritual life with us by virtue of the unity of His Manhood with ours, for "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly."¹²⁷ Further, even as in Him we sit at the right hand of the Father, not in the sense that we share His throne, but that we rest in the Body of Christ-even as, I say, we have part in Christ's session by reason of corporal unity, so too we live in Christ by reason of unity of our bodies with His Body.

136. Not only, then, have I no fears of the text, "I live by the Father," but I should have none, even though Christ had said, "I live by help of the Father."¹²⁸

137. Now another objection commonly urged by them starts from the text: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, to the end that His Son may be glorified by Him."¹²⁹ But not only is the Son glorified through the Father and by the Father, as it is written: "Glorify Me, Father;"¹³⁰ and again: "Now hath the Son of Man been glorified, and God hath been glorified in Him, and God glorifieth Him,"¹³¹ but the Father also is glorified through the Son and by the Son, for Truth hath said: "I have glorified Thee upon earth."¹³²

138. Even as the Son, therefore, is glorified through the Father, so too He lives by the Father. There are some who have been led by consideration of these words to the supposition that [the Greek] "doca" means "opinion, belief," rather than "glory," and therefore have interpreted as follows: "I have given thee a doca upon earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do, and now, O Father, give me a doca;" that is to say: "I have taught men so to believe concerning Thee, as to know that Thou art the true God; do Thou also establish in them, concerning Me, the belief that I am Thy Son, and very God."

Chapter XI. The particular distinction which the Arians endeavoured to prove upon the Apostle's teaching that all things are "of" the Father and "through" the Son, is overthrown, it being shown that in the passage cited the same Omnipotence is ascribed both to Father and to Son, as is proved from various texts, especially from the words of St. Paul himself, in which heretics foolishly find a reference to the Father only, though indeed there is no diminution or inferiority of the Son's sovereignty proved, even by such a reference. Finally, the three phrases, "of Whom," "through Whom," "in Whom," are shown to suppose or imply no difference (of power), and each and all to hold true of the Three Persons.

139. Now we come to that laughable method, attempted by some, of showing a difference of Power to subsist between Father and Son, on the strength of apostolic testimony, it being written "But for us there is One God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him, and One Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things, and we through Him."¹³³ It is urged that no small difference in degree of Divine Majesty is signified in the affirmation that all things are "of" the Father, and "through" the Son. Whereas nothing is clearer than that here a plain reason is given of the Omnipotence of the Son, inasmuch as whilst all things are "of" the Father, none the less are they all "through" the Son.¹³⁴

140. The Father is not "amongst" all things, for to Him it is confessed that "all things serve Thee."¹³⁵ Nor is the Son reckoned "amongst" all things, for "all things were made by Him,"¹³⁶ and "all things exist together¹³⁷ in Him, and He is above all the heavens."¹³⁸ The Son, therefore, exists not "amongst" but above all things, being, indeed, after the flesh, of the people,¹³⁹ of the Jews, but yet at the same time God over all, blessed for ever,¹⁴⁰ having a Name which is above

every name,¹⁴¹ it being said of Him, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet."¹⁴² But in making all things subject to Him, He left nothing that is not subject, even as the Apostle hath said.¹⁴³ But suppose that the Apostle's words were intended with reference to the Incarnate Lord; how then can we doubt the incomparable majesty of His Divine Generation?

141. Certain it is, then, that between Father and Son there can be no difference of Power. Nay, so far is such difference from being present, that the same Apostle has said that all things are "of" Him, by Whom are all things, as followeth: "For of Him and through Him and in Him are all things."¹⁴⁴

142. Now if, as they suppose, it is the Father alone Who is spoken of, it cannot be that He is at once Omnipotent because all things are of Him, and not Omnipotent because all things are through Him.¹⁴⁵ On their own showing, then, they will declare the Father lacking in Power, and not Omnipotent, or at the least they will be confessing with their own mouth, all against their will though it be, the Omnipotence of the Son as well as of the Father.

143. Howbeit, let them decide whether they will understand this affirmation as made concerning the Father. If they do so decide then all things are "through" Him also. If they decide that it is the Son Who is spoken of, then all things are "of" Him as well as "of" the Father. But if all things are "through" the Father also, then surely there is no argument for diminishing from the honour due to the Son; and if all things are "of" the Son, the Son must be honoured in like manner as the Father is.

144. In case our opponents should suspect that we are taking advantage of some intrusion of a single spurious verse into the text, let us review the whole passage. "O depth of the riches of God's wisdom and knowledge!" exclaims the Apostle, "how un-searchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath been first to give unto Him, and shall be recompensed? For of Him and through Him and in Him are all things. To Him be glory for ever!"¹⁴⁶

145. Who, then, think they, is here spoken of-the Father or the Son? If it be the Father-then we answer that the Father is not the Wisdom of God, for the Son is. But what is there that is impossible to Wisdom, of Whom it is written: "Seeing that she is almighty and abiding, she maketh all things new in herself"?¹⁴⁷ We read of Wisdom, then, not as approaching, but as abiding.¹⁴⁸ Thus have you the authority of Solomon to teach you of the Omnipotence and Eternity of Wisdom, and of her Goodness as well, for it is written: "But malice overcometh not Wisdom."¹⁴⁹

146. But to purpose. "How unsearchable," saith the Apostle, "are His judgments!" Now if "the Father hath given all judgment to the Son,"¹⁵⁰ it seems that the Father¹⁵¹ points to the Son as Judge.

147. But now, to show us that He is speaking of the Son, not of the Father, St. Paul proceeds: "Who was first in giving to Him?" For "the Father hath given to the Son," but it was as acknowledging the rights of Him Whom He has begotten, not by way of largess. Therefore, it being undeniable that the Son has received at the hands of the Father, as it is written, "All things have been given unto Me of My Father,"¹⁵² yet, in saying, "Who was first in giving to Him?" the Apostle has not denied that the Son has received gifts of the Father, by virtue of His Nature, but he has indeed shown that, of Father and Son, Neither can be said to be before the Other, forasmuch as,

albeit the Father has given gifts unto the Son, yet He has not so bestowed them as upon one that began to be after Him; because the uncreate and incomprehensible Trinity, Which is of One Eternity and Glory, admits neither difference of time nor degree of precedence.

148. If, however, we hold ourselves more bound to observe those Greek manuscripts which show "tij prosedwxen autw" it is clear that He to Whom nothing can be added is not unequal to Him Who is perfect and complete. Therefore, if this passage from the Apostle, in its entirety, is better understood with reference to the Son, we see that we must also believe concerning the Son, that all things are of Him, even as it is written: "For of Him and through Him and in Him are all things."

149. Be it so, nevertheless, that they suppose the passage to be intended of the Father, then let us call to mind that even as we read of all things being of Him, so too we read of all things being through Him, that is to say, the authority of the Father and of the Son is extended over the whole created universe. And, though we have already proved the Omnipotence of the Son by the Omnipotence of the Father,¹⁵³ still-forasmuch as they are ever bent upon disparagement-let them consider that they disparage the Father as well as the Son. For if the Son be limited in might, because all things are through Him, do we say further, that the Father likewise is limited, because all things are through Him also?

150. But to bring them to understand that these phrases involve no difference, I will once again show that it is the same person, "of" whom anything is, and "through" whom anything is, and that we read of things being related in both these ways to the Father. For we find: "Faithful is God, through Whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son."¹⁵⁴ Let our adversaries weigh the meaning of the Apostle's words. We are called "through" the Father-they raise no controversy: we are created "through" the Son-and this they have set down as a mark of inferiority.¹⁵⁵ The Father has called us into fellowship with His Son, and this truth we, as in duty bound, devoutly receive. The Son has created all things, and Arius' followers imagine that here they have not the decree of a free Will, but a forced service, slavishly performed!

151. Again, to obtain fuller understanding that, forasmuch as we are called through the Father into fellowship with His Son, there is no difference of Power in the Father and the Son, [note that] the fellowship itself has its beginning of the Son, as it is written: "For from His fulness have we all received," though, if we follow the Greek text of the Gospel, we ought to render "of His fulness."¹⁵⁶

152. See, then, how there is fellowship both through the Father and of the Son, and yet not a different fellowship, but one and the same. "And that our fellowship be with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."¹⁵⁷

153. Observe, further, that Scripture speaks of our having one fellowship not only "of" the Father and the Son, but also "of" the Holy Spirit. "The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ," saith the Apostle, "and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."¹⁵⁸

154. Now, I ask, wherein does He, through Whom are all things, appear less than He, of Whom are all things? Is it because He is declared to be the Worker? But the Father also works, for He is true who said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."¹⁵⁹ Therefore, even as the Father worketh, so worketh the Son also; and so He Who worketh is not liminary in power nor abject, for the Father also worketh; which being so, that which is common to the Son with the Father, or even

which the Son has by the Father, ought not to be the less esteemed, lest heretics further dishonour the Father in the Person of the Son.

155. Not to be passed over for silencing the disputings of Arian misbelief are those words of the same Saint John, which he set down in another Scripture: "If ye know that He is just, know that he which doeth righteousness is born of Him."¹⁶⁰ But who is righteous, save the Lord, Who loveth righteousness?¹⁶¹ Or whom-as the foregoing texts warn us-have we to assure us of everlasting life, if we have not the Son? If, therefore, the Son of God hath promised us everlasting life, and He is righteous, surely we are born "of" Him. Else, if our adversaries deny that we are born of the Son by grace, they likewise deny His righteousness.

156. Thou must therefore believe that all things are of the Son of God [even as of God the Father, for even as God is the Father of all, so likewise is the Son the Author and Creator of all. We see, then, the vanity of this their questioning, forasmuch as it holds good of the Son [as of the Father], that "of Him and through Him and in Him are all things."

157. We have shown how all things are "of" Him, and likewise how all things are also "through" Him. Who then doubts that all things are "in" Him, when another Scripture saith: "For in Him are all things founded, that are in the heavens, and in Him they were created, and He is before all things, and all things consist in Him"? (Col. i. 16). Of Him, then, thou hast grace; Himself thou hast for thy Creator; in Him thou findest the foundation of all things.

Chapter XII. The comparison, found in the Gospel of St. John, of the Son to a Vine and the Father to a husbandman, must be understood with reference to the Incarnation. To understand it with reference to the Divine Generation is to doubly insult the Son, making Him inferior to St. Paul, and bringing Him down to the level of the rest of mankind, as well as in like manner the Father also, by making Him not merely to be on one footing with the same Apostle, but even of no account at all. The Son, indeed, in so far as being God, is also the husbandman, and, as regards His Manhood, a grape-cluster. True statement of the Father's pre-eminence.

158. There is yet another Scripture, which our opponents commonly object against us, in order to prove their division of the Godhead of the Father from the Godhead of the Son, namely, our Lord's words in the Gospel: "I am the true Vine and My Father is the Husbandman." The vine and the husbandman, say they, are of different natures, and the vine is in the power of the husbandman.

159. Thus, then, ye would have us believe that the Son, as touching His Godhead, is like to a vine, so that without a vine-dresser He is nothing, and may be neglected or even rooted up. Thus ye juggle up a lie from the letter of the Scripture which sayeth that our Lord called Himself the Vine, intending thereby the mystery of His Incarnation.¹⁶² Howbeit, if ye are bent on it that we dispute upon the letter, I too confess, yea, I proclaim, that the Son called Himself the Vine. For woe be to me, if I deny the pledge¹⁶³ of the salvation of His people!

160. How then do you purpose to understand the truth that the Son of God called Himself the Vine? If you interpret the saying with respect to the Substance of His Godhead, and if you suppose such a diversity of Godhead between the Father and the Son as there is of nature between a husbandman and a vine, you do double insult both to Father and to Son-to the Son, because if, as you affirm, He is, as touching His Godhead, beneath a husbandman, then must He on the same showing be esteemed lower than the Apostle Paul, forasmuch as Paul indeed called himself a

husbandman, as we find it written: "I have planted, Apollos hath watered: but God hath given the increase."¹⁶⁴ Will you have Paul, then, to be better than the Son of God?

161. Thus far the one insult. As for the other, it lies herein, that if the Son is the Vine in respect of His eternally-begotten Person, then, He having said: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches,"¹⁶⁵ that divinely-begotten One appears to be of one substance with us. But "who is like unto Thee among the gods, O Lord?"¹⁶⁶ as it is written; and again, in the Psalms: "For who is there among the clouds that shall be equal to the Lord? Or who among the sons of God shall be like unto God."¹⁶⁷

162. Moreover, ye disparage not only the Son, but the Father also. For if the term "husbandman" is to comprehend in its designation all the prerogative of the Father's Sovereignty, then, seeing that Paul too is a husbandman, you set the Apostle, to whom you deny that the Son is equal, on an even footing with the Father.

163. Again, it being written, "But neither he which planteth is anything, nor he that watereth; but God, Who giveth the increase,"¹⁶⁸ you will rest the fulness of the Father's Majesty in a name which, as you see, stands for weakness. For if he that planteth is nothing, and he that watereth is nothing, but it is God, Who giveth the increase [Who is all], observe what your blasphemy intends-even to expose the Father to contempt under the title of a husbandman, and to demand another God to provide the increase of the Father's labour. Wickedly, therefore, do they think to extol the Dignity of God the Father by this use of the term "husbandman," in which God the Father is brought down to the level of man, as being designated by a common title.

164. Yet what wonder if, as ye heretics would have it, the Father is to be exalted above a Son Whose Godhead differs not a whit from the common condition of mankind? If ye suppose the Son to have been entitled the Vine with respect to His Godhead, then do ye esteem Him not only as liable to corruption and subject to changes of wind and weather, but even as partaking of manhood only, forasmuch as the Vine and its branches are of one nature, so that the Son of God appears, not to have taken upon Him our flesh, through the mystery of Incarnation, but to have altogether sprung into being from the flesh.

165. But I will indeed openly confess that His flesh, though born in a new and mysterious birth, was yet of the same nature with ours, and that this is the pledge of our salvation, not the source of the Divine Generation. He indeed is the Vine, for He bears my sufferings, whensoever manhood, hitherto frail, leans on Him and so matures with plenteous fruit of renewed devotion.

166. Yet if the husbandman's power allure thee, tell me, prithee, who it was that spake in the prophet, saying: "O Lord, make it known to me, that I may know; then saw I their thoughts. I was led as a harmless lamb to the slaughter and knew it not: they took counsel together against me, saying, Come, let us throw wood into his bread."¹⁶⁹ For if the Son here speaks of the mystery of His coming Incarnation-for it were blasphemy to suppose that the words are spoken concerning the Father-then surely it is the Son Who speaks in an earlier passage: "I have planted thee as a fruitful vine-how art Thou become bitter, and a wild vine?"¹⁷⁰

167. And thus thou seest that the Son also is the husbandman,-the Son, of one Name with the Father, one work, one dignity and Substance. If, then, the Son is both Vine and Husbandman, plainly we infer the meaning of the Vine with regard to the mystery of the Incarnation.

168. But not only has our Lord called Himself a Vine-He has also given Himself, by the voice of the prophet, the title of a Grape-cluster-even when Moses, at the command of the Lord, sent spies to the Valley of the Cluster.¹⁷¹ What is that valley but the humility of the Incarnation and the fruitfulness of the Passion? I indeed think that He is called the Cluster, because that from the Vine brought out of Egypt, that is, the people of the Jews, there grew a fruit for the world's good. No man, truly, can understand the Cluster as a token of the Divine Generation-or if there be any who so understand it, they leave no conclusion open but that we should believe that Cluster to have sprung from the Vine: And thus in their folly they attribute to the Father that which they refuse to believe of the Son.

169. But if there be now left no room for doubt that the Son of God is called the Vine with respect and intention to His Incarnation,¹⁷² you see what hidden truth it was to which our Lord had regard in saying, "The Father is greater than I."¹⁷³ For after this premised, He proceeded immediately: "I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman," that you might know that the Father is greater in so far as He dresses and tends our Lord's flesh, as the husbandman dresses and tends his vines. Further, our Lord's flesh is that which could increase in stature with age,¹⁷⁴ and be wounded through suffering, to the end that the whole human race might rest guarded from the pestilent heat of the pleasures of this world, under the shadow of the Cross whereon Its limbs are spread.

1: Col. ii. 3.

2: St. Ambrose perhaps meant that John Baptist had, for a space, lost the prophetic Light, when he doubted, and sent disciples to enquire of Jesus. The darkness of the dungeon had drawn a cloud over the prisoner's soul, and for a time he was in the state described by Isaiah ix. 1, walking in darkness and the shadow of death, the state of the people of Israel (represented by the synagogue) at the time of our Lord's Advent. See S. Matt. iv. 12-16.

3: S. Matt. xi. 3.

4: S. John iii. 13.

5: Ps. xxiv. 7. St. Ambrose follows the LXX.

6: Ps. xxiv. 8.

7: Isa. liii. 2.

8: S. Matt. xxii. 11.

9: Bk. II. iv.

10: Heb. iv. 14.

11: Ps. xix. 1.

12: Rev. iii. 20.

13: Song of Solomon v. 2.

14: Ps. cxviii. 19.

15: Col. iv. 3.

16: S. John xvi. 7.

17: S. John xx. 17.

18: S. Matt. xvi. 18.

19: S. Mark iii. 17.

20: Ps. ix. 14.

21: S. John xv. 22, John xv. 23.

22: Orig. " derogare. " Derogare was a Roman law-term, meaning to repeal a law in part, to restrict or modify it-hence it came to be used generally of diminishing or taking away from anything already established.

23: 1 Cor. xi. 3.

24: "After" somewhat as in "Neither reward us after our iniquities"- i.e. (1) according to, and so (2) "by virtue of." Here the second stage of the metaphorical usage seems to be arrived at.

25: Referring to Christ's sinlessness.

26: Eph. v. 23.

27: Eph. v. 25.

28: Eph. v. 25.

29: The citation is from 1 Cor. iii. 8. Paul and Apollos are omoousioi , "of one substance, nature, essence," in so far as the definition of man can be applied to each. But the presence of Paul does not carry with it the presence of Apollos, and the existence of Paul is not bound up, save accidentally, with that of Apollos. Paul could not say, "He that hath seen me hath seen Apollos." No human being can say that of another, even though the other be a twin and closely resembling him in appearance. The root of the difference is in the difference between the Creator and the creature, the Eternal, knowing neither beginning of life nor end of days, existing from everlasting to everlasting, and that which lives under conditions and limits of time and space.

30: S. John xvii. 21.

31: S. John v. 19.

32: S. John v. 19.

33: i.e. that the Father is not a Spirit (S. John iv. 24) but exists in bodily shape.

34: S. John xiv. 6.

35: 1 Cor. i. 24.

36: 1 Cor. i. 24.

37: S. John v. 19.

38: Namely, the error of postulating two mutually exclusive infinities.

39: S. John ii. 4. For the walking on the sea, vide S. Mark vi. 48.

40: As a matter of fact, gnats and insects generally are far from being the least wonderful of God's works. In them as much as, if not more than, in anything we may recognize His eternal power and wisdom and Godhead. Cf. Prov. vi. 6-8.

41: S. John i. 3; Ps. xxxiii. 6.

42: Jer. x. 11.

43: Cf. Aristotle, Eth. Nic. I. viii. 15.

44: Cf. Aristotle, Eth. Nic. I. viii. 15.

45: 1 Pet. ii. 7, from Isa. xxviii. 16.

46: 1 Cor. x. 4.

47: S. Mark ii. 11.

48: Ps. cxlv. 8.

49: S. Matt. xi. 5.

50: S. Mark vi. 56.

51: Isa. liii. 5.

52: S. Luke v. 20.

53: Isa. liii. 5.

54: S. Luke xxii. 32.

55: S. Matt. xvi. 18.

56: i.e. we are not to suppose that in S. John v. 19 Jesus refers to any sort of physical impossibility, to any external restraint or limitation.

57: S. John xiii. 13.

58: S. John xv. 14, John xv. 15.

59: 2 Cor. xii. 11.

60: 1 Tim. i. 4; 1 Tim. vi. 20, 1 Tim. vi. 21.

61: Our Lord did not simply assert that He and His Father are One, without revealing to those, at least, who had faith to perceive it, what is one great bond of that Unity, showing men, so far as man can comprehend the matter, what that Unity consists in, viz., absolute and perfect harmony of will.

62: Lat. " consiliarius. " Cf. Prov. viii. 29, Prov. viii. 30.

63: Gen. i. 3 Gen. i. 4.

64: Or "what sort of thing He made it to be." How could the Son ask such a question, being Himself the true Light? S. John i. 9.

65: S. John xiv. 10.

66: Ps. civ. 24.

67: Heb. x. 10-12; S. John iii. 16, John iii. 17; John i. 29.

68: S. John xi. 40.

69: Lat. " ex personae hominis incarnati susceptione. " St. Ambrose does not mean that there were two Persons in Christ-the Divine Logos or Word and the man Jesus. " Persona " is here used in its dramatic rather than its strict theological sense.

70: Heb. iv. 12.

71: S. John xvi. 15.

72: Cf. Rom. i. 20.

73: i.e. The Father begets quâ Father, not quâa Almighty (o Pantokratwr).

74: Ps. cx. 3.

75: See §82.

76: Or "authority."

77: S. John i. 10 ff 78: Ecclus. xxiv. 5.

79: Ps. cx. 3.

80: The word "womb" is used metaphorically in the original, from which St. Ambrose (though inaccurately) quotes. See Ps. cx. in the R.V.

81: Or "to show the distinctive character of true" or "perfect generation"-as an absolute act, unconditioned of time or space.

82: Ath. Creed 4.

83: S. John xvi. 15.

84: sc. internally.

85: i.e. without plurality of substance or essential nature. There is one Godhead of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost-not three Godheads.

86: 1 Cor. viii. 6.

87: 1 Cor. xii. 11.

88: Cf. Gal. iii. 23 ff.

89: Ps. li. 4.

90: Or "engage in discussions of this kind." Lat.- serunt hujusmodi quæstiones.

91: Cf. Heb. i. 3, where Christ is called the Radianc of the Father's Glory (ataugasmtahj dochj).

92: St. Ambrose exhibits the argument as a reductio ad absurdum.

93: Col. i. 16.

94: Heb. i. 1.

95: Col. i. 19; Col. ii. 9; Col. iii. 4; S. John i. 4; John v. 26; John xi. 25; John xiv. 6; Rev. i. 18.

96: Ps. cxv. 3, which, however, in the English, runs: "He hath done whatsoever pleased Him."-Prayer-book.

97: Rev. i. 8, Rev. i. 17; Rev. ii. 8; Rev. iii. 14; Rev. xxii. 13; Isa. xli. 4; Isa. xlv. 6; Isa. xlviii. 12.

98: "And," we may add; "already was. "-St. Ambrose refers to St. John viii. 25, but the reference is only justifiable by means of a defective rendering of the Greek; unless we suppose our Saviour to be alluding to what the prophets had said of Himself as well as to His own statements. Cf. Bk. III. vii. 49.

99: On the analogy of which, indeed, Arianism endeavoured to conceive of the Nature and Activities of God.

100: Or "a shining body"- lumen, not lux, as in other places of this passage. St. Ambrose probably was unaware that "radiance" or "effulgence" from an incandescent or otherwise shining body is clue to the presence of the atmosphere, so that his analogy requires modification when bodies shining in vacuo come into the account. But with regard to these it may be urged that the shining of the body may be taken as the sole object of consideration, whilst it is fully admitted that the brightness and the body, though separated for purposes of mental treatment and thought, are not so in fact and actual reality. In the Book of Wisdom, vii. 26, the Divine Wisdom is called "the brightness of everlasting Light" (ataugasma fwtoj aidjou)-These texts would naturally suggest the 'Light of Light O' (fwj ek fwtoj ,) of the Nicene Creed. The analogy of light and radiance is employed by many of the Fathers in maintaining the doctrine of the Church, see Alford's note on Heb. i. 3.

101: Heb. i. 3.

102: Or "before all worlds. " Cf. Heb. i. 2, in the Greek, Latin, and English.

103: Gen. xxv. 23.

104: Jer. i. 5.

105: Or "by the Spirit," i.e. by the help, power of the Spirit, working indeed with his spirit.

106: S. Luke i. 44.

107: S. Luke i. 41.

108: i.e. that "such as the Father is, such is the Son."

109: S. John vi. 58.

110: Isa. xiv. 6.

111: 1 Thess. v. 10.

112: S. John x. 17 ff.

113: S. John vi. 54.

114: S. John vi. 56.

115: S. John vi. 52.

116: S. Luke xxiv. 39.

117: 1 Cor. xi. 26. St. Ambrose's term for "are transformed" is "transfigurantur."

118: S. John iii. 13.

119: Or "flesh."

120: S. John v. 21.

121: Or "is discovered to be a certain unity, etc."

122: i.e. in respect of His Body of flesh and blood.

123: Rom iv. 24.

124: S. John v. 26.

125: Ps. xlv. 1.

126: Ps. cx. 3.

127: 1 Cor. xv. 40. On this place H. observes: "As the Son, by reason of a nature numerically identical with the Father's, lives together with Him the same Divine Life, so we by virtue of a manhood specifically the same as Christ's have power to live the life which the Man Christ lives; which life indeed resides in its greatest fulness in Him as its Head and Fountain, and from His Person overflows into us, His members-yet not without a certain difference, for the comparison is incomplete, by reason, namely, of the reservation of prerogatives attaching to the Divine Nature or to the Lord's Incarnation. The Godhead is numerically One, the Life of the Father and the Life of the Son is numerically one, but Christ's Life and ours are not so. Moreover, this (Divine) Life subsistent in the Son is united to His Manhood in and by the unity of His Person, but is not communicated to us in so close an alliance, overflowing rather into us only by a certain participation. ...But perhaps the sainted Doctor's meaning here is that we live and abide in Christ by a corporal unity, because, Christ having Manhood specifically the same as ours, whatsoever is fittingly predicted of manhood as existing in Christ is applicable to all His fellow-men. The first construction, however, explains St. Ambrose's analogy more fully."

128: St. Ambrose quotes the words from St. John vi. 58, thus: " propter Patrem. " This seeming expression of dependence, he says, does not in the least disturb his belief in the co-eternity and co equality of the Son with the Father; which belief would indeed remain unshaken even though Christ's words had been still more expressive, to all appearance, of dependence and inferiority.

129: S. John xi. 4.

130: S. John xvii. 5.

131: S. John xiii. 31, John xiii. 32.

132: S. John xvii. 4.

133: 1 Cor. viii. 6.

134: Cf. Bk. I. iii. 26.

135: Ps. cxix. 91.

136: S. John i. 3.

137: Or "consist;" Lat.- constant; Greek- ta panta en autw sunesthen .

138: Col. i. 17.

139: Lat.- familia. Cf. the expression "house of Israel."-Ps. cxv. 9.

140: Rom. ix. 5; cf. Rom. i. 3.

141: Phil. ii. 9.

142: Ps. viii. 6.

143: Heb. ii. 8.

144: Rom. xi. 36.

145: "You think, perhaps," St. Ambrose might have said to his Arian opponents, "that this text speaks of God the Father only, as it begins with `of Him. O' Very good. But whilst, in dealing with 1 Cor. viii. 6, you acknowledge that the Father is Omnipotent because `all things are of Him, O' you deny that the Son is Omnipotent, on the strength of the statement that all things are ` through O' Hint Now here (Rom. xi. 36) we find that all things are said to be `through O' as well as `of O' One and the same Person-the Father. On your own showing, then, you must conclude that the Father is both Omnipotent (all things being `of O' Him) and not Omnipotent (all things being only `through O' Him) at the same time and in the same respect. Which is absurd and impossible. Clearly, then, the inference you want to draw from the difference of the expressions `of Him O' and `by Him O' will not stand, if you make Rom. xi. 36 a declaration regarding the Father only. But if you make it a declaration concerning the Son, or even including the Son in its reference, you upset your own position."

146: Rom. xi. 33-36. St. Ambrose's quotation of the passage in extenso shows us how texts ought to be used in argument-namely, not rent from their context, not as unrelated apophthegms.

147: Wisd. vii. 27.

148: "Approaching"-Lat. accedentem. An "accidentem" potius sit legendum?-ut Sapientia non sit accidens, sed proprium, Substantioe Divinoe.

149: Wisd. vii. 30.

150: S. John v. 22.

151: Potest hic manus incuriose transcribentis deprehendi, cum "Pauli" pro "Patris" nomen potius legendum esse videatur. Nec tamen prohibemur quin sic verba intelligamus, ut Pater Ipse in hoc Epistoloe Romano loco, per calamum A postoli sit locutus.

152: S. Matt. xi. 27.

153: See §140, and comparison of Ps. cxix. 91, with St. John i. 3; Col. i. 17, and Ps. viii. 8, with Heb. ii. 8.

154: Or "into fellowship with His Son." "Fellowship" in the orig. is communio (koinwnia). 1 Cor. i. 9.

155: Or "as an inferior work."

156: S. John i. 16.

157: 1 John i. 3.

158: 2 Cor. xiii. 13. "Fellowship" in the Latin of St. Ambrose is (in this citation and that of 1 John i. 3, in §152) communicatio; Greek koinwnia .

159: S. John v. 17.

160: 1 John ii. 29.

161: Ps. xi. 8.

162: Or "intending an emblem" or "token (orig. sacramentum) of His Incarnation."

163: Orig. sacramentum.

164: 1 Cor. iii. 6.

165: S. John xv. 5.

166: Exod. xv. 11.

167: Ps. lxxxix. 6.

168: sc. is all. See Alford in loc. 1 Cor. iii. 7.

169: Jer. xi. 18.

170: Jer. ii. 21.

171: Num. xiii. 24.

172: i.e. the Incarnate Son of God, not the Pre-existent Logos, is the Vine.

173: S. John xiv. 28.

174: S. Luke ii. ad fin.

Exposition of the Christian Faith - Book 5

Book V.

Prologue.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Chapter XIII.

Chapter XIV.

Chapter XV.

Chapter IV.

Chapter XVII.

Chapter XVIII.

Chapter XIX.

Book V.

Prologue. Who is a faithful and wise servant? His reward is pointed out in the case of Peter, as also in the case of Paul. Ambrose, being anxious to follow Paul's guidance, wished this book to be added to the others, for it could not be included in the preceding one. The subject for discussion is then stated, and the reason for such a discussion given. He must needs be pardoned, for usury is to be demanded from every servant for the money which has been entrusted to him. Their

faithfulness is the usury desired in his own case. He will be happy if he may hope for a reward; but he does not look so much for the recompense of the saints, as for exemption from punishment. He urges all to seek to merit this.

1. "Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing."¹ Not worthless is this servant: some great one ought he to be. Let us think who he may be.

2. It is Peter, chosen by the Lord Himself to feed His flock, who merits thrice to hear the words: "Feed My little lambs; feed My lambs; feed My sheep."² And so, by feeding well the flock of Christ with the food of faith, he effaced the sin of his former fall. For this reason is he thrice admonished to feed the flock; thrice is he asked whether he loves the Lord, in order that he may thrice confess Him, Whom he had thrice denied before His Crucifixion.³

3. Blessed also is that servant who can say: "I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it."⁴ For he knew how to feed them. Who of us can do this? Who of us can truly say: "To the weak became I weak, that I might gain the weak?"⁵

4. Yet he, being so great a man, and chosen by Christ for the care of His flock, so as to strengthen the weak and to heal the sick, -he, I say, rejects forthwith after one admonition⁶ a heretic from the fold entrusted to him, for fear that the taint of one erring sheep might infect the whole flock with a spreading sore. He further bids that foolish questions and contentions be avoided.⁷

5. How, then, shall we act, being but ignorant dwellers set amongst these fresh tares in the old-standing harvest field?⁸ If we are silent, we shall seem to be giving way; and if we contend against them, there is the fear that we too shall be held to be carnal. For it is written of matters of this sort, which beget strife: "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient, with moderation instructing those that oppose themselves."⁹ And in another place: "If any man is contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Church of God."¹⁰ For this reason it was our intention to write somewhat, in order that our writings might without any din answer the impiety of heretics on our behalf.

6. And so we prepare to commence this our Fifth Book, O Emperor Augustus. For it was but right that the Fourth Book should end with our discussion on the Vine, lest otherwise we should seem to have overloaded that book with a tumultuous mass of subjects, rather than to have filled it with the fruit of the spiritual vineyard. On the other hand, it was not seemly that the gathering of the vintage of the faith should be left unfinished, whilst there was still all abundance of such great matters for discussion.

7. In the Fifth Book, therefore, we speak of the indivisible Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (omitting, however, a full discussion on the Holy Ghost), being urged by the teaching of the Gospel to let out on interest to human minds the five talents¹¹ of the faith entrusted to these five books being as it were the principal; lest perhaps when the Lord comes, and finds His money hidden in the earth, He may say to me: "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I do not sow; and gather where I have not strawed; thou oughtest therefore to have put My money to the exchangers, that at My coming I might have received Mine Own,"¹² or as it stands in another book: "And I," it says, "at My coming might have received it with usury."¹³

8. I pray those to pardon me, whom the boldness of such a lengthy address displeases. The thought of my office compels me to entrust to others what I have received. "We are stewards of the heavenly mysteries."¹⁴ We are ministers, but not all alike. "But," it says, "even as the Lord gave to every man, I have planted; Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."¹⁵ Let each one then strive that he may be able to receive a reward according to his labour. "For we are labourers together with God," as the Apostle said; "we are God's husbandry, God's building."¹⁶ Blessed therefore is he who sees such usury on his principal; blessed too is he who beholds the fruit of his work; blessed again is he "who builds upon the foundation of faith, gold, silver, precious stones."¹⁷

9. Ye who hear or read these words are all things to us. Ye are the usury of the money-lender, -the usury on speech, not on money; ye are the return given to the husbandman; ye are the gold, the silver, the precious stones of the builder. In your merits lie the chief results of the labours of the priest; in your souls shines forth the fruit of a bishop's work; in your progress glitters the gold of the Lord; the silver is increased if ye hold fast the divine words. "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in the fire; proved on the earth, purified seven times."¹⁸ Ye therefore will make the lender rich, the husbandman to abound in produce; ye will prove the master-builder to be skilful. I do not speak boastfully; for I do not desire so much my own advantage as yours.

10. Oh that I might safely say of you at that time: "Lord, Thou gavest me five talents, behold I have gained five other talents;"¹⁹ and that I might show the precious talents of your virtues! "For we have a treasure in earthen vessels."²⁰ These are the talents which the Lord bids us spiritually to trade with, or the two coins of the New and the Old Testament, which that Samaritan in the Gospel left for the man robbed by the thieves, for the purpose of getting his wounds healed.²¹

11. Neither do I, my brethren, with greedy desires, long for this, so that I may be set over many things; the recompense I get from the fact of your advance is enough for me. Oh that I may not be found unworthy of that which I have received! Let those things which are too great for me be assigned to better men. I demand them not! Yet mayest Thou say, O Lord: "I will give unto this last, even as unto thee."²² Let the man that deserves it receive authority over ten cities.²³

12. Let him be such an one as was Moses, who wrote the Ten Words of the Law. Let him be as Joshua, the son of Nun, who subdued five kings, and brought the Gibeonites into subjection, that he might be the figure of a Man of his own name Who was to come, by Whose power all fleshly lust should be overcome, and the Gentiles should be converted, so that they might follow the faith of Jesus Christ rather than their former pursuits and desires. Let him be as David, whom the young maidens came to meet with songs, saying: "Saul hath triumphed over thousands, David over ten thousands."²⁴

13. It is enough for me, if I am not thrust out into the outer darkness, as he was, who hid the talent entrusted to him in the earth so to speak, of his own flesh. This the ruler of the synagogue did, and the other rulers of the Jews; for they employed²⁵,²⁶ the words of the Lord, which had been entrusted to them, on the ground as it were of their bodies; and, delighting in the pleasures of the flesh, sunk the heavenly trust as though into the pit of an overweening heart.

14. Let us then not keep the Lord's money buried and hidden in the flesh; nor let us hide our one talent in a napkin;²⁷ but like good money-changers let us ever weigh it out with labour of mind and body, with an even and ready will, that the word may be near, even in thy mouth and in thy

heart.28

15. This is the word of the Lord, this is the precious talent, whereby thou art redeemed. This money must often be seen on the tables of souls, in order that by constant trading the sound of the good coins may be able to go forth into every land, by the means of which eternal life is purchased. "This is eternal life," which Thou, Almighty Father, givest freely, that we may know "Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent."²⁹

Chapter I.

How impious the Arians are, in attacking that on which human happiness depends. John ever unites the Son with the Father, especially where he says: "That they may know Thee, the only true God, etc." In that place, then, we must understand the words "true God" also of the Son; for it cannot be denied that He is God, and it cannot be said He is a false god, and least of all that He is God by appellation only. This last point being proved from the Apostle's words, we rightly confess that Christ is true God.

16. Wherefore let the Arians observe, how impious they are in calling in question our hope and the object of our desires. And since they are wont to cry out on this point above all others, saying that Christ is distinct from the only and true God, let us confute their impious ideas so far as lies in our power.

17. For on this point they ought rather to understand, that this is the benefit, this the reward of perfect virtue, namely, this divine and incomparable gift, that we may know Christ together with the Father, and not separate the Son from the Father; as also the Scriptures do not separate them. For the following tells rather for the unity than for the diversity of the Divine Majesty, namely, that the knowledge of the Father and of the Son gives us the same recompense, and one and the same honour; which reward no man will have but he that has known both the Father and the Son. For as the knowledge of the Father procures eternal life, so also does the knowledge of the Son.

18. Therefore as the Evangelist forthwith at the outset joined the Word with God the Father in his devout confession of faith, saying: "And the Word was with God;"³⁰ and here too, in writing the words of the Lord: "That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent,"³¹ he has undoubtedly, by thus connecting Them, bound together the Father and the Son, so that no one may separate Christ as true God from the majesty of the Father, for union does not dissever.

19. Therefore in saying, "That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent," he put an end to the Sabellians, and has also put the Jews out of court, - those at any rate who heard him speak; so that the former might not suppose the Same to be the Father as the Son, which they might have done if he had not added also Christ, and that the latter might not sever the Son from the Father.

20. But, I ask, why do they not think we ought to gather and understand this from what has been already said; that as he has declared the Father to be only, true God, so we may understand Jesus Christ also to be only, true God? For it could not be expressed in any other way, for fear he might seem to be speaking of two Gods. For neither do we speak of two Gods; and yet we confess the Son to be of the same Godhead with the Father.

21. May we ask, therefore, on what grounds they think a distinction is made in the Godhead, and whether they deny Christ to be God? But they cannot deny it. Do they deny Him to be true God? But if they deny Him to be true God, let them say whether they declare Him to be a false God, or God by appellation only. For according to the Scriptures the word "God" is used either of the true God, or by appellation only, or of a false god. True God as the Father; God by appellation as the saints; a false god like the demons and idols. Let them say then how they will acknowledge and describe the Son of God. Do they suppose the name of God to have been falsely assumed; or was there in truth merely an indwelling of God within Him, as it were by appellation only?

22. I do not think they can say the name was falsely assumed, and so involve themselves in the open wickedness of blasphemy; lest they should betray themselves on the one hand to the demons and idols, and on the other to Christ, by insinuating that the name of God was falsely given to Him. But if they think He is called God because He had an indwelling of the Godhead within Him,-as many holy men were (for the Scripture calls them Gods to whom the word of God came),³² -they do not place Him before other men, but think He is to be compared with them; so that they consider Him to be the same as He has granted other men to be, even as He says to Moses: "I have made thee a god unto Pharaoh."³³ Wherefore it is also said in the Psalms: "I have said, ye are gods."³⁴

23. This idea of these blasphemers Paul puts aside; for he said: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth."³⁵ He said not: "There begods," but "There be that are called gods." But "Christ," as it is written, "is the same yesterday and to-day."³⁶ "He is," it says; that is, not only in name but also in truth.

24. And well is it written: "He is the same yesterday and to-day," so that the impiety of Arius might find no room to pile up its profanity. For he, in reading in the second psalm of the Father saying to the Son, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee,"³⁷ noted the word "to-day," not "yesterday," referring this which was spoken of the assumption of our flesh to the eternity of the divine generation; of which Paul also says in the Acts of the Apostles: "And we declare unto you the promise which was made to our fathers: for God has fulfilled the same to our children, in that He hath raised up the Lord Jesus Christ again, as it is written in the second psalm: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee."³⁸ Thus the Apostle, filled with the Holy Ghost, in order that he might destroy that fierce madness of his, said: "The same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever." "Yesterday" on account of His eternity; "to-day" on account of His taking to Himself a human body.

25. Christ therefore is, and always is; for He, Who is, always is. And Christ always is, of Whom Moses says: "He that is hath sent me."³⁹ Gabriel indeed was, Raphael was, the angels were; but they who sometime have not been are by no means with equal reason said always to be. But Christ, as we read, "was not it is, and, it is not, but, it is was in Him."⁴⁰ Wherefore it is the property of God alone to be, Who ever is.

26. Therefore if they dare not say He is God by appellation, and it is a mark of deep impiety to say He is a false god, it remains that He is true God, not unlike to the true Father, but equal to Him. And as He sanctifies and justifies whom He will,⁴¹ not by assuming that power from without Himself, but having within Himself the power of sanctification, how is He not true God? For the Apostle called Him indeed true God, Who according to His nature was God, as it is written: "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them, who by nature were not gods;"⁴²

that is, who could not be true gods, for this title by no means belonged to them by nature.

Chapter II.

Since it has been proved that the Son is true God, and in that is not interior to the Father, it is shown that by the word *solus* (alone) when used of the Father in the Scriptures, the Son is not excluded; nay, that this expression befits Him above all, and Him alone. The Trinity is alone, not amongst all, but above all. The Son alone does what the Father does, and alone has immortality. But we must not for this reason separate Him from the Father in our controversies. We may, however, understand that passage of the Incarnation. Lastly the Father is shut out from a share in the redemption of men by those who would have the Son to be separated from Him.

27. We have fully demonstrated by passages of Scripture, in the earlier books, that Christ is true, yea, very true God. Therefore if Christ, as it has been taught, is true God, let us enquire why they desire to separate the Son from the Father, when they read that the Father is the only true God.

28. If they say that the Father alone is true God, they cannot deny that God the Son alone is the Truth; for Christ is the Truth. Is the Truth then something inferior to Him that is true, seeing that according to the use of terms a man is called true from the word "truth," as also wise from wisdom, just from justice? We do not deem it so between the Father and the Son. For there is nothing wanting to the Father, because the Father is full of truth; and the Son, because He is the Truth, is equal to Him that is true.

29. But that they may know, when they see the word "alone," that the Son is in no wise to be separated from the Father, let them remember it was said by God in the Prophets: "I stretched forth the heavens alone."⁴³ The Father certainly did not stretch them forth without the Son. For the Son Himself, Who is the Wisdom of God, says: "When He prepared the heavens I was present with Him."⁴⁴ And Paul declares that it was said of the Son: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands."⁴⁵ Whether therefore the Son made the heavens, as also the Apostle would have it understood, whilst He Himself certainly did not alone spread out the heavens without the Father; or as it stands in the Book of Proverbs: "The Lord in wisdom hath rounded the earth, in understanding hath He prepared the heavens;"⁴⁶ it is proved that neither the Father made the heavens alone without the Son, nor yet the Son without the Father. And yet He who spread out the heavens is said to be alone.

30. To show indeed how plainly we must understand the expression "alone" of the Son (although we may never believe that He did anything without the knowledge of the Father), we have here also another passage, where it is written: "Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and walketh as it were on a pavement over the sea."⁴⁷ For the Gospel of the Lord has taught us that it was not the Father but the Son that walked upon the sea, when Peter asked Him, saying, "Lord, bid me come unto Thee."⁴⁸ But even prophecy itself gives proof of this. For holy Job prophesied of the coming of the Lord; of Whom he said in truth that He would vanquish the great Leviathan,⁴⁹ and it was done. For that dread Leviathan that is, the devil, He smote, and struck down, and laid low in the last times by the adorable Passion of His own Body.⁵⁰

31. The Son therefore is only and true God for this also is assigned to the Son as His sole right. For of no created being can it be accurately said that he is alone. How can he to whom fellowship in creation belongs be separated from the rest, as though he were alone? Thus man is seen to be

a rational being amongst all earthly creatures, yet he is not the only rational being; for we know that the heavenly works of God also are rational, we confess that angels and archangels are rational beings. If then the angels are rational, man cannot be said to be the only rational being.

32. But they say that the sun can be said to be alone, because there is no second sun. But the sun himself has many things in common with the stars, for he travels across the heavens, he is of that ethereal and heavenly substance, he is a creature, and is reckoned amongst all the works of God. He serves God in union with all, blesses Him with all, praises Him with all.⁵¹ Therefore he cannot accurately be said to be alone, for he is not set apart from the rest.

33. Wherefore since no created being can be compared with the Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Which is alone, not amongst all, but over all (our declaration concerning the Spirit being meanwhile held back); as the Father is said to be the only true God, because He has nothing in common with others; so also is the Son alone the Image of the true God, He alone is the Hand of the Father, He alone is the Virtue and Wisdom of God.

34. Thus the Son alone does what the Father does; for it is written: "Whatsoever things I do, He doth."⁵² And since the work of the Father and of the Son is one, it is well said of the Father and the Son, that God worked alone; wherefore also when we speak of the Creator, we own both the Father and the Son. For assuredly when Paul said, "Who served the creature more than the Creator,"⁵³ he neither denied the Father to be the Creator, from Whom are all these things, nor yet the Son, through Whom are all things.⁵⁴

35. And it does not seem out of agreement with this that it is written: "Who alone hath immortality."⁵⁵ For how could He not have immortality Who has life in Himself? He has it in His nature; He has it in His essential Being; and He has it not as a temporal grace, but owing to His eternal Godhead. He has it not by way of a gift as a servant, but by peculiar right of His Generation, as the co-eternal Son. He has it, too, as has the Father. "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so also hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself."⁵⁶ As He has it, it says, so He has given it. Thou hast learnt already how He gave it,⁵⁷ that thou mayest not think it to be a free gift of grace, when it is a secret of His generation. Since, then, there is no divergence of life between the Father and the Son, how can it be supposed that the Father alone has immortality, whilst the Son has it not?

36. Wherefore let them understand that in this passage the Son is not to be separated from the Father, Who is the only true God. For they cannot prove that the Son is not the only and true God, especially as here also it may be gathered, as I have said, that Christ too is true and only God; or the passage may at least be understood partly in reference to the Godhead of the Father and the Son, and partly to the Incarnation of Christ: for knowledge is not perfect unless it confesses Jesus Christ from eternity to be only-begotten God, true Son of God, and, according to the flesh, begotten of a Virgin. Which also this very Evangelist has taught us elsewhere, saying: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God."⁵⁸

37. Lastly, the whole of our passage teaches us that it is not improper in this verse to understand a reference to the sacrament of the Incarnation. For thus it is written: "Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son."⁵⁹ When, therefore, He states that the hour is come, and prays to be glorified, how can one suppose Him to have spoken but only in accordance with the assumption of our

flesh? For the Godhead has no fixed moments of time, nor does eternal light stand in need of glorification. Therefore in the only true God, Who is the Father, we also understand the only true Son of God to be in accordance with the unity of the Godhead. And in the name of Jesus Christ, which He received when born of the Virgin, we acknowledge the sacrament of the Incarnation.

38. But if they wish to separate the Son, when they read that the Father is the only true God, I suppose that when they read of the Incarnation of the Son: "This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner;" and further: "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved;"⁶⁰ then they imagine the Father is to be cut off from the benefit of imparting salvation to us. But there is neither salvation without the Father, nor eternal life without the Son.

Chapter III. To the objection of the Arians, that two Gods are introduced by a unity of substance, the answer is that a plurality of Gods is more likely to be inferred from diversity of substance. Further, their charge recoils upon themselves. Manifold diversity is the reason why two men cannot be said to be one man, though all men are called individually man, where a unity of nature is referred to. There is one nature alone in them, but there is wholly a unity in the Divine Persons. Therefore the Son is not to be severed from the Father, especially as they dare not deny that worship is due to Him.

39. But the Arians maintain the following: If you say that, as the Father is the only true God, so also is the Son, and confess that the Father and the Son are both of one substance, you introduce not one God, but two. For they who are of one substance seem not to be one God but two Gods. Just as two men or two sheep or more are spoken of, but a man and a sheep are not spoken of as two men or two sheep, but as one man and one sheep.

40. This is what the Arians say; and by this cunning argument they attempt to catch the more simple-minded. However if we read the divine Scriptures we shall find that plurality occurs rather amongst those things which are of a diverse and different substance, that is, eterousia. We have this set forth in the books of Solomon, in that passage in which he said: "There are three things impossible to understand, yea, a fourth which I know not, the track of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock, the path of a ship in the sea, and the way of a man in his youth."⁶¹ An eagle and a ship and a serpent are not of one family and nature, but of a distinguishable and different substance, and yet they are three. On the testimony of Scripture, therefore, they learn that their arguments are against themselves.

41. Therefore, in saying that the substance of the Father and of the Son is diverse and their Godhead distinguishable, they themselves assert there are two Gods. But we, when we confess the Father and the Son, in declaring them still to be of one Godhead, say that there are not two Gods, but one God. And this we establish by the word of the Lord. For where there are several, there is a difference either of nature or of will and work. Lastly, that they may be refuted on their own witness, two men are mentioned: But though they are of one nature by right of birth, yet in time and thought and work and place, they are apart; and so one man cannot be spoken of under the signification and number of two; for there is no unity where there is diversity. But God is said to be one, and the glory and completeness of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is thus expressed.

42. Such, indeed, is the truth of unity that, when the nature alone of human birth or of human flesh is indicated, one man is the term used for the many, as it is written "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me;"⁶² that is, not the one person of a man, but the one flesh, the one frailty of human birth. It added also: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to trust in man."⁶³ Here, too, it did not denote one particular man, but a universal condition. Then, immediately after it added, speaking of many: "It is better to put confidence in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."⁶⁴ Where man is spoken of, as we have already said, there the common unity of the nature, which exists between all is indicated; but where the princes are mentioned, there is a certain distinction between their different powers.

43. Amongst men, or in men, there exists a unity in some one thing, either in love, or desire, or flesh, or devotion, or faith. But a universal unity, that embraces within itself all things agreeably to the divine glory, is the property of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit alone.

44. Wherefore the Lord also, in pointing out the diversity that exists among men, who have nothing in common that can tend towards the unity of an indivisible substance, says: "In your law it is written that the testimony of two men is true."⁶⁵ But though He had said, "The testimony of two men is true," when He came to the testimony of Himself and His Father, He said not: "Our testimony is true, for it is the testimony of two Gods;" but: "I am One that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me."⁶⁶ Earlier He also says: "If I judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me."⁶⁷ Thus, both in one place and the other, He indicated both the Father and the Son, but neither implied the plurality, nor severed the unity of their divine Substance.

45. It is plain, then, that whatsoever is of one substance cannot be severed, even though it be not single, but one. By singleness I mean that which the Greeks call *monothj*. Singleness has to do with a person; unity with a nature. That those things which are of a different substance are wont to be called, not one alone, but many, though already proved on the testimony of the prophet, the Apostle himself has stated in so many words, saying: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth."⁶⁸ Dost thou see, then, that those who are of different substances, and not of the verity of one nature, are called "gods"? But the Father and the Son, being of one substance, are not two Gods, but "One God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things."⁶⁹ "One God," he says, "and one Lord Jesus;" and above: "One God, not two Gods;" and then: "One Lord, not two Lords."⁷⁰

46. Plurality, therefore, is excluded, but the unity is not destroyed. But as, on the one hand, when we read of the Lord Jesus, we do not dissociate the Father, as I have already said, from the prerogative of ruling, because He has that in common with the Son; so, on the other hand, when we read of the only true God, the Father, we cannot sever the Son from the prerogative of the only true God, for He has that in common with the Father.

47. Let them say what they feel or what they think, when we read: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."⁷¹ Do they think Christ should not be worshipped, and that He Ought not to be served? But if that woman of Canaan who worshipped Him,⁷² merited to gain what she asked for, and the Apostle Paul, who confessed himself to be the servant of Christ in the very outset of his letters, merited to be an Apostle "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ;"⁷³ let them say what they think should follow. Would they prefer to join with Arius in a

league of treachery, and so show, by denying Christ to be the only true God, that they consider He should neither be worshipped nor served? Or would they sooner go in company with Paul, who in serving and worshipping Christ did not disown in word and heart the only true God, Whom he acknowledged with dutiful service?

Chapter IV.

It is objected by heretics that Christ offered worship to His Father. But instead it is shown that this must be referred to His humanity, as is clear from an examination of the passage. However, it also offers fresh witness to His Godhead, as we often see it happening in other actions that Christ did.

48. But if any one were to say that the Son worships God the Father, because it is written, "Ye worship ye know not what, we know what we worship,"⁷⁴ let him consider when it was said, and to whom, and to whose wishes it was in answer.

49. In the earlier verses of this chapter it was stated, not without reason, that Jesus, being weary with the journey, was sitting down, and that He asked a woman of Samaria to give Him drink;⁷⁵ for He spoke as man; for as God He could neither be weary nor thirst.

50. So when this woman addressed Him as a Jew, and thought Him a prophet, He answers her, as a Jew who spiritually taught the mysteries of the Law: "Ye worship ye know not what, we know what we worship." "We," He says; for He joined Himself with men. But how is He joined with men, but according to the flesh? And to show that He answered as being incarnate, He added: "for salvation is of the Jews."⁷⁶

51. But immediately after this He put aside His human feelings, saying: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father."⁷⁷ He said not: "We shall worship." This He would certainly have said, if He had a share in our obedience.

52. And when we read that Mary worshipped Him,⁷⁸ we ought to learn that it is not possible for Him under the same nature both to worship as a servant, and to be worshipped as Lord; but rather that as man He is said to worship among men, and that as Lord He is worshipped by His servants.

53. Many things therefore we read and believe, in the light of the sacrament of the Incarnation. But even in the very feelings of our human nature we may behold the Divine Majesty. Jesus is wearied with His journey, that He may refresh the weary; He desires to drink, when about to give spiritual drink to the thirsty; He was hungry, when about to supply the food of salvation to the hungry; He dies, to live again; He is buried, to rise again; He hangs upon the dreadful tree, to strengthen those in dread; He veils the heaven with thick darkness, that He may give light; He makes the earth to shake, that He may make it strong; He rouses the sea, that He may calm it; He opens the tombs of the dead, that He may show they are the homes of the living; He is made of a Virgin, that men may believe He is born of God; He feigns not to know, that He may make the ignorant to know; as a Jew He is said to worship, that the Son may be worshipped as true God.

Chapter V.

Ambrose answers those who press the words of the Lord to the mother of Zebedee's children, by saying that they were spoken out of kindness, because Christ was unwilling to cause her grief. Ample reason for such tenderness is brought forward. The Lord would rather leave the granting of

that request to the Father, than declare it to be impossible. This answer of Christ's, however, is not to His detriment, as is shown both by His very words, and also by comparing them with other passages.

54. "How," they say, "can the Son of God be the only true God, like to the Father, when He Himself said to the sons of Zebedee: `Ye shall drink indeed of My cup; but to sit on My right hand or on My left, is not Mine to give to you, but to those for whom it has been prepared of My Father'?"⁷⁹ This, then, is, as you desire, your proof of divine inequality; though in it you ought rather to reverence the Lord's kindness and to adore His grace; if, that is, you could but perceive the deep secrets of the virtue and wisdom of God.

55. For think of her who, with and for her sons, makes this request. It is a mother, who in her anxiety for the honour of her sons, though somewhat unrestrained in the measure of her desires, may for all that yet find pardon. It is a mother, old in years, devout in her zeal, deprived of consolation; who at that time, when she might have been helped and supported by the aid of her able bodied offspring, suffered her children to leave her, and preferred the reward her sons should receive in following Christ to her own pleasure. For they when called by the Lord, at the first word, as we read, left their nets and their father and followed Him.⁸⁰

56. She then, somewhat yielding to the devotion of a mother's zeal, besought the Saviour, saying: "Grant that these my two sons may sit the one on Thy right hand, the other on Thy left in Thy kingdom."⁸¹ Although it was an error, it was an error of a mother's affections; for a mother's heart knows no patience. Though eager for the object of her desires, yet her longing was pardonable, for she was not greedy for money, but for grace. Not shameless was her request, for she thought not of herself, but of her children. Contemplate the mother, reflect upon her.

57. But it is nothing wonderful if the feelings of parents for their children seem nothing to you, who think the love of the Almighty Father for His only-begotten Son a trifling matter. The Lord of heaven and earth was ashamed (to speak as accords with the assumption of our flesh and the virtues of the soul)-He was ashamed, I say, and, to use His own word, disturbed, to refuse a share even in His own seat to a mother making request for her sons. You maintain sometimes that the proper Son of the eternal God stands to give service, at other times you would have His co-session to be as that of an attendant, that is, not because there is a oneness of majesty, but because it is the order of the Father; and you deny to the Son of God, Who is true God, that which He plainly was unwilling to refuse to men.

58. For He thought of the mother's love, who solaced her old age with the thought of her sons' reward, and, though harassed with a mother's longings, endured the absence of those dearest pledges of her love.

59. Think also of the woman, that is, the weaker sex, whom the Lord had not yet strengthened by His own Passion. Think, I say, of a descendant of Eve, the first woman, sinking under the inheritance of unrestrained passion, which had been passed on to all; one, too, whom the Lord had not yet redeemed with His own Blood, and from whom He had not yet washed out in His Blood the desire implanted in the hearts of all for unbounded honour even beyond what is right. Thus the woman offended owing to an inherited tendency to wrong.

60. And what wonder if a mother should strive to win preference for her children (which is far better than if she had done it for herself), when even the Apostles themselves, as we read, strove amongst themselves, as to who should have the preference?⁸²

61. The physician, therefore, ought not to wound a mother who has been deprived of all, nor a suffering mind, with shameful reproaches, lest when the request had been made and had been proudly denied, she should grieve over the condemnation of her petition as being unreasonable.

62. Lastly, the Lord, Who knew that a mother's affection is to be honoured, answered not the woman, but her sons, saying: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" When they say: "We are able," Jesus says to them: "Ye shall drink indeed of My cup; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give to you, but to those for whom it is prepared of My Father."⁸³

63. How patient and kind the Lord is; how deep is His wisdom and good His love! For wishing to show that the disciples asked for no slight thing, but one they could not obtain, He reserved His own peculiar rights for His Father's honour, not fearing to detract aught from His own rights: "Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God;"⁸⁴ and loving, too, His disciples (for "He loved them," as it is written, "unto the end"),⁸⁵ He was unwilling to seem to refuse to those whom He loved what they desired; He, I say, the good and holy Lord, Who would rather keep some of His own prerogative secret, than lay aside aught of His love. "For charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not, and seeketh not her own."⁸⁶

64. Lastly, that you may learn it was no sign of weakness, but rather of tenderness, that He said: "It is not Mine to give to you;" note that when the sons of Zebedee make the request without their mother, He said nothing about the Father; for thus it is written: "It is not Mine to give to you, but those for whom it has been prepared."⁸⁷ So the Evangelist Mark has stated it. But when the mother makes this request on her sons' behalf, as we find it in Matthew, He says: "It is not Mine to give to you, but to those for whom it has been prepared of My Father."⁸⁸ Here He added: "of My Father," for a mother's feelings demanded greater tenderness.

65. But if they think that by saying, "For whom it hath been prepared of My Father," He assigned greater power to His Father, or detracted aught from His own; let them say whether they think there is any detraction from the Father's power, because the Son in the Gospel says of the Father: "The Father judgeth no man."⁸⁹

66. But if we think it impious to believe that the Father has handed over all judgment to the Son in such wise that He has it not Himself,-for He has it, and cannot lose what the Divine Majesty has by its very nature,-we ought to consider it equally impious to suppose that the Son cannot give what either men can merit, or any creature can receive; especially as He Himself has said: "I go unto My Father, and whatsoever ye shall ask of Him in My name, that will I do."⁹⁰ For if the Son cannot give what the Father can give, the Truth has lied, and cannot do what the Father has been asked for in His name. He therefore did not say: "For whom it has been prepared of My Father," in order that requests should be made only of the Father. For all things which are asked of the Father, He has declared that He will give. Lastly, He did not say: "Whatsoever ye shall ask of Me, that will I do;" but: "Whatsoever ye shall ask of Him in My name, that will I do."

Chapter VI.

Wishing to answer the above-stated objection somewhat more fully, he maintains that this request, had it not been impossible in itself, would have been possible for Christ to grant; especially as the Father has given all judgment to Him; which gift we must understand to have been given without any feature of imperfection. However, he proves that the request must be reckoned amongst the impossibilities. To make it really possible, he teaches that Christ's answer must be taken in accordance with His human nature, and shows this next by an exposition of the passage. Lastly, he once more confirms the reply he has given on the impossibility of Christ's session.

67. I Ask now whether they think the request made by the wife and sons of Zebedee was possible or impossible to human circumstances, or to any created being? If it was possible, how is it that He Who made all things which were not had not the power of granting a seat to His apostles on His right hand and on His left? or how was it that He, to Whom the Father gave all judgment, could not judge of men's merits?

68. We know well in what way He gave it; for how did the Son, who created all things out of nothing, receive it as though in want? Had He not the judgment of those whose natures He had made? The Father gave all judgment to the Son, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."⁹¹ It is not therefore the power of the Son, but our knowledge of it, that increases; nor does what is learnt by us add aught to His being, but only to our advantage; so that by knowing the Son of God, we may have eternal life.

69. As, then, in our knowledge of the Son of God His honour, but our profit, not His, is concerned; if any one thinks that the power of God is augmented by that honour, He must also believe that God the Father can receive augmentation; for He is glorified by our knowledge of Him, as is the Son: as it is written on the word of the Son: "I have glorified Thee upon the earth."⁹² Therefore if that which was asked for was at all possible, it certainly was in the power of the Son to grant it.

70. Let them show, if they consider it possible, who of men or of other created beings sits either on the right hand or the left of God. For the Father says to the Son: "Sit Thou on My right hand."⁹³ Therefore if any one sits on the right hand of the Son, the Son is found to be sitting (to speak in human wise) between Himself and the Father.

71. A thing impossible for man, then, was asked of Him. But He was unwilling to say that men could not sit with Him; seeing that He desired His divine glory should be veiled, and not revealed before He rose again.⁹⁴ For before this, when He had appeared in glory between His attendants Moses and Elias, He had warned His disciples that they should tell no man what they had seen.

72. Therefore if it was not possible for men or other created beings to merit this, the Son ought not to seem to have less power because He gave not to His apostles, what the Father has not given to men or other created beings. Or else let them say to which of them He has given it. Certainly not to the angels; of whom Scripture says that all the angels stood round about the throne.⁹⁵ Thus Gabriel said that he stands, as it says: "I am Gabriel that stand before God."⁹⁶

73. Not to the angels, then, has He given it, nor to the elders who worship Him that sitteth; for they do not sit upon the seat of majesty, but as the Scripture has said, round about the throne; for there are four and twenty other seats, as we have it in the Revelation of John: "And upon the seats four and twenty elders sitting."⁹⁷ In the Gospel also the Lord Himself says: "When the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of

Israel."98 He did not say that a share in His own throne could be given to the apostles, but that there were those other twelve thrones; which, however, we ought not to think of as referring to actual sitting down, but as showing the happy issue of spiritual grace.

74. Lastly, in the Book of the Kings, Micaiah the prophet said: "I saw the Lord God of Israel sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing around Him, on His right hand and on His left."99 How then, when the angels stand on the right hand and on the left of the Lord God, when all the host of heaven stands, shall men sit on the right hand of God or on His left, to whom is promised as a reward for virtue likeness to the angels, as the Lord says: "Ye shall be as the angels in heaven?"100 "As the angels," He says, not "more than the angels."

75. If, then, the Father has given nothing more than the Son, the Son certainly has given nothing less than the Father. Therefore the Son can in no wise be less than the Father.

76. Suppose, however, that it had been possible for men to obtain what was desired; what does it mean when He says: "But to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give to you"?101 What is "Mine"? Above He said: "Ye shall drink indeed of My cup;" and again He added: "It is not Mine to give to you." Above He said "Mine," and again lower down He said "Mine." He made no change. And so the earlier passages tell us why He said "Mine."

77. For being asked by a woman as man to allow her sons to sit on His right hand and His left, because she asked Him as man, the Lord also as though only man answered concerning His Passion: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?"102

78. Therefore because He spoke according to the flesh of the Passion of His Body, He wished to show that according to the flesh He left behind Him an example and pattern to us of the endurance of suffering; but that according to His position as man He could not grant them fellowship in the throne above. This is the reason why He said: "It is not Mine;" as also in another place He says: "My doctrine is not Mine."103 It is not, He says, spoken after my flesh; for the words which are divine belong not to the flesh.

79. But how plainly He showed His tenderness for His disciples, whom He loved, saying first: "Will ye drink of My cup?" For as He could not grant what they sought, He offered them something else, so that He might mention what He would assign to them, before He denied them anything; in order that they might understand that the failure lay more in the equity of their request to Him, than in the wish of their Lord to show kindness.

80. "Ye shall indeed drink of My cup," He says; that is, "I will not refuse you the suffering, which My flesh will undergo. For all that I have taken on Myself as man, ye can imitate. I have granted you the victory of suffering, the inheritance of the cross. `But to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give to you.'" He did not say, "It is not Mine to give," but: "It is not Mine to give to you;" meaning by this, not that He lacked the power, but that His creatures were wanting in merit.

81. Or take in another way the words: "It is not Mine to give to you," that is. "It is not Mine, for I came to teach humility; it is not Mine, for I came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister; it is not Mine, for I show justice, not favour."

82. Then, speaking of the Father, He added: "For whom it has been prepared," to show that the Father also is not wont to give heed merely to requests, but to merits; for God is not a respecter of

persons.¹⁰⁴ Wherefore also the Apostle says: "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate."¹⁰⁵ He did not predestinate them before He knew them, but He did predestinate the reward of those whose merits He foreknew.

83. Rightly then is the woman checked, who demanded what was impossible, as a special kind of privilege from Him the Lord, Who of His own free gift granted not only to two apostles, but to all the disciples, those things which He had adjudged to be given to the saints; and that too without a prayer from any one, as it is written: "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."¹⁰⁶

84. Therefore, although we may think the demand to have been possible, there is no room for false attacks. However, when I read that the seraphim stand,¹⁰⁷ how can I suppose that men may sit on the right hand or the left of the Son of God? The Lord sits upon the cherubim, as it says: "Thou that sittest upon the cherubim, show myself."¹⁰⁸ And how shall the apostles sit upon the cherubim?

85. And I do not come to this conclusion of my own mind, but because of the utterances of our Lord's own mouth. For the Lord Himself later on, in commending the apostles to the Father, says: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am."¹⁰⁹ But if He had thought that the Father would give the divine throne to men, He would have said: "I will that where I sit, they also may sit with Me." But He says: "I will that they be with Me," not "that they may sit with Me;" and "where I am," not "as I am."

86. Then follow the words: "That they may see My glory." Here too He did not say: "that they may have My glory," but "that they may see" it. For the servant sees, the Lord possesses; as David also has taught us, saying: "That I may see the delight of the Lord."¹¹⁰ And the Lord Himself in the Gospel has revealed it, stating: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."¹¹¹ "They shall see," He says; not "They shall sit with God upon the cherubim."

87. Let them therefore cease to think little of the Son of God according to His Godhead, lest they should think little also of the Father. For he who believes wrongly of the Son cannot think rightly of the Father; he who thinks wrongly of the Spirit cannot think rightly of the Son. For where there is one dignity, one glory, one love, one majesty, whatsoever thou thinkest is to be withdrawn in the case of any one of the Three Persons, is withdrawn from all alike, For that can never have completeness which thou canst separate and divide into various portions.

Chapter VII.

Objection is taken to the following passage: "Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." To remove it, he shows first the impiety of the Arian explanation; then compares these words with others; and lastly, takes the whole passage into consideration. Hence he gathers that the mission of Christ, although it is to be received according to the flesh, is not to His detriment. When this is proved he shows how the divine mission takes place.

88. There are some, O Emperor Augustus, who in their desire to deny the unity of the divine Substance, strive to make little of the love of the Father and the Son, because it is written: "Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me."¹¹² But when they say this, what else do they do but adopt a likeness of comparison between the Son of God and men?

89. Can men indeed be I loved by God as the Son is, in Whom the Father is well-pleased?¹¹³ He is well-pleasing in Himself; we through Him. For those in whom God sees His own Son after His own likeness, He admits through His Son into the favour of sons. So that as we go through likeness unto likeness, so through the Generation of the Son are we called unto adoption. The eternal love of God's Nature is one thing, that of grace is another.

90. And if they start a debate on the words that are written: "And Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me," and think a comparison is intended; they must think that the following also was said by way of comparison: "Be ye merciful, as your Father Which is in heaven is merciful;"¹¹⁴ and elsewhere: "Be ye perfect, as My Father Which is in heaven is perfect."¹¹⁵ But if He is perfect in the fulness of His glory, we are but perfect according to the growth of virtue within us. The Son also is loved by the Father according to the fulness of a love that ever abideth, but in us growth in grace merits the love of God.

91. Thou seest, then, how God has given grace to men, and dost thou wish to dis sever the natural and indivisible love of the Father and the Son? And dost thou still strive to make nothing of words, where thou dost note the mention of a unity of majesty?

92. Consider the whole of this passage, and see from what standpoint He speaks; for thou hearest Him saying: "Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."¹¹⁶ See how He speaks from the standpoint of the first man. For He begs for us in that request those things which, as Man, He remembered were granted in paradise before the Fall, as also He spoke of it to the thief at His Passion: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, today shall thou be with Me in paradise."¹¹⁷ This is the glory before the world was. But He used the word "world" instead "men," as also thou hast it: "Lo! the whole world goeth after Him;"¹¹⁸ and again "That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me."¹¹⁹

93. But that thou mightest know the great God, even the life-giving and Almighty Son of God, He has added a proof of His majesty by saying: "And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine."¹²⁰ He has all things, and dost thou turn aside the fact that He was sent, to wrong Him?

94. But if thou dost not accept the truth of His mission according to the flesh, as the Apostle spoke of it,¹²¹ and dost raise out of a mere word a decision against it, to enable thee to say that inferiors are wont to be sent by superiors; what answer wilt thou give to the fact that the Son was sent to men? For if thou dost think that he who is sent is inferior to him by whom he is sent, thou must learn also that an inferior has sent a superior, and that superiors have been sent to inferiors. For Tobias sent Raphael the archangel,¹²² and an angel was sent to Balsam,¹²³ and the Son of God to the Jews.

95. Or was the Son of God inferior to the Jews to whom He was sent? For of Him it is written: "Last of all He sent unto them His only Son, saying, They will reverence My Son."¹²⁴ And mark that He mentioned first the servants, then the Son, that thou mayest know that God, the only-begotten Son according to the power of His Godhead, has neither name nor lot in common with servants. He is sent forth to be revered, not to be compared with the household.

96. And rightly did He add the word "My," that we might believe He came, not as one of many, nor as one of a lower nature or of some inferior power, but as true from Him that is true, as the Image of the Father's Substance.

97. Suppose, however, that he who is sent is inferior to him by whom he is sent. Christ then was inferior to Pilate; for Pilate sent Him to Herod. But a word does not prejudice His power. Scripture, which says that He was sent from the Father, says that He was sent from a ruler.

98. Wherefore, if we sensibly hold to those things which be worthy of the Son of God, we ought to understand Him to have been sent in such a way that the Word of God, out of the incomprehensible and ineffable mystery of the depths of His majesty, gave Himself for comprehension to our minds, so far as we could lay hold of Him, not only when He "emptied" Himself, but also when He dwelt in us, as it is written: "I will dwell in them."¹²⁵ Elsewhere also it stands that God said: "Go to, let us go down and confound their language."¹²⁶ God, indeed, never descends from any place; for He says: "I fill heaven and earth."¹²⁷ But He seems to descend when the Word of God enters our hearts, as the prophet has said: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."¹²⁸ We are to do this, so that, as He Himself promised, He may come together with the Father and make His abode with us.¹²⁹ It is clear, then, how He comes.

Chapter VIII.

Christ, so far as He is true Son of God, has no Lord, but only so far as He is Man; as is shown by His words in which He addressed at one time the Father, at another the Lord. How many heresies are silenced by one verse of Scripture! We must distinguish between the things that belong to Christ as Son of God or as Son of David. For under the latter title only must we ascribe it to Him that He was a servant. Lastly, he points out that many passages cannot be taken except as referring to the Incarnation.

99. Wherefore also it is plain how He calls Him Lord, Whom He knew as Father. For He says: "I confess to Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth."¹³⁰ First Wisdom spoke of His own Father, and then proclaimed Him Lord of creation. For this reason the Lord shows in His Gospel that no lordship is exercised where there is a true offspring, saying: "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The son of David. Jesus saith to them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying: The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit Thou on My right hand"? Then he added: "If David in spirit then call Him Lord. how is He his son? And no man was able to answer Him a word."¹³¹

100. With what care did the Lord provide for the faith in this witness because of the Arians! For He did not say: "The spirit calls Him Lord," but that "David spake in spirit;" in order that men might believe that as He is his, that is, David's son according to the flesh, so also He is his Lord and God according to His Godhead. Thou seeest, then, that there is a distinction between the titles that are used of relationship and of lordship.

101. And rightly did the Lord speak of His own Father, but of the Lord of heaven and earth; so that thou, when thou readest of the Father and the Lord, mayest understand it is the Father of the Son, and the Lord of Creation. In the one title rests the claim of nature, in the other the authority to rule. For taking on Himself the form of a servant, He calls Him Lord, because He has submitted to service; being equal to Him in the form of God, but being a servant in the form of His body: for service is the due of the flesh, but lordship is the due of the Godhead. Wherefore also the Apostle says: "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,"¹³² that is, terming Him God of the adoption of humanity but the Father of glory. Did God have two Sons, Christ and Glory? Certainly

not. Therefore if there is one Son of God, even Christ, Christ is Glory. Why dost thou strive to belittle Him who is the glory of the Father?

102. If then the Son is glory, and the Father is glory (for the Father of glory cannot be anything else than glory), there is no separation of glories, but glory is one. Thus glory is referred to its own proper nature, but lordship to the service of the body that was assumed. For if the flesh is subject to the soul of a just man as it is written: "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection,"¹³³ how much more is it subject to the Godhead, of Which it is said: "For all things serve Thee"?¹³⁴

103. By one question the Lord has shut out both Sabellians and Photinians and Arians. For when He said that the Lord spoke to the Lord, Sabellius is set aside, who will have it that the same Person is both Father and Son. Photinus is set aside, who thinks of Him merely as man; for none could be Lord of David the King, but He Who is God, for it is written: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."¹³⁵ Would the prophet who ruled under the Law act contrary to the Law? Arius is set aside, who hears that the Son sits on the right hand of the Father; so that if he argues from human ways, he refutes himself, and makes the poison of his blasphemous arguments to flow back upon himself. For in interpreting the inequality of the Father and the Son by the analogy of human habits (wandering from the truth in either case), he puts Him first Whom he makes little of, confessing Him to be the First, Whom he hears to be at the right hand. The Manichaeon also is set aside, for he does not deny that He is the Son of David according to the flesh, Who, at the cry of the blind men, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us,"¹³⁶ was pleased at their faith and stood and healed them. But He does deny that this refers to His eternity, if He is called Son of David alone by those who are false.

104. For "Son of God" is against Ebion,¹³⁷ "Son of David," is against the Manichees;¹³⁸ "Son of God" is against Photinus,¹³⁹ "Son of David" is against Marcion;¹⁴⁰ "Son of God" is against Paul of Samosata,¹⁴¹ "Son of David" is against Valentinus;¹⁴² "Son of God" is against Arius and Sabellius, the inheritors of heathen errors. "Lord of David" is against the Jews, who beholding the Son of God in the flesh, in impious madness believed Him to be only man.

105. But in the faith of the Church one and the same is both Son of God the Father and Son of David. For the mystery of the Incarnation of God is the salvation of the whole of creation, according to that which is written: "That without God He should taste death for every man;"¹⁴³ that is, that every creature might be redeemed without any suffering at the price of the blood of the Lord's Divinity, as it stands elsewhere: "Every creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption."¹⁴⁴

106. It is one thing to be named Son according to the divine Substance, it is another thing to be so called according to the adoption of human flesh. For, according to the divine Generation, the Son is equal to God the Father; and, according to the adoption of a body, He is a servant to God the Father. "For," it says, "He took upon Him the form of a servant."¹⁴⁵ The Son is, however, one and the same. On the other hand, according to His glory, He is Lord to the holy patriarch David, but his Son in the line of actual descent, not abandoning aught of His own, but acquiring for Himself the rights that go with the adoption into our race.

107. Not only does He undergo service in the character of man by reason of His descent from David, but also by reason of His name, as it is written: "I have found David My Servant;"¹⁴⁶ and

elsewhere: "Behold I will send unto you My Servant, the Orient is His name."¹⁴⁷ And the Son Himself says: "Thus saith the Lord, that formed Me from the womb to be His servant, and said unto Me: It is a great thing for Thee to be called My Servant. Behold I have set Thee up for a witness to My people, and a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."¹⁴⁸ To whom is this said, if not to Christ? Who being in the form of God, emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant.¹⁴⁹ But what can be in the form of God, except that which exists in the fulness of the Godhead?

108. Learn, then, what this means: "He took upon Him the form of a servant." It means that He took upon Him all the perfections of humanity in their completeness, and obedience in its completeness. And so it says in the thirtieth Psalm: "Thou hast set my feet in a large room. I am made a reproach above all mine enemies. Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant."¹⁵⁰ "Servant" means the Man in whom He was sanctified; it means the Man in whom He was anointed; it means the Man in whom He was made under the law, made of the Virgin; and, to put it briefly, it means the Man in whose person He has a mother, as it is written: "O Lord, I am Thy Servant, I am Thy Servant, and the Son of Thy hand-maid;"¹⁵¹ and again: "I am cast down and sore humbled."¹⁵²

109. Who is sore humbled, but Christ, Who came to free all through His obedience? "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."¹⁵³ Who received the cup of salvation? Christ the High Priest, or David who never held the priesthood, nor endured suffering? Who offered the sacrifice of Thanksgiving?¹⁵⁴

110. But that is insufficient; take again: "Preserve My soul, for I am holy."¹⁵⁵ Did David say this of himself? Nay, He says it, Who also says: "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption."¹⁵⁶ The Same then says both of these.

111. He has added further: "Save Thy Servant;"¹⁵⁷ and, further on: "Give Thy strength to Thy servant, and to the Son of Thy handmaid;"¹⁵⁸ and, elsewhere, that is, in Ezekiel: "And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall rule them, even My Servant David. He shall feed them, and He shall be their Shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and My Servant David a prince among them."¹⁵⁹ Now David the Son of Jesse was already dead. Therefore he speaks of Christ, Who for our sakes was made the Son of a handmaiden in the form of man; for according to His divine Generation He has no Mother, but a Father only: nor is He the fruit of earthly desire, but the eternal Power of God.

112. And so, also, when we read that the Lord said: "My time is not yet full come;"¹⁶⁰ and: "Yet a little while I am with you;" and: "I go unto Him that sent Me;"¹⁶¹ and: "Now is the Son of Man glorified;"¹⁶² we ought to refer all this to the sacrament of the Incarnation. But when we read: "And God is glorified in Him, and God hath glorified Him;"¹⁶³ what doubt is there here, where the Son is glorified by the Father, and the Father is glorified by the Son?

113. Next, to make clear the faith of the Unity, and the Union of the Trinity, He also said that He would be glorified by the Spirit, as it stands: "He shall receive of Mine, and shall glorify Me."¹⁶⁴ Therefore the Holy Spirit also glorifies the Son of God. How, then, did He say: "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing."¹⁶⁵ Is then the glory of the Son nothing? It is blasphemy to say so, unless we apply these words to His flesh; for the Son spoke in the character of man, for by comparison with

the Godhead, there is no glory of the flesh.

114. Let them cease from their wicked objections which are but thrown back upon their own falseness. For they say, it is written: "Now is the Son of Man glorified." I do not deny that it is written: "The Son of Man is glorified." But let them see what follows:

"And God is glorified in Him." I can plead some excuse for the Son of Man, but He has none for His Father; for the Father took not flesh upon Himself. I can plead an excuse, but do not use it. He has none, and is falsely attacked. I can either understand it in its plain sense, or I can apply to the flesh what concerns the flesh. A devout mind distinguishes between the things which are spoken after the flesh or after the Godhead. An impious mind turns aside to the dishonour of the Godhead, all that is said with regard to the littleness of the flesh.

Chapter IX. The saint meets those who in Jewish wise object to the order of the words: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the oly Ghost," with the retort that the Son also is often placed before the Father; though he first points out that an answer to this objection has been already given by him.

115. Why is it that the Arians, after the Jewish fashion, are such false and shameless interpreters of the divine words, going indeed so far as to say that there is one power of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost, since it is written: "Go ye, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost"? And why do they make a distinction of divine power owing to the mere order of words?

116. Though I have already given this very witness for a unity of majesty and name in my former books, yet if they make this the ground of debate, I can maintain on the testimony of the Scriptures that the Son is mentioned first in many places, and that the Father is spoken of after Him. Is it therefore a fact that, because the name of the Son is placed first, by the mere accident of a word, as the Arians would have it, the Father comes second to the Son? God forbid, I say, God forbid. Faith knows nothing of such order as this; it knows nothing of a divided honour of the Father and the Son. I have not read of, nor heard of, nor found any varying degree in God. Never have I read of a second, never of a third God. I have read of a first God,¹⁶⁶ I have heard of a first and only God.

117. If we pay such excessive regard to order, then the Son ought not to sit at the right hand of the Father, nor ought He to call Himself the First and the Beginning. The Evangelist was wrong in beginning with the Word and not with God, where he says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God."¹⁶⁷ For, according to the order of human usage, he ought to name the Father first. The Apostle also was ignorant of their order, who says: "Paul the servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of Go;"¹⁶⁸ and elsewhere: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost."¹⁶⁹ If we follow the order of the words, he has placed the Son first, and the Father second. But the order of the words is often changed; and therefore thou oughtest not to question about order or degree, in the case of God the Father and His Son, for there is no severance of unity in the Godhead.

Chapter X. The Arians openly take sides with the heathen in attacking the words: "He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me," etc. The true meaning of the passage is unfolded; and to prevent us from believing that the Lord forbade us to have faith in Him, it is shown how He spoke

at one time as God, at another as Man. After bringing forward examples of various results of that faith, he shows that certain other passages also must be taken in the same way.

118. Last of all, to show that they are not Christians, they deny that we are to believe on Christ, saying that it is written: "He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me."¹⁷⁰ I was awaiting this confession; why did you delude me with your quibbles? I knew I had to contend with heathens. Nay, they indeed are converted, but ye are not. If they believe, that the sacrament [of Baptism] is safe; ye have received it, and destroyed it, or perchance it has never been received, but was unreal¹⁷¹ from the first.

119. It is written, they say: "He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me." But see what follows, and see how the Son of God wishes to be seen; for it continues: "And he that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me,"¹⁷² for the Father is seen in the Son. Thus, He has explained what He had spoken earlier, that he who confesses the Father believes on the Son. For he who knows not the Son, neither knows the Father. For every one that denies the Son has not the Father, but he that confesses the Son has both the Father and the Son.¹⁷³

120. What, then, is the meaning of "Believeth not on Me"? That is, not on that which you can perceive in bodily form, nor merely on the man whom you see. For He has stated that we are to believe not merely on a man, but that thou mayest believe that Jesus Christ Himself is both God and Man. Wherefore, for both reasons He says: "I came not from Myself;"¹⁷⁴ and again: "I am the beginning, of which also I speak to you."¹⁷⁵ As Man He came not from Himself; as Son of God He takes not His beginning from men; but "I am," He says, "Myself `the beginning of which also I speak to you.' Neither are the words which I speak human, but divine."

121. Nor is it right to believe that He denied we were to believe on Him, since He Himself said: "That whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness;"¹⁷⁶ and in another place again: "For this is the will of My Father that sent Me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have eternal life;"¹⁷⁷ and again: "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me."¹⁷⁸

122. Let no one, therefore, receive the Son without the Father, because we read of the Son. The Son hath the Father, but not in a temporal sense, nor by reason of His passion, nor owing to His conception, nor by grace. I have read of His Generation, I have not read of His Conception. And the Father says: "I have begotten;"¹⁷⁹ He does not say: "I have created." And the Son calls not God His Creator in the eternity of His divine Generation, but Father.

123. He represents Himself also now in the character of man, now in the majesty of God; now claiming for Himself oneness of Godhead with the Father, now taking upon Him all the frailty of human flesh; now saying that He has not His own doctrine, and now that He seeks not His own will; now pointing out that His testimony is not true, and now that it is true. For He Himself has said: "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true."¹⁸⁰ Later on He says: "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true."¹⁸¹

124. And how is Thy testimony, Lord Jesus, not true? Did not he who believed it, though he hung upon the cross, and paid the penalty for the crime he owned to, cast aside the deserts of the robber and gain the reward of the innocent?¹⁸² 125. Was Paul deceived, who received his sight, because he believed;¹⁸³ which sight he had lost, before he believed?

126. And did Joshua, the son of Nun, err in recognizing the leader of the heavenly host?¹⁸⁴ But after he believed, he forthwith conquered, being found worthy to triumph in the battle of faith. Again, he did not lead forth his armed ranks into the fight, nor did he overthrow the ramparts of the enemy's walls, with battering rams or other engines of war, but with the sound of the seven trumpets of the priests. Thus the blare of the trumpet and the badge of the priest brought a cruel war to an end.

127. A harlot saw this; and she who in the destruction of the city lost all hope of any means of safety, because her faith had conquered, bound a scarlet thread in her window, and thus uplifted a sign of her faith and the banner of the Lord's Passion;¹⁸⁵ so that the semblance of the mystic blood, which should redeem the world, might be in memory. So, without, the name of Joshua was a sign of victory to those who fought; within, the semblance of the Lord's Passion was a sign of salvation to those in danger. Wherefore, because Rahab understood the heavenly mystery, the Lord says in the Psalm: "I will be mindful of Rahab and Babylon that know Me."¹⁸⁶

128. How, then, is Thy testimony not true, O Lord, except it be given in accordance with the frailty of man? For "every man is a liar."¹⁸⁷

129. Lastly, to prove that He spoke as man, He says: "The Father that sent Me, He beareth witness of Me."¹⁸⁸ But His testimony as God is true, as He Himself says: "My record is true: for I know whence I come, and whither I go, but ye know not whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh."¹⁸⁹ They judge then not after the Godhead but after the manhood, who think that Christ had not the power of bearing witness.

130. Therefore, when thou hearest: "He that believeth, believeth not on Me;" or: "The Father that sent Me, He gave Me a commandment;"¹⁹⁰ thou hast now learnt whither thou oughtest to refer those words. Lastly, He shows what the commandment is, saying: "I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself."¹⁹¹ Thou seest, then, what is said so as to show He had full power to lay down or to take up His life; as He also said: "I have power to lay it down, and I have power again to take it up. This commandment have I received of My Father."¹⁹²

131. Whether, then, a command, or, as some Latin manuscripts have it, a direction was given, it was certainly not given to Him as God, but as incarnate man, with reference to the victory He should gain in undergoing His Passion.

Chapter XI.

We must refer the fact that Christ is said to speak nothing of Himself, to His human nature. After explaining how it is right to say that He hears and sees the Father as being God, He shows conclusively, by a large number of proofs, that the Son of God is not a creature.

132. Are we indeed to bring the Son of God to such a low estate that He may not know how to act or speak, except as He hears, and are we to suppose that a fixed measure of action or of speech is assigned to Him, because it is written: "I speak not of Myself," and, further on: "As the Father hath said unto Me, even so I speak"?¹⁹³ But those words have reference to the obedience of the flesh, or else to the faith in the Unity. For many learned men allow that the Son hears, and that the Father speaks to the Son through the unity of their Nature; for that which the Son, through the

unity of their will, knows that the Father wills, He seems to have heard.

133. Whereby is meant no personal duty, but an indivisible sentence of co-operation. For this does not signify any actual hearing of words, but the unity of will and of power, which exists both in the Father and in the Son. He has stated that this exists also in the Holy Spirit, in another place, saying, "For He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak,"¹⁹⁴ so that we may learn that whatsoever the Spirit says, the Son also says; and whatsoever the Son says, the Father says also; for there is one mind and one mode of working in the Trinity. For, as the Father is seen in the Son, not indeed in bodily appearance, but in the unity of the Godhead, so also the Father speaks in the Son, not with a voice of earth, not with a human sound, but in the unity of Their work. So when He had said: "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He speaketh; and the works that I do, He doeth;"¹⁹⁵ He added: "Believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the very work's sake."¹⁹⁶

134. This is what we understand according to the whole course of the holy Scriptures; but the Arians, who will not think of God the things that be right, may be put to silence by an example just suited to their deserts; that they may not believe everything in carnal fashion, since they themselves do not see the works of their father the devil with bodily eyes. So the Lord has declared of their fellows the Jews, saying: "Ye do what ye have seen your father doing;"¹⁹⁷ though they are reproved not because they saw the work of the devil, but because they did his will, since the devil unseen works out sin in them in accordance with their own wickedness, We have written this, as the Apostle did, because of the folly of these traitors.¹⁹⁸

135. But we have sufficiently proved by examples from Scripture that it is a property of the unity of the divine majesty that the Father should abide in the Son, and that the Son should seem to have heard from the Father those things which He speaks. How else can we understand the unity of majesty than by the knowledge that the same deference is paid to the Father and the Son? For what can be better put than the Apostle's saying that the Lord of glory was crucified?¹⁹⁹

136. The Son then is the God of glory and the Lord of glory, but glory is not subject to creatures; the Son therefore is not a creature.

137. The Son is the Image of the Father's Substance;²⁰⁰ but every creature is unlike that divine Substance, but the Son of the Father is not unlike God; therefore the Son is not a creature.

138. The Son thought it not robbery to be equal with God;²⁰¹ but no creature is equal with God, the Son, however, is equal; therefore the Son is not a creature.

139. Every creature is changeable; but the Son of God is not changeable; therefore the Son of God is not a creature.

140. Every creature meets with chance occurrences of good and evil after the powers of its nature, and also feels their passing away; but nothing can pass away from or bring addition to the Son of God in His Godhead; therefore the Son of God is not a creature.

141. Every work of His God will bring into judgment;²⁰² but the Son of God is not brought into judgment; for He Himself judges; therefore the Son of God is not a creature.

142. Lastly, that thou mayest understand the unity, the Saviour in speaking of His sheep says: "No man is able to pluck them out of My hand. My Father Which gave them to Me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."²⁰³ 143. So the Son gives life as does the Father. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will."²⁰⁴ So the Son raises up as does the Father: so too the Son preserves as does the Father. He Who is not unequal in grace, how is He unequal in power? So also the Son does not destroy, as neither does the Father. Therefore lest any one should believe there were two Gods, or should imagine a diversity of power, He said that He was one with His Father. How can a creature say that? Therefore the Son of God is not a creature.

144. It is not the same thing to rule as to serve; but Christ is both a King and the Son of a King. The Son of God therefore is not a servant. Every creature, however, gives service. But the Son of God, Who makes servants become the sons of God, does not give service. Therefore the Son of God is not a servant.

Chapter XII.

He confirms what has been already said, by the parable of the rich man who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom; and shows that when the Son delivers up the kingdom to the Father, we must not regard the fact that the Father is said to put all things in subjection under Him, in a disparaging way. Here we are the kingdom of Christ, and in Christ's kingdom. Hereafter we shall be in the kingdom of God, where the Trinity will reign together.

145. In divine fashion has He represented that parable of the rich man, who went to a far-off country to receive a kingdom, and to return,²⁰⁵ thus describing Himself in the substance of the Godhead, and of His Manhood. For He being rich in the fulness of His Godhead, Who was made poor for us though He was rich and an eternal King, and the Son of an eternal King; He, I say, went to a foreign country in taking on Him a body, for He entered upon the ways of men as though upon a strange journey, and came into this world to prepare for Himself a kingdom from amongst us.

146. Jesus therefore came to this earth to receive for Himself a kingdom from us, to whom He says: "The kingdom of God is within you."²⁰⁶ This is the kingdom which Christ has received, this the kingdom which He has delivered to the Father. For how did He receive for Himself a kingdom, Who was a King eternal? "The Son of Man therefore came to receive a kingdom and to return." The Jews were unwilling to acknowledge Him, of whom He says: "They which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them."²⁰⁷

147. Let us follow the course of the Scriptures. He Who came will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father; and when He has delivered up the kingdom, then also shall He be subject to Him, Who has put all things in subjection under Him, that God may be all in all.²⁰⁸ If the Son of God has received the kingdom as Son of Man, surely as Son of Man also He will deliver up what He has received. If He delivers it up as Son of Man, as Son of Man He confesses His subjection indeed under the conditions of the flesh, and not in the majesty of His Godhead.

148. And dost thou make objections and condemn Him, because God has put all things in subjection under Him, when thou hearest that the Son of Man delivers up the kingdom to God, and hast read, as we said in our earlier books: "No man can come to Me, except the Father draw him;

and I will raise him up at the last day"?209 If we follow it literally, see rather and notice the unity of honour each gives to other: The Father has put all things in subjection under the Son, and the Son delivers the kingdom to the Father. Say now which is the greater, to deliver up, or to raise up to life? Do we not after human fashion speak of the service of delivering up, and the power of raising to life? But both the Son delivers up to the Father, and also the Father to the Son. The Son raises to life, and the Father also raises to life, Let them create the fiction of a blasphemous division where there is a unity of power.

149. Let the Son then deliver up His kingdom to the Father. The kingdom which He delivers up is not lost to Christ, but grows. We are the kingdom, for it was said to us: "The kingdom of God is within you."210 And we are the kingdom, first of Christ, then of the Father; as it is written: "No man cometh to the Father, but by Me."211 When I am on the way, I am Christ's; when I have passed through, I am the Father's; but everywhere through Christ, and everywhere under Him.

150. It is a good thing to be in the kingdom of Christ, so that Christ may be with us; as He Himself says: "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."212 But it is better to be with Christ: "For to depart and be with Christ is far better."213 Though we are under sin in this world, Christ is with us, that "by the obedience of one man many may be made just."214 And if I escape the sin of this world, I shall begin to be with Christ. And so He says: "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself;"215 and further on: "I will that where I am, there ye may be also with Me."216

151. Therefore we are now under Christ's rule, whilst we are in the body, and are not yet stripped of the form of a servant, which He put upon Him, when He "emptied Himself." But when we shall see His glory, which He had before the world was, we shall be in the kingdom of God, in which are the patriarchs and prophets, of whom it is written: "When ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God;"217 and shall thus acquire a deeper knowledge of God.

152. But in the kingdom of the Son the Father also reigns; and in the kingdom of the Father the Son also reigns: for the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father; and in whomsoever the Son dwells, in him also the Father dwells; and in whomsoever the Father dwells, in him also the Son dwells, as it is written: "Both I and My Father will come to Him, and make Our abode with Him."218 Thus as there is one dwelling, so also there is one kingdom. Yea, and so far is the kingdom of the Father and of the Son but one, that the Father receives what the Son delivers, and the Son does not lose what the Father receives. Thus in the one kingdom there is a unity of power. Let no one therefore sever the Godhead between the Father and the Son.

Chapter XIII. With the desire to learn what subjection to Christ means after putting forward and rejecting various ideas of subjection, he runs through the Apostle's words; and so puts an end to the blasphemous opinions of the heretics on this matter. The subjection, which is shown to be future, cannot concern the Godhead, since there has always been the greatest harmony of wills between the Father and the Son. Also to that same Son in His Godhead all things have indeed been made subject; but they are said to be not yet subject to Him in this sense, because all men do not obey His commands. But after that they have been made subject, then shall Christ also be made subject in them, and the Father's work be perfected.

153. But if the one name and right of God belong to both the Father and the Son, since the Son of God is also true God, and a King eternal, the Son of God is not made subject in His Godhead. Let us then, Emperor Augustus, think how we ought to regard His subjection.

154. How is the Son of God made subject? As the creature to vanity? But it is blasphemous to have any such idea of the Substance of the Godhead.

155. Or as every creature is to the Son of God, for it is rightly written: "Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet"?²¹⁹ But Christ is not made subject to Himself.

156. Or as a woman to a man, as we read: "Let the wives be subject to their husbands;"²²⁰ and again: "Let the woman learn in silence in all subjection"?²²¹ But it is impious to compare a man to the Father, or a woman to the Son of God.

157. Or as Peter said: "Submit yourselves to every human creature"?²²² But Christ was certainly not so subject.

158. Or as Paul wrote: "Submitting yourselves mutually to God and the Father in the fear of Christ"?²²³ But Christ was not subject either in His own fear, nor in the fear of another Christ. For Christ is but one. But note the force of these words, that we are subject to the Father, whilst we also fear Christ.

159. How, then, do we understand His subjection? Shall we review the whole chapter which the Apostle wrote, so as to give no appearance of having falsely withheld anything, or of having weakened its force with intention to deceive? "If in this life only," he says, "we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But if Christ is risen from the dead, He is the first-fruits of them that sleep."²²⁴ Ye see how he discusses the question of Christ's Resurrection.

160. "For since by one man," he says, "came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's, who have believed in His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and authority and power. For He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death; for He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted Which did put all things under Him. But when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him, that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."²²⁵ Thus also the same Apostle said to the Hebrews: "But now we see not yet all things put under Him."²²⁶ We have heard the whole of the Apostle's discourse.

161. How, then, do we speak of His subjection? The Sabellians and Marcionites say that this subjection of Christ to God the Father will be in such wise that the Son will be re-absorbed into the Father. If, then, the subjection of the Word means that God the Word is to be absorbed into the Father; then whatsoever is made subject to the Father and the Son will be absorbed into the Father and the Son, that God may be all and in all His creatures. But it is foolish to say so. There is therefore no subjection through re-absorption. For there are other things which are made subject, those, that is to say, which are created, and there is Another, to Whom that subjection is made. Let the expounders of a cruel re-absorption keep silence.

162. Would that they too were silent, who, as they cannot prove that the Word of God and Wisdom of God can be re-absorbed, attribute the weakness of subjection to His Godhead, saying that it is written: "But when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him."²²⁷

163. We see, then, that the Scripture states that He is not yet made subject, but that this is to come: Therefore now the Son is not made subject to God the Father. In what, then, do ye say that the Son will be made subject? If in His Godhead, He is not disobedient, for He is not at variance with the Father; nor is He made subject, for He is not a servant, but the only Son of His own proper Father. Lastly, when He created heaven, and formed the earth, He exercised both power and love. There is therefore no subjection as that of a servant in the Godhead of Christ. But if there is no subjection then the will is free.

164. But if they think of this as the subjection of the Son, namely, that the Father makes all things in union with His will, let them learn that this is really a proof of inseparable power. For the unity of Their will is one that began not in time, but ever existed. But where there is a constant unity of will, there can be no weakness of temporal subjection. For if He were made subject through His nature, He would always remain in subjection; but since He is said to be made subject in time, that subjection must be part of an assumed office and not of an everlasting weakness: especially as the eternal Power of God cannot change His state for a time, neither can the right of ruling fall to the Father in time. For if the Son ever will be changed in such wise as to be made subject in His Godhead, then also must God the Father, if ever He shall gain more power, and have the Son in subjection to Himself in His Godhead, be considered now in the meantime inferior according to your explanation.

165. But what fault has the Son been guilty of, that we should believe that He could hereafter be made subject in His Godhead? Has he as man seized for Himself the right to sit at His Father's side, or has He claimed for Himself the prerogative of His Father's throne, against His Father's will? But He Himself says: "For I do always those things that please Him."²²⁸ Therefore if the Son pleases the Father in all things, why should He be made subject, Who was not made subject before?

166. Let us see then that there be not a subjection of the Godhead, but rather of us in the fear of Christ, a truth so full of grace, and so full of mystery. Wherefore, again, let us weigh the Apostle's words: "But when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him: that God may be all in all." What then dost thou say? Are not all things now subject unto Him? Are not the choirs of the saints made subject? Are not the angels, who ministered to Him when on the earth?²²⁹ Are not the archangels who were sent to Mary to foretell the coming of the Lord? Are not all the heavenly hosts? Are not the cherubim and seraphim, are not thrones and dominions and powers which worship and praise Him?

167. How, then, will they be brought into subjection? In the way that the Lord Himself has said. "Take My yoke upon you."²³⁰ It is not the fierce that bear the yoke, but the humble and the gentle. This clearly is no base subjection for men, but a glorious one: "that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things beneath; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord in the glory of God the Father."²³¹ But for this reason all things were not made subject before, for they had not yet received the wisdom of God, not yet did they wear the easy

yoke of the Word on the neck as it were of their mind. "But as many as received Him," as it is written, "to them gave He power to become the sons of God."²³²

168. Will any one say that Christ is now made subject, because many have believed? Certainly not. For Christ's subjection lies not in a few but in all. For just as I do not seem to be brought into subjection, if the flesh in me as yet lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,²³³ although I am in part subdued; so because the whole Church is the one body of Christ, we divide Christ as long as the human race disagrees. Therefore Christ is not yet made subject, for His members are not yet brought into subjection. But when we have become, not many members, but one spirit, then He also will become subject, in order that through His subjection "God may be all and in all."

169. But as Christ is not yet made subject, so is the work of God not yet perfected; for the Son of God said: "My meat is to do the will of My Father that sent Me, and to finish His work."²³⁴ What manner of doubt is there that the subjection of the Son in me is still in the future, in whom the work of the Father is unfinished, because I myself am not yet perfect? I, who make the work of God to be unfinished, do I make the Son of God to be in subjection? But that is not a matter of wrong, it is a matter of grace. For in so far as we are made subject, it is to our profit, not to that of the Godhead, that we are made subject to the law, that we are made subject to grace. For formerly, as the Apostle himself has said, the wisdom of the flesh was at enmity with God, for "it was not made subject to the law,"²³⁵ but now it is made subject through the Passion of Christ.

Chapter XIV.

He continues the discussion of the difficulty he has entered upon, and teaches that Christ is not subject but only according to the flesh. Christ, however, whilst in subjection in the Flesh, still gave proofs of His Godhead. He combats the idea that Christ is made subject in This. The humanity indeed, which He adopted, has been so far made subject in us, as ours has been raised in that very humanity of His. Lastly, we are taught, when that same subjection of Christ will take place.

170. However, lest anyone should cavil, see what care Scripture takes under divine inspiration. For it shows to us in what Christ is made subject to God, whilst it also teaches us in what He made the universe subject to Himself. And so it says: "Now we see not yet all things put under Him."²³⁶ For we see Jesus made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.²³⁷ It shows therefore that He was made lower in taking on Him our flesh. What then hinders Him from openly showing His subjection in taking on Him our flesh, through which He subjects all things to Himself, whilst He Himself is made subject in it to God the Father?

171. Let us then think of His subjection. "Father," He says, "if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will but Thine be done."²³⁸ Therefore that subjection will be according to the assumption of human nature; as we read: "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, being made obedient unto death."²³⁹ The subjection therefore is that of obedience; the obedience is that of death; the death is that of the assumed humanity; that subjection therefore will be the subjection of the assumed humanity. Thus in no wise is there a weakness in the Godhead, but there is such a discharge of pious duty as this.

172. See how I do not fear their intentions. They allege that He must be subject to God the Father, I say He was subject to Mary His Mother. For it is written of Joseph and Mary: "He was subject

unto them."240 But if they think so, let them say how the Deity was made subject to men.

173. Let not the fact that He is said to have been made subject work against Him, Who receives no hurt from the fact that He is called a servant, or is stated to have been crucified, or is spoken of as dead. For when He died He lived; when He was made subject He was reigning; when He was buried He revived again. He offered Himself in subjection to human power, yet at another time He declared He was the Lord of eternal glory. He was before the judge, yet claimed for Himself a throne at the right hand of God, as Judge forever. For thus it is written: "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven."241 He was scourged by the Jews, and commanded the angels; He was born of Mary under the law;242 He was before Abraham above the law. On the cross He was revered by nature; the sun fled; the earth trembled; the angels became silent. Could the elements see the Generation of Him Whose Passion they feared to see? And will they uphold the subjection of an adorable Nature in Him, in Whom they could not endure the subjection of the body?

174. But since the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are of one Nature, the Father certainly will not be in subjection to Himself. And therefore the Son will not be in subjection in that in which He is one with the Father; test it should seem that through the unity of the Godhead the Father also is in subjection to the Son. Therefore, as upon that cross it was not the fulness of the Godhead, but our weakness that was brought into subjection, so also will the Son hereafter become subject to the Father in the participation of our nature, in order that when the lusts of the flesh are brought into subjection the heart may have no care for riches, or ambition, or pleasures; but that God may be all to us, if we live after His image and likeness, as far as we can attain to it, through all.

175. The benefit has passed, then, from the individual to the community; for in His flesh He has tamed the nature of all human flesh. Thus, according to the Apostle: "As we have borne the image of the earthly, so also shall we bear the image of the heavenly."243 This thing certainly cannot come to pass except in the inner man. Therefore, "laying aside all these," that is those things which we read of: "anger, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication;"244 as he also says below: "Let us, having put off the old man with his deeds, put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him."245

176. And that thou mightest know that when he says: "That God may be all in all," he does not separate Christ from God the Father, he also says to the Colossians: "Where there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all."246 So also saying to the Corinthians: "That God may be all and in all," he comprehended in that the unity and equality of Christ with God the Father, for the Son is not separated from the Father. And in like manner as the Father worketh all and in all, so also Christ worketh all in all. If, then, Christ also worketh all in all, He is not made subject in the glory of the Godhead, but in us. But how is He made subject in us, except in the way in which He was made lower than the angels, I mean in the sacrament of His body? For all things which served their Creator from their first beginning seemed not as yet to be made subject to Him in that.

177. But if thou shouldst ask how He was made subject in us, He Himself shows us, saying: "I was in prison, and ye came unto Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done it unto Me."247 Thou hearest of Him as sick and weak, and art not moved. Thou hearest of Him in subjection, and art moved, though He is sick and weak in

Him in whom He is in subjection, in whom He was made sin and a curse for us.

178. As, then, He was made sin and a curse not on His own account but on ours, so He became subject in us not for His own sake but for ours, being not in subjection in His eternal Nature, nor accursed in His eternal Nature. "For cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."²⁴⁸ Cursed He was, for He bore our curses; in subjection, also, for He took upon Him our subjection, but in the assumption of the form of a servant, not in the glory of God; so that whilst he makes Himself a partaker of our weakness in the flesh, He makes us partakers of the divine Nature in His power. But neither in one nor the other have we any natural fellowship with the heavenly Generation of Christ, nor is there any subjection of the Godhead in Christ. But as the Apostle has said that on Him through that flesh which is the pledge of our salvation, we sit in heavenly places,²⁴⁹ though certainly not sitting ourselves, so also He is said to be subject in us through the assumption of our nature.

179. For who is so mad as to think, as we have said already,²⁵⁰ that a seat of honour is due to Him at the right hand of God the Father, when that is granted to Christ according to the flesh by the Father of His Generation, even a seat of a heavenly and equal power? The angels worship, and dost thou attempt to overthrow the throne of God with impious presumption?

180. It is written, thou sayest, that "when we were dead in sins, He hath quickened us in Christ, by Whose grace ye are saved, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."²⁵¹ I acknowledge that it is so written; but it is not written that God suffers men to sit on His right hand, but only to sit there in the Person of Christ. For He is the foundation of all, and is the head of the Church,²⁵² in Whom our common nature according to the flesh has merited the right to the heavenly throne. For the flesh is honoured as having a share in Christ Who is God, and the nature of the whole human race is honoured as having a share in the flesh.

181. As we then sit in Him by fellowship in our fleshly nature, so also He, Who through the assumption of our flesh was made a curse for us (seeing that a curse could not fall upon the blessed Son of God), so, I say, He through the obedience of all will become subject in us; when the Gentile has believed, and the Jew has acknowledged Him Whom he crucified; when the Manichean has worshipped Him, Whom he has not believed to have come in the flesh; when the Arian has confessed Him to be Almighty, Whom he has denied; when, lastly, the wisdom of God, His justice, peace, love, resurrection, is in all. Through His own works and through the manifold forms of virtues Christ will be in us in subjection to the Father. And when, with vice renounced and crime at an end, one spirit in the heart of all peoples has begun to cleave to God in all things, then will God be all and in all.²⁵³

Chapter XV.

He briefly takes up again the same points of dispute, and shrewdly concludes from the unity of the divine power in the Father and the Son, that whatever is said of the subjection of the Son is to be referred to His humanity alone. He further confirms this on proof of the love, which exists alike in either.

182. Let us then shortly sum up our conclusion on the whole matter. A unity of power puts aside all idea of a degrading subjection. His giving up of power, and His victory as conqueror won over death, have not lessened His power. Obedience works out subjection. Christ has taken obedience

upon Himself, obedience even to taking on Him our flesh, the cross even to gaining our salvation. Thus where the work lies, there too is the Author of the work. When therefore, all things have become subject to Christ, through Christ's obedience, so that all bend their knees in His name, then He Himself will be all in all. For now, since all do not believe, all do not seem to be in subjection. But when all have believed and done the will of God, then Christ will be all and in all. And when Christ is all and in all, then will God be all and in all; for the Father abides ever in the Son. How, then, is He shown to be weak, Who redeemed the weak?

183. And lest thou shouldst by chance attribute to the weakness of the Son, that it is written, that God hath put all things in subjection under Him; learn that He has Himself brought all things into subjection to Himself, for it is written: "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working, whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."²⁵⁴ Thou has learnt, therefore, that He can subdue all things unto Himself according to the working of His Godhead.

184. Learn now how He receives all things in subjection according to the flesh, as it is written: "Who wrought in Christ, raising Him from the dead, and setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, above principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet."²⁵⁵ According to the flesh then all things are given to Him in subjection; according to which also He was raised from the dead, both in His human soul and His rational subjection.

185. Many nobly interpret that which is written: "Truly my soul will be in subjection to God;"²⁵⁶ He said soul not Godhead, soul not glory. And that we might know that the Lord has spoken through the prophet of the adoption of our human nature, He added: "How long will ye cast yourselves upon a man?"²⁵⁷ As also He says in the Gospel: "Why do ye seek to kill Me, a man?"²⁵⁸ And He added again: "Nevertheless they desired to refuse My price, they ran in thirst, they blessed with their mouth, and cursed with their heart."²⁵⁹ For the Jews, when Judas brought back the price,²⁶⁰ would not receive it, running on in the thirst of madness, for they refused the grace of a spiritual draught.

186. This is the reverent interpretation of subjection, for since this is the office of the Lord's Passion, He will be subject in us in that in which He suffered. Do we ask wherefore? That "neither angels, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other creature may separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus."²⁶¹ we see then, from what has been said, that no creature is excepted; but that every one, of whatever kind it may be, is enumerated among those he mentioned above.

187. At the same time, we must also think of the words which, after first saying "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"²⁶² he wrote next: "Neither death, nor life, nor any other creature can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." we see, then, that the love of God is the same as the love of Christ. Thus it was not without reason that he wrote of the love of God, "which is in Christ Jesus," lest otherwise thou mightest imagine that the love of God and of Christ was divided. But there is nothing that love divides, nothing that the eternal Godhead cannot do, nothing that is unknown to the Truth, or deceives Justice, or escapes the notice of Wisdom.

Chapter IV. The Arians are condemned by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David: for they dare to limit Christ's knowledge. The passage cited by them in proof of this is by no means free from suspicion of having been corrupted. But to set this right, we must mark the word "Son." For knowledge cannot fail Christ as Son of God, since He is Wisdom; nor the recognition of any part, for He created all things. It is not possible that He, who made the ages, cannot know the future, much less the day of judgment. Such knowledge, whether it concerns anything great or small, may not be denied to the Son, nor yet to the Holy Spirit. Lastly, various proofs are given from which we can gather that this knowledge exists in Christ.

188. Wherefore we ought to know that they who make such statements are accursed and condemned by the Holy Spirit. For whom else but the Arians in chief does the prophet condemn, seeing that they say that the Son of God knows neither times nor years. For there is nothing which God is ignorant of; and Christ, yea the most high Christ, is God, for He is "God over all."²⁶³

189. See how horrified holy David is at such men, in limiting the knowledge of the Son of God. For thus it is written: "They are not in the troubles of other men, neither will they be scourged with men; therefore their pride has laid hold on them; they are covered with their wickedness and blasphemy; their iniquity hath stood forth as it were with fatness; they have passed on to the thoughts of their heart."²⁶⁴ Truly he condemns those who think that divine things are to be regarded in the light of the thoughts of the heart. For God is not subject to arrangement or order; seeing that we do not perceive even those very things, which are common among men and often occur in the history of the human race, to turn out always after the arrangement of some stated rule, but often to happen suddenly in some secret and mysterious manner.

190. "They have thought," he says, "and have spoken wickedness. They have spoken wickedness against the Most High. They have set their mouth against heaven."²⁶⁵ We see then that he condemns, as guilty of wicked blasphemy, those who claim for themselves the right to arrange the heavenly secrets after the semblance of our human nature.

191. And they have said: "How hath God known? And is there knowledge in the Most High?"²⁶⁶ Do not the Arians echo this daily, saying that all knowledge cannot exist in Christ? For He, they say, stated that He knew not the day nor hour. Do they not say, how did He know, while they maintain that He could not know anything but what He heard and saw, and apply by a blasphemous interpretation that which concerns the unity of the divine Nature to weaken His power?

192. It is written, they say: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only."²⁶⁷ First of all the ancient Greek manuscripts do not contain the words, "neither the Son." But it is not to be wondered at if they who have corrupted the sacred Scriptures, have also falsified this passage. The reason for which it seems to have been inserted is perfectly plain, so long as it is applied to unfold such blasphemy.

193. Suppose however that the Evangelist wrote thus. The name of "Son" embraces both natures. For He is also called Son of Man, so that in the ignorance attached to the assumption of our nature, He seems not to have known the day of the judgment to come. For how could the Son of God be ignorant of the day, seeing that the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God are hidden in Him?²⁶⁸

194. I ask then, whether He had this knowledge by reason of His Being, or by chance? For all knowledge comes to us either through nature, or by learning. It is supplied by nature, as for instance to a horse to enable it to run, or to a fish to enable it to swim. For they do this without learning. On the other hand, it is by learning that a man is enabled to swim. For he could not do so unless he had learnt. Since therefore nature enables dumb animals to do and to know what they have not learnt, why shouldst thou give an opinion on the Son of God, and say whether He has knowledge by instruction or by nature? If by instruction, then He was not begotten as Wisdom, and gradually began to be perfect, but was not always so. But if He has knowledge by nature, then He was perfect in the beginning, He came forth perfect from the Father; and so needed no foreknowledge of the future.

195. He therefore was not ignorant of the days; for it does not fall to the lot of the Wisdom of God to know in part and in part to be ignorant. For how can He who made all things be ignorant of a part, since it is a less thing to know than to make. For we know many things which we cannot make, neither do we all know things in the same way but we know them in part. For a countryman knows the force of the wind and the courses of the stars in one way-the inhabitant of a city knows them in another way-and a pilot in yet a third way. But although all do not know all things, they are said to know them; but He alone knows all things in full, Who made all things. The pilot knows for how many watches Arcturus continues, what sort of a rising of Orion he will discover, but he knows nothing of the connection of the Vergiliae and of the other stars, or of their number or names, as does He "Who numbers the multitude of stars, and calleth them all by their names;"²⁶⁹ Whom indeed the power of His work cannot escape.

196. How then do you wish the Son of God to have made these things? Like a signet ring which does not feel the impression it makes? But the Father made all things in wisdom,²⁷⁰ that is, He made all things through the Son, who is the Virtue and Wisdom of God.²⁷¹ But it befits such Wisdom as that to know both the powers and the causes of His own works. Thus the Creator of all things could not be ignorant of what He did-or be without knowledge of what He had Himself given. Therefore He knew the day which He made.

197. But thou sayest that He knows the present and does not know the future. Though this is a foolish suggestion, yet that I may satisfy thee on Scriptural grounds, learn that He made not only what is past, but also what is future, as it is written: "Who made things to come."²⁷² Elsewhere too Scripture says: "By whom also He made the ages, who is the brightness of His glory and the express Image of His Person."²⁷³ Now the ages are past and present and future. How then were those made which are future, unless it is that His active power and knowledge contains within itself the number of all the ages? For just as He calls the things that are not as though they were,²⁷⁴ so has He made things future as though they were. It cannot come to pass that they should not be. Those things which He has directed to be, necessarily will be. Therefore He who has made the things that are to be, knows them in the way in which they will be.

198. If we are to believe this about the ages, much more must we believe it about the day of judgment, on the ground that the Son of God has knowledge of it, as being already made by Him. For it is written: "According to Thine ordinance the day will continue."²⁷⁵ He did not merely say "the day continues," but even "will continue," so that the things which are to come might be governed by His ordinance. Does He not know what He ordered? "He who planted the ear, shall

He not hear? He that formed the eye shall He not see?"²⁷⁶

199. Let us however see if by chance there may be some great thing, which could be beyond the knowledge of its Creator; or at least let them choose whether they will think of something great and superior to other things, or something very little and mean. If it is very little and mean, it is no loss, to speak after our fashion, to know nothing of worthless and petty things. For as it is a sign of power to know the greatest things, it seems rather to be a sign of inferior work to look upon what is worth less. Thus He is freed from fastidiousness, yet is not deprived of His power.

200. But if they think it a great and important thing to know the day of judgment: Let them say what is greater or better than God the Father. He knows God the Father, as He Himself says: "No man knoweth the Father but the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."²⁷⁷ I say, does He know the Father and yet not know the day? So then ye believe that He reveals the Father, and yet cannot reveal the day?

201. Next because you make certain grades, so as to put the Father before the Son, and the Son before the Holy Spirit, tell me whether the Holy Spirit knew the day of judgment For no thing is written of Him in this place. You deny it entirely. But what if I show you He knew it? For it is written: "But God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God."²⁷⁸ Wherefore, because He searches the deep things of God, since God knows the day of judgment, the Spirit also knows it. For He knows all that God knows, as also the Apostle states, saying: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."²⁷⁹ Take heed therefore lest either by denying that the Holy Spirit knows, you should deny that the Father knows; (For the things of God, the Spirit of God also knows, but the things which the Spirit of God does not know, are not the things of God). Or by confessing that the Spirit of God knows, what you deny that the Son of God knows, you should put the Spirit before the Son in opposition to your own declaration. But to hesitate on this point is not only blasphemous but also foolish.

202. Now consider how knowledge is acquired, and let us show that the Son Himself proved that He knew the day. For what we know we make clear either by mention of time or place or signs or persons, or by giving their order. How then did He not know the day of judgment Who described both the hour and the place of judgment, and the signs and the cases?

203. And so thou hast it: "In that hour he which shall be on the housetop let him not come down to take his goods out of his house, and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back."²⁸⁰ To such a point in the future did He know the issues of dangers, that He even showed the means of safety to those in danger.

204. Could the Lord be ignorant of a day Who Himself said of Himself that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath?²⁸¹

205. He has also elsewhere marked out a place, when He said to His disciples who were showing Him the building of the temple, "Do ye see all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down."²⁸²

206. When questioned also about a sign by His disciples, He answered: "Take heed that ye be not deceived. For many shall come in My name, saying I am Christ;"²⁸³ and further on He says: "and

great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and terrors from heaven, and there shall be great signs."284 Thus He has described both persons and signs.

207. In what manner He tells that the armies will surround Jerusalem, or that the times of the Gentiles are to be fulfilled, and in what order,-all this is disclosed to us by the witness of the Gospel words. Therefore He knew all things.

Chapter XVII.

Christ acted for our advantage in being unwilling to reveal the day of judgment. This is made plain by other words of our Lord and by a not dissimilar passage from Paul's writings. Other passages in which the same ignorance seems to be attributed to the Father are brought forward to meet those who are anxious to know why Christ answered His disciples, as though He did not know. From these Ambrose argues against them that if they admit ignorance and inability in the Father, they must admit that the same Substance exists in the Son as in the Father; unless they prefer to accuse the Son of falsehood; since it belongs neither to Him nor to the Father to deceive, but the unity of both is pointed out in the passage named.

208. But we ask for what reason He was unwilling to state the time. If we ask it, we shall not find it is owing to ignorance, but to wisdom. For it was not to our advantage to know; in order that we being ignorant of the actual moments of judgment to come, might ever be as it were on guard, and set on the watch-tower of virtue, and so avoid the habits of sin; lest the day of the Lord should come upon us in the midst of our wickedness. For it is not to our advantage to know but rather to fear the future; for it is written: "Be not high-minded but fear."285

209. For if He had distinctly stated the day, he would seem to have laid down a rule of life for that one age which was nearest to the judgment, and the just man in the earlier times would be more negligent, and the sinner more free from care. For the adulterer cannot cease from the desire of committing adultery unless he fears punishment day by day, nor can the robber forsake the hiding places in the woods where he dwells, unless he knows punishment is hanging over him day by day. For impurity generally spurs them on, but fear is irksome to the end.

210. Therefore I have said that it was not to our advantage to know; nay, it is to our advantage to be ignorant, that through ignorance we might fear, through watchfulness be corrected, as He Himself said: "Be ye ready, for ye know not at what hour the Son of Man cometh."286 For the soldier does not know how to watch in the camp unless he knows that war is at hand.

211. Wherefore at another time also the Lord Himself when asked by his Apostles (Yes, for they did not understand it as Arius did, but believed that the Son of God knew the future. For unless they had believed this, they would never have asked the question.)-the Lord, I say, when asked when He would restore the kingdom to Israel, did not say that He did not know, but says: "It is not for you to know the times or years, which the Father hath put in His own power."287 Mark what He said: It is not for you to know! Read again, "It is not for you." "For you," He said, not "for Me," for now He spoke not according to His own perfection but as was profitable to the human body and our soul. "For you" therefore He said, not "for Me."

212. Which example the Apostle also followed: "But of the times and seasons, brethren," he says, "ye have no need that I write unto you."288 Thus not even the Apostle himself, the servant of

Christ, said that he knew not the seasons, but that there was no need for the people to be taught; for they ought ever to be armed with spiritual armour, that the virtue of Christ may stand forth in each one. But when the Lord says: "Of the times which the Father hath put in His own power,"²⁸⁹ He certainly cannot be without a share in His Father's knowledge, in whose power He is by no means without a share. For power grows out of wisdom and virtue; and Christ is both of these.

213. But you ask, why did He not refuse His disciples as one who knew, but would not say; and, why did He state instead that neither the angels nor the Son knew?²⁹⁰ I too will ask you why God says in Genesis: "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry that is come unto Me. And if not, that I may know."²⁹¹ Why does Scripture also say of God: "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men builded."²⁹² Why also does the prophet say in the Book of the Psalms: "The Lord looked down upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and that did seek God"?²⁹³ Just as though in one place, if God had not descended, and in the other, if He had not looked down, He would have been ignorant either of men's work or of their merits.

214. But in the Gospel of Luke also thou hast the same, for the Father says: "What shall I do? I will send My beloved Son; it may be that they will reverence Him."²⁹⁴ In Matthew and in Mark thou hast: "But He sent His only Son, saying: they will reverence My Son;"²⁹⁵ In one book He says: "It may be that they will reverence My Son;"²⁹⁶ and is in doubt as though He does not know; for this is the language of one in doubt. But in the two other books He says: "They will reverence My Son;" that is, He declares that reverence will be shown.

215. But God can neither be in doubt, nor can He be deceived. For he only is in doubt, who is ignorant of the future; and he is deceived, who has predicted one thing, whilst another has happened. Yet what is plainer than the fact that Scripture states the Father to have said one thing of the Son, and that the same Scripture proves another thing to have taken place? The Son was beaten, He was mocked, was crucified, and died.²⁹⁷ He suffered much worse things in the flesh than those servants who had been appointed before. Was the Father deceived, or was He ignorant of it, or was He unable to give help? But He that is true cannot make a mistake; for it is written: "God is faithful Who doth not lie."²⁹⁸ . How was He ignorant, Who knows all? What could He not do, Who could do all?

216. Yet if either He was ignorant, or had not power (for you would sooner agree to say that the Father did not know than own that the Son knows), you see from this very fact that the Son is of one Substance with the Father; seeing that the Son like the Father (to speak in accordance with your foolish ideas) does not know all things, and cannot do all things. For I am not so eager or rash in giving praise to the Son as to dare to say that the Son can do more than the Father; for I make no distinction of power between the Father and the Son.

217. But perhaps you say that the Father did not say so, but that the Son erred about the Father. So now you convict the Son not only of weakness, but also of blasphemy and lying. However if you do not believe the Son with regard to the Father, neither may you believe Him with regard to that. For if He wished to deceive us in saying that the Father was in doubt as though He knew not what would take place, He wished also to deceive us about Himself in saying that He did not know the future. It would be far more endurable for Him to stretch the veil of ignorance in front of that which He does of His own accord, than that He should seem to be deluded by a result contrary to

what He had foretold in the things He had declared of His Father.

218. But neither is the Father deceived nor does the Son deceive. It is the custom of the holy Scriptures to speak thus, as the examples I have already given, and many others testify, so that God feigns not to know what He does know. In this then a unity of Godhead, and a unity of character is proved to exist in the Father and in the Son; seeing that, as God the Father hides what is known to Him, so also the Son, Who is the image of God in this respect, hides what is known to Him.

Chapter XVIII.

Wishing to give a reason for the Lord's answer to the apostles, he assigns the one received to Christ's tenderness. Then when another reason is supplied by others he confesses that it is true; for the Lord spoke it by reason of His human feelings. Hence he gathers that the knowledge of the Father and the Son is equal, and that the Son is not inferior to the Father. After having set beside the text, in which He is said to be inferior, another whereby He is declared to be equal, he censures the rashness of the Arians in judging about the Son, and shows that whilst they wickedly make Him to be inferior, He is rightly called a Stone by Himself.

219. We have been taught therefore that the Son of God is not ignorant of the future. If they confess this, I too-that I may now answer why He declared that neither angels, nor the Son, but only the Father knows-call to mind His wonted love for His disciples also in this passage, and His grace, which by its very frequency ought to have been known to all. For the Lord, filled with deep love for His disciples, when they asked from Him what He thought unprofitable for them to know, prefers to seem ignorant of what He knows, rather than to refuse an answer. He loves rather to provide what is useful for us, than to show His own power.

220. There are, however, some not so faint-hearted as I. For I would rather fear the deep things of God, than be wise. There are some, however, relying on the words: "And Jesus increased in age and in wisdom and in favour with God and man,"²⁹⁹ who boldly say, that according to His Godhead indeed He could not be ignorant of the future, but that in His assumption of our human state He said that He as Son of Man was in ignorance before His crucifixion. For when He speaks of the Son, He does not speak as it were of another; for He Himself is our Lord the Son of God and the Son of a Virgin. But by a word which embraces both, He guides our mind, so that He as Son of Man according to His adoption of our ignorance and growth of knowledge, might be believed as yet not fully to have known all things. For it is not for us to know the future. Thus He seems to be ignorant in that state in which He makes progress. For how does He progress according to His Godhead, in Whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells?³⁰⁰ Or what is there which the Son of God does not know, Who said: "Why think ye evil in your hearts?"³⁰¹ How does He not know, of Whom Scripture says: "But Jesus knew their thoughts"?³⁰²

221. This is what others say, but I-to return to my former point, where I stated it was written of the Father: "It may be they will reverence My Son,"-I think indeed this was written in order that the Father, as He was speaking of men, might also seem to have spoken with human feelings. But still more am I inclined to think that the Son Who went about with men, and lived the life of man, and took upon Him our flesh, assumed also our feelings; so that after our ignorance He might say He knew not, though there was not anything He did not know. For though He seemed to be a man in

the reality of His body, yet was He Life, and Light, and virtue came out of Him,³⁰³ to heal the wounds of the injured by the power of His Majesty.

222. Ye see then that this matter has been solved for you, since the saying of the Son is referred to the assumption of our state in its fulness, and it was thus written concerning the Father, in order that you might cease to cavil at the Son.

223. There was nothing then of which the Son of God was ignorant, for there was nothing of which the Father was ignorant. But if the Son was ignorant of nothing, as we now conclude, let them say in what respect they wish Him to seem to be inferior. If God has begotten a Son inferior to Himself, He has granted Him less. If He has granted Him less, He either wished to give less, or could only give less. But the Father is neither weak nor envious, seeing that there was neither will nor power before the Son. For wherein is He inferior, Who has all things even as the Father has them? He has received all things from the Father by right of His Generation,³⁰⁴ and has shown forth the Father wholly by the glory of His Majesty.

224. It is written, they say: "For the Father is greater than I."³⁰⁵ It is also written: "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God"³⁰⁶ It is written again that the Jews wished to kill Him, because He said He was the Son of God, making Himself equal with God.³⁰⁷ It is written: "I and My Father are one."³⁰⁸ They read "one" they do not read "many." Can He then be both inferior and equal in the same Nature? Nay, the one refers to His Godhead, the other to His flesh.

225. They say He is inferior: I ask who has measured it, who is of so overweening a heart, as to place the Father and the Son before his judgment seat to decide upon which is the greater? "My heart is not haughty nor are mine eyes raised unto vanity,"³⁰⁹ says David. King David feared to raise his heart in pride in human affairs, but we raise ours even in opposition to the divine secrets. Who shall decide about the Son of God? Thrones, dominions, angels, powers? But archangels give attendance and serve Him, cherubim and seraphim minister to Him and praise Him. Who then decides about the Son of God, on reading that the Father Himself knows the Son, but will not judge Him. "For no man knoweth the Son, but the Father."³¹⁰ "Knoweth" it says, not "judgeth." It is one thing to know, another to judge. The Father has knowledge in Himself. The Son has no power superior to Himself. And again: "No man knoweth the Father, but the Son;" and He Himself knows the Father, as the Father knows Him.

226. But thou sayest that He said He was inferior, He said also He was a Stone. Thou sayest more and yet dost impiously attack Him. I say less and with reverence add to His honour. Thou sayest He is inferior and confessest Him to be above the angels. I say He is less than the angels, yet do not take from His honour; for I do not refute His Godhead, but I do proclaim His pity.

Chapter XIX. The Saint having turned to God the Father, explains why he does not deride that the Son is inferior to the Father, then he declares it is not for him to measure the Son of God, since it was given to an angel-nay, perhaps even to Christ as man-to measure merely Jerusalem. Arius, he says, has shown himself to be an imitator of Satan. It is a rash thing to hold discussions on the divine Generation. Since so great a sign of human generation has been given by Isaiah, we ought not to make comparisons in divine things. Lastly he shows how carefully we ought to avoid the pride of Arius, by putting before us various examples of Scriptures.

227. To Thee now, Almighty Father, do I direct my words with tears. I indeed have readily called Thee inapproachable, incomprehensible, inestimable; but I dared not say Thy Son was inferior to Thyself. For when I read that He is the Brightness of Thy glory, and the Image of Thy Person,³¹¹ I fear lest, in saying that the Image of Thy Person is inferior, I should seem to say that Thy Person is inferior, of which the Son is the Image; for the fulness of Thy Godhead is wholly in the Son. I have often read, I freely believe, that Thou and Thy Son and the Holy Spirit are boundless, unmeasurable, inestimable, ineffable. And therefore I cannot appraise Thee so as to weigh Thee.

228. But be it so, that I desired with a daring and rash spirit to measure Thee? From whence, I ask, shall I measure Thee, The prophet saw a line of flax with which the angel measured Jerusalem. An angel was measuring, not Arius. And he was measuring Jerusalem, not God. And perchance even an angel could not measure Jerusalem, for it was a man. Thus it is written: "I raised mine eyes and saw and beheld a man, and in his hand there was a line of flax."³¹² He was a man, for a type of the body that was to be assumed was thus shown. He was a man, of whom it was said: "There cometh a man after me, Whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."³¹³ Therefore Christ in a type measures Jerusalem. Arius measures God.

229. Even Satan transforms himself into an angel of light;³¹⁴ what wonder then if Arius imitates his Author in taking upon himself what is forbidden? Though his father the devil did it not in his own case, that man with intolerable blasphemy assumes to himself the knowledge of divine secrets and the mysteries of the heavenly Generation. For the devil confessed the true Son of God, Arius denies Him.

230. If, then, I cannot measure Thee, Almighty Father, can I without blasphemy discuss the secrets of Thy Generation? Can I say there is anything more or less between Thee and Thy Son when He Himself Who was begotten of Thee, says: "All things which the Father hath are Mine."³¹⁵ Who has made Me a judge and a divider of human affairs? This the Son says,³¹⁶ and do we claim to make a division and to give judgment between the Father and the Son? A right feeling of duty avoids arbiters even in the division of an inheritance. And shall we become arbiters, to divide between Thee and Thy Son the glory of the uncreated Substance?

231. "This generation," it says, "is an evil generation. It seeketh a sign, and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet."³¹⁷ A sign of the Godhead then is not given, but only of the Incarnation. Thus when about to speak of the Incarnation the prophet says: "Ask thee a sign." And when the king had said: "I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord," the answer was: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive."³¹⁸ Therefore we cannot see a sign of the Godhead, and do we seek a measure of it? Alas! woe is me! we impiously dare to discuss Him, to Whom we cannot worthily pray!

232. Let the Arians see to what they do. I have unlawfully compared Thee, O Father, with Thy works in saying that Thou art greater than all. If greater than Thy Son, as Arius maintains, I have judged wickedly. Concerning Thee first will that judgment be. For no choice can be made except by comparison, nor can anyone be put before another without a decision being first given on Himself.

233. It is not lawful for us to swear by heaven, but it is lawful to judge about God. Yet Thou hast given to Thy Son alone judgment over all.

234. John feared to baptize the flesh of the Lord, John forbade Him, saying: "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?"³¹⁹ And shall I bring Christ under my judgment.?

235. Moses excuses himself from the Priesthood, Peter is for avoiding the obedience demanded in the Ministry; and does Arius examine even the deep things of God? But Arius is not the Holy Spirit. Nay, it was said even to Arius and to all men: "Seek not that which is too deep for thee."³²⁰

236. Moses is prevented from seeing the face of God;³²¹ Arius merited to see it in secret. Moses and Aaron among His Priests. Moses who appeared with the Lord in glory, that Moses then saw only the back parts of God in appearance; Arius beholds God wholly face to face! But "no one," it says, "can see My face and live."³²²

237. Paul also speaks of inferior beings: "We know in part and we prophesy in part."³²³ Arius says: "I know God altogether and not in part." Thus Paul is inferior to Arius, and the vessel of election knows in part, but the vessel of perdition knows wholly. "I know," he says, "a man, whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth, how he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words."³²⁴ Paul carried up to the third heaven, knew not himself; Arius rolling in filth, knows God. Paul says of himself: "God knows;" Arius says of God: "I know."

238. But Arius was not caught up to heaven, although he followed him who with accursed boastfulness presumed on what was divine, saying: "I will set my throne upon the clouds; I will be like the Most High."³²⁵ For as he said: "I will be like the Most High," so too Arius wishes the Most High Son of God to seem like himself, Whom he does not worship in the eternal glory of His Godhead, but measures by the weakness of the flesh.

1: S. Matt. xxiv. 45, Matt. xxiv. 46.

2: S. John xxi. 15 ff.

3: S. Matt. xxvi. 70 ff.

4: 1 Cor. iii. 2.

5: 1 Cor. ix. 22.

6: Tit. iii. 10.

7: Tit. iii. 9.

8: S. Matt. xiii. 25.

9: 2 Tim ii. 24, 2 Tim ii. 25.

10: 1 Cor. xi. 16.

11: S. Matt. xxv. 15.

12: S. Matt. xxv. 26, Matt. xxv. 27.

13: S. Luke xix. 23.

14: 1 Cor. iv. 1.

15: 1 Cor. iii. 5, 1 Cor. iii. 6.

16: 1 Cor. iii. 9.

17: 1 Cor. iii. 12.

18: Ps. xii. 6.

19: S. Matt. xxv. 20.

20: 2 Cor. iv. 7.

21: S. Luke x. 35.

22: S. Matt. xx. 14.

23: S. Luke xix. 17.

24: 1 Sam. xviii. 7.

25: S. Matt. xxiii. 14 ff.

26: i.e. Either `used to their own earthly advantage 0' or `explained in a carnal earthly sense. 0' 27:
S. Luke xix. 20.

28: Deut. xxx. 14.

29: S. John xvii. 3.

30: S. John i. 1.

31: S. John xvii. 3.

32: S. John x. 35.

33: Ex. vii. 1.

34: Ps. lxxxii. 6.

35: 1 Cor. viii. 5.

36: Heb. xiii. 8.

37: Ps. ii. 7.

38: Acts xiii. 32, Acts xiii. 33.

39: Ex. iii. 14.

40: 2 Cor. i. 19.

41: Rom. ix. 18.

42: Gal. iv. 8.

43: Isa. xlv. 24.

44: Prov. viii. 27.
45: Heb. i. 10. Cf. also Ps. cii. 25.
46: Prov. iii. 19.
47: Job ix. 8.
48: S. Matt. xiv. 28.
49: Job xli. 8.
50: Isa. xxvii. 1.
51: Ps. cxlviii. 3.
52: S. John v. 19.
53: Rom. i. 25.
54: Rom. xi. 36.
55: 1 Tim. vi. 16.
56: S. John v. 26.
57: De Fide, iv. 6.
58: 1 John iv. 2.
59: S. John xvii. 1.
60: Acts iv. 11, Acts iv. 12.
61: Prov. xxx. 18, Prov. xxx. 19.
62: Ps. cxviii. 6.
63: Ps. cxviii. 8.
64: Ps. cxviii. 9.
65: S. John viii. 17.
66: S. John viii. 18.
67: S. John viii. 16.
68: 1 Cor. viii. 5.
69: 1 Cor. viii. 6.
70: 1 Cor. viii. 4, 1 Cor. viii. 6.
71: S. Matt. iv. 10.
72: S. Matt. xv. 25.

73: Gal. i. 1.
74: S. John iv. 22.
75: S. John iv. 6, John iv. 7.
76: S. John iv. 22.
77: S. John iv. 23.
78: S. Matt. xxviii. 9.
79: S. Matt. xx. 23.
80: S. Matt. iv. 22.
81: S. Matt. xx. 21.
82: S. Luke xxii. 24.
83: S. Matt. xx. 22, Matt. xx. 23.
84: Phil. ii. 6.
85: S. John xiii. 1.
86: 1 Cor. xiii. 4.
87: S. Mark x. 40.
88: S. Matt. xx. 23.
89: S. John v. 22.
90: S. John xiv. 12, John xiv. 13.
91: S. John v. 23.
92: S. John xvii. 4.
93: Ps. cx. 1.
94: S. Matt. xvii. 9.
95: Rev. vii. 11.
96: S. Luke i. 19.
97: Rev. iv. 4.
98: S. Matt. xix. 28.
99: 1 Kings xxii. 19.
100: S. Matt xxii. 30.
101: S. Matt. xx. 23.

102: S. Matt. xx. 22.
103: S. John vii. 16.
104: Acts x. 34.
105: Rom. viii. 29.
106: S. Matt. xix. 28.
107: Isa. vi. 2.
108: Ps. lxxx. 1.
109: S. John xvii. 24.
110: Ps. xxvii. 4.
111: S. Matt. v. 8.
112: S. John xvii. 23.
113: S. Matt. iii. 17.
114: S. Luke vi. 36.
115: S. Matt. v. 48.
116: S. John xvii. 5.
117: S. Luke xxiii. 43.
118: S. John xii. 19.
119: S. John xvii. 21.
120: S. John xvii. 10.
121: Rom. viii. 3.
122: Tob ix. 3.
123: Num. xxii. 22.
124: S. Matt. xxi. 37.
125: 2 Cor. vi. 16.
126: Gen. xi. 7.
127: Jer. xxiii. 24.
128: Isa. xl. 3.
129: S. John xiv. 23.
130: S. Matt. xi. 25.

131: S. Matt. xxii. 42-46.

132: 2 Cor. i. 3.

133: 1 Cor. ix. 27.

134: Ps. cxix. 91.

135: Deut. vi. 13.

136: S. Matt. xx. 30.

137: Ebion recognized our Lord absolutely as man and no more.

138: I. 57 sc.

139: I. 6 sc.

140: II. 44.

141: His error was much the same as that of Ebion. except that he asserted that the Word descended from heaven and dwelt in Jesus.

142: II. 44.

143: Heb. ii. 9.

144: Rom. viii. 21.

145: Phil. ii. 7.

146: Ps. lxxxix. 20.

147: Zech. iii. 8.

148: Isa. xlix. 5, Isa. xlix. 6.

149: Phil. ii. 6, Phil. ii. 7.

150: Ps. xxxi. 3, Ps. xxxi. 11, Ps. xxxi. 16.

151: Ps. cxvi. 16.

152: Ps. xxxviii. 8.

153: Rom. v. 19.

154: Ps. cxvi. 13, Ps. cxvi. 17.

155: Ps. lxxxvi. 2.

156: Ps. xvi. 10.

157: Ps. lxxxvi. 2.

158: Ps. lxxxvi. 16.

159: Ez. xxxiv. 23, Ez. xxxiv. 24.

160: S. John vii. 8.

161: S. John vii. 33.

162: S. John xiii. 31.

163: S. John xiii. 31.

164: S. John xvi. 14.

165: S. John viii. 54.

166: Isa. xlv. 6.

167: S. John i. 1.

168: Rom. i. 1.

169: 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

170: S. John xii. 44.

171: It would seem that the form of words was sometimes changed by Arians, in which case there would be of course no valid baptism.

172: S. John xii. 45.

173: 1 John ii. 23.

174: S. John vii. 28.

175: S. John viii. 25.

176: S. John xii. 46.

177: S. John vi. 40.

178: S. John xiv. 1.

179: Ps. ii. 7.

180: S. John v. 31.

181: S. John vii. 14.

182: S. Luke xxiii. 41.

183: Acts ix. 12.

184: Josh. v. 13.

185: Josh. ii. 18.

186: Ps. lxxxvii. 4.

187: Ps. cxvi. 11 188: S. John viii. 18.
189: S. John viii. 14, John viii. 15.
190: S. John xii. 49.
191: S. John x. 17.
192: S. John x. 18.
193: S. John xii. 50.
194: S. John xvi. 13.
195: S. John xiv. 10.
196: S. John xiv. 17.
197: S. John viii. 38.
198: 2 Tim. iii. 9.
199: 1 Cor. ii. 8.
200: Heb. i. 3.
201: Phil. ii. 6.
202: Eccles. xii. 14.
203: S. John x. 28-30.
204: S. John v. 21.
205: S. Luke xix. 12.
206: S. John xvii. 21.
207: S. Luke xix. 27.
208: 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.
209: S. John vi. 44.
210: S. Luke xvii. 21.
211: S. John xiv. 6.
212: S. Matt. xxviii. 20.
213: Phil. i. 23.
214: Rom. v. 19.
215: S. John xiv. 3.
216: S. John xiv. 3.

217: S. Luke xiii. 28.
218: S. John xiv. 23.
219: Ps. viii. 6.
220: Eph. v. 22.
221: 1 Tim. ii. 11.
222: 1 Pet. ii. 13.
223: Eph. v. 21.
224: 1 Cor. xv. 19, 1 Cor. xv. 20.
225: 1 Cor. xv. 21-28.
226: Heb. ii. 8.
227: 1 Cor. xv. 28.
228: S. John viii. 29.
229: S. Matt. iv. 11.
230: S. Matt. xi. 29.
231: Phil. ii. 10.
232: S. John i. 12.
233: Gal. v. 17.
234: S. John iv. 34.
235: Rom. viii. 7.
236: Heb. ii. 8.
237: Heb. ii. 9.
238: S. Luke xxii. 42.
239: Phil. ii. 8.
240: S. Luke ii. 51.
241: S. Matt. xxvi. 64.
242: Gal. iv. 4.
243: 1 Cor. xv. 49.
244: Col. iii. 8.
245: Col. iii. 9, Col. iii. 10.

246: Col. iii. 11.

247: S. Matt. xxv. 36, Matt. xxv. 40.

248: Gal. iii. 13.

249: Eph. ii. 6.

250: Cf. ch. v 251: Eph. ii. 5, Eph. ii. 6.

252: Eph. v. 23.

253: 1 Cor. xv. 28.

254: Phil. iii. 20, Phil. iii. 21.

255: Eph. i. 20, Eph i. 21.

256: Ps. lxii. 1.

257: Ps lxii. 3.

258: S. John viii. 40.

259: Ps. lxii. 4.

260: S. Matt. xxvii. 4.

261: Rom. viii. 38, Rom. viii. 39.

262: Rom. viii. 35.

263: Rom. ix. 5.

264: Ps. lxxiii. 5-7.

265: Ps. lxxii. 8, Ps. lxxii. 9.

266: Ps. lxxiii. 11.

267: S. Mark xiii. 32.

268: Col. ii. 3.

269: Ps. cxlvii. 4.

270: Ps. civ. 24.

271: 1 Cor. i. 24.

272: Isa. xlv. 11.

273: Heb. i. 2, Heb. i. 3.

274: Rom. iv. 17.

275: Ps. cxxi. 91.

276: Ps. xciv. 9.
277: S. Matt. xi. 27.
278: 1 Cor. ii. 10.
279: 1 Cor. ii. 11.
280: S. Luke xvii. 31.
281: S. Matt. xii. 8.
282: S. Matt. xxiv. 2.
283: S. Luke xxi. 8.
284: S. Luke xxi. 11.
285: Rom. xi. 20.
286: S. Matt. xxiv. 44.
287: Acts i. 7.
288: 1 Thess. v. 1.
289: Acts i. 7.
290: S. Mark xiii. 32.
291: Gen. xviii. 21.
292: Gen. xi. 5.
293: Ps. liii. 2.
294: S. Luke xx. 13.
295: S. Matt. xxi. 37.
296: S. Mark xii. 6.
297: S. Matt. xxvii. 29 ff.
298: Tit. i. 2.
299: S. Luke ii. 52.
300: Col. ii. 9.
301: S. Matt. ix. 4.
302: S. Luke vi. 8.
303: S. Luke vi. 19.
304: S. John xvi. 15.

305: S. John xiv. 28.
306: Phil. ii. 6.
307: S. John v. 18.
308: S. John x. 30.
309: Ps. cxxxi. 1.
310: S. Matt. xi. 27.
311: Heb. i. 3.
312: Ezek. xl. 3.
313: S. John i. 27.
314: 2 Cor. xi. 14.
315: S. John xvi. 15.
316: S. Luke xii. 14.
317: S. Luke xi. 29.
318: Isa. vii. 11 ff.
319: S. Matt. iii. 4.
320: Ecclus. iii. 22.
321: Ex. xxxiii. 23.
322: Ex. xxxiii. 20.
323: 1 Cor. xiii. 9.
324: 2 Cor. xiii. 3, 2 Cor. xiii. 4.
325: Isa. xiv. 14.

Interrogation of Job and David

The Four Books of Saint Ambrose of Milan, Bishop, on the Interrogation of Job and David.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents • Book One. Of the Interrogation of Job, and of the Infirmary of Man.

- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Book Two. On the Interrogation of David.
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Book Three. The Interrogation of Job\.
- Chapter I.

- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Book Four. On the Interrogation of David.
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.

Book One. Of the Interrogation of Job, and of the Infirmity of Man.

Chapter I. In this life, there are many disturbances, many consolations, but the latter far surpass the former; which is confirmed by the examples of the saints: that David and Job interceded for our weaknesses, hence the subject of this work. The divine scripture demonstrates to us in frequent passages that many disturbances must be endured in this life; and it provides many consolations by which the soul, capable of strength and conscious of rectitude, should absorb what are the inconveniences of the present and look upon what has perpetual delight. Consolations outweigh disturbances because they bring about the calming of present troubles and the hope of future ones. Hence the Apostle Paul says, 'The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come' (Rom. VIII, 18). Certainly unfitting for the comparison of consolation, not for the benefit of redemption. For what life on earth is so illustrious that it can equal that heavenly glory? What is more sublime than Paul, who endured so many dangers, so much pain and weakness? In the sufferings he underwent in the name of Christ every day, as he himself says (1 Cor. 15:31), he was dying, and he considered nothing unworthy to endure in this time for the hope and expectation of such great glory. Elijah endured hunger, traps, and the terrors of death, and the bitter hardships of labours: and yet he, alone, hiding all the merits of this warfare, having been taken from the earth by fiery chariots and horses of fire, and being brought back from the earth to heaven, raised the grace of the pious ascender above all human things. But what can I say about Peter, who considered his cross unworthy of future reward, and demanded to be

crucified upside down, so that he could add something to his own suffering, of which he himself did not fear to make more severe?

3. Hence not undeservedly does the holy David hasten to that glory, when in his other work, but especially in the forty-first psalm, he testifies, saying: When shall I come and appear before the face of God (Psalm 41:3)? In this psalm he clearly expresses both the disturbances of human frailty and the consolations from the Lord. In this psalm he also intercedes for us to God, because forgetting his own work and forgetting the kindness and grace bestowed upon man, which he had undertaken to protect and adorn, he abandoned him and rejected him, weak and shipwrecked, to be crushed by various afflictions. What the holy Job had done earlier, this person does it morally, while the former does it more vehemently. Therefore, it is advisable for us to consider the interjections of both; what is expressed in these is the form of human life, the cause at stake, and the prerogative being shaped. Therefore, we must observe them in their respective order.

Chapter II.

How blessed Job, having lost everything except his wife, did not yield to disturbances like a good athlete, nor did he refuse to compete.

Therefore, having lost his children and all his possessions except for his wife, who was reserved solely for his temptation, and even being afflicted with a severe ulcer, when he saw that his friends had not come to console him, but to magnify and exacerbate his pain, he understood that the power to tempt him had been given to him by the Lord's adversary. And although he felt the arrows of the Lord in his body, by which he said he was being wounded, yet like a good athlete who would not yield to pain and would not refuse the challenges of the contest, he added: The Lord has begun to inflict wounds, but in the end He will not destroy me. For what is my strength, that I should endure? And what is my time, that my soul should be patient? Is my strength the strength of stones, or is my flesh bronze? In whom then do I trust? Has help left me? Have pity on me, O Lord, for you have afflicted me.

5. Is not man's life on earth a trial, and his days like the days of a hired worker? As a slave who fears his master and seeks shelter under his protection, or as a hired worker who waits for his wages, so have I awaited empty months, and the nights have been given to me in pain. If I try to rest, I ask: When will day come? If I rise again, I ask: When will evening come? I am full of sorrows from evening until morning. My body is consumed by the rot of worms, and I melt the clods of the earth, scraping the pus from my sores. But my life is lighter than a fable, it perishes in empty hope... I would say, my bed will comfort me... You terrify me in my dreams, and you strike me in my visions (Job 7:1 et seq.)

Chapter III.

Concerning the miserable condition of man, who is daily under fear; and how foolishly he thinks that he can deceive God's knowledge of his sins: likewise, how wretched it is for us to be troubled in bed, which is given for rest, and to rise empty and naked from it, which is the image of this life.

6. How wretched is the condition of man, who labors for others like a hireling, is in need of himself, and unless sustained by the mercy of others, cannot support himself! Every day, enduring heavy servitude under fear and dread, and fearing to be discovered by the Lord, he thinks that he can

hide himself in the wandering and fleeting shadow of this world. Consider him of whom it says in Ecclesiasticus: Every man transgressing on his own bed, despising and saying in his soul: Who sees me? Darkness surrounds me and the walls, which I fear (Eccli. XXIII, 25 and 26)? Does it not seem to you that he is truly a hireling who spends his own, like that young man in the Gospel (Luke XV, 13 and following), who is said to have received a portion of substance from his father, and being needy and destitute, to satisfy his hunger, began to feed swine, so that he could exercise his acquired means? But he, however, was eventually converted; for he returned to his father, and did not suppress his sins, but revealed them. But he who thinks himself hidden from Him who sees all things, and believes that his secret actions can be concealed in darkness, is pretending a shadow. But in vain does he think he can hide, for the eye of the Lord is brighter than the sun, and it perceives all hidden things, illuminates the darkness, and penetrates the conscience of the innermost heart, descending into the depths. Therefore, it is empty to think that one is safe in darkness, when one cannot avoid the light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not comprehend it. Therefore, like a fugitive and an evil hireling, he is apprehended, and before he conceals himself, he is recognized; because to the Lord, all things are known before he seeks them, not only things done, but also things that are to come.

7. Therefore, he who thinks that he can hide his own crime in empty hope perishes: that is a fable, not the truth. In short, the story of sinners is idle, having no fruit but lamentation. For the foolish narrative is a burden on the way. For what else is sin but a burden that weighs down the traveler of this world with the heavy load of guilt; if he did not wish to be subject to the burden, he should have listened to the one who said: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you (Matthew 11:28).

8. But what is more distressing than when our own bed, assigned to provide us with rest, inflicts a grievous wound? For then we are accustomed to recall the things we have done, and the inner conscience is stung by the pricks of our actions. Hence, Scripture says of such people: 'What you say in your hearts, and are convicted of in your beds' (Psalm 4:5). It offers a remedy, but at the same time wounds the conscience. But suppose that sleep comes upon the weary at times, we are terrified by dreams, agitated by visions, so that rest is no longer a repose but a punishment. For so the riches of the world depart, as if the dream of one waking. Someone has awoken from the sleep of this body, and possessed nothing, and even lost what they thought they had.

9. Now, consider for me that rich man who was accumulating daily gains and various profits, and was driven by his own desires, suddenly coming to his senses and reflecting to himself that he will not take everything with him when he dies, nor will the glory of his house descend with him; and that the things he possesses in this life may have some pleasure, but not in the future: opening his eyes to heavenly things. Does it not seem to you like someone who drank in his dreams, drank; and like someone who feasted in his dreams, feasted; but upon opening his eyes, realized that his soul had hoped in vain, and still is hungry and thirsty; for greed has no limit, nor is it satisfied by seizing, but it is spurred on the more in need it becomes, the more it seeks? And here he arose, and the dream is empty.

Chapter IV.

How Job's friends, coming to comfort him, aggravated his grief: and how magnificently he expressed his sense of divine power, and designated the mysteries of redemption.

10. But let us hear him speaking again: In truth I know that it is so; for how can a mortal be just, etc. (Job 9:1-2). Those friends who had come to console him were pressing upon him like the waves of the sea with their words. One type of solace it is for those who are afflicted and suffering bitter hardship to be without guilt; so that the adversities they endure do not seem to be endured as punishment for their sins. They were eager to take this away from that holy man as well; so that he might be seen as the author of his own affliction, who had incurred the offense of the Lord with serious sins, and was enduring them on account of his impieties: describing the punishments of the wicked; so that those who sowed vices might reap for themselves sorrows, because they perished by God's command (Job 4:8-9), and perished by the breath of his own life, who breathed into the clay houses that were inhabited (Ibid., 19 and following), and withered, and in whose thoughts the plots of the tricksters were frustrated, and the mouth of the unjust was stopped (Job 5:13-16). Indeed, these things are true about the power of the Lord; but they were not befitting the merits of such a great man.

11. So he replied: In truth I know that it is so; for how can a mortal be righteous before the Lord? If he should desire to contend with Him in judgment, He would not answer him, nor would he be able to refute even one of His words with a thousand arguments. For He is wise in understanding, strong and mighty; who then is so stubborn that he can stand before Him? He causes mountains to shake and they do not know it, and He overturns them in His anger. He shakes the earth from its foundations, and its pillars tremble. He who speaks to the sun alone, and does not rise, but rather marks the stars. He alone stretches out the sky, and walks upon the sea as if on solid ground. He creates the morning and the evening, the north wind and the south wind: He performs great and unsearchable things, glorious and immense, countless in number. If He passes by me, I will not see Him; and if He goes past me, I will not even know it (Ibid., IX, 3 et seq.). How much more powerful is the trumpet blast of His dominion? But in it is the help of the just, not ruin. Finally, it seems that power is expressed, but rather the mysteries of our redemption are declared.

Chapter V.

That God caused the mountains to grow old, that is, to convert the letter of the Old Testament into a spiritual meaning: The Jews cannot be excused for not knowing this, because of the miracles that accompanied Christ's death; but especially because of the sun's eclipse which is described. Other works of Christ are mentioned, and especially walking on water; where Peter's wavering and the grinding of the ships of Tarshish, which represent our bodies, are described.

12. For who are the mountains that are made old, if not Moses, Aaron, and Elijah, Joshua, Gideon, the prophets, all the books of the old Testament? The Lord Jesus came: he brought a new Testament, and that which was old became new. The Christian has been renewed, the Jew has grown old. Grace has been renewed, the letter has grown old. He overturns mountains and turns things upside down. For he both destroys and demolishes the understanding according to the letter, and establishes spiritual understanding. Therefore, that understanding of the Law vanished, and it became spiritual. Hence the Apostle says: But we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal (Rom. VII, 14). But even he who was carnal became spiritual, as he himself asserts, saying: For I, too, have the spirit of God (I Cor., VII, 40). Therefore, Jesus has hidden these mountains, and the Jews do not know. For if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of majesty: they would never have followed Jewish delusions. Therefore, they are the ones who do

not know. Hence, in the Gospel, the Lord Jesus says: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' (Luke 23:34).

13. But they are not excused because they do not know, since they did not want to know what they should have known. Certainly, we do not envy them if they follow the Lord's judgment. For the higher judgment usually absolves, not the future one. But neither is he free from guilt who crucified the author of his own salvation and did not seek forgiveness afterwards. Let it be that he did not know before whom he was persecuting; nevertheless, when he was placed on the cross, he ought to have recognized that he was the Lord of all the elements, under whom all elements trembled, the sky was darkened, the sun withdrew, the earth split, the tombs of the dead were opened, and the dead received the company of the living. And the centurion said: Truly this man was the Son of God (Matth., XXVII, 54). The centurion recognizes the foreigner, the Levite does not recognize his own: the Gentile venerates, the Hebrew renounces. Therefore, it is not without reason that the pillars of the world were moved when the chief priests did not believe. But the old pillars were moved so that new ones could be confirmed, as He himself deigned to say: I have confirmed its pillars (Psal. LXXIV, 4). Listen to which pillars He has confirmed. Peter and James and John, who were seemed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship (Galatians 2:9).

14. So how then do they excuse themselves from not knowing, some of whom saw, others recognized, that the sun did not complete its daily course? And again, before the completion of the span of the night, it went out, making night into day, and day into night. Surely they should have understood that the sun obeyed the command to go out and the command to return. For the Lord had foretold (Matthew 12:40) that He would be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights; the sun had learned this, and it observed the command. He was doubting, saying: What am I to do? I arise, and it is day: I set, and it is night. If I keep to my course, I will delay the salvation of the world. Let us also hasten to our redemption: I myself must also hasten to a new life; for by the grace of the cross, all things are renewed, and a new sun, and a new heaven. Therefore, I hasten, that I may be able to see that sun of justice, enlightening the souls of all. But what am I to do? He Himself desires to rise again after three days. I have found what to do, so that I do not delay and keep track of the number of days. I will not make a whole day and a whole night. I will shorten the hours, so that there are indeed three days and nights between the dead and the Lord Jesus: but they allow for a shorter interval than three days and nights, let him rise from the dead. Therefore, I will shorten the hours when he ascends the cross. Let night immediately come at the sixth hour; so that I may not see the passion of the Lord, but may escape the sight of a treacherous persecution. I will slay, and there will be a night of three hours: I will go forth, and I will renew the day, so that it will be of three hours: the first day has passed: the second night will follow in its own space, and likewise the day will follow: the third night will begin, the Lord will rise in the night, and there will be a day in the light of the rising; so that it may be fulfilled: And the night will be illuminated like the day (Psalm 138:12). This is that great day which Abraham saw and rejoiced in: of which David also says: This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it (Psalm 118:24): in which I will perish not by the toil of service, but by the fruit of rejoicing.

Therefore, the Lord himself directs the day, and before the consummation of the world, he will be seen as the light that enlightens every man coming into this world. He is the Lord who marks and counts the multitude of stars; he is the Lord who alone extends the sky, who walked as if on the floor over the sea; when Peter saw him walking, and said, 'Lord, command me to come to you on

the water' (Matthew 14:28). And the Lord commanded, but he faltered; and if the Lord had not reached out his right hand, he would have been drowned by the waves. The flesh wavered, the right hand saved. And he said to him: O you of little faith, why did you doubt? (Matthew, 31). Therefore, faith walked in the Apostle, not the flesh. Finally, faith wavered, and the flesh began to feel shipwrecked. This is not said improperly; for the flesh is the ship of the soul, as it is written: Those who go down to the sea in ships (Psalm 106:23). And elsewhere: As the pains of a woman in labor, you shall break the ships of Tarshish with a vehement spirit (Psalm 47:8). For our souls, when they give birth to the Word, experience pains: but what she has given birth to, she no longer remembers the sadness on account of the joy; for a man is born to her who has redeemed the world. Ships of Tharsis, that is, intelligible things which bore gold and silver to Solomon, that is, our bodies, which hold treasure in earthen vessels, as the Apostle says (2 Corinthians 4:7): or perhaps these births are easily destroyed, according to what was said: Woe to those who are pregnant and nursing (Luke 21:23)! For when the soul is shaken, the flesh fluctuates; or when the passionate spirit is agitated within, the body is tormented. When the appointed time for resurrection comes, they will be raised up, as it is written: 'Come, Spirit, and breathe on these dead, and they shall live' (Ezekiel 37:9). Hence, Job himself also says later: 'For I know that my Redeemer lives, and he shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God' (Job 19:25-26). But those who are raised to judgment will be crushed. But contrition is good: for God does not despise a contrite and humble heart (Ps. 50:19). And elsewhere: Heal his contritions (Ps. 59:4). But it was also said to Jehoshaphat: The ships were broken, so as not to go to Tharsis (2 Chr. 20:37), because he had involved himself in sacrilege. Therefore, contrition signifies both; because both will be present on the day of judgment: When all who are in the tombs will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who have done good will proceed to the resurrection of life; but those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment (John 5:28-29). Which David the prophet also signifies saying: There are pains like those of a woman in labor: as we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God (Ps. 47:8-9). For it includes both future sorrow and joy: sorrow from judgment, and joy from absolution.

Chapter VI. The words of Job, which expose human weaknesses, are examined. Just as the holy man did not deny his sin, and what the difference is between sinning and acting impiously; with these words, he tries to excuse himself before God. Finally, it is shown that forgiveness is promised to the one who confesses, and to acknowledge one's own injustices. But let us return to the series of questions that were proposed to us. He says, 'He has made many contritions to me, he does not allow me to breathe, he has filled me with bitterness; and because he is powerful by virtue, no one can resist his judgment. If I am righteous in heart, my tongue errs... His anger destroys the great and powerful. The wicked suffer in a grave death, but the righteous are mocked. For they are given into the hands of the wicked.' (Job 9:17 et seq.) See each one. The anger of the powerful is heavy on them, the wickedness of the wicked, the weakness of the just. Thus nothing is free from danger. The strength and greatness of a man are deceived by his power, wickedness is afflicted, virtue is mocked. He who has more power, falls; he who has no power, is afflicted. It is a fault of our condition, because our life is lighter than a runner. It passes by and sees nothing. Like the trace of a ship or of a flying eagle searching for food; so passes the life of a man. When we speak, we forget and no remarkable trace of our passing is found, except that it is filled with sadness and groaning. 'I am disturbed,' he says, 'in all my members. May our mediator be present to argue and judge between the two of us.' (Job 9:28, 33).

I will say to the Lord: Why do you judge me like this? Is it good for you that I am unjust; because you have rejected the work of your hands, and you have given attention to the counsel of the wicked? Do you see as a mortal sees, or is your life like that of a man, or are your years like those of a man; because you have sought out my iniquities, and you have investigated my sins? For you know that I have not acted impiously: but who is there who can be delivered from your hands (Job 10:2 et seq.)? Great faith, great authority of conscience, to summon God as a witness of one's own mind. It does not deny what is of nature, but rejects what is impious; it admits what is of weakness. To sin is of nature, for no one is immune from error; to act impiously is not of nature, but of treachery and the poison of a very wicked mind. The righteous do not recognize this, but the absolution of a person lies in God's mercy, not in the power of man.

18. 'Your hands have made me and fashioned me,' he says; 'you turned around and struck me. Remember that you made me from clay, and you will return me to the earth. Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? You clothed me with skin and flesh and fastened me with bones and sinews. You have given me life and mercy; your visitation has preserved my spirit' (Job 10:8 et seq.). What a lamentation of the holy man on account of common frailty! What an authority of argument that God made man with his own hands! The fault is excused by the excuse of weakness, grace is commended by the privilege of eternal operation, and divine protection. Concerning this matter, David also spoke beautifully, saying: What is man, that you are mindful of him; or the son of man, that you visit him? (Psalm 8:5)

19. He says: these things you have in yourself: I know that you can do all things, and nothing is impossible for you. For if I have sinned, you will keep me, but you have not made me clean from iniquity. If I am wicked, woe to me! If I am righteous, I cannot lift myself up. For I am full of confusion, I am searched out like a lion for slaughter (Job 10:13 et seq.). See three things: If I have sinned, he says, you will keep me. And therefore, O man, confess your sin, so that you may obtain forgiveness: Say, he says, your iniquities, so that you may be justified (Isaiah 43:26). Why are you ashamed to admit the things in which you were born? It is a crime of the one who denies, not of the one who admits, to deny that you were born. May you preserve what you have received. Why do you think you have what you have not received? Therefore, let the sinner confess, let the wicked groan, let the righteous not raise himself up and exalt himself, so that he does not lose the fruit of righteousness through arrogance. And he said beautifully: If I am just, I cannot exalt myself; for I am full of confusion. The just man indeed notices his own frailty more than the unjust man; and the wise man recognizes, while the foolish man does not recognize. Finally, the wise man is remorseful for his own failings, while the foolish man takes pleasure in them: the just man accuses himself, the unjust man defends himself. The just man wants to preempt the accuser by confessing his sin, while the unjust man desires to conceal his sin: the former at the beginning of his speech reveals his error, the latter wraps the sound of accusation in the verbosity of his speech, so as not to reveal his error.

Chapter VII.

Adolescence is the most slippery of all ages: we will give an account of even those sins which we could not avoid; our hardships are not adequately expressed by the troubles of the sea and land; the heavens and the earth must be renewed, and the future resurrection will not happen before the coming of him who will make all things new.

21. Again adding, he says: Why have you written evils against me, and have appended the sins of my youth? He has well seized hold of the opportunity of his age for complaint, which is accustomed to be more slippery towards vice. For childhood has innocence, old age has prudence, youth itself, neighboring to adolescence, has a sense of good reputation, and a sense of shame in wrongdoing: only adolescence is weak in strength, feeble in judgment, burning with vice, disdainful of advisers, enticing with pleasures. In such a great and turbulent whirlwind of this world, why are so many shipwrecks attributed to imprudent age? And indeed, David requested forgiveness for all his time from the Lord, saying: Do not remember the sins of my youth and my ignorance, O Lord (Psalms 25:7), because at that time the heat of the body burns most intensely, and the heat of the evaporating blood ignites.

22. But let us hear him again: Man, he says, that is born of a woman, is short-lived, and full of wrath; who blossomed like a flower and withered, departed like a shadow, and does not resist. Is it not for this reason that reason is sought? And you have made him enter into judgment under your gaze. But who is clean from filth? But no one, even if his life on earth is only of one day. Truly a pitiable condition, that he is compelled to give an account of his own sin which he cannot avoid, to enter into judgment, to undergo the sight of the Almighty Lord, to reveal the reasons for his actions, which he has traveled through in so many ages of his life, whereas no one can be free from sin, so that guilt creeps upon us from our very cradle before there is any sense of error. And how wretched is this, that his life is short, a sweet allure, a manifold burden, daily anger. And so in fleeting delight there is perpetual bitterness.

23. There is, he says, hope for the tree. If it is cut down, it will sprout again; its shoots will not cease growing. If its root grows old in the earth, and its stump dies in the soil, at the scent of water it will bud and put forth shoots like a young plant. But a man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more. As the waters ebb, the sea grows calm. We have seen that the sequence of prophetic discourse concerns the two lower elements, earth and sea, which are subject to all kinds of damage and frequent storms: what powerful evidence does this provide for our distress? He said that earthly shrubs and the groves of trees, even when they are dead, rise again for vital purposes. The sea itself also is accustomed to fluctuate with the changes of the seasons. But truly our flesh always boils up, and it is its own storm, and is never affected by the motions of storms and miserable shipwrecks.

24. But when a man falls asleep, he does not rise until the heaven is sewn (Ibid., 12). This seems to indicate that until the heaven is renewed; for there will be a new heaven and a new earth, as it is written (Isaiah LXV, 17). For what is sewn is old: what is old will be changed. Lastly, listen to David saying: In the beginning you founded the earth, O Lord, and the works of your hands are the heavens. They will perish: but you endure, and all will grow old like a garment, and you will change them as a covering, and they will be changed (Psalm CI, 26 and 27). We can also add this, that what is old is patched; what is new is forced. But from the days of John the Baptist the kingdom of heaven is forced, and those who force it plunder it. Therefore, the Synagogue was accustomed to this in few, the Church forces it in thousands. Or because now the sky seems patched with clouds and fog, with nocturnal darkness and with the diverse and variegated appearance of the rising saffron-colored day, often woven together. But then there will be no more night, and lamps will not need light, nor sunlight; because the Lord will illuminate them, as John says (Apoc. II, 23). Woe to those who take pillows to destroy the souls of the people (Ezekiel 13:18).

25. The Holy Spirit poured out upon the prophet lamenting the misfortune of our frailty, which neither had rest in this life nor retained anything in the sudden encounter with death, that humanity would not rise again until the one came who did not patch the new onto the old nor put a new piece of cloth on an old garment; but rather made all things new, as he himself said: Behold, I make all things new. For he is the resurrection, he is the firstborn from the dead, in whom we have indeed received a foretaste of the future resurrection, yet he alone has already risen with eternal resurrection.

Chapter VIII.

How Job indicated the future resurrection and wrath of the Lord in the consummation; and how he desired to escape from this life, where deceit prevails.

26. So having heard what God had said in it, and knowing through the Holy Spirit that the Son of God would not only come to earth, but would also descend to the underworld to raise the dead (which indeed happened at that time as a witness to those present, and an example for the future), he turned to the Lord and said, 'I wish you would keep me in the underworld, but hide me until your anger ceases, and establish for me a time in which you will remember me.' For if a man die, shall he live again, all the days in which I am now in warfare, I will wait until my change come. Thou shalt call me, and I will answer thee: to the work of thy hands thou shalt reach out thy right hand. And I shall be consumed and be changed, while thou shalt look after me. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: to the works of thy hands thou shalt reach out thy right hand. For now thou numberest my steps, but dost thou not watch over my sin? My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up my iniquity (Job 14:13-17). How sweet is the place that confirms resurrection to us; and it seems to agree with the words of the Lord, which are read in the Gospel, where He says: Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us (Luke 23:30). For in the end of the age there will be the wrath of the Lord. Therefore, the Holy One prefers to rise for judgment rather than in the time of divine anger, which is even terrible for the innocent.

27. Moreover, he is also understood to prophesy by saying: Appoint for me a time when you will remember me; which is demonstrated at the end of this book that he would be raised in the passion of the Lord; and yet he does not cease to lament: and the more he understands that resurrection is proposed to him, the more he desires to flee from this life, seeing himself handed over to the hands of his adversaries, cast into the power of the wicked, to whom even his friends have turned into enemies, who, when they should be offering consolation, inflict one ruin upon another; still, mindful of his pure conscience and pure prayer, he says: Let not the earth cover my blood (Job 16:19); so that his prayer, like incense, may be directed to the Lord and not be scattered on the earth. For the prayer of the holy penetrates the clouds; opening his mouth, the prayer of the sinner, as it was said by God to Cain the parricide, hides the earth in the blood of flesh. Cursed, he says, is the earth that opened its mouth to receive the blood of your brother from your hand; for you will till the land. (Gen. IV, 11).

Chapter IX.

Those who dare to explore the depths of wisdom too curiously are criticized: it is said that wisdom is not to be sought in the abyss or in the sea, and for what reason: finally, the knowledge of it is

only revealed to God alone, and to those to whom He has revealed it.

28. Sadly, thus the Holy One mourns the times of this life: I perish, he says, and I am carried away by the spirit: I beg for burial, and I do not obtain, I pray while I labor. And what shall I do? (Job 17:1-2) My days have passed in horror: the joints of my heart have been disrupted. (Ibid., 11) Yet it does not diminish the judgment of God anywhere; for He knows the profound depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God, and His judgments are inscrutable, as well as His ways are unsearchable.

29. They have not trodden on them, he says, the sons of those glorifying themselves, nor has the lion passed through them (Job XXVIII, 8). For who indeed could comprehend his ways, which have penetrated hidden things? From where, he says, has wisdom been discovered, or where is the place of understanding? Mortal man does not know its way, nor is it found among men. The deep has said: It is not in me; and the sea has said: It is not with me (Ibid. 12 ff.). It is not permissible for you to know, O man, the depths of wisdom; therefore it is written to you: Do not be high-minded, but fear (Rom. XI, 20). Why do you desire to investigate curiously what it is not advantageous for you to know, and what is not given for you to understand? Paul heard certain secrets of wisdom, which he was forbidden to disclose to others; and for this reason he was caught up into paradise, caught up even to the third heaven, to hear things that a person in the earthly realm could not hear (2 Corinthians 12:3-4). If a person hears something, is it not allowed for them to speak, just as they inquire about what they have not heard? The plans of this emperor on earth are not allowed for you to know, and yet you desire to know divine things; it is not permitted for you to investigate curiously what happens on earth, and you curiously inquire about what happens above the heavens. Why do you argue about where Wisdom is born? Human beings do not know its path, nor is perfect Wisdom found among mortals. It was not in Moses, nor in Aaron, nor in Joshua. It was not even in David himself who said: You have revealed to me the uncertain and hidden things of your wisdom (Psalm 50:8). For he himself said in another place: I have become like a beast before you (Psalm 72:23). It is beyond you, O man, to know the height of Wisdom; it is enough for you to believe. For if you do not believe, he says, neither will you understand (Isaiah 7:9). You cannot know the abyss, you cannot grasp the abyss, how will you comprehend the depth of Wisdom? The abyss has said: It is not in me; and can you say that Wisdom is in you?

30. Therefore, the abyss said: It is not in me; because the Lord himself said: You will not abandon my soul in hell (Psalms 15:10). And the Apostle said: Who descended into the abyss? that is, to bring Christ out of the dead (Romans 10:7). Therefore, if the abyss is asked: Where is Wisdom? It answers: It is not in me, because it has risen. The sea is asked: Where is Wisdom? It says: It is not with me, because it has trampled upon me, nor could my waves disturb it. And therefore, in this current age, do not seek that perfect Wisdom of God in this world; for the world did not know it. But if you wish to find it, tread upon the waves of this world, as Peter did, and walk upon the waters of this age, and Wisdom will stretch out its right hand to you, as it did to Peter; for there was no one whom the waves of this age did not disturb. They disturbed Abraham, they disturbed Moses, they disturbed Peter. Moses crossed the sea and led the army on foot through the sea, but he himself was troubled beforehand. Peter walked on the water, but he was submerged in body because he stumbled on the path of weak faith. Therefore, do not seek Wisdom in the sea; for the Lord Jesus did not say that he would be with the sea, but with his apostles; so that they may know him to some extent, to whom he said: Behold, I am with you until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20). Blessed are those with whom he is, may he also be with us. But we have the sea with us, Peter

with Christ, because he himself also walked on the sea. For us, gold and silver are dear to the heart, but wisdom is above gold, it is not in gold. Therefore, whoever desired to have Wisdom, said: I have no silver or gold; but what I have, I give to you: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk (Acts 3:6). Because he did not have gold, he had the grace of pious action in the name of Christ. And this is said to you: Draw wisdom into your innermost being (Job XXVIII, 18); and further: It is hidden, he says, from all humans, and is concealed from the birds of the sky (Ibid. 21). Neither humans nor angels knew where it was, for they are themselves birds of the sky, of whom it is said: And I saw an angel flying through the sky (Apoc. XIV, 6).

31. No one could know Wisdom; for no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. Therefore, He Himself revealed to John with whom Wisdom was; and for this reason, he said, not as his own, but what Wisdom had infused in him: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God (John 1:1). Wisdom does not know destruction, it does not know wickedness. For destruction could not hold it, who said: Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? (I Cor. XV, 55) Evil does not know it, for it is written: The wicked will seek me, and will not find me (Prov. I, 28). They may say: We have heard of his glory. Only God knows it, for God says: He has established its way perfectly; He alone knows its place (Job XXVIII, 23). That it may be the dwelling place of Wisdom, listen to its disciple saying: The Only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made it known (John I, 18). For the Son acknowledges the Father, for he himself says: Just as the Father acknowledged me, so I acknowledge the Father (John 10:15). There is an equal measure of knowledge where there is a unity of power. Therefore, the Father, who made all things, knows the weight of the winds and the measure of the waters (Job 28:25). He himself saw Wisdom and proclaimed it through his prophets, for the Father proclaimed Wisdom and investigated it; just as the Son also proclaimed the Father, who misses nothing, and said: O man, what do you desire to know about the deep things of Wisdom, which are above you? To fear God is wisdom, but to abstain from evil is discipline. (Ibid., 28).

Book Two. On the Interrogation of David.

Chapter I.

After Job's absolute and more vehement interpellation, a calmer interpellation by David follows. It is not unfitting to compare him to a stag, since Christ himself did not refuse to be designated by the same animal. This likeness is most appropriate for the assumption of suffering, the calling of the Church, the defeat of the devil, and the mission of the apostles, who themselves were stags.

Indeed, many have lamented the weakness of human fragility, but among them, Job and David were particularly notable. The former, superior, direct, intense, and seemingly provoked by severe pains with a higher tragic quality; the latter, gentle, calm, and meek, with a milder emotion; so that, truly, we would imitate the heart of a deer that he set as an example for us to imitate. And do not be dismayed if I seem to preach to you in the likeness of a wild beast, when you read the statement to the apostles: Be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16).

2. However, even though such similarities are drawn with pious examples, and the nature of deer is innocent and gentle; I think that deer is proposed here as an imitation of the Prophet, about whom Solomon, the supporter of his father's mind, said in Proverbs: 'A deer of friendship, and a

foal of thanks will converse with you' (Prov. 5:19). For the true Son of God, in himself, expressed the nature which he himself bestowed on living creatures, when he came into this world as a deer: and with these he united himself in pure simplicity, by whom snares were being prepared for him. For it is reported that such is the simplicity of these deer, that when they see themselves being chased, they attach themselves to these horsemen, who, being implanted by the deceitful ministry, lead them all the way to the nets under the guise of flight and the pretense of companionship. And so, the Lord, as if unaware of the danger and unprepared, allowed himself to be mixed with the Jews who were devising a plot against him, and he enlisted the partnership of the betrayer Jew, through whose deadly pretense he approached even the noose of the cross and the nets of suffering. And turning to him, he said, 'Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?' (Luke 22:48). And in this way, he came into the nets of the Synagogue, and wanting to submit himself; but he was not caught, nor was he ensnared, who loosens all things.

3. Finally, he stood out above the nets. And because they did not receive him, he called the Church and bestowed his grace upon her, as the most holy Church herself testifies in the Song of Songs, saying: I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and strength of the field; do not arouse or awaken love until it pleases (Song of Songs 2:7). Therefore, he seeks to be aroused by the fragrance of the field, which the holy Jacob smelled, that is, by that faith, that devotion, his bridegroom be stirred by the daughters of Jerusalem, so that he may hasten to his bride and be aroused by her love, or even be aroused himself, for love is the bridegroom. For God is love, as John said (1 John 4:16). But He did not allow Himself to be provoked by others; rather, He eagerly hastened forth, rejoicing like a giant to run His course. The bride saw Him and heard the voice of His coming, and immediately turned and said: Behold, here He comes, leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills (Song of Solomon 2:8); for He leaps over the great and bounds over the small, so as not to be hindered in His loving haste. He says, my cousin is similar to a young goat or a young deer over the mountains of Bethel. He is a fine deer, whose mountain is the house of God, to which he runs with such speed that he surpasses the wishes and desires of his bride. Indeed, when he saw him coming from afar, he suddenly recognized that he was present beside him. Hence he says: Behold, he is here behind our wall, looking through the windows, peering through the lattice. My cousin answered and said to me: Arise, come, my nearest one, my beautiful one, my dove; for behold, winter has passed, the rain has gone, it has departed for itself, flowers have appeared on the earth. Winter is the Synagogue: the rain is the Jewish people, who could not see the sun: the apostles are the flowers. And he added: The harvest of the incision has come, the voice of the turtledove was heard in our land (Ibid. 12). That harvest is the faith of the Church: the voice of the turtledove is chastity. And not only does Christ take the likeness of these things, but even of a stag, because when he came to earth he crushes that serpent, the devil, without any harm to himself, and offered him his heel, but did not feel his poison. Hence it is said to him: You will tread on the asp and basilisk (Psalm 90:13). Let us therefore be stags, so that we may be able to walk on serpents. We will be stags if we follow the voice of Christ, which prepares the stags and makes them not fear the bites of serpents; and if perhaps they are wounded, he takes away their pain by forgiving their sin. Concerning these deer, the Lord says to Job: Have you observed the offspring of the deer? Have you counted their months, when they give birth in abundance? Have you helped them give birth or nourished their young, so they do not fear? (Job 39:1-2). Listen to how the young of such deer do not fear. Let Isaiah teach you, saying: And a small child shall put his hand into the den of asps, and they shall not harm him (Isaiah 11:8). And

to show that it seems to symbolize the children of the Church, he added: You will send forth their offspring, their young will break free and multiply in the generation, they will go forth and not turn back (Job 39:4-5). For no one, when he puts his hand to the plow and looks back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

5. Therefore, the deer became a Lord deservedly; so that the voice of the Lord would prepare such deer for himself, of whom he says: In my name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues, they will pick up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly, it will not harm them (Mark 16:17-18). For they were picking up serpents when the holy apostles, with the breath of their sacred mouth, were driving away spiritual wickedness from the hidden recesses of bodies, and they were not feeling the deadly poisons. Finally, when the viper leaped out of the branches and bit Paul, the Barbarians, seeing the viper hanging from his hand, thought that he would suddenly die. But he stood fearlessly, neither being moved by a wound, nor being immersed in poison. Therefore, seeing him, they thought that he was not born by the condition of a human, but rather brought forth by the grace of God, and considered him to be above humans. See the deer driving out vipers from its hiding places with the divine breath that was in its nostrils, as Job said (Job 27:3). Converted, Paul said in the spirit, and looking with grief, he said to the python: I command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to immediately leave her. And at the same hour (Acts XVI, 18). See the deer when it comes to baptism, and, having been washed with the sacred font's blessed water, it rejects all the poisons of persecution. See the deer, the Lord Jesus, when He came to John the Baptist, and, in response to John saying to Him: 'I need to be baptized by You, and You come to me,' He replied: 'Allow it now' (Matthew III, 14 and 15). And having said this, thirsting for the salvation in the waters, He eagerly descended. But now enough for us in the beginning of the discourse, as the deer delighted the crowd at the start of the year in the usual way. Let us proceed to the rest.

Chapter II.

How David longed to be delivered from this life, fraught with countless calamities and subject to sin, in order to attain the presence of God! The land is a place of tears, but what benefit do they bring? The Prophet, lifting his soul above the weaknesses of the flesh, poured out a prayer to cover his sins, so that he might enter the heavenly court. The delights of this same court are tasted by only a few, and it is compared to the Church itself.

6. He invokes, as I said, David, saying to the Lord: As the deer longs for the springs of water, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for the living God: when shall I come and appear before the face of God (Ps. 41:2-3)? The saint is consumed, and cannot contain himself. For the greatness of the soul is greater than the magnitude of any body; and he desires to fly safely from earthly things to heavenly things, as he says elsewhere: Who will give me wings like the dove, and I will fly and find rest (Ps. 54:7). For here are the snares, by which, although the just man is not entangled, yet he is hindered: here are pains and anxieties; there is joy, where grace is: here, finally, are the bonds of the body, which Paul desired to loose, that, being freed from all hindrances, he might be present with the Lord. This, therefore, was the desire of David's soul, that he might now see God, not through faith, but face to face; that he might no longer wander from the body, but be released from the body. For to be dissolved and to be with Christ is much better; because to die to the just man is gain. And indeed, it is a great gain to be without sin, to not be

moved by the allurements of wrongdoing. For how can the world be free from filth, when not even a single day of a person's life on earth is free from the contagion of sin? Therefore, by living we incur losses to our innocence, and by death we attain an end to our errors. Thus, gain is acquired through death, but in the use of life, like miserable debtors, the name of usurers is increased to the charge of guilt. And the soul thirsts well, which hastens to the fountain, not of this water, but of eternal life, of which it was said above: For with you is the fountain of life, and in your light we shall see light (Ps. XXXV, 10). Therefore, David was hurrying to reach and appear before the face of God, whose countenance is light; for all whom the Lord looks upon, he illuminates. My tears have been my bread day and night, while it is said to me every day: Where is your God? (Psalm 42:4) There, tears are indeed bread, where justice is hungered after. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be filled. Therefore, there are tears that are bread, and they strengthen the soul of man. This also agrees with that saying of Ecclesiastes: Cast your bread upon the waters (Ecclesiastes 11:1); for there is the bread of heaven, where the water of grace is; for they rightly receive the substance of the Word and the nourishment of mystical understanding, by which streams of the water of life flow from the womb. Likewise there is here the living bread where tears and weeping of repentance are. For thus it is written: 'They went out with weeping, and I will bring them back in consolation' (Jeremiah XXXI, 9). Blessed therefore are those whose tears are loaves, who have deserved to laugh; because blessed are those who weep.

Remembering these things, he says, I poured out my soul over myself (Ps. XLI, 5). The holy person collects from those things that are outside, and pours out his soul above himself, so that the soul, poured out over the body, may hide the weakness of the flesh, cover the body for penance, and extend the power of the soul and mind everywhere. Hence, in the later passage he says: I will pour out my prayer in his presence (Ps. CXLI, 2). Where prayer is poured out, there sins are concealed. But of whom does he say he is mindful? Certainly of those things which he desired, that he might come and appear in the sight of God, that he might see that eternal court of His, in which he wandered in his mind and delighted in the presumed entrance.

9. 'Since I will enter,' he says, 'into the place of the tabernacle of wonder, even to the house of God. In the voice of exultation and confession, the sound of feasting (Psalm 41:5).' He wept not without reason, because he was dwelling on earth, to whom the heavenly tabernacles should have been owed, and whom the entrance of a powerful palace should have awaited. Finally, he preferred that one alone above all the riches of his kingdom, as he himself testified elsewhere, saying: 'One thing I have asked of the Lord, this I will seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life and that I may behold the delight of the Lord (Psalm 26:4).' The delight of the Lord is in the Church: the Church is the image of heavenly things; for after the shadow passed, the image succeeded. The shadow is the Synagogue: in the shadow is the Law, in the Gospel the truth. Therefore in the light of the Gospel, the image shines forth. Thus the Prophet wept; because the fullness of grace and the abundance of joy were delayed.

Chapter III.

It is not surprising that David, troubled by the hardships of this life and lacking in consolation, was disturbed; considering that Christ himself, who willingly underwent death, desired to be disturbed, and in what sense is this to be understood? Likewise, why does the Prophet say 'I do not confess' in one place, but 'I will confess' in another?

10. Finally, even in the latter words he says: Alas for me, because my sojourn has been prolonged (Psalm 116:5)! And therefore he was entreating the Lord, because he was hastening to better things. Yet in the midst of the afflictions of the world there would be great consolation in the present, hope for the future. For who would not raise his spirit, who could hope that in the heavenly tabernacle those blessed associations would be reserved for him. But because future things are often wearisome to a weak condition, present things are a vexation; therefore the soul of the holy Prophets was disturbed by the rising waves of the body. For you should not be surprised if the Prophet says that his soul is disturbed, since the Lord Jesus himself said: Now my soul is troubled (John 12:27). For he who took on our weaknesses also took on our emotions, in which he was sad even unto death, not because of death; for voluntary death could not have sorrow, in which the joy and refreshment of all was to come. Of this he also said elsewhere: And I arose, and saw, and a sweet sleep came to me (Jeremiah 31:26). Blessed sleep that made the hungry not hunger, the thirsty not thirst, for whom he prepared the sweetness of the sacraments. So how then was his soul troubled by fear, who made the souls of others not fear? Sorrowful even unto death, until grace was perfected: which is proven by his own testimony saying of his death: With the baptism I am to be baptized, and how am I distressed until it is accomplished (Luke 12:50)?

12. Therefore, David, troubled by the slippery bends of this world, said: Why are you sad, my soul? Why do you trouble me? Hope in God, for I will confess to Him: He is the salvation of my countenance and my God (Psalm 41:6-7). Therefore, when we are helped and troubled, let hope strengthen us with the expectation of future things. Consider each thing: Hope, he says, for I will confess. Not, I will confess, but I will confess; that is, I will confess better then, when having beheld the glory of the Lord with His face revealed, I will be transformed into the same image.

13. Immediately when he consoled himself, he said within himself: To me myself, my troubled soul (Psalms 41:7); that is, who should be comforting others, I myself am troubled. And because I do not have strength from myself, let us seek it from the source.

Chapter IV.

Those who seek to disturb themselves for the sake of the good seek to leave Egypt, which is designated by the Jordan: through this river, Christ is also foreshadowed, namely in order to penetrate the thoughts of the heart and divide terrestrial and celestial possession for the saints. However, this is suitable for Christ, not excluding the Father; and what does it signify through Jericho? Likewise, Christ was a great mountain by divinity, small by incarnation, and when the Old Law was not sufficient to redeem humanity, he wanted to bring the Gospel, which he had undertaken.

Therefore, he says, I will remember you, O Lord, from the land of the Jordan and Hermon (Ibid.). He remembers the land of the Jordan, in which he heaps up the memory of devotion with grace. Naaman the Syrian descended into the Jordan and was cleansed from leprosy. Christ was baptized in the Jordan when he established the form of the saving washing. The name Jordan signifies descent, by which the Lord Jesus descended, for he cleansed the neighboring river Jordan from the contagion of sins. This river flows out of Egypt and divides the promised land. Therefore, if someone who is troubled seeks good counsel, they should come out of Egypt and follow the path of light. Hermonim is also interpreted as the path of the lamp. So, come out of

Egypt first if you want to see the light of Christ. The Canaanite woman came out from the borders of the nations and found Christ, to whom she said: Have mercy on me, Son of David (Matthew 15:22)! Moses also came out of Egypt and became a prophet, sent back to the people to deliver their souls from the land of affliction. But the lamp is in the body of Christ. This lamp shows you the way. Therefore, Saint David says: Your word is a lamp to my feet (Psalm 118:105). The lamp illuminates the souls of all and shows the way in darkness. The Gospel is the way of the lamp; it shines in the shadow, that is, in the world. As it is written elsewhere: They shall be made white with snow on Selmon (Psalm 67:15), that is, in obscurity.

15. Moreover, Jordan himself divides the earth. How he divides, listen: And a sword shall pass through your own soul also, to reveal the thoughts of many hearts (Luke II, 35): because he is the divider of our souls, who descends into the deepest secrets of the heart and detects the thoughts of minds. This sword is the living word of God. Lastly, to the Hebrews, the scripture says: The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating to the division of soul and spirit, joints and marrow (Hebrews IV, 12). Here is the fountain of Siloam, which is said to be sent, because Christ said that he was sent by the Father (John 9:7). Also, there is that division which is gathered from the fact that both banks of the Jordan were inhabited by the tribes of the Jews, because the Son of Man, who descended from heaven in later times, is the true Jordan, the true divider of earthly and heavenly things, and he gave a divided possession to the fathers: one which would be possessed in this life, and another which would be preserved for the merits of the future life. Both of these things fittingly belong to Christ alone, either to divide heavenly things or to perceive hidden things. For he divides the interior, who perceives the hidden, which is surely the sign of divinity. Finally, you have it written that the Lord said: 'I will rejoice and divide Shechem' (Psalm 60:8). This is that magnificent portion which Jacob granted to his son Joseph, superior to all. Hence he says: 'I give you Shechem, which I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and my bow' (Genesis 48:22). What is owed to the lonely Lord, which is to the Word, that is, to that spiritual, true sword of Solomon. What is the lonely? Is it the Father without the Son, or the Son without the Father? By no means. When I say only the Father, I do not separate the Son; because in the bosom and secret of the Father is the Son. When I say only the Son, I join the Father, just as the Son also joined, saying: Behold, the hour is coming when you will leave me alone: but not alone, because the Father is with me (John XVI, 32). So both the Father alone is blessed, and alone is called powerful; so that the Son may not be separated from Him, who is always in the Father. (1 Tim. VI, 13 and 16). Finally, John beautifully says: In the beginning was the Word (John I, 1), but it was not without the Father. And God the Father was, but it was not without the Word: because the Word was with God.

16. This is the Sicima Church. Solomon himself chose her, distinguishing her hidden affection. This is Sicima Mary, through whom the sword of God passes and divides the soul. This Sicima is rising, as the interpretation says. Listen to the Church that is rising. Who is this that rises white, leaning on her brother (Song of Songs 8:5) ? This is the luminous one, which in Greek is called **κτινδης**, because it shines with faith and works: to her children she says: Let your works shine before my Father, who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

17. Therefore, remember that the Lord David is from the land of the Jordan and the Hermon mountain, a small mountain. Who is this small mountain? Let us consider whether the divinity of Christ is a great mountain. Finally, I fill heaven and earth, says the Lord (Jeremiah 23:24). If

therefore the divinity of Christ is a great mountain, certainly His incarnation is a small mountain. Therefore, Christ is both the great mountain and the small mountain: truly great because He is the great Lord and His power is great; small because it is written: You have made him a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:6). Wherefore also Esaias saith: We beheld Him, and He had no form nor comeliness (Isa. LIII, 2). Nevertheless, He became less from great and greater from less. Less from great, because, when He was in the form of God, He emptied Himself and took the form of a servant; greater from less, because Daniel saith: And the stone which was cut out of the mountain, became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (Dan. II, 36). If thou inquire who this stone is, learn. The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone (Psalm 118:22). Though it seemed insignificant, it was great. This is testified by Isaiah, saying: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). All things because of you, Christ. The stone for your sake, that you may be built up; the mountain for your sake, that you may ascend. Therefore, ascend upon the mountain, which you seek the heavenly things. For this reason, the sky inclined itself so that you might be closer; for this reason, it rose to the highest peak of the mountain, in order to elevate you.

18. Therefore, the abyss was not invoked undeservedly; so that this mountain became small, of which the Prophet says: The abyss calls to the abyss in the voice of your waterfalls (Psalm 41:8). The old Testament was not able to accomplish the redemption of this world: it invoked and almost called for the new Testament as help. The Law cried out, announcing the Gospel. For it was only half-full and therefore it was necessary for the one who would fulfill the Law to come. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. He comes not to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. How deep is the law, listen to the one who says 'Your judgments are like the deep abyss' (Psalm 36:7). From this, understand that both are part of one wisdom, which comes to fulfill its own. The cataracts, on the other hand, represent the profound words and the power of heavenly discourse that flow to us like rain from the sky. Therefore, Christ is the remedy for all weariness, as is divine Scripture; and in temptations, it is the one refuge.

Chapter V.

The prophet, overwhelmed by miseries, implores divine mercy, which is especially manifested in adversity. God is the creator of man, both because He has the same rights over us as a potter has over his clay vessels, and because He preserves the life granted to man through His defense.

19. Finally, when David realized that the waves of secular distractions were coming upon him, which we must necessarily experience in the sea of this life, remembering the Lord's mercies that he promised in countless oracles, he turns to God in prayer, knowing that his mercy is commanded in the light, that is, in the Law; for your precepts are the light (Isaiah 26:9): but in temptations, it is manifested as in the darkness of the night. As a traveler who desires to return home and reach his destination, but who is weary from the arduous journey of life, he calls upon a guide and pleads for relief.

20. 'In my presence,' he said, 'is a speech to God about my life; I will say to God: You are my protector (Psalm 41:10).' He seeks well-known help for himself, and he meets the author of the promise, and the provider of the usual favor; so that in helping, if he offends the merit of man, he does not offend the divine example. Someone says: When does God undertake him? In order to

demonstrate this, come with me to the beginning of the Holy Scriptures (Genesis 2:7), and see how the Lord fashioned man with his own hands from clay. And here He Himself says in the later passage: Your hands have made me and fashioned me (Psalm 118:73). Like a certain potter, God has worked the structure of human flesh. And it is said to Jeremiah: Go down to the house of the potter, and there you will hear my words (Jeremiah 18:2). Certainly, it often happens to a potter that while a vessel is being shaped, it falls from his hands, and he gathers the clay again to reshape the vessel. Finally, Jeremiah also says: I went down and saw how the vessel, which he himself was making in his hands, had fallen (ibid. 3, 4). And again he says: He made another vessel as it pleased him. (Ibid.) Therefore, he is rightly called a potter, because he himself took us up with his own hands, he himself formed us. Those vessels of the human potter are some for honor, others for dishonor. We are all earthen vessels: and if anyone is a king, he is an earthen vessel; and if an apostle, he is an earthen vessel. Hence Paul also says: We have, he says, this treasure in earthen vessels. (II Cor. IV, 7). And the prophet says about the king: Jechonias has been despised like a vessel, whose work is not necessary (Jeremiah 22:28). And he adds: Land, hear the word of the Lord, write down this man as rejected (Jeremiah 22:28). Just as our God is accustomed to reject degenerate sons by paternal right; therefore, he also writes them down on the earth, because they are sons of the earth. Thus, when the Jews were accusing the adulteress, the Lord Jesus was writing with his finger on the ground. But rejoice that your names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

Therefore the Lord received us when he formed us; he also received us when he commanded us to be born. Hence the just one says: He received me from my mother's womb (Ps. 138:13). Whose mother? Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you (Jer. 1:5). He receives and forms those who come forth. And before you come out of the womb of your mother, I sanctified you. He is the receiver who receives with his hands, and is called the receiver of the human race; and he receives by visitation, in order to protect. Where the Prophet says: Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High, says to the Lord: You are my protector and my refuge (Psalm 90:1-2). The first reception is of action, the second of defense. Finally, listen to Moses saying: He spread his wings and took them, and carried them on his shoulders (Deuteronomy 32:11): just as an eagle carries its offspring, which it is accustomed to examine; in order to hold and nurture those who have the true nature of birth, and to observe the grace of incorruptible nature; or to reject those in whom it has detected the weakness of a degenerate origin at a tender age.

Chapter VI.

David is questioning whether he appears to have forgotten God, confessing both the merits of his own sins and his own weakness, which cannot survive without divine help. At the same time, he mourns that he has been rejected by God, whom he had previously embraced. How blessed it is to cast oneself from the womb to God, and how is that relevant to Christ?

Why have you forgotten me and why have you rejected me (Ps. 41:10)? God does not forget. It is impossible for Him to forget, as He is aware of all things that have been and will be: but our sins deserve to be forgotten by Him; so that He may forget those whom He deems unworthy of His visitation. For the Lord knows those who are His. However, when some commit iniquity, He says to them: I never knew you (Matthew 7:23). So who is there that can say to God: Why have you forgotten me? But yet this is common to the saints and to us the weak. The saint says it as if

conscious of his own merits; and yet the holier he is, the more humble. And if the saint hardly says it, what should I, a sinner, say, unless I refer to this: Why have you forgotten your own work; why have you forgotten your own visitation? Lastly, why have you forgotten my weakness? For what is man, if not that he should be visited? So do not forget the weak. Remember, Lord, that you have made me weak; remember that you have formed me from dust. How can I stand unless you always strengthen this clay, so that my strength may come forth from your face? When you turn your face away, everything is thrown into turmoil; if you pay attention, woe is me; you have nothing in me to look at, except the stains of sin; it is neither useful to abandon me, nor is it beneficial to behold me; for while we are seen, we offend. However, we can estimate that he does not reject those whom he sees; for he cleanses those whom he beholds. The fire burns before him, which consumes the crime.

23. It is good for us, therefore, not to be rejected. And this is why David is asked, because he believed himself to be rejected, who had been received before. Finally, in the later [verses], it says: In you I have been confirmed from the womb (Psalm 70:6). But we also have the above written: I have been cast upon you from the womb; you are my God from my mother's womb (Psalm 21:11). It is good to be cast, but [cast] upon God. Finally, in the person of Christ, this is said in Psalm 21, who was truly cast into the Father from the womb of the Virgin; for the earthly ones did not receive him while dying. And when he was placed on the cross and was releasing his spirit, he said to the Father: Into your hands I commend my spirit. (Luke, 23:46).

24. Therefore let no one say, Lord, as the psalmists do, what I have not found either in my Latin codex, nor in the Greek, nor in the Gospel, which is more evident. Finally, He had said before, Father, forgive them this sin (Ibid., 34); and therefore, like a son committing his spirit into the hands of the Father, in whose bosom the Son always is. Although, even if they add that He said, Lord, let them consider that He speaks this as a man placed in death.

Therefore he was thrown from the womb into the Father, from the womb of his mother, that is, he declared that the womb that threw him out is the mother's. But the Father said: From the womb before the morning star I begot you (Psalm. 109:3). Certainly the Father did not throw out the Son, from whom the Son has never departed, as he himself says: I am handed over, and I do not leave (Psalm 87:9). He did not throw him out, to whom he is connected by the unity of the same substance. Therefore, it can also be read as follows: 'In you I have been cast from the womb; from my mother's womb you are my God' (Psalm 22:10), so that it may be followed by: 'Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help' (Psalm 22:11). It can also be read as follows: 'From my mother's womb you are my God; for I have been placed in the womb by you and have never departed from it. Like Jonah, who was placed in the belly of the whale, I was interceding for the people. And he truly was with God in his mother's womb, as it is written: 'Before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste' (Isaiah 7:16).' And before he called father or mother, he plundered the virtue of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria (Isaiah 8:4); so that, with the nations called forth, he might acquire a kingdom for the Father with the pious worship of devotion. Let us see the rest.

Chapter VII.

While the long-awaited coming of Christ is delayed, the devil became furious, in order to crush those who would believe in Christ, and he placed his signs in them: where the discussion is about

the signs that we should follow and flee. The devil places his signs in those who receive the seed of faith along the way; on the other hand, he places the faith of the devil in the open road. Finally, so that the devil does not defile the tabernacle of God, it must be provided, for which perseverance is most needed.

26. Therefore, he said, why have you rejected me? And why do I walk in sorrow while my enemy afflicts me? He breaks my bones, those who torment me reproach me, saying to me every day: Where is your God? Why are you sad, my soul? (Psalm 41:10) And the rest. The first complaint was that the goods, whose fruits were already desired, were detained for trial. The second complaint was that the long-awaited coming of Christ was delayed for the wise, whom the Law had announced, whom the prophets had promised, and the hearts of the righteous were boiling more impatiently because they knew that He would come for the redemption of all. Of all these things, through evangelical teaching he opened up the path of virtue and showed the paths of good works, as he himself said in Proverbs: The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways (Prov. 8:22). Therefore, they would say to him: Where is your God; for Christ had not yet come, but was hoped for? Therefore, the devil raged, in order to crush those whom he knew would believe in the coming of the Lord, and he afflicted them with various miseries. Therefore, let David interpellate, so that he may awaken the slumbering with prophetic complaint, hurry them on, admonish them to come to the rescue. We have a similarity of this interpellation even in later [verses], where the same prophet says: Why have you repudiated us, O God, forever (Psalm 73:1)? And there he openly bewailed that he had forgotten his congregation and cast away the rod of his inheritance; and that his enemies had risen up against the people of God, of whom he says: And those who hate you have gloried in the midst of your feast (ibid., 4). This little verse here might seem to declare the Assyrians, who triumphed over the people of Judah, unless it is followed by: They set up their standards, and I did not know them (ibid. 5). Standards are always in war, which are accustomed to go before those about to fight and to lead the military host. Each unit or legion follows its own standards. And if they have been scattered in the turmoil of war, they return to the place where they have seen their standards, no matter how far away it is. Each leader establishes these signs and prescribes what should be followed. But there are also other signs that the victorious enemy imposes and decrees should be observed as if by captives; but a faithful soldier follows his own signs and does not recognize others.

27. Let us consider more intensely and more deeply the signs of others. Christ placed his sign on the foreheads of each one; likewise, Antichrist will also place his own signs there, so that he may recognize his own. But the true confessor, who is a hidden Jew, says: They have placed their signs as signs, and I did not recognize them. The devil and his ministers have placed them, but I did not know them; because I did not agree with his followers, I did not comply with his orders. Assyrian Nebuchadnezzar placed signs for the Hebrew boys and changed their names; and he commanded them to worship his image and to forsake the customs of their fathers and follow the Chaldean rites, disregarding the Law of God. The king established this, but Daniel resolved in his heart to shun the defilements of the royal table (Dan. III, 18). Therefore, it is right for him to say, 'I do not know foreign signs.' It was commanded that the Hebrew boys worship the king's image; they replied, 'We do not worship your image.' Therefore, each one of them aptly said: They have set up their own signs, and I do not recognize (Dan. III, 18); that is, I have not experienced, I have not accepted with any agreement, I have not taken in any association. Hence, we also read about

the Son of God that he did not know sin (II Cor. V, 21). And elsewhere you have: For he who keeps the commandment does not know the word of wickedness (Eccles. VIII, 3): when it is clear that it is not the knowledge of wrongdoing, but the criminal association, David himself also says in the following: But I did not recognize those who turn aside to wickedness from me (Psal. C, 4). But when the adversaries want to set up these signs, he declares: 'As on a road,' he says, 'over a high place: as if in a forest, they cut down its doors with axes, they have thrown it down with hatchet and mattock' (Psalm 73:6). What does this mean, unless it shows that our faith should not be like a road, lest the birds of the sky come and take it away, as that word which you read in the Gospel, should not be sown around roads and paths (Luke 8:5).

So, the adversaries desiring to uproot the faith of this one, who does not see their signs in his heart, attempted to place them on the path, that is, in the open. But the heart is at the summit; for the eyes of the wise are in his head. And they placed signs as if in a forest of trees, which quickly burn with fire, or are cut down with axes. For fire comes out of the forest, and even the cedars of Lebanon are burned. But they thought to do this: to defile the tabernacle of the divine name, which is within us. For just as we are the temple of God, so too we are the tabernacle of God, in which the feasts of the Lord are celebrated. Therefore, oh man, guard your highest self, so that you may conquer the heads of your enemies, the top of their hair walking about (Psalm 67:22). For they walk in trivial matters, not in holy matters; on the top of hair, not on the top of devotion and faith. And if the spirit of the one who has authority over you ascends, as you have in Ecclesiastes, do not abandon your place (Ecclesiastes 10:4). Indeed, Christ placed you above, whom He made in the image of God. Therefore, hold the place of superior faith and piety that you received from Christ, so that as one who is superior, you may easily reject the wicked spirit ascending from the lower things, that is, from earthly and worldly matters, and not receive its signs in your heart. May it not occupy the entrance of your soul, nor the innermost part of your mind. And may it be like a forest consumed by its own fires, where the weak and fragile things are destroyed, or like axes cutting down the doors of your heart. Therefore, let it not be a forest but a vineyard within us; let the gate of our mouth and heart be closed more diligently, lest the enemy enter. He quickly breaks down the door if he finds it open. But truly Christ knocks, he does not cast down, he who strengthens you, O Jerusalem, the bolts of your gates. Christ knocks with his hand, that you may open, the adversary is cut down by axes; and therefore it is written (3 Kings 6:7), let not the axe and hammer of the house of God enter unlawfully. Pride and deceit should be outside, not within. For outside is the battle, and inside is the peace that is beyond all understanding. Do not let your soul be torn by iron, but let your soul pass through it like the soul of Joseph, so that your innermost being, like a dwelling place of the Word, is not destroyed by the entrance of faith and spiritual doctrine. For it is founded on use and practice, and remains steadfast, not giving place to the one who attempts to ascend to the highest, as if transforming himself into an angel of light; if he does not see his own signs in us, he cannot have the authority to resist. So that the enemy does not afflict us and break our bones, let us not fail to persevere in Christ, so that it may be said of us: They have endured with me for three days, and I do not want to send them away hungry, so that they do not faint on the way (Matthew XV, 32). Blessed is he to whom he himself has given the firmament of the heart, so that he cannot fail on the path of this life. For he does not fail who hopes in the Lord and confesses him with intimate affection; for even that knight whose horse's heel was bitten by a serpent, although he fell backward, yet he was not deceived, because he awaited salvation from the Lord.

Chapter VIII.

David demands that he be distinguished from the unjust, but not Christ, to whom all judgment has been given by the Father. It is right that the Prophet, troubled by internal and external enemies, should have sought divine help in order that the light of divine assistance might shine upon him in good time; yet he was refreshed by God with the knowledge of future redemption.

29. The third interruption of the Prophet is that, as he is stationed among people who exercise wickedness, he desires to be separated from their contamination. Many think that this refers to the Lord Jesus, because it is His alone not to fear judgment, since He conquers when He is judged. For He has a judgment from an unjust man, into which Christ willingly enters, as you have written: My people, what have I done to you, or in what have I saddened you? (Micah 6:3)? Moreover, when the father gives all judgment to him, not as if to an infirm person, but as if to a son, because he himself can undergo judgment? If they think that the judgment of the Father must be undergone by the Son, then the Father surely does not judge anyone, but he has given all judgment to the son; so that everyone may honor the son just as they honor the father. The father honors the son, and do you judge? We have said this so that no one would consider us as placing the person of the Prophet in the place of the Lord due to fear of questioning, when the holy David, foreseeing by the spirit that the Jews would rise up against the passion of the Lord, does not fear the judgment of his faith: he even demands that his cause be distinguished from the nation of persecutors; so that he would not be entangled with the descendants of his wicked generation and the heirs of his posterity, the lineage of the whole Jewish race.

30. Therefore, it is not without reason that he is troubled, who sees that there is a struggle against the flesh and blood, and that there is a heavy shipwreck in his own body, a storm which he is not able to withstand unless heavenly help supports him. For there is no greater enemy to man than his own household: but what is more domestic than man himself and the weakness of his own flesh? And therefore the Prophet hastens and prays with all his passion, that Christ may come as the strength of all, who takes on all infirmities and makes the two one, by removing the wall that divides the conflict between the mind and the flesh, so that they may come together in harmony. Therefore, because within himself there was a conflict, he was in danger from those who were ignorant of the law and equity, who were preparing snares of deceit and ambushes, and the hoped-for remedy was being delayed; he considered himself repelled, as if the one who had promised the remedy was refusing to come. And as if recalling from the depths of dark shadows to the dawning light of day, he prayed that the radiance of the truth would dispel the darkness of this age, and that eternal truth would be present, which would erase the deceptive image of this world.

31. God was present through their prayers, who is accustomed to assist unexpectedly and reveal himself to those who do not ask, as he himself says: 'I was found by those who did not seek me' (Isaiah 65:1). And he, favoring the prayers of the pious, swiftly surpassed the sequence of their prayers with speedy fulfillment, and suddenly led the holy Prophet into the church and his tabernacle in spirit, and placed before his eyes the sacred altar, on which the redemption of the whole world was to take place and the forgiveness of sins for all people throughout the entire world.

Chapter IX.

The prophets signify that God, who had turned away from humans because of their sins, was later reconciled to them through the passion of Christ: where God is averse to human sacrifices, it is confirmed by the testimony of Isaiah that he can still be reconciled. Likewise, in order for us to enter the house of God, we who were battered by the waves of crimes like islands, suffered shipwrecks, have been renewed in many ways by Christ.

32. Therefore, seeing in the spirit that sweetness of the heavenly sacraments, that table which repels the snares of those who would wear us down, just as he himself said in the preceding: 'You have prepared a table before me against those who wear me down' (Psalm 22:5), he says: 'And I will go to the altar of my God, to God who delights my youth' (Psalm 42:4). He has said it beautifully, as if Adam, 'And I will go.' For indeed we were cast out from the paradise of the Lord, after Adam, conscious of his sin, turned away his face from the Lord. He also added this decree: And I will go to the altar of God, to God who gives joy to my youth. For he turned his back on our offerings, when Cain the murderer did not approve of his offerings. Cain was hiding from the sight of the Lord, raging with a wild fierceness because the Lord had regarded the offerings of his brother but had not regarded his own, and in his anger he left his rightful inheritors in offense. He killed Abel, not for himself, but for all of us. No sacrifice was nearly acceptable anymore; for there was no one who could do good, there was not even one, when neither faith in God nor piety towards one's own brother was upheld. The Lord Jesus came to resurrect Adam. He was resurrected, and Abel, whose offerings pleased God. The Lord Jesus offered himself, that is, the firstfruits of his body, in the sprinkling of his blood, which spoke better than the blood of Abel on the earth. God looked upon his gifts, from which he left divine grace of reconciliation to good heirs. Therefore, the holy David rightly says, as if in the person of a reconciled man: And I will go in to the altar of my God, to God who makes joyful my youth.

33. Let us ponder this passage, if we can, following the example of another prophet, how the Lord first rejected the sacrifices of a man, and then was reconciled to him. We have it written in the book of Isaiah, with the Lord saying: 'What to Me is the abundance of your sacrifices?' says the Lord. 'I am full: (Isaiah. I, 11), that is, I abound in them, but I do not seek yours: I do not want burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of lambs, and the blood of bulls and goats, nor do you come before my presence in this way.' And indeed, Abel offered a sacrifice of the offspring of the flock, in which God was pleased, but it did not require a symbol, as it anticipated the truth of the sacrifice. The salvific passion of the Lord was anticipated. Who indeed required these things from your hands? You will not trample on my kingdom. (Ibid. 12). And further, When you stretch out your hands to me, I will turn my face away from you But cleanse yourselves, be clean, remove malice from your souls. Judge the orphan, and justify the widow, and come, let us argue, says the Lord (Ibid. 15 and 16). Therefore, it is clear that the Lord turned away from man's sacrifices before, and later reconciled, in order to look favorably upon our sacrifices.

34. Therefore, he who enters the mercy of the Lord enters securely. Finally, it is said to the good servant: Enter into the joy of your Lord (Matthew 25:21). But concerning the wicked servant, it is said: Cast him into outer darkness (ibid. 30). Therefore, Adam, cast out from his heavenly homeland and the seat of paradise, was banished to the island of sin. Thus, Scripture correctly says: Be renewed, O islands (Isaiah 41:1). For we are surrounded by the waves of sin, like islands in the sea of this world. Therefore, these islands were renewed by the coming of the Lord through the forgiveness of sins, that is, men were immersed in the water as if placed in the midst of the sea

like islands, they were struck by the waves like islands, resounding with the waves of sins as if they were islands, in which, before, there were frequent shipwrecks for the simple reason that there was deceit in their hearts and flattery on their lips. But truly, after the Lord Jesus, in whom there is no deceit, came into this world, he illumined the deep regions of human minds with the heavenly exposition of his teaching, and he poured forth tranquility upon the desires of individuals, removing the hedge of discord as if they were the supports of harbors drawing near; so that each person may establish the vessel of their own peace in the affection of their neighbor or brother, and may abide on the shore in a certain seclusion of a devout mind.

35. Therefore not undeservedly does David cry out as one renewed: And I will go in unto the altar of my God, to God who makes joyful my youth; whereas he had said that he had fallen into old age among his enemies, as we read in the sixth Psalm, he here says that his youth is renewed to him out of the inveterate decay of human old age. For we are renewed by the regeneration of baptism; we are renewed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; we shall also be renewed by the resurrection, as he says in the later passage: Thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle's. To describe how we are renewed, listen: You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: You shall wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow (Psalm 50:9). And in Isaiah it says: If your sins are like scarlet, they shall become white as snow (Isaiah 1:18). One is truly renewed when they are changed from the darkness of sin to the light of virtues and grace: so that the one who was previously defiled by foul filth may shine brightly above the snow with a dazzling radiance.

Chapter X.

David promises to confess to God in song on the harp: the occasion on which the harp is related to our body, and what kind of sound is fitting for it, is explained.

36. I will praise you with the lyre, my God (Ps. 42:4). Our soul has its lyre. For Paul would not have said, 'I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the mind; I will sing with the spirit, I will sing also with the mind' (1 Cor. 14:15), unless he had a lyre that would resound with the plectrum of the Holy Spirit. Our flesh is the lyre when it dies to sin in order to live for God; the lyre is our flesh when it receives the sevenfold Spirit in the sacrament of baptism. For when the turtle is alive, it is engulfed in mud; but when it is dead, its shell is fitted for the purpose of singing, and it speaks in seven different voices, uttering sounds modulated by numbers. Likewise, if our flesh lives for the sake of bodily pleasures, it lives in a certain mire and pit of indulgence. But if it dies to luxury and self-indulgence, then it resumes true life, then it begins to produce the sweet harmony of good deeds. Sweet is the sound of chastity: sweet is the sound of praising God: finally, their sound went out into all the earth (Psalm 19:4); sweet is the sound of the faith which is announced, as it is written (Romans 1:8), in the whole world. May this sound go forth from us to God, as it also went forth from the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1:8); so that we may sing, even without singing, and proclaim the Lord with the harmony of good works, to whom be honor, glory, perpetuity from age to age, now and always and forever and ever. Amen.

Book Three. The Interrogation of Job\.

Chapter I.

Many, even wise, are moved when they see the unjust prospering here and the just being afflicted, which is the subject matter of the following books: that for the same reason Job's ignorant friends

argued that he was afflicted with punishments because of the crimes he had committed.

1. Our discussion was about the intercession of the saints, and how fragile and weak the human condition is, which has no stability anywhere except in divine protection: today we must take this into consideration, as it greatly affects the common people, and even the wise are often troubled; when they see the unjust prospering, and the just frequently afflicted in this world. Truly, this is a slippery place, where even the saints could hardly maintain a firm belief. And indeed, David himself, who had said in the past: You have revealed to me the hidden wisdom (Psalm 50:8). However, he later affirmed himself and searched for the path of perfect reason. Even holy Job, along with his three old friends who came to console him, struggled in speech with this opinion (Job chapters 4 and following). Therefore, let us bring forth the arguments of both. They are deserving of teaching us how to live, for they have deserved to please God more by being placed in adversity. Let us listen, therefore, to both in their proper order.

2. The holy Job had been strongly rebuked by Eliphaz the king of the Themanites, and by Baldad the tyrant of the Sabeans, and by Sophar the king of the Minaeans, because he endured such great punishment only because of his sins. For, with their weak understanding, they did not realize that the Lord had allowed him to be tested, so that as a champion of Christ, he could become more glorious and reach the crown through trials. Therefore, they did not see the great mystery of wisdom; with the fear of narrow-mindedness, lest they appear to accuse God of injustice by afflicting the innocent with punishment, they turned Job's meritorious suffering into punishment; saying that the entire life of the wicked is lived in hardship (Job 15:20), and that unjustly gathered riches are vomited out (Job 20:15); all the heavy things that a man suffers on earth, he suffers because of his own sins: even if he is prosperous, his prosperity cannot last, but quickly vanishes like a dream, and his place is not found; however, the joy of the wicked leads to a more severe downfall (Ibid. 5); and so, even the holy Job, having been changed from prosperity to adversity, fell from the highest to the lowest because of his sins: he was accused by those who claimed to be innocent; for the fate of the wicked is such that when the Lord's wrath comes upon them, it joins in causing them pain and the destruction of their home (Ibid. 28 and 29).

Chapter II.

Job's weakness proved to be stronger for his healthy friends and even himself. How did he rebuke his accusers? Especially when his silence, as well as that of David and the Apostle, is presented to us for imitation.

Holy Job heard these things, and like a strong athlete sat in the dung, covered in sores and painful wounds, the whole body covered in dreadful ulcers, he spoke of mysteries, not seeking his own remedies for sickness, but occupied with sacred discourses. Therefore, the words of a sick man are stronger than those who are not sick. For they spoke of injustices, but not according to knowledge: they preached divine judgments, the punishments of criminals, the rewards of the saints; but they did not know how to discern the guilty from the righteous: in short, whom the Lord God pronounced righteous, they condemned as unjust, they summoned him to wickedness. Therefore, they did not know what was suitable for each person. But truly, the holy Job could discern by the spirit how he ought to speak to each one; therefore, he was stronger than those who appeared to be healthy and whole. And what shall I say? Was he found stronger than the others? He was found stronger than himself. For Job, when he was sick, was stronger than when

he was healthy, according to what is written, 'For my strength is made perfect in weakness' (2 Corinthians 12:9). Therefore, even when Job was weakened, he was then stronger. For his soul was not sick, although his body was in pain: because his soul was not in the flesh, to which it did not adhere to its passions; but in the spirit, by whose power it was clothed.

Therefore, it was not the groaning of the flesh and the weaknesses of the body that spoke, but the voices of the spirit by which it was oppressed, not by which it yielded. And at first, more gently, to instill shame in them; because they unjustly accused the just man of enduring lesser punishments for his sins, and they themselves, sinners, did not blush to falsely accuse the innocent one. 'Let it be,' he said, 'that I have erred, and that he who pours errors into the minds of men dwells with me deviatingly; so that I may speak words that I ought not, as you say, and my words may err, and my speech may not be timely. Why do you leap upon me and revile me, not considering that this temptation has come upon me from the Lord, who has thought it fitting to enclose me with a certain rampart of perturbations.' (Job 19:4ff) I am exercised by adversity, surrounded on all sides by labors and dangers; and yet, you insult me, wanting to oppress whom you should help. Behold, I laugh at your reproaches, and I will not speak, nor will I respond to your insults. For it is not you who judge: but He who judges me is the Lord, and the time of His judgment has not yet come. Why shout before the judgment? It is good to be silent while awaiting the judge. It is good not to return insult for insult, lest we ourselves be counted among the detractors.

5. Let us therefore imitate this man, who with his silence refuted his accusers. He showed the strength of his character, which was not moved by insults; and he displayed the innocence of his conscience, as he did not acknowledge the accusations and instead laughed at them as if they were from someone else. But we, on the other hand, when something is being accused against us, we become bitter when we want to defend ourselves, and we admit our desire for revenge; whereas the Scripture says to turn away from disgraceful speech (Prov. XXVII, 11), and to take off your garment (Ibid. 13); for the one who insults will pass by. Let us be silent, so that it passes by, lest our provoked garment be burned. For it is written: Do not kindle the coals of a sinner, lest you be burned by the fire of his flame (Eccl. VIII, 13). Therefore, the holy man is silent; and if a servant acts insolently, and if a poor man is reviled, the righteous man is silent; and if a sinner hurls insults, the righteous man laughs; and if an infirm person curses, the righteous man blesses.

David remained silent when Shimei, son of Gera, cursed him; Job laughed; Paul blessed, as he himself says: We are cursed, and we bless (1 Corinthians 4:2). For by divine teaching, the progress of human virtue has grown; for the one had already come who would make the weaker stronger, and he had heard him say: Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you (Luke 6:28). What he said in words, he proved by example. Finally, even while placed on the cross, with his persecutors reviling him, he said: Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do (Luke 23:34); so that he might pray for those who falsely accused him, whom he himself could forgive. Therefore, Job laughed, because Christ had not yet come, to whom alone the prerogative of great virtues was reserved; for he is the beginning of virtues, as it is written: The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways (Proverbs 8:22).

Chapter III. In the contest of words, which is generally considered no less difficult, the victor is declared. How beautiful it is to laugh and remain silent in the face of accusations; and how, after responding gently, the same person has repelled more forcefully those who calumniate with more

importunity. And he remained silent while laughing. He taught why one should remain silent, saying: I will cry out, but there is no judgment (Job 19:7-8). He himself said that he wanted to endure these things. Like enclosed by wall-like temptations, I cannot escape until it pleases God to destroy the heights of my temptations. For now, if I cry out, there is still no judgment. I am still in the struggle, still wrestling, still the fight remains for me, for the crown has not yet been won. But no one is crowned unless they have legitimately fought.

He was faced with a third battle: he had lost everything he had, that is, his inheritance with his sons; his flesh was enduring wounds; he remained to conquer the temptations of words. No ordinary battle. Adam was deceived by speech, Samson was overcome by words. For nothing penetrates the soul like deceitful speech, and nothing bites as hard as harsh words. Many, after overcoming physical torment, could not endure the harshness of words. Job suffered, but endured, and carried the burden of wounds alongside the burden of words. His agonistes saw him struggling in the cloud and whirlwind and gave him a helping hand, and declared that those struggling had fallen with a heavy fall, but he declared himself the victor and brought back the crown.

9. But what is more beautiful than laughing when we are spoken ill of? For we should rejoice if things said against us are untrue. First, because an enemy, desiring to say something against us to accuse us, did not find what is true, but composed falsehoods as if they were true. Secondly, because the Lord Himself said in the Gospel about such false accusations brought against the innocent for the sake of righteousness: Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven (Matthew 5:12). Therefore, the one who recognizes the object should remain silent, so as not to worsen the wound and cause the scar to split open. And the one who does not recognize it should also remain silent, for they are hearing someone else's accusation, not their own crime. If they repeat it, they make it their own; if they keep silent, they turn it back and wound the accuser. The one who presumes upon the mentioned reward should also remain silent. For they do not suffer prejudice if there is no judgment. And even if there is prejudice in the world, there will be none in God's judgment. Finally, so that you may know that the insult does not harm a good conscience, listen to holy Job saying, a richer witness indeed than if he had attained the power of the Roman empire: Now I will be silent and depart: if there is harm to me now, then I will not hide from your face (Job 13:19-20).

10. Therefore, in the beginning, he responded more sparingly, in order to remind them of God's judgment and to make them turn away from insolence and fury as a good physician would make them repent. But after he noticed that they persisted in their insults, he repeated more forcefully and struck them as with a stronger fist, those who were throwing stones of their words at the innocent. Hear, he said, hear my words, let me not seek consolation from you: bear with me, for I will speak more forcefully: the weight of my words will be heavy (Job. XXI, 1 et seq.). I will also speak according to your opinion; because many abound in the successes of this world, while others are burdened. They are in distress, and it seems that this is deserved according to the merit of their sins. And even if I say this, do not laugh as if I agree with you; and if I am a sinner, I am not guilty before man, for he himself is also under sin and claims authority over himself concerning me. Or if I am judged as a man, that is common, I should not be reproached: it is the weakness of the condition, not a special wickedness.

Chapter IV. Asserting that friends always suffer misfortunes for the sake of their sins, Job refutes them by asking why the wicked in this life are prosperous. However, these apparent misfortunes are shown to be true blessings. Likewise, he asks who should truly be considered happy, who sows well or poorly, and what will be the fate of the unjust in the future. He also questions why some are immune to these punishments while the righteous are considered subject to them. Finally, it is demonstrated that the wicked do not obtain eternity, but rather only a false image of it. But tell me this: If I suffer because of my sin, as you argue, why do the wicked live? Not only do they live, but they are also filled with wealth, and their crops multiply. They even have children and their houses abound. These things may appear good on the surface, but in a deeper mystery you will find that what is thought to be good is not truly good, and what is thought to be evil is considered even more desirable than them.

12. 'They have become old,' he says, 'in riches' (Ibid. 7); 'they have grown old,' he said; so that the possession of wealth does not seem as long-lasting as the trouble caused by accumulated resources; as Ecclesiastes saw that wealth is kept to the detriment of those who possess them, which perish in extreme distress and worry (Eccle. V, 12). For what they leave behind here perishes, and it cannot benefit the dead. Therefore, the deceased had anxiety from them, and could not find rest, who left behind something to be ashamed of, and did not take with him what he held, much different from him of whom it is written: 'Blessed is the man who fills his desire from these things; he will not be put to shame when he speaks to his enemies at the gate' (Psal. CXXVI, 5). To whom the inheritance belongs, and the reward from the birth of the Virgin Mary: here at the end of wisdom, he is praised with praises, because he had nothing to be ashamed of, who desired nothing of those things which are of the world: but the adversary, having cast off the rags of the old man, wounded by the spear of self-control; so that he could not hinder him at the end of this life, being lame from the wound and confused by the admiration of virtues. Therefore, you have someone who is not praiseworthy, who is hardened in the desire for wealth, not renewed in the perception of grace.

13. Let us consider something else: Their seed, he says, is the second soul (Job 21:8), that is, they are not considered among the righteous. For the righteous sow in the spirit, and from the spirit they will reap eternal life. But those who sow in accordance with the flesh cannot reap spiritual things; for the natural man does not perceive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. sed iudicatur.

14. Their children in their eyes (Ibid.) that is, they do what they do so that they may be seen by men, not because they seek good in order to choose what will be approved in the future judgment. Therefore, Scripture frequently declares children on account of their works, because our posterity is more abundant in good deeds than in children. Hence, even Hezekiah, freed from serious sickness, says: From this day, I will beget children who will declare your justice, O Lord, the God of my salvation, and I will not cease blessing you with the psaltery all the days of my life (Isaiah 38:19-20). For indeed, the future generations of devotion and faith, which did not know how to submit to captivity, suffered as the sons of Hezekiah did. And he added, saying: Because they have no fear, there is no punishment from the Lord (Job XXI, 9). But the just man says: For I am scourged all day long (Ps. LXXII, 14); and he desires to be scourged, so that he may be received by the Lord; and he wants to fear the Lord; for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And he does not consider it a blessing if his heifer does not abort (Job XXI, 10). Like fools think. For

what does the ox signify, if not the rural cultivation of the heart, which always returns in a circle, and never ceases, but when it seems to be filled up, it is called back to the beginning? These are the ones who worship Sodom and Gomorrah. Therefore, those who worship Egypt and plow the land with a solid mind turn labor upon themselves, and reap sorrows. Therefore, their cattle do not miscarry but give birth, so that their work may increase and they may generate everything they have conceived without fear of God. The righteous, on the other hand, boast in a different way. For they do not boast in the abundance of riches or in the birth of livestock, but they boast in the Lord saying: In your fear we have conceived in the womb and given birth to the spirit of salvation (Isaiah 26:18). Therefore, it is said of the just, because they have begotten the spirit of salvation, which they received from the fear of God, not from the malice of this world, of which we read: Behold, he travailed with injustice, he hath conceived sorrow, and hath brought forth iniquity (Ps. VII, 15). Therefore, the abortion is better than the birth of secular things. Lastly, the Preacher declared about the man who comes into this world and endures the vanity of this world and the darkness for a long time, that the abortion is better than him (Eccl. VI, 3). For to this one there is more rest than to that one; because he has not experienced the variety of the world, in which even if someone were to live for a thousand years, he could not see what is good. Therefore, it is more a matter of gratitude to have escaped these things than to have undergone them. But perhaps that which he added may stir us: Because they abide forever like sheep; but their children play, receiving the psaltery and the harp, and delight in the voice of the psalm. Yet they have completed their life in prosperity, and in the rest of the underworld they have slept (Job 21:11 et seq.). Distinguish these things, and since you are spiritual, judge. The wicked are like eternal, but not eternal, for they cannot receive eternity from him who is not eternal. Therefore, he cannot give what he does not have, nor can he illuminate who does not possess light: but he transforms himself into an angel of light, in order to deceive the unbelievers. However, he transforms himself by the simulation of false light, not by the brightness of perpetual clarity. Hence, the Savior says: I saw Satan as a lightning fall from heaven (Luke 10:18). He is not lightning, but like lightning. Consider someone heretical who is focused on bodily abstinence and the knowledge of celestial sacraments, as he is believed to be eternal, he does not have the reward of eternal life; for he has a false imitation, who does not have the truth of faith. These little children play, just like she who, when she has grown up, wants to marry. She has grown up in the psaltery and lyre, that is, in the sound of her voice, not in the depth of the sacraments; to make it resound with her lips, not to impart it to her heart.

Chapter V.

To end life in prosperity is to be wicked, but to afterwards lack heavenly rest; on the other hand, it is desirable for us that temptation from vices and presumption of impunity reside in prosperity. This folly is overcome by the holy man, declaring that punishment is both present and prepared for eternity. Then, after listing their crimes, he shows that they cannot escape the notice of God: he describes what their portion will be, and he exhorts us to pursue the wisdom that they have abandoned.

Therefore, these people have finished their lives in the goods of this world (Job 21:13), certainly this life that they were living, not that whose reward they hoped for; and therefore they slept in the rest of hell, not in the rest of heaven. But we should rather undergo labor here, so that in the kingdom of heaven we may deserve to obtain the consolation of eternal rest. For the abundance of worldly goods is a great enticement to sin: it lifts a person up in pride and instills forgetfulness of

the Creator. Consider him, a rich man in the Gospel (Luke XVI, 19 et seq.), reclining on purple and fine linen, from whose table that righteous poor man Lazarus collected crumbs. Does it not seem to you that the rich man says to God: Depart from me; I do not want to know your ways (Job XXI, 14). And truly they do not want to know such ways of the Lord; for if they did, they would understand. But because they are full of labor, they flee and turn away from the lost. Therefore, like a drunkard, he does not recognize the author of salvation (Isaiah XXII, 13). Finally, turning to his companions, he said: Let us eat and drink: what use is it if we serve him? Or what benefit if we obey him? (Job 21:15) Therefore, the abundance of worldly things makes him drunk; because the rewards for the wicked deeds are not immediately paid in this world. He was arrogant because everything was available to him for pleasure: and being aware of his impiety, from which he was separated by punishment, he thought that God did not see the wicked deeds of the impious.

18. So to this opinion of his, the holy Job responded: do not be secure and dissolute, thinking that in this very age of the Lord no punishment will come to you. Nevertheless, even the lamp of the wicked is extinguished (Job 21:17 et seq.): it shines for a time, it does not have eternal light; and even though the world may favor them, because those who have power in this world do the will of him who has dominion in this world, the turning of events often comes, and pains from heavenly anger and indignation come, to be scattered, like chaff by the wind. The unjust are scattered like chaff, while the just are like wheat. Finally, listen to the words of the Lord to Peter: Behold, Satan has desired to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail (Luke XXII, 31 and 32). Those who are scattered like chaff will fail; but not the one who is like that grain which fell and rose again, enriched by the abundant yield of many fruits. Therefore the Prophet says: Woe is me, for I have become like one gathering straw in the harvest (Micah VII, 1)! Therefore, straw that is quickly burned is compared to impiety and to dust. Therefore, after he said: They will be like chaff carried away by the wind, he added the verse immediately saying: Or like the dust that the wind snatches away (Job. XXI, 18). Finally, so that you may know that the wicked person quickly grows weak and vanishes like dust, you have the following statement in the first Psalm: Not so the wicked, not so, that is, not like the righteous: but like the dust that the wind scatters away from the face of the earth. And he makes a distinction between the righteous and the wicked. Here, he says, he dies in the power of his simplicity, wholly in abundance and grace: but his inner parts are full of fat: and the marrow of his bones is moistened. But he finishes his course in the bitterness of his soul, and the feast of this life receives no good things. (Job XXI, 23 et seq.) To whom according to his merits, can anything worthy be assigned? He is laid in the tomb, and watches in his own sepulcher. Not indeed this punishment middling; to not have the rest of death, to be transferred not to the land of the living, but to the tombs of the dead. For he who lives is sought not among the dead, but in the bosom of Abraham he enjoys eternal life. Therefore, those two men in bright clothing said to the women: Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here (Luke 24:6).

Then (Job XXIV, 2 et seq.) he enumerates the wicked deeds of the impious, who would trespass boundaries and plunder the flock from the shepherd, take away the support of the orphan, pledge the widow's ox, harvest a field that is not theirs, have the feeble work in their vineyards without pay or food, leave the naked to sleep without clothes. Many of those whose souls they have taken cover themselves with the dew of the mountains; and because they lack covering, they hide themselves behind rocks. The orphans were being snatched away from their mothers' breasts,

those who should have been raised were being oppressed. The hungry were deprived of food, and the souls of the infants were grieved deeply.

21. Could she have been ignorant of this, she who nothing escapes? Naked hell is in sight of her, and she is not clothed in the most wicked (Job XXVI, 6 et seq.); for they cannot hide. She stretches out the north wind as nothing: she suspends the earth in nothing, binding the waters in her clouds, and the clouds are not broken under her feet: the pillars of heaven have burst, and they tremble at her rebuke. She restrains the sea with power, and with her discipline she constructs the assembly of the sea. The gates of heaven fear him: he has put to death the rebellious dragon according to his command. Who can understand the power of his thunder? In such great wickedness, what hope is there for the impious? Can he be confident that he will be saved by the Lord? I will tell you, he says, what is in the hand of the Lord; and cease to add vain things to emptiness (Job 27:8, 11). And he describes how miserable is the portion of the wicked. For although they may have many children, they are without descendants, to whom the succession of good merits is lacking (Ibid. 14 et seq.). For true posterity is not on earth, but in heaven. Therefore, for men of this kind, inheritance is poverty, and death is succession. When they have accumulated wealth, they will beg; because when they are dead, they will be in need, unable to find rest. No one will have mercy on their widows: they will remain deserted, and deprived of all consolation. Although money is gathered as plentiful as the earth, and gold is prepared like clay, their substance will be empty like a spider's web, and their entire heritage will be consumed like moths. The wealthy will gain nothing while sleeping, when they open their eyes, they will no longer exist. (Job 28:1 et seq.) They remain in sorrow. Therefore, everything that is in this world is nothing. Gold in metals, silver in metals: it is extracted from the ore, and returns to the ore. For what else is the mind of the greedy person but a metal? It holds onto whatever it has received as if buried, and hides it in the veins of the earth and its secret places; because it does not know how to use it. Every day gold is brought forth from the metals: who could bring it forth from the greedy person?

23. Therefore, since the empty craving for gold is useless, because whatever is accumulated, slips away: truly pitiable are those who have forsaken the right path, and have forgotten it to which precious stones are by no means comparable, difficult to investigate, impassable to the proud, blocked to the boastful: flat for the humble, open for the wise. And therefore we must seek wisdom, so that we may walk in the right path, through which that adversary, like a roaring and ravenous lion, who has run through this world, could not pass. But the one who wants to investigate wisdom should not search for it in the abyss (like the philosophers, who believe that they can know its depths on their own, by their own genius), nor should they seek it in the sea. For where there is a storm, where there is roaring wind, wisdom cannot be found there. But they should seek it where there is tranquility of mind and a peace that surpasses all understanding.

Book Four. On the Interrogation of David.

Chapter I. David is often seen speaking about the vanity of the world in his songs, but most notably in Psalm 72, where he expresses his deep initial disturbance at the prosperity of the wicked and the difficulties of the righteous, but later indicates that he has been corrected. It is uncertain whether David himself is the author of the same Psalm or if it should be attributed to Asaph. The discourse of the holy Job is concluded: now let us adore that discourse which we find

in the Psalms. Indeed, David did not remain silent in many places about the vanity of the world, and frequently affirmed that the things considered good in this world are empty, especially in Psalm 38, where he says: Yet all is vanity, every living man (Psalm 38:6); and although man walks in the image of God, he will be troubled in vain, he hoards and does not know who will gather them. And elsewhere: How long, O Lord, how long shall sinners, O Lord, glory? (Psalm 93:3) They may have a shadowy glory here, where they have left the world, but they cannot find the fruit of comfort. Yet the same Asaph inserted the seventy-second psalm, in which he himself, using the name of Asaph, declares that his was the beginning of a fall; so he was greatly distressed when he saw sinners in this world abound in riches and abound in worldly things, while he, who had justified his heart, was in afflictions and hardships; nor did he lightly endure the offense at the beginning; but afterwards, being corrected by the scourges of the Lord, and enlightened by the grace of divine knowledge, he truly learned the true series of tradition.

However, nowhere do I find that the holy Asaph was ever troubled by any adversity; but indeed the holy David endured many serious and perilous situations, for he speaks of his own labors. Therefore, the psalm is inscribed not as if it were by the holy Asaph, but as if it were for the holy Asaph, as the title indicates, which is more clearly manifest in the Greek Psalter, so that it appears that David even gave this psalm to Asaph, as he had written it himself. But because it is written in the title itself that the Psalms of David have ended, how can it be that, after these ten psalms have been completed, a psalm of David should embrace the inscription of titles to the very end? Therefore, disregarding this kind of definition, let us consider the series of the psalms, and let us draw the beginning from the first verse of the prophetic interpellation.

Chapter II.

From the very beginning of the psalm, I discovered David's correction: that God is always good to the righteous, because if they are afflicted by adversity, they are revived by the hope of future reward, and they always consider themselves to suffer lesser sins, and they cannot be deprived of their wisdom by any punishments. However, God is also good to the wicked, but they do not want to experience all His goodness prepared for everyone.

How good is the God of Israel to those with upright hearts (Psalm 73:1)! The progress of correction becomes clear from the beginning. For no one can truly acknowledge God as good unless they recognize His goodness not from the successes of their own goods, but from the depth of heavenly mysteries and the heights of divine disposition: which should be considered not by the appearance of present things, but by the usefulness of future things. Therefore, God is always good to the righteous: even when the body is tormented by pains and afflicted with the harshness of punishments, He always says: If we receive good things from the hand of the Lord, why should we not endure the bad things (Job 2:10)? He congratulates himself in being worn down, so that he may find consolation in the future; knowing that whoever receives good things in this life has his reward; he who has not struggled or been exercised in the contest of various battles will not be able to hope for future rewards. But he who is afflicted, whether justly or unjustly, in this world, congratulates himself either because he pays the price for his own sins, or because he knows that there is greater grace with God if he suffers anything bitter for His name's sake or for some good work, as it is written: For there is no glory if you are punished and suffer as sinners, but if you do good and endure patiently, this is grace with God. For to this you have been called, because Christ

also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly (1 Peter 2:21-23). Therefore, even if a righteous person is on the cross, he is always righteous, for he justifies God and says that he can endure lesser suffering for his sins. He is always wise, for the true and perfect wisdom is not taken away by the torments of the cross. He does not lose what he has, for he excludes fear by the desire and purpose of love. As a wise person, he knows how to say that the sufferings we endure in this body are unworthy of the reward of future glory, and all the passions of this present time cannot compare to the coming reward. Therefore, God is always a bonus to this person, who knows when to reap. And thus, like a good farmer, this person plows their field with a plow of rigorous self-restraint; they weed out vices with a cutting scythe of virtues; they fertilize the soil by humbling themselves to the ground, knowing that God raises up the lowly from the earth and lifts up the poor from the dung heap. In conclusion, the Apostle Paul, if he had not esteemed himself as dung, could never have acquired Christ. Here he guards his fruits, so that he may safely store them there. Therefore, God is always good to him, because he always hopes for good things from God.

Take another example: How good, he says, is the God of Israel to those with pure hearts! Is God not good to everyone then? Indeed, He is good to everyone, because He is the Savior of all, especially the faithful; and for this reason the Lord Jesus came, to save what was lost: He came to take away the sin of the world, to heal our wounds. But because not everyone seeks the medicine, but many refuse it, lest the force of the ulcer be aggravated by the remedies, He who desires to heal does not compel the unwilling. Therefore, those who seek medicine receive health; but those who reject the physician and do not seek him cannot perceive the goodness of the physician whom they have not experienced. However, he who is treated is also healed; therefore, the physician is good to those whom he has healed. Therefore, God is good to those whom he has forgiven their sins; but how can one estimate a good physician whom they reject, who has an incurable wound in the ulcer of their mind? Therefore, the Apostle explained excellently, as we have stated, that God is good to all, for he wishes all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4); and this privilege of divine goodness is especially preserved for the faithful, to whom the will of God helps and the grace aids. But the Psalmist, saying: How good is God to Israel, to those who are of upright heart! related it to their sentiment, who do not think otherwise about God, except that He is good in all things and in everything.

Chapter III.

To confess that the Prophet himself was almost not lured into sin, while he was pursuing the peace of sinners; to acknowledge that there is a twofold peace, but that one which has an offense should be avoided; to recognize that there is no relief for sinners in death; to assert that afflictions do not help after death, as demonstrated by the example of Lazarus and the rich man; and to reveal how much they truly benefit in life, by citing David and Job; finally, to affirm that those who have not been afflicted here will be afflicted forever.

5. Finally, he explains what he felt in the following, saying: But my feet were almost moved, my steps were a little less steady: because I became envious of the sinners, seeing the peace of sinners (Psalm 72:2-3). By feet, he does not refer to the steps of the body, but rather the direction

and progress, about which he says elsewhere: Let not the foot of pride come to me, and let not the hand of sinners move me (Psalm 35:12). Therefore, it is always necessary to ask that the Lord may direct the steps of our souls, so that they may not slip, and in the slippery path of error, they may not be able to maintain their stability. But the cause of emulation is that it emulates the peace of sinners. But we ought to emulate those things that are good, not those that are full of shame; just as the Apostle Paul also expressed, saying: But it is good to always emulate that which is good (Galatians IV, 18).

6. And let it not bother you that peace was placed in evil. Finally, in the Gospel, you have that there is peace, which Christ rejected, as He Himself says: My peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you (John 14:27). For there is a peace that does not have an offense, and there is one that has it: which is from love, it does not have an offense; which is from deceit, it has. Therefore, the Prophet also says: Peace, peace; but where is peace (Ezekiel 12:10)? Therefore, let us seek the refuge of peace for sinners; for they conspire against the innocent, they gather together to oppress the righteous, to destroy the widow, or to assault her modesty.

7. And therefore, there is no leaning towards their death (Psalm 72): not a leaning, as many Latin manuscripts have been written, but a reclining. For when we labor and bend ourselves to a certain work, and incline ourselves, we are accustomed to recline. But sinners, namely those guilty of grave offenses, and especially the impious, cannot recline themselves; concerning whom it is said: And their back is always bent (Psalm 68:14). For those who have not adhered to Christ do not raise themselves to the celestial things. And therefore, those who die a most wicked death do not rise again with Him, as it is written: The death of sinners is very evil (Psalm 33:22). But whoever dies with Christ and is buried with Him, not only is laid down, but also is raised up. Of whom that saying is fittingly spoken: You have turned all his bed in his sickness (Psalm 40:4); especially if he is a martyr, whose weakness is dissolved by suffering, and death by resurrection.

We saw that rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen, reclining in splendor every day in this world. And from his table, the crumbs that fell were collected by the poor Lazarus, who, while in torment, could not recline in hell. But he could barely lift his eyes to Abraham, not his whole self, and he begged him to send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool his tongue (Luke 16:19 et seq.). Therefore, there was no bending to his death, nor support in his punishment (Psalm 72:4). For whips are of no use after death.

9. And therefore David, while he was in the life of this body, prepared himself for the scourge, so that the Lord would receive him chastised. Consider again to me the holy Job, who was covered with sores and was shaken in all his members, and was full of pains in his whole body, dissolving the clods of earth with the pus and moisture of his wounds, just as when he could not recline himself in this body, he found the rest of death; and therefore, aware of himself, he said: Death is a rest for man (Job 3:23). Therefore, if he was not moved in his affliction, nor did his speech waver on his slippery slope, when in all these things he did not sin with his lips, as Scripture testifies (Job 2:10), but rather found the firmament of his affliction, through which he was strengthened in Christ. So both Job and David, because they were scourged here, had firmament in their affliction; for the father scourges the son whom he receives: but those who are not scourged here, are not received as sons there. And so they are not in the labors of men, and they will not be scourged with men

(Psalm 72:5-6); so that they may be scourged forever with the devil.

Chapter IV.

Sinners are clothed with their own iniquity: which garment must be rejected by us, so that we may be clothed with the garment of virtues, especially fasting; Joseph found it profitable to clothe himself with this, while Adam suffered great loss in casting it off; and, finally, the iniquity of the Jews has manifestly and deliberately emerged as if from fat.

Therefore, he says, their pride has gained control over them, they are covered in their own wickedness and impiety. Wickedness is a harmful garment, which, if anyone wishes to hold onto in us, we must forgive, lest it begin to come to judgment with us; and if anyone should try to take away our spiritual tunic that we have received, let go of the cloak of wickedness, take up the covering of faith and patience, with which David covered himself in fasting, lest he lose the covering of virtue. Fasting is a covering. Indeed, unless the holy Joseph had observed the sobriety of fasting, he would have stripped off the impudence of the adulteress. If Adam had desired to cover himself with this fasting, he would not have become naked. But because he tasted the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil against the divine prohibition, and transgressed the commanded fasting with food of disobedience, he knew himself to be naked. If he had fasted and preserved the vestiges of faith, he would not have looked at himself uncovered. Therefore, let us not clothe ourselves in iniquity and impiety, lest it be said of any of us: And he put on a curse (Psalm 108:18). And Adam also clothed himself poorly, for while he was seeking the covering of leaves, he received the sentence of curse.

11. They have clothed themselves in the curse of the Jews, of whom it is written: Their wickedness has come forth as from fatness, they have passed into the disposition of the heart (Psalm 72:7). For from fatness, they are called fat, that is, rich. Just as the soul, nourished by good things and filled with virtues, is filled with fatness and richness, as it is written (Psalm 62:6): so wickedness, which proceeds as from fatness, is not thin and lean, but full of vices. Finally, they did not accidentally fall into error, but with deliberate intent and planning, they crossed over into sacrilege.

Chapter V.

Those who place their hope in heaven are considered above others, who attribute everything to the necessity of the stars: yet it is reserved for them to return with Israel by the grace of God; the mystery of whose return is revealed: to deny that hidden things are known by God, especially being influenced by the wealth of sins: finally, Simon the Pharisee held the same opinion about Christ.

12. They set their mouth against heaven, and their tongue went through the earth (Psalm 73:9). To set their mouth against heaven means, the younger brother teaches us, who returned to his father and said: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you (Luke 15:18). But those who believe that the authorities of their crimes are imposed upon them by a certain necessity of birth, set their mouth against heaven. They are accustomed to spare neither heaven nor earth, thinking that the life of man is governed by the movement of the stars. They leave nothing to providence, nothing to good morals. And I hope that they, like that one of the two young men, will return: may the good Lord not deny a remedy, and yet even if they themselves do not want to be healed, the Lord reserves the grace of return; so that those who were expelled from Israel through the

blindness of their own heart may return through the fullness of the Church; and they may not lead empty days of this life, but have fullness of good works and faith, when the Lord fills them with spiritual grace. But let us consider how they might return. For, as it is written, 'Blindness has come upon a part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel will be saved' (Rom. 11:25-26). However, this mystery had to be fulfilled in order for God to conclude all things in unbelief (ibid., 32), that is, to rebuke and convict (for when two people contend, if one is superior, it is said that he has concluded the other), and through His mercy, the world would become subject to God. Therefore, the people have indeed returned to being heirs, but they have been led astray by quick error, not believing that God knows the secrets. But the Lord, in order that they may be sometimes redeemed, has reserved the grace of future salvation for them, saying: Therefore my people will return here (Ps. 72:10). What is here? That is, to me, to my righteousness and justice, to my worship.

13. And he will fill the days of his life. You will certainly understand this in such a way that indeed the people are redeemed, who have believed in him: in whom, although those who have not believed are not redeemed, nevertheless the prerogative of the redeemed people of God is conferred.

14. Therefore, those who are in error have said: How does God know; and if all knowledge is in the Most High (cf. Eccl. 11:21)? For they think that there is no knowledge in God; because sinners abound in worldly prosperity. And he still brings them to speak: Behold, these sinners and those who abound in the world have obtained riches (cf. Eccl. 12:34). You have this more clearly expressed in the Gospel, where that Pharisee Simon, seeing that that sinful woman came into his house and poured ointment on the feet of Christ, said to himself: If this man were a prophet, he would surely know what kind of woman touches him; for she is a sinner (Luke 7:39). But the patience of God does not prejudice the truth, and his foreknowledge and providence are the more established by the very fact that, though a person may be steeped in sin, he still enjoys the success of worldly prosperity. The stronger one observes this and laughs, the unsuspecting is led and moved.

Chapter VI.

After the prophet had initially lost hope, he later realized that everything happens according to divine arrangement, but that wealth is not the reward for virtue, nor is poverty the punishment for sin.

15. Finally, the Psalmist says, he said: Therefore I have justified my heart in vain: and have washed my hands among the innocent (Ps. 72:13). That is, I see them abound, I see all advantages follow them, but I am worn out and tormented by many temptations. Therefore, I have given myself to innocence in vain, and directed myself to the pursuit of a sober way of life. And he says beautifully: I have washed my hands among the innocent (Ibid., 14); so that he may not arrogate to himself the highest level of innocence, but seem to diligently devote himself to the pursuit.

16. Meanwhile, he testifies that he did not speak without harm. For he recalls being whipped throughout the whole day; because he had falsely justified his heart to the Lord, but after the whips, there immediately followed a correction of his wicked opinion. For my vindicator said, 'In the

morning' (Ib.), that is, in the open and clear light; for the light of truth, comprehending him, did not allow him to understand what he had said. Therefore, the light of truth overcame and refuted me, because I had spoken incorrectly: 'I justified my heart without cause.' For I spoke those things as if being set in darkness, and while remembering them, my heart was pierced: but with a pierced heart, my affection was enlightened; so that there would arise in my heart a flaming fire, which made in me a spiritual beginning of the day. Therefore, being enlightened by the rising day, and as if placed in many morning circumstances, I understood that I was made outside the order of the generation of the children of God. And when I first believed, because the creator of the world, who provides for the human generation, had made all things for the benefit of us, whether sad or those things which give little pleasure, I later lost that good opinion, being disturbed by wicked opinions. So I considered with my heart and said to myself: If I tell it thus, that I have justified my heart without cause, the voice of God answered me, saying: Behold the generation of your sons, to whom I have given it (Ibid., 15): that is, behold, you, Adam, find in the Scriptures that I have given it to the generation of your sons; for riches are not bestowed on the wicked by chance, nor are the rewards of virtue the advantages of a treasure; nor, on the contrary, is poverty the punishment of sin, but these things come indiscreetly, like the flood of a certain age, rolling along like a river. And I thought, and it seemed to me that I knew this to be true, that this was in accordance with divine providence and fitting; but I, on the other hand, was disturbed in vain by those things in which I should not have been involved.

Chapter VII.

Having corrected his error, David knows that this work alone remains for himself, in order to enter into the mysteries of divine knowledge. The saints, as they advance in age, desire to know their own end and who they will be. This is the first true knowledge, by means of which we believe that good things are granted to the wicked only for the purpose of excluding their excuses. The same people who are uplifted by God's blessings can be thrown down and reduced to nothing.

Therefore, since I seemed to myself to have grasped the true meaning and to have attained knowledge of the thing itself, I said to myself: This is the labor before me, until I enter into the sanctuary of God, and understand in the end (Ibid., 17). That is, the only labor remaining for me is to enter into the sanctuary of God, where the Cherubim are, that is, the depths of knowledge, and not toil in uncertain and vain opinions; for the speech of a fool is like a burden on the road. Therefore, let us enter the shrine of sacred knowledge and the innermost depths of truth, so that there may be no labor in us; for wisdom leads us away from the sense of labor. Indeed, there is no labor in Jacob. The cause of labor, however, is ignorance; for he who does not know that rewards are stored up for the just is not refreshed by labors, but rather is bent and broken by his own foolishness. Therefore, let us enter the sanctuary of God, where the Cherubim are, in whom is the remembrance of sacred knowledge and that true and eternal light.

20. In that candlestick the image shines forth, by which we can understand the last things. For the saint, in the end, knows and attains perfect wisdom, saying: Show me, O Lord, my end, and what is the number of my days, that I may know what is wanting to me (Psalm 38:5). Who is the end, if not He who delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when the hidden things of wisdom are revealed? This is the end of our struggle that the Prophet sought, desiring to know what was lacking to his perfection; for the end of our discipline and the perfection of our studies is.

21. Therefore, this is the first true reason for knowledge; because things that happen in the world happen by chance: the second reason is that, due to their turning away, you have given them success in obtaining worldly benefits and an abundance of riches; so that they would not be blamed for being less devoted due to lack and bitterness of any sorrow and grief, and being provoked to the desire for theft and robbery by the necessity of poverty. For they were not enriched with abundant wealth or elevated by honors for the sake of tranquility of life and the enjoyment of happiness, but rather to exclude complaint and pile up suffering.

22. Therefore, such men are cast down while they are exalted. For it is not a favor, but a ruin; where neither the enduring use of the duty is preserved, nor the excuse for wrongdoing is removed. For what weightier complaint is there than that divine one which you have in the book of the prophet Micah: 'My people, what have I done to you, or how have I wearied you, or how have I been a burden to you? Answer me. Have I not brought you up from the land of Egypt, and freed you from the house of bondage?' (Micah VI, 3 and 4)? See how the wicked are thrown down while they are being lifted up, the complaints of the afflicted are excluded, and punishment is intensified. Indeed, invited by divine benefits, they should not have abandoned the giver of a secure and prosperous life, to whom they should have obeyed more. But just as God's justice is great, so is his severe vengeance. For when the wicked are accustomed to persevere, about whom you have seen and written elsewhere: I have seen the wicked exalted and lifted up above the cedars of Lebanon; and I passed by, and behold, he was no more; and I sought him, but his place could not be found (Psalm 36:35-36). The incredible swiftness of its extinction. You see suddenly the wicked powerful in this world: while you pass by, he is no longer. How great is the shadow on the earth: how short-lived it is! Move your footsteps, and the shadow has passed. Or if he moves anything here, raise your mind's footsteps to the things that are to come, and you will find there the wicked one who you thought was here will not be, for he does not exist who is nothing. Finally, the Lord knows those who are his own; but those who are not, he does not know, because they have not recognized him who is.

Chapter VIII.

The impious are compared favorably in their destruction with a dream, because their souls are found devoid of all good things; and their dark images are erased from the light of heavenly Jerusalem.

23. Therefore, he says here: They have failed and perished because of their wickedness, like the dream of one waking up (Psalm 72:19-20), that is, the wicked fail and vanish like a dream upon waking; for they are in darkness, and they have walked in darkness, and there is no trace of any good work of theirs, but they are like those who see a dream: whoever dreams, dreams at night; but night is in darkness. The children of darkness are deprived of the sun of justice and the splendor of virtue, always sleeping and not vigilant, about whom it is well said: They have slept their sleep, and have found nothing (Psalm 75:6). For when their souls are separated from the body, like those freed from the sleep of the body, they will find nothing, they will possess nothing; and what they thought they possessed, they will lose; for when the foolish and senseless have overflowed with riches, they will leave their riches to others, and the glory of their household will not descend to the underworld with them.

24. The following also demonstrates how the wicked are not found, but perish. For his image is not found in the city of the Lord above, Jerusalem. For the Lord has painted us in his image and likeness, as he himself teaches, saying: Behold, I have painted your walls, O Jerusalem (Isaiah 49:16). If we do good, this heavenly image remains in us; if someone does evil, this image is erased in him (certainly in him who descended from heaven), and in him is the image of the earthly. And so the Apostle says: Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. 15:49). Therefore, the images of the good persist, and they shine forth in the city of God. But if someone turns to more serious sins and does not repent, their image is erased or cast aside, just as Adam was cast out and excluded from paradise. But whoever conducts themselves in a pious and honorable manner enters the city of God and brings their image, so that they may shine forth in the city of God. Lord, in your city you will reduce their image to nothing (Psalm 73:20); for those who clothe themselves in dark deeds cannot shine in the light. Let us take an example from the world. See how the images of good leaders endure in cities, while the images of tyrants are erased.

Chapter IX.

The prophet, renewed by the knowledge of divine providence, is not unlike the celestial citizens when compared to animals; however, by the grace of God, they are brought back to human dignity.

25. Considering this, and with a focused mind, the holy Prophet was delighted, who had been troubled before. Hence he says himself: "For my heart has been delighted, and my reins have been loosened. And I have been reduced to nothing, and I knew not: and I have been made like a beast before you, and I am always with you" (Ibid., 21 et seq.). "When I realized," he said, "that God takes care of and regards human affairs, my reins found rest," that is, I found rest from great fatigue of old imprudence through knowledge of the good heavenly and grace. For there are indeed certain kidneys of the soul, which are troubled in us through the labor of ignorance: these are dissolved to rest by the heavenly knowledge of doctrine, and they are nourished as if supported by a beautiful fulcrum of heavenly precepts. Then, he says, I understood that I was foolishly weary; because I did not know what is true.

26. And I became like a beast: he added beautifully, with you; for what is man compared to the heavenly beings, if not an irrational beast? For even the stars, though they are bright, fade at the rising of the sun. And Moses said: I am not capable since yesterday, from the time you began to speak with your servant: and I am meek of speech and slow of tongue (Exod. IV). Therefore, just as a beast seems mute in comparison to man, not to mention Christ or the angels. But let no one despair; for God saves both humans and animals. And therefore, because I have learned not from myself, but from you, I will always adhere to you; so that I may cease to be a beast, and you may say to me: But you stand here with me (Deut. V, 31). For a man, encompassed by the grace of God, begins to be, who through folly pretended to be without feeling and ignorant like a beast. For a man is proven to be such if he is capable of reason and grace. Therefore, he rejoices in being separate from dumb animals and being admitted into the fellowship of men, which God visits and protects. For what is man, if not because he is mindful of his Lord, or because he is visited by the Lord?

Chapter X.

If God had not been to our right hand, that place would be taken over by the devil, as happened to our first parent: when Christ played the role, he placed the devil on his right side in order to throw him down more gloriously: finally, the greatest benefits will return to those on Christ's right hand.

27. From where, as if visited by Him, he says: You have held my right hand, and in your will you have led me, and with glory you have taken me up (Psalm 72:24). Thus we have received it, and it agrees with the Greek. For the Greek says: κρατῶσας τῆς χειρὸς, that is, you have held the hand, τῆς δεξιῆς μου, my right hand. Well is directed whose right hand God holds with His own hand. He can say: The Lord is at my right hand, so that I may not be shaken (Psalm 16:8). If Adam had desired to have God on his right hand, he would not have been deceived by the serpent. But because he forgot the commandment of God and fulfilled the will of the serpent, the devil held his hand and caused him to reach for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in order to eat of the forbidden fruit. In him, judgment was pronounced on all, and the adversary began to stand at the right hand of all. Hence, that cursed form came forth against Judas: And let the Devil stand at his right hand (Psalm 108:6). If that curse is severe, then this blessing is the greatest, by which the chains of harsh curses are loosened. Therefore, the Lord Jesus placed the devil at His right hand, just as we read in the book of Zechariah (Zach. III, 1); for He had taken up the cause and place of mankind. There He stood, where the inheritance of Adam stood. Like a good athlete, He allowed him to stand at His right hand, in order to repel him backward, saying: 'Get behind me, Satan' (Matth. IV, 10). Therefore, the enemy, being thrown down, retreated from his position; but in order that the devil would not stand at your right hand, he said, 'Come, follow me' (Matthew 19:21). Therefore, foreseeing the coming of the Lord, who would come down from heaven to deliver us from the power of the enemy, David said, 'The Lord is at my right hand, so that I may not be shaken.' But the devil, who was at his right hand, was shaken. Therefore, rightly does he say, 'You have held my right hand,' that is, so that I may no longer be able to sin; so that, being unstable before on the slippery path, I may be able to stand firm with a secure station. How well the apostle said this, when the Lord saw him troubled and, extending his right hand, he did not allow him to stagger, and with fearless steps, he strengthened him (Matt. XIV, 30 and 31). Therefore, Peter, having been freed, spoke nothing else but these prophetic verses: You have held my right hand, and in your will you have led me, and with glory you have taken me up. What is the right hand if not the active power of the soul? If it is directed by the will of the Lord, it desires nothing else, requires nothing, seeks no worldly riches, asks for no assistance.

Chapter XI.

David, content with the possession of God, desires nothing except him; for earthly things ought to be erased from memory, so that heavenly things may take their place, and so that we may also approach God, who repels no one, from whom we only stray through wicked actions.

Therefore, Saint David says: What do I have left in heaven, and what do I desire from you on earth? That is, You are my portion, you abound to me in all things, I sought nothing else but to have you as my portion, I have subjected myself to no heavenly creature as the Gentiles do, I have desired no riches of this world and no allurements of pleasures. I have no need of anyone since I have been assumed by you, there is nothing more that I seek in heaven. Having nothing, I have everything; because I have Christ, whom the Most High Father did not spare; but for the sake of all of us, He handed Him over: therefore, how could He not have given us everything with Him

(Rom. VIII, 32); as the Apostle said? For all things are in Christ, through whom all things are, and in whom all things consist. Therefore, having everything in Him, I seek no other reward, for He Himself is the reward of all. Therefore, He rightly said: Take up your cross and follow me (Mark VIII, 34). He who follows Him is not led to perfection by reward, but is consummated in perfection for the reward. For the imitators of Christ are not virtuous because of the hope of reward, but because of the love of virtue. For Christ is good by nature, not because of desire for reward. Therefore, He suffered because it pleased Him to do good, not because He sought an increase of glory from His passion. Therefore, he who desires to imitate Him, does so not for his own benefit, but for the benefit of others. Where he rightfully falls short for himself, but grows stronger for others through an increase in virtue. And appropriately he says: My heart and my flesh have failed, O God of my heart (Psalm 73:26). For eternal things cannot succeed unless earthly things fail. And so the flesh fails when it is mortified by rejecting worldly desires. Likewise, those who bear the death of Jesus Christ in their own flesh are also weakened; for the death of Christ works in them, so that every snare of error may die. Therefore, it is inferred that the heart of man also fails when evil thoughts, which come from the heart, are mortified; so that forgetfulness may conceal all worldly things and God may become the heart of those who are blessed with a pure heart to see God, that they may draw near to you and not separate themselves. For God, approaching is not a repulsion of those who approach; for He wants to be the cause of salvation for all, not of death. In fact, He repels no one, unless they think they should be kept away from His sight.

30. For behold, those who distance themselves from you will perish, as it is said. For each person either joins or separates themselves from your piety through their actions. For he who performs things that he fears being caught for avoids God, just as that person who is hidden by walls and surrounded by darkness considers himself unseen by the Lord God; but he is seen, as it is said, 'You have destroyed all who are unfaithful to you.' For just as a woman who commits adultery does not cling to her husband, nor does one flesh exist with her husband, nor is there one spirit; but she divides and separates herself through adultery: so too, any soul that does not cling to God, but serves in vain the worship of idols, commits adultery, separates herself through the wickedness of sacrilege, and becomes distant from the Lord, whom she should be close to. But he who is separated from the Lord perishes.

31. Hence the Holy one who fears the judgment of God always wants to adhere to Christ and place his hope in Him, in order to praise the Lord, to whom belongs honor, glory, perpetuity from age to age, now and always, and forever and ever. Amen.

Letters - Epistle 17

Epistle XVII.

Epistle XVII. This Epistle was written when Symmachus sent his memorial to Valentinian II. St. Ambrose presses on the Emperor the consideration that it is his business to defend religion, and not superstition. The memorial was sent without the adhesion of the Christian senators, and therefore did not represent that body. He warns Valentinian that if he accedes to the request he will incur the censures of the Church, besides acting in a manner derogatory to the memory of his father and brother.

Ambrose, Bishop, to the most blessed Prince and most Christian Emperor Valentinian.

I. As all men who live under the Roman sway engage in military service under you, the Emperors and Princes of the world, so too do you yourselves owe service to Almighty God and our holy faith. For salvation is not sure unless everyone worship in truth the true God, that is the God of the Christians, under Whose sway are all things; for He alone is the true God, Who is to be worshipped from the bottom of the heart; for "the gods of the heathen," as Scripture says, "are devils,"¹

2. Now everyone is a soldier of this true God, and he who receives and worships Him in his inmost spirit, does not bring to His service dissimulation, or pretence, but earnest faith and devotion. And if, in fine, he does not attain to this, at least he ought not to give any countenance to the worship of idols and to profane ceremonies. For no one deceives God, to whom all things, even the hidden things of the heart, are manifest.

3. Since, then, most Christian Emperor, there is due from you to the true God both faith and zeal, care and devotion for the faith, I wonder how the hope has risen up to some, that you would feel it a duty to restore by your command altars to the gods of the heathen, and furnish the funds requisite for profane sacrifices; for whatsoever has long been claimed by either the imperial or the city treasury you will seem to give rather from your own funds, than to be restoring what is theirs.

4. And they are complaining of their losses, who never spared our blood, who destroyed the very buildings of the churches. And they petition you to grant them privileges, who by the last Julian law² denied us the common right of speaking and teaching, and those privileges whereby Christians also have often been deceived; for by those privileges they endeavoured to ensnare some, partly through inadvertence, partly in order to escape the burden of public requirements; and, because all are not found to be brave, even under Christian princes, many have lapsed.

5. Had these things not been abolished I could prove that they ought to be done away by your authority; but since they have been forbidden and prohibited by many princes throughout nearly the whole world, and were abolished at Rome by Gratian³ of august memory, the brother of your Clemency, in consideration of the true faith, and rendered void by a rescript; do not, I pray you, either pluck up what has been established in accordance with the faith, nor rescind your brother's

precepts. In civil matters if he established anything, no one thinks that it ought to be treated lightly, while a precept about religion is trodden under foot.

6. Let no one take advantage of your youth; if he be a heathen who demands this, it is not right that he should bind your mind with the bonds of his own superstition; but by his zeal he ought to teach and admonish you how to be zealous for the true faith, since he defends vain things with all the passion of truth. I myself advise you to defer to the merits of illustrious men, but undoubtedly God must be preferred to all.

7. If we have to consult concerning military affairs, the opinion of a man experienced in warfare should be waited for, and his counsel be followed; when the question concerns religion, think upon God. No one is injured because God is set before him. He keeps his own opinion. You do not compel a man against his will to worship what he dislikes. Let the same liberty be given to you, O Emperor, and let every one bear it with patience, if he cannot extort from the Emperor what he would take it ill if the Emperor desired to extort from him. A shuffling spirit is displeasing to the heathen themselves, for everyone ought freely to defend and maintain the faith and purpose of his own mind.

8. But if any, Christians in name, think that any such decree should be made, let not bare words mislead your mind, let not empty words deceive you. Whoever advises this, and whoever decrees it, sacrifices. But that one should sacrifice is more tolerable than that all should fall. Here the whole Senate of Christians is in danger.

9. If to-day any heathen Emperor should build an altar, which God forbid, to idols, and should compel Christians to come together thither, in order to be amongst those who were sacrificing, so that the smoke and ashes from the altar, the sparks from the sacrilege, the smoke from the burning might choke the breath and throats of the faithful; and should give judgment in that court where members were compelled to vote after swearing at the altar of an idol (for they explain that an altar is so placed for this purpose, that every assembly should deliberate under its sanction, as they suppose, though the Senate is now made up with a majority of Christians), a Christian who was compelled with a choice such as this to come to the Senate, would consider it to be persecution, which often happens, for they are compelled to come together even by violence. Are these Christians, when you are Emperor, compelled to swear at a heathen altar? What is an oath, but a confession of the divine power of Him Whom you invoke as watcher over your good faith? When you are Emperor, this is sought and demanded. that you should command an altar to be built, and the cost of profane sacrifices to be granted.

10. But this cannot be decreed without sacrilege, wherefore I implore you not to decree or order it, nor to subscribe to any decrees of that sort. I, as a priest of Christ, call upon your faith, all of us bishops would have joined in calling upon you, were not the report so sudden and incredible, that any such thing had been either suggested in your council, or petitioned for by the Senate. But far be it from the Senate to have petitioned this, a few heathen are making use of the common name. For, nearly two years ago, when the same attempt was being made, holy Damasus, Bishop of the Roman Church, elected by the judgment of God, sent to me a memorial, which the Christian senators in great numbers put forth, protesting that they had given no such authority, that they did not agree with such requests of the heathen, nor give consent to them, and they declared publicly and privately that they would not come to the Senate, if any such thing were decreed. Is it

agreeable to the dignity of your, that is Christian, times, that Christian senators should be deprived of their dignity, in order that effect should be given to the profane will of the heathen? This memorial I sent to your Clemency's brother,⁴ and from it it was plain that the Senate had made no order about the expenses of superstition.

11. But perhaps it may be said, why were they not before present in the Senate when those petitions were made? By not being present they sufficiently say what they wish, they said enough in what they said to the Emperor. And do we wonder if those persons deprive private persons at Rome of the liberty of resisting, who are unwilling that you should be free not to command what you do not approve, or to maintain your own opinion?

12. And so, remembering the legation⁵ lately entrusted to me, I call again upon your faith. I call upon your own feelings not to determine to answer according to this petition of the heathen, nor to attach to an answer of such a sort the sacrilege of your subscription. Refer to the father of your Piety, the Emperor Theodosius, whom you have been wont to consult in almost all matters of greater importance. Nothing is greater than religion, nothing more exalted than faith.

13. If it were a civil cause the right of reply would be reserved for the opposing party; it is a religious cause, and I the bishop make a claim. Let a copy of the memorial which has been sent be given me, that I may answer more fully, and then let your Clemency's father be consulted on the whole subject, and vouchsafe an answer. Certainly if anything else is decreed, we bishops cannot contentedly suffer it and take no notice; you indeed may come to the church, but will find either no priest there, or one who will resist you.

14. What will you answer a priest who says to you, "The church does not seek your gifts, because you have adorned the heathen temples with gifts. The Altar of Christ rejects your gifts, because you have made an altar for idols, for the voice is yours, the hand is yours, the subscription is yours, the deed is yours. The Lord Jesus refuses and rejects your service, because you have served idols, for He said to you: `Ye cannot serve two masters.'⁶ The Virgins consecrated to God have no privileges from you, and do the Vestal Virgins claim them? Why do you ask for the priests of God, to whom you have preferred the profane petitions of the heathen? We cannot take up a share of the errors of others."

15. What will you answer to these words? That you who have fallen are but a boy? Every age is perfect in Christ, every age is full of God. No childhood is allowed in faith, for even children have confessed Christ against their persecutors with fearless mouth.

16. What will you answer your brother? Will he not say to you, "I did not feel that I was overcome, because I left you as Emperor; I did not grieve at dying, because I had you as my heir; I did not mourn at leaving my imperial command, because I believed that my commands, especially those concerning divine religion, would endure through all ages. I had set up these memorials of piety and virtue, I offered up these spoils gained from the world, these trophies of victory over the devil, these I offered up as gained from the enemy of all, and in them is eternal victory. What more could my enemy take away from me? You have abrogated my decrees, which so far he who took up arms⁷ against me did not do. Now do I receive a more terrible wound in that my decrees are condemned by my brother. My better part is endangered by you, that was but the death of my body, this of my reputation. Now is my power annulled, and what is harder, annulled by my own

family, and that is annulled, which even my enemies spoke well of in me. If you consented of your own free will, you have condemned the faith which was mine; if you yielded unwillingly, you have betrayed your own. So, too, which is more serious, I am in danger in your person.

16. What will you answer your father also? who with greater grief will address you, saying, "You judged very ill of me, my son, when you supposed that I could have connived at the heathen. No one ever told me that there was an altar in the Roman Senate House, I never believed such wickedness as that the heathen sacrificed in the common assembly of Christians and heathen, that is to say that the Gentiles should insult the Christians who were present, and that Christians should be compelled against their will to be present at the sacrifices. Many and various crimes were committed whilst I was Emperor. I punished such as were detected; if any one then escaped notice, ought one to say that I approved of that of which no one informed me? You have judged very ill of me, if a foreign superstition and not my own faith preserved the empire."

17. Wherefore, O Emperor, since you see that if you decree anything of that kind, injury will be done, first to God, and then to your father and brother, I implore you to do that which you know will be profitable to your salvation before God.

1: i e. deceased.

2: Julian.

3: Valentinian I.

4: Valentinian and Valens.

5: The play upon the words nomen (name) and numen (divinity) cannot be reproduced in English.

6: The evil omen resulting from destroying the image and altar of Victory.

7: i.e. to acorns for food.

Letters - Epistle 18

Epistle XVIII.

Epistle XVIII.

Reply of St. Ambrose to the Memorial of Symmachus, in which after complimenting Valentinian he deals with three points of the Memorial. He replies to his opponent's personification of Rome in a singularly telling manner, and proves that the famine spoken of by Symmachus had nothing to do with the cessation of heathen rites.

Ambrose, Bishop, to the most blessed prince and most gracious Emperor Valentinianus, the august.

1. Since the illustrious Symmachus, Prefect of the city, has sent petition to your Grace that the altar, which was taken away from the Senate House of the city of Rome, should be restored to its place; and you, O Emperor, although still young in years and experience, yet a veteran in the power of faith, did not approve the prayer of the heathen, I presented a request the moment I heard of it, in which, though I stated such things as it seemed necessary to suggest, I requested that a copy of the Memorial might be given to me.

2. So, then, not being in doubt as to your faith, but anxiously considering the risk, and sure of a kindly consideration, I am replying in this document to the assertions of the Memorial, making this sole request, that you will not expect elegance of language but the force of facts. For, as the divine Scripture teaches, the tongue of wise and studious men is golden, which, gifted with glittering words and shining with the brilliancy of splendid utterance as if of some rich colour, captivates the eyes of the mind with the appearance of beauty and dazzles with the sight. But this gold, if you consider it carefully, is of value outwardly but within is base metal. Ponder well, I pray you, and examine the sect of the heathen, their utterances, sound, weighty, and grand, but defend what is without capacity for truth. They speak of God and worship idols.

3. The illustrious Prefect of the city has in his Memorial set forth three propositions which he considers of force: that Rome, as he says, asks for her rites again, that pay be given to her priests and Vestal Virgins, and that a general famine followed upon the refusal of the priests' stipends.

4. In his first proposition Rome complains with sad and tearful words, asking, as he says, for the restoration of the rites of her ancient ceremonies. These sacred rites, he says, repulsed Hannibal from the walls, and the Senones from the Capitol. And so at the same time that the power of the sacred rites is proclaimed, their weakness is betrayed. So that Hannibal long insulted the Roman rites, and while the gods were fighting against him, arrived a conqueror at the very walls of the city. Why did they suffer themselves to be besieged, for whom their gods were fighting in arms?

5. And why should I say anything of the Senones, whose entrance into the inmost Capitol the remnant of the Romans could not have prevented, had not a goose by its frightened cackling betrayed them? See what sort of protectors the Roman temples have. Where was Jupiter at that time? Was he speaking in the goose?

6. But why should I deny that their sacred rites fought for the Romans? For Hannibal also worshipped the same gods. Let them choose then which they will. If these sacred rites conquered in the Romans, then they were overcome in the Carthaginians; if they triumphed in the Carthaginians, they certainly did not benefit the Romans.

7. Let, then, that invidious complaint of the Roman people come to an end. Rome has given no such charge. She speaks with other words. "Why do you daily stain me with the useless blood of the harmless herd? Trophies of victory depend not on the entrails of the flocks, but on the strength of those who fight. I subdued the world by a different discipline. Camillus was my soldier, who slew those who had taken the Tarpeian rock, and brought back the standards taken from the Capitol; valour laid those low whom religion had not driven off. What shall I say of Attilius [Regulus], who gave the service of his death? Africanus found his triumphs not amongst the altars of the Capitol, but amongst the lines of Hannibal. Why do you bring forward the rites of our ancestors? I hate the rites of Neros. Why should I speak of the Emperors of two months,¹ and the ends of rulers closely joined to their commencements. Or is it perchance a new thing for the barbarians to cross their boundaries? Were they, too, Christians in whose wretched and unprecedented cases,² the one, a captive Emperor, and, under the other, the captive world made manifest that their rites which promised victory were false. Was there then no Altar of Victory? I mourn over my downfall, my old age is tinged with that shameful bloodshed. I do not blush to be converted with the whole world in my old age. It is undoubtedly true that no age is too late to learn. Let that old age blush which cannot amend itself. Not the old age of years is worthy of praise but that of character. There is no shame in passing to better things. This alone was common to me with the barbarians, that of old I knew not God. Your sacrifice is a rite of being sprinkled with the blood of beasts. Why do you seek the voice of God in dead animals? Come and learn on earth the heavenly warfare; we live here, but our warfare is there. Let God Himself, Who made me, teach me the mystery of heaven, not man, who knew not himself. Whom rather than God should I believe concerning God? How can I believe you, who confess that you know not what you worship?

8. By one road, says he, one cannot attain to so great a secret. What you know not, that we know by the voice of God. And what you seek by fancies, we have found out from the very Wisdom and Truth of God. Your ways, therefore, do not agree with ours. You implore peace for your gods from the Emperors, we ask for peace for the Emperors themselves from Christ. You worship the works of your own hands, we think it an offence that anything which can be made should be esteemed God. God wills not that He should be worshipped in stones. And, in fine, your philosophers themselves have ridiculed these things.

9. But if you deny Christ to be God, because you believe not that He died (for you are ignorant that death was of the body not of the Godhead, which has brought it to pass that now no one of those who believe dies), what is more thoughtless than you who honour with insult, and disparage with honour, for you consider a piece of wood to be your god. O worship full of insult! You believe not that Christ could die, O perversity rounded on respect!

10. But, says he, let the altars be restored to the images, and their ornaments to the shrines. Let this demand be made of one who shares in their superstitions; a Christian Emperor has learnt to honour the altar of Christ alone. Why do they exact of pious hands and faithful lips the ministry to their sacrilege? Let the voice of our Emperor utter the Name of Christ alone, and speak of Him

only, Whom he is conscious of, for, "the King's heart is in the hand of the Lord."³ Has any heathen Emperor raised an altar to Christ? While they demand the restoration of things which have been, by their own example they show us how great reverence Christian Emperors ought to pay to the religion which they follow, since heathen ones offered all to their superstitions.

11a. We began long since, and now they follow those whom they excluded. We glory in yielding our blood, an expense moves them. We consider these things in the place of victories, they think them loss. Never did they confer on us a greater benefit than when they ordered Christians to be beaten and proscribed and slain. Religion made a reward of that which unbelief thought to be a punishment. See their greatness of soul! We have increased through loss, through want, through punishment; they do not believe that their rites can continue without contributions.

11. Let the Vestal Virgins, he says, retain their privileges. Let those speak thus, who are unable to believe that virginity can exist without reward, let those who do not trust virtue, encourage by gain. But how many virgins have the promised rewards gained for them? Hardly are seven Vestal Virgins received. See the whole number whom the fillets and chaplets for the head, the dye of the purple robes, the pomp of the litter surrounded by a company of attendants, the greatest privileges, immense profits, and a prescribed time of virginity have gathered together.

12. Let them lift up the eyes of soul and body, let them look upon a people of modesty, a people of purity, an assembly of virginity. Not fillets are the ornament of their heads, but a veil common in use but ennobled by chastity, the enticement of beauty not sought out but laid aside, none of those purple insignia, no delicious luxuries, but the practice of fasts, no privileges, no gains; all things, in fine, of such a kind that one would think them restrained from enjoyment whilst practising their duties. But whilst the duty is being practised the enjoyment of it is aroused. Chastity is increased by its own sacrifices. That is not virginity which is bought with a price, and not kept through a love of virtue; that is not purity which is bought by auction for money, which is bid for a time. The first victory of chastity is to conquer the desire of wealth, for the pursuit of gain is a temptation to modesty. Let us, however, lay down that bountiful provision should be granted to virgins. What an amount will overflow upon Christians! What treasury will supply such riches? Or if they think that gifts should be conferred on the Vestals alone, are they not ashamed that they who claimed the whole for themselves under heathen Emperors should think that we ought to have no common share under Christian Princes?

13. They complain, also, that public support is not considered due to their priests and ministers. What a storm of words has resounded on this point! But on the other hand even the inheritance of private property is denied us by recent laws,⁴ and no one complains; for we do not consider it an injury, because we grieve not at the loss. If a priest seeks the privilege of declining the municipal burdens,⁵ he has to give up his ancestral and all other property. If the heathen suffered this how would they urge their complaint, that a priest must purchase the free time necessary for his ministry by the loss of all his patrimony, and buy the power to exercise his public ministry at the expense of all his private means; and, alleging his vigils for the public safety, must console himself with the reward of domestic want, because he has not sold a service but obtained a favour.

14. Compare the cases. You wish to excuse a decurio, when it is not allowed the Church to excuse a priest. Wills are written on behalf of ministers of the temples, no profane person is excepted, no one of the lowest condition, no one shamelessly immodest, the clergy alone are

excluded from the common right, by whom alone common prayer is offered for all, and common service rendered, no legacies even of grave widows, no gifts are permitted. And where no fault can be found in the character, a penalty is notwithstanding imposed on the office. That which a Christian widow has bequeathed to the priests of a temple is valid, her legacy to the ministers of God is invalid. And I have related this not in order to complain, but that they may know what I do not complain of; for I prefer that we should be poorer in money than in grace.

15. But they say that what has been given or left to the Church has not been touched. Let them also state who has taken away gifts from the temples, which has been done to Christians,⁶ If these things had been done to the heathen the wrong would have been rather a requital than an injury. Is it now only at last that justice is alleged as a pretext, and a claim made for equity? Where was this feeling when, after plundering the goods of all Christians, they grudged them the very breath of life, and forbade them the use of that last burial nowhere denied to any dead? The sea restored those whom the heathen had thrown into it. This is the victory of faith, that they themselves now blame the acts of their ancestors whose deeds they condemn. But what reason is there in seeking benefits from those whose deeds they condemn?

16. No one, however, has denied gifts to the shrines, and legacies to the soothsayers, their land alone has been taken away, because they did not use religiously that which they claimed in right of religion. Why did they not practise what we did if they allege our example? The Church has no possessions of her own except the Faith. Hence are her returns, her increase. The possessions of the Church are the maintenance of the poor.⁷ Let them count up how many captives the temples have ransomed, what food they have contributed for the poor, to what exiles they have supplied the means of living. Their lands then have been taken away, not their rights.

17. See what was done, and a public famine avenged, as they say, the sad impiety that what was before profitable only for the comfort of the priests began to be profitable to the use of all. For this reason then, as they say, was the bark shipped from the corpses, and fainting men's mouths supped up the unsavoury sap. For this reason changing corn for the Chaonian acorn, going back once more to the food of cattle and the nourishment of wretched provisions, they shook the oaks and solaced their dire hunger in the woods. These, forsooth, were new prodigies on earth, which had never happened before, while heathen superstition was fervent throughout the world! When in truth before did the crop mock the prayers of the grasping husbandman with empty straw, and the blade of corn sought in the furrows fail the hope of the rustic crew?

18. And from what did the Greeks derive the oracles of their oaks except from their thinking that the support of their sylvan food was the gift of heavenly religion? For such do they believe to be the gifts of their gods. Who but heathen people worshipped the trees of Dodona, when they gave honour to the sorry food of the woodland? It is not likely that their gods in anger inflicted on them as a punishment that which they used when appeased to confer as a gift. And what justice would there be if, being grieved that support was refused to a few priests, they denied it to all, since the vengeance would be more unbearable than the fault? The cause, then, is not adequate to bring such suffering on a failing world, as that the full-grown hope of the year should perish suddenly while the crops were green.

19. And, certainly, many years ago the lights of the temples were taken away throughout the world; has it only now at length come into the mind of the gods of the heathen to avenge the

injury? And did the Nile fail to overflow in its accustomed course, in order to avenge the losses of the priests of the city, whilst it did not avenge its own?

20. But let it be that they suppose that the injuries done to their gods were avenged in the past year. Why have they been unnoticed in the present year? For now neither do the country people feed upon torn up roots, nor seek refreshment from the berries of the wood, nor pluck its food from thorns, but joyful in their prosperous labours, while wondering at their harvest, made up for their fasting by the full accomplishment of their wishes; for the earth rendered her produce with interest.

21. Who, then, is so unused to human matters as to be astonished at the differences of years? And yet even last year we know that many provinces abounded with produce. What shall I say of the Gauls which were more productive than usual? The Pannonias sold corn which they had not sown, and Phaetia Secunda experienced harm of her own fertility, for she who was wont to be safe in her scarcity, stirred up an enemy against herself by her fertility. The fruits of the autumn fed Liguria and the Venetias. So, then, the former year did not wither because of sacrilege, and the latter flourished with the fruits of faith. Let them too deny if they can that the vineyards abounded with an immense produce. And so we have both received a harvest with interest and possess the benefit of a more abundant vintage.

22. The last and most important point remains, whether, O Emperors, you ought to restore those helps which have profited you; for he says: 'Let them defend you, and be worshipped by us.' This it is, most faithful princes, which we cannot endure, that they should taunt us that they supplicate their gods in your names, and without your commands, commit an immense sacrilege, interpreting your shutting your eyes as consent. Let them have their guardians to themselves, let these, if they can, protect their worshippers. For, if they are not able to help those by whom they are worshipped, how can they protect you by whom they are not worshipped?

23. But, he says, the rites of our ancestors ought to be retained. But what, seeing that all things have made progress towards what is better? The world itself, which at first was compacted of the germs of the elements throughout the void, in a yielding sphere, or was dark with the shapeless confusion of the work as yet without order, did it not afterwards receive (the distinction between sky, sea, and earth being established), the forms of things whereby it appears beautiful? The lands freed from the misty darkness wondered at the new sun. The day does not shine in the beginning, but as time proceeds, it is bright with increase of light, and grows warm with increase of heat.

24. The moon herself, by which in the prophetic oracles the Church is represented, when first rising again, she waxes to her monthly age, is hidden from us in darkness, and filling up her horns little by little, so completing them opposite to the sun, glows with the brightness of clear shining.

25. The earth in former times was without experience of being worked for fruits; afterwards when the careful husbandman began to lord it over the fields, and to clothe the shapeless soil with vines, it put off its wild disposition, being softened by domestic cultivation.

26. The first age of the year itself, which has tinged us with a likeness to itself as things begin to grow, as it goes on becomes springlike with flowers soon about to fall, and grows up to full age in fruits at the end.

27. We too, inexperienced in age, have an infancy of our senses, but changing as years go on, lay aside the rudiments of our faculties.

28. Let them say, then, that all things ought to have remained in their first beginnings, that the world covered with darkness is now displeasing, because it has brightened with the shining of the sun. And how much more pleasant is it to have dispelled the darkness of the mind than that of the body, and that the ray of faith should have shone than that of the sun. So, then, the primeval state of the world as of all things has passed away, that the venerable old age of hoary faith might follow. Let those whom this touches find fault with the harvest, because its abundance comes late; let them find fault with the vintage, because it is at the close of the year; let them find fault with the olive, because it is the latest of fruits.

29. So, then, our harvest is the faith of souls; the grace of the Church is the vintage of merits, which from the beginning of the world flourished in the Saints, but in the last age has spread itself over the people, that all might notice that the faith of Christ has entered minds which were not rude (for there is no crown of victory without an adversary), but the opinion being exploded which before prevailed, that which was true is rightly preferred.

30. If the old rites pleased, why did Rome also take up foreign ones? I pass over the ground hidden by costly building, and shepherds' cottages glittering with degenerate gold. Why, that I may reply to the very matter which they complain of, have they eagerly received the images of captured cities, and conquered gods, and the foreign rites of alien superstition? Whence is the pattern for Cybele washing her chariots in a stream counterfeiting the Almo? Whence were the Phrygian bards, and the deities of unjust Carthage always hateful to the Romans? And her whom the Africans worship as Celestis, the Persians as Nitra, and the greater number as Venus, according to a difference of name, not a variety of deities. So they believed that Victory was a goddess, which is certainly a gift, not a power; is granted and does not rule, results from the aid of legions not the power of religions. Is that goddess then great whom the number of soldiers claims, or the event of battle gives?

31. They ask to have her altar erected in the Senate House of the city of Rome, that is where the majority who meet together are Christians! There are altars in all the temples, and an altar also in the temple of Victories. Since they take pleasure in numbers they celebrate their sacrifices everywhere. To claim a sacrifice on this one altar, what is it but to insult the Faith? Is it to be borne that a heathen should sacrifice and a Christian be present? Let them imbibe, he says, let them imbibe, even against their will, the smoke with their eyes, the music with their ears, the ashes with their throats, the incense with their nostrils, and let the dust stirred up from our hearths cover their faces though they detest it. Are not the baths, the colonnades, the streets filled with images sufficient for them? Shall there not be a common lot in that common assembly? The faithful portion of the senate will be bound by the voices of those that call upon the gods, by the oaths of those that swear by them. If they oppose they will seem to exhibit their falsehood, if they acquiesce, to acknowledge what is sacrilege.

32. Where, says he, shall we swear obedience to your Grace's laws and decrees? Does then your mind, which is contained in the laws, gain assent and bind to faithfulness by heathen ceremonies? The faith is attacked, not only of those who are present but also of those who are absent, and what is more, O Emperors, your faith, too, is attacked, for you compel if you command. Constantius of

august memory, though not yet initiated in the sacred Mysteries, thought that he would be polluted if he saw that altar. He commanded it to be removed, he did not command it to be replaced. The removal has the authority of an act, the restoration has not that of a command.

33. Let no one flatter himself because he is absent. He who joins himself to others in mind is more present than he whose assent is given by bodily presence. For it is more to be united in mind than to be joined in body. The Senate has you as the presidents who convene the assembly, it comes together for you; it gives its conscience to you, not to the gods of the heathen; it prefers you to its children, but not to its faith. This is a love to be desired, this is a love greater than any dominion, if faith which preserves dominion be secure.

34. But perhaps it may move some that if this be so, a most faithful Emperor⁸ has been forsaken, as if forsooth the reward of merits were to be estimated by the transitory measure of things present. For what wise man is ignorant that human affairs are ordered in a kind of round and cycle, for they have not always the same success, but their state varies and they suffer vicissitudes.

35. Whom have the Roman temples sent out more prosperous than Cneius Pompeius? Yet, when he had encompassed the earth with three triumphs, defeated in battle, a fugitive from war, and an exile beyond the bounds of his own empire, he fell by the hand of an eunuch of Canopus.

36. Whom has the whole land of the East given to the world more noble than Cyrus, king of the Persians? He too, after conquering the most powerful princes who opposed him, and retaining them, when conquered, as prisoners, perished, overthrown by the arms of a woman.⁹ And that king who was acknowledged to have treated even the vanquished with honour, had his head cut off, placed in a vessel full of blood, and was bidden to be satiated, being thus subject to the mocking of a woman's power. So in the course of that life of his like is not repaid by like, but far otherwise.

37. And whom do we find more devoted to sacrificing than Hamilcar, leader of the Carthaginians?¹⁰ Who, having offered sacrifice between the ranks during the whole time of the battle, when he saw that his side was conquered, threw himself into the fire which he was feeding, that he might extinguish even with his own body those fires which he had found to profit him nothing.

38. What, then, shall I say of Julian? Who, having credulously trusted the answers of the soothsayers, destroyed his own means of retreat.¹¹ Therefore even in like cases there is not a like offence, for our promises have deceived no one.

39. I have answered those who provoked me as though I had not been provoked, for my object was to refute the Memorial, not to expose superstition. But let their very memorial make you, O Emperor, more careful. For after narrating of former princes, that the earlier of them practised the ceremonies of their fathers, and the later did not abolish them; and saying in addition that, if the religious practice of the older did not make a precedent, the connivance of the later ones did; it plainly showed what you owe, both to your faith, viz., that you should not follow the example of heathen rites, and to your affection, that you should not abolish the decrees of your brother. For if for their own side alone they have praised the connivance of those princes, who, though Christians, yet in no way abolished the heathen decrees, how much more ought you to defer to brotherly love, so that you, who ought to overlook some things even if you did not approve them in

order not to detract from your brother's statutes, should now maintain what you judge to be in agreement both with your own faith, and the bond of brotherhood.

1: Perhaps by a rhetorical exaggeration reference is made to Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, who reigned less than three years between them; or else to Pertinax and his successor Julian, each of whom was murdered under three months.

2: These emperors were Valerian, taken prisoner by Sapor and treated with great indignity by the Persians, a.d. 260; and his son Gallienus, under whom a number of generals, nicknamed the "Thirty Tyrants," claimed and exercised independent authority. "Gallienus made but feeble and desultory attempts to put any of them down, turning into wretched jests each new humiliation, and taking refuge in sensuality from the hopeless task of state reorganization."- Dict. Chr. Biog. s. voc.

3: Prov. xxi. 1.

4: The law of Valentinian, de Episcopis, of which St. Jerome says [Ep. LII. ad Nepotianum, vol. 6, p. 92, of this series]: "I do not complain of the law, but I grieve that we have deserved a statute so harsh" ... "yet even so," he adds, "rapacity goes on unchecked." With the conversion of Constantine the world entered into the Church, and bishops becoming great personages, ambition and worldly passions gained a hold on many, and the scandals and evil of succeeding centuries seem likely to last, till the world once more turns against the Church of God. (Comp. Fr. Puller, Primitive Saints and the See of Rome, chap. iv.)

5: Exemption had been granted to the clergy from municipal offices by Constantine, but in consequence of abuse the privilege had been restrained. (See note on Ep. XL. §29.) 6: See Sosomen, Eccl. Hist. V. 5; Theodoret, Eccl. Hist. III. 8.

7: Cf. de Off. Min. II. 78, 137, 138.

8: Gratian, murdered a.d. 383. St. Ambrose on Ps. lxii. [lxi.] §23, gives some details mentioned by no other writer. The Emperor was noted for his great conscientiousness, and especially for purity.

9: Tomyris, queen of the Massagetae.-Herodot. I. 214.

10: Herod. VII. 167.

11: Sozomen, H. E. VI. 1. Cf. St. Aug. de Civ. Dei, IV. 29; V. 21.

Letters - Epistle 20

Epistle XX.

Epistle XX.

St. Ambrose relates to his sister the events at Milan connected with the demand of the Arians for a basilica, and how the people rose up in opposition. Then that on the second day the basilica had been occupied by soldiers, who however fraternized with the Catholics. He gives a sketch of his address, comparing their trials to those of Job, more particularly those caused by his wife, and other cases owing to women. Though the basilica was surrendered, he himself had been threatened by a notary, but this did not trouble him. He adapts the story of Jonah to the present circumstances, relates the joy of the people at recovering their church, Valentinian's words to his courtiers, and the behaviour of Calligonus to himself. The date of the letter is Easter, a.d. 385.

1. Since in almost all your letters you enquire anxiously about the Church, you shall hear what is taking place. The day after I received your letter, in which you said you were troubled by dreams, the pressure of heavy troubles began to be felt. And this time it was not the Portian basilica, that is the one outside the walls, which was demanded, but the new basilica, that is the one within the walls, which is larger.

2. First of all some great men, counsellors of state, begged of me to give up the basilica, and to manage that the people should make no disturbance. I replied, of course, that the temple of God could not be surrendered by a Bishop.

3. On the following day this answer was approved by the people in the Church; and the Prefect¹ came there, and began to persuade us to give up at least the Portian basilica, but the people clamoured against it. He then went away implying that he should report to the Emperor.

4. The day after, which was Sunday, after the lessons and the sermon, when the Catechumens were dismissed, I was teaching the creed to certain candidates² in the baptistery of the basilica. There it was reported to me that they had sent decani³ from the palace, and were putting up hangings,⁴ and that part of the people were going there. I, however, remained at my ministrations, and began to celebrate mass.⁵

5. Whilst offering the oblation, I heard that a certain Castulus, who, the Arians said, was a priest, had been seized by the people. Passers-by had come upon him in the streets. I began to weep bitterly, and to implore God in the oblation that He would come to our aid, and that no one's blood be shed in the Church's cause, or at least that it might be my blood shed for the benefit not of my people only, but also for the unbelievers themselves. Not to say more, I sent priests and deacons and rescued the man from violence.

6. Thereupon the heaviest sentences were decreed, first upon the whole body of merchants. And so during the holy days of the last week of Lent, when usually the bonds of debtors are loosed, chains were heard grating, were being placed on the necks of innocent persons, and two hundred

pounds' weight of gold was required within three days' time. They replied that they would give as much or twice as much, if demanded, so that only they might preserve their faith. The prisons were full of trades-people.

7. All the officials of the palace, that is the recorders, the commissioners, the apparitors of the different magistrates, were commanded to keep away from what was going on, on the pretence that they were forbidden to take part in any sedition; many very heavy penalties were threatened against men of position, if they did not surrender the basilica. Persecution was raging, and had they but opened the floodgates, they seemed likely to break out into every kind of violence.

8. The Counts and Tribunes come and urged me to cause the basilica to be quickly surrendered, saying that the Emperor was exercising his rights since everything was under his power. I answered that if he asked of me what was mine, that is, my land, my money, or whatever of this kind was my own, I would not refuse it, although all that I have belonged to the poor, but that those things which are God's are not subject to the imperial power. "If my patrimony is required, enter upon it, if my body, I will go at once. Do you wish to cast me into chains, or to give me to death? it will be a pleasure to me. I will not defend myself with throngs of people, nor will I cling to the altars and entreat for my life, but will more gladly be slain myself for the altars."

9. I was indeed Struck with horror when I learnt that armed men had been sent to take possession of the basilica, lest while the people were defending the basilica, there might be some slaughter which would tend to the injury of the whole city. I prayed that I might not survive the destruction of so great a city, or it might be of the whole of Italy. I feared the odium of shedding blood, I offered my own neck. Some Gothic tribunes were present, whom I accosted, and said, "Have you received the gift of Roman rights in order to make yourselves disturbers of the public peace? Whither will you go, if things here are destroyed?"

10. Then I was desired to restrain the people; I answered that it was in my power not to excite them; but in God's hands to quiet them. And that if they thought that I was urging them on, they ought at once to punish me, or that I ought to be sent to any desert part of the earth they chose. After I had said this, they departed, and I spent the whole day in the old basilica, and thence went home to sleep, that if any one wanted to carry me off he might find me ready.

11. Before day when I left the house the basilica was surrounded by soldiers. It is said that the soldiers had intimated to the Emperor that if he wished to go forth he could do so; that they would be in attendance, if they saw him go to join the Catholics; if not that they would go to the assembly which Ambrose had convened.

12. None of the Arians dared to go forth, for there was not one among the citizens, only a few of the royal family, and some of the Goths. And they as of old they made use of their waggons as dwellings, now make the Church their waggon. Wherever that woman goes, she carries with her all assemblage.

13. I heard that the Basilica was surrounded by the groaning of the people, but whilst the lessons were being read, I was informed that the new Basilica also was full of people, that the crowd seemed greater than when they were all free, and that a Reader was being called for. In short, the soldiers themselves who seemed to have occupied the Basilica, when they knew that I had ordered that the people should abstain from communion with them, began to come to our

assembly. When they saw this, the minds of the women were troubled, and one rushed forth. But the soldiers themselves said that they had come for prayer not for fighting. The people uttered some cries. With great moderation, with great instancy, with great faithfulness they begged that we would go to that Basilica. It was said, too, that the people in that Basilica were demanding my presence.

14. I then commenced the following address. You have heard, my children, the reading of the book of Job, which, according to the appointed order and season,⁶ is being gone through. By experience the devil also knew that this book would be explained, in which all the power of his temptations is shown and made clear, and so to-day he roused himself with greater vigour. But thanks be to our God, who has so established you with faith and patience. I had mounted the pulpit to praise Job alone, and I have found in you all Jobs to praise. In each of you Job lives again, in each the patience and valour of that saint has shone forth again. For what more resolute could have been said by Christian men, than what the Holy Spirit has to-day spoken in you? We request, O Augustus, we do not fight, we do not fear, but we request. This beseems Christians both to wish for peace and tranquillity, and not to suffer constancy of faith and truth to be checked by fear. For the Lord is our Leader, "Who is the Saviour of them that hope in Him."⁷

15. But let us come to the lessons before us. You see that permission is given to the devil, that the good may be tested. The evil one envies all progress in good, he tempts us in divers way. He tried holy Job in his possessions, in his children, in pain of body. The stronger is tried in his own person, the weaker in that of another. And he was desirous of carrying off my riches which I possess in you, and wished to dissipate this patrimony of your tranquillity. And he strove to deprive me of yourselves also, my good children, for whom I daily renew the Sacrifice, you he endeavoured to involve in the ruin as it were of a public disturbance. I have then already been assailed by two kinds of temptation. And perhaps because the Lord our God knows me to be too weak, He has not yet given him power over my body. Though myself may desire it, though I offer myself, He deems me yet it may be unequal to this conflict, and exercises me with divers labours. And Job did not begin with that conflict but finished with it.

16. But Job was tried by accumulated tidings of evils, he was also tried by his wife, who said, "Speak a word against God and die."⁸ You see what terrible things are of a sudden stirred up, the Goths, armed men, the heathen, the fines of the merchants, the sufferings of the Saints. You observe what was commanded, when the order was given "surrender the Basilica," that is "speak a word against God and die. And not only, speak against God," but, Do something against Him. For the command was, surrender the altars of God.

17. So, then, we are prepared by the imperial commands, but are strengthened by the words of Scripture, which replies: "Thou hast spoken as one of the foolish." That temptation then is no light one, for, we know that those temptations are more severe which arise through women. For even Adam⁹ was overthrown by Eve, whereby it came to pass that he erred from the Divine commandments. And when he recognized his error, feeling the reproach of a guilty conscience, he would fain have hidden himself, but he could not be hidden, and so God said to him: "Adam, where art thou?"¹⁰ that is, what wast thou before? where hast thou now begun to be? Where had I placed thee? Whither hast thou wandered? Thou ownest that thou art naked because thou hast lost the robe of a good faith. Those are leaves with which thou now seekest to veil thyself. Thou

hast rejected the fruit, thou desired to hide under the leaves of the Law, but thou art betrayed. Thou hast desired to depart from the Lord thy God for the sake of one woman, therefore thou fleest from Him Whom thou soughtest before to see. Thou hast chosen to hide thyself with one woman, to forsake the Mirror of the world, the abode in Paradise, the grace of Christ.

18. Why should I relate that Jezebel,¹¹ also persecuted Elisha after a bloodthirsty fashion? or that Herodias¹² caused John the Baptist to be slain? Individuals persecuted individuals; but for me, whose merits are far inferior, the trials are all the harder. My strength is less, but I have more danger. Of women change follows on change, their hatreds alternate, their falsehoods vary, elders assemble together, wrong done to the Emperor is made a pretence. What is then the reason of such severe temptation against me, a mere worm; except that they are attacking not me but the Church?

19. At last the command was given: Surrender the Basilica. My reply was, it is not lawful for me to surrender it, nor advantageous for you, O Emperor, to receive it. By no right can you violate the house of a private person, and do you think that the House of God may be taken away? It is asserted that everything is lawful for the Emperor, that all things are his. My answer is: Do not, O Emperor, lay on yourself the burden of such a thought as that you have any imperial power over those things which belong to God.¹³ Exalt not yourself, but if you desire to reign long, submit yourself to God, It is written: "The things which are God's to God, those which are Caesar's to Caesar."¹⁴ The palaces belong to the Emperor, the churches to the Bishop. Authority is committed to you over public, not over sacred buildings. Again the Emperor was stated to have declared: I also ought to have one Basilica. My answer was: It is not lawful for you to have it. What have you to do with an adulteress? For she is an adulteress who is not joined to Christ in lawful wedlock.

20. Whilst I was treating on this matter, tidings were brought me that the royal hangings were taken down, and the Basilica filled with people, who were calling for my presence, so I at once turned my discourse to this, and said: How high and how deep are the oracles of the Holy Spirit! We said at Matins, as you, brethren, remember, and made the response with the greatest grief of mind: "O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance,"¹⁵ And in very deed the heathen came, and even worse than the heathen came; for the Goths¹⁶ came, and men of different nations; they came with weapons and surrounded and occupied the Basilica. We in our ignorance of Thy greatness mourned over this, but our want of foresight was in error.

21. The heathen are come, and in very truth are come into Thine inheritance, for they who came as heathen have become Christians. Those who came to invade Thine inheritance, have been made coheirs with God. I have those as protectors whom I considered to be adversaries. That is fulfilled which the Prophet sang of the Lord Jesus that "His dwelling is in peace," and "There brake He the horns of the bows, the shield, the sword and the battle."¹⁷ For whose girl is this, whose work is this but Thine, Lord Jesus? Thou sawest armed men coming to Thy temple; on the one hand the people wailing and coming in throngs so as not to seem to surrender the Basilica of God, on the other hand the soldiers ordered to use violence. Death was before my eyes, lest madness should gain any footing whilst things were thus. Thou, O Lord, didst come between, and madest of twain one.¹⁸ Thou didst restrain the armed men, saying, If ye run together to arms, if those shut up in My temple are troubled, "what profit is there in My blood." Thanks then be unto Thee, O

Christ. No ambassador, no messenger, but Thou, O Lord, hast saved Thy people, "Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness."¹⁹

22. I said these things, wondering that the Emperor's mind could be softened by the zeal of the soldiers, the entreaties of the Counts, and the supplication of the people. Meanwhile I was told that a notary had been sent to me, to bring me orders. I retired a little, and he intimated the order to me. What were you thinking of, he said, in acting against the Emperor's decree? I replied: I do not know what has been decreed, and I have not been informed of what has been unadvisedly done. He asked: Why did you send priests to the Basilica? If you are a tyrant I wish to know it, that I may know how to prepare against you. I replied by saying that I had done nothing hastily regarding the Church. That at the time when I heard that the Basilica was occupied by soldiers, I only gave freer utterance to groans, and that when many were exhorting me to go thither, I said: I cannot surrender the basilica, but I may not fight. But after I heard that the royal hangings had been taken away, when the people were urging me to go thither, I sent some priests; that I would not go myself, but said, I believe in Christ that the Emperor himself will treat with us.

23. If these acts looked like tyranny, that I had arms, but only in the Name of Christ, that I had the power of offering my own body. Why, I said, did he delay to strike, if he thought me a tyrant? That by ancient right imperial power had been given by bishops, never assumed, and it was commonly said that emperors had desired the priesthood, rather than priests the imperial power. That Christ withdrew lest He should be made a king. That we had our own power; for the power of a bishop was his weakness. "When I am weak," says the Apostle, "then I become strong."²⁰ But let him against whom God has not stirred up an adversary beware lest he make a tyrant for himself. That Maximus did not say that I was the tyrant of Valentinian, he complained that by the intervention of my legation he had been unable to cross over into Italy.²¹ And I added that priests had never been tyrants, but had often suffered from them.

24. We passed that whole day in sadness, but the imperial hangings were cut by boys in derision. I could not return home, because the soldiers who were guarding the basilica were all around. We repeated Psalms with the brethren in the smaller basilica of the Church.

25. On the following day the Book of Jonah²² was read according to custom, after the completion of which I began this discourse. A book has been read, brethren, in which it is foretold that sinners shall be converted. Their acceptance takes place because that which is to happen is looked forward to at present. I added that the just man had been willing even to incur blame, in order not to see or denounce the destruction of the city. And because the sentence was mournful he was also saddened that the gourd had withered up. God too said to the prophet: "Art thou sad because of the gourd?" and Jonah answered: "I am sad."²³ And the Lord then said, that if he grieved that the gourd was withered, how much should He Himself care for the salvation of so many people. And therefore that He had put away the destruction which had been prepared for the whole city.

26. And without further delay, tidings are brought that the Emperor had commanded the soldiers to retire from the basilica, and that the sums which had been exacted of the merchants should be restored. How great then was the joy of the whole people! how just their applause! and how abundant their thanks! And it was the day on which the Lord was delivered up for us, on which penance is relaxed in the Church. The soldiers vied with each other in bringing in these tidings, rushing to the altars, giving kisses, the mark of peace. Then I recognized that God had smitten the

early worm that the whole city might be preserved.

27. These things were done, and would that all was at an end! but the Emperor's words full of excitement foreshadow future and worse troubles. I am called a tyrant, and even more than a tyrant. For when the Counts were entreating the Emperor to go to the Church, and said that they were doing this at the request of the soldiers, he answered: If Ambrose bade you, you would deliver me up to him in chains. You can think what may be coming after these words. All shuddered when they heard them, but he has some by whom he is exasperated.

28. Lastly, too, Calligonus, the chief chamberlain, ventured to address me in peculiar language. Do you, said he, whilst I am alive treat Valentinian with contempt? I will take your head from you. My reply was, God grant you to fulfil your threat; for then I shall suffer as bishops do, you will act as do eunuchs. Would that God might turn them away from the Church, let them direct all their weapons against me, let them satisfy their thirst with my blood.

1: The Praetorian Prefect, one of the four great officers of the Empire, their power extending over all departments of state, except the army. See Dict. Gr. and Rom. Ant.

2: The Competentes, those of the Catechumens who having requested to be baptized were admitted to be instructed in the Creed and the Lord's Prayer in preparation. This was usually done in Lent.

3: Officials probably of the same kind as lictors.

4: The officials were fixing outside the basilica certain vela or hangings, the effect of which was to mark the building as Imperial property.

5: Missam facere. This is the earliest extant instance of the use of this subsequently almost universal name for the Holy Eucharist, the meaning of which is uncertain.

6: The Book of Job is still read in the evenings of Holy Week in the Eastern Church.

7: Ps. xvii. [xvi.] 7.

8: Job. ii. 9.

9: Gen. iii. 6.

10: Gen. iii. 9.

11: 1 [3] Kings xix. 1.

12: S. Matt. xiv. 3.

13: St. Ambrose is here repeating in plain words what he has also said before, that the secular power has no authority over the Church, and what belongs to God.

14: S. Matt. xxii. 21.

15: Ps. lxxix. [lxxviii.] 1.

16: The Goths were mostly Arians, and so worse than heathen.

17: Ps. lxxvi. [lxxv.] 2, Ps. lxxvi. [lxxv.] 3. E. V.-Salem, which means "peace."

18: Eph. ii. 15.

19: Ps. xxx. [xxix.] 11.

20: 2 Cor. xii. 10.

21: The first legation, a.d. 383 or 384.

22: Read now in the West on Holy Saturday.

23: Jonah iv. 9.

Letters - Epistle 63

Epistle LXIII.

Epistle LXIII.

Limenius, Bishop of Vercellae, having died, the see remained long vacant owing to domestic factions. St. Ambrose, therefore, as Exarch, writes to the Christians at Vercellae, and commences by reference to the speedy and unanimous election of Eusebius, a former Bishop, and reminds them of the presence of Christ as a reason for concord, He refers next to two apostate monks, Sarmatio and Barbatianus, and inveighs against sensuality, which degrades men below the beasts. Thence he passes to the virtues required in a bishop, referring again to Eusebius, and to Dionysius, Bishop of Milan, comparing the clerical and monastic lives, and ends with exhortations to Christian virtue. The letter seems to have been written a.d. 396.

Ambrose, a servant of Christ, called to be a Bishop, to the Church of Vercellae, and to those who call on the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Grace be fulfilled unto you in the Holy Spirit from God the Father and His only-begotten Son.

1. I am spent with grief that the Church of God which is among you is still without a bishop, and now alone of all the regions of Liguria and Aemilia, and of the Venetiae all the and other neighbouring parts of Italy needs that care which other churches were wont to ask for themselves from it; and what is a greater source of shame to myself, the tension amongst you which causes the obstacle is laid to my charge. Now since there are dissensions among you, how can we decree anything, or you elect, or anyone agree to undertake this office amongst those who are at variance which he could hardly sustain amongst those who are at unity.

2. Is this the training of a confessor, are these the offspring of those righteous fathers who, as soon as they saw, approved of holy Eusebius, whom they had never known before, preferring him to their fellow-citizens, and he was no sooner amongst them than he was approved, and much more when they had observed him. Justly did he turn out so great a man, whom the whole Church elected, justly was it believed that he whom all had demanded was elected by the judgment of God. It is fitting then that you follow the example of your parents, especially since you who have been instructed by a holy confessor ought to be so much better than your fathers, as a better teacher has taught and instructed you, and to manifest a sign of your moderation and concord by agreeing in your request¹ for a Bishop.

3. For if according to the Lord's saying, that which two shall have agreed upon on earth concerning anything which they shall ask, shall be done for them, as He says, by My Father, Who is in heaven, for: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them,"² how much less, where the full congregation is gathered in the Name of the Lord. Where the demand of all is unanimous, ought we to doubt that the Lord Jesus is there as the Author of that desire, and the Hearer of the petition, the Presider over the ordination, and the Giver of the grace?

4. Make yourselves then to appear worthy that Christ should be in your midst. For where peace is, there is Christ, for Christ is Peace; and where righteousness is, there is Christ, for Christ is Righteousness. Let Him be in the midst of you, that you may see Him, lest it be said to you also: "There standeth One in the midst of you, Whom ye see not."³ The Jews saw not Him in Whom they believed not; we look upon Him by devotion, and behold Him by faith.

5. Let Him therefore stand in your midst, that the heavens, which declare the glory of God,⁴ may be opened to you, that you may do His will, and work His works. He who sees Jesus, to him are the heavens opened as they were opened to Stephen, when he said: "Behold I see the heavens opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God."⁵ Jesus was standing as his advocate, He was standing as though anxious, that He might help His athlete Stephen in his conflict, He was standing as though ready to crown His martyr.

6. Let Him then be standing for you, that you may not be afraid of Him sitting; for when sitting He judges, as Daniel says: "The thrones were placed, and the books were opened, and the Ancient of days did sit."⁶ But in the eighty-first[second] Psalm it is written: "God stood in the congregation of gods, and decideth among the gods."⁷ So then when He sits He judges, when He stands He decides, and He judges concerning the imperfect, but decides among the gods. Let Him stand for you as a defender, as a good shepherd, lest the fierce wolves assault you.

7. And not in vain is my warning turned to this point; for I hear that Sarmatio and Barbatianus⁸ are come to you, foolish talkers, who say that there is no merit in abstinence no grace in a frugal life, none in virginity, that all are valued at one price, that they are mad who chasten their flesh with fastings, that they may bring it into subjection to the spirit. But if he had thought it madness, Paul the Apostle would never himself have acted thus, nor written to instruct others. For he glories in it, saying: "But I chasten my body, and bring it into bondage, lest, after preaching to others, I myself should be found reprobate."⁹ So they who do not chasten their body, and desire to preach to others, are themselves esteemed reprobates.

8. For is there anything so reprobate as that which excites to luxury, to corruption, to wantonness, as the incentive to lust, the enticer to pleasure, the fuel of incontinence, the firebrand of desire? What new school has sent out these Epicureans? Not a school of philosophers, as they themselves say, but of unlearned men who preach pleasure, persuade to luxury, esteem chastity to be of no use. They were with us, but they were not of us,¹⁰ for we are not ashamed to say what the Evangelist John said. But when settled here they used to fast at first, they were enclosed within the monastery, there was no place for luxury, the opportunity of mocking and disputing was cut off.

9. This these dainty men could not endure. They went abroad, then when they desired to return they were not received; for I had heard many things which necessitated my being cautious; I admonished them, but effected nothing. And so boiling over they began to disseminate such things as made them the miserable enticers to all vices. They utterly lost the benefit of having fasted; they lost the fruits of their temporary continence. And so now they with Satanic eagerness envy the good works of others, the fruit of which themselves have failed to keep.

10. What virgin can hear that there is no reward for her chastity and not groan? Far be it from her to believe this easily, and still more to lay aside her zeal, or change the intention of her mind. What

widow, when she learnt that there was no profit in her widowhood, would choose to preserve her marriage faith and live in sorrow, rather than give herself up to a happier condition? Who, bound by the marriage-bond, if she hear that there is no honour in chastity, might not be tempted by careless levity of body or mind? And for this reason the Church in the holy lessons, and in the addresses of her priests, proclaims the praise of chastity and the glory of virginity.

11. In vain, then, does the Apostle say: "I wrote to you, in an Epistle, not to mingle with fornicators;"¹¹ and lest perchance they should say, We are not speaking of all the fornicators of the world, but we say that he who has been baptized in Christ ought not now to be esteemed a fornicator, but his life, whatever it is, is accepted of God,¹² the Apostle has added "Not at all[meaning] with the fornicators of this world," and farther on, "If any that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one not even to eat. For what have I to do with judging them that are without?"¹³ And to the Ephesians: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, and covetousness let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints."¹⁴ And immediately he adds: "For this ye know, that no immodest person, nor unclean, nor covetous, which is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."¹⁵ It is clear that this is said of the baptized, for they receive the inheritance, who are baptized into the death of Christ¹⁶ and are buried together with Him, that they may rise again with Him. Therefore they are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ:¹⁷ heirs of God, because the grace of Christ is conveyed to them; joint-heirs with Christ, because they are renewed into His life; heirs also of Christ; because to them is given by His death as it were the inheritance of the testator.

12. These then ought to take heed to themselves who have that which they may lose, rather than they who have it not. These ought to act with greater care, these ought to guard against the allurements of vice, or incentives to error, which arise chiefly from food and drink. For "the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."¹⁸

13. Epicurus¹⁹ himself also, whom these persons think they should follow rather than the apostles, the advocate of pleasure, although he denies that pleasure brings in evil, does not deny that certain things result from it from which evils are generated; and asserts in fine that the life of the luxurious which is filled with pleasures does not seem to be reprehensible, unless it be disturbed by the fear either of pain or of death. But how far he is from the truth is perceived even from this, that he asserts that pleasure was originally created in man by God its author, as Philomarus²⁰ his follower argues in his Epitomae, asserting that the Stoics are the authors of this opinion.

14. But Holy Scripture refutes this, for it teaches us that pleasure was suggested to Adam and Eve by the craft and enticements of the serpent. Since, indeed, the serpent itself is pleasure, and therefore the passions of pleasure are various and slippery, and as it were infected with the poison of corruptions, it is certain then that Adam, being deceived by the desire of pleasure, fell away from the commandment of God and from the enjoyment of grace. How then can pleasure recall us to paradise, seeing that it alone deprived us of it?

15. Wherefore also the Lord Jesus, wishing to make us more strong against the temptations of the devil, fasted when about to contend with him, that we might know that we can in no other way overcome the enticements of evil. Further, the devil himself hurled the first dart of his temptations

from the quiver of pleasure, saying: "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."²¹ After which the Lord said: "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word of God;"²² and would not do it, although He could, in order to teach us by a salutary precept to attend rather to the pursuit of reading than to pleasure. And since they say that we ought not to fast, let them prove for what cause Christ fasted, unless it were that His fast might be an example to us. Lastly, in His later words He taught us that evil cannot be easily overcome except by our fasting, saying: "This kind of devils is not cast out but by prayer and fasting."²³

16. And what is the intention of the Scripture which teaches us that Peter fasted, and that the revelation concerning the baptism of Gentiles was made to him when fasting and praying,²⁴ except to show that the Saints themselves advance when they fast. Finally, Moses received the Law when he was fasting;²⁵ and so Peter when fasting was taught the grace of the New Testament. Daniel too by virtue of his fast stopped the mouths of the lions and saw the events of future times.²⁶ And what safety can there be for us unless we wash away our sins by fasting, since Scripture says that fasting and alms do away sin?²⁷

17. Who then are these new teachers who reject the merit of fasting? Is it not the voice of heathen who say, "Let us eat and drink?" whom the Apostle well ridicules, when he says: "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."²⁸ That is to say, What profited me my contention even unto death, except that I might redeem my body? And it is redeemed in vain if there is no hope of the resurrection. And, consequently, if all hope of the resurrection is lost, let us eat and drink, let us not lose the enjoyment of things present, who have none of things to come. It is then for them to indulge in meats and drinks who hope for nothing after death.

18. Rightly then does the Apostle, arguing against these men, warn us that we be not shaken by such opinions, saying: "Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners. Be ye righteously sober and sin not, for some have no knowledge of God."²⁹ Sobriety, then, is good, for drunkenness is sin.

19. But as to that Epicurus himself, the defender of pleasure, of whom, therefore, we have made frequent mention in order to prove that these men are either disciples of the heathen and followers of the Epicurean sect or himself, whom the very philosophers exclude from their company as the patron of luxury, what if we prove him to be more tolerable than these men? He declares, as Demarchus³⁰ asserts, that neither drinking, nor banquets, nor offspring, nor embraces of women, nor abundance of fish, and other such like things which are prepared for the service of a sumptuous banquet, make life sweet, but sober discussion. Lastly, he added that those who do not use the banquets of society in excess, use them with moderation. He who willingly makes use of the juices of plants alone together with bread and water, despises feasts on delicacies, for many inconveniences arise from them. In another place they also say: It is not excessive banquets, nor drinking which give rise to the enjoyment of pleasure, but a life of temperance.

20. Since, then, philosophy has disowned those men, is the Church not to exclude them? Seeing, too, that they, because they have a bad cause, frequently fall foul of themselves by their own assertions. For, although their chief opinion is that there is no enjoyment of pleasure except such as is derived from eating and drinking, yet understanding that they cannot, without the greatest shame, cling to so disgraceful a definition, and that they are forsaken by all, they have tried to

colour it with a sort of stain of specious arguments; so that one of them has said: Whilst we are aiming at pleasure by means of banquets and songs, we have lost that which is infused into us by the reception of the Word, whereby alone we can be saved.

21. Do not they by these various arguments show themselves to us as differing and disagreeing one with the other? And Scripture too condemns them, not passing over those whom the Apostle refuted, as Luke, who wrote the book as a history, tells us in the Acts of the Apostles, "And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers disputed with him. And some said, What does this babbler mean? And others said, He seemeth to be a setter forth of new gods."³¹

22. Yet from this hand too the Apostle did not go forth without success, since even Dionysius the Areopagite together with his wife Damaris and many others believed. And so that company of most learned and eloquent men showed themselves overcome in a simple discussion by the example of those who believed. What then do those men mean, who endeavour to prevent those whom the Apostle has gained, and whom Christ has redeemed with His own blood? asserting that the baptized ought not to give themselves to the discipline of the virtues, that revellings injure them not, nor abundance of pleasures; that they are foolish who go without them, that virgins ought to marry, bear children, and likewise widows to repeat that converse with man which they have once experienced with ill results; and that even if they can contain, they are in error who will not again enter the marriage bond.

23. What then? Would you have us put off the man in order to put on the beast, and stripping ourselves of Christ, clothe ourselves or be superclothed with the garments of the devil? But since the very teachers of the heathen did not think that honour and pleasure could be joined together, because they would seem thus to class beasts with men, shall we as it were infuse the habits of beasts into the human breast, and inscribe on the reasonable mind the unreasoning ways of wild beasts?

24. And yet there are many kinds of animals, which, when they have lost their fellow, will not mate again, and spend their time as it were in solitary life; many too live on simple herbs, and will not quench their thirst except at a pure stream; one can also often see dogs refrain from food forbidden them, so that they close their famishing mouths if restraint is bidden them. Must men then be warned against that wherein brutes have learned not to transgress?

26. But what is more admirable than abstinence, which makes even the years of youth to ripen, so that there is an old age of character? For as by excess of food and by drunkenness even mature age is excited, so the wildness of youth is lessened by scanty feasts and by the running stream. An external fire is extinguished by pouring on water, it is then no wonder if the inward heat of the body is cooled by draughts from the stream, for the flame is fed or fails according to the fuel. As hay, straw, wood, oil, and such like things are the nourishment which feeds fire, if you take them away, or do not supply them, the fire is extinguished. In like manner then the heat of the body is supported or lessened by food, it is excited by food and lessened by food. Luxury then is the mother of lust.

27. And is not temperance agreeable to nature, and to that divine law, which in the very beginning of all created things gave the springs for drink and the fruits of the trees for food? After the Flood the just man found wine a source of temptation to him.³² Let us then use the natural drink of

temperance, and would that we all were able to do so. But because all are not strong the Apostle said: "Use a little wine because of thy frequent infirmities."³³ We must drink it then not for the sake of pleasure, but because of infirmity, and therefore sparingly as a remedy, not in excess as a gratification.

28. Lastly, Elijah, whom the Lord was training to the perfection of virtue, found at his head a cake and a cruse of water; and then fasted in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights.³⁴ Our fathers, when they passed across the sea on foot,³⁵ drank water not wine. Daniel and the Hebrew children, fed with their peculiar food,³⁶ and with water to drink, overcame, the former the fury of the lions;³⁷ the latter saw the burning fire play around their limbs with harmless touch.³⁸

26. And why should I speak of men? Judith, in no way moved by the luxurious banquet of Holophernes, carried off the triumph of which men's arms despaired, solely in right of her temperance; delivered her country from occupation and slew the leader of the expedition with her own hands.³⁹ A clear proof both that his luxury had enervated that warrior, terrible to the nations, and that temperance made this woman stronger than men. In this case it was not in her sex that nature was surpassed, but she overcame by her diet. Esther by her fasts moved a proud king.⁴⁰ Anna, who for eighty-four years in her widowhood had served God with fasts and prayers day and night in the temple,⁴¹ recognized Christ, Whom John, the master of abstinence, and as it were a new angel on earth, announced.

30. O foolish Elisha, for feeding the prophets with wild and bitter gourds!⁴² O Ezra forgetful of Scripture, though he did restore the Scriptures from memory!⁴³ foolish Paul, who glories in fastings,⁴⁴ if fastings profit nothing.

31. But how should that not be profitable by which our sins are purged? And if you offer this with humility and with mercy, your bones, as Isaiah said, shall be fat, and you shall be like a well-watered garden.⁴⁵ So, then, your soul shall grow fat and its virtues also by the spiritual richness of fasting, and your fruits shall be multiplied by the fertility of your mind, so that there may be in you the inebriation of soberness, like that cup of which the Prophet says: "Thy cup which inebriates, how excellent it is!"⁴⁶

32. But not only is that temperance worthy of praise which moderates food, but also that which moderates lust. Since it is written: "Go not after thy lusts, and deny thy appetite. If thou givest her desires to thy soul, thou wilt be a joy to thine enemies;"⁴⁷ and farther on; "Wine and women make even wise men to fall away;"⁴⁸ So that Paul teaches temperance even in marriage itself; for he who is incontinent in marriage is a kind of adulterer, and violates the law of the Apostle.

33. And why should I tell how great is the grace of virginity, which was found worthy to be chosen by Christ, that it might be even the bodily temple of God, in which as we read the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily.⁴⁹ A Virgin conceived the Salvation of the world, a Virgin brought forth the life of all. Virginity then ought not to be left to itself, seeing that it benefited all in Christ. A Virgin bore Him Whom this world cannot contain or support. And when He was born from His mother's womb, He yet preserved the fence of her chastity and the inviolate seal of her virginity. And so Christ found in the Virgin that which He willed to make His own, that which the Lord of all might take to Himself. Further, our flesh was cast out of Paradise by a man and woman and was joined to God through a Virgin.

34. What shall I say concerning the other Mary,⁵⁰ the sister of Moses, who as leader of the women passed on foot the straits of the sea?⁵¹ By the same gift Thecla also was revered by the lions, so that the unfed beasts stretched at the feet of their prey prolonged a holy fast, and harmed the virgin neither with wanton look nor claw, since virginity is injured even by a look.

35. Again, with what reverence for virginity has the holy Apostle spoken: "Concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, but I give my counsel, as having obtained mercy of the Lord."⁵² He has received no commandment, but a counsel, for that which beyond the law is not commanded, but is rather advised by way of counsel. Authority is not assumed but grace is shown, and this is not shown by anyone, but by him who obtained mercy from the Lord. Are then the counsels of these men better than those of the apostles? The Apostle says, "I give my counsel," but they think it right to dissuade any from cultivating virginity.

36. And we ought to recognize what commendation of it the prophet, or rather Christ in the prophet, has uttered in a short verse; "A garden enclosed," says He, "is My sister, My spouse, a garden enclosed, a sealed fountain."⁵³ Christ says this to the Church, which he desires to be a virgin, without spot, without a wrinkle. A fertile garden is virginity, which can bear many fruits of good odour. A garden enclosed, because it is everywhere shut in by the wall of chastity. A sealed fountain, because virginity is the source and origin of modesty, having to keep inviolate the seal of purity, in which source the image of God is reflected, since the purity of simplicity agrees also with chastity of the body.

37. And no one can doubt that the Church is a virgin, who also in the Epistle to the Corinthians is espoused and presented as a chaste virgin to Christ.⁵⁴ So in the first Epistle he gives his counsel, and esteems the gift of virginity as good, since it is not disturbed by any troubles of the present time, nor polluted by any of its defilements, nor shaken by any storms; in the later Epistle he brings a spouse to Christ, because he is able to certify the virginity of the Church in the purity of that people.

38. Answer me now, O Paul, in what way thou givest counsel for the present distress.⁵⁵ "Because he that is without a wife is careful," he says, "for the things of the Lord, how he may please God." And he adds, "The unmarried woman and the virgin think of the things of the Lord, that they may be holy in body and spirit."⁵⁶ She has then her wall against the tempests of this world, and so fortified by the defence of divine protection she is disturbed by none of the blasts of this world. Good then is counsel, because there is advantage in counsel, but there is a bond in a commandment. Counsel attracts the willing, commandment binds the unwilling. If then anyone has followed counsel, and not repented, she has gained an advantage; but if she has repented, she has no ground for blaming the Apostle, for she ought herself to have judged of her own weakness; and so she is responsible for her own will, inasmuch as she bound herself by a bond and knot beyond her power to bear.

39. And so like a good physician, desiring to preserve the stability of virtue in the strong, and to give health to the weak, he gives counsel to the one, and points out the remedy to the others: "He that is weak eateth herbs,"⁵⁷ let him take a wife; he that has more power let him seek the stronger meat of virtue. And rightly he added: "For he who being steadfast hath settled in his own heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath determined this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin, doeth well. So then both he who giveth his own virgin in marriage, doeth

well; and he that giveth her not in marriage, doeth better. A woman is bound by the law, for so long a time as her husband liveth. But if her husband have fallen asleep, she is freed, let her marry whom she will, only in the Lord. But she will be more happy if she abide as she is, after my counsel, for I think that I also have the Spirit of the Lord."⁵⁸ This is to have the counsel of God, to search diligently into all things, and to advise things that are best, and to point out those that are safest.

40. A careful guide points out many paths, that each may walk along the one which he prefers and considers suitable to himself, so long as he comes upon one by which he can reach the camp. The path of virginity is good, but being high and steep requires the stronger wayfarers. Good also is that of widowhood, not so difficult as the former, but being rocky and rough, it requires more cautious travellers. Good too is that of marriage; being smooth and even it reaches the camp of the saints by a longer circuit. This way is taken by most. There are then the rewards of virginity, there are the merits of widowhood, there is also a place for conjugal modesty. There are steps and advances in each and every virtue.

41. Stand therefore firm in your hearts, that no one overthrow you, that no one be able to make you fall. The Apostle has taught us what it is "to stand," that is what was said to Moses: "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground;"⁵⁹ for no one stands unless he stand by faith, unless he stands fixed in the determination of his own heart. In another place also we read: "But do thou stand here with Me."⁶⁰ Each sentence was spoken by the Lord to Moses, both "Where thou standest is holy ground," and "Stand here with Me," that is, thou standest with Me, if thou stand firm in the Church. For the very place is holy, the very ground is fruitful with sanctity and fertile with harvests of virtues.

42. Stand then in the Church, stand where I appeared to thee, where I am with thee. Where the Church is, there is the most solid resting place for thy mind, there the support of thy soul, where I appeared to thee in the bush. Thou art the bush, I am the fire; the fire in the bush, I in the flesh. Therefore am I the fire, that I may give light to thee, that I may consume thy thorns, that is, thy sins. and show thee My grace.

43. Standing firm then in your hearts, drive away from the Church the wolves which seek to carry off prey. Let there be no sloth in you, let not your mouth be evil nor your tongue bitter. Do not sit in the council of vanity; for it is written, "I have not sat in the council of vanity."⁶¹ Do not listen to those who speak against their neighbours, lest whilst you listen to others, you be stirred up yourselves to speak against your neighbours, and it be said to each of you "Thou satest and spakest against thy brother."⁶²

44. Men sit when speaking against others, they stand when they praise the Lord, to whom it is said: "Behold now, praise the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, ye that stand in the house of the Lord."⁶³ He who sits, to speak of the bodily habit, is as it were loosened by ease, and relaxes the energy of his mind. But the careful watchman, the active searcher, the watchful guardian, who keeps the outposts of the camp, stands. The zealous warrior, too, who desires to anticipate the designs of the enemy, stands in array before he is expected.

45. "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall."⁶⁴ He who stands does not give way to detraction, for it is the tales of those at ease in which detraction is spread abroad, and malignity

betrayed. So that the prophet says: "I have hated the congregation of the malignant, and will not sit with the ungodly."⁶⁵ And in the thirty-sixth Psalm, which he has filled with moral precepts, he has put at the very beginning: "Be not malignant amongst the malignant, neither be envious of those who do iniquity."⁶⁶ Malignancy is more harmful than malice, because malignancy has neither pure simplicity nor open malice, but a hidden ill-will. And it is more difficult to guard against what is hidden than against what is known. For which reason too our Saviour warns us to beware of malignant spirits, because they would catch us by the appearance of sweet pleasures and a show of other things, when they hold forth honour to entice us to ambition, riches to avarice, power to pride.

46. And so both in every action, and especially in the demand for a bishop, by whom [as a pattern] the life of all is formed; malignity ought to be absent; so that the man who is to be elected out of all, and to heal all, may be preferred to all by a calm and peaceful decision. For "the meek man is the physician of the heart."⁶⁷ And the Lord in the Gospel called Himself this, when He said: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."⁶⁸

47. He is the good Physician, Who has taken upon Him our infirmities, has healed our sicknesses, and yet He, as it is written, honoured not Himself to be made a High Priest, but He Who spake to Him. The Father said: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee."⁶⁹ As He said in another place: "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech." Who, since He was the type of all future priests, took our flesh upon Him, that "in the days of His flesh He might offer prayers and supplications with a loud voice and tears; and by those things which He suffered, though He was the Son of God, might seem to learn obedience, which He taught us, that He might be made to us the Author of Salvation?"⁷⁰ And at last when His sufferings were completed, as though completed and made perfect Himself, He gave health to all, He bore the sin of all.

48. And so He Himself also chose Aaron as priest, that not the will of man but the grace of God should have the chief part in the election of the priest;⁷¹ not the voluntary offering of himself, nor the taking it upon himself, but the vocation from heaven, that he should offer gifts for sins who could be touched for those who sinned, for He Himself, it is said, bears our weakness.⁷² No one ought to take this honour upon himself but they are called of God, as was Aaron,⁷³ and so Christ did not demand but received the priesthood.

49. Lastly, when the succession derived through family descent from Aaron, contained rather heirs of the family than sharers in his righteousness, there came, after the likeness of that Melchisedech, of whom we read in the Old Testament, the true Melchisedech, the true King of peace, the true King of righteousness, for this is the interpretation of the Name, "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life,"⁷⁴ which also refers to the Son of God, Who in His Divine Generation had no mother, was in His Birth of the Virgin Mary without a father; begotten before the ages of the Father alone, born in this age of the Virgin alone, and certainly could have no beginning of days seeing He "was in the beginning."⁷⁵ And how could He have any end of life, Who is the Author of life to all? He is "the Beginning and the Ending."⁷⁶ But this also is referred to Him as an example, that a priest ought to be without father and without mother, since in him it is not nobility of family, but holiness of character and pro-eminent in virtue which is elected.

50. Let there be in him faith and ripeness of character, not one without the other, but let both meet together in one with good works and deeds. For which reason the Apostle Paul wishes that we should be imitators of them, who, as he says, "by faith and patience"⁷⁷ possess the promises made to Abraham, who by patience was found worthy to receive and to possess the grace of the blessing promised to him. David the prophet warns us that we should be imitators of holy Aaron, and has set him amongst the Saints of God to be imitated by us, saying: "Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among those that call upon His Name."⁷⁸

51. A man clearly worthy to be proposed that all should follow him was he, for when a terrible death on account of the rebels was spreading over the people, he offered himself between the dead and the living, that he might arrest death, and that no more should perish.⁷⁹ A man truly of priestly mind and soul, who as a good shepherd with pious affection offered himself for the Lord's flock. And so he broke the sting of death, restrained its violence, refused it further course. Affection aided his deserts, for he offered himself for those who were resisting him.

52. Let those then who dissent learn to fear to rouse up the Lord, and to appease His priests. What! did not the earthquake swallow up Dathan, Abiron, and Korah because of their dissension?⁸⁰ For when Korah, Dathan, and Abiron had stirred up two hundred and fifty men against Moses and Aaron to separate themselves from them, they rose up against them and said: "Let it suffice you that all the congregation are holy, every one, and the Lord is amongst them."⁸¹

53. Whereupon the Lord was angry and spoke to the whole congregation. The Lord considered and knew those that were His, and drew His saints to. Himself; and those whom He chose not, He did not draw to Himself. And the Lord commanded that Korah and all those who had risen up with him against Moses and Aaron the priests of the Lord should take to themselves censers, and put on incense,⁸² that he who was chosen of the Lord might be established as holy among the Levites of the Lord,⁵⁴ And Moses said to Korah: "Hear me, ye sons of Levi: Is this a small thing unto you, that God hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, and brought you near to Himself, to minister the service of the Tabernacle of the Lord."⁸³ And farther on, "Seek ye the priesthood also, so that thou and all thy congregation are gathered against the Lord. And what is Aaron that ye murmur about him?"⁸⁴

55. Considering, then, what causes of offence existed, that unworthy persons desired to discharge the offices of the priesthood, and therefore were causing dissensions; and were murmuring in censure of the judgment of God in the choice of His priest, the whole people were seized with a great fear, and dread of punishment came upon them all. But when all implore that all perish not for the insolence of few, those guilty of the wickedness are marked out; and two hundred and fifty men with their leaders are separated from the whole body of the people; and then the earth with a groan cleaves asunder in the midst of the people, a deep gulf opens, the offenders are swallowed up, and are so removed from all the elements of this world, as neither to pollute the air by breathing it, nor the heavens by beholding them, nor the sea by their touch, nor the earth by their sepulchres.

56. The punishment ceased, but the wickedness ceased not; for from this very thing a murmuring rose among them that the people had perished through the priests. In His wrath at this, the Lord would have destroyed them all, had He not been moved first by the prayers of Moses and Aaron, and afterwards also at the intervention of His priest Aaron (the humiliation of their forgiveness

being thereby greater), He willed to give their lives to those whose privilege they had repudiated.

57. Miriam the prophetess herself, who with her brothers had crossed the straits of the sea on foot, because, being still ignorant of the mystery of the Ethiopian woman, she had murmured against her brother Moses, broke out with leprous spots,⁸⁵ so that she would scarcely have been freed from so great a plague, unless Moses had prayed for her. Although this murmuring refers to the type of the Synagogue, which is ignorant of the mystery of that Ethiopian woman, that is the Church gathered out of the nations, and murmurs with daily reproaches, and envies that people through whose faith itself also shall be delivered from the leprosy of its unbelief, according to what we read that: "blindness in part has happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved."⁸⁶

58. And that we may observe that divine grace rather than human works in priests, of the many rods which Moses had received according to the Tribes, and had laid up, that of Aaron alone blossomed. And so the people saw that the gift of the Divine vocation is to be looked for in a priest, and ceased from claiming equal grace for a human choice though they had before thought that a similar prerogative belonged to themselves. But what else does that rod show, but that priestly grace never decays, and in the deepest lowliness has in its office the flower of the power committed to it, or that this also is referred to in mystery? Nor do we think that it was without a purpose that this took place near the end of the life of Aaron the priest. It seems to be shown that the ancient people, full of decay through the oldness of the long-continued unfaithfulness of the priests, being fashioned again in the last times to zeal in faith and devotion by the example of the Church, will again send forth with revived grace its flowers dead through so many ages.

59. But what does this signify, that after Aaron was dead, the Lord commanded, not the whole people, but Moses alone, who is amongst the priests, to clothe Aaron's son Eleazar with the priest's garments, except that we should understand that priest must consecrate priest, and himself clothe him with the vestments, that is, with priestly virtues; and then, if he has seen that nothing is wanting to him of the priestly garments, and that all things are perfect, should admit him to the sacred altars. For he who is to supplicate for the people ought to be chosen of God and approved by the priests, lest there be anything which might give serious offence in him whose office it is to intercede for the offences of others. For the virtue of a priest must be of no ordinary kind, since he has to guard not only from nearness to greater faults, but even the very least. He must also be prompt to have pity, not recall a promise, restore the fallen, have sympathy with pain, preserve meekness, love piety, repel or keep down anger, must be as it were a trumpet to excite the people to devotion, or to soothe them to tranquillity.

60. It is an old saying: Accustom yourself to be consistent, that your life may set forth as it were a picture, always preserving the same representation which it has received. How can he be consistent who at one time is inflamed by anger, at another blazes up with fierce indignation, whose face now burns, and now again is changed to paleness, varying and changing colour every moment? But let it be so, let it be natural for one to be angry, or that there is generally a cause, it is a man's duty to restrain anger, and not to be carried away like a lion by fury, so as not to know to be quieted, not to spread tales, nor to embitter family quarrels; for it is written: "A wrathful man diggeth up sin"⁸⁷ He will not be consistent who is double-minded; he cannot be consistent who cannot restrain himself when angry, as to which David well says: "Be ye angry and sin not."⁸⁸ He

does not govern his anger, but indulges his natural disposition, which a man cannot indeed prevent but may moderate. Therefore even though we are angry, let our passion admit only such emotion as is according to nature, not sin contrary to nature. For who would endure that he should not be able to govern himself, who has undertaken to govern others?

61. And so the Apostle has given a pattern, saying that a bishop must be blameless,⁸⁹ and in another place: "A bishop must be without offence, as a steward of God, not proud, not soon angry, not given to wine, not a striker, not greedy of filthy lucre."⁹⁰ For how can the compassion of a dispenser of alms and the avarice of a covetous man agree together?

62. I have set down these things which I have been told are to be avoided, but the Apostle is the Master of virtues, and he teaches that gainsayers are to be convicted with patience,⁹¹ who lays down that one should be the husband of a single wife,⁹² not in order to exclude him from the right of marriage (for this is beyond the force of the precept), but that by conjugal chastity he may preserve the grace of his baptismal washing; nor again that he may be induced by the Apostle's authority to beget children in the priesthood; for he speaks of having children, not of begetting them, or marrying again.

63. And I have thought it well not to pass by this point, because many contend that having one wife is said of the time after Baptism; so that the fault whereby any obstacle would ensue would be washed away in baptism. And indeed all faults and sins are washed away; so that if anyone have polluted his body with very many whom he has bound to himself by no law of marriage, all the sins are forgiven him, but if any one have contracted a second marriage it is not done away; for sin not law is loosed by the laver, and as to baptism there is no sin but law. That then which has to do with law is not remitted as though it were sin, but is retained. And the Apostle has established a law, saying: "If any man be without reproach the husband of one wife."⁹³ So then he who is without blame the husband of one wife comes within the rule for undertaking the priestly office; he, however, who has married again has no guilt of pollution, but is disqualified for the priestly prerogative.

64. We have stated what is according to the law, let us state in addition what is according to reason. But first we must notice that not only has the Apostle laid down this rule concerning a bishop or priest, but that the Fathers in the Nicene Council⁹⁴ added that no one who has contracted a second marriage ought to be admitted amongst the clergy at all. For how can he comfort or honour a widow, or exhort her to preserve her widowhood, and the faith pledged to her husband, which he himself has not kept in regard to his former marriage? Or what difference would there be between people and priest, if they were bound by the same laws? The life of a priest ought to excel that of others as does his grace, for he who binds others by his precepts ought himself to keep the precepts of the law.

65. How I resisted my ordination, and lastly, when I was compelled, endeavoured that it might at least be deferred, but the prescribed rule did not prevail against the popular eagerness. Yet the Western Bishops approved of my ordination by their decision, the Eastern by an example of the same kind.⁹⁵ And yet the ordination of a neophyte is forbidden, lest he should be lifted up by pride.⁹⁶ If the ordination was not postponed it was because of constraint, and if humility suitable to the priestly office be not wanting, where there is no reason blame will not be imputed to him.

66. But if so much consideration is needed in other churches for the ordination of a bishop, how much care is required in the Church of Vercellae, where two things seem to be equally required of the bishop, monastic rule and church discipline? For Eusebius of holy memory was the first in Western lands to bring together these differing matters, both while living in the city observing the rules of the monks, and ruling the Church with fasting and temperance. For the grace of the priesthood is much increased if the bishop constrain young men to the practice of abstinence, and to the rule of purity; and forbid them though living in the city, the manners and mode of life of the city.

67. From such a rule sprang those great men, Elijah, Elisha, John the son of Elizabeth, who clothed in sheepskins, poor and needy, and afflicted with pain, wandered in deserts,⁹⁷ in hollows and thickets of mountains, amongst pathless rocks, rough caves, pitfalls and marshes, of whom the world was not worthy. From the same, Daniel, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael,⁹⁸ who were brought up in the royal palace, were fed meagrely as though in the desert, with coarse food, and ordinary drink. Rightly did those royal slaves prevail over kingdoms, despise captivity, shaking off its yoke, subdue powers, conquer the elements, quench the nature of fire, dull the flames, blunt the edge of the sword, stop the mouths of lions;⁹⁹ they were found most strong when esteemed to be most weak, and did not shrink from the mockings of men, because they looked for heavenly rewards; they did not dread the darkness of the prison, on whom was shining the beauty of eternal light.

68. Following these, holy Eusebius went forth out of his country, and from his own relatives, and preferred a foreign wandering to ease at home. For the faith also he preferred and chose the hardships of exile, in conjunction with Dionysius¹⁰⁰ of holy memory, who esteemed a voluntary exile above an Emperor's friendship. And so these illustrious men, surrounded with arms, closed in by soldiers, when torn away from the larger Church, triumphed over the imperial power, because by earthly shame they purchased fortitude of soul, and kingly power; they from whom the band of soldiers and the din of arms could not tear away the faith subdued the raging of the brutal mind, which was unable to hurt the saints. For, as you read in Proverbs, "the king's wrath is as the wrath of a lion."¹⁰¹

69. He confessed that he was overcome when he asked them to change their determination, but they thought their pen stronger than swords of iron. Then it was unbelief which was wounded so that it fell, not the faith of the saints; they did not desire a tomb in their own country, for whom was reserved a home in the heavens. They wandered over the whole earth, "having nothing and yet possessing all things."¹⁰² Wherever they were sent, they esteemed it a place full of delights, for nothing wanting to them in whom the riches of faith abounded. Lastly, they enriched others, being themselves poor as to earthly means, rich in grace. They were tried but not killed, in fasting, in labours, in watchings, in vigils. Out of weakness they came forth strong. They did not wait for the enticements of pleasure who were satiated by fasting; the burning summer did not parch those whom the hope of eternal grace refreshed, nor did the cold of icy regions break them down, whose devotion was ever budding afresh with glowing devotion; they feared not the chains of men whom Jesus had set free; they desired not to be rescued from death, who expected to be raised again by Christ.

70. And at last holy Dionysius requested in his prayers, that he might end his life in exile, for fear that he might, if he returned home, find the minds of the people or the clergy disturbed through the teaching or practice of the unbelievers, and he obtained this favour, so that he bore with him the peace of the Lord with a quiet mind. Thus as holy Eusebius first raised the standard of confessorship, so blessed Dionysius in his exile gave up his life with honour higher even than martyrs.

71. Now this patience in holy Eusebius grew strong by the discipline of the monastery, and from the custom of hard endurance he derived the power of enduring hardships. For who doubts that in stricter Christian devotion these two things are the most excellent, the offices of the clergy and the rule of the monks? The former is a discipline which accustoms to courteousness and good morals, the latter to abstinence and patience; the former as it were on an open stage, the latter in secret; the one is visible, the other hidden. And so he who was a good athlete said: "We are made a spectacle to this world and to Angels."¹⁰³ Worthy indeed was he to be gazed upon by Angels, when he was striving to attain the prize of Christ, when he was striving to lead on earth the life of Angels, and overcome the wickedness of spirits in heaven, for he wrestled with spiritual wickedness.¹⁰⁴ Rightly did the world gaze upon him, that it might imitate him.

72. The one life, then, is on the open arena, the other hidden as in a cave; the one is opposed to the confusion of the world, the other to the desires of the flesh; the one subdues, the other shuns the pleasures of the body; the one was more agreeable, the other more safe; the one ruling, the other restraining itself, in order to be wholly Christ's, for to the perfect it is said: "He who will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."¹⁰⁵ Now he follows Christ who is able to say: "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me."¹⁰⁶

73. Paul denied himself, when, knowing that chains and tribulations awaited him in Jerusalem, he willingly offered himself to danger, saying: "Nor do I count my life dear to myself, if only I can accomplish my course, and the ministry of the Word, which I have received of the Lord Jesus."¹⁰⁷ And at last, though many were standing round, weeping and beseeching him, he did not change his mind, so stern a censor of itself is ready faith.

74. The one then contends, the other retires; the one overcomes incitements, the other flees from them; by the one the world is triumphed over, the other rejoices over it; to the one the world is crucified, or itself is crucified to the world,¹⁰⁸ to the other it is unknown; the one endures more frequent temptations, and so has the greater victory, the other falls less often, and keeps guard more easily.

75. Elijah himself too, that the word spoken by his mouth might be confirmed, was sent by the Lord to hide himself by the brook Cherith.¹⁰⁹ Ahab threatened, Jezebel threatened, Elijah was afraid and rose up, and then "went in the strength of that spiritual meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God;"¹¹⁰ and entered into a cave and rested there; and afterwards was sent to anoint kings. He was then inured to patience by dwelling in solitude, and, as though fed to the fatness of virtue by the homely food, went on more strong.

76. John, too, grew up in the desert, and baptized the Lord, and there first practised constancy, that afterwards he might rebuke kings.

77. And since in speaking of holy Elijah's dwelling in the desert, we have passed by without notice the names of places which were not given without a purpose, it seems well to go back to what they signify. Elijah was sent to the brook Cherith, and there the ravens nourished him, bringing him bread in the morning, for it "strengthens man's heart."¹¹¹ For how should the prophet be nourished except by mystical food? At evening flesh was supplied. Understand what you read, for Cherith means "understanding," Horeb signifies "heart" or "as a heart," Beersheba also is interpreted "the well of the seventh," or "of the oath."

78. Elijah went first to Beersheba, to the mysteries and sacraments of the divine and holy Law, next he is sent to the brook, to the stream of the river which makes glad the City of God.¹¹² You perceive the two Testaments of the One Author; the old Scripture as a well deep and obscure, whence you can only draw with labour; it is not full, for He Who was to fill it was not yet come, Who afterwards said: "I am come not to destroy but to fulfil the Law."¹¹³ And so the Saint is bidden of the Lord to pass over to the stream, for he who has drunk of the New Testament, not only is a river, but also "from his belly shall flow rivers of living water,"¹¹⁴ rivers of understanding, rivers of meditation, spiritual rivers, which, however, dried up in the times of unbelief, lest the sacrilegious and unbelieving should drink.

79. At that place the ravens recognized the Prophet of the Lord, whom the Jews did not recognize. The ravens fed him, whom that royal and noble race were persecuting. What is Jezebel, who persecuted him but the Synagogue, vainly fluent, vainly abounding in the Scriptures, which it neither keeps nor understands? What ravens fed him but those whose young call upon Him, to whose cattle He gives food as we read; "to the young ravens that call upon Him."¹¹⁵ Those ravens knew whom they were feeding, who were close upon understanding, and brought food to that stream of sacred knowledge.

80. He feeds the prophet, who understands and keeps the things that are written. Our faith gives him sustenance, our progress gives him nourishment; he feeds upon our minds and senses, his discourse is nourished by our understanding. In the morning we give him bread, who, being placed in the light of the Gospel, bestow on him the settled strength of our hearts. By these things he is nourished, by these he is strong, with these he fills the mouths of those who fast, to whom the unbelief of the Jews supplied no food of faith. To them every prophetic utterance is but fasting diet, the interior richness of which they do not see; empty and thin, such as cannot fatten their jaws.

81. Perhaps they brought him flesh in the evening, as it were stronger food, such as the Corinthians, whose minds were weak, could not take, and were therefore fed by the Apostle with milk.¹¹⁶ So, stronger meat was brought in the evening of the world, in the morning bread. And so, because the Lord commanded this food to be supplied, that word of prophecy may be suitably addressed to Him in this place: "Thou wilt give joy in the outgoings of morning and evening,"¹¹⁷ and, farther on: "Thou hast prepared their food, for so is its preparation."¹¹⁸

82. But I think that enough has been said of the Master, let us now go on to the lives of the disciples, who have given themselves to His praise and celebrate it with hymns day and night. For this is the service of the Angels, to be always occupied in the praises of God, to propitiate and entreat the Lord with frequent prayers. They attend to reading, or occupy their minds with continual labours, and separated from the companionship of women, afford safe protection to each other. What a life is this, in which is nothing to fear, much to imitate! The pain of fasting is compensated

by tranquillity of mind, is lightened by practice, aided by leisure, or beguiled by occupation; is not burdened with worldly cares, nor occupied with uncongenial troubles, nor weighed down with the distractions of the city.

83. You perceive what kind of teacher must be found for the preservation or teaching of this gift, and we can find him, if you assist by unanimity, if you forgive one another should any one think himself injured by another. For it is not the only kind of justice, not to injure him who has not injured us, but also to forgive him who has most injured us. We are often injured by the fraud of another, by the guile of a neighbour; do we consider it a mark of virtue, to avenge guile by guile, or to repay fraud by fraud? For if justice is a virtue it should be free from offence, and should not repel wickedness by wickedness. For what virtue is it that the same thing should be done by you which you yourself punish in another? That is the spreading of wickedness not its punishment, for it makes no difference whom one injures, whether a just man or an unjust, seeing one ought not to injure anyone. Nor does it make any difference in what way one bears ill will, whether from a desire of revenging oneself, or from a wish to injure, since in neither case is ill will free from blame. For to bear ill will is the same thing as to be unjust, and so it is said to thee: "Bear not ill will amongst those that bear ill will, and emulate not those that do unrighteousness;"¹¹⁹ and above; "I have hated the congregation of them that bear ill will."¹²⁰ He clearly comprehends all and makes no exception, he lays hold of ill will and asks not the cause.

84. But what better pattern can there be than that of Divine justice? For the Son of God says: "Love your enemies;"¹²¹ and again: "Pray for those that persecute you and speak against you."¹²² So far does He remove the desire of vengeance from the perfect that He commands charity towards those who injure them. And since He had said in the Old Testament: "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay."¹²³ He says in the Gospel, that we are to pray for those who have injured us, that He Who has said that He will avenge, may not do so; for it is His will to pardon at your desire with which according to His promise He agrees. But if you seek for you know that the unjust is more severely punished by his own convictions than by judicial severity.

85. And since no one can be without some adversities, let us take care that they do not happen to us through our own fault. For no one is more severely condemned by the judgment of others, than a foolish man, who is the cause of his misfortunes, is condemned by his own. For which reason we should decline matters which are full of trouble and contention, which have no advantage, but cause hindrances. Although we ought to take care not to have to repent our decisions or acts. For it is the part of a prudent man to look forward, so as not often to have to repent, for never to repent belongs to God alone. But what is the fruit of righteousness, but tranquillity of mind? Or what is to live righteously but to live with tranquility? Such as is the pattern of the master, such is the condition of the whole house. But if these things are requisite in a house, how much more in the Church, "where we, both rich and poor, bond and free, Greek and Scythian, noble and common, are all one in Christ Jesus."¹²⁴

86. Let no man suppose that because he is rich, more deference is to be paid him. In the Church he is rich who is rich in faith, for the faithful has a whole world of riches. What wonder is it if the faithful possesses the world, who possesses the inheritance of Christ, which is of more value than the world? "Ye were redeemed with the Precious Blood,"¹²⁵ was certainly said to all, not to the rich only. But if you will be rich, obey him who says: "Be ye holy in all your conversation."¹²⁶ He is

speaking not to the rich only but to all; for He judges without respect of persons, as the Apostle His faithful witness says. And therefore says he: "Spend the time of your sojourning here,"¹²⁷ not in luxury, or fastidiousness, nor haughtiness of heart, but in fear. On this earth you have time not eternity, do you use the time as those who must pass hence.

87. Do not trust in riches; for all such things are left here, faith alone will accompany you. And righteousness indeed will go with you if faith has led the way. Why do riches entice you? "Ye were not redeemed with gold and silver," with possessions, or silk garments, "from your vain conversation, but with the precious Blood of Christ."¹²⁸ He then is rich who is an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ. Despise not the poor man, he has made you rich. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him."¹²⁹ Do not reject a poor man, Christ when He was rich became poor, and became poor because of you, that by His poverty He might make you rich.¹³⁰ Do not then as though rich exalt yourself, He sent forth His apostles without money.

88. And the first of them said: "Silver and gold have I none."¹³¹ He glories in poverty as though shunning contamination. "Silver and gold," he says, "I have none,"-not gold and silver. He knows not their order in value who knows not the use of them. "Silver and gold have I none," but I have faith. I am rich enough in the Name of Jesus, "which is above every name."¹³² I have no silver, neither do I require any; I have no gold, neither do I desire it, but I have what you rich men have not, I have what even you would consider to be of more value, and I give it to the poor, namely that I say in the Name of Jesus: "Be strengthened, ye weak hands, and ye feeble knees."¹³³

89. But if you will be rich, you must be poor. Then shall you in all things be rich, if you are poor in spirit. It is not property which makes rich, but the spirit.

90. There are those who humble themselves in abundance of riches, and they act rightly and prudently, for the law of nature is sufficiently rich for all, according to which one may soon find what is more than enough; but for lust any abundance of riches is still penury. Again, no one is born poor but becomes so. Poverty then is not in nature but in our own feelings, and so to find oneself rich is easy for nature, but hard for lust. For the more a man has gained the more he thirsts for gain, and burns as it were with a kind of intoxication from his lusts.

91. Why do you seek for a heap of riches as though it were necessary? Nothing is so necessary as to know that this is not necessary. Why do you throw the blame on the flesh? It is not the belly in the body but avarice in the mind which makes a man insatiable. Does the flesh take away the hope of the future? Does the flesh destroy the sweetness of spiritual grace? Does the flesh hinder faith? Is it the flesh which attributes any weight to vain opinions as it were to insane masters? The flesh prefers frugal moderation, by which it is freed from burdens, is clothed with health, because it has laid aside its care and has obtained tranquillity.

92. But riches themselves are not blameable. For "the ransom of a man's life are his riches,"¹³⁴ since he that gives to the poor redeems his soul.¹³⁵ So that even in these material riches there is place for virtue. You are like steersmen in the vast sea. If a man steers his course well, he quickly passes over the sea so as to attain to the port, but one who knows not how to direct his property is drowned together with his freight. And so it is written: "The wealth of rich men is a most strong city."¹³⁶

93. And what is that city but Jerusalem which is in heaven, in which is the kingdom of God? This is a good possession which brings eternal fruit. A good possession which is not left here, but is possessed there. He who possesses this says: "The Lord is my portion."¹³⁷ He says no_, My portion stretches and extends from this boundary to that. Nor does he say, My portion is amongst such and such neighbours, except perchance amongst the apostles, amongst the prophets, amongst the saints of the Lord, for this is the righteous man's portion. He does not say, My portion is in the meadows, or in the woods, or the plains, except perchance those wooded plains in which the Church is found, of which it is written: "We found it in the wooded plains."¹³⁸ He does not say, My portion consists of herds of horses, for "a horse is a vain thing for safety."¹³⁹ He does not say, My portion consists of herds of oxen, asses, or sheep; except perchance he reckons himself amongst those which know their Owner, and wishes to company with the ass which does not shun the crib¹⁴⁰ of Christ; and that Sheep is his portion which was led to the slaughter, and that Lamb which was dumb before the shearer, and opened not His mouth,¹⁴¹ in Whose humiliation judgment has been exalted. Well does he say "before the shearer," for He laid aside what was additional, not His own essence, on the cross, when He laid aside His Body, but lost not His Divinity.

94. It is not then everyone who can say, "The Lord is my portion." The covetous man cannot, for covetousness draws near and says: Thou art my portion, I have thee in subjection, thou hast served me, thou hast sold thyself to me with that gold, by that possession thou hast adjudged thyself to me. The luxurious man says not: Christ is my portion, for luxury comes and says: Thou art my portion, I made thee mine in that banquet, I caught thee in the net of that feast, I hold thee by the bond of thy gluttony. Dost thou not know that thy table was more valued by thee than thy life? I refute thee by thine own judgment, deny if thou canst, but thou canst not. And in fine thou hast reserved nothing for thy life, thou hast spent it all for thy table. The adulterer cannot say: "The Lord is my portion;" for lust comes and says: I am thy portion, thou didst bind thyself to me in the love of that maiden, by a night with that harlot thou hast come under my laws and into my power. The traitor cannot say: "Christ is my portion," for at once the wickedness of his sin rushes on him and says: He is deceiving Thee, Lord Jesus, he is mine.

95. We have an example of this, for when Judas had received the bread from Christ the devil entered into his heart, as though claiming his own property, as though retaining his right to his own portion, as though saying: He is not Thine but mine; clearly he is my servant, Thy betrayer, plainly he is mine. He sits at table with Thee, and serves me; with Thee he feasts, but is fed by me; from Thee he receives bread, from me money; with Thee he drinks, and has sold Thy Blood to me. And he proved how truly he spoke. Then Christ departed from him, Judas also himself left Jesus and followed the devil.

96. How many masters has he who has forsaken the One! But let us not forsake Him. Who would forsake Him Whom they follow bound with chains indeed, but chains of love, which set free and do not bind, those chains in which they who are bound boast, saying: "Paul the bondservant of Jesus Christ, and Timothy."¹⁴² It is more glorious for us to be bound by Him, than to be set free and loosed from others. Who then would flee from peace? Who would flee from salvation? Who would flee from mercy? Who would flee from redemption?

97. You see, my sons, what has been the end of those who followed these things, how being dead they yet work. Let us study to gain the diligence of those the glory of whose virtues we admire, and what we praise in others, let us silently recognize in ourselves. Nothing effeminate, nothing feeble attains to praise. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."¹⁴³ The fathers ate the lamb in haste. Faith hastens, devotion is quick, hope is active, it loves not objections of the mind, but to pass from fruitless ease to the fruits of toil. Why do you put off till tomorrow? You can gain to-day; and must guard against not attaining the one and losing the other. The loss even of one hour is no slight one, one hour is a portion of our whole life.

98. There are young persons who desire quickly to attain to old age, so as no longer to be subject to the will of their elders; and there are also old men who would wish if they could to return again to youth. And I approve of neither desire, for the young, disdainful of things present, as it were ungratefully desire a change in their way of living, the old wish for its lengthening, whereas youth can grow old in character, and old age grow green with action. For it is discipline as much as age which brings amendment of character. How much the more then ought we to raise our hopes to the kingdom of God, where will be newness of life, and where will be a change of grace not of age!

99. Reward is not obtained by ease or by sleep. The sleeper does no work, ease brings no profit, but rather loss. Esau by taking his ease lost the blessing of the first-born, for he preferred to have food given to him rather than to seek it. Industrious Jacob found favour with each parent.

100. And yet although Jacob was superior in virtue and favour, he yielded to his brother's anger, who grieved that his younger brother was preferred to him. And so it is written: "Give place to wrath,"¹⁴⁴ lest the wrath of another draw you also into sin, when you wish to resist, and to avenge yourself. You can put away sin both from him and from yourself, if you think well to yield. Imitate the patriarch who by his mother's counsel went far away. And who was the mother? Rebecca, that is, Patience. For who but Patience could have given this counsel? The mother loved her son, but preferred that he should be cut off from herself rather than from God. And so because the mother was good, she benefited both her sons, but to the youngest she gave a blessing which he could keep; yet she preferred not one son to the other as sons; but the active to the easy-going, the faithful to the unbelieving.

101. And so since he was separated from his parents through piety not on account of impiety, he talked with God, he increased in riches, in children, and in favour. Nor was he elated by these things when he met his brother; but humbly bowed down to him, not indeed considering him the pitiless, the furious, the degenerate, but Him Whom he revered in him. And so he bowed down seven times, which is the number of remission, for he was not bowing down to man, but to Him Whom he foresaw in the Spirit, as hereafter to come in human flesh to take away the sins of the world.¹⁴⁵ And this mystery is unfolded to you in the answer given to Peter, when he said: "If my brother trespass against me how often shall I forgive him? Until seven times?"¹⁴⁶ You see that remission of sins is a type of that great Sabbath, of that rest of everlasting grace, and therefore is given by contemplation.

102. But what is the meaning of his having arranged his wives and children and all his servants, and ordered that they should bow down to the earth? It was certainly not to the element of earth, which is often filled with blood, in which is the workshop of all crimes, which often is rough with huge rocks, or broken cliffs, or barren and hungry soil, but as to that Flesh which is to be for our

salvation. And perchance this is that mystery which the Lord taught, when He said: "Not only seven times, but even seventy times seven."¹⁴⁷

103. Do you then forgive injuries done to you that you may be children of Jacob. Be not provoked as was Esau. Imitate holy David, who as a good master left us what we should follow, saying: "Instead of loving me they spake against me, but I prayed,"¹⁴⁸ and when he was reviled, he prayed. Prayer is a good shield, wherewith contumely is kept away, cursing is repelled and often is turned back on those who utter it, so that they are wounded by their own weapons. "Let them curse," he says, "but bless Thou."¹⁴⁹ The curse of man is to be sought for, which procures the blessing of the Lord.

104. And for the rest, most dear brethren, consider that Jesus suffered without the gate, and do you go forth out of this earthly city, for your city is Jerusalem which is above. Let your conversation be there, that you may say: "But our conversation is in heaven."¹⁵⁰ Therefore did Jesus go forth out of the city, that you going out of this world may be above the world. Moses alone, who saw God, had his tabernacle without the camp when he talked with God;¹⁵¹ and the blood indeed of the victims which were offered for sin, was brought to the altar, but the bodies were burnt without the camp;¹⁵² for no one placed amidst the evil of this world can lay aside sin, nor is his blood accepted of God, except he go forth from the defilement of this body.

105. Love hospitality, whereby holy Abraham found favour, and received Christ as his guest, and Sarah already worn with age gained a son; Lot also escaped the fire of the destruction of Sodom. You too can receive Angels if you offer hospitality to strangers. What shall I say of Rahab who by this means found safety?

106. Compassionate those who are bound with chains, as though bound with them. Comfort those in sorrow; for, "It is better to go into the house of mourning than into the house of rejoicing."¹⁵³ From the one is gained the merit of a good work, from the other a lapse into sin. Lastly, in the one case you still hope for the reward, in the other you have already received it. Feel with those who are afflicted as if also afflicted with them.

107. Let a wife show deference, not be a slave to her husband; let her show herself ready to be ruled not coerced. She is not worthy of wedlock who deserves chiding. Let a husband also guide his wife like a steersman, honour her as the partner of his life, share with her as a joint heir of grace.

108. Mothers, wean your children, love them, but pray for them that they may long live above this earth, not on the earth but above it, for there is nothing long-lived on this earth, and that which lasts long is but short and very frail. Warn them rather to take up the Cross of the Lord than to love this life.

109. Mary, the mother of the Lord stood by her Son's Cross; no one has taught me this but the holy Evangelist St. John.¹⁵⁴ Others have related how the earth was shaken at the Lord's passion, the sky was covered with darkness, the sun withdrew itself;¹⁵⁵ that the thief was after a faithful confession received into paradise.¹⁵⁶ John tells us what the others have not told, how the Lord fixed on the Cross called to His mother, esteeming it of more worth that, victorious over His sufferings, He rendered her the offices of piety, than that lie gave her a heavenly kingdom. For if it be according to religion to grant pardon to the thief, it is a mark of much greater piety that a mother

is honoured with such affection by her Son. "Behold," He says, "thy Son".... "Behold thy mother."¹⁵⁷ Christ testified from the Cross, and divided the offices of piety between the mother and the disciple. The Lord made not only a public but also a private testament, and John signed this testament of His, a witness worthy of so great a Testator. A good testament not of money but of eternal life, which was written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, Who says: "My tongue is the pen of a quickly writing scribe."¹⁵⁸

110. Nor was Mary below what was becoming the mother of Christ. When the apostles fled, she stood at the Cross, and with pious eyes beheld her Son's wounds, for she did not look for the death of her Offspring, but the salvation of the world. Or perchance, because that "royal hall"¹⁵⁹ knew that the redemption of the world would be through the death of her Son, she thought that by her death also she might add something to the public weal. But Jesus did not need a helper for the redemption of all, Who saved all without a helper. Wherefore also He says: "I am become like a man without help, free among the dead."¹⁶⁰ He received indeed the affection of His mother, but sought not another's help.

111. Imitate her, holy mothers, who in her only dearly beloved Son set forth so great an example of maternal virtue; for neither have you sweeter children, nor did the Virgin seek the consolation of being able to bear another son.

112. Masters, command your servants not as being below you in rank, but as remembering that they are sharers of the same nature as yourselves. Servants, serve your masters with good will, for each ought patiently to support that to which he is born, and be obedient not only to good but also to froward masters. For what thanks has your service if you zealously serve good masters? But if you thus serve the froward also you gain merit; for the free also have no reward, if when they transgress they are punished by the judges, but this is their merit to suffer without transgressing. And so you, if contemplating the Lord Jesus you serve even difficult masters with patience, will have your reward. Since the Lord Himself suffered, the just at the hand of the unjust, and by His wonderful patience nailed our sins to His Cross, that he who shall imitate Him may wash away his sins in His Blood.

113. In fine, turn all to the Lord Jesus. Let your enjoyment of this life be with a good conscience, your endurance of death with the hope of immortality, your assurance of the resurrection through the grace of Christ; let truth be with simplicity, faith with confidence, abstinence with holiness, industry with soberness, conversation with modesty, learning without vanity; let there be soberness of doctrine, faith without the intoxication of heresy. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.parpapar

1: The people demanded, requested, or acclaimed some one as bishop [*postulavit*], and he was then elected, if they thought well, by the clergy. St. Ambrose makes this clear [Ep. XV. 12], saying of Acholius. " *Ad summum sacerdotium a Macedonicis obsecratus populis, electus a sacerdotibus.* "

2: S. Matt. xviii. 21.

3: S. John i. 26.

4: Ps. xix. [xviii.] 1.

5: Acts vii. 56.

6: Dan. vii. 9.

7: Ps. lxxxii. [lxxxii.] 1.

8: There were two apostate monks, followers apparently of Jovinian, who was condemned by synods at Rome and Milan a.d. 390.

9: 1 Cor. ix. 27.

10: S. John ii. 19.

11: 1 Cor. v. 9.

12: This was one of the errors of Jovinian.

13: 1 Cor. v. 10, 1 Cor. v. 11.

14: Eph. v. 3.

15: Eph. v. 5.

16: Rom. vi. 3.

17: Rom. viii. 17.

18: 1 Cor. x. 7.

19: See de Off. i. 50.

20: Who this may be is unknown, and the name, even, owing to various readings, is uncertain.

21: S. Matt. iv. 3.

22: S. Matt. iv. 4.

23: S. Matt. xvii. 21.

24: Acts x. 10.

25: Ex. xxxiv. 28.

26: Dan. vi. Dan. vii.

27: Tobit xii. 8, Tobit xii. 9.

28: 1 Cor. xv. 32.

29: 1 Cor. xv. 33.

30: Demarchus is mentioned by no writer besides St. Ambrose. The Benedictine editors suggest that Hermachus is meant, who succeeded Epicurus as leader of his school.

31: Acts xvii. 18.

32: Gen. ix. 20.

33: 1 Tim. v. 23.
34: 1 [3] Kings xix. 6.
35: Ex. xvii. 6.
36: Dan. i. 8.
37: Dan. vi. 22.
38: Dan. iii. 27.
39: Judg. xiii. i6.
40: Esth. iv. 16.
41: S. Luke ii. 37.
42: 2 [4] Kings iv. 39.
43: Ezra vii. 6.
44: 2 Cor. xi. 27.
45: Isa. lviii. 11.
46: Ps. xxiii. [xxii.] 5 [LXX.].
47: Ecclus. xviii. 30, Ecclus. xviii. 31.
48: Ecclus. xix. 2.
49: Col. i. 9.
50: i.e. Miriam, the Hebrew form of the name.
51: Ex. xv. 20.
52: 1 Cor. vii. 25.
53: Cant. iv. 12.
54: 2 Cor. xi. 2.
55: 1 Cor. vii. 26.
56: 1 Cor. vii. 32.
57: Rom. xiv. 2.
58: 1 Cor. vii. 37-40.
59: Ex. iii. 5.
60: Deut. v. 31.
61: Ps. xxvi. [xxv.] 4.

62: Ps. I. [xlix.] 20.

63: Ps. cxxxiv. [cxxxiii.] 1, Ps. cxxxiv. [cxxxiii.] 2.

64: 1 Cor. x. 12.

65: Ps. xxvi. [xxv.] 5.

66: Ps. xxxvii. [xxxvi.] 1.

67: Prov. xiv. 30 [LXX.].

68: S. Matt. ix. 12.

69: Heb. v. 5.

70: Heb. v. 5, quoted loosely.

71: Num. xvi. 40.

72: Heb. v. 2.

73: Heb. v. 4.

74: Heb. v. 3.

75: S. John i. 1.

76: Rev. i. 8.

77: Heb. vi. 12.

78: Ps. xcix. [xcviii.] 1.

79: Num. xvi. 48.

80: Num. xvi. 32.

81: Num. xvi. 3.

82: Num. xvi. 17.

83: Num. xvi. 8, Num. xvi. 9.

84: Num. xvi. 9-11.

85: Num. xii. 10.

86: Rom. xi. 25.

87: Prov. xv. 18.

88: Ps. iv. 4.

89: 1 Tim. iii. 2.

90: Tit. i. 7.

91: Tit. i. 9.

92: Tit. i. 6.

93: 1 Tim. iii. 2.

94: In concilio Nicoeni tractatus -"the Council of the Nicene tractate or creed," possibly. The reference is plain, though there are various readings, and tractatus may not mean the creed. The real difficulty is that in the 20 extant Canons of Nicaea, there is no reference of the kind, and there is no evidence that any are missing. Perhaps St. Ambrose is quoting from memory, or some faulty collection, and so other canons are wrongly spoken of as Nicene. On the subject comp. St. Ambr. de Off. I. 257, and Dict. Chr. Ant. art. "Digamy."

95: Nectarius, unbaptized and holding a civil office, was appointed to the see of Constantinople, on the resignation of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, during the sitting of the second oecumenical council at Constantinople.

96: 1 Tim. iii. 6 97: Heb. xi. 37.

98: Dan. i. 16.

99: Heb. xi. 33, Heb. xi. 34.

100: The two Bishops, Eusebius of Vercellae and Dionysius of Milan, were banished by Valens, because in a council at Milan a.d. 355.

101: Prov. xix. 12.

102: 2 Cor. vi. 10.

103: 1 Cor. vi. 9.

104: Eph. vi. 12.

105: S. Matt. xvii. 24.

106: Gal. ii. 20.

107: Acts xx. 24.

108: Gal. vi. 14.

109: 1 [3] Kings xvii. 3.

110: 1 [3] Kings xix. 8.

111: Ps. civ. [ciii.] 15.

112: Ps. xlv. [xlvi.] 4.

113: S. Matt. v. 17.

114: S. John vii. 38.

115: Ps. cxlvii. [cxlvi.] 9.

116: 1 Cor. iii. 2.
117: Ps. lxxv. [lxxiv.] 8.
118: Ps. lxxv. [lxxiv.] 9.
119: Ps. lxxvii. [lxxvi.] 1.
120: Ps. lxxvi. [lxxv.] 5.
121: S. Matt. v. 44.
122: S. Matt. v. 44.
123: Deut. lxxii. 35.
124: Col. iii. 11.
125: 1 Pet. i. 18, 1 Pet. i. 19.
126: 1 Pet. i. 15.
127: 1 Pet. i. 17.
128: 1 Pet. i. 18.
129: Ps. lxxiv. [lxxiii.] 6.
130: 2 Cor. viii. 9.
131: Acts iii. 6.
132: Phil. ii. 9.
133: Isa. lxxv. 3.
134: Prov. lxxiii. 8.
135: Probably a reference to Dan. iv. 27 [LXX].
136: Prov. x. 15.
137: Ps. lxxiii. [lxxii.] 26.
138: Ps. cxxxi. [cxxxii.] 6.
139: Ps. lxxiii. [lxxii.] 17.
140: Isa. i. 3.
141: Isa. liii. 7.
142: Phil. i. 1.
143: S. S. Matt. xi. 12.
144: Rom. xii. 19.

145: S. John i. 29.

146: S. Matt. xviii. 21.

147: S. Matt. xviii. 22.

148: Ps. cix. [cviii.] 4.

149: Ps. cix. [cviii.] 28.

150: Phil. iii. 20.

151: Ex. xxxiii. 7.

152: Ex. xxix. 12, Ex. xxix. 13.

153: Eccl. vii. 2.

154: S. John xix. 25.

155: S. Matt. xxvii. 45.

156: S. Luke xxiii. 43.

157: S. John xix. 27.

158: Ps. xlv. [xliv.] 1.

159: The expression " Aula regalisi " applied to the Blessed Virgin is also used by St. Ambrose, de Inst. Virg. XII. 79, and in the Hymn for the Nativity of our Lord-" Veni Redemptor gentium, " verse 4-" Proceedit e thalamo Suo, Pudoris aula Regia. " The force is lost in the translation adopted in Hymns Ancient and Modern, No. 57, but is preserved in Dr. Neale's version, "Proceeding from His chamber free, The royal hall of chastity."- Hymnal Noted, No. 31.

160: Ps. lxxxviii. [lxxxvii.] 4, Ps. lxxxviii. [lxxxvii.] 5.

Letters - Letter 21

Letter XXI.

Letter XXI.

St. Ambrose excuses himself for not having gone to the consistory when summoned, on the ground that in matters of faith no one but bishops could rightly judge, and that he was not contumacious because he would not suffer wrong to be done to his own order. And he adds that Auxentius would perhaps choose as judges either Jews or unbelievers, that is, persons hostile to Christ. He says further that he is willing to discuss the matters in dispute at a synod, and that he would have told the Emperor his word of mouth what he is now writing, but that his fellow bishops and the people would not suffer him to do so.

Ambrose, Bishop, to the most gracious Emperor and blessed Augustus, Valentinian.

1. Dalmatius, the tribune and notary, summoned me by the orders of your Clemency, as he asserted, demanding that I should also choose judges, as Auxentius had done. He did not mention the names of those who had been asked for, but he added that there was to be a discussion in the consistory, and that the judgment of your piety would give the decision.

2. To this I make, as I think, a suitable answer. No one ought to consider me contumacious when I affirm what your father of august memory not only replied by word of mouth,¹ but also sanctioned by his laws, that, in a matter of faith, or any ecclesiastical ordinance, he should judge who was not unsuited by office, nor disqualified by equity, for these are the words of the rescript. That is, it was his desire that priests should judge concerning priests. Moreover, if a bishop were accused of other matters also, and a question of character was to be enquired into, it was also his will that this should be reserved for the judgment of bishops.

3. Who, then, has answered your Clemency contumaciously? He who desires that you should be like your father, or he that wishes you to be unlike him? Unless, perhaps, the judgment of so great an Emperor seems to any persons of small account, whose faith has been proved by the constancy of his profession,² and his wisdom declared by the continual improvement of the State.

4. When have you heard, most gracious Emperor, that laymen gave judgment concerning a bishop in a matter of faith? Are we so prostrate through the flattery of some as to be unmindful of the rights of the priesthood, and do I think that I can entrust to others what God has given me? If a bishop is to be taught by a layman, what will follow? Let the layman argue, and the bishop listen, let the bishop learn of the layman. But undoubtedly, whether we go through the series of the holy Scriptures, or the times of old, who is there who can deny that, in a matter of faith,-in a matter I say of faith,-bishops are wont to judge of Christian emperors, not emperors of bishops.

5. You will, by the favour of God, attain to a riper age, and then you will judge what kind of bishop he is who subjects the rights of the priesthood to laymen. Your father, by the favour of God a man of riper age, used to say: It is not my business to judge between bishops. Your Clemency now

says: I ought to judge. And he, though baptized in Christ, thought himself unequal to the burden of such a judgment, does your Clemency, who have yet to earn for yourself the sacrament of baptism, arrogate to yourself a judgment concerning the faith, though ignorant of the sacrament of that faith?

6. I can leave it to be imagined what sort of judges he will have chosen. since he is afraid to publish their names. Let them simply come to the Church, if there are any to come; let them listen with the people, not for every one to sit as judge, but that each may examine his own disposition, and choose whom to follow. The matter is concerning the bishop of that Church: if the people hear him and think that he has the best of the argument, let them follow him, I shall not be jealous.

7. I omit to mention that the people have themselves already given their judgment. I am silent as to the fact that they demanded of your father him whom they now have.³ I am silent as to the promise of your father that if he who was chosen would undertake the bishopric there should be tranquillity. I acted on the faith of these promises.

8. But if he boasts himself of the approval of some foreigners, let him be bishop there from whence they are who think that he ought to receive the name of bishop. For I neither recognize him as a bishop, nor know I whence he comes.

9. And how, O Emperor, are we to settle a matter on which you have already declared your judgment, and have even promulgated laws,⁴ so that it is not open to any one to judge otherwise? But when you laid down this law for others, you laid it down for yourself as well. For the Emperor is the first to keep the laws which he passes. Do you, then, wish me to try how those who are chosen as judges will either come, contrary to your decision, or at least excuse themselves, saying that they cannot act against so severe and so stringent a law of the Emperor?

10. But this would be the act of one contumacious, not of one who knew his position. See, O Emperor, you are already yourself partially rescinding your law, would that it were not partially but altogether! for I would not that your law should be set above the law of God. The law of God has taught us what to follow; human laws cannot teach us this. They usually extort a change from the fearful, but they cannot inspire faith.

11. Who, then, will there be, who when he reads that at one instant through so many provinces the order was given, that whoever acts against the Emperor shall be beheaded, that whoever does not give up the temple of God shall at once be put to death; who, say, is there who will be able either alone or with a few others to say to the Emperor: I do not approve of your law? Priests are not allowed to say this, are then laymen allowed? And shall he judge concerning the faith who either hopes for favour or is afraid of giving offence?

12. Lastly, shall I myself choose laymen for judges, who, if they upheld the truth of their faith, would be either proscribed or put to death, as that law passed concerning the faith decrees? Shall I then expose these men either to denial of the truth or to punishment?

13. Ambrose is not of sufficient importance to degrade the priesthood on his own account. The life of one is not of so much value as the dignity of all priests, by whose advice I gave those directions, when they intimated that there might perchance be some heathen or Jew chosen by Auxentius, to whom I should give a triumph over Christ, if I entrusted to him a judgment concerning Christ. What

else pleases them but to hear of some insult to Christ? What else can please them unless(which God forbid) the Godhead of Christ should be denied? Plainly they agree well with the Arian who says that Christ is a creature, which also heathen and Jews most readily acknowledge.

14. This was decreed at the Synod of Ariminum, and rightly do I detest that council, following the rule of the Nicene Council, from which neither death nor the sword can detach me, which faith the father of your Clemency also. Theodosius, the most blessed Emperor, both approved and follows. The Gauls hold this faith, and Spain, and keep it with the pious confession of the Divine Spirit.

15. If anything has to be discussed I have learnt to discuss it in church as those before me did. If a conference is to be held concerning the faith, there ought to be a gathering of Bishops, as was done under Constantine, the Prince of august memory, who did not promulgate any laws beforehand, but left the decision to the Bishops. This was done also under Constantius, Emperor of august memory, the heir of his father's dignity. But what began well ended otherwise, for the Bishops had at first subscribed an unadulterated confession of faith, but since some were desirous of deciding concerning the faith inside the palace, they managed that those decisions of the Bishops should be altered by fraud. But they immediately recalled this perverted decision, and certainly the larger number at Ariminum approved the faith of the Nicene Council and condemned the Arian propositions.

16. If Auxentius appeals to a synod, in order to discuss points concerning the faith(although it is not necessary that so many Bishops should be troubled for the sake of one man, who, even if he were an angel from heaven, ought not to be preferred to the peace of the Church), when I hear that a synod is gathering, I, too, will not be wanting. Repeal, then, the law if you wish for a disputation.

17. I would have come, O Emperor, to your consistory, and have made these remarks in your presence, if either the Bishops or the people had allowed me, but they said that matters concerning the faith ought to be treated in the church, in presence of the people.

18. And I wish, O Emperor, that you had not given sentence that I should go into banishment whither I would. I went out daily. No one guarded me. You ought to have appointed me a place wherever you would, for I offered myself for anything. But now the clergy say to me, "There is not much difference whether you voluntarily leave the altar of Christ or betray it, for if you leave it you will betray it."

19. And I wish it were clearly certain to me that the Church would by no means be given over to the Arians. I would then willingly offer myself to the will of your piety. But if I only am guilty of disturbance, why is there a command to invade all other churches? I would it were established that no one should trouble the churches, and then I could wish that whatever sentence seems good should be pronounced concerning me.

20. Vouchsafe, then, O Emperor, to accept the reason for which I could not come to the consistory. I have never learned to appear in the consistory except on your behalf,⁵ and I am not able to dispute within the palace, who neither know nor wish to know the secrets of the palace.

21. I, Ambrose, Bishop, offer this memorial to the most gracious Emperor, and most blessed Augustus Valentinian.

1: "When Valentinian was journeying from Constantinople to Rome ...some bishops despatched Hypatian ...to request permission to assemble themselves together for deliberation on questions of doctrine. ...Valentinian made the following reply: 'I am but one of the laity, and have therefore no right to interfere in these transactions; let the priests, to whom such matters appertain, assemble where they please.'" Sozomen, Eccl. Hist. VI. 7 [Vol. II. of this series]. The law referred to is not extant.

2: Allusion is here made to a celebrated act of Valentinian, when attending on the Emperor Julian at the temple of Fortune. One of the attendants sprinkled him with lustral water, and Valentinian struck him with his fist, saying that this water defiled rather than purified those whom it touched. Comp. Sozomen, Hist. Eccl. VI. 6.

3: St. Ambrose is alluding to the circumstances of his own election.

4: A law in favour of the Arians, allowing them to meet together freely, passed through the influence of Justina. See Sozomen, Hist. Eccl. VII. 13.

5: This refers modestly to the legations undertaken by St. Ambrose on two separate occasions to Maximus, when the Empress Justina feared for the safety of herself and Valentinian. In his first mission, a.d. 383, he had at great personal risk induced Maximus not to invade Italy, but to leave Valentinian in peaceful possession of a share of the empire. In his second embassy, a.d. 387, he was less successful, as Maximus had determined on invading Italy; so that Justina and Valentinian escaped to the East, seeking the protection of Theodosius, who took their part, and defeated Maximus and put him to death at Aquileia, a.d. 388.

Letters - Letter 22

Letter XXII.

Letter XXII.

St. Ambrose in a letter to his sister gives an account of the finding of the bodies of SS. Gervasius and Protasius, and of his addresses to the people on that occasion. Preaching from Psalm xix., he allegorically expounded the "heavens" to represent the martyrs and apostles, and the "day" he takes to be their confession. They were humbled by God, and then raised again. He then gives an account of the state in which their bodies were found, and of their translation to the basilica. In another address he speaks of the joy of the Catholics and the malice of the Arians who denied the miracles that were being wrought, as the Jews used to do, and points out that their faith is quite different from that of the martyrs, and that since the devils acknowledge the Trinity, and they do not, they are worse than the very devils themselves. To the lady, his sister, dearer to him than his eyes and life, Ambrose Bishop.

1. As I do not wish anything which takes place here in your absence to escape the knowledge of your holiness, you must know that we have found some bodies of holy martyrs. For after I had dedicated the basilica,¹ many, as it were, with one mouth began to address me, and said: Consecrate this as you did the Roman basilica. And I answered: "Certainly I will if I find any relics of martyrs." And at once a kind of prophetic ardour seemed to enter my heart.

2. Why should I use many words? God favoured us, for even the clergy were afraid who were bidden to clear away the earth from the spot before the chancel screen of SS. Felix and Nabor. I found the fitting signs, and on bringing in some on whom hands were to be laid,² the power of the holy martyrs became so manifest, that even whilst I was still silent, one³ was seized and thrown prostrate at the holy burial-place. We found two men of marvellous stature, such as those of ancient days. All the bones were perfect, and there was much blood. During the whole of those two days there was an enormous concourse of people. Briefly we arranged the whole in order, and as evening was now coming on transferred them to the basilica of Fausta,⁴ where watch was kept during the night, and some received the laying on of hands. On the following day we translated the relics to the basilica called Ambrosian. During the translation a blind man was healed.⁵ I addressed the people then as follows:

3. When I considered the immense and unprecedented numbers of you who are here gathered together, and the gifts of divine grace which have shone forth in the holy. martyrs, I must confess that I felt myself unequal to this task, and that I could not express in words what we can scarcely conceive in our minds or take in with our eyes. But when the course of holy Scripture began to be read, the Holy Spirit Who spake in the prophets granted me to utter something worthy of so great a gathering, of your expectations, and of the merits of the holy martyrs.

4. "The heavens," it is said, "declare the glory of God."⁶ When this Psalm is read, it occurs to one that not so much the material elements as the heavenly merits seem to offer praise worthy of God.

And by the chance of this day's lessons it is made clear what "heavens" declare the glory of God. Look at the holy relics at my right hand and at my left, see men of heavenly conversation, behold the trophies of a heavenly mind. These are the heavens which declare the glory of God, these are His handiwork which the firmament proclaims. For not worldly enticements, but the grace of the divine working, raised them to the firmament of the most sacred Passion, and long before by the testimony of their character and virtues bore witness of them, that they continued steadfast against the dangers of this world.

5. Paul was a heaven, when he said: "Our conversation is in heaven."⁷ James and John were heavens, and then were called "sons of thunder";⁸ and John, being as it were a heaven, saw the Word with God.⁹ The Lord Jesus Himself was a heaven of perpetual light, when He was declaring the glory of God, that glory which no man had seen before. And therefore He said: "No man hath seen God at any time, except the only-begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."¹⁰ If you seek for the handiwork of God, listen to Job when he says: "The Spirit of God Who hath made me."¹¹ And so strengthened against the temptations of the devil, he kept his footsteps constantly without offence. But let us go on to what follows.

6. "Day," it is said, "unto day uttereth speech."¹² Behold the true days, where no darkness of night intervenes. Behold the days full of life and eternal brightness, which uttered the word of God, not in speech which passes away, but in their inmost heart, by constancy in confession, and perseverance in their witness.

7. Another Psalm which was read says: "Who is like unto the Lord our God, Who dwelleth on high, and regardeth lowly things in heaven and in the earth?"¹³ The Lord regarded indeed lowly things when He revealed to His Church the relics of the holy martyrs lying hidden under the unnoted turf, whose souls were in heaven, their bodies in the earth: "raising the poor out of the dust, and lifting the needy from the mire,"¹⁴ and you see how He hath "set them with the princes of His people."¹⁵ Whom are we to esteem as the princes of the people but the holy martyrs? amongst whose number Protasius and Gervasius long unknown are now enrolled, who have caused the Church of Milan, barren of martyrs hitherto, now as the mother of many children, to rejoice in the distinctions and instances of her own sufferings.

8. Nor let this seem at variance with the true faith: "Day unto day uttereth the word;" soul unto soul, life unto life, resurrection unto resurrection; "and night unto night showeth knowledge;"¹⁶ that is, flesh unto flesh, they, that is, whose passion has shown to all the true knowledge of the faith. Good are these nights, bright nights, not without stars: "For as star differeth from star in brightness, so too is the resurrection of the dead."¹⁷

9. For not without reason do many call this the resurrection of the martyrs. I do not say whether they have risen for themselves, for us certainly the martyrs have risen. You know-nay, you have yourselves seen-that many are cleansed from evil spirits, that very many also, having touched with their hands the robe of the saints, are freed from those ailments which oppressed them; you see that the miracles of old time are renewed, when through the coming of the Lord Jesus grace was more largely shed forth upon the earth, and that many bodies are healed as it were by the shadow of the holy bodies. How many napkins are passed about! how many garments, laid upon the holy relics and endowed with healing power, are claimed! All are glad to touch even the outside thread, and whosoever touches will be made whole.

10. Thanks be to Thee, Lord Jesus, that at this time Thou hast stirred up for us the spirits of the holy martyrs, when Thy Church needs greater protection.¹⁸ Let all know what sort of champions I desire, who are able to defend, but desire not to attack. These have I gained for you, O holy people, such as may help all and injure none. Such defenders do I desire, such are the soldiers I have, that is, not soldiers of this world, but soldiers of Christ. I fear no ill-will on account of them, the more powerful their patronage is the greater safety is there in it. And I wish for their protection for those very persons who grudge them to me. Let them come, then, and see my attendants. I do not deny that I am surrounded by such arms: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will boast in the Name of the Lord our God."¹⁹

11. The course of divine Scripture relates that Elisha, when surrounded by the army of the Syrians, told his servant, who was afraid, not to fear; "for," said he, "they that be for us are more than those against us;"²⁰ and in order to prove this, he prayed that the eyes of Gehazi might be opened, and when they were opened, he saw that numberless hosts of angels were present. And we, though we cannot see them, yet feel their presence. Our eyes were shut, so long as the bodies of the saints lay hidden. The Lord opened our eyes, and we saw the aids wherewith we have been often protected. We used not to see them, but yet we had them. And so, as though the Lord had said to us when trembling, "See what great martyrs I have given you," so we with opened eyes behold the glory of the Lord, which is passed in the passion of the martyrs, and present in their working. We have escaped, brethren, no slight lead of shame; we had patrons and knew it not. We have found this one thing, in which we seem to excel those who have gone before us. That knowledge of the martyrs, which they lost, we have regained.

12. The glorious relics are taken out of an ignoble burying-place, the trophies are displayed under heaven. The tomb is wet with blood. The marks of the bloody triumph are present, the relics are found undisturbed in their order, the head separated from the body. Old men now repeat that they once heard the names of these martyrs and read their titles. The city which had carried off the martyrs of other places had lost her own. Though this be the gift of God, yet I cannot deny the favour which the Lord Jesus has granted to the time of my priesthood, and since I myself am not worthy to be a martyr, I have obtained these martyrs for you.

13. Let these triumphant victims be brought to the place where Christ is the victim. But He upon the altar, Who suffered for all; they beneath the altar, who were redeemed by His Passion. I had destined this place for myself, for it is fitting that the priest should rest there where he has been wont to offer, but I yield the right hand portion to the sacred victims; that place was due to the martyrs. Let us, then, deposit the sacred relics, and lay them up in a worthy resting-place, and let us celebrate the whole day with faithful devotion.

14. The people called out and demanded that the deposition of the martyrs should be postponed until the Lord's day, but at length it was agreed that it should take place the following day. On the following day again I preached to the people on this sort.

15. Yesterday I handled the verse, "Day unto day uttereth speech,"²¹ as my ability enabled me; to-day holy Scripture seems to me not only to have prophesied in former times, but even at the present. For when I behold your holy celebration continued day and night, the oracles of the prophet's song have declared that these days, yesterday and to-day, are the days of which it is most opportunely said: "Day unto day uttereth speech;" and these the nights of which it is most

fittingly said that "Night unto night showeth knowledge." For what else but the Word of God have you during these two days uttered with inmost affection, and have proved yourselves to have the knowledge of the faith.

16. And they who usually do so have a grudge against this solemnity of yours; and since because of their envious disposition they cannot endure this solemnity, they hate the cause of it, and go so far in their madness as to deny the merits of the martyrs, whose deeds even the evil spirits confess. But this is not to be wondered at since such is the faithlessness of unbelievers that the confession of the devil is often more easy to endure. For the devil said: "Jesus, Son of the living God, why art Thou come to torment us before the time?"²² And the Jews hearing this, even themselves denied Him to be the Son of God. And at this time you have heard the devils crying out, and confessing to the martyrs that they cannot bear their sufferings, and saying, "Why are ye come to torment us so severely?" And the Arians say: "These are not martyrs, and they cannot torment the devil, nor deliver any one, while the torments of the devils are proved by their own words, and the benefits of the martyrs are declared by the restoring of the healed, and the proof of those that are loosed.

17. They deny that the blind man received sight, but he denies not that he is healed. He says: I who could not see now see. He says: I ceased to be blind, and proves it by the fact. They deny the benefit, who are unable to deny the fact.²³ The man is known: so long as he was well he was employed in the public service; his name is Severus, a butcher by trade. He had given up his occupation when this hindrance betel him. He calls for evidence those persons by whose kindness he was supported; he adduces those as able to affirm the truth of his visitation whom he had as witnesses of his blindness. He declares that when he touched the hem of the robe of the martyrs, wherewith the sacred relics were covered, his sight was restored.

18. Is not this like that which we read in the Gospel? For we praise the power of the same Author in each case, nor does it be a work or a gift, since He confers a gift in His works, and works in His gift. For that which He gave to others to be done, this His Name effects in the work of others. So we read in the Gospel, that the Jews, when they saw the gift of healing in the blind man, called for the testimony of his parents, and asked: "How doth your son see?" when he said: "Whereas I was blind, now I see."²⁴ And in this case the man says, "I was blind and now I see." Ask others if you do not believe me; ask strangers if you think his parents are in collusion with me. The obstinacy of these men is more hateful than that of the Jews, for the latter, when they doubted, at least asked his parents; the others enquire in secret and deny in public, incredulous not as to the work, but as to its Author.

19. But I ask what it is that they do not believe; is it whether any one can be aided by the martyrs? This is the same thing as not to believe Christ, for He Himself said: "Ye shall do greater things than these."²⁵ How? By those martyrs whose merits have been long efficacious, whose bodies were long since found? Here I ask, do they bear a grudge against me, or against the holy martyrs? If against me, are any miracles wrought by me? by my means or in my name? Why, then, grudge me what is not mine? If it be against the martyrs (for if they bear no grudge against me, it can only be against them), they show that the martyrs were of another faith than that which they believe. For otherwise they would not have any feeling against their works, did they not judge that they have not the faith which was in them, that faith established by the tradition of our forefathers,

which the devils themselves cannot deny, but the Arians do.

21. We have to-day heard those on whom hands were laid say, that no one can be saved unless he believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that he is dead and buried who denies the Holy Spirit, and believes not the almighty power of the Trinity. The devil confesses this, but the Arians refuse to do so. The devil says: Let him who denies the Godhead of the Holy Spirit be so tormented as himself was tormented by the martyrs.

22. I do not accept the devil's testimony but his confession. The devil spoke unwillingly, being compelled and tormented. That which wickedness suppresses, torture extracts. The devil yields to blows, and the Arians have not yet learned to yield. How great have been their sufferings, and yet, like Pharaoh, they are hardened by their calamities! The devil said, as we find it written: "I know Thee Who Thou art, Thou art the Son of the living God."²⁶ And the Jews said: "We know not whence He is."²⁷ The evil spirits said to-day, yesterday, and during the night, We know that ye are martyrs. And the Arians say, We know not, we will not understand, we will not believe. The evil spirits say to the martyrs, Ye are come to destroy us. The Arians say, The torments of the devils are not real but fictitious and made-up tales. I have heard of many things being made up, but no one has ever been able to feign that he was an evil spirit. What is the meaning of the torment we see in those on whom hands are laid? What room is there here for fraud? what suspicion of pretence?

23. But I will not make use of the voice of evil spirits in support of the martyrs. Their holy sufferings are proved by the benefits they confer. These have persons to judge of them, namely, those who are cleansed, and witnesses, namely, those who are set free. That voice is better than that of devils, which the soundness of those utters who came infirm; better is the voice which blood sends forth, for blood has a loud voice reaching from earth to heaven. You have read how God said: "Thy brother's blood crieth unto Me."²⁸ This blood cries by its colour, the blood cries by the voice of its effects, the blood cries by the triumph of its passion. We have acceded to your request, and have postponed till to-day the deposition of the relics which was to have taken place yesterday.

1: This was probably the church now known as Sant Ambrogio, at Milan, where St. Ambrose and his brother, together with SS. Gervasius and Protasius, now rest. Of course the church has been rebuilt, though in ancient times. The church of SS. Nabor and Felix is that now called San Francisco.

2: This laying on of hands was not confirmation, but for the exorcising of those possessed of evil spirits, the energameni. See Dict. Chr. Ant. s.v. "Exorcism."

3: [Urna.] But it would seem, though all ms. authority supports this reading, as though una, "a woman," must be the true one. For from the context it would seem plain that one of those brought in was thrown prostrate, and there is no connection in which an "urn" could be brought into the narrative. See Fleury, XVIII. 47.

4: Now SS. Vitalis and Agricola.

5: This statement is corroborated by St. Augustine, Conf. IX. 7; De Civ. Dei. XXII. 8, 2; and Sermo de Diversis, CCLXXVI. 5.

6: Ps. xix. [xviii.] 1.

7: Phil. iii. 20.

8: S. Mark iii. 17.

9: S. John i. 1.

10: S. John i. 17, John i. 18.

11: Job xxxiii. 4.

12: Ps. xix. [xviii.] 2.

13: Ps. cxiii. [cxii.] 5, Ps. cxiii. [cxii.] 6.

14: Ps. cxiii. [cxiii.] 7.

15: Ps. cxiii. [cxii.] 8.

16: Ps. xix. [xviii.] 2.

17: 1 Cor. xv. 41.

18: 3 This would seem to refer to the persecution stirred up by Justina, in order to gain one of the churches for Arian use. The following sentence: " Tales ego ambio defensores, " was inscribed by St. Charles Borromeo on a banner of SS. Gervasius and Protasius, which he caused to be made and carried in procession through Milan at the time of the great plague.

19: Ps. xx. [xix.] 8.

20: 2 [4] Kings vi. 16.

21: Ps. xix. [xviii.] 2.

22: S. Matt. viii. 29.

23: The truth of this miracle, of which, unless it took place, St. Ambrose could not have spoken in a public address, is also supported by St. Augustine, who was at this time in Milan, and if not himself on the spot, as he may well have been, would at least know whether such an event had taken place. See St. Augustine, De Civ. Dei. XXII. 8, and specially, Sermo in natali Martyrum Gervasii et Protasii.

24: S. John ix. 25.

25: S. John xiv. 12.

26: S. Mark i. 24.

27: S. John ix. 30.

28: Gen. iv. 10.

Letters - Letter 40

Letter XL.

Letter XL.

St. Ambrose begs Theodosius to listen to him, as he cannot be silent without great risk to both. He points out that Theodosius though God-fearing may be led astray, and points out that his decision respecting the restoration of the Jewish synagogue is full of peril, exposing the bishop to the danger of either acting against the truth or of death. The case of Julian is referred to, and the reasons given for the imperial rescript are met, especially by the plea that the Jews had burnt many churches. St. Ambrose touches on the temple of the Valentinians, whom he declares to be worse than heathen, and points out what a door would be opened to the calumnies of the Jews and a triumph over Christ Himself. The Emperor is lastly warned by the example of Maximus not to take the part of Jews or heretics, and is urged to clemency.

Ambrose, Bishop, to the most clement prince, and blessed Emperor, Theodosius the Augustus.

1. I am continually harassed by almost incessant cares, most blessed Emperor, but I have never been in such anxiety as at present, since I see that I must take heed that there be nothing which may be ascribed to me savouring even of sacrilege. And so I entreat you to listen with patience to what I say. For, if I am unworthy to be heard by you, I am unworthy to offer for you, who have been entrusted by you with your vows and prayers. Will you not yourself hear him whom you wish to be heard for you? Will you not hear him pleading his own cause whom you have heard for others? And do you not fear for your own decision, lest by thinking him unworthy to be heard by you, you make him unworthy to be heard for you?

2. But it is neither the part of an emperor to refuse liberty of speech, nor of a priest not to say what he thinks. For there is nothing in you emperors so popular and so estimable as to appreciate freedom in those even who are in subjection to you by military obedience. For this is the difference between good and bad princes, that the good love liberty, the bad slavery. And there is nothing in a priest so full of peril as regards God, or so base in the opinion of men, as not freely to declare what he thinks. For it is written: "I spoke of Thy testimonies before kings, and was not ashamed;"¹ and in another place: "Son of man, I have set Thee a watchman unto the house of Israel, in order," it is said, "that if the righteous doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, because thou hast not given him warning," that is, hast not told him what to guard against, "the memory of his righteousness shall not be retained, and I will require his blood at thine hand. But if thou warn the righteous that he sin not, and he doth not sin, the righteous shall surely live because thou hast warned him, and thou shalt deliver thy soul."²

3. I had rather then, O Emperor, have fellowship with you in good than in evil, and therefore the silence of the priest ought to displease your Clemency, and his freedom to please you. For you are involved in the risk of my silence, but are aided by the benefit of my freedom. I am not, then, officiously intruding in things where I ought not, nor interfering in the affairs of others. I am obeying

the commands of God. And I do this first of all out of love for you, good-will toward you, and desire of preserving your well-doing. If I am not believed in this, or am forbidden to act on this feeling, I speak in very truth for fear of offending God. For if my peril would set you free, I would patiently offer myself for you, though not willingly, for I had rather that without my peril you might be acceptable to God and glorious. But if the guilt of silence and dissimulation on my part would both weigh me down and not set you free, I had rather that you should think me too importunate, than useless and base. Since it is written, as the holy Apostle Paul says, whose teaching you cannot controvert: "Be instant, in season, out of season, reprove, entreat, rebuke with all patience and doctrine."³

4. We, then, also have One Whom it is even more perilous to displease, especially since even emperors are not displeased when every one discharges his own office, and you patiently listen to every one making suggestions in his own sphere, nay, you rebuke him if he act not according to the order of his service. Can this, then, seem to you offensive in priests, which you willingly accept from those who serve you; since we speak not what we wish, but what we are bidden? For you know the passage: "When ye shall stand before kings and rulers, take no thought what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father Who speaketh in you."⁴ And if I were speaking in state causes, although justice must be observed even in them, I should not feel such dread if I were not listened to, but in the cause of God whom will you listen to, if not to the priest, at whose greater peril sin is committed? Who will dare to tell you the truth if the priest dare not?

5. I know that you are Godfearing, merciful, gentle, and calm, having the faith and fear of God at heart, but often some things escape our notice. "Some have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."⁵ And I think that we ought to take care lest this also come upon faithful souls. I know your piety towards God, your lenity towards men, I myself am bound by the benefits of your favour. And therefore I fear the more, I am the more anxious; lest even you condemn me hereafter by your own judgment, because through my want of openness or my flattery you should not have avoided some fault. If I saw that you sinned against me, I ought not to keep silence, for it is written: "If thy brother sin against thee, rebuke him at first, then chide him sharply before two or three witnesses. If he will not hear thee, tell the Church."⁶ Shall I, then, keep silence in the cause of God? Let us, then, consider what I have to fear.

6. A report was made by the military Count of the East that a synagogue had been burnt, and that this was done at the instigation of the Bishop. You gave command that the others should be punished, and the synagogue be rebuilt by the Bishop himself. I do not urge that the Bishop's account ought to have been waited for, for priests are the calmers of disturbances, and anxious for peace, except when even they are moved by some offence against God, or insult to the Church. Let us suppose that that Bishop was too eager in the matter of burning the synagogue, and too timid at the judgment-seat, are not you afraid, O Emperor, lest he comply with your sentence, lest he fail in his faith?

7. Are you not also afraid, lest, which will happen, he oppose your Count with a refusal? He will then be obliged to make him either an apostate⁷ or a martyr, either of these alien to the times, either of them equivalent to persecution, if he be compelled either to apostatize or to undergo martyrdom. You see in what direction the issue of the matter inclines. If you think the Bishop firm,

guard against making a martyr of a firm man; if you think him vacillating, avoid causing the fall of one who is frail. For he has a heavy responsibility who has caused the weak to fall.

8. Having, then, thus stated the two sides of the matter, suppose that the said Bishop says that he himself kindled the fire,⁸ collected the crowd, gathered the people together, in order not to lose an opportunity of martyrdom, and instead of the weak to put forward a stronger athlete. O happy falsehood, whereby one gains for others acquittal, for himself grace! This it is, O Emperor, which I, too, have requested, that you would rather take vengeance on me, and if you consider this a crime, would attribute it to me. Why order judgment against one who is absent? You have the guilty man present, you hear his confession. I declare that I set fire to the synagogue, or at least that I ordered those who did it, that there might not be a place where Christ was denied. If it be objected to me that I did not set the synagogue on fire here, I answer, it began to be burnt by the judgment of God, and my work came to an end. And if the very truth be asked, I was the more slack because I did not expect that it would be punished. Why should I do that which as it was unavenged would also be without reward? These words hurt modesty but recall grace, lest that be done whereby an offence against God most High may be committed.

9. But let it be granted that no one will cite the Bishop to the performance of this task, for I have asked this of your Clemency, and although I have not yet read that this edict is revoked, let us notwithstanding assume that it is revoked. What if others more timid offer that the synagogue be restored at their cost; or that the Count, having found this previously determined, himself orders it to be rebuilt out of the funds of Christians? You, O Emperor, will have an apostate Count, and to him will you entrust the victorious standards? Will you entrust the labarum, consecrated as it is by the Name of Christ, to one who restores the synagogue which knows not Christ? Order the labarum to be carried into the synagogue, and let us see if they do not resist.

10. Shall, then, a place be made for the unbelief of the Jews out of the spoils of the Church, and shall the patrimony, which by the favour of Christ has been gained for Christians, be transferred to the treasuries of unbelievers? We read that Of old temples were built for idols of the plunder taken from Cimbri, and the spoils of other enemies. Shall the Jews write this inscription on the front of their synagogue: "The temple of impiety, erected from the plunder of Christians"?

11. But, perhaps, the cause of discipline moves you, O Emperor. Which, then, is of greater importance, the show of discipline or the cause of religion? It is needful that judgment should yield to religion.

12. Have you not heard, O Emperor, how, when Julian had commanded that the temple of Jerusalem should be restored, those who were clearing the rubbish were consumed by fire?⁹ Will you not beware lest this happen now again? For you ought not to have commanded what Julian commanded.

13. But what is your motive? Is it because a public building of whatever kind has been burnt, or because it was a synagogue? If you are moved by the burning of a building of no importance (for what could there be in so mean a town?), do you not remember, O Emperor, how many prefects' houses have been burnt at Rome, and no one inflicted punishment for it? And, in truth, if any emperor had desired to punish the deed sharply, he would have injured the cause of him who had suffered so great a loss. Which, then, is more fitting, that a fire in some part of the buildings of

Callinicum, or of the city of Rome, should be punished, if indeed it were right at all? At Constantinople lately, the house of the bishop was burnt and your Clemency's son interceded with his father, praying that you would not avenge the insult offered to him, that is, to the son of the emperor, and the burning of the episcopal house. Do you not consider, O Emperor, that if you were to order this deed to be punished, he would again intervene against the punishment? That favour was, however, fittingly obtained by the son from the father, for it was worthy of him first to forgive the injury done to himself. That was a good division in the distribution of favour, that the son should be entreated for his own loss, the father for that of the son. Here there is nothing for you to keep back for your son. Take heed, then, lest you derogate aught from God.

14. There is, then, no adequate cause for such a commotion, that the people should be so severely punished for the burning of a building, and much less since it is the burning of a synagogue, a home of unbelief, a house of impiety, a receptacle of folly, which God Himself has condemned. For thus we read, where the Lord our God speaks by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah: "And I will do to this house, which is called by My Name, wherein ye trust, and to the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh, and I will cast you forth from My sight, as I cast forth your brethren, the whole seed of Ephraim. And do not thou pray for that people, and do not thou ask mercy for them, and do not come near Me on their behalf, for I will not hear thee. Or seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah?"¹⁰ God forbids intercession to be made for those.

15. And certainly, if I were pleading according to the law of nations, I could tell how many of the Church's basilicas the Jews burnt in the time of the Emperor Julian: two at Damascus, one of which is scarcely now repaired, and this at the cost of the Church, not of the Synagogue; the other basilica still is a rough mass of shapeless ruins. Basilicas were burnt at Gaza, Ascalon, Berytus, and in almost every place in those parts, and no one demanded punishment. And at Alexandria a basilica was burnt by heathen and Jews, which surpassed all the rest. The Church was not avenged, shall the Synagogue be so?

16. Shall, then, the burning of the temple of the Valentinians be also avenged? But what is but a temple in which is a gathering of heathen? Although the heathen invoke twelve gods, the Valentinians worship thirty-two Aeons whom they call gods. And I have found out concerning these also that it is reported and ordered that some monks should be punished, who, when the Valentinians were stopping the road on which, according to custom and ancient use, they were singing psalms as they went to celebrate the festival of the Maccabees, enraged by their insolence, burnt their hurriedly-built temple in some country village.

17. How many have to offer themselves to such a choice, when they remember that in the time of Julian, he who threw down an altar, and disturbed a sacrifice, was condemned by the judge and suffered martyrdom? And so the judge who heard him was never esteemed other than a prosecutor, for no one thought him worthy of being associated with, or of a kiss. And if he were not now dead, I should fear, O Emperor, that you would take vengeance on him, although he escaped not the vengeance of heaven, outliving his own heir.

18. But it is related that the judge was ordered to take cognizance of the matter, and that it was written that he ought not to have reported the deed, but to have punished it, and that the money chests which had been taken away should be demanded. I will omit other matters. The buildings of

our churches were burnt by the Jews, and nothing was restored, nothing was asked back, nothing demanded. But what could the Synagogue have possessed in a far distant town, when the whole of what there is there is not much; there is nothing of value, and no abundance? And what then could the scheming Jews lose by the fire? These are artifices of the Jews who wish to calumniate us, that because of their complaints, an extraordinary military inquiry may be ordered, and a soldier sent, who will, perhaps, say what one said once here, O Emperor, before your accession: "How will Christ be able to help us who fight for the Jews against Christ, who are sent to avenge the Jews? They have destroyed their own armies, and wish to destroy ours."

19. Further, into what calumnies will they not break out, who by false witness calumniated even Christ? Into what calumnies will not men break out who are liars, even in things belonging to God? Whom will they not say to have been the instigators of that sedition? Whom will they not assail, even of those whom they recognize not, that may gaze upon the numberless ranks of Christians in chains, that they may see the necks of the faithful people bowed in captivity, that the servants of God may be concealed in darkness, may be beheaded, given over to the fire, delivered to the mines, that their sufferings may not quickly pass away?

20. Will you give this triumph over the Church of God to the Jews? this trophy over Christ's people, this exultation, O Emperor, to the unbelievers? this rejoicing to the Synagogue, this sorrow to the Church? The people of the Jews will set this solemnity amongst their feast-days, and will doubtless number it amongst those on which they triumphed either over the Amorites, or the Canaanites, or were delivered from the hand of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, or of Nebuchodonosor, King of Babylon. They will add this solemnity, in memory of their having triumphed over the people of Christ.

21. And whereas they deny that they themselves are bound by the Roman laws, and repute those laws as criminal, yet now they think that they ought to be avenged, as it were, by the Roman laws. Where were those laws when they themselves set fire to the roofs of the sacred basilicas? If Julian did not avenge the Church because he was an apostate, will you, O Emperor, avenge the injury done to the Synagogue, because you are a Christian?

22. And what will Christ say to you afterwards? Do you not remember what He said by the prophet Nathan to holy David?¹¹ "I have chosen thee the youngest of thy brethren, and from a private man have made thee emperor. I have placed of the fruit of thy seed on the imperial throne. I have made barbarous nations subject unto thee, I have given thee peace, I have delivered thine enemy captive into thy power. Thou hadst no corn for provision for thine army, I opened to thee the gates, I opened to thee their stores by the hand of the enemies themselves. Thy enemies gave to thee their provisions which they had prepared for themselves. I troubled the counsels of thy enemy, so that he made himself bare. I so lettered the usurper of the empire himself and bound his mind, that whilst he still had means of escape, yet with all belonging to him, as though for fear lest any should escape thee, he shut himself in. His officer and forces on the other element,¹² whom before I had scattered, that they might not join to fight against thee, I brought together again to complete thy victory. Thy army, gathered together from many unsubdued nations, I bade keep faith, tranquillity, and concord as if of one nation. When there was the greatest danger lest the perfidious designs of the barbarians should penetrate the Alps, I conferred victory on thee within the very wall of the Alps, that thou mightest conquer without loss. Thus, then, I caused thee to triumph over thy

enemy, and thou givest My enemies a triumph over My people."

23. Is it not on this account that Maximus was forsaken, who, before the days of the expedition, hearing that a synagogue had been burnt in Rome, had sent an edict to Rome, as if he were the upholder of public order? Wherefore the Christian people said, No good is in store for him. That king has become a Jew, we have heard of him as a defender of order, and Christ, Who died for sinners, soon tested him. If this was said of words, what will be said of punishment? And then at once he was overcome by the Franks and the Saxons, in Sicily, at Siscia, at Petavio, in a word everywhere. What has the believer in common with the unbeliever? The instances of his unbelief ought to be done away with together with the unbeliever himself. That which injured him, that wherein he who was conquered offended, the conqueror ought not to follow but to condemn.

24. I have, then, recounted these things not as to one who is ungrateful, but have enumerated them as rightly bestowed, in order that, warned by them, you, to whom more has been given, may love more. When Simon answered in these words the Lord Jesus said: "Thou hast judged rightly."¹³ And straightway turning to the woman who anointed His feet with ointment, setting forth a type of the Church, He said to Simon: "Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven, since she loved much. But he to whom less is forgiven loveth less."¹⁴ This is the woman who entered into the house of the Pharisee, and cast off the Jew, but gained Christ. For the Church shut out the Synagogue, why is it now again attempted that in the servant of Christ the Synagogue should exclude the Church from the bosom of faith, from the house of Christ?

25. I have brought these matters together in this address, O Emperor, out of love and zeal for you. For I owe it to your kindnesses (whereby, at my request, you have liberated many from exile, from prison, from the extreme penalty of death) that I should not fear even offending your feelings for the sake of your own salvation (no one has greater confidence than he who loves from his heart, certainly no one ought to injure him who takes thought for him); that I may not lose in one moment that favour granted to every priest and received by me for so many years; and yet it is not the loss of favour which I deprecate but the peril to salvation.

26. And yet how great a thing it is, O Emperor, that you should not think it necessary to enquire or to punish in regard to a matter as to which up to this day no one has enquired, no one has ever inflicted punishment. It is a serious matter to endanger your salvation for the Jews. When Gideon¹⁵ had slain the sacred calf, the heathen said, The gods will themselves avenge the injury done to them. Who is to avenge the Synagogue? Christ, Whom they slew, Whom they denied? Will God the Father avenge those who do not receive the Father, since they have not received the Son? Who is to avenge the heresy of the Valentinians? How can your piety avenge them, seeing it has commanded them to be excluded, and denied them permission to meet together? If I set before you Josiah as a king approved of God, will you condemn that in them which was approved in him?¹⁶

27. But at any rate if too little confidence is placed in me, command the presence of those bishops whom you think fit, let it be discussed, O Emperor, what ought to be done without injury to the faith, If you consult your officers concerning pecuniary causes, how much more just is it that you should consult the priests of God in the cause of religion.

28. Let your Clemency consider from how many plotters, how many spies the Church suffers. If they come upon a slight crack, they plant a dart in it. I speak after the manner of men, but God is feared more than men, Who is rightly set before even emperors. If any one thinks it right that deference should be paid to a friend, a parent, or a neighbour, I am right in judging that deference should be paid to God, and that He should be preferred to all. Consult, O Emperor, your own advantage, or suffer me to consult mine.

29. What shall I answer hereafter, if it be discovered that, by authority given from this place, Christians have been slain by the sword, or by clubs, or thongs knotted with lead? How shall I explain such a fact? How shall I excuse it to those bishops, who now mourn bitterly because some, who have discharged the office of the priesthood for thirty and many more years, or other ministers of the Church, are withdrawn from their sacred office, and set to discharge municipal duties?¹⁷ For if they who war for you serve for a stated time of service, how much more ought you to consider those who war for God. How, I say, shall I excuse this to the bishops, who make complaint concerning the clergy, and write that the Churches are wasted by a serious attack upon them?

30. I was desirous that this should come to the knowledge of your Clemency. You will, when it pleases you, vouchsafe to consider and give order according to your will, but exclude and cast out that which troubles me, and troubles me rightly. You do yourself whatever you order to be done, even if he, your officer, do not do it. I much prefer that you should be merciful, than that he should not do what he has been ordered.

31. You have those¹⁸ for whom you ought yet to invite and to merit the mercy of the Lord in regard to the Roman Empire; you have those for whom you hope even more than for yourself; let the grace of God for them, let their salvation appeal to you in these words of mine. I fear that you may commit your cause to the judgment of others. Everything is still unprejudiced before you. On this point I pledge myself to our God for you, do not fear your oath.¹⁹ Is it possible that that should displease God which is amended for His honour? You need not alter anything in that letter, whether it be sent or is not yet sent. Order another to be written, which shall be full of faith, full of piety. For you it is possible to change for the better, for me it is not possible to hide the truth.

32. You forgave the Antiochians the insult offered to you;²⁰ you have recalled the daughters of your enemy, and given them to be brought up by a relative; you sent sums of money to the mother of your enemy from your own treasury. This so great piety, this so great faith towards God, will be darkened by this deed. Do not you, then, I entreat, who spared enemies in arms, and preserved your adversaries, think that Christians ought to be punished with such eagerness.

33. And now, O Emperor, I beg you not to disdain to hear me who am in fear both for yourself and for myself, for it is the voice of a Saint which says: "Wherefore was I made to see the misery of my people?"²¹ that I should commit an offence against God. I, indeed, have done what could be done consistently with honour to you, that you might rather listen to me in the palace, lest, if it were necessary, you should listen to me in the Church.

1: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 46.

2: Ezek. iii. 17, Ezek. iii. 20, Ezek. iii. 21.

3: 2 Tim. iv. 2.

4: S. Matt. x. 19, Matt. 20.

5: Rom. x. 2 6: S. Matt. xviii. 15 ff.

7: Proevicator , in a civil case, one who acts collusively with the defendant, and betrays the other side. Hence in ecclesiastical Latin the word came to mean Apostate.

8: A Canon [60] of the Council of Elvira, a.d. 305 or 6, lays down that if any one is killed for breaking idols, he is not to be reckoned as a martyr, but perhaps St. Ambrose here considers the burning of the synagogue as a retaliation for the destruction of churches.

9: The miracles of this nature which prevented the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple are mentioned by the usual ecclesiastical historians, and confirmed by the heathen Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIII. I.

10: Jer. vii. 14.

11: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] vii. 8.

12: Referring to the fleet under Andragathius, which Maximus had prepared expecting that Theodosius would come by sea.

13: S. Luke vii. 43.

14: S. Luke vii. 47.

15: Judg. vi. 31, very loosely.

16: 2 [4] Kings xxii. 1 ff.

17: Cf. Ep. XVIII. 13, 14.

18: i.e. his children.

19: It is possible that keeping an oath may be contrary to duty. Cf. Off. Min. I. 264.

20: In the year before this the people of Antioch enraged at new taxation, rose and destroyed the statues of the Emperor and Empress. This was the occasion on which St. Chrysostom preached the Homilies on the Statues. Theodosius, at first greatly enraged, subsequently pardoned the people. Cf. St. Chrys. Hom. 20 ad Antioch.

21: 1 Macc. ii. 7.

Letters - Letter 41

Letter XLI.

Letter XLI.

St. Ambrose in this letter to his sister continues the account of the matters contained in his letter to Theodosius, and of a sermon which he subsequently delivered before the Emperor, with the result that the Emperor, when St. Ambrose refused to offer the Sacrifice before receiving a promise that the objectionable order should be revoked, yielded. The Brother TO His Sister.

1. You were good enough to write me word that your holiness was still anxious, because I had written that I was so, so that I am surprised that you did not receive my letter in which I wrote word that satisfaction had been granted me. For when it was reported that a synagogue of the Jews and a conventicle of the Valentinians had been burnt by Christians at the instigation of the bishop, an order was made while I was at Aquileia, that the synagogue should be rebuilt, and the monks punished who had burnt the Valentinian building. Then since I gained little by frequent endeavours, I wrote and sent a letter to the Emperor, and when he went to church I delivered this discourse.

2. In the book of the prophet it is written: "Take to thyself the rod of an almond tree."¹ We ought to consider why the Lord said this to the prophet, for it was not written without a purpose, since in the Pentateuch too we read that the almond rod of Aaron the priest, after being long laid up, blossomed. For the Lord seems to signify by the rod that the prophetic or priestly authority ought to be straightforward, and to advise not so much what is pleasant as what is expedient.

3. And so the prophet is bidden to take an almond rod, because the fruit of this tree is bitter in its rind, hard in its shell, and inside it is pleasant, that after its likeness the prophet should set forth things bitter and hard, and should not fear to proclaim harsh things. Likewise also the priest; for his teaching, though for a time it may seem bitter to some, and like Aaron's rod be long laid up in the ears of dissemblers, yet after a time, when it is thought to have dried up, it blossoms.

4. Wherefore also the Apostle says: "What will ye, shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and in the spirit of gentleness?"² First he made mention of the rod, and like the almond rod struck those who were wandering, that he might afterwards comfort them in the spirit of meekness. And so meekness restored him whom the rod had deprived of the heavenly sacraments. And to his disciple he gave similar injunctions, saying: "Reprove, beseech, rebuke."³ Two of these are hard, one is gentle, but they are hard only that they may soften; for as to suffering from excess of gall, bitter food or drink seems sweet, and on the other hand sweet food is bitter, so where the mind is wounded it grows worse under the influence of pleasurable flattery, and again is made sound by the bitterness of correction.

5. Let thus much be gathered from the passage of the prophet, and let us now consider what the lesson from the Gospel contains: "One of the Pharisees invited the Lord Jesus to eat with him, and

He entered into the Pharisee's house and sat down. And behold a woman, who was a sinner in the city, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and standing behind at His feet, began to wash His feet with her tears." And then he read as far as this place: "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."⁴ How simple, I went on to say, is this Gospel lesson in words, how deep in its counsels! And so because the words are those of the "Great Counsellor,"⁵ let us consider their depth.

6. Our Lord Jesus Christ judged that men could more readily be bound and led on to do the things that are right by kindness than by fear, and that love avails more than dread for correction. And so, when He came, being born of a Virgin, He sent forth His grace, that sin might be forgiven in baptism in order to make us more grateful to Himself. Then if we repay Him by services befitting men who are grateful, He has declared in this woman that there will be a reward for this grace itself to all men. For if He had forgiven only our original debt, He would have seemed more cautious than merciful, and more careful for our correction than magnificent in His rewards. It is only the cunning of a narrow mind that tries to entice, but it is fitting for God that those whom He has invited by grace He should lead on by increase of that grace. And so He first bestows on us a gift by baptism, and afterwards gives more abundantly to those who serve Him faithfully. So, then, the benefits of Christ are both incentives and rewards of virtue.

7. And let no one be startled at the word "creditor."⁶ We were before under a hard creditor, who was not to be satisfied and paid to the full but by the death of the debtor. The Lord Jesus came, He saw us bound by a heavy debt. No one could pay his debt with the patrimony of his innocence. I could have nothing of my own wherewith to free myself. He gave to me a new kind of acquittance, changing my creditor because I had nothing wherewith to pay my debt. But it was sin, not nature, which had made us debtors, for we had contracted heavy debts by our sins, that we who had been free should be bound, for he is a debtor who received any of his creditor's money. Now sin is of the devil; that wicked one has, as it were, these riches in his possession. For as the riches of Christ are virtues, so crimes are the wealth of the devil. He had reduced the human race to perpetual captivity by the heavy debt of inherited liability, which our debt-laden ancestor had transmitted to his posterity by inheritance. The Lord Jesus came, He offered His death for the death of all, He poured out His Blood for the blood of all.

8. So, then, we have changed our creditor, not escaped wholly, or rather we have escaped, for the debt remains but the interest is cancelled, for the Lord Jesus said, "To those who are in bonds, Come out, and to those who are in prison, Go forth;"⁷ so your sins are forgiven. All, then, are forgiven, nor is there any one whom He has not loosed. For thus it is written, that He has forgiven "all transgressions, doing away the handwriting of the ordinance that was against us."⁸ Why, then, do we hold the bonds of others, and desire to exact the debts of others, while we enjoy our own remission? He who forgave all, required of all that what every one remembers to have been forgiven to himself, he also should forgive others.

9. Take care that you do not begin to be in a worse case as creditor than as debtor, like the man in the Gospel,⁹ to whom his lord forgave all his debt, and who afterwards began to exact from his fellow-servant that which he himself had not paid, for which reason his master being angry, exacted from him, with the bitterest reproaches, that which he had before forgiven him. Let us, therefore, take heed lest this happen to us, that by not forgiving that which is due to ourselves, we

should incur the payment of what has been forgiven us, for thus is it written in the words of the Lord Jesus: "So shall My Father, Which is in heaven, do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother."¹⁰ Let us, then, forgive few things to whom many have been forgiven, and understand that the more we forgive the more acceptable shall we be to God, for we are the more well pleasing to God, the more we have been forgiven.

10. And, finally, the Pharisee, when the Lord asked him, "which of them loved him most,"¹¹ answered, "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most." And the Lord replied. "Thou hast judged rightly."¹² The judgment of the Pharisee is praised, but his affection is blamed. He judges well concerning others, but does not himself believe that which he thinks well of in the case of others. You hear a Jew praising the discipline of the Church, extolling its true grace, honouring the priests of the Church; if you exhort him to believe he refuses, and so follows not himself that which he praises in us. His praise, then, is not full, because Christ said to him: "Thou hast rightly judged," for Cain also offered rightly, but did not divide rightly, and therefore God said to him: "If thou offerest rightly, but dividest not rightly, thou hast sinned, be still."¹³ So, then, this man offered rightly, for he judges that Christ ought to be more loved by Christians, because He has forgiven us many sins; but he divided not rightly, because he thought that He could be ignorant of the sins of men Who forgave the sins of men.

11. And, therefore, He said to Simon: "Thou seest this woman. I entered into thine house, and thou gavest Me no water for My feet, but she hath washed My feet with her tears."¹⁴ We are all the one body of Christ, the head of which is God, and we are the members; some perchance eyes, as the prophets; others teeth, as the apostles, who have passed the food of the Gospel preached into our breasts, and rightly is it written: "His eyes shall be bright with wine. and his teeth whiter than milk."¹⁵ And His hands are they who are seen to carry out good works, His belly are they who distribute the strength of nourishment on the poor. So, too, some are His feet, and would that I might be worthy to be His heel! He, then, pours water upon the feet of Christ, who forgives the very lowest their offences, and while delivering those of low estate, yet is washing the feet of Christ.

12. And he pours water upon the feet of Christ, who purifies his conscience from the defilement of sin, for Christ walks in the breast of each. Take heed, then, not to hare your conscience polluted, and so to begin to defile the feet of Christ. Take heed lest He encounter a thorn of wickedness in you, whereby as He walks in you His heel may be wounded. For this was why the Pharisee gave no water for the feet of Christ, that he had not a soul pure from the filth of unbelief. For how could he cleanse his conscience who had not received the water of Christ? But the Church both has this water and has tears. For faith which mourns over former sins is wont to guard against fresh ones. Therefore, Simon the Pharisee, who had no water, had also, of course, no tears. For how should he have tears who had no penitence? For since he believed not in Christ he had no tears. For if he had had them he would have washed his eyes, that he might see Christ, Whom, though he sat at meat with Him, he saw not. For had he seen Him, he would not have doubted of His power.

13. The Pharisee had no hair, inasmuch as he could not recognize the Nazarite; the Church had hair, and she sought the Nazarite, Hairs are counted as amongst the superfluities of the body, but if they be anointed, they give forth a good odour, and are an ornament to the head; if they be not anointed with oil, are a burden. So, too, riches are a burden if you know not how to use them, and sprinkle them not with the odour of Christ. But if you nourish the poor, if you wash their wounds

and wipe away their filth, you have indeed wiped the feet of Christ.

14. "Thou gavest Me no kiss, but she from the time she came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet."16 A kiss is the sign of love. Whence, then, can a Jew have a kiss, seeing he has not known peace, nor received peace from Christ when He said: "My peace I give you, My peace I leave you."17 The Synagogue has not a kiss, but the Church has, who waited for Him, who loved Him, who said: "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth."18 For by His kisses she wished gradually to quench the burning of that long desire, which had grown with looking for the coming of the Lord, and to satisfy her thirst by this gift. And so the holy prophet says: "Thou shalt open my mouth, and it shall declare Thy praise."19 He, then, who praises the Lord Jesus kisses Him, he who praises Him undoubtedly believes. Finally, David himself says: "I believed, therefore have I spoken;"20 and before: "Let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, and let me sing of Thy glory."21

15. And the same Scripture teaches you concerning the infusion of special grace, that he kisses Christ who receives the Spirit, where the holy prophet says: "I opened my mouth and drew in the Spirit."22 He, then, kisses Christ who confesses Him: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."23 He, again, kisses the feet of Christ who, when reading the Gospel, recognizes the acts of the Lord Jesus, and admires them with pious affection, and so piously he kisses, as it were, the footprints of the Lord Jesus as He walks. We kiss Christ, then, with the kiss of communion: "Let him that readeth understand."24

16. Whence should the Jew have this kiss? For he who believed in His coming, believed not in His Passion. For how can he believe that He has suffered Whom he believes not to have come? The Pharisee, then, had no kiss except perchance that of the traitor Judas. But neither had Judas the kiss; and so when he wished to show to, the Jews that kiss which he had promised as the sign of betrayal, the Lord said to him: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"25 that is, you, who have not the love marked by the kiss, offer a kiss. You offer a kiss who know not the mystery of the kiss. It is not the kiss of the lips which is sought for, but that of the heart and soul.

17. But you say, he kissed the Lord. Yes, he kissed Him indeed with his lips. The Jewish people has this kiss, and therefore it is said: "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."26 So, then, he who has not faith and charity has not the kiss, for by a kiss the strength of love is impressed. When love is not, faith is not, and affection is not, what sweetness can there be in kisses?

18. But the Church ceases not to kiss the feet of Christ, and therefore in the Song of Songs she desires not one but many kisses,27 and like Holy Mary she is intent upon all His sayings, and receives all His words when the Gospel or the Prophets are read, and "keeps all His sayings in her heart."28 So, then, the Church alone has kisses as a bride, for a kiss is as it were a pledge of espousals and the prerogative of wedlock. Whence should the Jew have kisses, who believes not in the Bridegroom? Whence should the Jew have kisses, who knows not that the Bridegroom is come?

19. And not only has he no kisses, but neither has he oil wherewith to anoint the feet of Christ, for if he had oil he would certainly, before now, soften his own neck.

Moses says: "This people is stiff-necked,"29 and the Lord says that the priest and the Levite passed by, and neither of them poured oil or wine into the wounds of him who had been wounded

by robbers;³⁰ for they had nothing to pour in, since if they had had oil they would have poured it into their own wounds. But Isaiah declares: "They cannot apply ointment nor oil nor bandage."³¹

20. But the Church has oil wherewith she dresses the wounds of her children, lest the hardness of the wound spread deeply; she has oil which she has received secretly. With this oil Asher washed his feet as it is written: "A blessed son is Asher, and he shall be acceptable to his brothers, and shall dip his feet in oil."³² With this oil, then, the Church anoints the necks of her children, that they may take up the yoke of Christ; with this oil she anointed the Martyrs, that she might cleanse them from the dust of this world; with this oil she anointed the Confessors, that they might not yield to their labours, nor sink down through weariness; that they might not be overcome by the heat of this world; and she anointed them in order to refresh them with the spiritual oil.

21. The Synagogue has not this oil, inasmuch as she has not the olive, and understood not that dove which brought back the olive branch after the deluge.³³ For that Dove descended afterwards when Christ was baptized, and abode upon Him, as John testified in the Gospel, saying: "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He abode upon Him."³⁴ But how could he see the Dove, who saw not Him, upon Whom the Spirit descended like a dove?

22. The Church, then, both washes the feet of Christ and wipes them with her hair. and anoints them with oil, and pours ointment upon them, because not only does she care for the wounded and cherish the weary, but also sprinkles them with the sweet odour of grace; and pours forth the same grace not only on the rich and powerful, but also on men of lowly estate. She weighs all with equal balance, gathers all in the same bosom, and cherishes them in the same lap.

23. Christ died once, and was buried once, and nevertheless He wills that ointment should daily be poured on His feet. What, then, are those feet of Christ on which we pour ointment? The feet of Christ are they of whom He Himself says: "What ye have done to one of the least of these ye have done to Me."³⁵ These feet that woman in the Gospel refreshes, these feet she bedews with her tears; when sin is forgiven to the lowliest, guilt is washed away, and pardon granted. These feet he kisses, who loves even the lowest of the holy people. These feet he anoints with ointment, who imparts the kindness of his gentleness even to the weaker. In these the martyrs, in these the apostles, in these the Lord Jesus Himself declares that He is honoured.

24. You see how ready to teach the Lord is, that He may by His own example provoke you to piety, for He is ready to teach when He rebukes. So when accusing the Jews, He says: "O My people, what have I done to thee, or wherein have I troubled thee, or wherein have I wearied thee? Answer Me. Is it because I brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and delivered thee from the house of bondage?" adding: "And I sent before thy face Moses and Aaron and Miriam."³⁶ Remember what Balaam conceived against thee,³⁷ seeking the aid of magic art, but I suffered him not to hurt thee. Thou wast indeed weighed down an exile in foreign lands, thou wast oppressed with heavy burdens. I sent before thy face Moses and Aaron and Miriam, and he who spoiled the exile was first spoiled himself. Thou who hadst lost what was thine, didst obtain that which was another's, being freed from the enemies who were hedging thee in, and safe in the midst of the waters thou sawest the destruction of thine enemies, when the same waves which surrounded and carried thee on thy way, pouring back, drowned the enemy.³⁸ Did I not, when food was lacking to thee passing through the desert, supply a rain of food, and nourishment around thee, whithersoever thou wentest? Did I not, after subduing all thine enemies, bring thee

into the region of Eshcol?³⁹ Did I not deliver up thee Sihon, King of the Amorites⁴⁰ (that is, the proud one, the leader of them that provoked thee)? Did I not deliver up to thee alive the King of Ai,⁴¹ whom after the ancient curse thou didst condemn to be fastened to the wood and raised upon the cross? Why should I speak of the troops of the five kings which were slain⁴² in endeavouring to deny thee the land given to thee? And now what is required of thee in return for all this, but to do judgment and justice, to love mercy, and to be ready to walk with the Lord thy God?⁴³

25. And what was His expostulation by Nathan the prophet to King David himself, that pious and gentle man? I, He said, chose thee the youngest of thy brethren, I filled thee with the spirit of meekness, I anointed thee king by the hand of Samuel,⁴⁴ in whom I and My Name dwelt. Having removed that former king, whom an evil spirit stirred up to persecute the priests of the Lord, I made thee triumph after exile. I set upon thy throne of thy seed one not more an heir than a colleague. I made even strangers subject to thee, that they who attacked might serve thee, and wilt thou deliver My servants into the power of My enemies, and wilt thou take away that which was My servant's, whereby both thyself wilt be branded with sin, and My adversaries will have whereof to rejoice.

26. Wherefore, O Emperor, that I may now address my words not only about you, but to you, since you observe how severely the Lord is wont to censure, see that the more glorious you are become, the more utterly you submit to your Maker. For it is written: "When the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into a strange land, and thou shalt eat the fruits of others, say not, My power and my righteousness hath given me this, for the Lord thy God hath given it to thee;"⁴⁵ for Christ in His mercy hath conferred it on thee, and therefore, in love for His body, that is, the Church, give water for His feet, kiss His feet, so that you may not only pardon those who have been taken in sin, but also by your peaceableness restore them to concord, and give them rest Pour ointment upon His feet that the whole house in which Christ sits may be filled with thy ointment, and all that sit with Him may rejoice in thy fragrance, that is, honour the lowest, so that the angels may rejoice in their forgiveness, as over one sinner that repenteth,⁴⁶ the apostles may be glad, the prophets be filled with delight. For the eyes cannot say to the hand: "We have no need of thee, nor the head to the feet, Ye are not necessary to me."⁴⁷ So, since all are necessary, guard the whole body of the Lord Jesus, that He also by His heavenly condescension may preserve your kingdom.

27. When I came down from the pulpit, he said to me: "You spoke about me." I replied: "I dealt with matters intended for your benefit." Then he said: "I had indeed decided too harshly about the repairing of the synagogue by the bishop, but that has been rectified. The monks commit many crimes." Then Timasius the general began to be over-vehement against the monks, and I answered him: "With the Emperor I deal as is fitting, because I know that he has the fear of God, but with you, who speak so roughly, one must deal otherwise."

28. Then, after standing for some time, I said to the Emperor: "Let me offer for you without anxiety, set my mind at ease." As he continued sitting and nodded, but did not give an open promise, and I remained standing, he said that he would amend the edict. I went on at once to say that he must end the whole investigation, lest the Count should use the opportunity of the investigation to do any injury to the Christians. He promised that it should be so. I said to him, "I act on your promise," and repeated, "I act on your promise." "Act," he said, "on my promise." And so I went to the altar,

whither I shouldnot have gone unless he had given me a distinct promise. And indeed so great was the grace attending the offering, that I felt myself that that favour granted by the Emperor was very acceptable to our God, and that the divine presence was not wanting. And so everything was done as I wished.

1: Jer. i. 11.

2: 1 Cor. iv. 21.

3: 2 Cor. ii. 10.

4: S. Luke vii. 36 ff.

5: Isa. ix. 6.

6: S. Luke vii. 41.

7: Isa. xlix. 9.

8: Col. ii. 13, Col. ii. 14 9: S. Matt. xviii. 23 ff.

10: S. Matt. xviii. 35.

11: S. Luke vii. 42.

12: S. Luke vii. 43.

13: Gen. iv. 7 [LXX].

14: S. Luke vii. 44.

15: Gen. xlix. 12.

16: S. Luke vii. 45.

17: S. John xiv. 27.

18: Cant. i. 2.

19: Ps. li. [l.] 17.

20: Ps. cxvi. [cxv.] 10.

21: Ps. lxxi. [lxx.] 8.

22: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 131.

23: Rom. x. 10.

24: S. Matt. xxiv. 15.

25: S. Luke xxii. 48.

26: S. Matt. xv. 8.

27: Cant. i. 2.

- 28: S. Luke ii. 51.
- 29: Exod. xxxiv. 9.
- 30: S. Luke x. 31, Luke x. 32.
- 31: Isa. i. 6.
- 32: Deut. xxxiii. 24.
- 33: Gen. viii. 11.
- 34: S. John i. 32.
- 35: S. Matt. xxv. 40.
- 36: Mic. vi. 3, Mic. vi. 4, Mic. vi. 5.
- 37: Num. xxiii. 2.
- 38: Exod. xiv. 29.
- 39: Num. xiii. 24.
- 40: Num. xxi. 24.
- 41: Josh. viii. 23 ff.
- 42: Josh. x. 19 ff.
- 43: Mic. vi. 8.
- 44: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xii. 7 ff.
- 45: Deut. vii.-ix.
- 46: S. Luke xv. 10.
- 47: 1 Cor. xii. 21.

Letters - Letter 51

Letter LI.

Letter LI.

Addressed to the Emperor Theodosius after the massacre at Thessalonica.¹ St. Ambrose begins by stating his reasons for not having met the Emperor on his return to Milan. He then mentions the sentiments of the bishops with regard to the slaughter at Thessalonica, and points out that repentance for that deed is necessary to obtain forgiveness and a victory over the devil, the instigator to that crime. St. Ambrose could not offer the sacrifice in the Emperor's presence, and, as truly loving the Emperor, grieves and yet hopes.

1. The memory of your old friendship is pleasant to me, and I gratefully call to mind the kindnesses which, in reply to my frequent intercessions, you have most graciously conferred on others. Whence it may be inferred that I did not from any ungrateful feeling avoid meeting you on your arrival, which I had always before earnestly desired. And I will now briefly set forth the reason for my acting as I did.

2. I saw that from me alone in your court the natural right of hearing was withdrawn, so that I was deprived also of the office of speaking; for you were frequently troubled because certain matters which had been decided in your consistory had come to my knowledge. I, therefore, am without a part in the common privilege, since the Lord Jesus says: "That nothing is hidden, which shall not be made known."² I, therefore, as reverently as I could, complied with the imperial will, and took heed that neither yourself should have any reason for displeasure, when I effected that nothing should be related to me of the imperial decrees; and that I, when present, either should not hear, through fear of all others, and so incur the reputation of connivance, or should hear in such a fashion that my ears might be open, my utterance prevented, that I might not be able to utter what I had heard lest I should injure and bring in peril those who had incurred the suspicion of treachery.

3. What, then, could I do? Should I not hear? But I could not close my ears with the wax of the old fables. Should I utter what I heard? But I was bound to be on my guard in my words against that which I feared in your commands, namely, lest some deed of blood should be committed. Should I keep silence? But then my conscience would be bound, my utterance taken away, which would be the most wretched condition of all. And where would be that text? If the priest speak not to him that erreth, he who errs shall die in his sin, and the priest shall be liable to the penalty because he warned not the erring.³

4. Listen, august Emperor. I cannot deny that you have a zeal for the faith; I do confess that you have the fear of God. But you have a natural vehemence, which, if any one endeavours to soothe, you quickly turn to mercy; if any one stirs it up, you rouse it so much more that you can scarcely restrain it. Would that if no one soothe it, at least no one may inflame it! To yourself I willingly entrust it, you restrain yourself, and overcome your natural vehemence by the love of piety.

5. This vehemence of yours I preferred to commend privately to your own consideration, rather than possibly raise it by any action of mine in public. And so I have preferred to be somewhat wanting in duty rather than in humility, and that other, should rather think me wanting in priestly authority than that you should find me lacking in most loving reverence, that having restrained your vehemence your power of deciding on your counsel should not be weakened. I excuse myself by bodily sickness, which was in truth severe, and scarcely to be lightened but by great care. Yet I would rather have died than not wait two or three days for your arrival. But it was not possible for me to do so.

6. There was that done in the city of the Thessalonians of which no similar record exists, which I was not able to prevent happening; which, indeed, I had before said would be most atrocious when I so often petitioned against it, and that which you yourself show by revoking it too late you consider to be grave,⁴ this I could not extenuate when done. When it was first heard of, a synod had met because of the arrival of the Gallican Bishops. There was not one who did not lament it, not one who thought lightly of it; your being in fellowship with Ambrose was no excuse for your deed. Blame for what had been done would have been heaped more and more on me, had no one said that your reconciliation to our God was necessary.

7. Are you ashamed, O Emperor, to do that which the royal prophet David, the forefather of Christ, according to the flesh, did? To him it was told how the rich man who had many flocks seized and killed the poor man's one lamb, because of the arrival of his guest, and recognizing that he himself was being condemned in the tale, for that he himself had done it, he said: "I have sinned against the Lord."⁵ Bear it, then, without impatience, O Emperor, if it be said to you: "You have done that which was spoken of to King David by the prophet. For if you listen obediently to this, and say: 'I have sinned against the Lord,' if you repeat those words of the royal prophet: 'O come let us worship and fall down before Him, and mourn before the Lord our God. Who made us,'"⁶ it shall be said to you also: "Since thou repentest, the Lord putteth away thy sin, and thou shalt not die,"⁷

8. And again, David, after he had commanded the people to be numbered, was smitten in heart, and said to the Lord: "I have sinned exceedingly, because I have commanded this, and now, O Lord, take away the iniquity of Thy servant, for I have transgressed exceedingly."⁸ And the prophet Nathan was sent again to him, to offer him the choice of three things, that he should select the one he chose-famine in the land for three years, or that he should flee for three months before his enemies, or mortal pestilence in the land for three days. And David answered: "These three things are a great strait to me, but let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for very many are His mercies, and let me not fall into the hands of man."⁹ Now his fault was that he desired to know the number of the whole of the people which was with him, which knowledge he ought to have left to God alone.

9. And, we are told, when death came upon the people, on the very first day at dinner time, when David saw the angel smiting the people, he said: "I have sinned, and I, the shepherd, have done wickedly, and this flock, what hath it done? Let Thine hand be upon me, and upon my father's house."¹⁰ And so it repented the Lord, and He commanded the angel to spare the people, and David to offer a sacrifice, for sacrifices were then offered for sins; sacrifices are now those of penitence. And so by that humbling of himself he became more acceptable to God, for it is no matter of wonder that a man should sin, but this is reprehensible, if he does not recognize that he

has erred, and humble himself before God.

10. Holy Job, himself also powerful in this world, says: "I hid not my sin, but declared it before all the people."¹¹ His son Jonathan said to the fierce King Saul himself: "Do not sin against thy servant David;"¹² and: "Why dost thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?"¹³ For, although he was a king, yet he would have sinned if he slew the innocent. And again, David also, when he was in possession of the kingdom, and had heard that innocent Abner had been slain by Joab, the leader of his host, said: "I am guiltless and my kingdom is guiltless henceforth and for ever of the blood of Abner, the son of Ner,"¹⁴ and he fasted for sorrow.

11. I have written this, not in order to confound you, but that the examples of these kings may stir you up to put away this sin from your kingdom, for you will do it away by humbling your soul before God. You are a man, and it has come upon you, conquer it. Sin is not done away but by tears and penitence. Neither angel can do it, nor archangel. The Lord Himself, Who alone can say, "I am with you,"¹⁵ if we have sinned, does not forgive any but those who repent.

12. I urge, I beg, I exhort, I warn, for it is a grief to me, that you who were an example of unusual piety, who were conspicuous for clemency, who would not suffer single offenders to be put in peril, should not mourn that so many have perished. Though you have waged battle most successfully, though in other matters, too, you are worthy of praise, yet piety was ever the crown of your actions. The devil envied that which was your most excellent possession. Conquer him whilst you still possess that wherewith you may conquer. Do not add another sin to your sin by a course of action which has injured many.

13. I, indeed, though a debtor to your kindness, for which I cannot be ungrateful, that kindness which has surpassed that of many emperors, and has been equalled by one only; I, I say, have no cause for a charge of contumacy against you, but have cause for fear; I dare not offer the sacrifice if you intend to be present. Is that which is not allowed after shedding the blood of one innocent person, allowed after shedding the blood of many? I do not think so.

14. Lastly, I am writing with my own hand that which you alone may read. As I hope that the Lord will deliver me from all troubles, I have been warned, not by man, nor through man, but plainly by Himself that this is forbidden me. For when I was anxious, in the very night in which I was preparing to set out, you appeared to me in a dream to have come into the Church, and I was not permitted to offer the sacrifice. I pass over other things, which I could have avoided, but I bore them for love of you, as I believe. May the Lord cause all things to pass peaceably. Our God gives warnings in many ways, by heavenly signs, by the precepts of the prophets; by the visions even of sinners He wills that we should understand, that we should entreat Him to take away all disturbances, to preserve peace for you emperors, that the faith and peace of the Church, whose advantage it is that emperors should be Christians and devout, may continue.

15. You certainly desire to be approved by God. "To everything there is a time,"¹⁶ as it is written: "It is time for Thee, Lord, to work."¹⁷ "It is an acceptable time, O Lord."¹⁸ You shall then make your offering when you have received permission to sacrifice, when your offering shall be acceptable to God. Would it not delight me to enjoy the favour of the Emperor, to act according to your wish, if the case allowed it? And prayer by itself is a sacrifice, it obtains pardon, when the oblation would bring offence, for the one is a sign of humility, the other of contempt. For the Word

of God Himself tells us that He prefers the performance of His commandments to the offering of sacrifice. God proclaims this, Moses declares it to the people, Paul preaches it to the Gentiles. Do that which you understand is most profitable for the time. "I prefer mercy," it is said, "rather than sacrifice."¹⁹ Are they not, then, rather Christians in truth who condemn their own sin, than they who think to defend it? "The just is an accuser of himself in the beginning of his words."²⁰ He who accuses himself when he has sinned is just, not he who praises himself.

16. I wish, O Emperor, that before this I had trusted rather to myself, than to your habits. When I consider that you quickly pardon, and quickly revoke your sentence, as you have often done; you have been anticipated, and I have not shunned that which I needed not to fear. But thanks be to the Lord, Who willeth to chastise His servants, that He may not lose them. This I have in common with the prophets, and you shall have it in common with the saints.

17. Shall I not value the father of Gratian more than my very eyes? Your other holy pledges also claim pardon. I conferred beforehand a dear name on those to whom I bore a common love. I follow you with my love, my affection, and my prayers. If you believe me, be guided by me; if, I say, you believe me, acknowledge what I say; if you believe me not, pardon that which I do, in that I set God before you. May you, most august Emperor, with your holy offspring, enjoy perpetual peace with perfect happiness and prosperity.

1: The mob at Thessalonica had barbarously murdered a number of the officers of the garrison of that city. The Emperor, being exceedingly angry, sent orders in obedience to which over seven thousand of the inhabitants were cruelly put to death. This act of vengeance shocked the public conscience, and St. Ambrose felt it his duty to speak out in the name of the Church.

2: S. Luke viii. 17.

3: Ezek. iii. 18.

4: Theodosius had promised to forgive the Thessalonians, but was again stirred up by his courtiers, as Paulinus relates in his life of St. Ambrose.

5: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xii. 13.

6: Ps. xcv. [xciv.] 6.

7: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xii. 13.

8: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xxiv. 10.

9: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xxiv. 14.

10: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xxiv. 17.

11: Job xxxi. 34 [LXX].

12: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xix. 4.

13: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xix. 5 14: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] iii. 28.

15: S. Matt. xxviii. 20.

16: Eccles. iii. 1.

17: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 126.

18: Ps. lxix. [lxviii.] 13.

19: S. S. Matt. ix. 13.

20: Prov. xviii. 17 [LXX.].

Letters - Letter 57

Letter LVII.

Letter LVII.

St. Ambrose informs the Emperor Eugenius why he was absent from Milan. He then proceeds to reprove him for his conduct with regard to heathen worship. This was, he says, the reason why he did not write sooner, and he promises that for the future he will treat him with the same freedom as the other emperors.

Ambrose, Bishop, to the most gracious Emperor Eugenius.

1. The cause of my departure was the fear of the Lord, to Whom, so far as I am able, I am accustomed to refer all my acts, and never to turn away my mind from Him, nor to make more of any man than of the grace of Christ. For I do no one an injury, if I set God before all, and, trusting in Him, I am not afraid to tell you emperors my thoughts, such as they are. And so I will not keep silence before you, O Emperor, as to things respecting which I have not kept silence before other emperors. And that I may keep the order of the matters, I will go through, one by one, the things which have to do with this matter.

2. The illustrious Symmachus, when prefect of the city, had memorialized¹ the Emperor Valentinian the younger of august memory, requesting that he would command that what had been taken away should be restored to the temples. He performed his part in accordance with his zeal and his religion. And I also, as Bishop, was bound to recognize my part. I presented two petitions² to the Emperors, in which I pointed out that a Christian man could not contribute to the cost of the sacrifices; that I indeed had not been the cause of their being abolished, but I certainly did urge that they should not be decreed; and lastly, that he himself would seem to be giving not restoring those sums to the images. For what he had not himself taken away, he could not, as it were, restore, but of his own will to grant towards the expenses of superstition. Lastly, that, if he did it, either he must not come to the Church, or, if he came, he would either not find a priest there, or he would find one withstanding him in the Church. Nor could it be alleged in excuse that he was a catechumen, seeing that catechumens are not allowed to contribute to the idols' expenses.

3. My letters were read in the consistory. Count Bauto, a man of the highest rank of military authority was present, and Rumoridus, himself also of the same dignity, addicted to the worship of the gentile nations from the first years of his boyhood. Valentinian at that time listened to my suggestion, and did nothing but what the rule of our faith required. And they yielded to his officer.

4. Afterwards I plainly addressed the most clement Emperor Theodosius, and hesitated not to speak to his face. And he, having received a similar message from the Senate, though it was not the request of the whole Senate, at length assented to my recommendation, and so I did not go near him for some days, nor did he take it ill, for he knew that I was not acting for my own advantage, but was not ashamed to say in the sight of the king that which was for the profit of

himself and of my own soul.³

5. Again a legation sent into Gaul from the Senate to the Emperor Valentinian of august memory could procure nothing; and then I was certainly absent, and had not written anything at that time to him.

6. But when your Clemency took up the reins of government it was afterwards discovered that favours of this kind had been granted to men, excellent indeed in matters of state but in religion heathens. And it may, perhaps, be said, august Emperor, that you did not make any restitution to temples, but presented gifts to men who had deserved well of you. But you know that we must constantly act in the cause of God, as is often done in the cause of liberty, also not only by priests, but also by those who are in your armies, or are reckoned in the number of those who dwell in the provinces. When you became Emperor envoys requested that you would make restitution to the temples, and you did not do it; others came a second time and you resisted, and afterwards you thought fit that this should be granted to those very persons who made the petition.

7. Though the imperial power be great, yet consider, O Emperor, how great God is. He sees the hearts of all, He questions the inmost conscience, He knows all things before they happen, He knows the inmost things of your breast. You do not suffer yourselves to be deceived, and do you desire to conceal anything from God? Has not this come into your mind? For although they acted with such perseverance, was it not your duty, O Emperor, to resist with still greater perseverance because of the reverence due to the most high and true and living God, and to refuse what was an offence against His holy law?

8. Who grudges your having given what you would to others? We are not scrutinizers of your liberality, nor envious of the advantages of others, but are interpreters of the faith. How will you offer your gifts to Christ? Not many but will put their own estimate on what you have done, all will do so on your intentions. Whatever they do will be ascribed to you; whatever they do not do, to themselves. Although you are Emperor, you ought to be all the more subject to God. How shall the ministers of Christ dispense your gifts?

9. There was a question of this sort in former times, and yet persecution itself yielded to the faith of our fathers, and heathendom gave way. For when in the city of Tyre the quinquennial game was being kept, and the intensely wicked King of Antioch had come to witness it, Jason appointed officers of sacred rites, who were Antiochians, to carry three hundred didrachms of silver from Jerusalem, and give them to the sacrifice of Hercules.⁴ But the fathers did not give the money to the heathen, but having sent faithful men declared that that money should not be spent on sacrifices to the gods, because it was not fitting, but on other expenses, And it was decreed that because he had said that the money was sent for the sacrifice of Hercules, it ought to be taken for that for which it was sent; but, because they, who had brought it, because of their zeal and religion, pleaded that it should not be used for the sacrifice, but for other expenses, the money was given for the building of ships. Being compelled they sent it, but it was not used for sacrifice, but for other expenses of the state.

10. Now they who had brought the money might, no doubt, have kept silence, but would have done violence to their faith, because they knew whither the money was being carried, and therefore they sent men who feared God to contrive that what was sent should be assigned, not to

the temple, but to the cost of ships. For they entrusted the money to those who should plead the cause of the sacred Law, and He Who absolves the conscience was made judge of the matter. If they when in the power of another were so careful, there can be no doubt what you, O Emperor, ought to have done. You, at any rate, whom no one compelled, whom no one had in his power, ought to have sought counsel from the priest.

11. And I certainly when I then resisted, although I was alone in resistance, was not alone in what I wished, and was not alone in what I advised. Since, then, I am bound by my own words both before God and before all men, I felt that nothing else was allowable or needful for me but to act for myself, because I could not well trust you. I kept back and concealed my grief for a long time; I thought it not right to intimate anything to anybody, now I may no longer dissemble, nor is it open to me to keep silence. For this reason also at the commencement of your reign I did not reply when you wrote to me, because I foresaw that this would happen. Then at last, when you required a letter, because I had not written a reply, I said: This is the reason that I think this will be extorted from him.

12. But when a reason for exercising my office arose, I both wrote and petitioned for those who were in anxiety about themselves, that I might show that in the cause of God I felt a righteous fear, and that I did not value flattery above my own soul; but in those matters in which it is fitting that petitions should be addressed to you. I also pay the deference due to authority, as it is written: "Honour to whom honour is due, tribute to whom tribute."⁵ For since I deferred from the bottom of my heart to a private person, how could I not defer to the Emperor? But do you who desire that deference be paid to you suffer us to pay deference to Him Whom you are desirous to be proved the Author of your power.

1: The memorial is given on p.

2: Letters 17 and 18, pp.

3: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 46.

4: 2 Macc. iv. 18, ff.

5: Rom. xiii 7.

Letters - Letter 61

Letter LXI.

Letter LXI.

St. Ambrose explains his absence from Milan on the arrival of the Emperor Theodosius after his victory over Eugenius,¹ and after expressing his thankfulness for that success he promises obedience to the Emperor's will, and while commending his piety urges him to be merciful to the conquered.

Ambrose, to the Emperor Theodosius.

1. You thought, most blessed Emperor, so far as I gathered from your letter, that I kept away from the city of Milan, because I believed that your cause was forsaken by God. But I was not so wanting in foresight, nor so unmindful in my absence of your virtue and merits, as not to anticipate that the aid of Heaven would be with your piety, with which you would rescue the Roman Empire from the cruelty of a barbarian robber, and the dominion of an unworthy usurper.

2. I therefore made haste to return thither, as soon as I knew that he, whom I thought it right to avoid,² was now gone, for I had not deserted the Church of Milan, entrusted to me by the judgment of God, but avoided the presence of him who had involved himself in sacrilege. I returned, therefore, about the Calends of August, and have resided here since that day. Here, too, O Augustus, your letter found me.

3. Thanks be to our Lord God, Who responded to your faith and piety, and has restored the form of ancient sanctity, suffering us to see in our time that which we wonder at in reading the Scriptures, namely, such a presence of the divine assistance³ in battle, that no mountain heights delayed the course of your approach, no hostile arms were any hindrance.

4. For these mercies you think that I ought to render thanks to the Lord our God, and being conscious of your merits, I will do so willingly, Certainly that offering will be acceptable to God which is offered in your name, and what a mark of faith and devotion is this! Other emperors, immediately upon a victory, order the erection of triumphal arches, or other monuments of their triumphs; your Clemency prepares an offering for God, and desires that oblation and thanksgiving should be presented by the priests to the Lord.

5. Though I be unworthy and unequal to such an office and the offering of such acknowledgments, yet will I describe what I have done. I took the letter of your Piety with me to the altar. I laid it upon the altar. I held it in my hand whilst I offered the Sacrifice; so that your faith might speak by my voice, and the Emperor's letter discharge the function of the priestly oblation.

6. In truth, the Lord is propitious to the Roman Empire, since He has chosen such a prince and father of princes, whose virtue and power, established on such a triumphant height of dominion, rests on such humility, that in valour he has surpassed emperors and priests in humility. What can

I wish? What can I desire? You have everything, and therefore I will endeavour to gain the sum of my desires. You, O Emperor, are pitiful, and of the greatest clemency.

7. And for yourself, I desire again and again an increase of piety, than which God has given nothing more excellent, that by your clemency the Church of God, as it delights in the peace and tranquillity of the innocent, so, too, may rejoice in the pardon of the guilty. Pardon especially those who have not offended before. May the Lord preserve your Clemency. Amen.

1: Arbogastes, a Frankish general, had been set by Theodosius over the troops in Gaul, and determined to gain supreme power in the West. Having removed all who were faithful from the person of the Emperor Valentinian II., he caused him to be murdered, and then to conceal his own purposes caused the rhetorician Eugenius, his private secretary, to be acknowledged Emperor. Ambassadors were sent to Theodosius begging him to acknowledge the new Emperor as his colleague, but he saw through the design, and after two years' preparation marched into Italy, and defeated the usurper's troops. Eugenius was beheaded, and Arbogastes killed himself.

2: i.e. Eugenius, whom St. Ambrose avoided, because he had permitted the restoration of heathen ceremonies. See also Ep. 57.

3: Theodoret, Hist. Eccl. V. 24, relates certain prophecies and several prodigies connected with this victory, to which there seems to be some allusion here.

Letters - Letter 62

Letter LXII.

Letter LXII.

St. Ambrose excuses himself for having omitted an opportunity of writing to the Emperor, but is now sending a letter by the hands of a deacon, requesting forgiveness for some of Eugenius' followers who had sought the protection of the Church, especially in consideration of the miraculous aid which had been vouchsafed to the Emperor.

Ambrose, to the Emperor Theodosius.

1. Although I lately wrote to your Clemency even a second time, it did not seem to me that I had responded sufficiently to the duty of intercourse by answering as it were in turn, for I have been so bound by frequent benefits from your Clemency, that I cannot repay what I owe by any services, most blessed and august Emperor.
2. And so just as the first opportunity was not to be lost by me, when, through your chamberlain, I was able to thank your Clemency and to pay the duty of an address, especially lest my not having written before should seem to have been owing to sloth rather than necessity, so, too, I had to seek some manner of rendering to your Piety my dutiful salutations.
3. And rightly do I send my son, the deacon Felix, to bear my letter, and, at the same time, to present to you my duty, in my place, and also a memorial on behalf of those who have fled to the Church, the Mother of your Piety, seeking mercy. I have been unable to endure their tears without anticipating by my entreaty the coming of your Clemency.
4. It is a great boon that I ask, but I ask it from him to whom the Lord has granted great and unheard-of things, from him whose clemency I know, and whose piety I have as a pledge. For your victory is considered to have been granted to you after the ancient manner, and with the old miracles, a victory such as was granted to holy Moses, and holy Joshua, son of Nave, and Samuel, and David, not by human calculations, but by the outpouring of heavenly grace. Now we expect an equal amount of gentleness with that by virtue of which so great a victory has been gained.

Letters - Letters 1-10

St. Ambrose of Milan, Letters (1881). pp. 1-67. Letters

1-10.

- Letter of the emperor Gratian to Ambrose Bishop of Almighty God
 - Letter 1: To the emperor Gratian
 - Letter 2: To Constantius, a newly appointed bishop
 - Letter 3: To Felix, Bishop of Comum
 - Letter 4: To Felix, Bishop of Comum
 - Letter 5: To Syagrius [Printed in Latin at the end]
 - Letter 6: To Syagrius [Printed in Latin at the end]
 - Letter 7: To St. Justus, Bishop of Lyons
 - Letter 8: To St. Justus
 - The Proceedings of the Council of Aquileia against the heretics Palladius and Secundianus
 - Letter 9: The Council of Aquileia to the Bishops of the Viennese and first and second Narbonese provinces in Gaul
 - Letter 10: The Council of Aquileia to the emperors Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius
- THE LETTERS OF

S. AMBROSE BISHOP OF MILAN.

---- LETTER OF GRATIAN TO AMBROSE. [A.D.379.]

It is in answer to this that Letter I was written by S. Ambrose. It was written by the Emperor Gratian in his 20th year, four years after his succession to the Empire in partnership with his Uncle Valens and his younger brother Valentinian the 2nd, on the death of their father Valentinian the first, 375 A. D. Tillemont (Hist. des Emp. vol. v. p. 158.) calls it 'une lettre toute pleine de piete et d'humilite, et d'ailleurs mesme ecrite avec beaucoup d'esprit et

d'elegance.'

THE EMPEROR GRATIAN TO AMBROSE BISHOP OF ALMIGHTY GOD.

1. GREAT is my desire that as I remember you though far away, and in spirit am present, with you, so I may be with you in bodily presence also. Hasten then, holy Bishop

1 of God ; come and teach me, who am already a sincere believer; not that

I am eager for controversy, or seek to apprehend God in words rather than with my mind, but that the revelation of His Godhead may sink more deeply into an enlightened breast.

2. For He will teach me, He Whom I deny not, but confess to be my God and my Lord, not cavilling at that created

2 nature in Him, which I see also in myself. That I can add nothing to Christ I acknowledge, hut I am desirous by declaring the Son to commend

|2 myself to the Father also; for in God I can fear no jealousy; nor will I suppose myself such an eulogist as that I can exalt His divinity by my words. Weak and frail, I proclaim Him according to my power, not according to His Majesty.

3. I beg you to bestow upon me the Treatise 3 you gave me before, adding to it an orthodox discussion on the Holy Spirit: prove, I beseech you, both by Scripture and reason, that He is God. God keep you for many years, my father, servant of the eternal God, Whom we worship, even Jesus Christ.

LETTER I. [A.D.379]

IN this letter S. Ambrose replies to the preceding. He apologises for not coming at once to Gratian, and, after praising his humility and faith, promises to come before long, and meanwhile sends him the two books (duos libellos) of the Treatise De Fide, which he had before composed at Gratian's request, begging for time to write on the subject of the Holy Spirit.

AMBROSE BISHOP TO THE BLESSED EMPEROR AND MOST CHRISTIAN PRINCE,
GRATIAN.

1. IT was not lack of affection, most Christian Prince, (for I can give you no title more true or more illustrious than this,) it was not, I repeat, lack of affection, but modesty which put a restraint upon that affection, and hindered my coming to meet your Grace. But if I did not meet you on your return in person, I did so in spirit, and with my prayers, wherein the duties of a priest more especially lie. Meet, did I say ? Nay, when was I absent? I who followed you with an entire affection, who clung to you in thought and heart; and surely it is by our souls that we are present to one other most intimately. I studied your route day by day; transported by my solicitude to your camp by night and day, I shielded it with my watchful prayers, prayers, if not of prevailing merit, yet of unremitting affection.

|3

2. And in offering these for your safety we benefited ourselves. This I say without flattery, which you require not, and I deem unbefitting my office, but with the greatest regard to the favour you have shewn me. Our Judge Himself, Whom you acknowledge and in Whom you devoutly believe, knoweth that my heart is refreshed by your faith, your safety, your glory, and that not only my public duty but my personal affection leads me to offer these prayers. For you have restored to me quiet in the Church, you have stopped the mouths (would that you had stopped the hearts) of the traitors, and this you have done not less by the authority of your faith than of your power.

3. What shall I say of your late letter? the whole is written with your own hand, so that the very characters tell of your faith and devotion. Thus Abraham of old, when ministering entertainment to his guests, slew a calf with his own hand, and had not, in this sacred service, the assistance of others. But he, a private man, ministered to the Lord and His Angels, or to the Lord in His Angels, you, the Emperor, honour with your royal condescension the lowest of Bishops. And yet the Lord is served when His minister is honoured; for He hath said, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.⁴

4. But is it only this lofty humility which I praise in the Emperor, and not rather that faith, which you have rightly expressed with a mind conscious of your desert, or which He Whom you deny not hath taught you? For who but He could have taught you not to cavil at that created nature in Him which you see in yourself? Nothing could have been said more pious or more accurate; for to call Christ a creature savours of a contemptuous cavil, not of a reverent confession. Again, what could be more unworthy, than to suppose Him to be like as we ourselves are? Thus you have instructed me, from whom you profess your wish to learn, for I never read nor heard anything better.

5. Again, how pious, how admirable that expression, that you fear no jealousy in God! From the Father you anticipate a recompense for your love of the Son, yet you acknowledge that your praise of the Son can add nothing to

[4 Him, only you wish by praising the Son to commend yourself to the Father also. This He alone hath taught you, Who hath said, He that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father.⁵

6. You go on to say that you, weak and frail as you are, do not suppose yourself such an eulogist as that you can exalt His divinity by your words, but that you preach Him according to your power, not according to His Majesty. This weakness is mighty in Christ, as the Apostle has said, When I am weak, then I am strong. This humility excludes frailty.

7. Certainly I will come, and that speedily, as you command, that I may be present with you and hear and read these things, as they are newly spoken by you. But I have sent two small volumes, for which, approved as they have been by your grace, I shall have no fears; I must plead for time to write on the Spirit, knowing as I do what a judge I shall have of my treatise.

8. Meanwhile however your sentiments and belief concerning our Lord and Saviour, transferred from the Son, form an abundant assertion to express our faith in the everlasting Godhead of the Holy Spirit, in that you cavil not at that created nature in Him which you find in yourself, and suppose not that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, can be jealous of His own Spirit. For that which is separated from communion with the creature is divine.

9. If the Lord will, I will in this also comply with your Majesty's wishes; that as you have received the grace of the Holy Spirit, so also you may know that He, holding so high a place in the Divine glory, has in His own Name a right to our veneration.

10. May Almighty God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, vouchsafe, my Lord the Emperor, chosen by Divine providence, most glorious Sovereign, may He vouchsafe to keep your majesty in all happiness and prosperity to an advanced age, and establish your kingdom in perfect glory and in perpetual peace.

[5

LETTER II. [A.D.379.]

WE gather from the letter itself that Constantius, to whom it is addressed was a newly appointed Bishop, but of what see does not appear. In § 27 S. Ambrose commends to his care the see of Forum Cornellii, which was vacant at the time, as being in his neighbourhood. The grounds on which the Benedictine Editors fix the date seem rather vague. Its interest however is not historical: it is simply hortatory, urging on Constantius the fulfilment of the duties of his new office, and setting before him the chief subjects to which his preaching should be addressed. From S. Ambrose calling him 'my son' (§ 27) it would seem that he was either one of his own clergy, or had been in some way under his guidance. It is interesting as shewing how a great Bishop of that age dwelt upon the relations of the Episcopate, not merely to the Clergy under him as their superior, but to the laity of his diocese as their chief teacher.

AMBROSE TO CONSTANTIUS.

1. You have undertaken the office of a Bishop, and now, seated in the stern of the Church, you are steering it in the teeth of the waves. Hold fast the rudder of faith, that you may not be shaken by the heavy storms of this world. The sea indeed is vast and deep, but fear not, for He hath founded it upon the seas, and prepared it upon the floods.⁶ Rightly then the Church of the Lord, amid all the seas of the world, stands immoveable, built as it were, upon the Apostolic rock; and her foundation remains unshaken by all the force of the raging surge. The waves lash but do not shake it; and although this world's elements often break against it with a mighty sound, still it offers a secure harbour of safety to receive the distressed.

2. Yet although it is tossed on the sea, it rides upon the floods; and perhaps chiefly on those floods of which it is said, The floods have lift up their voice. For there are rivers, which shall flow out of his belly, who has received to drink from Christ, and partaken of the Spirit of God. These rivers then, when they overflow with spiritual grace, lift up their voice. There is a river too, which runs down upon His saints like a torrent.⁷ And there are the rivers of the

[6 flood, which make glad the peaceful and tranquil soul. He that receives, as did John the Evangelist, as did Peter and Paul, the fulness of this stream, lifts up his voice; and like as the Apostles loudly heralded forth to the farthest limits of the globe the Evangelic message, so he also begins to preach the Lord Jesus. Receive to drink therefore of Christ, that your sound may also go forth.

3. The Divine Scripture is a sea, containing in it deep meanings, and an abyss of prophetic mysteries; and into this sea enter many rivers. There are Sweet and transparent streams, cool

8 fountains too there are, springing up into life eternal, and pleasant words as an honey-comb.⁹ Agreeable sentences too there

are, refreshing the minds of the hearers, if I may say so, with spiritual drink, and soothing them with, the sweetness of their moral precepts. Various then are the streams of the sacred Scriptures. There is in them a first draught for you, a second, and a last.

4. Gather the water of Christ, that which praises the Lord.¹⁰

Gather from many sources that water which the prophetic clouds pour forth.¹¹

He that gathers water from the hills and draws it to himself from the fountains, he also drops down dew like the clouds. Fill then the bosom of your mind, that your ground may be moistened and watered by domestic springs. He who needs and apprehends much is filled, he who hath been filled waters others, and therefore Scripture saith, If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth.¹²

5. Let your discourses then be flowing, let them be clear and lucid; pour the sweetness of your moral arguments into the ears of the people, and sooth them with the charm of your words, that so they may willingly follow your guidance. But if there be any contumacy or transgression in the people or individuals, let your sermons be of such a character as shall move your audience, and prick the evil conscience, for the words of the wise are as goads.¹³

The Lord Jesus too pricked Saul, when he was a persecutor. And think how salutary the goad was which from a

persecutor made him an Apostle, by simply saying, It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.¹⁴

6. There are discourses too like milk, such as Paul fed the Corinthians with; for they who cannot digest stronger food, must have their infant minds nourished with the juice of milk.¹⁵

7. Let your addresses be full of understanding. As Solomon says, The lips of the wise are the weapons of the understanding, and in another place, Let your lips be bound up with sense,¹⁷

that is, let your discourses be clear and bright, let them flash with intelligence like lightning: let not your address or arguments stand in need of enforcement from without, but let your discourse defend itself, so to speak, with its own weapons, and let no vain or unmeaning word issue out of your mouth. For there is a bandage to bind up the wounds of the soul, and if any one cast it aside, he shews that his recovery is desperate. Wherefore to those who are afflicted with a grievous ulcer administer the oil of your discourse to soften the hardness of their heart, apply an emollient, bind on the ligature of salutary precepts; beware lest by any means you suffer men who are unstable and vacillating in faith or in the observance of discipline, to perish with minds unbraced and vigour relaxed.

8. Wherefore admonish and entreat the people of God that they abound in good works, that they renounce iniquity, that they kindle not the fires of lust, (I say not on the Sabbath only, but never,) lest they set on fire their own bodies; that there be no fornication or uncleanness in the servants of God,¹⁸ for we serve the immaculate Son of God. Let every man know himself, and possess his own vessel,¹⁹ that, having, so to say, broken up the fallow ground of his body, he may expect fruit in due season, and it may not bring forth thorns and thistles,²⁰

but he too may say, Our land hath given her increase;²¹

and on this once wild thicket of the passions a graft of virtue may flourish.

9. Teach moreover and train the people to do what is ⁸

good and that no one fail to perform works which shall be approved, whether he be seen of many, or be without witness, for the conscience is a witness abundantly sufficient unto itself.

10. And let them avoid shameful deeds, even though they believe they cannot be detected. For though a man be shut up within walls, and covered with darkness, without witness and without accomplice, still he has a Judge of his acts, Whom nothing ever deceives, and to Whom all things cry aloud. To Him the voice of blood cried from the ground.²²

Every man has in himself and his own conscience a strict judge, an avenger of his wickedness and of his crimes. Cain wandered about in fear and trembling, suffering the punishment of his unnatural deed; so that death was to him a refuge, relieving the wandering outcast from that terror of death which he felt at every moment. Let no man then either alone or in company commit any shameful or wicked act. Though he be alone, let him be abashed before himself more than before others, for to himself is his greatest reverence due.

11. Nor let him covet many things, for even few things are to him as many; for poverty and wealth are words implying want and sufficiency. He is not rich who needs any thing, nor he poor who needs not. And let no man despise a widow, circumvent a ward, defraud his neighbour. Woe unto him, whose substance has been collected by guile, and who buildeth a town, that is his own soul, with blood.²³

For this it is, which is built as a city;²⁴ and this city avarice builds not but destroys, lust builds not but sets on fire and consumes. Wouldest thou build this city well? Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure without that fear.²⁵

A man's riches ought to avail to the ransom of his soul, not to its destruction. And a treasure is a ransom, if a man use it well; on the other hand it is a snare, if a man know not how to use it. What is a man's money to him but a provision for his journey? Much is a burthen, a little is useful. We are wayfarers in this life; many walk, but it is needful that we walk aright, for then is the Lord Jesus with us, as we read, When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through

[9 the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned.²⁶

But if a man take fire in his bosom, the fire of lust, the fire of immoderate desire he walketh not through,²⁷

but burns this clothing of his soul. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour than silver and gold!²⁸

Faith is sufficient for itself, and in its own possession is rich enough. And to the wise man nothing is foreign, but what is contrary to virtue; wherever he goes, he finds all things to be his own. All the world is his possession, for he uses it all as if it were his own.

12. Why then is our brother circumvented, why is our hired servant defrauded? Little it is said, is gained by the wages of an harlot, that is to say, of frailty so delusive.²⁹ This harlot is not an individual, but something general; not one woman, but every idle lust. All perfidy, all deceit is this harlot; not she alone who offers her body to defilement; but every soul that barter away its hope, and seeks a dishonourable profit, and an unworthy reward. And we are hired servants, in that we labour for hire, and look for the reward of this our work from our Lord and God. If any one would know how we are hired servants, let him listen to the words, How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger,³⁰

and again, Make me as one of thy hired servants.³¹

All are hired servants, all are labourers; and let him, who looks for the reward of his labour, remember that if he defraud another of the wages due to him, he also will be defrauded of his own. Such conduct offends Him Who has lent to us, and He will repay it hereafter in more abundant measure. He therefore who could not lose what is eternal, let him not deprive others of what is temporal.

13. And let no one speak deceitfully with his neighbour. There is a snare in our mouths,³²

and not seldom is it that a man is entangled rather than cleared by his words. The mouth of the evil-minded is a deep pit:³³

great is the fall of innocence, but greater that of iniquity. The simple, by giving too easy credit, quickly falls, but when fallen he rises again; but the evil-speaker is so cast down by his own acts that he never can recover himself and escape.

[10 Therefore let every man weigh his words, not with deceit and guile, for a false balance is abomination to the Lord.³⁴ I do not mean that balance which weighs the wares of others, (though even in lesser matters deceit often costs dear,) but that balance of words is hateful to the Lord, which wears

the mask of the weight of sober gravity, and yet practises the artifices of cunning. Great is God's anger, if a man deceive his neighbour by flattering promises, and by treacherous subtlety oppress his debtor, a craft which will not benefit himself. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the riches of the whole world, and yet defraud his own soul of the wages of eternal life?³⁵

14. There is another balance which pious minds ought to consider, wherein the actions of individuals are weighed, and wherein for the most part sin inclines the scale towards judgement, or outweighs good deeds with crimes. Woe unto me, if my offences go before,³⁶

and with a fatal weight incline to the judgement of death! More terrible will it be if they follow after, though they all be manifest to God, even before judgement; neither can things good be secret, nor things full of scandal be concealed.

15. How blessed is he who can extirpate avarice, the root of all evil! he truly need not fear this balance. For avarice is wont to deaden man's senses, and pervert his judgement, so that he counts godliness a source of gain, and money the reward of prudence.³⁷ But great is the reward of piety, and the gain of sobriety to have enough for use. For what do superfluous riches profit in this world, when you find in them neither a succour in birth nor a defence against death? For without a covering are we born into the world, without provision we depart hence, and in the grave we have no inheritance.

16. The deserts of each one of us are suspended in the balance, which a little weight either of good works or of degenerate conduct sways this way or that; if the evil preponderate, woe is me! if the good, pardon is at hand. For no man is free from sin; but where good preponderates, the evil flies up, is overshadowed, and covered. Wherefore in the Day of judgement our works will either succour us, or will sink us into the deep, weighed down as

[11 with a millstone. For iniquity is heavy, supported as by a talent of lead;38

avarice is intolerable, and all pride is foul dishonesty. Wherefore exhort the people of God to trust rather in the Lord, to abound in the riches of simplicity, wherein they may walk without snare and without hindrance.

17. For the sincerity of a pure speech is good, and rich in the sight of God, although it walk among snares; yet, because it is innocent of laying wait or enthralling others, it escapes itself.

18. A great thing too it is if you can persuade them to know how to be abased, to know the true garb and nature of humility. Many possess the shew of humility, but not its power; many possess it abroad, but oppose it at home; colourably they pretend it, but in truth they renounce it, in regard of grace they deny it. For there is one that humbleth himself wickedly and his inward parts are full of deceit. And there is one that submitteth himself exceedingly with a great lowliness.39

There is no true humility then but such as is without colour and pretence. Such humility is that which hath a pious sincerity of mind. Great is its virtue. Finally by one man's disobedience death entered,40

and by the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ came the redemption of all.

19. Holy Joseph knew how to be abased, who, when he was sold into bondage by his brethren, and purchased by merchants, whose feet as the Scripture saith, 'they hurt in the stocks'41

learned the virtue of humility and laid aside all weakness. For when he was bought by the royal servant, officer of the household, the memory of his noble descent as one of the seed of Abraham did not cause him to disdain servile offices or scorn his mean condition. On the contrary he was diligent and faithful in his master's service, knowing in his prudence that it matters not in what station a man renders himself approved, but that the object of good men is to merit approbation in whatever station they are placed; and the point of importance is that their character should dignify their station rather than their station their character. In proportion as the station is low the merit becomes illustrious. And such attention

[12 did Joseph exhibit that his lord entrusted to him his whole house, and committed to him all that he had.

20. And so his wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, captivated by the beauty of his form. Now we are not in fault, if either our age or our beauty becomes an object of desire to wanton eyes; let it be artless, and no blame attaches to beauty; if enticement be away,

seemliness and grace of form is innocent. But this woman, fired with love, addresses the youth, and at the instigation of lust, overpowered by the force of passion confesses her crime. But he rejects the crime, saying that to defile another man's bed was consonant neither with the customs nor the laws of the Hebrews, whose care it was to protect modesty, and to provide chaste spouses for chaste virgins, avoiding all unlawful intercourse, And that it were an impious deed for him, intoxicated by impure passion, and regardless of his master's kindness, to inflict a deadly injury on one to whom he owed obedience.

21. Nor did he disdain to call the despised Egyptian his master, and to confess himself his servant. And when the woman courted him, urging him by the fear of betrayal, or shedding passionate tears to force his compliance, neither was he moved by compassion to consent to iniquity, nor constrained by fear, but he resisted her entreaties and yielded not to her threats, preferring a perilous virtue to rewards, and chastity to a disgraceful recompense. Again she assailed him with greater temptations, yet she found him inflexible, yea for the second time immoveable; yet her furious and shameless passion gave her strength, and she caught the youth by his robe and drew him to her couch, offering to embrace him, nay, she would have done so, had not Joseph put off his robe; he put it off, that he might not put off the robe of humility, the covering of modesty.

22. He then knew how to be abased, for he was degraded even to the dungeon; and thus unjustly treated, he chose rather to bear a false accusation than to bring the true one. He knew how to be abased, I say, for he was abased for virtue's sake. He was abased as a type of Him Who was to abase Himself even to death, the death of the cross,

[13 Who was to come to raise our life from sleep, and to teach that our human life is but a dream: its vicissitudes reel past us as it were, with nothing in them firm or stable, but like men in a trance seeing we see not, hearing we hear not, eating we are not filled, congratulating we joy not, running we attain not. Vain are men's hopes in this world, idly pursuing the things that are not as though they were; and so, as in a dream, the empty forms of things come and go, appear and vanish; they hover around us, and we seem to grasp yet grasp them not. But when a man has heard Him that saith Awake, thou that

sleepest,⁴² and rises up from the sleep of this world, then he perceives that all these things are false; he is now awake, and the dream is fled, and with it is fled ambition, and the care of wealth, and beauty of form, and the pursuit of honours. For these things are dreams which affect not those whose hearts wake, but affect only them that slumber.

23. And holy Joseph certifies this my assertion, that the things of this world are not perpetual or lasting, for he, noble by birth and with a rich inheritance, suddenly becomes a despised servant, and (what enhances the bitterness of servitude) a slave bought for a price by an unworthy master. For to serve the free is esteemed less disgraceful, but to be the servant of servants is a double slavery. Thus from being nobly born he became a slave, from having a wealthy father he became poor, from love he fell into hate, from favour into punishment. Again, he is raised from the prison to the court, from the bar to the judgement-seat. But he is neither depressed by adversity nor elated by prosperity.

24. The frequently changing condition of holy David also testifies how fleeting are the vicissitudes of life. He, overlooked by his father, but precious in the sight of God, exalted by his success, thrust down by envy, summoned to the service of the king and chosen to be his son-in-law, then again disguised in face and appearance, banished from the kingdom, flying from death at his own son's hands, weeping for his own offences, atoning for those of others, nobler in winning back the affection of the heir to his throne, than if he had disgraced him. Having thus tried

[14 every condition he says well, It is good for me that I have been humbled.⁴³

25. This sentence however might well also be referred to Him Who being in the form of God, and able to bow the heavens, yet came down, and taking upon Him the form of a servant, bore our

infirmities.⁴⁴ He, foreseeing that His saints would not think it a prize to claim the honour that belonged to them, but would give place to their equals and prefer others to themselves, said, It is good for me that I have been humbled; it is good for me that I have subjected myself, that all things may be subject unto me, and God may be all in all.⁴⁵

Instil this humility into the minds of all, and shew yourself an example to all saying, Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ.⁴⁶

26. Let them learn to seek the wealth of good wishes, and to be rich in holiness; the beauty of wealth consists not in the possession of money-bags, but in the maintenance of the poor. It is in the sick and needy that riches shine most. Wherefore let the wealthy learn to seek not their own things, but the things of Jesus Christ, that Christ also may seek them, and recompense to them what is their own. He spent for them His blood, He pours forth on them His Spirit, He offers to them His kingdom. What more shall He give, Who gave Himself, or what shall not the Father give, Who delivered up His Only Son to die for our sakes? Admonish them therefore to serve the Lord soberly and with grace, to lift their eyes with all diligence to heaven, to count nothing gain but what appertains to eternal life; for all this worldly gain is the loss of souls. He who desired to win Christ, suffered the loss of all things,⁴⁷

which saying, marvellous as it is, falls short of what he had received, for he speaks of external things only, whereas Christ hath said, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself;⁴⁸

let him lose himself so that Christ be gained. Fleeting are all things here, they bring loss and not gain; that only is gain, where enjoyment is perpetual, where eternal rest is our reward.

27. I commend to your care, my son, the Church which is at Forum Corneli ⁴⁹; Being nigh thereunto, visit it

[¹⁵ frequently until a Bishop for it be ordained; I myself, engaged with the approaching season of Lent, cannot go to such a distance.

28. There you will find certain Illyrians imbued with the false doctrines of Arius; take heed of their tares, let them not come near the faithful, nor scatter their spurious seed. Let them remember what their perfidy has brought upon them

⁵⁰, let them be quiet and follow the true faith. Difficult indeed it is for minds imbued with the poison of unbelief to rid themselves of this impiety, for it cleaves to them; and if the fatal venom has grown inveterate in them, you must not readily give them credence. For the very sinews and strength of wisdom lie in not giving credence too readily, especially in the matter of faith, which in men is seldom perfect.

20. Yet if any one, whose frailty is suspected and inclination dubious, desire nevertheless to clear himself of suspicion; suffer him to believe that he has made satisfaction, show him some indulgence, for if a man be cut off from reconciliation his mind is estranged. Thus skilful physicians, when they observe what they deem to be well-known diseases, do not apply a remedy, but wait their time, attending upon the sick man, and administering to him such soothing appliance as they can, to the intent that the disease may neither be aggravated by neglect or despair, nor may reject the medicine applied too early, for if an inexperienced physician touch it prematurely, it will never come to a head, just as even an apple, if shaken from the tree while yet unripe, soon

withers.

30. Enjoin them too (as I have borrowed a figure from agriculture) to preserve inviolate the laws of common boundary, and to guard those paternal landmarks which the law protects.⁵¹ The affection of a neighbour often exceeds the love of a brother, for the one is often afar off, the other nigh at hand; the witness of your whole life, and judge of your conduct. Allow his cattle to stray at large over the neighbouring bounds, and to rest securely on the green herbage.

|16

31. Let the master too temper with moderation his lawful rule over his servants, seeing that in soul they are brethren. For he is called the father of the family, that he may govern them as sons; for he himself also is God's servant, and calls the Lord of heaven, the Source of all power, his Father.

Farewell; continue to love me, as I do you.

LETTER III. [A.D.380.]

THIS graceful little letter, written in a tone of playful affectionateness, is addressed to Felix, who was, as the next letter shews, Bishop of Comum. It tells its own story.

AMBROSE TO FELIX.

1. I HAVE received your present of mushrooms; they were of an extraordinary size, so large as to excite admiration. I did not like to keep them hidden, as the saying is, in my bosom, but preferred shewing them to others also. Therefore I gave part to my friends, part I reserved for myself.

2. An agreeable present, but not of weight enough to repress my just complaint against you for never visiting one who has so long loved you. And take heed lest you hereafter have to bear yet heavier fungus-growths⁵² of sorrow; for such things have a double signification; sent as gifts they are agreeable, in the body or the mind they are irksome. Prevail with yourself to cause me less sorrow by your absence, for my longing for you is the cause of my distress: make yourself, if you can, less necessary to me.

3. I have made my statement, proved my case. I am forced to assail you with that expression; no ordinary weapon, but one which will hit home

53. You certainly |17

shewed alarm; but see now that I am not so much grieved but that I can be playful about it. Hereafter however you must not excuse yourself, though your present excuse is to be a profitable one to me. Yet it were an ill judgment of you, and of me no better, to suppose that your absence is to be compensated by presents, or that I am to be bought off by them. Farewell: love me, as I do you.

LETTER IV. [A.D. 380.]

FELIX having replied to the preceding letter, S. Ambrose responds in the same affectionate style, rejoicing in the prospect of their meeting, asking meanwhile the prayers of Felix, and promising his own. He ends by praising Felix for 'fighting the good fight of faith,' and assures him of help and blessing.

AMBROSE TO FELIX, HEALTH.

1. ALTHOUGH not in a good state of bodily health, I derived no little alleviation from the perusal of words from a heart so congenial to my own, being refreshed by your discourse as by some soothing potion

54; and also by your announcement that the day memorable for us both was at hand, that whereon you took on yourself the office of the high-priesthood; of which I was just then speaking with my brother Bassianus

55. For having begun to speak of the dedication of the Church which he had built in the name of the Apostles, we were led to the subject, for he said that he earnestly desired the company of your Holiness.

2. Wherefore I introduced the mention of your birthday 56, as being on the first of November, and that it was (if I mistook not) close at hand, and to be celebrated on the following day, so that after that it would yield you no excuse. So I made a promise on your behalf; for you too have liberty to do the same as regards me: I made a promise to

him, 18 and exacted one for myself: for I feel assured you will be present, because you ought to be. It will not therefore be so much my promise that will bind you, as your own purpose, having resolved to do that which you ought. You see then it was rather my knowledge of you, than any rash confidence which induced me to give this pledge to my brother. Come then, lest you put two bishops to shame; yourself for not coming, me for having promised unadvisedly.

3. But we will remember your birthday in our prayers, and do you not forget us in yours. Our spirit shall accompany you; do you also, when you enter the second Tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies, do as we do, and carry us also in with you. When in spirit you burn incense on the golden censer, forget us not; for it is the one which is in the second Tabernacle, and from which your prayer, full of wisdom, is directed to heaven as incense.

4. There is the Ark of the Covenant overlaid round about with gold;57

that is, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of the Wisdom of God. There is the golden pot that had manna, the depository, namely, of spiritual nutriment, and the store-place of divine knowledge. There is the rod of Aaron, the symbol of priestly grace. Before, it had withered, but it budded again in Christ. There are the Cherubim over the tables of the Covenant, that is, the knowledge of the sacred Lessons. There is the Mercy-seat, over which on high is God the Word, the Image of the invisible God, Who says to thee, I will commune with thee from above the

Mercy-seat, between the two Cherubim,58 for He speaks thus with us, that we may understand His saying, or because He speaks things not earthly but spiritual, as He saith, I will open My mouth in a parable.59

For where Christ is, there are all things, there is His doctrine, there the remission of sins, there grace, there the separation of the living and the dead.

5. Aaron indeed once stood in the midst, interposing himself to prevent death passing over to the hosts of the living from the carcasses of the dead.60 But He, as the Word, ever stands within each

of us, although we see Him not, and separates the faculties of our reason from the carcase of our deadly passions and pestilential thoughts. He standeth as

[19 He Who came into the world to blunt the sting of death, to stop its devouring jaws, to give to the living an eternity of grace, to the dead a resurrection.

6. In His service you are warring a good warfare, His deposit you keep, His money you lend out at interest, as it is written, Thou shalt lend unto many nations;⁶¹ the good interest of spiritual grace, which the Lord when He comes will exact with usury; and when He finds that you have dispensed it well, He will give you for few things, many things. Then shall I reap most delightful fruit, in that my judgment of you is approved; the ordination which you received by the imposition of my hands and the benediction in the Name of the Lord Jesus will not be blamed. Work therefore a good work, that in that day you may receive a reward, and we may rest together, I in you and you in me.

7. Plenteous is the harvest of Christ, but the labourers few,⁶²

and helpers are difficult to be found. So it was of old, but the Lord is powerful, Who will send labourers into His harvest. Without doubt among the ranks of the people of Comum

⁶³ very many have already begun to believe by your ministry, and through your teaching have received the word of God. But He Who gave those who believe will also give them that will help: whereby all occasion will be removed for excusing yourself for your postponed visit, and thus also the grace of your presence will be more frequently shed around me.

Farewell: continue to love us, as you do.

LETTER V.

AMBROSE TO SYAGRIUS.

LETTER VI.

AMBROSE TO SYAGRIUS.

[To complete the character of S. Ambrose as shewn in his Letters, these will be printed at the end of the volume, but, on account of their subject, in the original Latin.]

[20

LETTER VII. [before 381 A.D.]

THE Justus to whom this letter and the following are addressed is in all probability S. Justus Bishop of Lyons, who is mentioned below as one of the Bishops who took part in the Council of Aquileia: that he was a Bishop is implied by S. Ambrose addressing him as 'brother.' The letter contains a mystical interpretation of the half-shekel of redemption, (Exodus xxx. 12. sqq.) and of the didrachma and stater of our Lord's miracle of the piece of money in the fish's mouth, and of the penny of the tribute money. The date given in the margin depends on the truth of the hypothesis that Justus is the Bishop of Lyons. Of him it is recorded that he did not return to his See after the Council of Aquileia, but became a monk in the deserts of Egypt. See Newman's *Fleury* vol. 1 p. 25.

AMBROSE TO JUSTUS, HEALTH. YOUR question, my brother, as to the meaning of that shekel, half of which the Hebrew is commanded to offer for the redemption of the soul, is an excellent admonition to us to direct our intercourse by letter and our converse while at a distance to the interpretation of the heavenly oracles. For what can more unite us than, to converse concerning the things of God?

2. Now the half of the shekel is a piece of silver, and the redemption of the soul is faith; faith therefore is that piece of silver which the woman in the Gospel, as we read, having lost, diligently seeks for, lighting a candle and sweeping the house; and when she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, bidding them rejoice with her for that she has found the piece of silver which, she had lost.⁶⁴

For great is the loss of the soul, if a man lose his faith, or that grace which by means of faith he had obtained to himself. Do thou therefore light thy candle. Thy light is thine eye;⁶⁵

that is, the inward eye of the mind. Do thou light this candle, which is fed by spiritual oil, and gives light to thy whole house. Seek that piece of silver, the redemption of thy soul, which he that loses is troubled, he that finds rejoices.

3. Mercy too is the redemption of the soul; for the redemption of a man's soul are his riches, by which he shews mercy, and expending them, relieves the poor.⁶⁶ Wherefore

[21 faith, grace, and mercy, are the redemption of the soul, which is purchased by a piece of silver, that is, by the full price of a larger sum. For thus it is written in the words of the Lord to Moses: When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty

gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel and thou shalt appoint it for the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation, that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls.⁶⁷

4. Did then both the rich man who offered more, and the poor who had less, fail so much, if this half shekel consisted in money and had not hidden excellencies? Whence we are to understand that this half shekel is not material but spiritual, having to be paid by all and rated equally.

5. Again as to heavenly food (for the food and delight of heavenly nutriment is wisdom, whereon they feed in Paradise, the unfailing food of the soul, called in the Divine Word manna) the distribution of this was, we read, so made to each soul as to be equally divided. For they who gathered most and they who gathered least, all gathered according to the direction of Moses; and they made an omer the measure, and it did not exceed to him who gathered much nor fall short to him who gathered little. For each man, according to the number of souls who were with him in the tent, gathered for each an omer, that is, being interpreted, a measure of wine.⁶⁸

6. Now this is the measure of wisdom, which if it be above measure is hurtful, as it is written, Make not thyself over-wise.⁶⁹

And Paul has taught that the division of grace |22

is according to measure, saying, The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal, to one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, [to another the faith of wisdom by the spirit of knowledge]

70 by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit,⁷¹

and that this grace is given according to the will of the Spirit. In that He divides, He shews His equity, in that He divides as He will, His power. Or He may will to bestow that upon each which He knows will be profitable.

7. An omer then is a measure, and a measure of wine, which maketh glad the heart of man.⁷²

For what is the joy of the heart but the draughts of wisdom? This is that wine which Wisdom hath mingled in a cup, and given us to drink,⁷³ that we may receive to ourselves temperance and prudence, that wine which should be so equally transfused through all the senses and thoughts and all the emotions which are within this our house, that we may know how to abound to all and to be wanting to none.

8. More fully also it may be understood of the Blood of Christ, to Whose grace nothing can be added nor taken away. Whether you take little or drink much, to all the measure of Redemption is perfect.

9. The Passover too of the Lord,⁷⁴ that is, the lamb, the fathers are ordered so to eat, that it might be according to the number of their souls, neither more nor less; that more should not be given to some, and less to others, but that it should be according to the number of their souls, lest the stronger should take more and the weaker less. For the grace, the gift, the redemption is distributed equally to all. And there ought not to be too many, lest any go away defrauded of his hope and redemption. Now there are too many, when any are beyond the number, for the saints are all numbered, and the hairs of their heads; for the Lord knoweth them that are His.⁷⁵

Neither can there be too few, lest any be too weak to receive the greatness of the grace.

10. Wherefore He hath commanded all to bring an equal faith and devotion to the Pasch of the Lord, that is, to the Passover. For it is the Pasch, when the mind lays down its senseless passion, and puts on good compassion, that

|23 it may suffer together with Christ, and take His Passover into itself, so as that He may dwell in it, and walk in it, and may become its God.⁷⁶

Thus grace is equal in all, but virtue is diverse in each. Let each then take that portion which fits his strength, that neither the stronger may lack nor the weaker be burthened.

11. This you have in the Gospel; for the same wages are paid to all the labourers in the vineyard;⁷⁷ but few attain to the prize, to the reward; few say, There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.⁷⁸

For the gift of bounty and of grace is one thing; another the wages of virtue, the recompense of labour.

12. Therefore a shekel is our ransom, nay half a shekel. He has redeemed us from death, redeemed from slavery, that we may not be subject to the world, which we have renounced. Whence in the Gospel our Lord bids Peter go to the sea, and cast an hook, and take the stater which he will find in the fish's mouth, and give it to them⁷⁹

who required of the Lord and of himself a shekel. This then is that shekel which was exacted by the Law, nevertheless it was not due from the King's Son, but from strangers. For why should Christ ransom Himself from this world, when He came to take away the sin of the world?

80 Why should He redeem Himself from sin, Who came down that He might remit to all their sins? Why should He redeem Himself from servitude, Who emptied Himself

81 that He might give liberty to all? Why should He redeem Himself from death, Who took flesh, that by His Death He might obtain for all a resurrection?

13. Truly the Redeemer of all had no need of a redemption; but as He received circumcision that He might fulfil the Law, and came to be baptized that He might fulfil righteousness,⁸²

so also did He not refuse to pay those who required of Him the shekel, but straightway commanded the stater to be given as the tribute for Himself and Peter. For He chose rather to give beyond the Law than to deny the Law's due. At the same time He shews that the Jews acted contrary to the Law, in exacting a shekel from one person, whereas Moses had ordained that half a shekel should be required. On this account He commanded as

[24 it were single pieces to be paid both for Himself and for Peter in the stater. Good is the tribute of Christ, which is paid by the stater, for justice is the balance ⁸³, and justice is above the Law. Again, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.⁸⁴

This stater is found in the fish's mouth, of that fish which the fishers of men take, of that fish who weighs his words that they may be tried by the fire before they are uttered.⁸⁵

14. This stater the Jews knew not, giving Him up to the betrayer. But the Law exacts half a shekel for the redemption of a soul, and devotes it to God, for she cannot claim the whole. For in the Jew scarcely a portion of devotion could be found. But he who is free indeed, a true Hebrew, belongs wholly to God, all that he has savours of liberty. He has nothing in common with him who refuses liberty, saying, I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free!

86 Which refers not only to his lord, but to the weakness of that man who shall have subjected himself to the world, in that he loves the world as his own soul, that is, his intelligence, the author of his will. Nor does it refer only to his wife, but also to that delight which cares for household not eternal things. This man's ear therefore his lord nails to his door or threshold, that he may remember these words whereby he chose servitude.

15. This man therefore, O Christian, imitate not; for thou art not commanded to offer half a shekel, but, if thou wouldest be perfect, to sell all thou hast, and give to the poor.⁸⁷ Thou art not to reserve a part of thy service for the world, but to deny thyself altogether, and to take up thy Lord's cross

and follow Him.

16. Now we have learned that the half-shekel was required by the Law, because the other half was reserved for the generation of this world, that is, for secular life, and domestic use, and for posterity, to whom it was necessary that a portion out of the original inheritance should be transmitted. Wherefore our Lord answered the Pharisees, when they tempted Him by the crafty question whether He would advise that tribute should be paid to Caesar, Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites, shew Me the tribute money.⁸⁸

[25 And they brought Him a penny on which was Caesar's image. He saith to them, Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's; shewing that they who thought themselves perfect were imperfect in that they paid to Caesar before God. They with whom the world was their first care would first pay that which appertained to the world; wherefore He says Render, that is, render ye, the things which are Caesar's----ye, among whom the image and likeness of Caesar is found.

17. Wherefore those Hebrew youths, Ananias, Azarias, Misael, and that wiser Daniel, who would not worship the image of the king, who received it not, nor any thing from the king's table, were not bound to pay tribute. For they possessed nothing that was under the power of an earthly king.⁸⁹ And so their followers, they whose portion is God, pay no tribute. And so the Lord says, Render, that is, Do ye render, who have brought forth the image of Caesar, with whom it is found, but I owe nothing to Caesar, because I have nothing in this world. The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.⁹⁰

Peter owes nothing, nor the Apostles, because they are not of this world though they are in this world. I have sent them into this world, but now they are not of this world, because with Me they are above the world.⁹¹

18. So that which belongs to the Divine Law, not to Caesar, is that which is commanded to be paid. Yet even this He that was perfect, that is, the preacher of the Gospel, no longer owed, for He had preached more. The Son of God owed it not, nor did Peter who was by grace an adopted son of the Father. Notwithstanding, says He, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up, and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money, that take, and give unto them for Me and thee.⁹²

O great mystery! He gives that half-shekel which the Law commanded, He refuses not what is of the Law, for He was made of a woman, made under the Law.⁹³ 'Made,' I say, as regards His incarnation; 'of a woman,' as regards the sex; woman is the sex, virgin the species; the sex relates to her nature, the virgin to her integrity. For wherein He came under the

[26 Law, therein He was made of a woman, that is, in the body. On this account He commands a shekel to be paid for Him and Peter, for both were born under the Law. He commands it to be paid then according to the Law, that He might redeem those who are under the Law.

19. And yet He commands a stater to be paid that they might have their mouths closed, and so not commit sin by excess of talking. And He bids that to be given which was found in the mouth of the fish, that they might acknowledge the Word. For why was it that they who exacted what was of the Law, knew not what was the Law? For they ought not to have been ignorant of the Word of God;

for it is written, The Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart.⁹⁴

He therefore paid the whole shekel to God, who reserved no part for the world. For it is to God that righteousness, which is the moderation of the mind, is paid; to God is paid the keeping of the tongue, which is the moderation in speech. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.⁹⁵

20. The half-shekel may also be understood of the Old Testament, the whole shekel for the price of both Testaments, for according to the Law every one was redeemed by the Law, but he who is redeemed according to the Gospel, pays the half-shekel according to the Law, he is redeemed by the Blood of Christ according to grace, having a double redemption both of devotion and of Blood. For not even faith alone is sufficient for perfection, unless the redeemed also obtain the grace of Baptism, and receive the Blood of Christ. Good then is that half-shekel which is paid to God.

21. The half-shekel is not a penny⁹⁶, but is different. Again, in the penny is the image of Caesar, in the half-shekel the image of God, for it is of one God, and formed after God Himself. Beginning from One it is infinitely diffused, and again, from the Infinite all things come back to one, as their end, for God is both the beginning and the end of all things. Wherefore arithmeticians have not called 'one' a number, but an element of number. And this we have said because it is written, I am Alpha and

[27 Omega, the beginning and the ending;⁹⁷

and, Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is One Lord.⁹⁸

22. Be thou then, after the likeness of God, one and the same; not sober to-day, drunken to-morrow; to-day pacific, to-morrow quarrelsome; to-day frugal, to-morrow immoderate; for each person is changed by diversity of manners and becomes another man, in whom that which he was is not recognized, while he begins to be that which he was not, degenerate from himself. It is a grievous thing to be changed for the worse. Be then as the image on the half-shekel, immutable, keeping daily the same deportment. Seeing the half-shekel, observe the image, that is, seeing the Law, observe in the Law Christ the Image of God; for He is the Image of the invisible and incorruptible God; let Him be displayed before thee as in the mirror of the Law. Confess Him in the Law, that thou mayest know Him again in the Gospel. If thou hast known Him in His precepts, acknowledge Him in works. Farewell, and if you do not think that this shekel has been committed to me unprofitably, doubt not to commit to me a second time whatever you may have to communicate.

LETTER VIII. [A.D.381.]

S. AMBROSE in this letter answers the objections raised against the Scriptures, that they were not written according to the rules of art, and illustrates his argument with various passages.

AMBROSE TO JUSTUS.

1. VERY many deny that the Sacred writers wrote according to the rules of art. Nor do we contend for the contrary; for they wrote not according to art, but according to grace, which is above all art; for they wrote that which the Spirit gave them to speak.⁹⁹ And yet they who wrote on art made use of their writings from which to frame their art, and to compose its comments and rules.

2. Again, in art there are principally required, a cause, [28

a subject, and an end. When then we read that holy Isaac said to his father, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering,¹⁰⁰

which of these is wanting? For he who asks, doubts, he who answers the query pronounces and solves the doubt. Behold the fire, that is the cause, and the wood, that is

u#lh, which in Latin is 'materia,' what third thing remains but the end, which the son asked for, saying, Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering, and the father replied, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering?

101

3. Let us discuss for a little while the mystery. God shewed a ram hanging by his horns. Now the ram is the Word, full of tranquillity, moderation, and patience; whereby is shewn that Wisdom is a good sacrifice, and that He was well skilled in the mode of meritorious propitiation. Wherefore the Prophet also says, Offer the sacrifice of righteousness.¹⁰²

And so it is a sacrifice both of righteousness and of wisdom.

4. Here then is a mind fervent and glowing as fire which worketh; here is the thing to be understood, that is the subject-matter, where is the third, the understanding? Behold the colour, where is the seeing? behold the object of sense, where is the sense itself? For matter is not seen by all, and therefore God gives the gift of understanding, and feeling, and seeing.

5. The Word of God then is the end or completion; that is, the determination and completion of the discussion, which is communicated to the more prudent, and confirms things doubtful. Well do even they who believed not in the Coming of Christ refute themselves, so that they confess what they think to deny. For they say that the ram is the Word of God, and yet believe not the mystery of the Passion, whereas in that mystery is the Word of God, in Whom the Sacrifice was fulfilled.

6. Wherefore let us first kindle within us the fire of the mind, that it may work within us. Let us seek for the subject-matter, what it is that nourishes the mind, as if we were looking for it in darkness. For neither did the Fathers know what manna was: they found manna, it is said, declaring it to be the Discourse and word of God,¹⁰³ from Whom

[29 all instruction as from a perennial fountain flows and is derived.

7. This is that heavenly food. And it is signified by the Person of the Speaker, Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you.¹⁰⁴

The 'cause' then we have in the operation of God, Who waters our minds with the dew of wisdom; the 'subject-matter' we have in that the minds which see and taste it are delighted, and inquire whence comes this which is brighter than light, sweeter than honey. They have their answer from the text of Scripture: This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat;¹⁰⁵ and this is the Word of God, Which God appointed and ordained, whereby the minds of the prudent are fed and comforted, which is white and sweet, enlightening the minds of the hearers with the splendour of truth, and soothing them with the sweetness of virtue.

8. The Prophet had learned in himself what was the 'cause' of the thing to be completed. For when he was sent to the king of Egypt to deliver the people of God, he says, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and deliver my people from the king's power? the Lord answers, I will be with thee. Moses asked again, What shall I say unto them, if they ask, Who is the Lord that hath sent thee, and what is His Name? The Lord said, I am that I am, thou shalt say, I AM hath sent me unto you.¹⁰⁶

This is the true Name of God---Eternity. Wherefore the Apostle also says of Christ, For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who was preached among you by us, by me and Silvanus and

Timotheus, was not Yea and Nay, but in Him was Yea.¹⁰⁷

Moses answered, But behold they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice, for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.¹⁰⁸

Then He gave him power to work miracles, that it might be believed that he was sent by God, A third time Moses says, I am not eloquent, but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue; how shall Pharaoh hear me?

109 the Lord answers, Go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.¹¹⁰

9. These intermingled questions and answers contain the seeds and science of wisdom. The 'end' or 'completion' too is good, for He says, I will be

with thee! And although [30 He had given him power to work miracles, yet as he was still doubtful, that we might know that signs are for them that believe not, but the promise for believers, the weakness of his deserts or of his purpose receives this answer, I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say!

111 Thus a perfect 'end' is preserved.

10. This you have also in the Gospel, Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.¹¹²

Ask from the 'cause,' that is, from the Author. You have as your subject-matter things spiritual which cause you to seek; knock, and God the Word opens to you. That which asks is the mind, which works like fire; it is in things spiritual that the glow of the mind works, as fire on wood; God the Word opens unto you, this is the 'end.' We have also in another part of the Gospel these words of our Lord, But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.¹¹³

11. These words too of Isaac you have in Genesis, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the Lord thy God brought it to me.¹¹⁴

The Lord is the end. He who seeks in the Lord finds. And thus Laban who sought not in the Lord, for he sought idols, found not.¹¹⁵

12. And he has well observed the rules 116 and distinctions as they are called. The first is Go and take me some venison, that I may eat.¹¹⁷

He excites and inflames his mind with the fire, as it were, of his exhortation, that he may labour and seek. The second is, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly? This is in the form of a question; the third is an answer, Because the Lord thy God brought it to me. The 'end' is God, Who concludes and perfects all things, of Whom we are not to doubt.

13. And there is a 'distinction' too as to spontaneous things; If you sow not, you shall not reap

118; for although culture calls forth seeds, yet nature by a certain spontaneous impulse, worketh in them that they spring up.

[31

14. Wherefore the Apostle says, I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that

watereth, but God That giveth the increase!¹¹⁹

God gives to you in the spirit, and the Lord sows in your heart. Take care then that He breathe life and sow in you, that you may reap; for if you sow not, neither shall you reap. This is a sort of admonition to you to sow. If you sow not you shall not reap, is a proverb. The end agrees with the beginning; the seed is the beginning, the harvest the end.

15. Learn, he says, of me; nature aids the learner, and God is the Author of nature. It is of God too that we learn well, for it is a natural gift to learn well; the hard of heart learn not. Nature, which is preserved by the Divine bounty, gives the increase. The final consummation God giveth, that is, the most excellent and Divine Nature and Essence of the Trinity.

Farewell: love us, as you do, for we love you.

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF AQUILEIA AGAINST THE HERETICS PALLADIUS AND SECUNDIANUS.

[A.D.381.]

THE official Record of the Proceeding's of this Council seems to be inserted among S. Ambrose's Letters, partly because S. Ambrose took the leading part in them, and partly because they form the subject of the next series of letters, directly of the four first, and more indirectly of the two next, all of which, though written in the name of the Bishops of Italy, we may presume to have been S. Ambrose's composition. The Council was held in the year 381 A.D., the same year in which the Second General Council was held at Constantinople. It will be remembered that that Council, being summoned by Theodosius, then Emperor of the East, consisted of Eastern Bishops only. At this time Arianism, though rife in the East, seems not to have been prevalent in the West. S. Ambrose says, (Letter xi. 1) 'as regards the West, two individuals only have been found to dare to oppose the Council with profane and impious words, men who had previously disturbed a mere corner of Dacia Ripensis.' These two men were Palladius and Secundianus. Palladius appears to have applied to Gratian to call a General Council, on the plea that he was falsely accused of Arianism, in 379 A.D. Gratian granted his request, but afterwards, as we learn from his letter read at the Council, on the representation of S. Ambrose that such a question as the soundness or heresy of two Bishops might be settled by a Council of the Bishops of the Diocese of Italy, he so

far altered his original order |32 as to summon only these, giving permission for others to attend if they pleased. This reconsideration, and perhaps also the troubles that prevailed in the Empire at the time, (Tillemont Vie de S. Ambr. ch. xxiii.) caused such delay that it was not till towards the end of 381 A.D. that the Council assembled under the presidency of S. Valerian Bishop of Aquileia. The Bishops of Italy, with deputies from Gaul, Africa, and Illyria, to the number of thirty two or thirty three (see note r) met at Aquileia at the beginning of September. The discussion recorded in the 'Gesta' took place probably on Septr. 3rd (see note a) but S. Ambrose's words in § 2 imply that previous discussions had been held of which no Record had been taken, (diu citra acta tractavimus.) The proceedings commence by the reading of the Emperor's Mandate. Palladius then raises objections on the ground of the absence of the Bishops from the East, and charges S. Ambrose with having tricked the Emperor into summoning only a small Council, and declines to take part in a Council which is not General. After some discussion on this point S. Ambrose proposes that Arius' letter from Nicomedia to S. Alexander should be read in detail, and Palladius called upon to condemn each heretical proposition. Palladius argues upon each, but eventually returns to his refusal to answer except in a General Council. In the end all the Bishops pronounce their decisions one by one, all agreeing that Palladius' doctrine was heretical and that he should be deposed. Secundianus is then more briefly dealt with in the same way. It would seem that the Record is incomplete, as the number of Bishops who give their decision is only 25, and the account of Secundianus' case ends abruptly without recording any decision. It may be from the same cause that the Record itself is in one or two places seemingly defective, and the sense confused.

Secundianus is not mentioned again in History. Of Palladius it is said by Vigilius, Bishop of Thapsus in Africa, who lived in the latter part of the 5th Century, that after S. Ambrose's death he wrote a reply to his writings against Arianism, which Vigilius himself answered (Tillemont Vie de S. Ambr. xxvi). The genuineness of the Gesta has been disputed by Père Chifflet, who maintained that they were a forgery of the Vigilius mentioned above: his arguments however are satisfactorily refuted by Tillemont in an elaborate note. (Vol. x. p. 738. note 15. on S. Ambr. Life.)

1. IN the consulship of the illustrious SYAGRIUS and

EUCHERIUS, on the 3rd day of September 120, the undermentioned Bishops

121, sitting in council in the church at |33

Aquileia, namely, VALERIAN, Bishop of Aquileia, AMBROSE,

EUSEBIUS, LIMENIUS, ANEMIUS,

SABINUS, ABUNDANTIUS, ARTEMIUS,

CONSTANTIUS, JUSTUS, PHILASTER,

CONSTANTIUS, THEODORUS, ALMACHIUS,

DOMNINUS, AMANTIUS, MAXIMUS,

FELIX, BASSIANUS, NUMIDIUS,

JANUARIUS, PROCULUS, HELIODORUS,

JOVINUS, FELIX, EXUPERANTIUS,
DIOGENES, MAXIMUS, MACEDONIUS,
CASSIANUS, MARCELLUS, and

EUSTATHIUS, Bishops: Ambrose, Bishop, said;

2. ' We have long been dealing with the matter without any Records 122, and now, since our ears are assailed with such sacrilegious words on the part of Palladius and Secundianus, that one can scarce believe that they could have so openly blasphemed, and that they may not attempt hereafter by any subtlety to deny their own words, though the testimony of such eminent Bishops does not admit of doubt, still as it is the pleasure of all the Bishops, let Records be made, that no one may be able to deny his own profession. Do you therefore, holy men, declare what is your pleasure.' All the Bishops said, 'It is our pleasure.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said, 'Our discussions must be confirmed by the Emperor's Letter, as the subject requires, so that they may be quoted.' 3. The Letter is read by Sabinianus a Deacon;

"Desirous to make our earliest efforts to prevent dissension among Bishops from uncertainty what doctrines they should reverence, we had ordered the Bishops to come together into the city of Aquileia, out of the diocese

123 which |34

has been confided to the merits of your Excellency. For controversies of dubious import could not be better disentangled than by our constituting the Bishops themselves expounders of the dispute that has arisen, so that the same persons from whom come forth the instructions of doctrine may solve the contradictions of discordant teaching.

4. "Nor is our present order different from our last: we do not alter the tenour of our command, but we correct the superfluous numbers that would have assembled. For as Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, eminent both for the merits of his life and the favour of God, suggests that there is no occasion for numbers in a case in which the truth, though in the hands of a few supporters, would not suffer from many antagonists, and that he and the Bishops of the adjoining cities of Italy would be more than sufficient to meet the assertions of the opposite party, we have judged it right to refrain from troubling venerable men by bringing into strange lands any one who was either loaded with years, or disabled with bodily weakness, or in the slender circumstances of honourable poverty;124 etc."

5. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'This is what a Christian Emperor has ordained. He has not thought fit to do an injury to the Bishops: he has constituted the Bishops themselves Judges. And therefore since we sit together in a Council of Bishops, answer to what is proposed to you. Arius's letter has been read: it shall be recited now again, if you think proper. It contains blasphemies from the beginning; it says that the Father alone is eternal. If you think that the Son of God is not everlasting, support this doctrine in what manner you please: if you think it is a doctrine to be condemned, condemn it. Here is the Gospel, and the Apostle

125: all the Scriptures are at hand. Support it from what quarter you please, if you think that the Son of God is not everlasting.'

|35

6. PALLADIUS said: 'You have contrived, as appears by the sacred document 126 which you have brought forward, that this should not be a full and General Council: in the absence of our Colleagues we cannot answer.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Who are your colleagues?' Palladius said; 'The Eastern Bishops.'

7. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Inasmuch as in former times the usage of Councils has been that the Eastern Bishops should be appointed to hold them in the East, and the Western Bishops in the West, we, having our place in the West, are come together to the city of Aquileia according to the Emperor's command. Moreover, the Prefect of Italy has issued letters, that if the Eastern Bishops chose to meet, they should be allowed to do so; but inasmuch as they know that the custom is that the Council of the Eastern Bishops should be in the East and of the Western in the West, they have therefore thought fit not to come.'

8. PALLADIUS said; 'Our Emperor Gratian commanded the Eastern Bishops to come: do you deny that he did so? the Emperor himself told us that he had commanded the Eastern Bishops to come.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'He certainly commanded them, in that he did not forbid them to come hither.'

Palladius said; 'But your prayer has prevented their coming: under a pretence of benevolence you have obtained this, and so put the Council off.'

9. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'There is no occasion to wander any longer from the subject: answer now. Did Arius say rightly that the Father alone is eternal? and did he say this in agreement with the Scriptures or not?' Palladius said; 'I do not answer you.' Constantius, Bishop, said; 'Do not you answer when you have so long blasphemed?'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'But you are under an obligation to express frankly the faith you claim the right to hold. If a heathen were to ask of you in what way you believe in Christ, you would be bound not to be ashamed to confess.'

10. SABINUS, Bishop, said; 'It was your own request that we would answer: we are come together this day

|36 according to your wish, and upon your own solicitation, and we have not waited for our other brethren, who might have come. It is therefore not open to you to wander from the subject. Do you say that Christ was created? or do you say that the Son of God is everlasting?'

Palladius said; 'I have told you already: we said we would come and prove that you have not done well to take advantage of the Emperor.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Let Palladius's letter be read to shew whether he sent us this message, and it will appear that even now he is deceiving.' Palladius said; 'Let it be read by all means.' The Bishops said: 'When you saw the Emperor at Sirmium, did you address him, or was it he that pressed you?' And they added: 'What do you answer to this?'

Palladius answered; 'He said to me, "Go." We said: "Are the Eastern Bishops summoned to attend?" He said, "They are." Should we have come if the Eastern Bishops had not been summoned?'

11. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Let the matter of the Eastern Bishops stand over. I enquire at present into your sentiments. Arius's letter has been read to you: you are in the habit of denying that you are an Arian. Either condemn Arius now, or defend him.' Palladius said; 'It is not within the compass of your authority to ask this of me.'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'We do not believe that the religious Emperor said other than he wrote. He has ordered the Bishops to meet: it is impossible that he said to you and no one else contrary to his own letter, that the case was not to be discussed without the presence of the Eastern Bishops.' Palladius said; 'He did, if the Italian Bishops alone were ordered to assemble.'

Evagrius, Presbyter and deputy, said; 127 [It is plain] 'that he promised to appear within four and even within two days. What then were you waiting for? was it, as you say, that you considered the opinion of your colleagues, the

[37 Eastern Bishops was to be waited for? Then you ought to have said so in your message, and not to have pledged yourself to discussion.'

Palladius said; 'I had come, believing it to be a General Council, but I saw that my colleagues had not assembled. I decided however

128 to come, in accordance with the summons, to bid you to do nothing to the prejudice of a future Council.'

12. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'You yourself required that we should sit to-day, moreover, even this very day you have said yourself 'we come as Christians to Christians.' You have therefore acknowledged us for Christians. You promised that you would engage in discussion: you promised that you would either assign your own reasons or accept ours. We therefore willingly accepted your opening, we wished that you should come as a Christian. I offered you the letter of Arius, which that Arius wrote, from whose name you say that you often suffer wrong. You say that you do not follow Arius. To-day your sentiments must be made clear; either condemn him, or support him by whatever passage you will.' He went on; 'Then according to Arius's letter Christ the Son of God is not everlasting?'

Palladius said; 'We said that we would prove ourselves Christians, but in a full Council. We do not answer you at all to the prejudice of a future Council.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'You ought to state your profession of faith straightforwardly.' Palladius said; 'And what do we reserve for the Council?'

13. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'He has been unanimously condemned who denies the Eternity of the Son of God. Arius denied it, Palladius, who will not condemn Arius, follows him. Consider then, whether his opinion is approved of; it is easy to perceive whether he speaks according to the Scriptures, or against the Scriptures. For we read: God's eternal Power and Godhead.129

Christ is the Power of God. If then the Power of God is everlasting, Christ surely is everlasting; for Christ is the Power of God'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; ' This is our faith: this is the Catholic doctrine; who says not this, let him be anathema.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.'

14. EUSEBIUS, Bishop, said; 'He says specifically that the Father alone is everlasting, and that the Son at some time began to be.' Palladius said; 'I have neither seen Arius, nor do I know who he is.'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; ' The blasphemy of Arius has been produced, in which he denies that the Son of God is everlasting. Do you condemn this wickedness and its author, or do you support it?' Palladius said; 'When there is not the authority of a full Council, I do not speak.'

15. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Do you hesitate after the divine judgements to condemn Arius, when he has burst asunder in the midst?'

131 and he added; 'Let the holy men too, the deputies of the Gauls, speak.'

Constantius, Bishop and deputy of the Gauls, said; 'This impiety of that man we always have condemned, and we now condemn not only Arius, but also whoever does not say that the Son of God is everlasting.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'What says also my Lord Justus?'

Justus, Bishop and deputy of the Gauls, said; 'He who does not confess that the Son of God is co-eternal with the Father, let him be accounted Anathema.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.'

16. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Let the deputies of the Africans speak too, who have brought hither the sentiments of all their countrymen.'

Felix, Bishop and deputy, said; ' If any man denies that the Son of God is everlasting, and that He is co-eternal with the Father, not only do I the deputy of the whole province of Africa condemn him, but also the whole priestly company, which sent me to this most holy assembly, has itself also already condemned him.'

Anemius, Bishop, said; 'There is no capital of Illyricum 132

|39 but Sirmium: I am its Bishop. The person who does not confess the Son of God to be eternal and co-eternal with the Father, that is, everlasting, I call anathema; and I also say anathema to those who do not make the same confession.'

17. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Hear what follows.' Then it was read; "Alone eternal, alone without beginning, alone true, Who alone has immortality."

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'In this also condemn him who denies that the Son is very God. For since He Himself is the Truth, how is He not very God?' And he added; 'What say you to this?'

Palladius said; 'Who denies that He is very Son?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Arius denied it.' Palladius said; ' When the Apostle says that Christ is God over all, can any one deny that He is the very Son of God?'

18. Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'That you may see with how much simplicity we seek the truth, lo, I say as you say: but I have then only half the truth. For by speaking thus, you appear to deny that He is

very God; if however you confess simply that the Son of God is very God, state it in the order in which I propose it to you.' Palladius said; 'I speak to you according to the Scriptures: I call the Lord the very Son of God.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Do you call the Son of God very Lord?' Palladius said; 'When I call Him very Son, what more is wanted?'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'I do not ask only that you |40 should call Him very Son, but that you should call the Son of God very Lord.' 19. EUSEBIUS, Bishop, said; 'Is Christ very God, according to the faith of all and to the Catholic profession?' Palladius said; 'He is the very Son of God.'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'We also are by adoption sons; He is Son according to the property of His Divine Generation.' And he added; 'Do you confess that the very Son of God is very Lord by His Birth and essentially?' Palladius said; 'I call Him the very Son of God, only-begotten.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Do you then think it is against the Scriptures, for Christ to be called very God?'

20. PALLADIUS being silent, Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'He who says only that he is the very Son of God, and will not say that He is very Lord, appears to deny it. Let Palladius then, if he does confess it, confess it in this order, and let him say whether he calls the Son of God very Lord.'

Palladius said; 'When the Son says, That they might know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent,133 is it by way of feeling only, or in truth?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'John said in his epistle; This is the true God.134 Deny this.' Palladius said; 'When I tell you that He is true Son, I acknowledge also a true Godhead.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'In this also there is evasion; for you art wont to speak of one only and true Godhead in such manner as to say that it is the divinity of the Father only, and not that of the Son also, which is one only and true. If then you wish to speak plainly, as you refer me to the Scriptures, say what the Evangelist John said; This is the true God, or deny that he hath said it.' Palladius said; 'Besides the Son there is none other that is begotten.'

21. EUSEBIUS, Bishop, said; 'Is Christ very God, according to the faith of all and to the Catholic profession, or in your opinion is He not very God?' Palladius said; 'He is the Power of our God.'

Ambrose, Bishop said; 'You do not speak frankly; and |41 so anathema to him who does not confess that the Son of God is very Lord.' All the Bishops said; ' Let him be accounted anathema, who will not call Christ, the Son of God, very Lord.' 22. The reader continued; "Alone true, Who alone hath immortality."

Ambrose, Bishop, said; ' Has the Son of God immortality, or has He it not, in respect of His Godhead?' Palladius said; 'Do you accept or no the words of the Apostle, The King of kings Who alone hath immortality?' 135 Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'What say you of Christ the Son of God?' Palladius said; 'Is Christ a divine Name or a human?'

23. EUSEBIUS, Bishop, said; 'He is called Christ indeed according to the mystery of His Incarnation, but He is both God and Man.' Palladius said; 'Christ is a name of the flesh: Christ is a man's name: do you answer me.'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Why do you dwell upon useless topics? When Arms' impious words were read, who says of the Father that He alone hath immortality, you cited a testimony in confirmation of Arius' impiety, quoting from the Apostle, Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which

no man can approach unto. But if you understand it, he has expressed by the Name of God the dignity of the whole Nature, inasmuch as in the Name of God, both Father and Son are signified.' Palladius said; 'You also have not chosen to answer what I have asked.'

24. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'I ask you to give your opinion plainly, has the Son of God immortality according to His divine generation, or has He not?' Palladius said; 'In respect of His divine generation He is incorruptible; and by means of His Incarnation He died.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'His divinity died not, but His flesh died.' Palladius said; 'Do you answer me first.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Has the Son of God immortality in respect of His Godhead or has He it not? But have you not even now betrayed your fraudulent and insidious [42 meaning according to Arms' profession?' and he added; 'He who denies that the Son of God has immortality, what think you of him?' All the Bishops said; 'Let him be accounted anathema.' 25. PALLADIUS said; 'A divine offspring is immortal.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'This also have you said evasively, to avoid expressing anything clearly about the Son of God. I say to you, the Son hath immortality in respect of His Godhead, or do you deny it and say that He has not.' Palladius said; 'Did Christ die or not?'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'In respect of the flesh He did: our soul does not die: for it is written, Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul;¹³⁶ seeing then that our soul cannot die, do you think Christ died in respect of His Godhead?' Palladius said; 'Why do you shrink from the name of death?'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Nay, I do not shrink from it, but I confess it in respect of my flesh: for there is One by Whom I am released from the chains of death.'

Palladius said; 'Death is caused by separation of the spirit (from the flesh), for Christ the Son of God took upon Him flesh, and by means of flesh he died.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'It is written that Christ suffered: He suffered then in respect of His flesh: in respect of His Godhead He has immortality. He who denies this, is a devil.' Palladius said; 'I know not Arius.'

26. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Then Arius said ill, since the Son of God also has immortality in respect of his Godhead.' And he added, 'Did he then say well or ill?' Palladius said; 'I do not agree.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'With whom do not you agree? Anathema to him, who does not frankly unfold his faith.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' Palladius said; 'Say what you please; His Godhead is immortal.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Whose? the Father's or the Son's?' And he added: 'Arius heaped together many impieties. But let us pass to other points.' [43 27. Then was recited; "Alone wise."

Palladius said; 'The Father is wise of himself, but the Son is not wise.'

Ambrose, Bishop said; 'Is then the Son not wise, when He Himself is Wisdom? For we also say that the Son is begotten of the Father.'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Is there anything as impious and profane as this which he said, that the Son of God is not wise?' Palladius said; 'He is called Wisdom, who can deny that he is Wisdom?'

Ambrose, Bishop said; 'Is He wise or not?' Palladius said; 'He is Wisdom.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Then He is wise, if He is Wisdom.' Palladius said; 'We answer you according to the Scriptures.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Palladius, as far as I can see, has attempted to deny also that the Son of God is wise.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'He who denies that the Son of God is wise, let him be anathema.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' 28. Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Let Secundianus also answer to this.' Secundianus being silent,

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'He who is silent wishes to reserve his judgement.' And he added, 'When he says that the Father alone is good, did he confess the Son or deny Him?'

Palladius said; 'We read, I am the good Shepherd,¹³⁷ and do we deny it? Who would not say that the Son of God is good?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Then is Christ good?' Palladius said; 'He is good.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Arius then was wrong in asserting it of the Father alone, since the Son of God also is a good ¹³⁸ God.' |44 Palladius said; 'He who says that Christ is not good, says ill.'

29. EUSEBIUS, Bishop, said; 'Do you confess that Christ is a good God? For I also am good. He has said to me; Well done, thou good servant; and, A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good? ¹³⁹ Palladius said; 'I have already said, I do not answer you until there is a full Council.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'The Jews said He is a good man;¹⁴⁰ and Arius denies that the Son of God is good.' Palladius said; 'Who can deny it?' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Then the Son of God is a good God.' Palladius said; 'The good Father begat a good Son.'

30. AMBROSE, Bishop said; 'We also are begotten of Him and are good, but not in respect of Godhead. Do you call the Son of God a good God?'

Palladius said; 'The Son of God is good.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'You see then that you call him a good Christ, a good Son, not a good God; which is what is asked of you.' And he added; 'He who does not confess that the Son of God is a good God, Anathema to him.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' 31. The reader likewise continued; "Alone mighty." Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Is the Son of God mighty or not?' Palladius said; 'He Who made all things, is He not mighty? He Who made all things, is He deficient in might?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Then Arius said ill.' And he added; 'Do you even in this condemn Arius?' Palladius said; 'How do I know who he is? I answer you for myself.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Is the Son of God the mighty God?' Palladius said; 'He is mighty.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Is the Son of God the mighty God?' Palladius said; 'I have already said that the only-begotten Son of God is mighty.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'The mighty Lord.' |45 Palladius said; 'The mighty Son of God.'

32. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Men also are mighty; for it is written, Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, thou mighty man?

¹⁴¹ and in another place, When I am weak, then am I strong.¹⁴²

I ask you to confess that Christ the Son of God is the mighty Lord; or if you deny it, support your denial. For I speak of one Power of the Father and of the Son, and I call the Son of God mighty in the same way as the Father. Do you hesitate then to confess that the Son of God is the mighty Lord?'

Palladius said; 'I have already said, we answer you in discussion as we can; for you wish to be sole judges, and at the same time parties to the case. We do not answer you now, but we will answer you in a General and full Council.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Anathema to him who denies that Christ is the mighty Lord.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' 33. It was likewise recited; "Alone mighty, Judge of all."

Palladius said; 'the Son of God, the Judge of all. There is Who gives, there is who receives.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Did He give by grace or nature? Men also have judgement given them.' Palladius said; 'Do you call the Father greater or not?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'I will answer you afterwards.' Palladius said; 'I do not answer you, if you do not answer me.'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Unless you condemn in order the impiety of Arius, we will give you no power of asking questions.' Palladius said; 'I do not answer you.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Is the Son of God, as has been read, Judge or not?' Palladius said; 'If you do not answer me, I do not answer you, as being an impious person.'

34. AMBROSE, Bishop said; 'You have my profession, whereby I will answer you. In the mean time, let Arius' letter be read through.' And he added: 'In that letter you will find that sacrilegious argument also which you are endeavouring at.' Palladius said; 'When I ask, do you not answer?' [46 Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'We call the Son of God equal God.' Palladius said: 'You are Judge: your note-takers are here.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Let any of yours write, who please.' 35. PALLADIUS said; 'Is the Father greater or not?'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'In respect of His Godhead the Son is equal to the Father. You have it in the Gospel that the Jews persecuted Him because He not only broke the

sabbath, but also called God His Father, making Himself equal with God;143

what then impious men confessed while they persecuted, we who believe cannot deny.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'And in another place you have: Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself

144 and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and became obedient unto death.145

You see that in the form of God He is equal to God. And he took, S. Paul says, the form of a servant. In what then is He less? In respect surely of His form of a servant, not of the form of God?'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Just as, being established in the form of a servant, He was not less than a servant; so being established in the form of God, He could not be less than God.' 36. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Or say that in respect of Godhead the Son of God is less.' Palladius said; 'The Father is greater.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'In respect of the flesh.' Palladius said; 'He who sent me, is greater than I.146 Was the flesh sent by God or was the Son of God sent?'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'We prove this day that the holy Scriptures are falsely cited by you, for thus it is written: Peace I leave unto you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid: If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I.147 He did not say, He Who

sent me is greater than I.' Palladius said; 'The Father is greater.' |47

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Anathema to him, who adds to or takes from the holy Scriptures.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' 37. PALLADIUS said; 'The Father is greater than the Son.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'In respect of the flesh the Son is less than the Father: in respect of Godhead He is equal to the Father: I read therefore that the Son of God is equal to the Father, as also the instances that have been adduced testify. But why should you wonder that He is less in respect of the flesh, when He has called Himself a servant, a stone, a worm, when He has said that He is less than the angels, for it is written: Thou madest him a little lower than the angels? 148 Palladius said; ' I see that you make impious assertions. We do not answer you without arbiters.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'Let no one ask for an opinion from him who has blasphemed in such countless opinions.' Palladius said; 'We do not answer you.'

38. SABINUS Bishop, said; 'Palladius has now been condemned by all. The blasphemies of Arius are much lighter than those of Palladius.' And when Palladius rose, as if he wished to go out, he said; 'Palladius has risen, because he sees that he is to be convicted by manifest testimonies of the Scriptures, as indeed he has been already convicted: for thus it has been read, that in respect of Godhead the Son is equal to the Father. Let him admit that in respect of His Godhead the Son of God has no greater: it is written: When God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, he swear by himself.¹⁴⁹ You see therefore the Scripture, that He could swear by no greater. But it is the Son of Whom this is said, since it was He Who appeared to Abraham, whence also He says, He saw my day and was glad.' 150 Palladius said; 'The Father is greater.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'When He spake as God, He had no greater; when He spake as man, He had one greater.' 39. PALLADIUS said; 'The Father begat the Son; the Father sent the Son.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Anathema to him, who denies |48 that in respect of His Godhead the Son is equal to the Father.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema.' Palladius said; ' The Son is subject to the Father; the Son keeps the commands of the Father.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; ' He is subject in respect of His Incarnation. But even you yourself remember that you have read; No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him.'

151

Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'Let him say whether the Son is subject to the Father in respect of His Godhead, or in respect of His Incarnation.'

40. PALLADIUS said; 'Then the Father is greater.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'In another place also it is written; God is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son.¹⁵²

I say that the Father is greater in respect of the assumption of the flesh, which the Son of God took upon Him, not in respect of the Son's Godhead.

Palladius said; 'What then is the comparison of the Son of God? And can flesh say, God is greater than I? Did the flesh speak or the Godhead because the flesh was there?' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'The flesh does not speak without the soul.'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'God in the flesh spoke according to the flesh, when He said, Why do ye persecute¹⁵³ me, a man? 154 Who said this?' Palladius said; 'The Son of God.' Ambrose, Bishop,

said; 'Then the Son of God is God in respect of His Godhead and is man in respect of His flesh.' Palladius said; 'He took flesh upon Him.' Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Accordingly He made use of human words.' Palladius said; 'He took man's flesh upon Him.'

41. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Let him say that the Apostle did not call Him subject in respect of His Godhead, but in respect of His flesh; for it is written, He humbled himself and became obedient unto death. In what then did He taste death?'

Palladius said; 'In that He humbled Himself.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Not His Godhead but His flesh [49 was humbled and subject.' And he added; ' Did Arius well or ill in calling him a perfect creature?' Palladius said; 'I do not answer you, for you have no authority.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Profess what you please.' Palladius said; 'I do not answer you.' 42. SABINUS, Bishop, said; 'Do you not answer on behalf of Arius? do you not answer to what has been asked?' Palladius said; 'I have not answered on behalf of Arius.'

Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'You have answered so far as to deny that the Son of God is mighty, to deny that He is true God.' Palladius said; 'I do not allow you to be my judge, whom I convict of impiety.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'You yourself forced us to sit.'

Palladius said; 'I gave in a request that you might sit, in order that I might convict you. Why have you practised upon the Emperor? You have gained by intrigue that the Council should not be a plenary one.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'When Arius' impieties were read, your impiety also, which harmonized with his, was condemned equally. You have thought fit while the letter was in the midst of being read, to bring forward whatever passages you would: you were told in answer in what way the Son has said that the Father is greater, because in respect of His taking flesh upon Him, the Father is greater than He. You have urged also that the Son of God is subject; and on this head you were answered that the Son of God is subject in respect of His flesh, not in respect of His divinity. You have our profession. Now hear the rest. Since you have been answered, do you answer to what is read.'

43. PALLADIUS said; 'I do not answer you, because what I have said has not been recorded; only your words are recorded. I do not answer you.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'You see that every thing is recorded. Moreover, what has been written is abundant for the proof of your impiety.' And he added; 'Do you say that Christ is a creature or do you deny it?' Palladius said; 'I do not answer you.' [50

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'An hour ago, when it was read that Arius called Christ a creature, you denied it: you had an opportunity offered you of condemning his perfidy; you would not. Say now at last whether Christ was begotten of the Father or created.' Palladius said; 'If you please, let my reporters come and so let the whole be taken down.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'Let him send for his reporters.' Palladius said; 'We will answer you in a full Council.'

44. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Attalus subscribed the formula 155 of the Council of Nicaea. Let him deny it, as he has come to our Council. Let him say to-day, whether he subscribed the formula of the Council of Nicaea or no?' Attalus remaining silent,

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Though the presbyter Attalus is an Arian, yet we give him permission to speak: let him frankly state whether he subscribed the formula of the Council of Nicaea under his Bishop Agrippinus, or no.' Attalus said; 'You have already said that I have been several times condemned. I do not answer you.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Did you subscribe the formula of the Council of Nicaea or no?' Attalus said; 'I do not answer you.' 45. PALLADIUS said; 'Do you now wish the formula to be regarded as general or no?'

Chromatius, presbyter, said; 'You have not denied that He is a creature, you have denied that He is mighty. You have denied every thing which the Catholic Faith professes.'

Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'We are witnesses that Attalus subscribed the Council of Niceea, and that he now refuses to answer. What is the opinion of all?' As Attalus did not speak, Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Let him say whether he subscribed the formula of the Council of Nicaea or no.' 46. PALLADIUS said; 'Let your reporter and ours stand forward and write down every thing.' |51 Valerian, Bishop, said; 'What you have said and what you have denied is already all written.' Palladius said; 'Say what you please.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Since Palladius who has been already many times condemned, wishes to be condemned still oftener, I am reading the letter of Arius which he has not chosen to condemn: do you state whether you approve of my doing so.' All the Bishops said; 'Let it be read.' Then the words were read. "But begotten not putatively," &c.

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'I have answered you on the Father's being greater: I have answered you also on the Son's being subject: do you yourself answer now.' 47. PALLADIUS said; 'I will not answer unless arbiters come after the Lord's day.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'You were come with a view to discussion, but since I have charged you with its doctrines, you have seen the letter of Arius which you have not chosen to condemn and which you cannot support: you now therefore shrink back and cavil. I read it to you fully point by point. Tell me whether you believe Christ to have been created; whether there was a time when he was not; or whether the only begotten Son of God has always existed. When you have heard Arius' letter, either condemn it or approve of it.' 48. PALLADIUS said; 'Since I convict you of impiety, I will not have you for judge. You are a transgressor.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'Say, what impieties you object to our brother and fellow-bishop Ambrose.' Palladius said; 'I have already told you, I will answer in a full Council, and with arbiters present.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'I desire to be confuted and convicted in the assembly of my brethren. Say then what I have said impiously; but I appear impious to you because I support piety.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'Does then he seem impious to you, who censures the blasphemies of Arius?' 49. PALLADIUS said; 'I have not denied that the Son of God is good.' |52 Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Do you say that Christ is a good God?' Palladius said; 'I do not answer you.'

Valerian, Bishop, said; 'Do not press Palladius so much: he cannot confess our truths with simplicity. For his conscience is confused with a twofold blasphemy: he was ordained by the Photinians and was condemned with them, and now he shall be condemned more fully.' Palladius said; 'Prove it.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'He would not have denied that Christ is true if he were not following his own teachers.' 50. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'You have objected to me that I am impious: prove it.' Palladius said; 'We will bring forward our statement, and when we have brought

it, then the discussion shall be held.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Condemn the impiety of Arius.' Palladius being silent,

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'He dwells upon useless subjects. There are so many impieties of Arius, which Palladius has not chosen to condemn, nay rather has confessed by supporting. He who does not condemn Arius is like him, and is rightly to be called a heretic.' All the Bishops said; 'On the part of us all let Palladius be anathema.' 51. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Do you consent, Palladius, that the other statements of Arius be read?'

Palladius said; 'Give us arbiters: let reporters come on both sides. You cannot be judges unless we have arbitrators and unless persons come on both sides to arbitrate, we do not answer you.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'What arbitrators do you wish for?' Palladius said; 'There are here many men of high rank.' Sabinus, Bishop, said; 'After such a number of blasphemies do you wish for arbitrators?'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Bishops ought to judge of laymen: not laymen of Bishops. But tell me what judges you wish for.' |53 Palladius said; 'Let arbitrators attend.'

Chromatius, the Presbyter, said; 'Without prejudice to condemnation by the Bishops, let those also who are of Palladius' party be heard at full length.'

52. PALLADIUS said; 'They are not allowed to speak. Let arbitrators attend and reporters on both sides, and then they will answer you in a General Council.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Though he has been convicted of many impieties, yet we should blush that a person who claims the priesthood for himself should seem to have been condemned by laymen, and on this very ground and in this very point he deserves condemnation because he looks to the sentence of laymen, when priests ought rather to be the judges of laymen. Looking to what we have this day heard Palladius professing and to what he has refused to condemn, I pronounce him unworthy of the priesthood, and I judge that he should be deprived 156 thereof in order that a Catholic may be ordained in his place.' All the Bishops said; 'Anathema to Palladius.'

53. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'The most gracious and Christian Emperor has committed the cause to the judgement of the Bishops and has constituted them arbitrators of the dispute 157. Since therefore the decision appears to have been made over to us, so that we are the interpreters of the Scriptures, let us condemn Palladius, who has not chosen to condemn the sentiments of the impious Arius, and because he has himself denied the Son of God to be everlasting, and made the other statements which appear in our proceedings. Let him therefore be accounted Anathema.' All the Bishops said; 'We all condemn him; let him be accounted anathema.'

54. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Since all who are met here |54

are Christian men, brethren approved of God, and our fellow-bishops, let each individual say, what he thinks.'

Valerian, Bishop, said; 'My sentence is that he who defends Arius is an Arian; that he who does not condemn His blasphemies is himself a blasphemer; and therefore I judge that such a man is alien from the fellowship of Bishops.' Palladius said; 'You have begun to play; play on. Without an Eastern Council we answer you not.'

55. ANEMIUS, Bishop of Sirmium said; 'Whoever does not condemn the heresies of Arius must of necessity be an Arian. Him therefore I judge to be alien from our communion, and to be without place in the assembly of Bishops.'

Constantius, Bishop of Orange, said; 'As Palladius is a disciple of Arius, whose impieties have been long since condemned by our Fathers in the Council of Nice, but have this day severally, when recited, been approved of by Palladius, inasmuch as he was not disturbed at his acknowledging that the Son of God was not of the same Nature with God the Father, and at his calling Him a creature, and saying that He began to be in time, and denying Him to be true Lord, on these grounds, I judge that he should be condemned for ever.'

56. JUSTUS, Bishop, said; 'Palladius who has refused to condemn the blasphemies of Arius, and who seems rather to acknowledge them, can in my judgement no longer be called a Priest or be reckoned among Bishops.'

Eventius, Bishop of Ticinum, said; 'I think that Palladius who has refused to condemn the impieties of Arius, is removed for ever from the fellowship of Bishops.'

57. ABUNDANTIUS, Bishop of Trent, said; 'Since Palladius maintains evident blasphemies, let him know that he is condemned by the Council of Aquileia.'

Eusebius, Bishop of Bologna, said; 'Inasmuch as Palladius has not only refused to condemn the impieties of Arius, impieties written with the pen of the devil, and which it is not lawful so much as to listen to, but has also appeared as the maintainer of them by denying that the Son of God is true Lord, is good Lord, is wise Lord, is everlasting Lord; both by my sentence, and by the

[55 judgement of all Catholics I think that he is rightly condemned and excluded from the assembly of Bishops.'

58. SABINUS, Bishop of Placentia, said; 'Since it has been proved to all that Palladius supports the Arian perfidy and maintains its impiety that was counter to the Evangelical and apostolical institutions, a just sentence of the whole Council has been passed upon him, and humble individual as I am, let him by my judgement be deprived once more of the priesthood and banished justly from this most holy assembly.'

Felix and Numidius, deputies of Africa said; 'Anathema to the Sect of the Arian heresy to which by the Synod of Aquileia Palladius is pronounced to belong. But we condemn also those, who contradict the truth of the Nicene Synod.'

59. LIMENIUS, Bishop of Vercellae, said; 'It is manifest that the Arian doctrine has been often condemned: and therefore, inasmuch as Palladius having been appealed to in this holy Synod of Aquileia has refused to correct and amend himself, and has rather proved himself worthy of blame and defiled himself with the perfidy which he has publicly professed himself to hold, I too by my judgement declare that he is to be deprived of the fellowship of the Bishops.'

Maximus, Bishop of Emona, said; 'That Palladius, who would not condemn, but has rather himself acknowledged, the blasphemies of Arius, is justly and deservedly condemned God knows, and the conscience of the faithful has condemned him.'

60. EXUPERANTIUS, Bishop of Dertona, said; 'As the rest of my Colleagues have condemned Palladius who has refused to condemn the sect and doctrine of Arius, and on the contrary has defended them, I also likewise condemn him.'

Bassianus, Bishop of Lodi, said; 'I have heard along with the rest of my Colleagues the impieties of Arius, which Palladius not only has not condemned but has confirmed. Let him be anathema and be deprived of the priesthood.'

61. PHILASTER, Bishop of Brescia, said: 'The blasphemies and iniquity of Palladius, who follows and defends the Arian doctrine I in company with all have condemned.'

|56

Constantius, Bishop of Sciscia, said; 'As the rest of my brother Bishops, I also think that Palladius is to be condemned, who has refused to condemn the blasphemies and impieties of Arius.'

Heliodorus, Bishop of Altinum, said; 'The man who maintains the perfidy of Arius, and of all the heretics with whom Palladius is partner, whose heart is foolish, and who has not confessed the truth; together with the rest of my brother Bishops I condemn.'

62. FELIX, Bishop of Jadera, said; 'I also in like manner unite with all in condemning Palladius, who speaks blasphemies against the Son of God as Arius did.'

Theodoras, Bishop of Octodorum, said; 'We judge Palladius, who has denied Christ to be true God, co-eternal with the Father, to be in no wise either a Christian or a priest.'

Domninus, Bishop of Grenoble, said; 'As Palladius adheres to the perfidy of Arius, I also judge that he is to be condemned for ever, as my brethren also have condemned him.'

63. PROCULUS, Bishop of Marseilles, said; 'Palladius, who by a kind of impious succession to the blasphemies of Arius has defended them in that he does not condemn them, as he has been already designated a blasphemer by the sentence of many venerable Bishops, and pronounced alien from the priesthood, so by my sentence also is marked out in the same manner as condemned for ever.'

Diogenes, Bishop of Genoa, said; 'Palladius who while he does not confess has even denied Christ to be true Lord and God, like and equal to the Father, I together with the rest of my brethren and fellow Bishops adjudge to have the lot of condemnation.'

64. AMANTIUS, Bishop of Nice, said; 'Palladius, who has refused to pull down the sect of Arius, according to the judgement of my brother Bishops, I also condemn.'

Januarius, Bishop, said; 'As all my brother Bishops have condemned Palladius so also do I think that he ought to be condemned by a similar judgement 158.' |57 65. SECUNDIANUS having withdrawn for a while, and then returned to the Council 159,

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'You have heard, Secundianus, what sort of sentence the impious Palladius has received, having been condemned by the Council of Bishops: and though we have been displeased that you have not shrunk from his madness, I nevertheless make some special enquiries of you. Do you say that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is or is not very God?'

Secundianus said; 'He who denies the Father of our Lord and God Jesus Christ to be true God is not a Christian, nor is he who denies that the Lord is the very Son of God.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'Do you confess that the Son of God is very God?' Secundianus said; 'I say that He is the very Son of God, the very only begotten Son of God.' 66. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Do you call Him very Lord?' Secundianus said; 'I call Him the very only-begotten Son of God. Who denies that He is the very Son of God?'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'It is not enough that you confess Him to be the only-begotten Son of God, for all confess this. But what influences us is that Arius said that the Father alone is Lord, alone is true, and denied that the Son of God is very Lord. Do you confess simply that the Son of God is very God?'

Secundianus said; 'Who Arius was, I know not; what he said, I know not. You speak with me, living man with living man. I say what Christ said: The only begotten

Son Which is in the bosom of the Father.¹⁶⁰ Therefore He

asserts Himself to be the only-begotten Son of the Father: the only-begotten Son is then the very Son of God.'

67. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Is the very Son of God also very God? It is written in the divine books: he that sweareth on the earth, shall swear by the true God,¹⁶¹ and that this applies to Christ there is no doubt. We [58 therefore profess the true God, and this is our faith and profession, that the only-begotten Son of the Father is very God. Do you then say 'of very God,' and then that the Son is very God.' Secundianus said; 'Of very God.' 68. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Is the Son of God very God?'

Secundianus said; 'Then would he be a liar.' Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'In this you practise an evasion to avoid saying very God, but instead thereof, God, very only-begotten, and therefore say simply, The only-begotten Son of God is very God.' Secundianus said; 'I called Him the only-begotten Son of God.' 69. EUSEBIUS, Bishop, said; 'This Photinus does not deny, this Sabellus confesses.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'And he who does not confess this is justly condemned, and on this point I appeal to you many times though by cavilling you have denied the truth. I do not ask you to call Him merely the very only-begotten Son of God, but to call Him also very God.'

Secundianus said; 'I profess myself the servant of truth. What I say is not taken down and what you say is taken down. I say that Christ is the true Son of God. Who denies that He is the true Son of God?' 70. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'He who denies that the only-begotten Son of God is very God, let him be anathema.' Secundianus said; 'The only-begotten Son of God, very God! why do you state to me what is not written?' Ambrose, Bishop, said: 'It is plain sacrilege, that Arius denied Christ the Son of God to be very God.'

Secundianus said; 'Forasmuch as Christ is called the Son of God, I call the Son of God very Son
162; but that He is very God is not written.'

71. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Have you not yet recovered your senses?' And he added; 'Lest it should appear that he has been unfairly treated, let him state his opinion. Let him then say that Christ the only-begotten Son of God is very God.' |59 Secundianus said; 'I have already said. What more would you wring from me?'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'What have you said? certainly if you had said so great truths, what is said gloriously, may well be often repeated.' Secundianus said; 'It is written, Let your conversation be yea, yea, nay, nay.' 163

72. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'He who says that the Father Himself is the Son, is sacrilegious. This I ask of you that you would say that the Son of God is begotten very God of very God.'

Secundianus said; 'I say that the Son is begotten of God, as He says Himself I have begotten Thee, 164 and that He confesses Himself to be begotten.' 73. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Is He very God of very God?'

Secundianus said; 'When you add to the Name and call Him very [God], do you understand what the character of your own faith is, and are you a Christian ?'

Eusebius, Bishop, said; 'Who has denied that He is very God? Arius and Palladius have denied it. If you believe Him to be very God, you should simply express it.' 74. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'If you will not say that He is very God begotten of very God, you have denied Christ.'

Secundianus said; 'When asked about the Son, I answered you: I have answered as to the manner in which I ought to make my profession. We have your statement: we will bring it forward; let it be read.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'You should have brought it forward to-day, but you are attempting a subterfuge. You demand a profession of me and I demand a profession of you. Is the Son of God very God ?' Secundianus said; 'The Son of God is God only-begotten. I also ask him : Is He only-begotten ?'

75. AMBROSE, Bishop, said; 'Let reason move us: let us be moved too by your impiety and folly. When you speak of God very only-begotten, you do not apply the 'very' to 'God,' but to 'only-begotten.' And therefore

|60 to remove this question answer me this: Is He very God of very God?'

Secundianus said; 'Did then God not beget God? He Who is very God begat What He is; He begat one true only-begotten Son.'

Ambrose, Bishop, said; 'You do not confess Him very God but you would call Him very only-begotten. I too call Him only-begotten, but also very God.' Secundianus said; 'I say that he was begotten of the Father, I say to all that he was very begotten 165.' The Names of the Bishops and Presbyters who were present at the Council.

VALERIAN, Bishop of Aquileia 166.

AMBROSE, Bishop of Milan.

EUSEBIUS, Bishop of Bologna.

LIMENIUS, Bishop of Vercellae.

ANEMIUS, Bishop of Sirmium in Illyricum.

SABINUS, Bishop of Placentia.

ABUNDANTIUS, Bishop of Brescia.

CONSTANTIUS, Bishop of Orange, Deputy of the Gauls.

THEODORUS, Bishop of Octodurus.

DOMNINUS, Bishop of Grenoble.

AMANTIUS, Bishop of Nice.

MAXIMUS, Bishop of Emona.

BASSIANUS, Bishop of Lodi.

PROCULUS, Bishop of Marseilles, Deputy of the Gauls.

HELIODORUS, Bishop of Altinum.

FELIX, Bishop of Jadera.

EVENTIUS, Bishop of Ticinum 167. |61 EXSUPERANTIUS, Bishop of Dertona.

DIOGENES, Bishop of Genoa.

CONSTANTIUS, Bishop of Sciscia.

JUSTUS, Bishop of Lyons, also Deputy of the Gauls.

FELIX, Deputy of Africa.

NUMIDIUS, Deputy of Africa.

EVAGRIUS, Presbyter and Deputy.

ARTEMIUS, ALMACHIUS, JANUARIUS, JOVINUS, MACEDONIUS, CASSIANUS, MARCELLUS, EUSTATHIUS, MAXIMUS, CHROMATIUS a Presbyter.

LETTER IX. [A.D.381.]

A FORMAL letter from the Italian Bishops assembled at Aquileia, thanking the Bishops of the three Provinces for the presence of their deputies, and announcing officially the condemnation of Palladius and Secundianus. THE COUNCIL WHICH IS ASSEMBLED AT AQUILEIA TO OUR MOST BELOVED BRETHREN, THE BISHOPS OF THE VIENNESE AND THE FIRST AND SECOND NARBONESE PROVINCES 168 IN GAUL.

1. WE return thanks to your holy unanimity that in the persons of our Lords and brethren Constantius and Proculus you have given us the presence of you all, and at the same time following the directions of former times, have added not a little weight to our judgement, with which the profession of your holinesses also is in agreement, Lords and brethren most beloved.

Therefore, as we received with gladness the above mentioned holy men of your order and ours, so do we also dismiss them with an abundant offering of thanks.

2. But how necessary the meeting was will be plain from the mere facts, since the adversaries and enemies of God, the defenders of the Arian sect and heresy, Palladius and

[62 Secundianus, the only two who dared to come to the meeting of the Council, received in person their due sentence, being convicted of impiety. Farewell. May our Almighty God keep you safe and prosperous, Lords and brethren most beloved. Amen.

LETTER X. [A.D.381.]

IN this letter, addressed formally to the three Emperors, but really to Gratian, the Council offer their thanks for the summoning of the Council, and announce its results, requesting that they may be enforced by the imperial authority. They also request the removal of Julius Valens from Italy, and that the Photinians may be forbidden to hold assemblies, which they were doing at Sirmium. THE HOLY COUNCIL WHICH IS ASSEMBLED AT AQUILEIA TO THE MOST GRACIOUS AND CHRISTIAN EMPERORS, AND MOST BLESSED PRINCES, GRATIAN, VALENTINIAN, AND THEODOSIUS.

1. BLESSED be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has given you the Roman empire, and blessed be our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Who guards your reign with His loving-kindness, before Whom we return you thanks, most gracious Princes, that you have both proved the earnestness of your own faith in that you were zealous to assemble the Council of Bishops for the removal of disputes, and that in your condescension you reserved for the Bishops the honourable privilege that no one should be absent who wished to attend, and none should be constrained to attend against his will.

2. Therefore according to the directions of your Graces we have met together without the odium of large numbers and with zeal for discussion, nor were any of the Bishops found to be heretics, except Palladius and Secundianus, names of ancient perfidy, on whose account people from the farthest portions of the Roman world demanded that a Council should be summoned. None however, loaded with the years of a long life, whose gray hairs alone would be entitled to reverence, was compelled to come from the

[63 most distant recesses of the Ocean: and yet nothing was lacking to the Council: no one dragging a feeble frame, weighed down by his campaigns of fasting, was forced by the hardships of his journey to lament the inconvenience of his loss of strength; no one finally, being without the means of coming, had to mourn over a poverty honourable to a Bishop. So that what the divine Scripture has praised was fulfilled in you, most merciful of Princes,

Gratian, Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy. 169

3. But what a hardship would it have been that on account of two Bishops only, who are rotten in perfidy, the Churches over the whole world should be left destitute of their Bishops. But though owing to the distance of the journey they could not come personally, nearly all from all the western provinces were present by the sending of deputies, and proved by manifest attestations that they hold what we assert and that they agree in the formula of the Council of Nicaea, as the documents hereto attached declare. Therefore the prayers of the nations are now in concert every where on

behalf of your Empire, and yet assertors of the Faith have not been wanting to your decision. For though the directions of our predecessors, from which it is impious and sacrilegious to deviate, were plain enough, still we gave them the opportunity of discussion.

4. And in the first instance we examined the very beginning of the question which had arisen, and we thought fit to hear recited the letter of Arius, who is found to be the author of the Arian heresy, from whom also the heresy received its name, the arrangement being thus far even favourable to them, that since they had been in the habit of denying that they were Arians they might either by censure condemn the blasphemies of Arius, or by argument maintain them, or at least not refuse the name of the person, whose impiety and perfidy they followed. But inasmuch as they could not condemn and were unwilling to support their Founder, after they had themselves, three days before, challenged us to a discussion, fixing place and time, and gone forth to it without waiting to be summoned, on a sudden the very individuals, who had said that they would easily prove that they were Christians, (which we

[64 heard with pleasure, and hoped that they would prove,] began to shrink from the engagement on the spot and to decline the discussion.

5. Yet had we much discourse with them: the divine Scriptures were set forth in the midst; and they had the offer made to them of a patient discussion from sun-rise to the seventh hour of the day. And would that they had said little, or that we could cancel what we heard. For when Arius by saying in sacrilegious words that the Father was alone eternal, alone good, alone true God, alone possessing immortality, alone wise and alone powerful, had intended that the Son by an impious inference should be understood to be without these attributes, these men have preferred following Arius to confessing that the Son of God is everlasting God and very God, and good God and wise and powerful and possessing immortality. We spent several hours to no purpose. Their impiety waxed greater and could in no wise be corrected.

6. At last when they saw that they were pressed by the sacrileges of Arius' letter, (which we have appended in order that even your Graces might shrink from it) they started away in the middle of the reading of the letter, and asked us to answer what they proposed. Though it lay not within either order or reason that we should interrupt the plan laid down, and though we had already answered that they were to condemn the impieties of Arius and then we would answer about whatever proposals of theirs they pleased, preserving order and plan, we notwithstanding acceded to their unreasonable wish: on which, falsifying the scriptures of the Gospel, they stated to us that our Lord said, He that sent Me is greater than I: whereas the course of the Scriptures teaches us that it is written otherwise.

7. They were convicted of the falsehood even to confession: they were not however corrected by reason. For when we said that the Son is called less than the Father in respect to his taking flesh upon Him, but is proved according to the testimonies of the Scriptures to be like and equal to the Father in respect of His Godhead, and that there could not be degrees of any distinction or greatness,

[65 when there was unity of power; they not only would not correct their error; but began to carry their madness further, so as even to say that the Son is subject in respect of His divinity, as if there could be any subjection of God in respect of His Divinity and Majesty. In short they refer His death

not to the mystery of our salvation, but to some infirmity of His Godhead.

8. We shudder, most gracious Princes, at such dire sacrileges, and such wicked teachers, and that they might not any longer deceive the people of whom they had a hold, we judged that they should be degraded from the Priesthood, since they agreed with the impieties of the book put before them. For it is not reasonable that they should claim to themselves the Priesthood of Him Whom they have denied. We appeal to your faith and your glory that you would shew the respect of your government to Him Who is the author of it, and judge that the assertors of impiety and debauchers of the truth be kept away from the threshold of the Church, by an order of your Graces issued to the competent authorities, and that Holy Bishops be put into the place of the condemned ones by deputies of our humble appointment.

9. The Presbyter Attalus 170 too who avows his error and adheres to the sacrilegious doctrines of Palladius is included under a similar sentence. For why should we speak of his master Julianus Valens

171? who although he was close at hand shunned coming to the Council of Bishops for fear he should be compelled to account to the Bishops for the ruin of his country, and his treason to his countrymen: a man, who, polluted with the impiety of the Goths, presumed, as is asserted, to go forth in the sight of a Roman army, wearing like a Pagan a collar and bracelet: which is unquestionably a sacrilege not only in a Bishop, but also

in any Christian whatever: for it is alien to the Roman customs. It may be that the idolatrous priests of the Goths commonly go forth in such guise.

10. Let your piety be moved by the title of Bishop, which that sacrilegious person dishonours, convicted as he is of atrocious crime even by the voice of his own people, if indeed any of his own people can still survive. Let him at least return to his own home, and cease to contaminate the most flourishing cities of Italy; at present by unlawful ordinations he is associating with himself persons like himself, and he endeavours by help of all abandoned individuals to leave behind him a seed-plot of his own impiety and perfidy: whereas he has not so much as begun to be a Bishop. For, to begin with, at Petavio he was put in the place of the holy Marcus, a Bishop whose memory is highly esteemed: but, having been disgracefully degraded by the people, unable to remain at Petavio, he has been riding in state at Milan, after the overthrow, say rather the betrayal, of his country.

11. Deign then, most pious princes, to deal with all these matters, lest we should appear to have met to no purpose, when we obeyed your Graces' injunctions: for care must be taken that not only our decisions but yours also be saved from dishonour. We must request therefore that your Graces would be pleased to listen indulgently to the deputies of the Council, Holy men, and bid them to return speedily with accomplishment of what we ask for, that you may receive a reward from Christ our Lord and God, Whose Church you have cleansed from all stain of sacrilegious persons.

12. With respect to the Photinians also, whom by a former law you forbade forming assemblies, revoking at the same time the law which had been passed for the assembling of a Council of Bishops

172, we request of your Graces, that as we have ascertained that they are attempting to hold assemblies in the town of Sirmium, you would by now again interdicting their meetings, cause respect to be paid,

[67 in the first place to the Catholic Church, and next to your own laws, that with God for your Patron you may be triumphant, while you provide for the peace and tranquillity of the Church.

[Footnotes and marginalia moved to the end and numbered]

1. a The word in the original is *Sacerdos*. It is constantly used by S. Ambrose and other writers of his time for Bishops, though they sometimes add a qualifying epithet, '*Summus Sacerdos*.' But even alone it is used where the writer is clearly speaking of Bishops, and of Bishops qua Bishops. Thus it occurs frequently in the Proceedings of the Council of

Aquileia, which is itself styled '*Sacerdotale Concilium*.' See the Article '*Bishop*' by Mr. Haddan in *Dict. of Chr. Ant.* Vol. 1 p. 210 b., who refers also to Bp. Taylor, *Episc. Assert.* § 27. It has therefore been rendered '*Bishop*' throughout this volume, wherever it is plain that the reference is to Bishops, and '*Priest*' wherever it is used in a more general way.

2. *creaturam*.

3. b This forms the two first books of the '*De Fide*' still extant among the works of S. Ambrose. The other three books were added afterwards, as S. Ambrose explains at the beginning

of Bk. iii, to maintain his statements against the attacks of heretical teachers. The Treatise, '*De Spiritu Sancto*,' in 3 books, was sent afterwards in 381 A.D.

4. S. Matt. xxv. 40.

5. S. John xiv. 21.

6. Ps. xxiv. 2.

7. Ps. xciii. 4. S. John vii. 38. Isa. lxvi. 12. Ps. xlv.

4.

8. a *Nivei*. This is the reading all MSS. Ed. Rom. has '*vivi*,' which would agree better with the text of S. John.

9. Prov. xvi. 24.

10. Ps. cxlviii. 5.

11. Eccles. xi. 3.

12. *lb*.

13. *lb*. xii. 11.

14. Acts ix. 5.

15. 1 Cor. iii. 2.

16. b The Benedictine reference for the first of these texts is Prov. xiv. 3. The lips of the wise shall preserve them, with which the Sept. and Vulg. agree.

In the second the English Vers. has The lips of the wise disperse knowledge. Here S. Ambr. agrees with the Sept.

17. Prov. xv. 7.

18. Eph. v. 3.

19. 1 Thess. iv. 4.

20. Gen. iii. 18.

21. Ps. lxxxv. 13.

22. Gen. iv. 10.

23. Hab. ii. 9-12.

24. Ps. cxxii. 3.

25. Prov. xv. 16.

26. Isa. xliii. 2.

27. Prov. vi. 27.

28. Ib. xxii. 1.

29. Prov. vi. 2:5. (not quoted ad verbum).

30. S. Luke xv. 17.

31. v. 19.

32. Prov. vi. 2.

33. Ib. xxii. 14 Sept. Ib. xiv. 15.

34. Prov. xi. 1.

35. S. Matt. xvi. 26.

36. 1 Tim. v. 24.

37. Ib. vi. 10.

38. Zech. v. 7.

39. Eccclus. xix. 23, 24. Vulg.

40. Rom. v. 19.

41. Ps. cv. 18.

42. Eph. v. 14.

43. Ps. cxix. 71.

44. Phil. ii. 6.7.

45. 1 Cor. xv. 28.

46. Ib. xi. 1.

47. Phil. iii. 8.

48. S. Luke ix. 23.

49. c Forum Cornelii was on the Via Aemilia, about 23 miles S.E. of Bononia. It was at this time in the Province Aemilia. The modern name is

Imola.

50. d The Benedictine Fathers refer this to the ravages of the Goths after Valens' defeat at Hadrianople A.D.

375. It is on this that they found the date of the letter, but the reference is somewhat vague.

51. Deut. xix. 14.

52. 1 tubera

53. a Amentata illa non manipularis sententia. Ed. Ben. refers to Junius, Adagiorum Centuriae 3, 10, who says 'Amentatam sententiam dixit D. Am-brosius pro valida et haud vulgari firmisque argumentis roboratit. Est autem amentum lori genus quo hasta praeligata validius certiusque libratur evibraturque: hinc amentata sententia ea est quae neutiquam trivialis est et pedanea, cujusmodi manipularis vocatur, velut a gregario milite profecta, sed eximia et artificio vallata.' He quotes two passages from Cicero, De Orat. 1 57, 242. Brut. 78. 271, in both which places he uses 'amentatae hastae' of arguments, and also Tertull. adv. Marc. iv. ,33 where he says that our Lord amentavit [Phariseis] hanc sententiam, non potestis Deo servire et mammonae, where it plainly means, 'gave them this home-thrust.' 54. a puleium, lit. the herb penny royal.

55. b Bassianus is mentioned among the Bishops who took part in the Council of Aquileia, as Bishop of Laus Pompeia, now Lodi Vecchio, S. E. of Milan. The modern town of Lodi is about 5 miles from the site of the ancient one.

56. c He means the day of his consecration as Bishop. So S. Ambr. speaks of his own consecration day as his birthday, Comm. in Luc. vii. 78.

57. Heb. ix. 4.

58. Col. i. 15. Exod. xxv. 22.

59. Ps. lxxviii. 2.

60. Numb. xvi. 48.

61. Deut. xv. 8.

62. S. Luke x. 2.

63. d Comum is the modern Como, at the southern extremity of the Lake which takes its name from it.
64. S. Luke xv. 8, 9.
65. S. Matt. vi. 22.
66. Prov. xiii. 8.
67. Exod. xxx. 12 -15.
68. Ib. xvi. 17, 18.
69. E ccles. vii. 16.
70. 1 These words are added by S.Ambrose.
71. 1 Cor.xii. 7-9.
72. Ps. civ. 15.
73. Prov. ix. 2.
74. Exod. xii. 4.
75. S. Matt. x. 30.
76. 2 Cor. vi. 16.
77. S. Matt. xx. 10.
78. 2 Tim.iv. 8.
79. S. Matt. xvii. 27.
80. S. John i. 29.
81. Phil. ii. 7.
82. S. Matt. iii. 15.
83. 1 statera.
84. Rom. x. 4.
85. Ps. xii. 6.
86. Exod. xxi. 5.
87. S. Matt. xix. 21.
88. S. Matt. xxii. 18, 19.
89. Dan. iii. 18. and i. 8.
90. S.John xiv. 30.

91. S. John xvii. 11, 14, 18.
92. S. Matt. xvii. 27.
93. Gal. iv. 4.
94. Deut. xxx.14.
95. Rom. x. 10.
96. 1 denarius.
97. Rev. i. 8.
98. Deut. vi. 4.
99. Acts ii. 4.
100. ai1tion, u#lh, a)pote/lesma.
Gen. xxii. 7.
101. Ib. 8.
102. Ps. iv. 5.
103. Exod. xvi. 15, 16.
104. Exod. xvi. 4.
105. Ib. 15.
106. Ib. iii. 11-14.
107. 2 Cor. i. 19.
108. Exod. iv 1.
109. Ib. 10.
110. Ib. 12.
111. Exod. iii. 12, 112. S. Matt. vii. 7.
113. Ib. x. 19, 20.
114. Gen. xxvii. 20.
115. Ib. xxxi. 33.
116. 1 o#roi.
117. Ib. xxvii. 4.
118. a There is no text in Holy Scripture exactly corresponding to this. Lev.
xxv, 11 which is referred to by Ed. Ben. is hardly to the point.

119. 1 Cor. iii. 6,7.

120. a There can be little doubt that the true date is iii. Non. Sept. i. e. the 8rd of Sept., and not Nonis, the 5th. For in 381 A. D. the 5th of Sept. was on a Sunday, and it is hardly likely that a Council would have sat from daybreak till one o' clock (Ep. 10. 5) in the Church on such a day, and moreover it would not have been natural for Palladius to say, as he does in § 47. Non respondebo nisi auditores

veniant post Dominicam diem, if he were speaking on a Sunday.

121. b The reading of Ed. Rom. has been adopted, which omits the preposition 'cum.' If this were correct, it would imply that the consuls were themselves taking a leading part in the Council; whereas it is clear that they are mentioned solely as the ordinary way of fixing the year; nor had the consuls at this time any other

than such ornamental functions. See Gibbon's description, ch. xvii. vol. ii. ed Smith p.

206-208.

122. c By 'acta' here are meant formal and official records taken down and published by authority. Thus Jul. Caesar ordered the 'Acta' of the Senate to be regularly published. Suet. Caes. 20.

123. d It is to be remembered that 'diocese' was then a civil and not an Ecclesiastical term. A 'diocesis' was an aggregate of provinces, under the charge of a Vicarius, who was subordinate to one of the four Praefecti Praetorio, each Praefectus having under him a number of dioceses. Thus the Vicarius Italiae, who was

subordinate to the Praefectus Praetorio Italiae, had in his diocese fourteen provinces, including' both Liguria of which Milan was the capital, and Venetia in which Aquileia was situated. It is to be remembered also that Italia at this time meant only the north of Italy, the rest of Italy being now included in the Diocese of Rome, and under the Vicarius Urbis Romae. See the table given in Smith's Gibbon, vol. ii. p. 315. taken from Marquardt. When the word diocese came into Ecclesiastical use, it was applied, first to "an aggregate not merely of several districts, governed each by its own bishop, but of several provinces

(e0parxi/ai) each presided over by a metropolitan. The diocese itself was under an Exarch or Patriarch." Dict. of Chr. Ant. sub voc. 'Credita' is here read for ' creditam,' as required by the order of the words.

124. e It is not certain to whom the Emperor's letter was addressed. Some have thought that it was addressed to the Pretorian Prefect of Italy. Tillemont maintained that it was addressed to Valerian, Bishop of Aquileia, in whose see the Council was held. The language, though not decisive, seems in favour of the former supposition. In § 7. the Prefect of Italy is spoken of as issuing letters in pursuance of it.

125. f i. e. a copy of S. Paul's Epistles.

126. g i. e. the Emperor's letter.

127. h The text here seems defective, nor is there any thing to guide us to supply the lacuna. What is given in the translation is no more than a guess

at the meaning of the sentence. The general connection is however clear enough even if it be omitted.

128. i The reading of Ed. Rom. is here adopted, as alone furnishing a reasonable sense. The Benedictine text is unintelligible.

129. Rom. i. 20.

130. 1 Cor. i. 8.

131. Acts i. 18.

132. j By Illyricum is here meant Illyricum Occidentale, which at this time was under the jurisdiction of the Vicarius Italiae. (See the Table in Smith's Gibbon, referred to in note d. p. 33) Sirmium, which in the following Century was entirely destroyed by the Goths under Attila, was at this time a place of great importance both civil and ecclesiastical. It is spoken of by Justinian as capital of Illyricum both in civil and episcopal matters (Tillemont, note xv on the Life of S. Ambrose vol. x. p. 739). Its ecclesiastical importance is shewn by the contest in which S. Ambrose engaged with Justina, two years before the Council, 379 A.D, to bring about the election of Anemius as Bishop, when the Empress was using all her influence to cause an Arian Bishop to be appointed. Arianism had been rife there for some time, and Germinus a previous Bishop had been one of the leaders of that party. (Tillemont, S. Ambr. ch. xx.) Illyricum had been finally separated into two divisions, Orientale and Occidentale, by Gratian, in 379 A.D, who transferred the Eastern Division to Theodosius when he made him Emperor of the East, from which time it formed part of the Eastern Empire. (Tillemont, Hist. des Emp. vol. v. p. 716.) 133. S. John xvii. 3.

134. 1 S. John v. 20.

135. 1 Tim. vi. 16.

136. S. Matt. x. 28.

137. S. John x. 11.

138. k The context requires the reading 'bonus' for 'omnibus,' which is that of one MS. The same MS. also inserts 'Deum' in Eusebius' next speech, which is required by the argument.

139. S. Luke xix. 17. Ib. vi. 45.

140. S. John vii. 12.

141. Ps. lii. 1.

142. 2 Cor. xii. 10.

143. S. John v. 18.

144. 1 made Himself of no reputation E.T.

145. Phil. ii. 6-8.

146. S. John xiv. 28.

147. Ib. 27,28.

148. Heb. ii. 7.

149. Ib. vi. 13.

150. S. John viii. 56.

151. S. John vi. 44.

152. 1 Cor. i. 8.

153. 2 But now ye seek to kill me, a man &c.

E.V.

154. S. John viii. 40.

155. 1 By 'tractatus concilii Nicaeni' is meant simply the Nicene Creed. This is established by S. Ambr. De Fide iii. 15. 125 (518 Ed. Ben.) where, speaking of the letter of Eusebius of Nicomedia read at the Council, in reference to the word

o(moou&sioj, he says, Haec cum lecta esset epistola in Concilio Nicaeno, hoc verbum in tractatu fidei posuerunt Patres, etc.

156. m The reading in Ed. Ben. is 'carendum.'

If it is genuine, the word must have acquired a sort of transitive sense and have come to mean 'to be deprived.' No traces of such an use is to be found in Facciolati or in Ducange. Ed. Ben. quotes a parallel use of 'abstinendus' but without any

instances. Rom. reads 'privandum,' Chifflet 'curandum,' either of which give the required sense, but seem corrections without MS. authority.

157. n The text in this passage is defective and confused: but the general sense, as given here, may fairly be made out of it as it stands.

158. o It is to be noticed that the sentence of only twenty-five Bishops are here given out of thirty two or thirty

three. It is probable therefore that the Record is defective, and that the sentences of the rest have been lost.

159. p Ed. Ben. here reads, Et cum Secundianus subripiisset. As subripiisset by itself could have no sense, the reading of Ed. Rom. has been adopted, Et cum Secundianus se paullulum subripiisset et postea convenisset. This is adopted in Tillemont's narrative, Il sortit mesme de

l'assemblée, mais il revint quelque temps apres.

160. S. John i.18.

161. Isa. lxx. 16.

162. q This is according to the text of Ed. Rom.

163. S. Matt. v. 37.

164. Heb. i. 5.

165. r The abrupt termination of the discussion with Secundianus, without any account of a decision in his case, seems to point to the same conclusion as the incomplete list of Bishops who give sentence on Palladius, that the Record is defective. Moreover the unusual number of various readings is generally a sign of a defective text. The force and cleverness of the evasions of Secundianus seem sometimes to be lost thereby.

166. s With regard to the names of the sees, those of which the modern name is as familiar or more familiar than

the ancient have been rendered by the modern name, those of which the modern name would be unfamiliar to general readers have been left in their ancient form. It would be affectation to call S. Ambrose Bishop of Mediolanum: on the other hand nothing would be gained by calling Felix Bishop of Jadera, Bishop of Zara.

167. t This name is omitted in the list at the beginning, so that there are thirty three in this list, only thirty two in the other. The two presbyters were probably representatives of Bishops, but it is not stated of whom.

168. a It is probable that similar letters were addressed to the Bishops of the other Provinces of Gaul, who had sent Justus as their deputy, and to Africa and

Illyricum, though no record of them remains. Possibly they were identical, except the address. Gaul had at this time been so subdivided, that the Vicariate or civil Diocese consisted of no less than seventeen provinces. See Marquardt's Table, as quoted above.

169. Ps. xli. 1. C.P.T.

170. b There is no mention of the condemnation of Attalus in the Records, another proof that they are not complete.

171. c Julianus Valens was Bishop of Petavio or Pettau on the Drave, into which See he had apparently been introduced in the place of the orthodox Bishop Marcus: for this is, according to Tillemont, the meaning of the word

'superpositus.' When Pannonia and Illyricum were overrun by the Goths after Valens' defeat at Hadrianople, (378 A.D.) he deserted his charge. The ravages of the Barbarians are described by S. Jerome ad cap i. Zephan. vol. iii. p. 1645. See Gibbon ch. 26. (from a note in Newman's Fleury, vol. 1 p. 38.)

172. d The reading here is uncertain. Ed. Rom. has 'prout jam et sacerdotum concilio sententia in eos lata est.' Nor is it certain to what laws allusion is made. A long note in Ed. Ben. does not seem to clear up the matter. This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2004. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely.

Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SPlonic font, free from [here](#).

Early Church Fathers - Additional Texts

Letters - Letters 11-20

St. Ambrose of Milan, Letters (1881). pp. 67-137. Letters

11-20.

- Letter 11 -- The Council of Aquileia, To the emperors Gratian, Valentinian and Theodosius
- Letter 12 -- The Council of Aquileia, To the emperors Gratian, Valentinian and Theodosius
- Letter 13 -- To the emperor Theodosius
- Letter 14 -- To the emperor Theodosius
- Letter 15 -- To Anatolius (etc) and the clergy of Thessalonica
- Letter 16 -- To his brother Anysius
- Letter 17 -- To the emperor Valentinian
- The Memorial of Symmachus, Prefect of the City
- Letter 18 -- To the emperor Valentinian
- Letter 19 -- To Vigilius
- Letter 20 -- To Marcellina

LETTER XI. [A.D.381.] THIS letter, which, like the previous one, is really addressed to Gratian, though in accordance with custom formally superscribed with the names of all the three Emperors, urges him to support Damasus as the orthodox and duly elected Bishop of Rome, and to condemn his rival Ursinus, whose interference with their Council, and intrigues with the Arian party they also inform him of. TO THE MOST GRACIOUS EMPERORS AND CHRISTIAN PRINCES, THE MOST GLORIOUS AND MOST BLESSED, GRATIAN, VALENTINIAN, AND THEODOSIUS, THE COUNCIL WHICH IS ASSEMBLED AT AQUILEIA.

1. YOUR enactments have indeed already provided, most gracious Princes, that the perfidy of the Arians may not any further either be concealed or diffused: for we do not conceive that the decrees of the Council will be without effect; for as regards the West, two individuals only have been found to dare to oppose the Council with profane and impious words, men who had previously disturbed a mere corner of Dacia Ripensis

1.

2. There is another subject which distresses us more, which, as we were assembled, it was our business to discuss duly, lest it should spread through the whole body of the Church diffused over the whole world, and so trouble all things. For though we were generally agreed that

[68 Ursinus 2

could not have overreached your piety (though he allows nothing to be quiet, and amid the many urgencies of war would press upon you with his importunity) still lest your holy tranquillity of mind, which delights in having all persons in its care, should he swayed by the false adulation of that unreasonable person, we think it right, if you condescendingly allow it, to offer you our prayers and entreaties, not only to guard against what may be, but shuddering at past things also which have been brought about by his temerity. For if he found any vent for his audacity, where would he not spread confusion?

3. But if pity for a single person can sway you, much more let the prayer of all the Bishops move you. For which of us will be united to him in fellowship and communion when he has attempted to usurp a place not due to him, and one he could not lawfully have arrived at, and endeavours to regain in a manner most unreasonable what he was most unreasonable in aiming at? Often as he has been found guilty of turbulence, he still goes on, as if his past conduct should inspire no horror. He was often, as we ascertained and saw in the present Council, in union and combination with the Arians at the time when he endeavoured in company with Valens

3 to disturb the Church of Milan with their detestable assembly: holding private meetings sometimes before the doors of the synagogue and sometimes in the houses of the Arians, and uniting his friends to them; and, as he could not go openly himself to their congregations, teaching and informing them in what way the Church's peace might be disturbed. Their madness gave him fresh courage, so as well to earn the favour of their supporters and allies.

|69

4. When therefore it is written; a man that is an heretic after⁴ one admonition reject,⁵

and when another man who spoke by the Holy Spirit has said that beasts such as these should be spurned and not received with greeting or welcome,⁶ how is it possible that we should not judge the person whom we have seen united to their society to be also a maintainer of their perfidy? What even if he were not there? We might still have besought your Graces not to allow the Roman Church, the Head of the whole Roman world, and the sacred faith of the Apostles to be disturbed; for from thence flow all the rights of venerable Communion to all persons. And therefore we pray and beseech you that you would condescend to take from him the means of stealing advantage from you.

5. We know your Graces' holy modesty: let him not press upon you words unbecoming your ears, or give his noisy utterance to what is alien from the office and name of a Bishop, or say to you what is unseemly. When he ought to have a good report even from those who are without,⁷

let your Graces condescend to recollect what was the testimony with which the men of his own city have followed him. For it is a shame to say and against modesty to repeat how disgraceful is the rumour, with the reproach of which he is wounded. The shame of this ought to have constrained him to silence, and if he partook in any degree of the feelings and conscience of a Bishop, he would prefer the Church's peace and concord to his own ambition and inclination. But, lost to all shame, he sends letters by Paschasius an excommunicated person, the standard bearer of his madness, and so sows confusion, and attempts to excite even Gentiles and abandoned characters.

6. We therefore entreat you to restore by the degradation of that most troublesome person the security which has been interrupted both to us Bishops and to the Roman people, which is at present in uncertainty and suspense since the memorial of the Prefect of the city. And on obtaining this let us in continuous and unbroken course offer thanksgivings to God the Almighty Father and to Christ our Lord God. [70 LETTER XII. [A.D.381] THIS letter, referring to the settlement of affairs in the East, is really addressed to Theodosius, the Emperor of the East. After expressing the thanks due to the Emperors for the success which has attended their efforts to establish the true faith throughout the Empire, the Bishops beg that Theodosius will use his influence to settle the questions of disputed succession, which were vexing the Churches of Alexandria and Antioch, and endangering the maintenance of Communion between the East and West. They ask therefore that a general Council may be summoned to Alexandria to settle both questions. TO THE MOST GRACIOUS AND CHRISTIAN EMPERORS, THE GLORIOUS AND MOST BLESSED PRINCES, GRATIAN, VALENTINIAN, AND THEODOSIUS, THE HOLY COUNCIL WHICH IS ASSEMBLED AT AQUILEIA.

1. MOST gracious Emperors and most blessed and most glorious princes, Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius, beloved of God the Father and of His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, we are unable to match the benefits which your piety has conferred upon us, even with the most overflowing return of thanks. For now that, after many times of trial and various persecutions, which the Arians, especially Lucius

8, who marked his course by the impious murder of monks and virgins, and Demophilus

9 too, an evil source of perfidy, brought on the Catholics, all the Churches of

[71 God, in the East especially, have been restored to the Catholics; while in the West scarce two heretics have been found to oppose the decrees of the Holy Council, who can conceive himself able to make an adequate acknowledgement of your goodness?

2. But though we cannot give full expression to your favours in words, we still desire to recompense them by the prayers of the Council; and though in all the several Churches we celebrate our daily vigils for your Empire before our God, still when assembled in one body, than which service we conceive nothing can be more glorious, we offer thanksgivings to our Almighty God both on behalf of the Empire, and of your own peace and safety, because peace and concord have been so shed over us through you.

3. In the West indeed only in two corners, on the borders of Dacia Ripensis and of Moesia did murmurs appear to have been raised against the faith: and these places after the sentence of the Council should, we conceive, be immediately provided for with your Graces' indulgence. But over all tracts and countries and village departments as far as the Ocean, the communion of the faithful remains one and unpolled. And in the East we have had the greatest joy and delight in learning that the Arians, who had violently invaded the Churches, have been ejected, and that the sacred temples of God are frequented by Catholics alone.

4. But still since the envy of the Devil is never wont to rest, we hear that there are among the Catholics themselves frequent dissensions and implacable discord; and all our feelings are disturbed at ascertaining that many things have been innovated upon, and that persons are molested now who should have been relieved, men who continued always in our Communion. In

short Timotheus Bishop of the Church of Alexandria, and Paulinus Bishop of the Church of Antioch 10, who always maintained the concord [72

of Communion with us inviolate, are said to be distressed by the variances of other persons, whose faith in former times was scarcely steadfast. These persons, if it be possible, and they are recommended by a sufficient faith, we would wish to have added to our fellowship: but without prejudice to the rights of those who share with us the ancient Communion. And our care for them is not superfluous, first of all because the fellowship of Communion should be clear of all offence, and secondly, because we have long since received letters from both parties, and particularly from those who were divided in the Church of Antioch.

5. Indeed if the irruption of the enemy 11 had not hindered, we had made arrangements to send thither some of our own number, to take the office of umpires and referees for diffusing peace again, should it be possible. But since our desires could not have accomplishment at that time owing to the troubles of the state, we think it right to offer our prayers to your Goodness, asking that by agreement

12 between the factions, on the death of the one, the rights of the Church should remain with the survivor, and that no additional consecration should be forcibly attempted. And therefore we request you, most gracious and Christian Princes, that you would have a Council of all Catholic Bishops held at Alexandria, that they may more fully discuss and define among themselves to

[73 whom Communion is to be imparted and with whom it is to be maintained

13.

6. For though we have always supported the disposition and order of the Church of Alexandria, and according to the manner and custom of our predecessors we retain Communion with it in indissoluble fellowship to these present times, still lest it should be thought that persons have been neglected who have sought our Communion according to the agreement, which we wish should stand, or that the shortest road to that peace and fellowship of the faithful has not been taken, we pray you that when they have discussed these matters in a full assembly among themselves, the decrees of the Bishops may be furthered by the assistance ministered by your Goodness. And allow us to be made acquainted with this, that our minds may not waver in uncertainty, but that, full of joy and relieved from anxiety, we may return thanks to your goodness before Almighty God, not only that heresy is shut out, but also that faith and concord are restored to the Catholics. The prayer which the African and Gallic Churches offer you through their deputies is this, that you would make the Bishops over the whole world your debtors, though the debt already due to your excellence is not small.

7. To offer however our entreaties to your clemency and to obtain what we ask for, we have sent as deputies our brethren and fellow-presbyters, whom we pray you that you would condescend graciously to listen to, and allow to return speedily. [74 LETTER XIII. [A.D.382] IN the year following the Council of Aquileia, a Council of the Bishops of the civil Diocese of Italy appears to have been held, over which S. Ambrose presided. It appears to have dealt principally with the questions at issue between the East and West. This letter was written by S. Ambrose in the name of the Council, after the end of its session ('in concilio nuper,' § 3), to Theodosius. The Bishops

complain of the election of Flavian to succeed Meletius at Antioch, contrary to the compromise which they urged in the last letter, and maintain Maximus' claim to the see of Constantinople against Nectarius, urging again the necessity of a General Council of both East and West, to settle finally all the questions in dispute between them, and suggest that it should be held at Rome. TO THE MOST BLESSED EMPEROR AND MOST GRACIOUS PRINCE THEODOSIUS, AMBROSE AND THE OTHER BISHOPS OF ITALY.

1. WE knew indeed that your holy mind was devoted to God in pure and sincere faith, but your Majesty has loaded us with fresh benefits in restoring the Catholics to the Churches. And I would that you could have restored the Catholics themselves to their ancient reverence, that they would innovate in nothing against the prescription of our ancestors, and not be hasty either to rescind what what they ought to maintain nor to maintain what they ought to rescind. Therefore we sigh, your Majesty, perhaps with too much grief, but not without sufficient reason, that it has proved easier to get the heretics expelled than to establish concord among the Catholics. For the extent of the confusion that has lately taken place is beyond expression.

2. We wrote to you not long ago, that since the city of Antioch had two Bishops, Paulinus and Meletius, both of whom we regarded as true to the faith, they should either agree with each other in peace and concord, preserving Ecclesiastical order, or at least, if one of them died before the other, no one should be put into the place of the deceased while the other lived. But now on the death of Meletius, while Paulinus is still alive, whom fellowship

[75 derived from our predecessors uninterruptedly testifies to have remained in our Communion, another person is said to have been not so much supplied, as super-added, into the place of Meletius, contrary to right and to Ecclesiastical order.

3. And this is alleged to have taken place by the consent and advice of Nectarius

14, the regularity of whose ordination we are not clearly convinced of. For in a Council lately, when Maximus the Bishop, having read the letter of Peter a man of holy memory, had shewn that the communion of the Church of Alexandria remained with him, and had proved by the clearest testimony, that he was

15 consecrated by three Bishops ordaining by mandate within his private house, because the Arians were at that time in possession of the Basilicas, we had no cause, most blessed of Princes, to doubt of his episcopacy, when he testified that he resisted and was forcibly constrained by a majority of the laity and clergy.

4. Still that we might not appear to have settled any thing over-hastily in the absence of the parties, we thought it fit to inform your Grace by letter, in order that his case might be provided for so as best to serve the interests of public peace and concord, because in truth we perceived that Gregory claimed to himself the priesthood of the Church of Constantinople, by no means in accordance with the tradition of the Fathers. We therefore in that Synod, attendance at which appeared to have been prescribed to the Bishops of the whole world, were of opinion that nothing ought to be decided rashly. So at that particular time the persons who declined a general Council and who are said to have had one at Constantinople, where they had

[76 ascertained that Maximus had come hither to plead his cause in the Synod (and this, even if a Council had not been proclaimed it was competent for him to do lawfully and according to the customs of our predecessors, as also Athanasius of holy memory, and since that Peter, brother Bishops of the Church of Alexandria, and several of the Eastern Bishops have done, so as to appear to have sought the decision of the Churches of Rome, of Italy, and of all the West) when, as we said, they saw that he wished to bring the question to a trial with those who denied his episcopate, they were surely bound to wait for our opinion upon it

16. We do not claim any special privilege of examining such matters, but we ought to have had a share in an united decision.

5. Last of all, it ought to have been decided whether he was to lose his See, before deciding whether another should receive it, especially by persons by whom Maximus complained that he was either deserted or injured. Therefore since Maximus the Bishop has been received into Communion by those of our fellowship on the ground that it was certain that he had been ordained by Catholics, we did not see that he ought to have been excluded from his claim to the Bishopric of Constantinople, and we thought that his allegation ought to be weighed in the presence of the parties. But since we have learned recently that Nectarius has been ordained at Constantinople, we fear that our communion with the Oriental regions is broken, especially since Nectarius is said to have been left immediately without the fellowship of Communion by the very persons by whom he was ordained.

6. There is therefore no slight difficulty here. And it is not any contention about wishes and ambition of our own that makes us anxious, but we are greatly disturbed by the breaking up and interruption of communion. Nor do we see any way in which concord can be established except either by restoring to Constantinople the Bishop who

[77 was first ordained, or at least having a Council of ourselves and of the Eastern Bishops at Rome, to consider the ordination of both of them.

7. Nor does it seem unbecoming, your Majesty, that the persons, who thought the judgement of Acholius, a single Bishop, so well worth waiting for, that they called him to Constantinople from the regions of the West, should be obliged to submit to the discussion of the Bishop of the Church of Rome, and of the Bishops of the neighbourhood and of Italy. If a question was reserved for a single individual, how much more should it be reserved for many?

8. We, however, as it has been suggested to us by the most blessed Prince, your Brother

17, that we should write to your Grace's Majesty, request that when the communion is one, you would be pleased that the judgement should be joint and the consent concurrent.

LETTER XIV. [A.D.382.] This letter is a reply to one addressed to the Bishops of Italy by Theodosius, in answer to the last. He seems in it to have "undeceived them by informing them what Maximus was, and how different his ordination was from that of Nectarius. He represented to them that these affairs, and that of Flavian, ought to be judged in the East, where all the parties were present, and that there was no reason to oblige those of the East to come unto the West." (Fleury xviii, 17, vol. 1. p. 41 Newman's Transl). The Bishops in this reply thank the Emperor for his efforts to appease the differences between the East and West, and profess the

disinterestedness of their desire for a general Council, and add, as an additional reason for it, the spread of opinions attributed to Apollinaris, which require to be examined into in the presence of the parties concerned. TO THE MOST BLESSED EMPEROR AND MOST GRACIOUS PRINCE THEODOSIUS, AMBROSE AND THE OTHER BISHOPS OF ITALY.

1. THE knowledge of your faith, which is diffused over the whole world, has soothed the innermost feelings of our minds; and therefore, that your reign might have the additional glory of having restored unity to the Churches

[78 both of the West and East, we have thought it right, most serene and faithful Emperor, at once to beseech and inform your Grace on Ecclesiastical subjects by our letter. For we have been grieved that the fellowship of holy Communion between the East and West was interrupted.

2. We say not a word by whose error or by whose fault this was, that we may not be supposed to be spreading fables and idle talk. Nor can we regret having made an attempt, the neglect of which might have turned to our blame. For it was often made matter of blame to us that we appeared to disregard the society of the Eastern brethren, and to reject their kindness.

3. We thought moreover that we ought to take this trouble on ourselves, not for Italy, which now for this long time has been quiet and free from anxiety on the part of the Arians, and which is troubled with no disturbance of the heretics; not for ourselves, for we seek not our own things, but the things of all; not for Gaul and Africa which enjoy the individual fellowship of all their Bishops, but that the circumstances which have disturbed our communion on the side of the East might be enquired into in the Synod, and all scruple be removed from among us.

4. For not only with regard to the persons about whom your Grace condescended to write, but with regard to others who are attempting to bring into the Church some dogma or other, said to be Apollinaris'18, there were several things that affected us, to which the knife should have been applied in the presence of the parties, that a person convicted of maintaining a new dogma and proved to be in error should not shelter himself under the general name of the Faith, but at once lay down both the office and name of Bishop, which he was not entitled to by authority of doctrine, and that no threads or artifices of delusion should remain for persons hereafter wishing to deceive. For the person who is convicted, not in the presence of the parties, as your Grace has truly decided in your august and princely answer, will always lay hold of a handle for reviving the enquiry.

[79

5. This was why we asked for a Council of Bishops, that no one should be permitted to state what was false against a person in his absence, and that the truth might be cleared up by discussion in the Council. We ought not then to incur any suspicion either of over-zeal or over-leniency, seeing that we made all our observations in the presence of the parties.

6. In truth we drew up what was quoted, not to decide but to give information, and while we asked for a judgement, we offer no prejudgement. Nor ought it to have been regarded as any reproach to them, when Bishops were invited to the Council, who in many cases were more present by their very absence, since it contributed to the common good. For neither did we conceive it to be a reproach to us when a Presbyter of the Church of Constantinople, by name Paulus, demanded

that there should be a Synod both of Eastern and Western Bishops in the province of Achaia.

7. Your Grace observes that this demand, which was made by the Greeks also, was not unreasonable. But, because there are disturbances in Illyricum 19, a neighbourhood near the sea and safer was sought. Nor have we indeed made any innovation in the way of precedent, but preserving the decisions of Athanasius of holy memory, who was as it were a pillar of the Faith, and of our holy fathers of old time in their Councils, we do not tear up the boundaries that our Fathers placed, or violate the rights of hereditary Communion, but reserving the honour due to your authority, we shew ourselves studious of peace and quietness 20. [80 LETTER XV.[A.D.383.] THIS letter is addressed to the Bishops of Macedonia, in reply to their announcement of the death of Acholius 21, Bishop of Thessalonica. S. Ambrose pronounces a warm eulogium on the departed Bishop, whom he compares to Elijah, especially in leaving in Anysius a successor, like Elisha, endowed with a double portion of his spirit. He recounts the pleasure which he had felt in his intercourse with Acholius at Rome, when they had wept together over the evils of the times, and invokes the Blessing of God upon his successor.

AMBROSE TO ANATOLIUS, NUMERIUS, SEVERUS, PHILIP, MACEDONIUS, AMMIANUS, THEODOSIUS, EUTROPIUS, CLARUS, EUSEBIUS, AND TIMOTHEUS, PRIESTS OF THE LORD, AND TO ALL THE BELOVED CLERGY AND PEOPLE OF THESSALONICA, HEALTH.

1. WHILE longing to keep ever imprinted on my mind the holy man, and while I survey all his acts like one set on a watch-tower, my restless anxiety caused me to drink only too swiftly these bitter tidings, and I learned what I had rather still be ignorant of, that the man whom we were seeking on earth was already at rest in heaven.

2. You will ask who announced this to me, seeing that the letter of your Holinesses had not then arrived. I know not who was the hearer of the tidings: it is, you know,

[81 men's wont not willingly to remember the bearer of tidings of sorrow: however, though the sea was then closed, and the land blocked by a barbarian invasion, there was no lack of a messenger, though it was impossible for any one to arrive from abroad; so that it appears to me the saint himself announced his own death to us, for now that he enjoyed the eternal recompense of his labours, and freed from the bands of the body, had been carried by the ministry of Angels to the intimate presence of Christ, he was desirous of removing the error of one who loved him, that we might not be asking for him length of mortal life, while he was already receiving eternal rewards.

3. This veteran then of Christ Jesus is not dead, but has departed and left us, he has changed for heaven this earth below, and clapping the pinions and wings of his spirit he exclaims, Lo, I have got me away far off!

22 For in the spirit of the Apostle he desired long ago to leave the earth, but he was detained by the prayers of all, as we read of the Apostle, because it was needful for the Church that he should abide longer in the flesh.23 For he lived not for himself but for all, and was to the people the minister of eternal life, so that he gained the fruit thereof in others, before he experienced it in himself.

4. Now therefore he is a citizen of heaven, a possessor of that eternal city Jerusalem, which is in heaven. There he sees the boundless circuit of this city, its pure gold, its precious stones, its

perpetual light though without the sun. And seeing all these things whereof he before had knowledge, but which are now manifested to him face to face, he says, Like as we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God.²⁴

Standing there he appeals to the people of God saying, O Israel, how great is the house of God, and how large is the place of His possession!²⁵

Great is He, and hath none end.

5. But what is this? While I consider his merits, and follow as it were in spirit his departure, and mingle with the choirs of saints that escort him, not indeed by my desert but by my affection, meanwhile I have almost forgotten myself. Is then this wall of faith and grace and sanctity taken from us, that wall which, though frequently assaulted

[82 by the Goths ²⁶, their barbarian darts could never penetrate, nor the warlike fury of many nations overpower? They who in other places were spoilers there prayed for peace, and while they marvelled what was this unarmed force which opposed them, the wiser hinted that one like Elisha dwelt within, one who was nearly his equal in age, in spirit quite his equal, and bade them beware lest after the manner of the Syrian army, blindness should fall on them also.²⁷

6. However the gifts of Christ to His disciples are various. Elisha led captive into Samaria the army of the Syrians, holy Acholius by his prayers caused the victors to retreat from Macedonia. Do we not see in this a proof of supernatural forces, that though no soldiers were at hand, the victors should thus fly without a foe; is not this too a proof of blindness that they should fly when no man pursued? Though in truth holy Acholius pursued and fought them, not with swords but prayers, not with weapons but good works.

7. Do we not know that the saints fight even when they keep holiday? Was not Elisha at rest? Yes, at rest in body, but in spirit he was active, and by his prayers he fought when the noise of horses and the noise of a great host were heard in the camp of the Syrians, so that they thought that the forces of other princes were marching against them, to succour the people of Israel. So they were seized with great panic and fled, and four lepers, who had gone out to seek for death, spoiled their camp.²⁸ And did not the Lord work like, or, I might almost say, greater wisdom in Macedonia, by the prayers of Acholius? For it was not by an idle panic nor a vague suspicion, but by a raging plague and burning pestilence that the Goths were troubled and alarmed. In short they then fled that they might escape; afterwards they returned and sued for peace to save their lives.

8. Wherefore in the great deeds of this eminent man we [83

have seen former ages revived, and have witnessed those works of the prophet which we read of. Like Elisha he was all his life in the midst of arms and battles, and by his good works made wars to cease. And when tranquillity was restored to his countrymen, he breathed out his holy soul, a misfortune heavier than war itself. Like Elijah he was carried up to heaven,²⁹ not in a chariot of fire, nor by horses of fire, (unless haply it was but that we saw them not) nor in any whirlwind in the sky, but by the will and in the calm of our God, and with the jubilation of the holy Angels who rejoiced that such a man had come among them.

9. Surely we cannot doubt this, when all other particulars agree so well. For at the very moment when he was being taken up, he let fall so to speak the vestment which he wore, and invested with

it holy Anysius his disciple, and clothed him with the robes of his own priesthood. His merits and graces I do not now hear for the first time, nor have I first learnt them from your letters, but I recognised them in what you wrote. For as if foreknowing that he would be his successor, Acholius designated him as such by tokens, though in open speech he concealed it; saying that he had been aided by his care, labour, and ministry, thus seeming to declare him his coadjutor, one who would not come as a novice to the chief office of the priesthood, but as a tried performer of its duties. Well does that saying in the Gospel befit him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.³⁰

10. So far both you and I participate in holy Acholius, but there is this special bond between him and me, that the man of blessed memory suffered me to become his friend. For on his arrival in Italy, when I was prevented by illness from going to meet him, he himself came and visited me. With what ardour, with what affection did we embrace each other! With what groans did we lament the evil of the times, and all that was happening here! Our garments were bedewed with a flood of tears, while in the enjoyment of our meeting long and mutually desired, we remained locked in each others embrace. Thus what

[84 I had long yearned for he bestowed, the opportunity of seeing him. For although it is in the spirit, the seat of love, that the greater portion and more perfect knowledge lies, yet we desire to behold our friends in bodily form also. Thus formerly the kings of the earth sought to behold the face of Solomon, and to hear his wisdom.³¹

11. He is gone then from us, and has left us tossed on this sea; what is a benefit to him is to the many a heavier calamity than even the rage of the barbarians; for this he repelled, and now who shall bring back his presence to us? Nay, the Lord brings it back, and he himself gives himself back in his disciple. Your judgements give him back, by which you say, Give to Levi his manifest one, and his truths to Thy holy one.³²

You have given his manifest one³³ inasmuch as he is established by his appointment; you have given a follower of that man, who said unto his father and to his mother I have not seen thee; neither did he

acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children. He observed the word of the Lord, and kept His covenant. The people will tell of his wisdom.³⁴

12. Such was the man's life, such his heritage, such his conversation, such his succession. While yet a boy he entered a monastery, and though shut up in a narrow cell in Achaia, yet by grace he traversed the spaces of many countries. The people of Macedonia besought that he might be their Bishop, the priesthood elected him to that office, that where the faith had before been maimed

³⁵ by the Bishop, there afterwards the solid foundations of the faith might be established by the Bishop.

13. None other did his disciple imitate, who also himself said unto his father and to his mother I have not seen

thee.³⁶ He saw them not with affection, he saw them not with desire, and he knew not his brethren, because he desired to know the Lord. He observed also the word of the Lord and kept His covenant, and will ever offer

[85 sacrifice upon His altar. Bless, O Lord, his faith, his holiness, his assiduity. Let Thy blessing descend upon his head and upon his neck. Let him be honourable among his brethren, let him be as the leader of the herd.³⁷ Let him sift the hearts of his enemies, let him soothe the minds of the saints, and let the judgement of Thy priests flourish in him as a lily. Brethren, farewell, and love me, as I love you.

LETTER XVI. [A.D.383.] This letter is addressed to Anysius, immediately on his election as successor to Acholius, in answer apparently to one from Anysius, which accompanied that from the Bishops of Macedonia, and announced his appointment. He speaks of the responsibility of succeeding so zealous a Bishop as Acholius, whom he praises in enthusiastic terms, and prays that (iod may make him a worthy successor in every way.

BISHOP AMBROSE TO HIS BROTHER ANYSIUS.

1. I HAVE been for some time sure of what I now read for the first time, and I know well by his merits him whom my eyes have not seen. I grieve that the one event should have happened, I rejoice that the other has ensued; I should have wished that the one had not happened in my lifetime, but it was my hope that after the death of that holy man this alone would ensue, as it ought. So now we have you, once the disciple, now the successor of Acholius of blessed memory, the inheritor alike of his rank and of his grace. This is a great merit, my brother. I congratulate you that there was not a moment's doubt who should be the successor of so great a man. It is a great task too, my brother, to have taken upon you the burden of so great a name, a name of such weight, of such a scale. In you we look for Acholius, and as he was in your affections, so in your ministry is required a copy of his virtue, of his holy life, his vigorous mind in that decrepit body.

2. I have seen him, I confess: my seeing him is due to his merits: I saw him in such sort in the body as to believe

[86 him to be out of the body: I saw the image of him who, knowing not whether it was in the body or out of the body, saw himself transported to Paradise.³⁸ With such rapid speed had he traversed every region, Constantinople, Achaia, Epirus, and Italy, that younger men could not keep pace with him. Men of stronger bodies yielded to him, knowing that he was free from the shackles of the body, so that he used it more as a covering than as an instrument, at all events that it was his slave not his helpmate, for he had so trained his body that he crucified the world in it, and himself to the world.

3. Blessed is the Lord, and blessed was His youth which He passed in the tabernacle of the God of Jacob, abiding in a monastery, in which, when sought after by His parents and relations He said, Who is My mother, and who are My brethren?

³⁹ I know not father, nor mother, nor brethren, save those who hear the Word of God, and do it. Blessed also were his maturer years, wherein he was elected to the chief priesthood, having given proof of his virtue by a long service. He came like David to restore peace to the people.⁴⁰ He came like that ship bringing with him spiritual treasure, and cedar wood, and precious stones, and those silver wings of a dove, with which, lying in the midst of the lots,⁴¹

she slept the sleep of tranquillity and peace.

4. For even the sleep of the saints is operative, as it is written, I sleep, but my heart

waketh,⁴² and as holy Jacob saw in sleep divine mysteries, which waking he saw not,⁴³ even a passage opened for the saints between earth and heaven, and the Lord regarding him and promising to him the possession of that land. Thus by a brief sleep he attained that which his successors afterwards won by great toil. The sleep of the saints is free from all bodily pleasures, from all perturbation of mind, it brings tranquillity to the mind and peace to the soul, so that, freed from the fetters of the body, it raises itself aloft, and is united to Christ.

5. This sleep is the life of the saints, the life which holy Acholius lived, whose old age was also blest. That old age is truly venerable which is hoary not with gray hairs

[87 but in good deeds; for those hoar hairs are reverent which belong to the soul, whose works and thoughts are, as it were, white and shining. For what is true old age, but that unspotted life, which lasts not for days or months but for ages, whose continuance is without end, whose length of years is without weakness?⁴⁴ For the longer it lives the stronger it waxes; the longer its life lasts the more vigorously does it grow unto a perfect man.

6. May God then approve you his successor not only in honor but also in conversation, and may He deign to establish you in His highest grace, that the people may flock to you also, and you may say often, Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves with their young?

45 Let them come also as the ships of Tarshish, and take in corn which the true Solomon gives, even twenty measures of wheat.⁴⁶ Let them receive the oil and wisdom of Solomon, and let there be peace between thee and thy people, and keep thou the covenant of peace. Brother, farewell: love me, for I too love you.

LETTER XVII. [A.D.384.] This letter was addressed to the Emperor Valentinian the 2nd at the time when a deputation from the Senate at Rome, headed by Symmachus, were seeking to obtain from him the restoration of the statue and altar of Victory. The facts relating to this statue form so important a page in the history of the gradual suppression of paganism in the Empire, that it may be well to give a brief outline of them, especially as this and the following letter, and the 'Memorial of Symmachus' which accompanies them, contain several allusions to them. Constantius 2nd, son of Constantine, when at Rome in 356 A.D., ordered the statue of Victory which stood in the senate-house, 'a majestic female standing on a globe, with flowing garments, expanded wings, and a crown of laurel in her outstretched hand' (Gibbon, ch. xxviii.) and the altar which stood before it, at which the senators were sworn, to be removed, as an offence to the Christians. The altar was restored by Julian, along with the other disused symbols and rites of paganism. It was tolerated by Valentinian 1st, who probably did not venture at once to overthrow Julian's work, (see Memorial of Symmachus § 7, 8) though S. Ambrose (Lett. xvii. § 16) rhetorically represents him as pleading that he was not aware of its being there, and that no one had complained to him of its presence. It was once more removed by Gratian, (sec Lett. [88 xvii. § 16.) The pagan party in the Senate then made great efforts to procure its restoration. Gibbon (ch. xxviii. note 13.) enumerates four successive deputations sent by them with this object, 'the first, A. D. 382, to Gratian, who refused them audience, the second, A.D. 384, to Valentinian, the third, A.D. 388, to Theodosius, the fourth, A. D. 392, to Valentinian.' The two letters of S. Ambrose and the Memorial of Symmachus refer to the second of these deputations. In this first one he presses on the Emperor his duty and responsibility as a Christian Emperor, urges that the heathens have deprived themselves of any equitable claim by their persecution of the Christians in former times; asserts

that the petition is only that of a minority of the Senate, just as had been the case years before, when they applied to Gratian. He then asks for a copy of the Memorial, in order to answer it in full, and warns Valentinian that he will find no Bishop to admit him to any share in Christian worship if he inflicts this insult on their faith, and reminds him of his brother and father, who would rise from the grave to reproach him.

Though called Letters, these two documents are rather state-papers. S.Ambrose himself in the latter speaks of the former as a 'libellus,' the term usually applied to petitions or memorials.

BISHOP AMBROSE TO THE MOST BLESSED PRINCE AND CHRISTIAN EMPEROR VALENTINIAN.

1. As all who are under the dominion of Rome are enlisted to serve you, the emperors and kings of the earth, so you yourselves are enlisted to serve Almighty God and our holy Faith. For safety cannot be imperilled, save when every man is a sincere worshipper of the true God, the God of the Christians, who governs all things; for He is the only true God, and is to be worshipped by the inmost spirit. As for all the gods of the heathen, they are but idols, as the Scripture

saith.⁴⁷

2. Now he that is the soldier of this, the true God, and worships Him in his inmost spirit, offers to Him no insincere or lukewarm service, but a zealous faith and devotion. At any rate no one ought to give his consent to the worship of idols and the observance of profane ceremonies. For no man can deceive God, before Whom all the secrets of the heart are manifest.

3. Seeing then, most Christian Emperor, that not only faith, but the very zeal and care and devotion of faith, is due from you to God, I wonder how some men can have conceived the thought that it was your duty to command the restoration of altars to the gods of the Gentiles, and to

bestow money for the purposes of profane sacrifices. For if you give what has long been appropriated to the emperor's privy purse or the city treasury

⁴⁸, you will seem to be giving out of what is your own rather than refunding to others what belongs to them.

4. The men who now complain of their losses are those who never spared our blood, and have even laid in ruins the very structures of our Churches. The men who ask for privileges are they who denied to us by the late law of Julian

⁴⁹ the common right of speaking and teaching, privileges too whereby even Christians have often been deceived, for by these means they sought to entrap some persons, either unawares or else by the desire to avoid the burthen of public duties. And since all men have not courage, many even under Christian Emperors have lapsed.

5. Even had these things never been repeated, I could have proved that your authority ought to have abolished them, but now that they have been severally forbidden by many previous Emperors and abolished at Rome in the interests of the true Faith by your Majesty's brother Gratian of illustrious memory, and abolished by a formal rescript, do not, I beseech you, pluck up again these Christian ordinances, nor rescind your brother's injunctions. In civil matters, if ought is

decreed, no man considers that it should be overthrown, and shall a religious precept be trampled on?

6. Let no man beguile your youth; if he be a heathen who asks this of you, let him not ensnare your mind in the bonds of his own superstition, rather his very zeal ought to admonish you with what ardour you ought to defend the true Faith, when he with all the warmth of truth defends falsehood. I myself urge you to shew deference to the merits of illustrious men; but it is certain that God ought to be obeyed above all.

[90

7. When we have to consult on military matters we should look for the opinion of one who is versed in war, and follow his counsel; when we treat of religion God is to be considered. No man is injured by Almighty God being preferred before him. He may keep his own opinion, you do not constrain any man to worship against his will, and your Majesty ought to have the same liberty, and every one should be content to be unable to extort from the Emperor, what it would be a hardship for the Emperor to desire to extort from him. The very heathen are wont to be displeased by a double-minded man, for every man ought boldly to defend the faith of his own heart, and to maintain his purpose.

8. But if any who call themselves Christians conceive that you should make such a decree, let not bare words affect your mind, let not idle names deceive you. Whoever persuades to this, or decrees it, offers sacrifice to the gods. Yet it is more tolerable that one should sacrifice than that all should fall. Here the whole Senate of Christians is in danger.

9. If at the present day, (which God forbid) an heathen Emperor were to erect an altar to false gods, and compel the Christians to assemble there, in order for them to be present at the sacrifice, so that the breath and mouth of the faithful might be tainted with ashes from the altar, with sparks from the sacrilege, with smoke from the pile, and should force them to vote in a house in which the members were sworn at the altar of an idol, (for on this account it is that they maintain that an altar should be set up, namely, that every one should consult for the public weal, under the obligation of what they consider its sanctity, although the majority of the Senate now consists of Christians,) if this, I say, were the case, Christians would consider themselves persecuted, if they were compelled by such an alternative to come to the assembly, and indeed it is often by violence that they are compelled to come: shall Christians then in your reign be compelled to swear on the altar? What is an oath, but an acknowledgement of the divine power of him whom you call upon to attest your truthfulness? Is it in your reign that the request and demand is

[91 made, that you bid an altar to be erected, and money expended on profane sacrifices?

10. But this cannot be decreed without sacrilege, and so I beg you not to decree or order it, nor to subscribe any such decree. I appeal to your faith as a minister of Christ; all the Bishops would have appealed with me, had not this report which has reached men's ears that such a thing was either propounded in your Council or petitioned for by the Senate, been so sudden and incredible. But let it not be said that the Senate have petitioned for this; a few heathen have usurped the name of all. For nearly two years ago on an attempt of this kind, holy Damasus the Bishop of the Roman Church, chosen by the judgment of God, sent me a document which the Christian senators in large numbers had presented, declaring that they gave no commission of the sort, that they did

not agree or consent to such petitions of the heathen, and they threatened that they would not come either publicly or privately to the Senate if such a decree was made. Is it worthy of your reign, that is of a Christian reign, that Christian senators should be deprived of their dignity, that the profane wishes of the heathen may be carried into effect? This document I sent to your Majesty's brother

50, and it proves that the Senate gave no commission to the deputies about the expenses of superstition.

11. But perhaps it may be said, Why then were they not present in the Senate, when these things were brought forward? They say plainly enough what they wish, by not being present; they have said enough in addressing your Majesty. And yet we need not wonder if they who will not concede to your Majesty the liberty of refusing to command that which you do not approve, or of maintaining your own opinion, should deprive private men at Rome of the right of resistance.

12. Remembering then the commission so lately laid upon me, I again appeal your own faith, I appeal to your own sentiments, not to give your answer in accordance with this heathen petition, or sign your name to such an answer, for it would be sacrilegious. Consult him who

[92 is your Excellency's father, the Emperor Theodosius, to whom you have been wont to refer in all causes of importance; and nothing can be graver than religion, more exalted than faith.

13. Were this a civil matter, the right of reply would be reserved for the opposing party: it is a matter of religion, and I, as Bishop, appeal to you, I request to be furnished with a copy of the Memorial which has been sent, that I may answer more at large; and so let your Majesty's father be consulted on the whole matter and vouchsafe a gracious answer. Assuredly should the decree be different, we as Bishops cannot quietly permit and connive at it; it will indeed be in your power to come to the Church, but there you will either not find a priest, or you will find one purposed to resist.

14. What answer will you give to the priest when he says to you, 'the Church seeks not your gifts, because you have adorned the heathen temples with gifts; the Altar of Christ rejects your gifts, because you have erected altars to idols, for it was your word, your hand, your signature, your act: the Lord Jesus refuses and repels your service, because you have served idols, for He has said to you, Ye cannot serve two masters? 51

The Virgins dedicated to God enjoy no privileges from you, and do the vestal Virgins claim them? What do you want of the priests of God, when you have preferred to them the profane petitions of the heathen? We cannot enter into fellowship with the errors of others.'

15. What will you answer to this charge? That it is a boyish error? Every age is perfect in Christ, and fulfilled with God. No childhood in faith can be admitted; for children confronted with their persecutors have boldly confessed Christ.

16. What answer will you make to your brother? Will he not say to you, 'I would not believe myself conquered, for I left you Emperor, I regretted not to die, because you were my successor, I grieved not that I was withdrawn from power, because I believed that my edicts, specially those concerning religion, would continue for ever. These were the memorials of piety and virtue which I had erected,

[93 these trophies of victory over the world, these the spoils of the devil, of the adversary of all, which I had offered up, and in which lies eternal victory. What more could an enemy have deprived me of? You have abrogated my decrees; an act which even he who took up arms against me

52 has not yet committed. Now am I pierced with a more deadly weapon, in that my brother has annulled my ordinances. Your acts tend to the injury of my better part, for while the one destroys my body the other destroys my good name. Now are my laws repealed, repealed too (which makes it more painful) by your adherents and by mine; that very thing which even my enemies had praised in me is repealed. If you have willingly acquiesced, you have condemned the Faith which I held, if you have yielded reluctantly, you have betrayed your own. And so, what is a still heavier calamity, I incur danger in your person also.'

17. What answer will you make to your father 53, who with still greater grief will address you, saying: 'You have judged very wrongly of me, my son, in supposing that I could have winked at the heathen. No man ever informed me that there was an altar in the Roman Senate house

54; never could I have believed such a crime as that heathen sacrifices should be performed in that common council of Christians and heathens, that is to say, that the heathen should triumph in the presence of Christians, and Christians should be compelled against their wills to be present at sacrifices. Many and various were the crimes committed during my reign, those that were discovered I punished, and if any man escaped unnoticed, is it just to say that I approved that which no one informed me of? You have judged most wrongly of me, if you suppose that a foreign superstition and not my own faith preserved to me the empire.'

18. Wherefore, your Majesty, seeing that if you make [94 any such decree, you will injure, first God, and next your father and brother, I beseech you to do that which you know will be profitable to your salvation in the sight of God. THE MEMORIAL OF SYMMACHUS, PREFECT OF THE CITY. THE occasion on which this Memorial was presented is stated in the introduction to the last letter. It is addressed formally to the three Emperors Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius, but really to Valentinian only, who was at that time sole Emperor of the West. Symmachus was the leading orator and scholar of his day, and his plea is composed with much skill and vigour. Gibbon (ch. xxviii.) expresses hearty admiration of the caution with which he 'avoids every topic which might appear to reflect on the religion of his sovereign, and artfully draws his arguments from the schools of rhetoric rather than from those of philosophy,' and gives a summary of its contents in a tone of keen appreciation, as might be expected. We may allow, with Cave (Life of S. Ambrose 3, 3.) that 'it was the best plea the cause would bear.'

1. As soon as the honourable Senate, ever faithful to your Majesty, learnt that offences were made amenable to law, and that the character of past times was being redeemed by pious governors, it hastened to follow the precedent of better times, and give utterance to its long repressed grief, and commissioned me once more to be the spokesman of its complaints, for I was before refused access to the deceased Emperor by evil men, because otherwise justice could never have failed me, most noble Emperors Valentinian, Theodosius and Arcadius, victorious and triumphant, ever illustrious.

2. Filling then a twofold office, as your Prefect I report the proceedings of the Senate

55, as the envoy of the citizens I offer to your favourable notice their requests. Here is no opposition of wills. Men have ceased to believe that disagreement proves their superiority in courtly zeal. To be loved, to be the object of respect and affection is more than sovereignty. Who could suffer private contests to injure the commonwealth? Justly does the

|95 Senate assail those who prefer their own power to the honour of the prince.

3. It is our duty to be watchful for your Majesties. The very glory of this present time makes it the more fitting that we should maintain the customs of our ancestors, the laws and destinies of our country; for it conduces to this glory that you should know it is not in your power to do anything contrary to the practice of your parents. We ask the restoration of that state of religion under which the Republic has so long prospered. Let the Emperors of either sect and either opinion be counted up; a late Emperor observed the rites of his ancestors, his successor did not abolish them. If the religion of older times is no precedent, let the connivance of the last Emperors

56 be so.

4. Who is so friendly with the barbarians as not to require an altar of Victory? Hereafter we must be cautious, and avoid a display of such things. But let at least that honour be paid to the name which is denied to the Divinity

57. Your fame owes much, and will owe still more, to Victory. Let those detest this power, who were never aided by it, but do you not desert a patronage which favours your triumphs. Vows are due to this power from every man, let no one deny that a power is to be venerated which he owns is to be desired.

5. But even if it were wrong to avoid this omen, at least the ornaments of the Senate-house ought to have been spared. Permit us, I beseech you, to transmit in our old age to our posterity what we ourselves received when boys. Great is the love of custom. And deservedly was the act of the deified Constantius of short duration. You ought to avoid all precedents which you know to have thus been reversed. We are solicitous for the endurance of your name and glory, and that a future age may find nothing to amend.

6. Where shall we swear to observe your laws and statutes? by what sanction shall the deceitful mind be deterred from bearing false witness? All places indeed are full of God, nor is there any spot where the perjured can

|96 be safe, but it is of great efficacy in restraining crime to feel that we are in the presence of sacred things. That altar binds together the concord of all, that altar appeals to the faith of each man, nor does any thing give more weight to our decrees than that all our decisions are sanctioned, so to speak, by an oath. A door will thus be opened to perjury, and this is to be approved of by the illustrious Emperors, allegiance to whom is guarded by a public oath!

7. But Constantius, of sacred memory, is said to have done the same thing. Be it so, let us then imitate his other actions, feeling sure that had any one committed this error before his time, he would never have fallen into it. For the fall of one is a warning to his successor, and the censure of a previous example causes amendment. It was allowable for this predecessor of your Majesties to incur offence in a novel matter, but how can the same excuse avail us, if we imitate that which we know was disapproved?

8. Will your Majesties listen to other acts of this same Emperor more worthy of your imitation? He left uncurtailed the privileges of the sacred virgins, he filled the priestly office with men of noble birth, he allowed the cost of the Roman ceremonies, and following the joyful Senate through all the streets of the eternal city, he beheld with serene countenance the temples, reading the names of the gods inscribed on their pediments, he enquired after the origin of the sacred edifices, and admired their founders. Although he himself professed another religion he maintained the ancient one for the Empire; for every man has his own customs, his own rites. The Divine mind has distributed to cities various guardians and various ceremonies. As each man that is born receives a soul, so do nations receive a genius who guards their destiny. Here the proof from utility comes in, which is our best voucher with regard to the Deity. For since our reason is in the dark, what better knowledge of the gods can we have than from the record and evidence of prosperity? And if a long course of years give their sanction to a religion, we ought to keep faith with so many centuries, and to follow our

[97 parents, as they followed with success those who founded them.

9. Let us suppose Rome herself to approach, and address you in these terms: 'Excellent Emperors, Fathers of your country, respect these years to which pious rites have conducted me. Let me use the ancient ceremonies, for I do not repent of them. Let me live in my own way, for I am free. This worship reduced the world under my laws; these sacred rites repulsed Hannibal from the walls, and the Gauls from the Capitol. Am I reserved for this, to be censured in my old age? I am not unwilling to consider the proposed decree, and yet late and ignominious is the reformation of old age.'

10. We pray therefore for a respite for the gods of our fathers and our native gods

58. That which all venerate should in fairness be accounted as one. We look on the same stars, the heaven is common to us all, the same world surrounds us. What matters it by what arts each of us seeks for truth? We cannot arrive by one and the same path at so great a secret; but this discussion belongs rather to persons at their ease, it is prayers not arguments which we now offer.

11. What advantage accrues to your treasury from the abolition of the privilege of the Vestal virgins? Shall that be denied under princes the most munificent which the most parsimonious have granted? Their sole honour consists in their wages, so to speak, of chastity. As their fillets adorn their heads, so is it esteemed by them an honour to be free to devote themselves to the ministry of sacrifices. It is but the bare name of exemption which they ask, for their poverty exonerates them from any payment. So that he who reduces their means, contributes to their praise, for virginity dedicated to the public welfare is meritorious in proportion as it is without reward.

12. Far be such gains from the purity of your treasury. The exchequer of good princes should be replenished by

[98 the spoils of enemies, not by the losses of ministers of religion. And is the gain any compensation for the odium? Those whose ancient resources are cut off only feel it the more acutely in that you are free from the charge of avarice. For under Emperors who keep their hands from other men's goods and check desire what does not excite the cupidity of the spoiler must be taken solely with a view of injuring the person robbed.

13. The Imperial Exchequer retains also lands bequeathed by the will of dying persons to the sacred virgins and priests. I implore you, as Priests of justice, to restore to the sacred functionaries of your city the right of inheritance. Let men dictate their wills in peace, knowing that

under equitable princes their bequests will be undisturbed. Men are wont to take pleasure in this security, and I would have you sympathise with them, for the precedent lately set has begun to harass them on their death-beds. Shall it be said that the religion of Rome appertains not to Roman laws? What name shall we give to the taking away of legacies which no law no casualty has made void? Freedmen may take legacies, slaves are allowed

59 a due latitude of bequeathing by will, only the noble virgins and ministers of sacred rites are excluded from inheriting lands devised to them. What advantage is it to dedicate one's virginity to the public safety, and to support the immortality of the empire with heavenly protection, to conciliate friendly powers to your arms and eagles, to take upon oneself vows salutary for all, and to refrain from commerce with mankind in general? Slavery then is a happier condition, whose service is given to men. It is the state which is wronged, whose interest it never is to be ungrateful.

14. Let me not be supposed to be defending the cause of the ancient religions only; from acts of this kind all the calamities of the Roman nation have arisen. The laws of our ancestors provided for the Vestal virgins and the ministers of the gods a moderate maintenance and just privileges. This gift was preserved inviolate till the time of the degenerate moneychangers, who diverted the

199 maintenance of sacred chastity into a fund for the payment of base porters. A public famine ensued on this act, and a bad harvest disappointed the hopes of all the provinces. The soil was not here in fault, we ascribe no influence to the stars, no mildew blighted the crops, nor did tares choke the corn, it was sacrilege which rendered the year barren, for it was necessary that all should lose that which they had denied to religion.

15. By all means, if there is any instance of such an evil, let us attribute this famine to the effect of the seasons. An unhealthy wind has caused this blight, and so life is supported by means of shrubs and leaves, and the peasants in their want have had resource once more to the oaks of Dodona

60. When did the provinces suffer such a calamity, so long as the ministers of religion were supported by the public bounty? When were oaks shaken for the food of man, when were roots dug up, when were opposite regions of the earth cursed with sterility, so long as provisions were furnished in common to the people and to the sacred virgins? The produce of the earth was blessed by its support of the priests, and thus the gift was rather in the nature of a safeguard than of a largess. Can it be doubted that the gift was for the common benefit, now that a general scarcity has attended its discontinuance?

16. But it may be said that public aid is rightly refused to the cost of an alien religion. Far be it from good rulers to suppose that what has been bestowed from the common stock on certain individuals is within the disposal of the Imperial treasury. For as the commonwealth consists of individuals, so that which comes from it becomes again the property of individuals. You govern all, but you preserve for each his own, and justice has more power with you than arbitrary will. Consult your own generous feelings, whether that ought still to be deemed public property which has been conferred on others. Gifts once devoted to the honour of the city are placed out of the power of the

donors, and that which originally was a free-gift becomes by usage and length of time a debt. Vain therefore is the fear which

[100 they would impress upon your minds who assert that unless you incur the odium of withdrawing the gift you share the responsibility of the donors of it.

17. May the unseen patrons of all sects be propitious to your Majesties, and may those in particular who of old assisted your ancestors, aid you and be worshipped by us. We ask for that religious condition which preserved the empire to your Majesties' father

61, and blessed him with lawful heirs. That venerable sire beholds from his starry seat the tears of the priests, and feels himself censured by the infraction of that custom which he readily observed.

18. I beg you also to amend for your departed brother what he did by the advice of others, to cover the act by which he unknowingly offended the Senate. For it is certain that the reason why the embassy was refused admittance was, to prevent the decision of the state from reaching him. It is due to the credit of past times to abolish without hesitation that which has been found not to have been the doing of the Emperor.

LETTER XVIII. [A.D.384.] THIS is S. Ambrose's answer to the Memorial of Symmachus which precedes it. In it he replies in detail to the arguments which Symmachus had advanced, and meets him on his own ground. It is to be remembered in forming an estimate of it, that it is simply a state paper, adopting both the style and method natural to such a document. That it is over rhetorical for our taste may at once be allowed, for that is the character of the literature of the time generally; that it is not so perfect a specimen of the style, regarded merely as a piece of argument, as the document to which it replies, may be granted without disparagement to S. Ambrose, for Symmachus "stood foremost among his contemporaries as a scholar, a statesman, and an orator." (Dict. of Biog. sub voc.) But he fairly meets and refutes Symmachus' arguments, and his retort of his adversary's personification of Rome is happy and telling. The earlier portion is more vigorous than the latter, which is overwrought, especially in the argument against maintaining things as they were. The abundance of allusions to, and quotations of, Virgil are characteristic of the age, and evidences of S. Ambrose's early training in the education of a Roman of high birth and rank. [101 BISHOP AMBROSE TO THE MOST BLESSED PRINCE AND GRACIOUS EMPEROR, HIS MAJESTY VALENTINIAN. THE honourable 62 Symmachus, Prefect of the city, having memorialised your Majesty that the altar, which had been removed from the Senate-house at Rome, ought to be restored to its place, and your Majesty, whose years of nonage and inexperience are yet unfulfilled, though a veteran in the power of faith, not having sanctioned the prayer of the heathen, I also as soon as I heard of it presented a petition, in which, though it embraced all that seemed necessary to be said, I requested that a copy of the Memorial might be furnished to me.

2. Now therefore, not as doubting your faith, but as providing for the future, and assured of a righteous judgement, I will reply to the allegations of the Memorial, making this one request, that you will not look for elegance of phrases but force of facts. For as Holy Scripture teaches us, the tongue of learned and wise men is golden, and endowed with highly-decked words, and glittering with splendid elegance as with the brightness of some rich colour, and so captivates and dazzles the eyes of the mind with a shew of beauty. But this gold, if closely handled, may pass current

outwardly, but within is base metal. Consider well, I beseech you, and sift the sect of the Heathens; their professions are grand and lofty, but what they espouse is degenerate and effete, they talk of God but worship idols.

3. The propositions of the honourable Prefect of the city, to which he attaches weight, are these, that Rome (as he asserts) seeks the restoration of her ancient rites, and that stipends are to be assigned to her priests and Vestal virgins, and that it was owing to these being withheld that a general famine has ensued.

4. According to his first proposition, Rome utters a mournful complaint, wanting back (as he asserts) her ancient ceremonies. These sacred rites, he says, repelled

[102 Hannibal from the walls, the Gauls from the Capitol. But even here, in blazoning the efficacy of these rites, he betrays their weakness. According to this, Hannibal long insulted the Roman religion, and pushed his conquest to the very walls of the city, though the gods fought against him. Why did they for whom their gods fought, allow themselves to be besieged?

5. For why speak of the Gauls, whom the remnant of the Romans could not have prevented from entering the sanctuary of the Capitol, if the timid cackling of a goose had not betrayed them. These are the guardians of the Roman temples! Where was Jupiter then? Did he speak in a goose?

6. But why should I deny that their sacred rites fought for the Romans? Yet Hannibal also worshipped the same gods. Let them choose therefore which they will. If these rites conquered in the Romans, they were vanquished in the Carthaginians, but if they were thus overcome in the case of the Carthaginians, neither did they profit the Romans.

7. Away then with this invidious complaint of the Roman people; Rome never dictated it. It is with other words that she addresses them: 'Why do you daily deluge me with the useless gore of the innocent flocks? The trophies of victory depend not on the limbs of cattle, but on the strength of warriors. It was by other powers that I subdued the world. Camillus was my soldier, who recovered the standards which had been taken from the Capitol, and slew those who had captured the Tarpeian rock; valour overthrew those against whom religion had not prevailed. Why should I name Regulus, who gave me even the services of his death? Africanus gained his triumph not among the altars of the Capitol, but among Hannibal's ranks. Why do you produce to me the rites of our ancestors? I abhor the rites of the Neros. What shall I say of the two-month Emperors

63, and the ends of princes knit on to their accession? Or is it a thing unheard of, that

[103 the barbarians should cross their frontiers? Were those men Christians, in whose miserable and unprecedented fate, in the one case a captive Emperor, in the other a captive world

64 proved the falsehood of the rites which promised victory? Was there then no altar of Victory? I am ashamed of my downfall, the pale cheeks of age gather redness from that disgraceful bloodshed. I do not blush to be converted in my old age along with the whole world. It is surely true that no age is too late to learn. Let that old age blush which cannot improve itself. It is not the hoary head of years but of virtue which is venerable.⁶⁵ It is no disgrace to pass to better things. This alone had I in common with the barbarians that of old I knew not God. Your sacrifice is a rite of sprinkling yourselves with the blood of beasts. Why do you look for the voice of God in dead beasts? Come and learn here on earth a heavenly warfare; we live here, but our warfare is above.

Let God Himself, the Creator, teach me the mystery of heaven, not man who knew not himself. Whom should I believe about God, sooner than God Himself? How can I believe you, who confess that you know not what you worship?'

8. By a single path, he says, we cannot arrive at so great a secret. What you are ignorant of, that we have learnt by the voice of God; what you seek after by faint surmises, that we are assured of by the very Wisdom and Truth of God. Our customs therefore and yours do not agree. You ask the Emperors to grant peace to your gods, we pray for peace for the Emperors themselves from Christ. You worship the works of your own hands, we think it sacrilege that any thing which can be made should be called God. God wills not to be worshipped under the form of stones. Nay, your very philosophers have ridiculed this.

9. But if you are led to deny that Christ is God, because you cannot believe that He died, (for you are ignorant how that this was the death not of His Godhead but of His

[104 flesh, whereby it comes to pass that none of the faithful shall die,) how inconsistent are you, who insult by way of worship, and disparage by way of honour. You consider your god to be a block of wood; what an insulting kind of reverence! You believe not that Christ could die; what a respectful kind of unbelief!

10. But, he says, the ancient altars and images ought to be restored, and the temples adorned as of old. This request ought to be made to one who shares the superstition; a Christian Emperor has learned to honour the altar of Christ alone. Why do they compel pious hands and faithful lips to minister to their sacrilege? Let the voice of our Emperor speak of Christ alone, let him declare Him only Whom in heart he believes, for the king's heart is in the Hand of God.⁶⁶

Did ever heathen Emperor raise an altar to God? In demanding a restoration of ancient things they remind us what reverence Christian Emperors ought to pay to the Religion which they profess, since heathen ones paid the utmost to their own superstitions.

11. Long since was our beginning, and now they follow us whom they shut out. We glory in shedding our blood, a trifling expense disturbs them. We consider such things a victory, they esteem them an injury. Never did they confer a greater favour on us than when they commanded Christians to be scourged, and proscribed and slain. Religion made into a reward what unbelief intended for a punishment. Behold their magnanimity! We have grown by wrongs, by want, by punishment; they find that without money their ceremonies cannot be maintained.

12. Let the Vestal virgins, he says, enjoy their privileges. It is for those to say this, who cannot believe in gratuitous virginity, it is for them to allure by profit who distrust virtue. But how many virgins have their promised rewards obtained them? They have barely seven Vestals. Such is the whole number whom the veiled and filleted head, the dye of the purple vest, the pompous litter surrounded by attendants, high privileges, great gains, and a prescribed period of virginity, have collected.

13. Let them turn their mental and bodily eye to us, let them behold a people of chastity, an undefiled multitude, a

[105 virgin assembly. No fillets to adorn their heads, but a veil of common use though dignified by chastity; the blandishments of beauty not curiously sought out, but cast aside; no purple trappings,

no luxurious delicacies, but frequent fastings; no privileges, no gains; all things in short so ordered as to repress any affection in the very exercise of their functions. But in fact by this very exercise their affection to it is conciliated. Chastity is perfected by its own sacrifices. That is not virginity which is bought for money, not preserved for love of holiness; that is not integrity which is bid for at an auction by a pecuniary equivalent, to last but for a time. The first triumph of chastity is to overcome the desire of wealth, for this desire is a temptation to modesty. But let us suppose that virginity ought to be supported by pecuniary bounty. In this case, what an abundance of gifts will overflow upon the Christians; what treasury will contain riches so great? Or do they consider that it ought to be bestowed exclusively on the Vestal virgins? Do not they, who claimed the whole under heathen Emperors, feel some shame in denying that under Christian Princes we ought to participate in the bounty?

11. They complain also that public support is not given to their priests and ministers. What a storm of words is here! To us on the other hand the privileges of inheriting private property

67 is denied by recent laws, and no one complains; we do not feel it to be an injury, for we grieve not at the loss. If a priest would claim the privilege of being exempt from the municipal

68 burthens, he must [106

relinquish his paternal estate and all other property. How would the heathens press this ground of complaint, if they had it, that a priest must purchase the liberty of performing his functions by the loss of his whole patrimony, and at the expense of all his private advantages must buy the right of ministering to the public, and while he claims to hold vigils for the public safety must console himself with the wages of domestic poverty; for he does not sell service but purchase a favour.

15. Compare 69 the two cases. You wish to exempt a Decurio, when the Church may not exempt a priest. Wills are made in favour of ministers of temples; not even profane persons, even of the lowest rank, nor of abandoned character, are excepted; the clergy alone are excluded from the common privilege, by whom alone the general prayer for all men is offered, and the common office performed; no legacy, even of grave widows, no donation is allowed. When no blame can attach to character, a fine is imposed on the office. The legacy which a Christian widow bequeaths to the minister of a temple is valid, that which she bequeaths to the ministers of God is invalid. This I have stated not by way of complaint, but that they may know how much I abstain from complaining of, for I would rather we were losers in money than in grace.

16. But they report that gifts or legacies to the Church have not been taken away. Let them state who has snatched gifts from the temples, a loss which Christians have

70 suffered. Had this been done to the Gentiles, it would rather have been the requital than the infliction of a wrong. Is it now only that they make a plea of justice, put in a claim for equity? Where was this sentiment, when, having despoiled all Christians of their goods, they grudged them the very breath of life, and debarred them from that last burial-rite which was never before denied to any of, the dead? Those whom the heathen flung into it, the sea restored. This is a victory of faith, that they

[107 themselves impugn the acts of their ancestors, in that they condemn their proceedings. But what consistency is there in condemning the acts of those whose gifts they solicit?

17. Yet no man has forbidden gifts to the temples, or legacies to the soothsayers; their lands alone are taken away, because they did not use that religiously which they claimed on the plea of religion. If they avail themselves of our example why did they not copy our practice? The Church possesses nothing but her faith. There are her rents, her revenues. The wealth of the Church is the support of the poor. Let them count up how many prisoners the temples have ransomed, what support they have afforded to the poor, to how many exiles they have ministered the means of life. Hence it is that they have been deprived of their lands, but not of their rights.

18. This is what has been done, and a public famine, as they assert, has avenged this grave impiety, that the private emoluments of the priests have been converted to the public service. For this cause they say it was that men stripped branches of their bark, and moistened their fainting life with this wretched juice. For this cause they were obliged to substitute for corn the Chaonian acorn, and thrust back again to this wretched fare, the food of beasts, they shook the oaks and thus appeased their sore hunger in the woods. As if forsooth these were new prodigies on earth, which never occurred so long as heathen superstition prevailed over the world! But in truth how often before this were the hopes of the greedy husbandmen frustrated by empty oat-stalks, while the blade of corn sought for in the furrows disappointed the race of peasants.

19. Why did the Greeks attribute oracles to their oaks, but that they fancied their sylvan fare was the gift of their heavenly religion? Such are the gifts which they suppose to come from their gods. Who but heathen ever worshipped the trees of Dodona, bestowing honour on the sorry sustenance of the sacred grove

71? It is not probable that their gods in their anger gave them for a punishment what they were wont when appeased to confer as a gift.

|108

20. But what equity were it, that because they are annoyed at the refusal of sustenance to a few priests they should themselves refuse it to every one? in that case their vengeance is more severe than was the fault. But in truth the cause they assign is not adequate to produce so great infirmity of a failing world, as that, when the crops were green, the full grown hopes of the season should all at once perish.

21. Certain it is that many years ago the rights of the temples were abolished throughout the world, is it only now that it has occurred to the gods of the Gentiles to avenge their injuries? Can it be said that the Nile failed to overflow his banks as usual, to avenge the losses of the priests of the City, when he did not do so to avenge his own priests?

22. But supposing that in the past year it was the wrongs of their gods that were avenged, why are the same wrongs neglected in the present year? Now the country people do not pluck up and eat the roots of herbs, nor seek solace from the sylvan berry, nor gather their food from thorns; but rejoicing in their successful labours they wonder at their own harvest, and their hopes fulfilled compensate for their fast, the earth having yielded us her produce with interest.

23. Who then is so inexperienced on human affairs as to be amazed at the vicissitudes of the seasons? And yet even last year we know that most provinces had an abundant harvest. What shall I say of Gaul which was more fertile than usual? The Pannonias

72 sold corn which they had not sown, and the second

73 Rhaetia learnt the danger of her own fertility, for being used to security from her sterility, she drew down an enemy on herself by her abundance. Liguria and Venice are replenished by the fruits of autumn. So then the former year was not withered by sacrilege, while the present has overflowed with the fruits of faith. Nor can they deny that the vineyards

|109 produced an overflowing crop. Thus our harvest yielded its produce with interest, and we enjoyed the benefits of a more abundant vintage.

24. The last and most weighty topic remains; as to whether your Majesties should restore those aids which have been profitable to yourselves, for he says, 'Let them defend you, and be worshipped by us.' This, most faithful Princes, we cannot endure; that they should make it a taunt to us that they supplicate their gods in your name, and without your command commit an atrocious sacrilege, taking your connivance as consent. Let them keep their guardians to themselves, let these guardians, if they can, protect their own. But if they cannot protect those who worship them, how can they protect you who worship them not?

25. Our ancestral rites, he says, should be preserved. But what if all things have become better? The world itself, which at first was compacted by the gathering together of the elemental seeds through the vast void, an unconsolidated sphere, or was obscured by the thick darkness of the yet unordered work, was it not afterwards endowed with the forms of things which constitute its beauty, and were not the heaven sea and earth distinguished from each other? The earth rescued from dripping darkness was amazed at its new sun. In the beginning too the day shines not, but as time goes on it is bright and warm with the increase of light and heat.

26. The moon herself, which in the prophetic oracles represents the Church, when first she rises again, and repairs her monthly wanings, is hidden from us by darkness, but gradually she fills her horns, or completes them as she comes opposite to the sun, and gleams with a bright and glorious splendour.

27. In former days, the earth knew not how to be wrought into fruitfulness; but afterwards when the careful husbandman began to till the fields, and to clothe the bare soil with vineyards, it was softened by this domestic culture, and put off its rugged nature.

28. So too the first season of the year itself, which has imparted a like habit to ourselves, is bare of produce, then,

|110 as time goes on, it blossoms out in flowers soon to fade, and in the end finds its maturity in fruits

74.

29. So we, while young in age, experience an infancy of understanding, but as we grow in years lay aside the rudeness of our faculties.

30. Let them say then that all things ought to have continued as at first; that the world once covered with darkness is now displeasing because it shines with the beams of the sun. And how much better is it to have dispelled the darkness of the mind than that of the body, and that the

beam of faith has shone forth than that of the sun. So then the early stages of the world as of all else have been unsettled, that the venerable age of hoary faith might follow. Let those who are affected by this find fault with the harvest too, because it ripens late; or with the vintage, because it is in the fall of the year; or with the olive, because it is the latest of fruits.

31. So then our harvest too is the faith of the soul; the grace of the Church is the vintage of good works, which from the beginning of the world flourished in the saints, but in these last

days is spread over the people; to the intent that all might perceive that it is not into rude minds that the faith of Christ has insinuated itself, but these opinions which before prevailed being shaken off (for without a contest there is no crown of victory) the truth was preferred according as is just.

32. If the old rites pleased, why did Rome adopt alien ones? I pass over the covering of the ground with costly buildings, and shepherds' huts glittering with the gold of a degenerate age

75. Why, to speak of the very subject of their complaint, have they admitted in their rivalry the images of captured cities, and of conquered gods, and the foreign rites of an alien superstition? Whence do they derive their precedent for Cybele washing her chariot in a

[111 stream to counterfeit the Almo 76? Whence came the Phrygian seers, and the deities of faithless Carthage ever hateful to Rome, her for instance, whom the Africans worship as Caelestis

77, and the Persians as Mitra, the greater part of the world as Venus, the same deity under different names. So also they have believed Victory to be a goddess, which is in truth a gift not a power, is bestowed and does not rule, comes by the aid of legions not by the power of religion. Great forsooth is the goddess whom the number of soldiers claims, or the issue of the battle confers!

33. And her altar they now ask to have set up in the Senate-house at Rome, that is to say, where a majority

78 of Christians assemble. There are altars in all temples, an altar also in the temple of victories. Being pleased with numbers, they celebrate their sacrifices every where. But to insist on a sacrifice on this one altar, what is it but to insult over the Faith? Is it to be borne that while a Gentile sacrifices Christians must attend? Let their eyes, he says, drink in the smoke whether they will or no; their ears the music; their mouth the ashes; their nostrils the incense; and though they loathe it, let the embers of our

[112 hearths besprinkle their faces. Is it not enough for him that the baths, the colonnades, the streets are filled with images? Even in that general assembly, are we not to meet upon equal terms? The believing portion of the Senate will be bound by the voices of them that call the gods to witness, by the oaths of them that swear by them. If they refuse, they will seem to prove their falsehood, if they acquiesce, to acquiesce in a sacrilege.

34. Where, he asks, shall we swear allegiance to your Majesties' laws and commands? Your minds then, of which your laws are the outward expression, gather support and secure fidelity by heathen rites. Moreover your Majesties' faith is assailed not only when you are present, but also, which is more, when you are absent, for you constrain when you command. Constantius, of

illustrious memory, though not yet initiated into the sacred Mysteries, thought himself polluted by the sight of that altar; he commanded it to be removed, he did not command it to be replaced. His order bears all the authority of an Act, his silence does not bear the authority of a precept.

35. And let no one rest satisfied because he is absent. He is more to be considered present who unites himself to the minds of others than he who gives the testimony of his visible presence. It is a greater matter to be united in mind than to be joined in body. The Senate regards you as its presidents who summon its meetings; at your bidding it assembles; to you, not to the gods of the heathen, does she resign her conscience; you she prefers to her children though not to her faith. This is the affection worth seeking, an affection more powerful than dominion, if faith, which preserves dominion, be secured.

36. But perhaps some one may be influenced by the thought that if so, a most orthodox Emperor 79 has been left without his reward; as if the reward of good actions was to be estimated by the frail tenure of things present. And what wise man is there who knows not that human affairs move in a certain cycle and order, and meet not always

|113 with the same success, but their state is subject to vicissitudes?

37. Who more fortunate than Cneius Pompeius was ever sent forth by the temples of Rome? But he, after compassing the circuit of the globe in three triumphs, vanquished in battle, and driven into exile beyond the bounds of the empire he had saved, perished by the hand of an Eunuch

80 of Canopus.

38. What nobler king than Cyrus king of the Persians has the whole Eastern world produced? He too, after he had conquered the most powerful princes in battle, and detained them as his prisoners, was worsted and slain by the arms of a woman

81. That king who had conferred on the vanquished the honour of sitting at meat with him, had his head cut off and enclosed in a vessel full of blood, and so was bid to satiate himself, exposed to the mockery of a woman. So in the course of his life like is not matched with like, but things most unlike.

39. Again who was more assiduous in sacrificing than Hamilcar 82

general of the Carthaginians? During the whole time of the battle he took his station between the ranks of the combatants, and there offered sacrifice: then, when he found himself vanquished, he threw himself upon the fire on which he was burning his victims, that he might extinguish even with his own body those flames which he had learnt availed him nothing.

40. And what shall I say of Julian? who blindly believing the answers of the diviners, deprived himself of the means of retreat

83. Thus even when the circumstances are |114

common there is not a common cause of offence, for our promises have deluded no one.

41. I have replied to those who harass me as though I had not been harassed: for my object has been to refute their Memorial, not to expose their superstitions. But let this very Memorial make

your Majesty more cautious. For by pointing out that of a series of former Emperors, those who reigned first followed the rites of their ancestors, and their successors did not remove them, and by observing upon this, that if the religion of older ones was not an example, the connivance of the more recent ones was, they have plainly shewn that you owe it to the faith which you profess not to follow the precedent of heathen rites, and to brotherly love not to violate your brothers' ordinances. For if they for the sake of their own cause have praised the connivance of those Emperors, who being Christians, have not abrogated heathen decrees, how much more are you bound to shew deference to brotherly affection, and, whereas you would be bound to wink at what perhaps you did not approve, for fear of detracting from your brothers' decrees, now to maintain what you judge to be in accordance both with your own faith and the tie of brotherhood.

LETTER XIX. [A.D.385.]

VIGILIUS, to whom this letter is addressed, is supposed by the Benedictine Editors to have been the Bishop of Trent, (Tridentum,) who is commemorated in the Roman Martyrology. He had written to S. Ambrose, on his consecration as Bishop, to ask his guidance and instruction, and S. Ambrose replies, first with brief general directions, somewhat resembling those of Letter 11, and then dwells at length on the duty of preventing intermarriage between Christians and heathens, and recounts at full length, in support of this, the history of Samson. At the time when heathenism was rapidly dying out, it is clear how important a point this would seem, and we do not wonder at the stress which S. Ambrose lays on it.

AMBROSE TO VIGILIUS.

1. BEING newly consecrated to the sacred office, you |115

have requested me to furnish you with the outlines of your teaching. Having built up yourself as was fitting, seeing you have been thought worthy of so high an office, you have now to be informed how to build up others also.

2. And in the first place remember that it is the Church of God that is committed to you, and be therefore always on your guard against the intrusion of any scandal, lest the body thereof become as it were common by any admixture of heathen. It is on this account that Scripture says to you Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, but go to Mesopotamia, to the house of Bethuel (that is the house of Wisdom) and take thee a wife from thence.⁸⁴

Mesopotamia is a country in the East, surrounded by the two greatest rivers in those parts, the Tigris and Euphrates, which take their rise in Armenia, falling, each by a different channel, into the Red sea; and so the Church is signified under the name of Mesopotamia, for she fertilizes the minds of the faithful by the mighty streams of wisdom and justice, pouring into them the grace of Baptism, the type of which was foreshewn in the Red sea, and washing away sin. Wherefore you must instruct the people that they should contract marriage not with strange-born but with Christian families.

3. Let no man defraud his hired servant of his due wages, for we too are the servants of our God, and look for the reward of our labour from Him. You then, (you must say) O merchant, whoever you be, refuse your servant his wages of money, that is, of what is vile and worthless, but to you will be denied the reward of heavenly promises: therefore thou shalt not defraud thy hired servant

of his reward, as the Law

saith.⁸⁵

4. Thou shalt not give thy money upon usury, for it is written that he who hath not given his money upon usury shall dwell in the tabernacle of God,⁸⁶

for he is cast down, who seeks for usurious gains.⁸⁷ Therefore let the Christian, if he have it, give money as though he were not to receive it again, or at all events only the principal which he has given. By so doing he receives no small increase of grace. Otherwise to lend would be to deceive not to succour. For what can be more cruel than to give money to one

[116 that hath not, and then to exact double? He that can not pay the simple sum how can he pay double the amount?

5. Let Tobit be an example to us, who never required again the money he had lent, till the end of his life; and that rather that he might not defraud his heir, than in order to levy and recover the money he had lent out.⁸⁸ Nations have often been ruined by usury, and this has been the cause of public destruction. Wherefore it must be the principal care of us Bishops, to extirpate those vices which we find to prevail most extensively.

6. Teach them that they ought to exercise hospitality willingly rather than of necessity, so that in shewing this favour they may not betray a churlish disposition of mind, and thus in the very reception of their guest the kindness be spoilt by wrong, but rather let it be fostered by the practice of social duties, and by the offices of kindness. It is not rich gifts that are required of thee, but willing services, full of peace and accordant harmony. Better is a dinner of herbs

⁸⁹ with grace and friendship than that the banquet should be adorned with exquisite viands, while the sentiment of kindness is lacking. We read of a people perishing by a grievous destruction on account of the violation of the laws of hospitality. Through lust also fierce wars have been kindled.⁹⁰

7. But there is scarce any thing more pernicious than marriage with a foreigner; already the passions both of lust and disorder, and the evils of sacrilege are inflamed. For seeing that the marriage ceremony itself ought to be sanctified by the priestly veil and benediction, how can that be called a marriage when there is not agreement in faith? Since their prayers ought to be in common, how can there be the love of a common wedlock between those whose religion it different. Often have men ensnared by the love of women betrayed their faith, as did the Jews at Baal-phegor. For which cause Phineas took a sword, and slew the Hebrew and the Midianitish woman, and appeased the Divine vengeance, that the whole people might not be destroyed.⁹¹

8. And why should I bring forward more examples? I will produce one out of many, from the mention of which

[117 will appear what an evil thing it is to marry a strange woman. Who ever was mightier or more richly endowed from his very cradle with God's Spirit than Samson the Nazarite? Yet was he betrayed by a woman, and by her means failed to retain God's favour. We will now narrate his birth and the course of his whole life arranged in the style of history, following the contents of the sacred Book, which in substance not in form is as follows.

9. The Philistines for many years kept the Hebrew people in subjection; for they had lost the prerogative of faith, whereby their fathers had gained victories. Yet had not their Maker wholly blotted out the mark of their election nor the lot of their inheritance; but as they were often puffed up by success, He for the most part delivered them into the hand of their enemies, that thus, after the manner of men, they might be led to seek for themselves the remedy of their evils from heaven. For it is when any adversity oppresses us, that we submit ourselves to God; good fortune is wont to puff up the mind. This is proved by experience, as in other instances, so particularly in that change of fortune whereby success returned again from the Philistines to the Hebrews.

10. After the spirit of the Hebrews had been so subdued by the pressure of a long subjection that no one dared with a manly spirit to rouse them to liberty, Samson, fore-ordained by the Divine oracle, was raised up to them. A great man he was, not one of the multitude, but first among the few, and beyond controversy far excelling all in bodily strength. And he is to be regarded by us with great admiration from the beginning, not because in his early abstinence from vice he gave signal proofs of temperance and sobriety, nor on account of his long preserving as a Nazarite his locks unshorn, but because from his very youth, which in others is an age of softness, he achieved illustrious deeds of virtue, perfect beyond the measure of human nature. By these he gained credence to the Divine prophecy, that it was not for nothing that such grace had gone before upon him, that an Angel came down by whom his birth beyond their hopes was announced to his parents, to be the leader and protector of his countrymen,

[118 now for a length of years harassed by the tyranny of the Philistines.

11. His father was of the tribe of Dan, a man fearing God, born of no mean rank, and eminent above others, his mother was barren of body, but in virtues of the mind not unfruitful; seeing that in the sanctuary of her soul she was counted worthy to receive the visit of an Angel, obeyed his command and fulfilled his prophecy. Not enduring however to know the secrets even of God apart from her husband she mentioned to him that she had seen a man of God, of beautiful form, bringing her the Divine promise of future offspring, and that she, confiding in this promise, was led to share with her husband her faith in the heavenly promises. But he, informed of this, devoutly offered his prayers to God, that the grace of this vision might be conferred on him also, saying, To me, Lord, let Thine Angel come.⁹²

12. I am of opinion therefore that it was not from jealousy of his wife, because she was remarkable for her beauty that he acted thus, as one writer

⁹³ has supposed, but rather that he was filled with desire of the Divine grace, and sought to participate in the benefit of the heavenly vision. For one whose mind was depraved could not have found such favour with the Lord, as that an Angel should return to his house, who, having given those monitions which the Divine announcement made requisite, was suddenly carried away in the form of a smoking flame. This sight, which terrified the man, the woman interpreted more auspiciously, and so removed his solicitude, in that to see God is a sign of good not evil.

13. Now Samson, approved by such signal tokens from above, turned his thoughts as soon as he grew up, to marriage; whether this was that he abhorred those vague and licentious desires in which young men are wont to indulge, or that he was seeking an occasion of releasing the necks of his countrymen from the power of the hard yoke of the Philistines. Wherefore going down to

Timnath, (this is the name of a city situated in those parts where the Philistines then dwelt,) he beheld a maiden of a pleasing form and beautiful countenance, and he besought his parents, by whose company he was supported in his journey, to ask

[119 her for him in marriage. But they, not knowing that his intention, either, if the Philistine refused her to him, to be more fierce against them, or, if they assented, to remove their disposition to injure their subjects; and since from such a connexion a certain equality and kindliness of intercourse would naturally grow, or, on the other hand, if any offence were given, this desire of revenge would be more vehement, deemed that this maiden ought to be avoided as a foreigner. But after they had vainly attempted to change the purpose of their son by urging upon him these lawful objections, they of their own accord acquiesced in his desire.

14. This request was granted; and Samson on his return to visit his promised bride, turned a little way out of the road, and straightway there met him a lion from the wood, fierce in its savage freedom. Samson had no companion, nor any weapon in his hand; but he felt ashamed to fly, and conscious power gave him courage. He caught the lion as it rushed upon him in his arms, and strangled it by the tightness of his embrace, leaving it near the wayside lying upon the

underwood, for the spot was clothed with luxuriant herbage, and planted with vineyards. The skin of the beast he thought would be little esteemed by his beloved bride, for seasons such as these derive their grace not from savage trophies, but rather from gentle joys and festal garlands. On his returning by the same road he found an honeycomb in the belly of the lion, and carried it off as a gift to the maiden and her parents; for such gifts befit a bride. And having first tasted the honey, he gave them the comb to eat, but was silent as to whence it came.

15. But it happened on a certain day that a nuptial feast was held, and that the young men inspirited by the banquet provoked each other to sport by question and answer, and as they assailed each other with wanton jests, as is the wont on such occasions, the contest of pleasure waxed hot. And then Samson put forth this riddle to his comrades, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness,⁹⁴

promising them as a reward of their sagacity if they guessed it, thirty sheets and as many changes [120 of garments according to the number of the company, while they on their part, if they could not solve the riddle, were to pay a like penalty.

16. But they, unable to untie the knot and to expound the riddle, induced his wife, partly by intimidation, partly by importunate entreaties, to require from her husband the solution of the riddle to be a token of conjugal affection in return for her love. And she, either terrified, and won over as women are wont to be, as if complaining tenderly of her husband's aversion, began to profess grief that she, the consort and intimate of his whole life, had not learnt this, but that she was treated like the others as one to whom her own husband's secret should not be confided. Thou dost but hate me, she said, and lovest me not, thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people and hast not told it me.⁹⁵

17. Samson's mind, otherwise inflexible, was softened by these and the like blandishments of his wife, and discovered to her his riddle, and she told it to her countrymen. And they, having thus but just learned it on the seventh day, which was the term prescribed for its solution, answered after

this manner, What is sweeter than honey, or what is stronger than a lion? To which he replied. Nor is ought more treacherous than a woman; If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle, and he straightway went down to

Ascalon, and slew thirty men, and taking their spoils, bestowed on the men who had expounded the riddle their promised reward.⁹⁶

18. But the perfidy of the maiden being thus discovered, he abstained from intercourse with her, and returned to his father's house. The damsel, disturbed in mind, and justly dreading that the wrath of this mighty man would be kindled into fury by this wrong, gave her hand to another man, one whom Samson, relying on his fidelity, had brought with him as his bridesman to his marriage. But neither by this expedient of a marriage did she avoid offence. For when the affair was disclosed, and he was forbidden to return to his wife, and her father said that she was married to another man, but that he might, if he chose, marry her sister, he was exasperated by the affront, and determined to take a

[121 public revenge for his domestic injury. Wherefore he took three hundred foxes, and in the heat of summer, when the corn was now ripe in the fields, he tied them together two and two by the tails, and fastened a burning firebrand between them, binding it with a firm knot, and by way of avenging his wrong turned them loose among the sheaves which the Philistines had cut. But the foxes, terrified by the fire, scattered flames whichever way they turned, and burnt the harvest. And the Philistines, incensed by the loss of all their corn in that region, told it to the princes of their land. And they sent men to

Timnath, and burnt in the fire the woman who had been faithless to her husband, and her parents and all her house; saying that she had been the cause of this injury and devastation, and ought not to have provoked a man who could avenge himself by a public calamity.

19. But Samson did not forgive the Philistines their wrong, nor rest content with this measure of vengeance, but he slew them with a great slaughter, and many of them fell by the sword. And he retired to

Etam, a torrent in the wilderness, where was a rock, a stronghold of the tribe of Judah. Now the Philistines, not daring to attack him, nor scale the steep heights on which this fortress stood, began to assail with threats of war the tribe of Judah: but when they saw that the plea of the men of Judah was a good one, that it was neither just nor fair nor expedient for them to destroy their own subjects and tributaries, especially for another man's fault, they took counsel, and required that the author of the outrage should be delivered up to them, in order that his countrymen might be exonerated from the consequences of it.

20. These terms being imposed upon them, the men of Judah gathered together three thousand of their tribe and went up to him, and premising that they were subject to the Philistines, and obliged to obey them, not willingly but by terror, they thus sought to turn away from themselves the odium of their act, throwing it upon those by whom they were constrained. Wherefore he thus replied, What kind of Justice is it, O children of Abraham, that the satisfaction I have taken for my bride first over-reached and

[122 then torn from me should be injurious to me, and that I may not safely avenge this private injury? Have ye so turned your minds to the low offices of slaves, as to become the ministers of the insolence of others, and to turn your arms against yourselves? If I must perish, because I gave free vent to my grief, I had rather perish by the hand of the Philistines. My home has been attempted, my wife tampered with, if I have not been allowed to live without harm from them, at least let my own countrymen be free from the guilt of my death. I did but requite the injury I had received, I did not inflict one. Judge ye whether it was an equal return. They complain of the loss of their home, I of the loss of my wife; compare the sheaves of corn, with a companion of the marriage bed. They have sanctioned my grief by avenging my injuries. Consider to what an office they have appointed you. They desire you to put to death that man, whom they themselves have judged worthy to be avenged on those who wronged him, and to whose vengeance they ministered. But if your necks are thus bowed down to these proud men, deliver me into the hand of the enemy, slay me not yourselves; I refuse not to die, but I shrink from implicating you in my death. If from fear ye comply with their insolence, bind my hands with chains: though unarmed they will break their bonds and find a weapon for themselves. They will assuredly consider that you have satisfied the imposed condition, if you deliver me alive into their hands.

21. When they heard this, though three thousand men had come up, they swore to him that they would make no attempt on his life, only he must submit to be bound, in order that they might formally surrender him, and so keep clear of the crime of which they were accused.

22. Their word being pledged he came out of the cave, and left his fastness on the rock, and was bound with two ropes. When he saw the mighty men of the Philistines drawing near to seize him, his spirit rose within him, and he brake all his bands, and taking up a jaw bone of an ass that lay near he slew a thousand men, and put to flight the rest by this exploit of

valour, whole hosts of armed soldiers giving way to one unarmed man. Thus those who

[123 ventured to close with him hand to hand he slew without effort; the others saved themselves by flight. Wherefore to this day the place is called Agon

97, because there Samson by his great valour achieved a glorious contest.

23. And I would that his moderation in victory had been equal to his courage against the enemy. But as is frequently the case, with mind unused to prosperity, he ascribed to himself the issue of the battle, which was due to the Divine favour and protection, saying, With the jaw bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men.⁹⁸

Nor did he build an altar to God, nor offer a victim, but neglecting sacrifice and assuming to himself the glory, to immortalize his triumph by a memorial name he called the place, The slaying of the jaw bone.

21. And now he began to burn with thirst, and there was no water, and yet he had great need of it. Wherefore perceiving that there is nothing so easy for human strength, as not to be rendered difficult by the absence of Divine aid, he besought God not to lay to his charge that he had ascribed ought to himself, giving Him all the glory of the victory, by the words, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of Thy servant,⁹⁹

and now help me, for lo, I die of thirst, and thirst gives me over into the hand of those over whom Thou hast given me so great a triumph. Wherefore God in His mercy clave a hollow place in the jaw bone which Samson had cast aside, and a stream of water flowed from it, and Samson drank, and his spirit revived, and he called the place 'the invoking of the spring,' because by his suppliant prayers he made amends for his boast of victory, and thus two judgements were opportunely declared, the one that arrogance soon incurs offence, the other that without any offence humility gains reconciliation.

25. Having, in the course of events closed his war with the Philistines, and shunning the sloth of his countrymen, Samson now betook himself to Gaza, which was in the

[124 region of the Philistines, and lodged there. When the men of Gaza knew this they did not dissemble or pass it over, but beset his lodging in haste, and guarded all the doors of the house that he might not escape by night. But Samson knowing their design, in the middle of the night forestalling the snare which had been laid for him, took the pillars of the house in his arms, and carried the whole structure and the weight of the roof on his back, up to a high hill above Hebron, a city inhabited by the Hebrews.

26. But now his licence transgressed the limits not only of his paternal territory, but of good morals, such as ancient discipline had prescribed, and this brought upon him destruction in the end. For although he had experienced in his first marriage the treachery of a foreign wife, and ought to have avoided it in future, he did not shun connecting himself with the harlot Delilah, and by his passionate love of her opened a way for the craft of his enemies to assail him. For the Philistines came up to her, and promised each of them to give her eleven hundred pieces of silver if she would disclose to them wherein his assurance of strength lay, that by means of this knowledge they might entrap and take him.

27. But she having once prostituted herself for money, began during the banquet and the blandishments of love, cunningly and craftily to inquire of him in what respect his strength excelled that of others, and at the same time, as if solicitous and fearful for his safety, to entreat him to confide to his beloved by what means he could be bound and subdued into the power of others. But he, still self-possessed and unshaken, opposed craft to the allurements of the harlot, and told her that if he were bound with withs yet green and not dried, his strength would be like that of other men. When the Philistines learnt this from Delilah, they bound him while asleep with green

withs, and then awoke him as though on a sudden, but found that he had not fallen off from his accustomed fortitude, but bursting its bonds his freed strength was able to resist and drive back a host of assailants.

28. This having failed, Delilah, as if she had been [125

mocked began with complaints to renew her arts and to require a pledge of his love. Samson, still firm of purpose, intimated to her that, if he were bound by seven ropes which had never been used, he would fall into the hands of the enemy, but this also was in vain. The third time he disclosed part of the secret, and now drawing nearer to his fall, told her that, if the seven locks of his head were unfastened and woven

100 to about a cubit's length, his strength would depart from him. But herein also he deluded those who were plotting against his life.

29. But last of all the wanton woman complaining that she had been so often deceived, and grieving that her lover deemed her unworthy to be entrusted with his secret, and that under her pretext of succour her treacherous purpose was suspected, won his confidence by her tears. By this means, and because also it was ordained that this man of hitherto unshaken fortitude should fall into calamity, Samson was touched and opened to her his heart. He told her that he possessed within him the power of God, that he was sanctified to the Lord, and that by His command he let his hair grow, and that if it were shorn, he would cease to be a

Nazarite, and lose the use of his strength. The Philistines having discovered through her means the man's weakness, bring her the reward of her perfidy, thus binding her to the commission of the crime.

30. And she, having wearied him by the wanton blandishments of love, threw him into slumber, and then caused the seven locks of his hair to be cut by a razor, whereupon by his transgression of the commandment his strength was immediately lost. When he woke out of sleep, he said, I will go out as at other times, and shake myself

101 against mine adversaries, but he was no longer sensible of activity and strength, his vigour was gone, his grace was departed. Wherefore, considering within himself that he had incautiously trusted to women, and that, convicted of infirmity, it would be sheer folly for him to contend any longer, he

[126 gave up his eyes to blindness, and his hands to the fetters, and being bound with chains he entered the confinement from which he had been for a long season free.

31. But in process of time his hair began to grow again; and on the occasion of a great feast Samson is brought out of prison to the assembly of the Philistines, and set in sight of the people. There were nearly three thousand in number, men and women; and they insulted him with bitter reproaches, and carried him about in mockery, a trial harder to be borne than the very reality of captivity by a man conscious of innate power. For to live and die is natural, to be a laughing stock is counted a disgrace. Desirous therefore either of consoling himself by avenging so great an indignity, or of forestalling it for the future by death, he pretended that from the weakness of his limbs and the weight of his fetters he could not support himself, and desired the boy who guided his steps to bring him to the nearest pillars by which the whole house was supported. Being brought near, he grasped with both hands the props of the building, and while the Philistines were intent on the sacrificial feast which they were offering to Dagon their god, by whose help they deemed their adversary had been delivered into their power, reckoning a woman's perfidy as a gift from above, he called unto the Lord, and said, 'O Lord God, remember me I pray Thee this once, that I may be avenged of the heathen for my two eyes, 102

and that they give not glory to their gods as if by their help they had gotten me into their power. Let me die with the Philistines, that they may find my weakness to have been no less fatal to them than my strength.'

32. Then he shook the columns with great force, and broke them in pieces, whereon followed the downfall of the upper roof, crushing Samson himself and casting down all those who were looking on from above. Thus were a great number of men and women slain together, and by an end not unworthy or disgraceful, but excelling all his former victories, the dying Samson obtained a triumph. For although to that point and thenceforward he was invincible, and incomparable during life among men versed in war, yet in death he conquered himself, and shewed an

[127 unconquerable soul, so as to despise and count for nothing that end of life which all men fear.

33. Thus it was through his valour that the last day of his life was also the sum of his victories, and that he met not a captive but a triumphant end. But to have been entrapped by a woman is to be ascribed to nature rather than to the man, because it was by the condition of his humanity more than through his own fault that he fell; for this is wont to be overcome, and yield to the allurements of wickedness. Wherefore, since Scripture bears witness that he slew more in his death than while in the light of life, it would seem that his captivity happened rather for the destruction of his adversaries than for his own fall and humiliation. For he whose burial was more efficacious than his living strength cannot be said to have found himself inferior. Lastly, he was overwhelmed and buried not by the weapons but by the bodies of his enemies, and thus, covered by his own triumph, he left a glorious memorial to posterity. For he judged his countrymen, whom he found enslaved, twenty years, and buried in his native soil, left them inheritors of liberty.

34. By this example then it is plain that alliances with strangers should be avoided, lest through love for our wife the snares of treachery should be successful.

Farewell and love us, as we love you.

LETTER XX. [A.D. 385.]

AFTER the death of Gratian the empire of the West was nominally in the hands of Valentinian the 2nd, but, as he was a mere boy, the real power was exercised by his mother Justina, who was an Arian. S. Ambrose had already resisted her successfully in the question of the election of a Bishop at Sirmium (see note in p. 39), and although he had performed a difficult and dangerous service for them two years before this, in going on an embassy to Maximus after the death of Gratian, Justina and Valentinian were bitterly hostile to him, and supported the Arian faction against him. In March, A.D. 385, S. Ambrose was summoned to the Palace, as he himself relates in the Sermon of which he gives an account in this letter (§ 15 sqq.) and called upon to give up one of the Churches, the Portian Basilica, outside the walls, for the use of the Arians. This he refused, and was so [128 energetically supported by the people of Milan, that the demand was for the time withdrawn. Various other efforts were then made either to induce him to yield or to get him out of the way, (one of the latter is recounted in a note on the Sermon against Auxentius § 15) but they all failed. At last on the Friday before Palm Sunday a fresh demand is made, not for the Portian Basilica, as a promise had been given that no further claim should be made upon it, but for the New Basilica which was within the walls. It is at this point that the narrative which S. Ambrose gives in this letter to his sister Marcellina begins. It recounts the occurrences from the Friday to the Wednesday in Holy Week, when the persecution was again for the time abandoned. TO MARCELLINA.

1. IN nearly all your letters you inquire anxiously about the Church; hear then what is going on. The day after I received the letter in which you told me how you had been troubled in your dreams, a heavy weight of troubles began to assail me. It was not now the Portian Basilica, that is the one without the walls, which was demanded, but the new Basilica, that is, one within the walls, which is larger in size.

2. In the first place some chief men ¹⁰³, counsellors of state, appealed to me to give up the Basilica, and restrain the people from raising any commotion. I replied as a matter of course, that a Bishop could not give up God's house.

3. On the following day the people expressed their approval in the Church, and the Prefect

¹⁰⁴ also came thither, and began to urge us to yield up at least the Portian Basilica. The people were clamorous against this, whereupon he departed, saying, that he would report matters to the Emperor.

4. On the following day, which was the Lord's day, ¹²⁹

having dismissed the catechumens after the lessons and sermon, I was explaining the Creed to some candidates for Baptism in the Baptistery of the Church. There the news was reported to me that, on learning that officials

¹⁰⁵ had been sent from the palace to the Portian Basilica, and were putting up the Imperial hangings

¹⁰⁶, many of the people were proceeding thither. I however continued my ministrations, and began to celebrate the Eucharist

¹⁰⁷.

5. While I was offering, tidings were brought me that the populace had seized upon one

Castulus, whom the Arians called a priest. While making the oblation I began to weep bitterly and to beseech God's aid that no blood might be shed in the Church's quarrel; or if so, that it might be my own, and that not for my people only, but even for the ungodly themselves. But, to be brief, I sent some presbyters and deacons, and rescued the man.

6. The severest penalties were immediately decreed; first upon the whole body of merchants. And thus, during the sacred period of the last Week, wherein the debtor was wont to be loosed from his bonds, chains are placed on innocent men's necks, and two hundred pounds' weight of gold is demanded within three days. They reply they will willingly give as much, or twice as much again, so that they may not violate their faith. The prisons too were filled with tradesmen.

7. All the Officials of the palace, the Recorders, the Proctors, the Apparitors of the several Courts, on the pretext of its being unlawful for them to be present at seditious assemblies, were commanded to keep at home, severe threats were held out against men of high rank in case the Basilica was not delivered up. The persecution

¹³⁰ raged, and had an opening been afforded, they seemed likely to break out into every kind of outrage.

8. I myself had an interview with the Counts and Tribunes, who urged me to give up the Basilica without delay, declaring that the Emperor was acting on his rights, inasmuch as he had supreme power over all things. I replied that if he required of me what was my own, my estate, my money, or the like, I would not refuse it, although all my property really belonged to the poor, but that sacred things were not subject to the power of the Emperor. 'If my patrimony be required,' I said, 'take it; if my person, here it is. Will you drag me away to prison, or to death? I will go with pleasure. I will not entrench myself by gathering a multitude round me, I will not lay hold of the Altar and beg for my life; rather will I offer myself to death for the Altar.'

9. In fact my mind was shaken with fear when I found that armed men had been sent to occupy the Basilica, I was seized with dread lest in protecting the Church, blood might be shed which would tend to bring destruction on the whole city. I prayed that if so great a city or even all Italy were to perish I might not survive. I shrank from the odium of shedding blood, and I offered my own throat to the knife. Some officers of the Goths

108 were present; I addressed them, saying, 'Is it for this that you have become citizens of Rome, to shew yourselves disturbers of the public peace? Whither will you go, if everything here is destroyed?'

10. I was called upon to calm the people. I replied that it was in my power not to excite them, that it was in God's Hand to pacify them. That if I was considered the instigator, I ought to be punished, that I ought to be banished into whatever desert places of the earth they chose. Having said this, they departed, and I spent the

[131 whole day in the old Church. Thence I returned home to sleep; that if any man wished to arrest me, he might find me prepared.

11. When, before dawn, I passed out over the threshold, I found the Basilica surrounded and occupied by soldiers. And it was said that they had intimated to the Emperor that he was at liberty to go to Church if he wished it, that they would be ready to attend him if he were going to the assembly of the Catholics; otherwise that they would go to the assembly which Ambrose had convened.

12. Not a single Arian dared come out, for there were none among the citizens, only a few of the royal household, and some of the Goths, who, as of old they made their waggon their home, so now make the Church their

waggon. Wherever that woman goes, she carries with her all those of her own communion. The groans of the people gave me notice that the Basilica was surrounded; but while the lessons are being read word is brought me that the New Basilica also is full of people, that the crowd seemed greater than when all were at liberty, that they were calling for a Reader. To be brief, the soldiers themselves, who were found to have occupied the Basilica, being informed of my directions that the people should abstain from communion with them, began to come to our assembly. At the sight of them the minds of the women are agitated, one of them rushes forth. But the soldiers themselves exclaimed that they had come to pray not to fight. The people raised a cry. In the most modest, most resolute, most faithful manner they entreated that I would go to that Basilica. In that Basilica also the people were reported to desire my presence.

14. Then I began the following discourse: Ye have heard, my sons, the lesson from the book of Job, which according to the usual service of the season, is now in course. By use the devil knew that this book was to be declared, already all the power of his temptations is laid open and betrayed, and therefore he exerted himself to-day with greater violence. But thanks be to our God Who hath so confirmed you in faith and patience. I went up into the pulpit to admire Job,

I found I had all of you to admire |132

as Jobs. Job lives again in each of you, in each the patience and virtue of that saint is reflected. For what more opportune could be said by Christian men than that which the Holy Spirit hath spoken in you this day? 'We petition your Majesty, we use no force, we feel no fear, but we petition.' This is what becomes Christians, to desire peace and quiet fear, and still not to let the steadfastness of faith and truth be shaken even by peril of death. For the Lord is our Guide, Who will save those who hope in Him.¹⁰⁹

15. But let us come to the lessons set before us. Ye see that power of temptation is given to the devil to prove the good. The wicked one envies our progress in good, he tempts us in various ways. He tempted holy Job in his patrimony, he tempted him in his sons, he tempted him by bodily pains. The stronger is tempted in his own person, the weaker in that of others. Me too he would fain have despoiled of the riches which I possess in you, and he desired to waste this patrimony of your

tranquillity. Yourselves also he desired to snatch from me, my good children for whom I daily offer sacrifice; you he endeavoured to involve in the ruins of the public confusion. Already then I have incurred two kinds of temptation. And perhaps the Lord, knowing my weakness, hath not yet given him power over my body: though I myself desire it, though I offer it, He perhaps still judges me unequal to this contest, and exercises me by diverse

labours. Even Job himself did not begin with this contest, but was perfected by it.

16. But Job was tempted by the accumulated tidings of evil, he was tempted by his wife who said, Curse God, and die.¹¹⁰

Ye behold how many things are suddenly stirred up against us, the Goths, the troops, the heathen, the fine of the tradesmen, the punishment of the saints. Ye observe what is commanded, when it is said 'Deliver up the Basilica;' Curse God, and die. But here it is not only 'Speak against God,' but also 'Act against God.' The command is, 'Betray the altars of God.'

17. So then we are pressed by the Imperial mandates, but we are strengthened by the words of Scripture, which answered, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women

|133 speaketh.¹¹¹

Not slight therefore is that temptation, for temptations which come through the agency of women we know to be more severe. Lastly, Adam also was betrayed by Eve, and thereby it came to pass that he betrayed the Divine commandments. Becoming aware of this error, and his guilty conscience accusing him, he desired to hide himself, but could not; wherefore God says to him, Adam where art thou?

112 that is, what wert thou before? where hast thou now begun to be? where did I place thee? whither hast thou fallen? thou ownest thyself naked, because thou hast lost the garments of a good faith. The things wherewith thou desirest to clothe thyself are leaves. Thou hast cast aside the fruit, thou desirest to lie hid under the leaves of the tree, but thou art betrayed. For one woman's sake thou hast chosen to depart from thy God, therefore thou fliest from Him when thou soughtest to see. Thou hast chosen to hide thyself with one woman, to leave the mirror of the world, the abode of Paradise, the Grace of Christ.

18. Why need I add that Elijah also was cruelly persecuted by Jezebel? that Herodias caused John the Baptist to be put to death? Each man seems to suffer from this or that woman; for me, in proportion as my merits are less, my trials are heavier. My strength is weaker, but I have more danger. Women succeed each other, their hatreds are interchanged, their falsehoods are varied, the elders are gathered together, the plea of wrong to the Emperor is put forward. What explanation is there then of such grievous temptation to such a worm as I am, but that it is not me but the Church that they persecute.

19. At length came the command, 'Deliver up the Basilica;' I reply, 'It is not lawful for us to deliver it up, nor for your Majesty to receive it. By no law can you violate the house of a private man, and do you think that the house of God may be taken away? It is asserted that all things are lawful to the Emperor, that all things are his. But do not burden your conscience with the thought that you have any right as Emperor over sacred things. Exalt not yourself, but if you would reign the longer, be subject

to God. It is written, God's to God and Caesar's to Caesar.113

The palace is the Emperor's, the Churches are the Bishop's. |134

To you is committed jurisdiction over public not over sacred buildings.' Again the Emperor is said to have issued his command, 'I also ought to have one Basilica;' I answered 'It is not lawful for thee to have her.114

What hast thou to do with an adulteress who is not bound with Christ in lawful wedlock?'

20. While I was engaged with this subject, it was reported to me that the Imperial hangings were taken down, the Church filled with people, and that my presence was required; straightway I turned my discourse to this, saying, How deep and profound are the oracles of the Holy Spirit! Remember, brethren, what was read at matins and how we responded with deep grief of mind, O God the heathen are come into Thine inheritance.115

And truly the heathen came, nay, even more than the heathen, for the Goths came and men of divers nations, they came armed with weapons, and surrounded and seized the Basilica. Ignorant of Thy Greatness we grieved for this, but our ignorance was mistaken.

21. The heathen came, but truly into Thine inheritance they came, for they who came as heathen were made Christians. They who came to invade Thine inheritance, were made coheirs of God; those whom I accounted enemies are become my defenders; I have as comrades those whom I esteemed adversaries. Thus has that been fulfilled which the prophet David spake of the Lord Jesus, that His Dwelling is in peace 116, there brake He the horns of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle.117

For whose office, whose work is this but

Thine, Lord Jesus? Thou sawest armed men coming to Thy temple, on the one hand the people groaning and collecting in a crowd that they might not seem to give up the Basilica, on the other hand the soldiers commanded to use force. Death was before my eyes, lest in the midst of all this madness should break out into

licence. But Thou, O Lord plantedst Thyself in the midst, and madcst the twain one. Thou restrainedst the soldiers, saying, If ye run to arms, if they who are within My temple are disturbed, What profit is there in My blood?¹¹⁸

All thanks therefore be to Thee, O Christ. It |¹³⁵

was not an enemy, not a messenger but Thou O Lord hast delivered Thy people, Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness.

22. Thus I spoke, wondering that the Emperor's mind could be softened by the zeal of the soldiers, by the entreaties of the Counts, by the prayers of the people. Meanwhile I am informed that a Secretary was come with the mandate. I retired a little, and he notified to me the mandate. 'What has been your design,' says he, 'in acting against the Emperor's orders?' I replied, 'What has been ordered I know not, nor am I aware what is alleged to have been wrongly done.' He says, 'Why have you sent presbyters to the Basilica? If you are a tyrant I would fain know it, that I may know how to arm myself against you.' I replied by saying that I had done nothing which assumed too much for the Church, but when I heard it was filled with soldiers, I only uttered deeper groans, and though many exhorted me to proceed thither, I replied, 'I cannot give up the Basilica, yet I must not fight.' That afterwards, when I was told that the Imperial hangings were removed, and that the people required me to go thither, I had directed the presbyters to do so, but that I was unwilling to go myself, saying, 'I trust in Christ that the Emperor himself will espouse our cause.'

23. If this seems like domineering, I grant indeed that I have arms, but only in the name of Christ; I have the power of offering up my body. Why, I asked, did he delay to strike if he considered my power unlawful? By ancient right Priests have conferred sovereignty, never assumed it, and it is a common saying that Emperors have coveted the Priesthood more often than Priests sovereignty. Christ fled that He might not be made a king. We have a power of our own. The power of a Priest is his weakness; When I am weak, it is said, then am I strong.¹¹⁹

But let him against whom God has raised up no adversary: beware lest he raise up a tyrant for himself. Maximus did not say that I domineered over

Valentinian, though he complains that my embassy prevented his passing over into Italy. I added, that priests were never usurpers, but that they had often suffered from usurpers.

|¹³⁶

24. The whole of that day was past in this affliction; meanwhile the boys tore in derision the Imperial hangings. I could not return home, because the Church was surrounded by a guard of soldiers. We recited the Psalms with our brethren in the little Basilica belonging to the Church.

25. On the following day, the book of Jonah was read in due course, after which, I began this discourse; We have read a book, my brethren, wherein it is foretold that sinners shall return again to repentance. They are accepted on this footing, that their present state is considered an earnest of the future. I added that this just man was even willing to incur blame, rather than behold or denounce destruction on the city; and, since that prophecy was mournful, that he was also grieved because the gourd had withered; that God had said to the prophet, Art thou greatly angry for the gourd? and Jonah had answered, I am greatly angry. Then the Lord said, if the withering of the gourd was a grief to him, how much more ought he to care for the salvation of so many souls; and therefore that He had suspended the destruction which had been prepared for the whole city.¹²⁰

26. Immediate tidings are brought to me that the Emperor had commanded the soldiers to retire from the Church; and that the fine which had been imposed on the merchants on their condemnation should be restored. What joy then prevailed among the whole people, what applause, what congratulations! Now it was the day whereon the Lord delivered Himself up for us, the day whereon there is a relaxation of penance in the Church. The soldiers eagerly brought the tidings, running in to the altars, and giving the kiss, the emblem of peace. Then I perceived that God had smitten the worm which came when the morning rose, that the whole city might be preserved.¹²¹

27. These are the past events, and would that they were terminated, but the excited words of the Emperor show that heavier trials are awaiting us. I am called a tyrant, and even more than tyrant. For when the Counts besought the Emperor to go to the Church, and said that they did so at the request of the soldiers, he replied, 'You would

[137 deliver me up to chains, if Ambrose bade you.' I leave you to judge what awaits us after these words; all shuddered at hearing them, but there are those about him who exasperate him.

28. Lastly Calligonus the Grand Chamberlain ¹²²

ventured to address himself specially to me. 'Do you, while I live, despise

Valentinian? I will have your head.' I replied, 'May God grant you to fulfil your threat: I shall suffer as becomes a Bishop, you will act as befits an

enunch.' May God indeed turn them aside from the Church; may all their weapons be directed against me, may they satiate their thirst in my blood!

[Footnotes and marginalia moved to end and numbered]

1. a Dacia Ripensis. The original Province of Dacia was beyond the Danube. It was conquered and included in the Empire by

Trajan. In the time of Aurelian it was abandoned again, and the Danube re-established as the frontier. Then the Roman colonists were removed to the South of the Danube,

into the central district of Moesia, which was then called Dacia Aureliani. This was afterwards divided into two Provinces, called Dacia Ripensis and Dacia

Mediterranea, Ripensis being the northern part, extending along the bank of the Danube, whence the name.

2. b "Damasus was made Pope on the death of Liberius A.D. 366. Ursinus, called by some Ursicinus, was, as Damasus had been, Deacon at Rome, and could not endure the exaltation of his former colleague who is suspected of having taken part with Felix, the successor to the power of Liberius, when exiled by the Arians. Ursinus was factiously consecrated by one Bishop, and a contest ensued in which even much blood was shed. Ursinus was banished, and being recalled the next

year, was banished again after two months. In 371 he was allowed to leave his place of exile, and only excluded from Rome and the suburbicarian provinces. In 378 he held the factious meetings mentioned in the letter, and was exiled to Cologne. He continued to petition Gratian to restore him, and hence the request of the Bishops at Aquileia." Note in Newman's *Fleury* vol. 1 p. 38.

3. c i.e. Julianus Valens, Bp. of Petavio, mentioned in the preceding letter.

4. 1 after the first and second admonition E.V.

5. Titus iii. 10.

6. 2 S. John 10.

7. 1 Tim. iii. 3-7.

8. a This Lucius was the person who, after the death of S. Athanasius, was forced upon the Church of Alexandria as Bishop, in the place of Peter who had been duly elected, by the Governor of the Province. His crimes and cruelties are recorded at length by Theodoret. *Eccl. Hist.* iv. 21, 22. He was eventually expelled from the see he had usurped, and is mentioned by Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* v. 7, as afterwards dwelling at Constantinople and sharing the fate of

Demophilus.

9. b Demophilus was originally Bishop of Beroea, (probably Beroea in Thrace,) and was deposed from his

office for Arianism. In A.D. 370, on the death of Eudoxius, he was elected by the Arian party Bishop of Constantinople, in opposition to Evagrius. He was supported by Valens who was then Emperor, and Evagrius banished. In 380 A.D. after the accession of Theodosius, matters were changed. Theodosius offered to maintain him in his see, if he subscribed the Nicene Confession, but he refused, and withdrew, and maintained, in conjunction with Lucius and others, Arian worship outside the walls of Constantinople. He died A.D. 386. He is mentioned by S. Ambrose (*De Fide* 1. 6. 45.) as a leader of one of the various forms of

Arianism.

10. c This refers to the long schism which had existed in the Church at Antioch, ever since 331 A.D. when Eustathius was deposed by the Arian party: in 361 A.D. Meletius was elected as successor to Eudoxius, having previously subscribed the Creed of

Acacius (*Socr.* ii. 44.); but on his accepting the Nicene Creed, and acknowledging the Homousion, he was deposed, and banished by the Emperor Constantius, and Euzoius, an Arian, appointed in his stead, who was afterwards succeeded by

Dorotheus, (who was afterwards transferred to Constantinople, 385 A. D.) Meanwhile Meletius had returned from exile, but the extreme orthodox party refused to recognise him, because he had at first been appointed as a Semi-Arian, and elected Paulinus, though the Council of Alexandria had urged them to submit to Meletius, so that, as Socrates says, when recounting the Bishops of the chief sees in the year 379, the the Church at Antioch

trixh~ dih&|rhto. Paulinus was supported by the Church of Alexandria and by the Bishops of the West, and, as appears from the statements of this letter, a compromise had been proposed, that when either Meletius or Paulinus died, both parties would acknowledge the survivor. The Bishops at Aquileia urge

the Emperor to enforce this, not aware that Flavian had already been elected as Meletius' successor at the Council of Constantinople. The schism was thus perpetuated, and continued till 415 A.D.

What the difficulty about Timotheus was, is not certain. He had been consecrated Bishop of Alexandria that same year, after the death of Peter, the successor of S. Athanasius. Tillemont (vol. x. p. 139) suggests that it was probably connected with the question of the succession at Antioch.

11. d The enemy are the Goths under Fritigern. See Gibbon ch. 26.

12. e The reading 'pactum' which is suggested by Valerius is here adopted instead of 'factum', which seems to give no satisfactory sense.

13. f Fleury remarks on this 'This letter plainly shews that the Bishops who were there present (i.e. at the Council of Aquileia) either did not acknowledge the Council which had been

lately held at Constantinople to be an Oecumenical Council, or that they were not yet informed of what had been transacted in it.

14. a In the regard of the question between Nectarius and Maximus, the Western Bishops had been deceived by the latter. Maximus, called the Cynic because he retained the outward garb of a Cynic philosopher after he professed to have become a Christian, was irregularly consecrated at Constantinople, but was never recognised, and was formally pronounced by the Council not to be a true Bishop. He then went about trying to stir up other

Churches in his favour. See Prof. Bright's Hist, of the Church pp. 160■ 166.

Nectarius was elected after the resignation of Gregory Nazianzen, during the Council of Constantinople. He, like S. Ambrose, was unbaptized and held a high civil office at the time of his election.

15. b This is translated from an ingenious and probable conjecture of Valesius.

16. c The text through this long sentence is confused and ungrammatical, but it conveys the general sense

expressed in the translation with tolerable clearness.

17. d i. e. Gratian.

18. a The sense is here to be elicited probably by repeating the word 'quod,' so that the sentence should run,

'dogma nescio quod, quod Apollinaris asseritur.'

19. b There seems to be something corrupt in the text. Perhaps we should read 'moventur,' 'the dangerous parts of Illyricum are in commotion;' or 'suspecta' has taken the place of some word, such as 'superiora,' which would stand in antithesis to

'maritima.'

20. c It may complete the subject of this series of letters to remind the reader that about the same time that the Council of the Italian Bishops was held, Theodosius convened a second Council at Constantinople to deal with the questions raised by the Westerns, where most of the Bishops who had formed the previous General Council

re-assembled. They replied to the invitation to another General Council at Rome by a Synodical letter, which is given at full length by Theodoret (Eccles. Hist. v. 9). In it they excuse themselves from attending, on the ground of their presence being required in their own Dioceses, especially after the long exile of many of them, and the prevalence of Arian usurpation, wishing that they 'had the wings of a dove,' to fly to their Western brethren. They then give a summary of the doctrinal decisions of the two Councils, and announce that they have sent three Bishops as deputies to

explain all things more fully to them, and, with reference to the disputed successions at Constantinople and

Antioch, give their assurance to their brethren that both Nectarius and Flavian were canonically elected, and the elections ratified both by the clergy and the faithful of each diocese, and by the Council, reminding them of the ancient Canon re-affirmed at Nicaea that each province should settle all such questions for themselves.

21. a Acholius, or Ascholius, as he is called by Socrates, was the Bishop who baptised Theodosius, during an illness which seized him on a campaign against the Goths. He was present at the Council of Constantinople, and afterwards at that of Rome, not as one of the deputies from the

East, but probably because his see had been so recently transferred to the Eastern Empire, that he might seem to belong to both East and West. (Tillemont Ambr. ch. xxxi.) It was there that he met S. Ambrose, who had gone to Rome to attend the Council, and had fallen ill. His death must have occurred in A.D. 383, for his successor Anysius was Bishop before the death of Damasus, Bishop of Rome, who died in A.D. 384. Theodoret therefore (B. v. ch. 18.) must be wrong in making him the Bishop who wrote to S. Ambrose an account of the massacre at Thessalonica, which occurred in A.D. 390. But the passage of Theodoret occurs in only one MS., and is perhaps not genuine.

22. Ps. lv. 7.

23. Phil. i. 24.

24. Ps. xlviii. 7.

25. Baruch iii. 24,25.

26. b The Goths had been settled within the boundaries of the Empire by Valens in A. D. 376, when they implored his protection against the Huns. He established them in Moesia, when; they soon revolted, and ravaged Thrace, uniting with their former

enemies, the Huns, and other barbarians. Valens was defeated and slain by them in A. D. 378, and then they overran all the neighbouring provinces. There is a graphic account in Gibbon. ch. xxvi.

27. 2 Kings. vi. 18.

28. Ib. vii. 6.

29. 2 Kings ii. 4.

30. S. Matt. xxv. 21.

31. 1 Kings x. 24.

32. Deut. xxxiii. 8.

33. Ib. 9.

34. Ecclus. xlv. 15.

35. c The Benedictine text here reads 'claudebatur.' Several MSS, as the editors mention in a note, have 'claudebat.' They themselves suggest 'claudieabat.' But 'claudebat' really gives the same meaning, and there

seems little doubt that it is the true reading. It comes from claudeo or claudio, (for both forms are to be found,) meaning 'to be lame,' 'to halt.' It occurs three times in Cicero.

36. Deut. xxxiii. 9.

37. Deut. xxxiii.16.

38. 2 Cor. xii. 2.

39. S. Matt. xii. 48.

40. 2 Chron. ix. 21.

41. Ps. lxxviii. 14.

42. Cant. v. 2.

43. Gen. xxviii.13.

44. Wisd. iv. 9.

45. Isa. lx. 8.

46. 2 Chron. ix. 21.

47. Ps. xcvi. 5.

48. a 'fisco vel arcae.' The 'fiscus,' or imperial treasury, received whatever was assigned to the Emperor individually, distinguished from the 'acrarium,' which received what belonged to the senate, as representing the old respublica: 'area' is sometimes used in late writers as equivalent to 'fiscus,' sometimes, when distinguished from it, as here, it signifies the city funds, which were distinct from both.

49. b Julian's edict, forbidding the Christians to teach in the schools of grammar and rhetoric, is mentioned with disapproval by Gibbon ch. xxiii.

50. c i. e. his half brother Gratian.

51. S. Luke xvi. 13.

52. d i. e. Maximus.

53. e Valentinian the 1st.

54. f This is sometimes represented as an exaggerated piece of rhetoric on S. Ambrose's part, not to be regarded as representing a real truth: but it may very well do so, for Valentinian

was almost constantly occupied with wars on the frontiers of the empire, and it does not appear from his life that he was ever at Rome during his reign. Milan, not Rome, was the chief seat of the Western Emperors at this time, when they were not with their armies.

55. a The Praefectus Urbi at this time 'was regarded as the direct representative of the Emperor,' and, among other duties, 'he had every month to make a report to the Emperor of the

transactions of the Senate,' and also was 'the medium through which the Emperors received the petitions and presents from their capital.' Dict. of Ant. sub voc.

56. b By the 'late emperor' is meant Julian; 'his successor' is Valentinian the 1st, and the 'last Emperors' are

Valentinian the 1st and Valens.

57. c There is a play here on the words 'nomen' and 'numen.' 58. d Symmachus is thinking of Virgil's invocation, Di patrii, Indigetes, et Romule, Vestaque Mater, &c.

Georg. i. 498. The Di patrii are explained as being those brought by Aeneas into Italy, Indigetes those native to the soil of Italy.

59. e In strict law a slave's peculium was the property of his owner, but custom had allowed it to be regarded as his own property.

60. f Another trace of Virgil:

Cum jam glandes atque arbuta sacrae Deficerent silvae et victum Dodona negaret. Georg. i. 158.

61. g Valentinian the 1st, as Symmachus mentions above, had tolerated the heathen rites, and this he here represents as having availed to win the special favour of the gods.

62. a This is an official title of honour. There were three ranks among those who held office under the Emperors, 1 *Illustres*, 2 *Spectabiles*, 3 *Clarissimi*, which is the one here applied to

Symmachus. The latter was applied to all senators: the other two were reserved for the higher offices of state. See Gibbon, ch. xvii.

63. b He is referring apparently to Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, but somewhat exaggerates the brevity of their

reigns. Galba reigned nearly seven months, Otho three months, Vitellius nearly eight months.

64. c The captive Emperor is Valerian, who, A.D. 260, was taken prisoner by Sapor king of Persia, and treated with the utmost indignity. The other is his son Gallienus, and S. Ambrose's expression with regard to him may be explained by a sentence of Gibbon, (ch. xi. init.) 'Under the deplorable reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, the empire was oppressed and almost destroyed by the soldiers, the tyrants, and the barbarians.' 65. *Wisd.* iv. 9.

66. *Prov.* xxi. 1.

67. d S. Ambrose refers here to a law of Valentinian's, forbidding the Clergy from receiving bequests from widows and unmarried females. It was addressed to Damasus, Bishop of Rome. S. Ambrose's caution in *de Off. Min.* 1, 20, 87, shews that control was needed. S. Jerome, speaking of this law says, 'I do not complain of the law, but grieve that we have deserved it.'

68. e In the provincial towns the political power in the times of the Emperors had passed into the hands of the *curia* or provincial Senate; and,

with the power, many burdensome and extensive duties, were laid upon the *curiales* or *decurions*, as they were called. (See § 15.) Exemption from these had been granted first by Constantine; afterwards, as it was found that persons sought Holy Orders in order to evade civil duties, the privilege was restrained: and various changes were introduced by different Emperors. A full outline of the various laws is given in a learned note in Newman's *Fleury*, vol. i. p. 162. where the text is speaking of S. Ambrose's Letter to Theodosius, (*infr.* Lett, xl.) where he

again complains of the same hardship. The subject is also more fully dealt with by Bingham *Antiq. B.V.* ch. iii. § 14-16.

69. f 'Conferte' is here adopted as a manifest emendation of 'conferet.' The transfer of two letters is a common mistake of copyists.

70. g This was the case in Julian's reign, as may be seen in *Theod.* iii. 12.

71. h The reading of all the other Edd. 'sacri nemoris' for 'agri nemorum' is here adopted, as yielding a clearer sense.

72. i Pannonia was at this time divided into three provinces, viz. Pannonia Prima and Secunda, and Valeria

Ripensis.

73. k Rhaetia Secunda was the name given to Vindelicia when separated again from Rhaetia proper, shortly before the time of Constantine: it had been united to it about the end of the first century.

74. l The Reading 'nuda gignentium' is adopted from Ed. Rom. The phrase occurs in Sallust Jug. 79, 6. 'Gignentia' is used for plants, trees &c. The clause 'quae nos' &c. is strange, but probably refers to the torpidity of winter, which is felt by man as well as by the lower creation.

75. m This passage seems suggested by reminiscences of Virgil, the phrase 'absconditam pretio humum' possibly from Aen. iv, 211. urbem Exiguam pretio posuit, while in the latter part S. Ambrose perhaps had in his mind the description of Evander's town in Aen. viii. See especially ll. 347-366.

76. n The story of Cybele being brought to Rome, and landing outside the city, where the little stream of the Tiber joins the Tiber, is told at length by Ovid, Fast. iv. 250-348. In commemoration of the washing of the Statue and sacred implements at the landing, an annual ceremony was maintained, which seems to have been popular, from the numerous allusions to it in later writers. See Lucan l. 600, Martial iii. 47. 2, Stat. Silv. v. 1. 222, Sil. Ital. viii. 305, all quoted in Dict. of Geogr. When the rites were performed away from Rome, the nearest river was conventionally made the Tiber for the time. It is remarkable that Ammianus Marcellinus xiii, 3, 7. mentions as one of the Emperor Julian's last acts, his keeping the day of this rite, when on his last campaign against the Persians, and performing all the ceremonies at Callinicum or Nicephorium on the Euphrates.

77. o Venus Caelestis is a Latin equivalent of

'Afrodisia', and this name was transferred, according to

Herodotus (Bk. i. ch. 105.) to the Phoenician goddess Astarte, or Ashtaroth. The same author also (Bk. i. ch. 131.) identifies Aphrodite with the Persian goddess Mitra, which however is shown by Prof. Rawlinson, ad loc., to be an error, as Mithras is the sun-god of the Persians. The Temple of Venus Caelestis, or Astarte, at Carthage was very shortly after this time converted into a Christian Church, as recorded by Gibbon on the authority of Prosper. Aquitan. (ch. xxviii).

78. p S. Ambrose's repeated assertions, that the Christians formed a majority in the Senate, are characterised by writers unfavourable to Christianity as unfounded, but they produce no proof. Gibbon (ch. xxviii. note 12.) simply says that it is an assertion 'in contradiction to common sense.' But as a large majority of the Senate voted for the abolition of the worship of Jupiter about the same time, as Gibbon himself records, common sense would seem rather to agree with S. Ambrose.

79. q Referring to the unhappy end of Gratian

whom the previous year (A.D. 383.) had been overpowered by Maximus, who revolted in Britain, and

attacked him in Gaul. His troops deserted him and he was put to death by Maximus' orders.

80. r Pompeius was murdered, as he landed in Egypt, after escaping from Pharsalia, by Achilles an Eunuch and one of the guardians of king Ptolemy.

81. s Tomyris queen of the Massagetae. See the story in Herod. i. 214.

82. t This is the first of the famous Hamilcars, the one who led the great invasion of Sicily in B. C. 480, and was totally defeated by Gelon. Herodotus, 15 vii. ch. 167, tells the story to which S. Ambrose alludes as the account given by the Carthaginians of his end.

83. u S. Ambrose is alluding to the famous story of Julian burning his fleet, after crossing the Tigris to attack

Sapor, king of Persia, in his own dominions. This was regarded afterwards by the Christians as an act of judicial blindness. See Augustine de Civ. Dei iv. 29, v. 21. Ammianus, xxiv. 7. asserts that he repented of the order as soon as it was issued, but was too late to stop the flames. Gibbon endeavours to justify the act, and says, 'had he been victorious we should now admire his conduct.' See his narrative in ch. xxiv. The author of his life in the Dict. of Ant. styles it 'the best thing he could have done, if his march into the interior of Persia, had been dictated by absolute necessity.' Setting these hypotheses aside,

and looking only at the actual result, we may fairly think that the Christian interpretation of the facts, even if over-strongly expressed, is the truer.

84. Gen. xxviii. 1, 2.

85. Deut. xxiv. 14.

86. Ps. xv. 1. 6.

87. Ps. xvii. 13.

88. Tobit iv. 21.

89. Prov. xv 17.

90. Judges xx. 44. Gen. xxxiv. 25.

91. Num. xxv. 8.

92. Judges xiii. 8.

93. 1 He here refers to Josephus Antiq. v. ch. iv.

94. Judg. xiv, 14.

95. Judg. xiv. 16.

96. ib. 18.

97. a The name given in the Hebrew is Ramath Lehi, which means, 'the hill or lifting up of the jaw-bone.' S. Ambrose interprets it below 'maxillae interfectionem.' He would seem to be here suggesting a Greek etymology. The Benedictine note suggests that the name Agon is a confusion on his part from the word siagw_n in Josephus.

98. Judges xv. 16.

99. Ib. 18.

100. b The words 'quasi in cubitum intexti' are probably from the Old Latin Version of the Bible. Field, on

Origen's Hexapla in

loe. (Judg. xvi. 13.) mentions that some MSS of LXX read εὐανθεῖς φωνήεντες or

ωἰετοῖς φωνήεντες, which may very well have been translated by some such words as the above, in the Old Latin Version which S. Ambrose used.

101. Judges xvi. 20.

102. Judges xvi. 28.

103. a The expression 'principes virtutum' seems to be a phrase from the Old Testament. In the Vulgate we find 'rex

virtutum' Ps. lxxvii, (lxxviii. E.V.) 13, where the E.V. has 'kings of armies,' and in Judith xiv. 17 (19

K.V.) 'Quod quum audissent, principes virtutis Assyriorum,' and in 1 Macc. v. 56.

'Azarias princeps virtutis.' The 'comites consistoriani' formed a sort of cabinet

(consistorium) or privy council to the Emperor. The Benedictine Editors take 'principes

virtutum' as meaning the Magistri militum, but the absence of any conjunction is against this.

104. b This must mean the Praefectus praetorio Italiae, one of the four great Viceroys, under whom the Dioceses of the Empire were placed. He was supreme over all Italy, and the countries north of it to the Danube, and the western part of the north of Africa. He had under him three Dioceses, containing thirty Provinces.

105. c The title given them is 'Decani.' They seem to have, been something like the lictors of the great officers of state, under the republic.

106. d These 'vela' or hangings were a token that the building was claimed for the

'fiscus,' or private property of the Emperor, Gibbon in his grand way says, 'the splendid canopy and hangings of the royal scat were arranged in the customary manner,'

but, as is noticed by the writer of the Life of S. Ambrose in Dict. of Christian Biog. it is clear from the sequel of the narrative (see § 20) that they were outside, not inside the Church.

107. e The words in the original are 'missam facere.' Prof. Bright in his History notes that this is 'the earliest instance, apparently, of this term being used for the Eucharistic service.'

108. f 'The introduction of barbarians into the Roman armies became every day more universal, more necessary, and more fatal. The most daring of the Scythians, of the Goths, and of the Germans, were enrolled not only in the auxiliaries of their respective nations, but in the legions themselves,

and among the most distinguished of the Palatine troops.' (Gibbon, ch. xvii.) The Goths were Arians. It was much about this time that

Ulfilas, the apostle of the Goths, made his famous translation of the Bible into Gothic. See Bright's Hist. of the Church p. 157.

109. Ps. xvii. 7.

110. Job ii. 9.

111. ib. 10.

112. Gen. iii. 9.

113. S. Matt. xxii. 21.

114. S. Matt. xiv. 4.

115. Ps. lxxix. 1.

116. g This is the Vulgate rendering of 'At Salem is His Tabernacle.' 117. Ps. lxxvi. 2,3.

118. Ps. xxx. 9.

119. 2 Cor. xii. 10.

120. Jonah iv. 9.

121. Ib. 7.

122. h On the high rank and great influence of the Praepositus cubiculi, or Grand Chamberlain, see Gibbon ch. xvii. They ranked with the Praefecti praetorio and other highest officers of state as Illustres. See note on Lett. xvii. § 1. This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2004. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely.

Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SP Ionic font, free from here.

Early Church Fathers - Additional Texts

Letters - Letters 21-30

St. Ambrose of Milan, Letters (1881). pp. 137-213. Letters 21-30.

- Letter 21: To the Emperor Valentinian
- Sermon: Against Auxentius, on giving up the basilicas
- Letter 22: To his sister
- Letter 23: To the bishops of the province of Aemilia
- Letter 24: To the Emperor Valentinian
- Letter 25: To Studius
- Letter 26: To Irenaeus [Studius?]
- Letter 27: To Irenaeus
- Letter 28: To Irenaeus
- Letter 29: To Irenaeus
- Letter 30: To Irenaeus

LETTER XXI. [A.D.386.]

S. AMBROSE ends his letter to his sister with foreboding's of more troubles, Nor was he wrong. One of the next steps taken was a challenge to dispute publicly before the Emperor with Auxentius the Arian (so-called) Bishop, with regular umpires (judices) appointed on both sides. This letter is his reply to the Emperor, setting forth his ground for refusing, as he had before done at the time of the Council of Aquileia, to allow laymen to be judges of questions of Faith. (See above. Council of Aquil. § 51, 52, 53.) TO THE MOST CLEMENT EMPEROR, HIS BLESSED MAJESTY VALENTINIAN, AMBROSE, BISHOP, SENDS GREETING.

1. DALMATIUS the tribune and notary cited me at your Clemency's bidding, as he alleged, requiring that I also should choose umpires as Auxentius had done. He did not mention the names of those who had been called for, but he added that the trial would take place in the Consistory, and that your pious judgment would decide between us.

2. To this I make, as I consider, a sufficient answer. |138

No one ought to deem me contumacious for asserting what your father of illustrious memory not only declared by word of mouth

1 but sanctioned by his laws; that in a matter of the Faith or of any ecclesiastical ordinance, the judges ought to be qualified for it, both competent by office and qualified by profession: (these are the words of the Rescript), that is to say, he would have Bishops judge Bishops. Moreover if a bishop were accused elsewhere also, and a charge of a moral nature to be examined, this too he would should be referred to the judgment of Bishops.

3. Who then is it who makes a contumacious answer to your Clemency? He who would have you like your Father, or he who would have you unlike? Unless perhaps some persons count cheaply the opinion of that great Emperor, whose faith has been approved by the constancy of his confession

2, and his wisdom proclaimed by the improved condition of the State.

4. When have you ever heard, most gracious Emperor, that laymen had judged a Bishop in a matter pertaining to the Faith? Does their flattery make us cringe so low as to forget the rights of the priesthood, and suppose that what God has committed to me I should entrust to others? If a layman may teach a Bishop, what will follow? a layman, will dispute, and a Bishop listen, a Bishop learn of a

[139 layman. Assuredly, if we revert to the volume of Holy Scripture or to the time of old, who is there who will deny that in a cause of the Faith, in a cause, I say, of the Faith, Bishops are wont to judge Christian Emperors, not Emperors to judge Bishops.

5. Hereafter, you will, by God's favour, reach a more mature age, and then you will judge what kind of Bishop he must be who submits the rights of the priesthood to laymen. Your father, who by God's favour attained a riper age, used to say: 'It is not for me to judge between Bishops:' your Majesty now says, 'I ought to judge.' He, although baptized into Christ, considered himself unequal to the weight of so important a judgment; does your Majesty, who have yet to earn for yourself the Sacrament of Baptism, claim to decide concerning the Faith, although still ignorant of the Sacrament of this Faith?

6. But what sort of judges he will have selected we may leave to be guessed, seeing that he fears to disclose their names. Let them come openly, if indeed there be any, to the Church; let them attend together with the people, not to sit as judges, but for every one to prove his own feelings and choose whom he will follow. The cause is concerning the Bishop of that Church; if the people hear him and suppose he has the better of the argument, let them follow his Faith; I shall not be jealous.

7. I forbear to mention that the people themselves have already decided; I do not urge that the Bishop

3 whom they have they demanded from your Majesty's father; I urge not that your father promised tranquillity for the future if he, having been elected, took upon him the Bishopric. It was in reliance on these promises that I acted.

8. But if he prides himself on the support of any foreigners let him be Bishop in the place whence those come who hold that he should be invested with the name of a Bishop. For I neither acknowledge him as Bishop, nor know whence he comes.

9. How, your Majesty, can we be said to settle a matter in which you have already declared your judgment; nay, have yourself published laws precluding others from

[140 deciding otherwise. And when you laid down this rule for others you laid it down also for yourself; for the laws which the Emperor makes he ought to be the first to keep. Would you then have me make trial whether those who are chosen judges will meet, contrary to your decree, or whether they will allege that they have not been able to contravene so rigid and peremptory a command of the Emperor?

10. But this is the part of a contumacious not of a respectful Bishop. See, your Majesty, how you yourself partially rescind your own law; but I would that you would do so not partially but universally, for I would not wish your law to be above the law of God. The law of God has taught us what we should follow, human laws cannot teach us this. They can compel a change in the timid, but they cannot inspire faith.

11. Who therefore when he learns that in one moment it has been published through so many provinces that whoever shall resist the Emperor shall be put to death, whoever shall not give up the temple of God shall immediately be slain; who is there, I say, who either alone or with a few others can say to the Emperor; 'I do not approve your law?' The priesthood are not allowed to say this; are then the laity allowed? And shall he judge concerning the faith, who either hopes for favour or fears giving offence?

12. Lastly, shall I venture to nominate laymen for umpires, who if they keep true to their Faith must be proscribed or put to death, as that law passed concerning the Faith prescribes. Shall I then expose them to the hazard either of prevarication or of punishment?

13. Ambrose is not of such importance as to degrade the priesthood on his account. One man's life is not of us much value as the dignity of the whole priesthood, by whose advice I gave my direction when they suggested that there might be some heathen or Jew, chosen by Auxentius, to whom we might give a triumph over Christ if we committed to him judgment concerning Christ. What else pleases them but to hear of wrong done to Christ? What else can please them but the denial (which God

[141 forbid) of the Divinity of Christ? Clearly they agree entirely with the Arian, who calls Christ a creature, which heathens and Jews too are willing enough to confess.

14. This was decreed at the synod of Ariminum, and with good reason do I abhor that Council; following as I do the doctrine of the Nicene Council, from which neither death nor the sword can ever separate me. This Faith your Majesty's father, the blessed Emperor Theodosius, both followed and approved. This Faith the provinces of Gaul and of Spain hold, and this they keep with the pious confession of the Divine Spirit.

15. If I have to preach, I have learnt to preach in the Church, as my predecessors did. If a conference is to be held on a matter of Faith, it ought to be a conference of Bishops, as was the case under Constantine of august memory, who laid down no laws beforehand, but left to the Bishops the liberty of judging. The same was the case also under Constantius of illustrious memory, who inherited his father's dignity, but what began well ended badly. For the Bishops had at first subscribed an orthodox confession, but, through the wish of certain persons to judge of the

Faith in agreement with the palace, the result was that these judgments of the Bishops were fraudulently changed; they however immediately recalled this perverted decision. And there is no doubt that the majority at Ariminum approved the creed of the Nicene Council

4 and condemned the Arian decrees.

16. If Auxentius appeals to a Synod to discuss questions concerning the Faith, though it would be needless to disturb so many Bishops on one person's account, who, were he an Angel from heaven, ought not to be preferred to the Church's peace, I too will not be absent when I hear that the Synod is assembled. Let the law then be repealed, if you would have the contest entered upon.

17. I would have come to your Majesty's Consistory, to offer this plea in your presence, could

I have obtained leave from the Bishops or the people; but they said that [142

an argument concerning the Faith ought to be held in the Church in the presence of the people.

18. I could have wished that your Majesty had not declared that I might go into exile, whither I chose. I went abroad daily, no man guarded me. You should then have sent me wherever you thought fit, for I was ready to submit to any thing; now the Bishops say to me, 'There is little difference between voluntarily leaving Christ's altar and betraying it, for if you leave you will betray it.'

19. And I would I were certain that the Church would not be given up to the Arians, I would then willingly surrender myself to your Majesty's disposal. But if it is I only who am an intruder, why has the command been given to invade all other Churches also? I would it were certain, that no one would disturb the Churches, I would gladly then have any sentence which seems good passed concerning myself.

20. Let your Majesty then be pleased graciously to accept my reasons for not coming to the Church. I have not learned how to stand up in the Consistory except in your behalf

5; and within the palace I cannot contend, for I neither seek after nor know the secrets of the palace.

21. I, Bishop Ambrose, offer this remonstrance to the most clement Emperor, his blessed Majesty Valentinian.

SERMON: AGAINST AUXENTIUS ON THE GIVING UP THE BASILICAS. [A.D. 386.] THE persecution against S.Ambrose still continued. The Court party endeavoured to induce him to leave Milan, in order, they said, to prevent more serious troubles. This he refused to do, and at last he remained for several days and nights continuously within the Basilica 6, attended by a [143 crowded congregation, all determined to protect him from the violence of the court, while a guard of soldiers was at the same time blockading the Church, and preventing any from leaving it. It was during this time that this Sermon was preached. In it S. Ambrose first calms the fears of the people lest he should be induced to leave them, assuring them that he will only yield to force; and proceeds to apply the Lessons of the day, the story of Naboth and the Entry into Jerusalem, to the circumstances of the time, giving incidentally several interesting details of the contest between

himself and the Court, and alluding to the hymns which he then taught the people to sing.

1. I SEE that you are in an unusual state of excitement, and that your eyes are fixed upon me. I am at a loss to know the cause of this. Is it that you saw or heard that an Imperial message has been brought to me by the Tribunes, commanding me to depart hence whither I would, and that all who would were permitted to follow me. Were you then alarmed lest I should desert the Church, and in fear for my own life abandon you? But you heard my answer. I said that the thought of deserting the Church could not for an instant enter my mind, for I feared the Lord of the Universe more than the Ruler of the Empire; that if I were to be forcibly removed from the Church, it would be my body not my mind which would be driven by violence from thence, that if the Emperor were to act as royal power is wont, I was prepared for that which is the part of a priest to suffer.

2. Why then are you thus disturbed? I will never desert you of my own will, but I may not repel force by force. I shall still be able to mourn, to weep, and to groan; when weapons, soldiers, Goths assail me, my tears are my weapons, for these are the defence of a priest. By any other means I neither can nor ought to resist; but to fly and desert the Church is not my wont, lest any one should impute it to fear of heavier punishment. You yourselves know that I am wont to pay deference to our Rulers, but not to give way to them, and willingly to offer myself to punishment, not fearing what is prepared for me.

3. Would that I could be satisfied that the Church would not be delivered to heretics! I would willingly go to the Emperor's palace, were this accordant with the priest's office, so as to hold our contest rather in the palace

[144 than in the Church. But in the Consistory Christ is not wont to be the accused, but the Judge. Who will deny that a matter of faith should be pleaded in the Church? If any one has confidence in his cause let him come hither; let him not look for the judgment of the Emperor, which already shews its leaning, which has declared plainly by the law he has enacted that he is adverse to the Faith, nor for the expected support of certain intriguers. I will not give occasion to any one to barter for gain a wrong to Christ.

4. The guard of soldiers and the din of the arms which beset the Church, alarm not my faith, but they make me fear that in keeping me here you may incur danger to yourselves. For I have learned ere this not to fear for myself, but I begin now to fear more for you. Permit, I beg, your Bishop to enter the lists; we have an adversary who challenges us; for our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour,⁷

as the Apostle saith. Doubtless he has obtained, he has obtained (not to deceive us, but to warn us, is it recorded) this power of temptation, lest haply I should be removed from the

stedfastness of my faith by the wounds of my body. You also have read that the devil thus tempted holy Job in many ways; and last of all he begged and obtained the power of afflicting his body which he covered with sores.

5. When it was proposed to me to give up at once the Church plate, I made this reply; That if my own property was required of me, farm or house, gold or silver, anything that lies in my power, I would willingly give it; but that I would withdraw nothing from God's temple, nor surrender what had been committed to me to keep, not to surrender. And further, that I was studying also for the

Emperor's good, for it was expedient neither for me to surrender nor for him to receive these things; let him then listen to the words of an independent Bishop: if he regard his own interest, let him abstain from doing wrong to Christ.

6. These are words full of humility, and, I believe, of that affection which a Bishop owes to his Emperor. But

since our contest is not only against flesh and blood, but 8

also [145 (which is more trouble) against spiritual wickedness in high places, that tempter, the Devil, sharpens the contest by his ministers, and deems that by the wounds of my body the trial must be made. I know, brethren, that these wounds which we receive for Christ, are no wounds: life is not lost by them, but its seed propagated. Permit, I beseech you. the contest to take place, it is for you to be spectators only. Consider that if there is in a city an athlete or one skilled in some other science, it wishes to present him for the combat. Why do ye reject in greater things what ye are wont to wish for even in smaller ones? He fears neither arms nor barbarians, who dreads not death, who is entangled in no fleshly pleasure.

7. Without doubt if the Lord hath appointed me to this combat, it is in vain that you have kept sleepless watch and ward through so many nights and days; the will of Christ will be performed. For our Lord Jesus Christ is Almighty, this is our Faith; and therefore what He bids to be done will be fulfilled, nor does it become us to run counter to the Divine Will.

8. Ye have heard what has been read to-day: the Saviour commanded an ass's colt to be brought to Him by the Apostles and commanded that if any one sought to hinder them they should say, The Lord hath need of him.⁹

What if now also He hath commanded this ass's colt, that is the colt of that animal which is wont to bear a heavy burthen, such as is the condition of man, to whom it is said, Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: take My yoke upon you, for My yoke is easy:¹⁰

what, I say, if He hath now commanded this colt to be brought to Him, sending forth those Apostles who now having put off the body, wear, invisibly to our eyes, the guise of Angels? Will they not say, should any one seek to hinder them, The Lord hath need of him, if either the desire of this life, or flesh and blood, or the conversation of the world, for perhaps we are acceptable to some persons, should seek to hinder them? But he who loves me here, cannot give a better testimony of his affection than by suffering me to become a sacrifice for Christ; because to be dissolved and to be with Christ is much better;

[146 howbeit, to remain in the flesh is more needful for your sakes.¹¹

Ye have therefore, my beloved brethren, no cause for fear, for I know that whatever I shall suffer, I shall suffer for Christ. And I have read that I ought not to fear those who can kill the flesh, and I have heard One say, He who loses his life for My sake, shall find it.¹²

9. Wherefore, if the Lord wills it, I am sure that no resistance will be made. But if He still delay our contest, why should we fear? It is not bodily protection but the Lord's providence which is wont to protect the servant of Christ.

10. You are disturbed at finding some folding doors unclosed which a blind man in returning home is said to have opened. Acknowledge then that human guards are no support. Lo! one who had lost the gift of sight has broken through all your barriers and baffled your guards: but the Lord hath not lost

13 the guard of His mercy. Do you not remember that two days ago there was found open an entrance on the left side of the Basilica which you thought to be closed and guarded? The Basilica was surrounded by armed men who inspected every entrance, but their eyes were blinded so that they could not discover the one which was open; and so it remained open, as you know, for many nights. Cease then all anxiety, for what Christ commands, and what is expedient, shall come to pass.

11. In the next place I will produce to you instances from the Old Testament. Elisha was sought after by the king of Syria, an army was sent to take him, he was surrounded on every side, his servant began to fear, because he was a servant, that is, his mind was not free, nor had he freedom of action. The holy prophet prayed that his eyes might be opened, and said, Look and see how many more are on our side than against us.¹⁴

And he looked up and saw thousands of Angels. You see then that the servants of Christ are protected rather by invisible than by visible beings. But when they keep guard around you, they have been called to do so by your prayers; for you have

[147 read that those very men who sought for Elisha on entering Samaria came upon the very man whom they wished to capture, yet they were not able to injure him, but were saved by the intercession of the very man against whom they came.

12. Take the Apostle Peter too as an example of both these things. When Herod sought after and took him, he was put in prison; for the servant of God had not fled but stood firm and without fear. The Church prayed for him, but the Apostle was asleep in the prison, a proof that he feared not. An Angel was sent to rouse him from his sleep, and by him Peter was brought out of prison and for the time escaped death.

13. The same Peter, afterwards, after overcoming Simon, by spreading the precepts of God among the people and preaching chastity, stirred up the minds of the heathen against him: and when they sought to put him to death the Christians besought him to retire for a little while.

And although he was desirous of suffering, yet he was moved by the sight of the people praying, for they besought him to reserve himself for the instruction and confirmation of the people. To be brief: as he set out from the walls by night, he saw Christ meeting him in the gate and entering the city, whereupon he said, 'Lord, whither goest Thou?' Christ answered, 'I am coming to be crucified again.' This Divine response Peter understood to refer to his own cross, for Christ, Who had put off the flesh by undergoing the suffering of death could not again be crucified, For in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.¹⁵

Wherefore Peter understood that Christ was again to be crucified in His servant; and so he turned back of his own accord, and when the Christians asked him why, he told them what he had seen, and was immediately seized, and honoured the Lord Jesus by his cross.

14. Ye see then that Christ wills to suffer in His servants. What if He saith to this servant also, I will that he tarry, but follow thou Me?

16 what if He wills to taste of the fruit from this tree? For if it was His meat to do His Father's Will, it is His meat also to feed upon the suffer

[148 ings of His servants. To take an example from our Lord Himself, did He not suffer when He willed, and was He not found when they sought for Him? But when the hour of His passion had not arrived, He passed through the midst of them who sought for Him, and they who saw Him could not detain Him. Which evidently shews that when the Lord wills, each man is found and taken, while he whose time is not come although he meet the eyes, is not captured.

15. And did I not go out daily to make visits, or go to the tomb of the Martyrs? Did I not in going and returning pass close by the Royal palace? And yet no man arrested me, though they wished to drive me from the city, as they shewed afterwards by saying, 'Leave this city, and go where thou wilt.' I expected, I confess, something great, to be burned or slain with the sword for the name of Christ, but they offered me delights in the place of sufferings; and yet the soldiers of Christ seeks not for delights but for sufferings. Wherefore let no man trouble you by the intelligence that they have prepared a carriage

17, or that Auxentius, who calls himself Bishop, has uttered what he thinks terrible words.

16. Many said that executioners had been sent, that the punishment of death had been decreed; I fear them not, nor will I desert my post. For whither should I go to find a place that is not full of nothing but tears and groans? For in every Church the Catholic clergy are ordered to be cast forth; if they resist, to be put to death; all the senators

18 who do not obey this mandate, to be proscribed.

[149 And it is a Bishop who writes these orders with his own hand and dictates them with his own mouth, who to prove his learning omitted not an ancient precedent; for we read in the prophet that he saw a flying sickle

19, and in imitation of this Auxentius sent a winged sword through all the cities. And thus Satan transforms himself into an Angel of light,²⁰

and imitates his power for evil purposes.

17. Thou, Lord Jesus, hast in one moment redeemed the world; shall Auxentius in one moment, so far as in him lies, slay so many people, some with the sword, others by sacrilege²¹? My Basilica he sought with a mouth and hands of blood, and to him our present Lesson may be well applied, Unto the ungodly, saith God, why dost thou preach my laws?²²

that is, There is no concord between peace and wrath, between Christ and Belial.²³

You remember also how in the Lesson of to-day that holy man Naboth, the owner of a vineyard, was requested by the king to surrender it to him, that he might root up the vines and plant it with common herbs, and that he answered, God forbid that I should give thee the inheritance of my fathers;²⁴

and that king was grieved that what belonged of right to another was refused him when he claimed it as his right, and only gained by the deceit of a woman's artifice. Naboth then defended his vineyard even with his own blood; if he would not surrender his vineyard, shall we surrender the Church of Christ?

18. How then did I reply contumaciously? When summoned, I said, 'God forbid that I should surrender Christ's heritage. If Naboth would not surrender the heritage of his fathers, shall I surrender Christ's heritage?' I added moreover, 'God forbid that I should surrender the heritage of my fathers, the heritage of Dionysius, who died in exile for the Faith, of the Confessor Eustorgius, of Myrocles, and of all the faithful Bishops of old time.' I answered as becomes a Bishop, let the Emperor act as becomes an Emperor. He shall deprive me of my life sooner than my Faith.

19. But to whom am I to surrender it? The Lesson just read from the Gospel ought to teach us what it is that is demanded, and by whom. Ye heard it read that, when

[150 Christ was sitting on the ass's colt, the children cried out, and the Jews were indignant, appealing to the Lord Jesus, and saying that He should bid them hold their peace, but He replied, If these were to hold their peace, the very stones would cry out.²⁵

Then He entered the Temple, and cast out the moneychangers, and their tables, and those that sold doves in the Temple of God. This Lesson was read by no direction of ours, but by chance; but it suits well with the present time. For the praises of Christ are always as it were scourges to misbelievers. And now when Christ is praised the heretics say that we are exciting sedition, the heretics say that they were thereby threatened with death; and truly the praises of Christ are death to them. For how can they bear His praises Whose weakness they are proclaiming! Wherefore to this day the praises of Christ are a scourge to the madness of the Arians.

20. The Gerasenes could not bear the presence of Christ, these men, worse than the Gerasenes, cannot even bear the praises of Christ. They see children singing the glory of Christ; for it is written, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise.²⁶

They deride their tender years so full of faith, and ask, Why do they cry out? But Christ answers them, If these should hold their peace the very stones would cry out, that is, the stranger will cry out, the young men too will cry out, the more mature will cry out, the old men also: stones built into that Stone of Whom it is written, The stone which the builders disallowed is become the head-stone of the corner.²⁷

21. Christ then, invited by these praises, enters His Tern-pie, and takes His scuorge and drives out the moneychangers. For He will not permit those who are slaves of money to be in His Temple, He will not suffer those to be there who sell seats. What are seats, but honours? What are doves, but simple minds, or souls which embrace a sincere and pure faith? Shall I then introduce into the Temple him whom Christ excludes? For he is commanded to go forth who sells dignities and honours, he is commanded to go forth who would sell the simple minds of the faithful.

[151

22. Wherefore Auxentius is cast forth, Mercurianus is excluded. This is one portent under two names. That it might not be known who he was, he changed his name, and, as there had been here Auxentius the Arian Bishop, so he, to deceive the people whom the other had influenced,

called himself Auxentius. Thus he changed his name, but his perfidy he could not change; he put off wolf, and yet put on wolf. It avails him not to have changed his name, what he really is is known. He was known by one name in the regions of Scythia. he is called by another here, he has names differing according to his country. Now therefore he has two names, and if from hence he goes elsewhere he will have a third also. For how will he endure to keep a name which betrays the greatness of his crime? In Scythia he did less wickedly, and yet he was so ashamed as to change his name; here he has dared to do more heinous things, and will he be willing wherever he goes to be betrayed by his name? After writing with his own hand the death warrant of so many people, will he be able to retain his senses unshaken?

23. The Lord Jesus drove out n few from His temple, Auxentius left no one. Jesus casts men out of His temple with a scourge, Auxentius with u sword; Jesus with a rod, Mercurianus with an axe. Our holy Lord drives out the sacrilegious with a scourge, this wicked man persecutes the godly with the sword. Of him ye have to-day said well; 'let him carry his laws away with him.' He shall carry them though he desire it not, lie shall carry with him his conscience, though he carry not the writing, he shall carry his own soul inscribed in blood, although he carry not a letter inscribed with ink. Thy sin, O Judah, is written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond, and it is graven in thy heart,²⁸ graven that is in the place from whence it came forth.

24. Does he moreover, stained as he is with blood and slaughter, dare to mention discussion to me? Those whom he fails to deceive by his arguments he sentences to be smitten with the sword, and he dictates bloody laws with his mouth, writing them with his hand, and thinking that the law can impose a Creed on men. He has never heard

[152 what was read to-day, A man is not justified by the works of the law, or, I by the law am dead to the law that I might live to God,²⁹

that is, by the spiritual law he is dead to the carnal interpretation of the law. Let us too by the law of our Lord Jesus Christ die to this law which sanctions the decrees of perfidy. It is not the law which has gathered together the Church, but the faith of Christ. For the law is not of faith: But the just shall live by faith.³⁰

It is faith then, not the law, which makes a man just, because righteousness is not by the law, but by the faith of Christ. But he who rejects faith, and takes law for his rule, bears witness to his own unrighteousness, for the just shall live by faith.

25. Shall any then follow this law confirming the Council of Arianism wherein Christ is called a creature? But they say, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law.³¹

So then He is made they say, that is, created. Will they not consider this very text which they have produced; that Christ is said to be made, but made of a woman, that is, He according to His birth from the Virgin was made, Who was according to His Divine generation born of the Father? They read too to-day that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.³²

Was Christ a curse according to His Divinity? But why He should be called a curse the Apostle teaches thee, alleging the text, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,³³

that is, He Who in His flesh took upon Him our flesh, in His body carried our griefs and our curses that He might crucify them, for He is cursed, not in Himself, but in thee. Lastly, you have in another

place, Who knew no sin, but was made sin for us,³⁴

for He took upon Him our sins, to do away with them by the Sacrament of His Passion.

26. These points, my brethren, I would have discussed more fully with you in his presence, but he, being aware that you were not ignorant of the Faith, fled from your scrutiny, and chose as his advocates, if indeed he chose any, four or live heathens, whom I would willingly have now present in our general assembly, not for them to judge of Christ, but that they might hear the majesty of Christ. They however have already pronounced concerning

[153 Auxentius, for when he daily argued before them they gave him no credit. What can be a greater condemnation of him than that he was defeated without an adversary before his own judges? Thus we now have their own sentence against Auxentius.

27. And justly is he to be condemned for choosing heathen judges, for he disregarded the Apostle's precept who says Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?³⁵

And below he says, Is it so that there is not a wise man among you, no not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers?³⁶

Ye see that what he offered is contrary to the Apostle's authority. Choose whether we should follow Auxentius or Paul as our master?

28. But why should I speak of the Apostle, when our Lord Himself cries by the Prophet, hearken unto Me My people, ye that know righteousness, in whose heart is My law. God says, hearken unto Me My people, ye that know righteousness. Auxentius says, Ye know not righteousness. Do ye not see that he now, who rejects the declaration of the heavenly oracles, despises God in you? Hearken unto Me My people;³⁷

saith the Lord. He says not, Hearken ye Gentiles; He says not, Hearken ye Jews. For now they that were the people of God are become the people of error, and they who were the people of error have become the people of God, because they have believed in Christ. Wherefore that people are judges, in whose heart is the Divine, not human, law; the law written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God;³⁸

not inscribed on paper but stampd upon the heart; the law of grace not of blood. Who is it then who wrongs you, he who refuses or he who chooses to be heard by you?

29. Hemmed in on all sides, he has recourse to the wiles of his fathers. He wishes to excite odium against me in

regard to the Emperor, saying, that a youth yet a catechumen and ignorant of the sacred Scriptures, ought to judge, and to judge in the Consistory. As if last year, when I was summoned to the palace, when in the presence of the

[154 nobles the matter was argued before the Consistory, when the Emperor wished to take away the Basilica, I was then cowed by the sight of the Imperial court, and had not maintained the constancy of a priest, or had suffered our rights to be infringed there. Do they not remember that

when the people knew I had gone to the palace they rushed in with an onset that nothing could withstand; and when a Military Count came forth with some light troops to disperse the multitude they all offered themselves to death for the Faith of Christ? Was I not then requested to make a long speech to soothe the people? Did I not pledge my faith that no one should invade the Church's Basilica? And although my good offices were requested as a kindness, yet the coming of the populace to the palace was made a ground of charge against me; into the same odium then they wish me again to fall.

30. I recalled the people, and yet I did not escape odium, and this odium ought, I conceive, to be controuled rather than feared. For what should we fear for the name of Christ? Unless perhaps this which they say ought to move me; 'And ought not the Emperor then to have one Basilica to go to; and does Ambrose desire to be more powerful than the Emperor, so as to exclude him from the liberty of attending Church?' When they say this, they wish to lay hold of my words, like the Jews who tempted Christ with empty words, saying, Master, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?³⁹

Must the servants of God always be exposed to odium on Caesar's account? And does impiety, with a view to calumny, seek to use the Imperial name as a cloak? And can they protest that they do not partake of the sacrilege of these men, whose guidance they follow?

31. Yet see how much worse the Arians are than the Jews. The latter enquired of Christ whether He thought that the right of tribute should be rendered to Caesar; the former are willing to surrender to the Emperor the rights of the Church. But like traitors, they follow their master, and so let us answer what our Lord and Master hath taught

us. For Jesus perceiving the treachery of the Jews, said unto them, Why tempt ye Me, shew Me a penny. And when they gave it to Him, He said, Whose image and whose

[155 superscription is this? They answered, Caesar's. Jesus replied, Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.⁴⁰

Thus I also say to them who find fault with me, Shew Me a penny. Jesus saw the penny was Caesar's, and said, Render unto Caesar the the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Can they from the seizure of the Basilicas of the Church offer the penny of Caesar?

32. But in the Church I know one image, that is, the image of the invisible God, of which God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness,⁴¹

that image of which it is written, that Christ is the brightness of His glory, the express image of His substance.⁴²

In this image I behold the Father, as the Lord Jesus Himself said, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also.⁴³ For this Image is not divided from the Father, for He hath taught me the unity of the Trinity, saying, I and the Father are One,⁴⁴

and below, All things that the Father hath are Mine.⁴⁵

And of the Holy Spirit, saying, that He is the Spirit of Christ, and hath received from Christ, as it is written, He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you.⁴⁶

33. In what respect then have we not answered with humility? If he ask for tribute we deny it not. The Church lands pay tribute; if the Emperor desire to possess these lands he has the power to claim them; none of us will interfere. The contributions of the people will more than suffice for the poor; let them excite no ill-will on account of the lands, let them take them if it please the Emperor; I give them not, but I do not refuse them. They ask for gold, but I can say, Silver and gold I seek not. But this disbursement of gold they make a cause of offence: this offence I dread not. I have stipendiaries, it is true: my stipendiaries

47 are the poor of Christ, this is a treasure which I am well used to collect. May this offence of bestowing gold on the poor ever be charged upon me! And if they accuse me of defending myself by their means, I deny not, nay I even court the charge; a defence I have,

[156 but it is in the prayers of the poor. Blind they are and and lame, weak and old, yet are they stronger than the stoutest warriors. Lastly, gifts to the poor make God our debtor, for it is written, He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord.⁴⁸

The guards of warriors often gain not Divine grace.

34. Moreover they assert that the people have been beguiled by the strains of my hymns

49. I deny not this either. It is a lofty strain, than which nothing is more powerful. For what can be more powerful than the confession of the Trinity, which is daily celebrated by the mouth of the whole people? All zealously desire to make profession of their faith, they know how to confess in verse the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus all are become teachers who were scarcely able to be disciples.

35. But what can be more lowly than for us to follow the example of Christ, Who being found in fashion as a man humbled himself being made obedient unto death.⁵⁰

And again, by obedience He delivered all: For as by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one Man shall many be made righteous.⁵¹

If then He was obedient let them learn from Him the lesson of obedience, to which we adhere, saying to them who raise odium against us, on the Emperor's account, We render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. To Caesar tribute is due, we deny it not; the Church is God's, and must not be given up to Caesar, because the Temple of God cannot by right be Caesar's.

[157

36. That this is said with due honour to the Emperor no one can deny. For what can be more honourable for the Emperor than to be styled a son of the Church? In saying this we are loyal to him without sinning against God. For the Emperor is within the Church, not over the Church; a good Emperor seeks the aid of the Church, he does not reject it, we say this humbly, but we assert it firmly. Some men threaten us with fire, sword and banishment. We, the servants of Christ, have learned not to fear. To them that fear not nothing is a cause of alarm. And it is thus written, arrows of infants are their blows become.⁵²

37. It would seem now that we have made a sufficient answer to what was proposed to us. Now I ask them the same question as did the Saviour, The baptism of John was it from heaven or of men?⁵³ And the Jews could not answer Him. If the Jews did not annul the baptism of John, shall Auxentius annul the Baptism of Christ? For that Baptism is not from men but from Christ which the Angel of mighty Counsel

54 brought down to us, that we might be justified before God. Why then does Auxentius hold that the faithful, those baptized in the name of the Trinity are to be re-baptized, when the Apostle says, One faith, one baptism;⁵⁵

why does he say that he is the adversary of men, not of Christ, seeing that he spurns the counsel of God, and contemns that Baptism which Christ gave us for the redemption of our sins.

LETTER XXII.[A.D.386.]

S. AMBROSE here recounts to his sister the discovery of the relics of S. S. Gervasius and Protasius, which occurred during the time of trial referred to in the last letter, and seems, by the pitch of excitement to which it raised the people of Milan, to have alarmed the court-party, and so to have caused the persecution to be dropped. The simple narrative needs no further introduction. It is strikingly told, and the question of the miracles discussed, in the 'Church of the Fathers' ch. iii. S. Augustine gives a brief account of the event in his Confessions, (ix. 7.) fully corroborating S. Ambrose's statements, and also speaks of it in De Civ. Dei xxii. 8, 2, and in Serm. de Divers. cclxxvi. 5. |158 TO THE LADY HIS SISTER WHOM HE LOVES MORE THAN HIS LIFE AND EYES AMBROSE HER BROTHER SENDS GREETING. As I am wont to keep your holiness informed of all that goes on here in your absence, I would have you know that we have found the bodies of some holy martyrs. After the consecration of a Church ⁵⁶, many began to interrupt me crying with one voice; Consecrate this as you did the Roman Basilica. 'I will do so,' I replied, 'if I find any relics of Martyrs:' and immediately my heart burned within me as if prophetically.

2. In short the Lord lent us aid ⁵⁷, though even the very clergy were alarmed. I caused the ground to be opened before the rails of the Church of S.S. Felix and Nabor. I found the suitable tokens; and when some persons were brought for us to lay our hands upon, the power of the holy martyrs became so manifest that before I began to speak, one of them, a woman

⁵⁸, was seized by an evil spirit and thrown down upon the ground in the place where the martyrs lay. We found two men of stupendous size, such as belonged to ancient days. All their bones were entire, and there was much blood.⁵⁹ The people flocked thither in crowds throughout the whole of those two days. We arranged all the bones in order, and carried them when evening set in, to the Basilica of Fausta

⁶⁰; where we kept vigils throughout the night, and some possessed persons received imposition of hands. The following day we transferred them to the Basilica which they call Ambrosian. During their transportation a blind man was healed

61. My |159

discourse to the people was as follows. When I considered in what overflowing and unprecedented numbers you were met together, and thought on the gifts of Divine Grace which shone forth in the holy Martyrs, I felt myself, I confess, unequal to this task, and thought it

impossible that I could find language to express that which we can hardly conceive in mind or endure with our eyes. But when the reading of the regular Lessons of Holy Scripture began, the Holy Spirit, Who spoke by the Prophets, granted us grace to speak somewhat worthy of this great and expectant concourse, and of the merits of the holy Martyrs.

4. The heavens, the Psalmist says, declare the glory of God.⁶²

On reading this Psalm the thought arises that it is not so much the material elements as the heavenly merits that seem to offer praise worthy of God. But by the coincidence of the Lesson being read to-day it is made plain what are the heavens which tell of the glory of God. Behold on my right hand and on my left the holy relics, behold men of heavenly conversation, behold the trophies of a lofty mind. These are the heavens which declare the glory of God; these are the works of His hands which are told by the firmament. For it was not worldly snares, but the favour of the Divine operation, which raised them to the firmament of the most sacred Passion, and long beforehand by the evidence of their conversation and virtues bore this testimony of them, that they remained steadfast against the slippery wiles of this world.

5. Paul was an heaven, when he says, Our conversation is in heaven.⁶³

James and John were heavens; they are called sons of thunder;⁶⁴

and therefore being as it were, an heaven, John saw the Word with God.⁶⁵

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself was an heaven of perpetual light, when He told forth the glory of God, that glory which no man had before beheld. And therefore He said, No man hath seen God at any time, but the Only-Begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.⁶⁶

Moreover, if you look for the handiwork of God, hear what Job says, The Spirit of God hath made me.⁶⁷

And so, strengthened against the temptations of the devil, he preserved his steps

stedfast and without stumbling. But let us proceed to what follows. |160

6. Day unto day, the Psalm says, uttereth speech.⁶⁸

These are the true days, which no shades of night obscure; these are the true days, full of light and eternal radiance, who have uttered the word of God not by any mere transient utterance but from their inmost heart, continuing constant in their confession, persevering in their testimony.

7. Another Psalm we read saith, Who is like unto the Lord our God, that hath His dwelling so high, and yet

regardeth the lowly things that are in heaven and earth.⁶⁹

Truly God hath regarded the lowly, Who hath discovered the relics of the martyrs of His Church as they lay hid under the unnoted sod, of those whose souls are in heaven, while their bodies are in the earth, taking up the simple out of the dust and lifting the poor out of the mire,⁷⁰

even those whom ye see, to set them with the princes of His people. For whom but the holy martyrs shall we deem to be princes of the people? In their number Protasius and Gervasius

heretofore long unknown are enrolled, they who have caused the Church of Milan, once barren of martyrs, but now the mother of many children,⁷¹

to exult both in the honors and examples of her own sufferings?

8. Nor let this be considered alien from the true Faith: Day unto day uttereth speech, soul to soul, life to life, resurrection to resurrection. And night unto night uttereth knowledge, that is, flesh to flesh, the flesh whose sufferings have declared to all the true knowledge of faith. Bright and fair nights, full of stars: For one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the

dead.⁷²

9. But many not improperly call this the resurrection of the martyrs; whether they have risen for themselves is another question, for us beyond a doubt they are risen. Ye have heard, nay, yourselves have seen, many cleansed from evil spirits; many also, after touching with their hands the garments of the saints, delivered from the infirmities under which they suffered: ye have seen the miracles of old time renewed, when through the coming of the Lord Jesus, a fuller Grace descended upon the earth; ye see many healed by the shadow, as it were, of the holy bodies. How many napkins are passed to and fro? How

[161 many garments placed on these holy relics, and endowed by the mere contact with the power of healing are reclaimed by their owners. All think themselves happy in touching even the outer-most thread, and whoever touches them will be made whole.

10. Thanks be to Thee, Lord Jesus, that at this time, when Thy Church requires greater guardianship, Thou hast raised up for us the spirits of the holy martyrs. Let all be well aware what kind of champions I desire, such as are wont to be protectors not assailants. Such are they,

O holy people, whom I have obtained for you, a benefit to all, and a hurt to none. These are the defenders whom

I desire, these are my soldiers, not the world's soldiers, but Christ's. I fear no odium on account of these; their patronage is safe in proportion to its power. Nay, I desire their protection for the very men who grudge them to me. Let them come then and see my body-guard: I deny not that I am surrounded by such weapons as these; Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will magnify ourselves in the Name of the Lord our God.⁷³

11. The Lesson from Holy Scripture relates how Elisha, when surrounded by the army of the Syrians, told his trembling servant not to fear, for they, said he, that are for us are more than they which are against us;⁷⁴

and in order to convince Gehazi of this, he prayed that his eyes might be opened, and when this was done he saw a countless host of Angels present with the prophet. And we, though we see them not, yet are conscious of their presence. Our eyes were held, as long as the bodies of the saints lay hid in their graves. Now God has opened our eyes, and we have seen the aids which had so often succoured us. Before, we saw them not, although we possessed them. And so, as though the Lord said to our trembling hearts, 'Behold what great martyrs I have given you;' even so with opened eyes we behold the glory of the Lord,⁷⁵ which as to the passion of the martyrs is past,

as to their operation is present. We have escaped, my brethren, no light load of shame; we had patrons and we knew it not. This one thing we have found, wherein we seem to excel our

[162 ancestors; they lost the knowledge of the holy martyrs, and we have gained it.

12. These noble relics are dug out of an ignoble sepulchre; these trophies are displayed in the face of day. The tomb is moist with blood, the tokens of a triumphant death are displayed, the uninjured relics are found in their proper place and order, the head separated from the body. Old men now relate that they have formerly heard the names of these martyrs, and read their titles. The city which had seized on the martyrs of other places had lost her own. This is the gift of God, and yet the favour which the Lord Jesus has conferred in the time of my episcopate I cannot deny, and since I myself am not counted worthy to be a martyr, I have gained these martyrs for you.

13. Bring these victorious victims to the spot where Christ is the sacrifice. But He, Who suffered for all, upon the Altar, they, who have been redeemed by His passion, under the Altar. This spot I had destined for myself, for it is fitting that the priest should rest where he hath been wont to offer, but I give up the right side to the sacred victims: that spot was due to the martyrs. Wherefore let us bury the hallowed relics, placing them in a worthy home, and let us employ the whole day in faithful devotion.

14. The people loudly requested that the deposition of the martyrs should be deferred until the Lord's Day; but at length I prevailed that it should take place on the following day. On that day I delivered a second sermon to the people to the following effect.

15. Yesterday I discoursed upon the verse, Day unto day uttereth speech,⁷⁶ speaking according to my capacity: to-day Holy Scripture seems to me to have prophesied, not only before, but now. For seeing that this your devout celebration has continued night and day, the oracles of prophetic song have declared that these, even yesterday and to-day, are the days of which it is most opportunely said day unto day uttereth speech, and these the nights to which the saying is appropriate that night unto night uttereth knowledge. For what else have ye done during these two days but utter the word of God with deep emotion, and prove yourselves to have the knowledge of faith?

[163

16. This your celebration some, as is their wont, are envious of. And since their envious minds cannot endure it, they also hate its cause, and proceed to such a pitch of folly as to deny the merits of the martyrs, whose power the very devils confess. But this is not strange; for such is the faithlessness of unbelievers that the confession of the devil himself is often less intolerable. For the devil said, Jesus, Thou Son of the living God, art Thou come to torment us before the time?⁷⁷ And yet when the Jews heard this they even then denied the Son of God. And now ye have heard the devils crying out, and owning to the martyrs that they cannot bear their tortures, and saying 'Why are ye come to torment us so grievously?' And the Arians say, 'These are not martyrs, nor can they torment the devil nor dispossess any one.' while yet their own words are evidence of the torments of the evil spirits, and the benefits of the martyrs are shewn by the recovery of the healed, and the manifest proof of those that were dispossessed.

17. They deny that the blind man received his sight, but he denies not his own cure. He says, 'I who was blind now see.' He says, 'My blindness has left me;' he evidences it by the fact. They deny the benefit, though they cannot deny the fact. The man is well known: when in health he was employed in public trade, his name is Severus, a butcher by business. When his affliction befell him he laid down his employment. He calls as his witnesses those men by whose charities he was supported; he summons as witnesses of his present visitation the very men who bore testimony to his blindness. He declares that when he touched the border of the garment with which the martyrs' bodies were clothed, his sight was restored to him.

18. Is not this like what we read in the Gospel? For the power which we admire proceeds from one and the same Author; nor does it signify whether it is a work or a gift, seeing that He confers gifts in His works and works by His gifts. For what He has enabled some themselves to perform, this in the work of others His Name effects. Thus we read in the Gospel that the Jews, when they saw that the blind man had received his sight, required the testimony of his parents. They asked, 'How has your son

[164 received his sight?' That blind man said, Whereas I was blind now I see,⁷⁸ and so too our blind man says, 'I was blind, and now I see.' Enquire of others, if ye believe me not; question strangers, if you suspect his parents of being in collusion with me. The obstinacy of these men is more detestable than that of the Jews, for the latter inquired of the man's parents to solve their doubts; they secretly inquire but openly deny, no longer refusing credit to the miracle but to its Author.

19 and 20. But I would fain ask, what it is they will not believe; is it that any one can be relieved by the martyrs? But this is not to believe in Christ, for He hath said, And greater things than these shall ye do.⁷⁹ Or only by those martyrs, whose merits have long been efficacious, and whose bodies have long been discovered? Here I ask whether it is of myself or of the holy martyrs that they are jealous? If of me, have I wrought any miracles by my own means, in my own name? Why then do they envy me that which is not mine? But if of the martyrs (for if not of me it must be of them they are envious) they show that their Creed is different from that of the martyrs. For they would not envy their works unless they deemed the faith which was in them to be that which they themselves have not. This is that Faith sealed by the tradition of our ancestors, which the devils themselves cannot deny, though the Arians do.

21. We have heard to-day those on whom hands were laid, profess that no man can be saved who does not believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: that he was dead and buried who denied the Holy Ghost, who believed not the Almighty power of the Trinity. This the devil confesses, but the Arians will not own it. The devil says, Let him who denies the divinity of the Holy Spirit be tormented as he himself was tormented by the Martyrs.

22. What I accept from the devil is not his testimony, but his confession. He spoke unwillingly, compelled and tortured. That which wickedness suppressed, force extorted. The devil yields to blows, but as yet the Arians have not learned to yield. How much have they suffered, and like Pharaoh, they are hardened by their calamities!

[165 The devil said, as we find it written, I know Thee Who Thou art, the Son of the Living God.⁸⁰ The Jews said, We know not who He is.⁸¹ Yesterday, and the preceding night and day the devils

said, 'We know that ye are martyrs,' while the Arians said, 'We know not, we will not understand nor believe.' The devils say to the martyrs, 'Ye are come to destroy us,' the Arians say, 'These torments of the devil are not true torments but pretended and counterfeit.' I have heard of many counterfeits, but no man could ever feign himself a devil. Again, what is the meaning of the agony we see in them, when the hand is laid on them? What room is here for fraud and what suspicion of imposture?

23. But I will not call the words of devils as a testimony to the martyrs: let the sacred sufferings of the martyrs be established by their own supernatural acts; judges indeed they have, namely, those that have been cleansed, witnesses, namely those that have been dispossessed. Better than that of devils is their voice who came diseased and are now healed, better is that voice which the martyrs blood sends forth, for blood has a loud voice which reaches from earth to heaven. Ye have read those words of God, Thy brother's blood crieth unto Me!⁸² This blood cries by its purple stains, it cries by its signal efficacy, it cries by its triumphant suffering.

We have granted your request and have put off till today the burial of the relics which should have taken place yesterday.

LETTER XXIII.[A.D.386.] This letter is addressed to the Bishops of the Province of Aemilia, which, as forming part of the political diocese of Italy, was under the ecclesiastical superintendence of the Bishop of Milan, who exercised the powers, if he had not the title, of Exarch. (See Bingham Antiq. ix. 1, § 6, 8.) The Bishops apply to him for his decision as to the proper day for observing Easter in the following year, A.D. ,387, in which the first day of the week fell on the fourteenth day of the moon, or, as it is called here, the 'fourteenth moon.' This was a question which for long troubled the Church, and divided the East and West, and much importance was attached to it. The whole question is fully discussed in Dict. of Christ. Antiq. under 'Easter,' in 166 a learned article by the Rev. L. Hensley. Some interesting remarks on it, in connection with disputes in England, may be seen in Prof. Bright's Early English Ch. Hist. pp. 76-79, and 193-200.

Mr. Hensley has kindly drawn up the following table, which exhibits at a glance the points on which S. Ambrose enters in this letter.

TABLE OF EASTER FROM A.D. 373 TO A.D. 387.

A.D.

GOLDEN NUMBER.

SUNDAY LETTER.

EASTER TERM.

EASTER DAY.

*373

13

F

March 24 F

March 31

374

14

E

April 12 D

April 13

375

15

D

April 1 G

April 5

376

16

CB

April 21 C

April 27

*377

17 A

April 9 A

April 16

378

18

G

March 29 D

April 1

379

19

F

April 17 B

April 21

*380

1

ED

April 5 D

April 12

381

2

C

March 25 G

March 28

382

3

B

April 13 E

April 17

*383

4 A

April 2 A

April 9

381

5

GF

March 22 D

March 24

385

6

E

April 10 B

April 13

386

7

D

March 30 E

April 5

*387

8

C

April 18 G

April 25

* The asterisks mark the year in which the full moon falls on the Sunday, and which are referred to in the Letter. TO THE LORDS, HIS BRETHREN MOST BELOVED, THE BISHOPS ESTABLISHED THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE OF AEMILIA, AMBROSE, BISHOP.

1. THAT to settle the day of the celebration of the Passover requires more than ordinary wisdom, we are taught both by the Holy Scripture and by the tradition of the Fathers, who, when assembled at the Nicene Synod, in addition to their true and admirable decrees concerning the Faith, formed also for the above-mentioned celebration a plan for nineteen years with the aid of the most skilful calculators, and constituted a sort of cycle to serve as a pattern for subsequent years. This cycle they called the nineteen years' cycle⁸³, their aim being that we should not waver in uncertain and ungrounded opinions on such a

[167 celebration, but ascertain the true method and so ensure such concurrence of the affections of all, that the sacrifice for the Lord's Resurrection should be offered every where on the same night.

2. My Lords and brethren most beloved, we ought not so far to deviate from truth, or to be of such varying and wandering minds, as to the obligation of this celebration having been imposed upon all Christians: since our Lord Himself selected the day to celebrate it upon, which agreed with the method of the true observance. For it is written: Then came the day when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover that we may eat. And they said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare? And He said unto them, Behold when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water: follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, the Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room, there make ready.⁸⁴

3. We observe then that we ought not to go down to places in the earth, but to seek a large upper room furnished, for us to celebrate the Lord's Passover. For we ought to wash our senses, so to

speak, with the spiritual water of the everlasting fountain, and maintain the rule of the devout celebration, and not follow common notions and go in quest of days according to the moon, whereas the Apostle says, Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.⁸⁵

For it is sure to be injurious ⁸⁶.

4. But it is one thing to observe them after the heathen fashion, so as to decide on what day of the moon you are to attempt anything, for instance, that you should avoid the fifth

⁸⁷ and begin no work upon it, and to recommend different points in the moon's course for commencing

[¹⁶⁸ employments, or to avoid certain days, as many are in the habit of avoiding days called 'following

⁸⁸ or the Egyptian days: it is another thing to turn the observance of a

religious mind to the day of which it is written, This is the day which the Lord hath made.⁸⁹

For although it is written that the Lord's Passover ought to be celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month, and we ought to look for what is truly the fourteenth moon

⁹⁰ for celebrating the course of our Lord's Passion, still we can understand from this that to fix such a solemnity there is required either the perfection of the Church, or the fulness of clear faith, as the Prophet said when he spoke of the Son of God, that his throne is as the sun before me, and as the perfect moon, it shall remain for ever.

⁹¹

5. Hence it is that our Lord Himself also, when He had performed His wonderful works upon the earth, as if the faith of human minds were now established, observed that it was the time of His Passion, saying, Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.⁹² For He teaches elsewhere that He sought this glory of celebrating His Passion, where He says, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected.⁹³

In them indeed is Jesus perfected, who begin to be perfect, that with their faith they may believe on the fulness of His Divinity and His Redemption.

6. Therefore we seek out both the day and the hour, as the Scripture teaches us. The prophet David also says, It is time for thee, Lord, to work,⁹⁴

when he sought understanding to know the testimonies of the Lord. The Preacher also saith, To every thing there is a season;⁹⁵

Jeremy exclaims, The turtle and the swallow and the sparrows of the ground observe the time of their coming.⁹⁶

But what can appear more evident than that it is of the Passion of our Lord that it is said, The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib?⁹⁷ Let us then acknowledge this crib of our

Master, wherein we are nourished, fed, and refreshed.

[169

7. We ought therefore especially to know this time, at which over the universal world the accordant prayers of the sacred night are to be poured forth; for prayers are commended by season also, as it is written, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee.⁹⁸

This is the time of which the Apostle said, Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation.⁹⁹

8. Accordingly, since, even after the calculations of the Egyptians, and the definitions of the church of Alexandria, and also of the Bishop of the church of Rome, several persons are still waiting my judgement by letter, it is needful that I should write what my opinion is about the day of the Passover. For though the question which has arisen is about the approaching Paschal day, yet we state what we think should be maintained for all subsequent time, in case any question of the kind should come up.

9. But there are two things to be observed in the solemnity of the passover, the fourteenth moon, and the first month, which is called the month of the new fruits

100.¹⁰¹ Therefore that we may not appear to be departing from the Old Testament, let us recite the words of the section concerning the day of celebrating the Passover. Moses warns the people, saying that they must keep the month of the new fruits, proclaiming that it is the first month, for he says, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you,¹⁰²

and thou shalt offer the Passover of the Lord thy God on the fourteenth day of the first month.¹⁰³

10. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁴

He therefore, Who spake the law, afterwards coming by the Virgin in the last times, accomplished the fulness of the Law, for He came not to destroy the Law but to fulfil it,¹⁰⁵

and He celebrated the Passover in the week in which the fourteenth moon was the fifth day of the week, and then on that very day, as what is said before teaches us, He ate the Passover with his disciples: but on the following day, on the sixth day of the week, He

[170 was crucified on the fifteenth moon. But the sixteenth moon was the Sabbath which was an high day, and so on. the seventeenth moon He rose again from the dead.

11. We must then keep this law of Easter, not to keep the fourteenth day as the day of the Resurrection, but rather as the day of the Passion, or at least one of the next preceding days, because the feast of the Resurrection is kept on the Lord's day; and on the Lord's day we cannot fast; for we rightly condemn the Manichaeans for their fast upon this day. For it is unbelief in Christ's Resurrection, to appoint a rule of fasting for the day of the Resurrection, since the Law says that the Passion is to be eaten with bitterness

106, that is, with grief, because the Author of Salvation was slain by so great a sacrilege on the part of men; but on the Lord's day the Prophet teaches us that we should rejoice, saying, This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it.¹⁰⁷

12. Therefore it is fit that not only the day of the Passion, but also that of the Resurrection be observed by us, that we may have a day both of bitterness and of joy; fast on the one, on the other be refreshed. Consequently, if the fourteenth moon of the first month fall, as will be the case next time, on the Lord's day, inasmuch as we ought neither to fast on the Lord's day, nor on the thirteenth moon which falls on the Sabbath-day to break the fast, which must especially be observed on the day of the Passion, the celebration of Easter must be postponed to the next week. For the fifteenth day of the month follows, on which Christ suffered, and it will be the second day of the week. The third day of the week will be the sixteenth moon, on which our Lord's Flesh rested in the tomb; and the fourth day of the week will be the seventeenth moon on which our Lord rose again.

13. When therefore these three sacred days run as they do next time into the further week, within which three days He both suffered and rested and rose again, of which three days He says, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,¹⁰⁸

what can bring us trouble or doubt? For if it raises a scruple that we do not on the fourteenth moon celebrate the particular day either of His Passion or

[171 Resurrection, we may remember that our Lord Himself did not suffer on the fourteenth moon, but on the fifteenth, and on the seventeenth He rose again. But if any are troubled at our passing over the fourteenth moon, which falls upon the Lord's day, that is the 18th of April, and recommending its celebration on the following Lord's day, there is this authority for doing so.

14. In times lately past, when the fourteenth moon of the first month fell on the Lord's day, the solemnity was celebrated on the Lord's day next ensuing. But in the eighty-ninth year of the Era of Diocletian

109, when the fourteenth moon was on the 21th of March, Easter was kept by us on the last day of March. The Alexandrians and Egyptians also, as they wrote themselves, when the fourteenth day of the moon fell on the 28th day of the month Phamenoth, kept Easter on the fifth day of the month Pharmuthi, which is the last day of March, and so agreed with us. Again in the ninety-third year of the Era of Diocletian, when the fourteenth moon fell on the fourteenth day of the month Pharmuthi, which is the 9th of April, and was the Lord's day, Easter was kept on the Lord's day, the 21st day of Pharmuthi, or according to us on the 16th of April. Wherefore since we have both reason and precedent, nothing should disturb us upon this head.

15. There is yet this further point that seems to require explanation, that several persons think that we shall be keeping Easter in the second month, whereas it is written, Keep the first month, the month of new fruits.¹¹⁰

The case however cannot occur that any should keep Easter out of the month of the new fruits, except those who keep the fourteenth moon so strictly to the letter, that they will not celebrate their Easter on any day but that. Moreover the Jews are going to celebrate the approaching Passover in

[172 the twelfth and not in the first month, viz. on the 20th of March according to us, hut according to the Egyptians on the twenty-fourth day of the month Phamenoth, which is not the first month hut the twelfth, for the first month of the Egyptians is called Pharmuthi, and begins on the 27th of March and ends on the 25th of April. Therefore according to the Egyptians we shall keep Easter Sunday in the first month, that is, on the 25th of April, which is the thirtieth day of the month Pharmuthi.

16. Nor do I consider it unreasonable to borrow a precedent for observing the month from the country in which the first Passover was celebrated. For which reason also our predecessors in the ordinance of the Nicene Council thought fit to decide that their cycle of nineteen years should belong to the same month, if one observes it diligently; and they rightly kept the very month of the new fruits, for in Egypt it is in this the first month that the new corn is cut: and this month is the first in respect of the crops of the Egyptians and first according to the Law, but the eighth according to our custom, for the in-diction begins in the month of September. The first of April therefore is in the eighth month. But the month begins not according to vulgar usage, but according to the custom of learned men, from the day of the equinox, which is the 21st of March, and ends on the 21st of April. Therefore the days of Easter have been generally kept as much as possible within these thirty-one

111 days.

17. But after keeping Easter Sunday six years ago 112

on the 21st of April, that is on the thirtieth day of the month according to our reckoning, we have no reason to be distressed if this next time also we are to keep it on the thirtieth day of the month Pharmuthi. If any one think that it is the second month, because Easter Sunday will be on the third day from the completion of the month (but this appears to be completed on the 21st of April) he should

[173 consider that the fourteenth moon, which is our object, will fall on the 18th of April and thus within the regular count-ing of the month. But what the law requires is that the day of the Passion should be kept within the first month, the month of new fruits.

18. The method then is satisfactory as far as the complete course of the moon is concerned, inasmuch as three more days remain to complete the month. Easter then does not pass on into another month, since it will be kept within the same month, that is, the first. But that it is not fit that we should be tied to the letter, not only does the customary method of keeping Easter of itself instruct us, but the Apostle too teaches us, when he says, Christ our Passover is sacrificed.¹¹³

The passage also which has been cited teaches us that we are not to follow the letter, for thus it runs: And thou shalt sacrifice the

Passover to the Lord thy God on the fourteenth day of the first month ¹¹⁴.¹¹⁵ He uses the word 'day' in the place of 'moon;' and so the most skilful according to the law calculate the

month by the moon's course, and since the moon's course, that is the first day, may begin with more than one of the nones, you perceive that the nones of May do still admit of being reckoned in the first month of the new fruits. Therefore even according to the judgement of the law this is the first month. To conclude, the Greeks call the moon

month, owing to which they call the months in Greek

month, and the ordinary usage of foreign nation employs moon in the sense of day.

19. But even the Lessons of the old Testament shew that different days are to be observed for the Passion and Resurrection: for there it runs, Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats; and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door post of the house wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire,¹¹⁶

and further on, And ye shall eat ^{it}¹⁷⁴

it with anxiety ¹¹⁷:

it is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and in all the land of Egypt¹¹⁸ will I execute vengeance: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token in the houses where ye are; and I will see the blood and I will protect you and the plague of extermination shall not be on you. And I will smite the land of Egypt, And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations: ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.¹¹⁹

20. We observe that the day of the Passion is marked out as a fast, for the lamb is to be slain at the evening: though we might understand by evening the last time, according to John who says, Children, it is the last time.¹²⁰

But even according to the mystery, it is plain that it was killed in the evening, when darkness immediately took place, and true fasting is to be observed on that day, for thus shall ye eat it with anxiety: but anxiety belongs to those who fast. But on the day of the Resurrection there is the exultation of refreshment and joy, on which day the people appears to have gone out of Egypt, when the first-born of the Egyptians had been killed. And this is shewn more evidently by what follows, wherein the Scripture says, that after the Jews kept the Passover as Moses ordered, It came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt from the first-born of Pharaoh.¹²¹ And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel, and go serve the Lord.¹²² And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste.¹²³

Eventually the Israelites went in such manner, that they had not opportunity to leaven their dough, for the Egyptians thrust them out, and would not wait for them to take the preparation they had made for themselves for the way.

21. We have made it clear then that the day of the Resurrection ought to be observed after the day of the Passion, and that this day of the Resurrection ought not to be on the fourteenth moon, but later, as the Old Testament says,

[175 because the day of the Resurrection is that on which the people going out of Egypt, after being baptized, as the Apostle says, in the sea and in the cloud,¹²⁴

overcame death, receiving spiritual bread, and drinking spiritual drink from the rock: and further that the Lord's Passion cannot be celebrated on the Lord's day, and that if the fourteenth moon should fall upon the Lord's day, that another week ought to be added, as was done in the seventy sixth year¹²⁵ of the era of Diocletian. For then without any doubt or hesitation on the part of our fathers we celebrated Easter Sunday on the twenty-eighth day of the month Pharmuthi, which is the 23rd of April. And both the course of the moon and the reason of the case concur in recommending this, for next Easter is to be kept on the twenty first moon, for to that day its range has commonly extended.

22. Since therefore so many indications of truth are combined, let us after the example of our fathers celebrate the festival of our general Salvation with joy and exultation, colouring our side posts, between which is the door of the word which the Apostle wishes to be opened unto him, with faith in the Lord's Passion.¹²⁶ Of this door David also says, Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips,¹²⁷ that we may speak of nothing but the Blood of Christ, whereby we have conquered death, whereby we are redeemed. Let the sweet odour of Christ burn in us. To Him let us listen, on Him let us turn the eyes both of mind and body, admiring His works, proclaiming His blessings; over the threshold of our door let the confession of holy Redemption shine resplendent. Let us with fervent spirit keep the holy Feast, in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth,¹²⁸ and singing in pious doctrine with one accord the Glory of the Father and of the Son and the undivided Majesty of the Holy Spirit. [176 LETTER XXIV. [A.D.387.]

S. AMBROSE here reports the result of his second mission to Maximus in behalf of Justina and her son Valentinian the 2nd. He had before gone, as he mentions in this Letter, immediately after the murder of Gratian, A.D. 383, and had then, at much risk to himself, done them good service, and been mainly instrumental in securing peace, and inducing Maximus to abstain from invading Italy, and to leave Valentinian in possession of a share of the Empire. Now it seemed certain that Maximus was preparing to cross the Alps and deprive Valentinian of his dominions and probably of his life, and once more Justina and her son seek the aid of the great Bishop, whom they had so cruelly persecuted during the peace he had procured for them. It is very striking to see the persecutors thus reduced to be suppliants of their victim, and the good Bishop at once rendering them the service which they sought. He writes this report while on his way back, and sends it before him, that Valentinian and his mother might learn the truth at once, and lose no time in making preparation to meet their danger. He was commissioned to induce Maximus to maintain peace, and to restore the body of Gratian for burial at Milan. S. Ambrose was less successful in this embassy than in the former one, and Justina and Valentinian had to escape to the East and put themselves under the protection of Theodosius, who took up arms in their behalf, and marched to the West, defeated and captured Maximus at Aquileia, and had him put to death, and so restored Valentinian to the Empire of all the West,

A.D. 388.

S. Ambrose cannot have started on his mission till after Easter, as this was the year in which he baptized S. Augustine.

AMBROSE TO THE EMPEROR VALENTINIAN.

1. OF my fidelity in my former mission you were so well assured as to require from me no account of it. Indeed the very fact that I was detained some days in Gaul sufficiently proved that I had made no promises acceptable to Maximus, nor agreed to any measures which inclined to what was pleasing to him rather than to the establishment of peace. And again, had you not approved of my first mission you would not have committed to me a second. But since as I was on the point of retiring he laid upon me the necessity of a discussion with him, I have thought it best to address to you in this letter an account of my mission, for fear any one should give you an account which mingled truth with falsehood, before my return could declare to you the truth in its perfect and sincere characters.

|177

2. The day after I reached Treves I presented myself at the palace; a Gaul came out to receive me, who was the Emperor's Chamberlain, and one of the royal eunuchs. I requested an audience; he enquired whether I had your Majesty's commission: I replied that I had. He said that I could only be heard in the Consistory. I answered that this was not usual for Bishops, and at all events that there were matters whereon I required serious conference with his master. To be brief; he consulted his master, and brought back the same answer, so that it was plain that the former had originated with his will. I said that such a course was inconsistent with the office I bore, but that I would not shrink from the duty I had undertaken, and that more especially in your service, and as it really was to support your brotherly affection, I was glad to humble myself.

3. As soon as he had taken his seat in the Consistory I entered; he rose to give me the kiss of peace. I stood among the members of the Consistory; some of them urged me to go up the steps, and he himself invited me. I replied, 'Why do you offer a kiss to one whom you do not acknowledge

129? for had you acknowledged me you would not have seen me here.' 'You are excited, Bishop,' said he. 'It is not anger,' I said, 'that I feel, but shame at appearing in a place unsuited to me.' 'Yet on your first mission,' he said, 'you entered the Consistory.' 'True,' I replied, 'but the blame rests on him who summoned, not on me who entered.' 'Why,' said he, 'did you then enter?' 'Because,' I replied, 'I was then suing for peace on behalf of one who was inferior to you, but I now appear for your equal.' 'By whose favour ' said he, 'is he my equal?' 'By that of Almighty God, who has maintained Valentinian in the empire He bestowed on him.'

4. At length he broke out, 'It is you who have cajoled me, you and the wretch Bauto, who wished by setting up a boy to acquire sovereignty for himself, who also brought barbarians upon me; as if I also had not those whom I could bring, seeing I have so many barbarians in my service and pay. But had I not been withheld at the time of your arrival, who could have resisted

me and my power?' |178

5. I answered mildly, 'You need not be excited, for there is no occasion for excitement; listen rather with patience to the reply which I have to make. My reason for coming is, that you have declared that on my first mission you trusted me and were deceived by me. It is a glory to me to have done this for the safety of an orphan Emperor, for whom rather than orphans ought we bishops to protect? For it is written, Relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the

widow;130

and in another place, father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows.131

6. But I will not make a boast of my services to Valentinian. To speak the truth, when did I oppose your legions, and resist your descent upon Italy? By what works, by what armies, with what forces? Did I block up against you the passes of the Alps with my body? Would that this were in my power, then I should not fear this allegation, nor your charges. By what promises did I beguile you into a consent to peace? Did not Count Victor, whom you had sent to request peace, meet me within the frontier of the provinces of Gaul, near the city of Mayence? Wherein then did Valentinian deceive you, whom you asked to grant you peace before he himself asked for it? Wherein did Bauto deceive you, who shewed fidelity to his Emperor? Did he do so by not betraying his own master?

7. Wherein have I circumvented you? Was it when, on my first arrival, on your saying that Valentinian ought to have come to you as a son to a father, I answered that it was not reasonable for a boy with his widowed mother to cross the Alps in severe winter weather, or without his mother be exposed under critical circumstances to such a journey? My business was to bring a message concerning peace, not to make any promise of his coming: it is certain that I have given no pledge of that, concerning which I had received no commands, and that I did not make any promise whatever, for you said, 'Let us wait to see what answer Victor will bring back.' But it is well known that he arrived at Milan while I was detained here, and that his request was refused. It was only about peace that we felt a common zeal, not about the Emperor's arrival; whose

[179 coming ought not to have been required. I was present when Victor returned. How then did I meet Valentinian? The emissaries who were sent a second time into Gaul to say that he would not come, found me at Valence in Gaul. The soldiers of either party, sent to guard the mountain passes, I met on my return. What armies of yours did I then recall? what eagles did I turn back from Italy? what barbarians did Count Bauto send against you?

8. And what wonder if Bauto, whose native country lies beyond the Rhine, had done so, when you yourself threaten the Roman Empire with barbarian allies, and with troops from beyond the military frontier, whose commissariat was supplied by the taxes of the provinces? But consider what a difference there is between your threats and the mildness of the young Emperor Valentinian. You insisted on making an incursion into Italy accompanied by armies of barbarians, Valentinian turned back the Huns and Alans on their approach to Italy through the territory of the Germans. What need for displeasure is there if Bauto set the barbarians at variance with each other? While you were employing the Roman forces, while he was presenting himself to oppose you on both sides, the Juthungi

132 in the very heart of the Roman Empire were laying Rhsetia waste, and so the Huns were called in against the Juthungi. And yet when he was attacking the country of the Alemanni on your frontier, and was already threatening the provinces of Gaul with the near approach of danger, he was obliged to

[180 relinquish his triumphs, lest you should be alarmed. Compare the acts of the two; you caused the invasion of Rhaetia, Valentinian by his gold has regained peace for you.

9. Look too at the man 133 who now stands at your right hand, whom Valentinian, when he had the opportunity of avenging his grief, sent back to you loaded with honours. He had him in his own territory, and yet restrained his hand: even when he received the tidings of his brother's death, he restrained his natural feelings, and abstained from retaliation, where the relationship was the same, though the rank was not. Compare therefore, yourself being judge, the two actions. He sent back your brother alive; do you restore to him his brother at least now that he is dead. Why do you refuse to him his relation's remains, when he refused not to you those who would assist you against him?

10. But you allege that you are alarmed lest the grief of the troops should be renewed by the return of these remains. Will they then defend after death one whom they deserted in life? Why do you fear him now he is dead, whom, when you might have saved him, you slew? 'It was my enemy' you say, 'that I have slain.' It was not he that was your enemy, but you that were his. He is no longer conscious of my advocacy, do you consider the case yourself

134. If any one were to think of setting up a claim to the empire in these parts against you, I ask whether you would deem yourself to be his enemy, or him to be yours? If I mistake not, it is the part of an usurper to excite war, of an Emperor to defend his rights. Will you then withhold even the body of him whom you ought not to have slain? Let Valentinian have at least the remains of his brother as a pledge of your peaceful intentions. How moreover will

135 you assert that you did not command him to be slain, when you forbid him to be buried? Will it be believed that you did not grudge him life, when you even grudge him burial?

11. But to return to myself. I find that you complain [181

of the followers of Valentinian betaking themselves to the Emperor Theodosius rather than to yourself. But what could you expect, when you called for punishment on the fugitives, and put to death those who were taken, Theodosius on the other hand loaded them with gifts and honours. 'Whom,' said he, 'have I slain?' 'Vallio,' I replied. 'And what a man, what a soldier! Was it then a just cause of death, that he maintained his fidelity to his Emperor?' 'I gave no orders,' said he, 'for his death.' 'We have heard,' I replied, 'that the order was given for him to be put to death.' 'Nay,' said he, 'had he not laid violent hands on himself I had ordered him to be taken to Cabillonum

136 and there burnt alive.' 'Yes,' I replied, 'and that was why it was believed that you had put him to death. And who could suppose that he would himself be spared, when a valiant warrior, a faithful soldier, a valuable comrade was thus slain?' At that time, on taking my leave, he said he was willing to treat.

12. But afterwards on finding that I would not communicate with the Bishops who communicated with him, or who sought the death of any one, even though they were heretics

137, he grew angry and bade me depart without delay. And I, although many thought I should be waylaid, set forth gladly, grieving only that the aged Bishop Hyginus, now almost at his last gasp, was being carried into exile. And when I appealed to his guards against their suffering the old man to be driven out without a curtain or a pillow to rest upon, I was driven forth myself.

13. Such is the account of my mission. Farewell, your Majesty, and be well on your guard against a man who conceals war under the cloak of peace.

LETTER XXV. THAT this and the following letter were addressed to the same person is clear from their contents, especially from the commencement of Letter xxvi. Whether Studius and Irenaeus were two names of the same person, as the Benedictines suggest, or whether there is any error in either title, cannot be ascertained for certain. Is it not most probable that the name of Irenaeus, to whom a long series of letters follows, has been affixed to one immediately preceding them by mistake, and that we should put 'Studio' for 'Irenaeo' at the head of xxvi? The letter deals briefly with the question which Studius, a layman apparently and a judge, puts to S. Ambrose, whether he did violence to his duty as a Christian in sentencing criminals to death. S. Ambrose replies that it is lawful, but recommends merciful dealing wherever possible, in hope of amendment of life.

AMBROSE TO STUDIUS.

I RECOGNIZE in your application to me a pure intention of mind, zeal for the faith, and fear of our Lord Jesus Christ. And indeed I should fear to reply to it, being checked on the one hand by the obligation of the trust committed to you for the maintenance of the laws, and on the other by claims of mercy and clemency, had you not in this matter the Apostle's authority that he who judgeth beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the avenger of God, upon him that doeth evil.

138

2. But although you knew this, it was not without reason that you have thought fit to make the enquiry. For some there are, although out of the pale of the Church

139, who will not admit to the divine Mysteries those who have deemed it right to pass sentence of death on any man. Many too abstain of their own accord, and are commended, nor can we ourselves but praise them, although we so far observe the Apostle's rule as not to dare to refuse them Communion.

3. You see therefore both what power your commission gives you, and also whither mercy would lead you; you will be excused if you do it, and praised if you do it not. Should you feel unable to do it, and are unwilling to afflict

[183 the criminal by the horrors of a dungeon, I shall, as a priest, the more commend you. For it may well be that when the cause is heard, the criminal may be reserved for judgment, who afterwards may ask for pardon for himself, or at any rate may suffer what is called mild confinement in prison. Even heathen are, I know, wont to boast that they have borne back their axes from their provincial government unrestored by blood. And if heathen do this what ought Christians to do?

4. But in all these matters let our Saviour's answer suffice for you. The Jews apprehended an adulteress and brought her to the Saviour, with the insidious intent that if He were to acquit her He might seem to destroy the law, though He had said, I am not come to destroy, but to

fulfil the law,¹⁴⁰ and on the other hand, were He to condemn her, He might seem to be acting against the purpose of His coming. Wherefore the Lord Jesus, foreseeing this, stooped down and wrote upon the earth. And what did He write but that word of the prophet, O Earth, Earth, Write these men deposed ^{141,142} which is spoken of Jeconiah in the prophet Jeremiah.

5. When the Jews interrupt Him, their names are written in the earth, when the Christians draw near, the names of the faithful are written not on the earth but in heaven. For they who tempt their Father, and heap insult on the Author of salvation, are written on the earth as cast off

143 by their Father. When the Jews interrupt Him, Jesus stoops His head, but not having where to lay His head, He raises it again, is about to give sentence, and says, Let him that is without sin cast the first stone at her.¹⁴⁴ And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.¹⁴⁵

6. When they heard this they began to go out one by one beginning at the eldest, and this either because they who had lived longest had committed most sins, or because, as being most sagacious, they were the first to comprehend the force of His sentence, and though they had come as the accusers of another's sins, began rather to lament their own.

[184

7. So when they departed Jesus was left alone, and lifting up His head, He said to the woman, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee, go, and sin no more.¹⁴⁶

Being the Redemption, He refuses to condemn her, being the Life He restores her, being the Fountain He washes her. And since Jesus, when He stoops down stoops that He may raise up the fallen, He says, as the Absolver of sins, Neither do I condemn thee.

8. Here is an example for you to follow, for it may be that there is hope of amendment for this guilty person; if he be yet unbaptized, that he may receive remission, if baptized that he may do penance¹⁴⁷, and offer up his body for Christ. See how many roads there are to salvation!

9. This is why our ancestors thought it better to be indulgent towards Judges; that by the terror of their sword the madness of crime should be repressed, and no encouragement given to it. For if Communion were denied to Judges, it would seem like a retribution on their punishment of the wicked. Our ancestors wished then that their clemency should proceed from their own free-will and forbearance, rather than from any legal necessity. Farewell, and love us, as we on our part love you.

LETTER XXVI. THAT this letter is addressed to the same person as the preceding, in spite of the discrepancy in the address, is clear from the first sentence (See Introd. to xxv.). It resumes the subject, and dwells in detail on the example of our Lord's dealing with the woman taken in adultery.

AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS. [STUDIUS?]

1. ALTHOUGH in my previous letter I have resolved the question which you proposed to me, I will not refuse your

[185 request, my son, that I would somewhat more fully state and express my meaning.

2. Much agitated has ever been the question, and very famous this acquittal of that woman who in the Gospel according to John was brought to Christ accused of adultery. The stratagem which the equivocating Jews devised was this, that in case of the Lord Jesus acquitting her contrary to the Law, His sentence might be convicted of being at variance with the Law, but if she were to be

condemned according to the Law, the Grace of Christ might seem to be made void.

3. And still more warm has the discussion become, since the time that bishops

148 have begun to accuse those guilty of the most heinous crimes before the public tribunals, and some even to urge them to the use of the sword and of capital punishment, while others again approve of such kind of accusations and of blood-stained triumphs of the priesthood. For those men say just the same as did the Jews, that the guilty ought to be punished by the public laws, and therefore that they ought also to be accused by the priests before the public tribunals, who, they assert, ought to be punished according to the laws. The case is the same, though the number is less, that is to say, the question as to judgment is similar, the odium of the punishment is dissimilar. Christ would not permit one woman to be punished according to the Law; they assert that too small a number has been punished.

4. But in what place does Christ give this decision? For He generally vouchsafed to adapt His discourses to the character of the place wherein He was teaching His disciples

149. For instance while walking in the porch of Solomon, that is, of the Wise man, He said, I and My Father are One; and in God's Temple He said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.¹⁵⁰

It was in the Temple also that He gave the sentence of which we now speak, for in the verse following it is thus written, These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as He taught in the

[186 Temple, and no man laid hands on Him.¹⁵¹

What is the Treasury? It is the place of offering for the faithful, the bank of the poor, the refuge of the needy, near which Christ sat, when, according to Luke, He declared that the widow's two mites were to be preferred to the gifts of the rich, thus bearing Divine testimony to a zealous and cordial charity as preferable to the offerings of an affluent munificence.¹⁵²

5. Now let us consider what He Who passed such a judgment as this contributed when sitting near the Treasury, for not without a purpose did He prefer the woman who threw in two mites. Precious was her poverty, and rich in the mystery of faith. These are the same two pieces of money which the Samaritan in the Gospel left with the host in order to cure the wounds of the man who had fallen among thieves.¹⁵³ So too this woman, outwardly a widow, but mystically representing the Church, thought it right to cast into the sacred Treasury this gift whereby the wounds of the poor might be healed and the hunger of the strangers satisfied.

6. Now then it behoves you spiritually to consider what Christ bestows;¹⁵⁴ for He distributed among the people silver tried by the fire of the heavenly oracles, and to the desires of the people He told out money stamped with the Royal image. No one could give more than He Who gave all. He satisfied the hungry, He replenished the needy, He enlightened the blind, He redeemed the captives, He raised the palsied, He restored the dead, nay, what is more, He gave absolution to the guilty and forgave their sins. These are the two pence which the Church cast in, after having received them from Christ. And what are the two pence but the price of the New and Old Testament? The price of the Scripture is our faith, for it is according to the intelligence and will of each that what we read therein is valued. So then the remission of sins is the price of both Testaments, and is announced in type by the Lamb, and accomplished in verity by Christ.

7. You understand therefore that the purification of seven days¹⁵⁵ brought with it also the purification of three days.¹⁵⁶ The purification of seven days is according to the

[¹⁸⁷ Law, which, under the semblance of the sabbath that now is, announced a spiritual sabbath; the purification of three days is according to Grace, and is sealed by the witness of the Gospel, for the Lord rose on the third day.¹⁵⁷ Where a penalty for sin is prescribed there also must penitence be, where remission of sins is accorded there follows Grace. Penitence precedes, Grace follows. So that there can neither be penitence without Grace, nor Grace without penitence, for penitence must first condemn sin, that Grace may abolish it. Wherefore John, fulfilling the type of the Law, baptized unto repentance,¹⁵⁸ Christ unto Grace.

8. Now the seventh day denotes the mystery of the Law, the eighth that of the Resurrection, as you have in Ecclesiastes, Give a portion to seven and also to eight.¹⁵⁹

In the prophet Hosea also you have read that it was said to him, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms for fifteen pieces of silver,¹⁶⁰

seeing that by the double price of the Old and New Testament, that is, by the full price of faith, that woman is hired who was attended by a vagrant and licentious train of sojourners.

9. And I bought her to me, saith the prophet,¹⁶¹ for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley and a measure¹⁶² of wine ¹⁶³. By barley is signified that the imperfect are called to the Faith that they may be made perfect, by the homer is understood a full measure, by the half homer a half measure. The full measure is the Gospel, the half measure is the Law, the fulfilment of which is the New Testament. Thus the Lord Himself saith, I am not come to destroy the Law, but to

fulfil.¹⁶⁴

10. Nor is it without meaning that we read in the Psalms of David of fifteen degrees, and that the sun had risen fifteen degrees, when Hezekiah the righteous king received a new supply of life.¹⁶⁵ Hereby was signified the coming of the Sun of Righteousness, Who was about to enlighten by His presence these fifteen steps of the Old and New Testament whereby our faith mounts up to life eternal.¹⁶⁶ And

[¹⁸⁸ this leads me to believe that what was read this day from the Apostle of his remaining fifteen days with Peter has a mystical meaning;¹⁶⁷ for it appears that while the holy Apostles held various discourses among themselves upon the interpretation of the Divine Scriptures a full and bright light fell upon them, and the shades of ignorance were dispersed. But now let us come to the absolution of the woman taken in adultery.

11. A woman accused of adultery was brought by the Scribes and Pharisees to the Lord Jesus with the malicious intent, that, if He was to acquit her, He might seem to annul the Law, if He condemned her, that He might seem to have changed the purpose of His coming, since He came to remit the sins of all men. To the same purport He said above¹⁶⁸, I judge no man. So when they brought her they said, This woman was taken in

adultery, in the very act; now Moses in the Law commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest Thou?

12. While they were saying this, Jesus stooped down and wrote with His finger on the ground. And as they waited for His answer, He lifted up His head and said, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.¹⁷⁰

What can be more Divine than this sentence, that he should punish sins who is himself free from sin? For how can we endure one who takes vengeance on guilt in another and excuses it in himself? When a man condemns in another what he commits himself, does he not rather pronounce his own condemnation?

13. Thus He spake, and wrote upon the ground. What then did He write? This, Thou beholdest the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye.¹⁷¹

For lust is like a mote, it is quickly kindled, quickly consumed; the sacrilegious perfidy which led the Jews to deny the Author of their salvation declared the magnitude of their crime.

14. He wrote upon the ground with the finger with which He had written the Law. Sinners' names are

written in the earth, those of the just in heaven,¹⁷² as He said to

[189 His disciples, Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.¹⁷³

And He wrote a second time, that you may know that the Jews were condemned by both Testaments.

15. When they heard these words they went out one after another, beginning at the eldest, and sat down thinking upon themselves. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. It is well said that they went out who chose not to be with Christ. Without is the letter, within are the mysteries. For in the Divine lessons they sought, as it were, after the leaves of trees, and not after the fruit; they lived in the shadow of the Law, and could not discern the Sun of Righteousness.

16. Finally, when they departed Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. Jesus about to remit sin remains alone, as He says Himself, Behold the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone;¹⁷⁴

for it was no messenger, no herald, but the Lord Himself Who saved His people. He remains alone, because in the remission of sins no man can participate with Christ. This is the gift of Christ alone, Who took away the sins of the world.¹⁷⁵

The woman too was counted worthy to be absolved, seeing that, on the departure of the Jews, she remained alone with Jesus.

17. Then Jesus lifted up His head, and said to the woman, Where are those thine accusers, hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee, go, and sin no more.¹⁷⁶

See, O reader, these Divine mysteries, and the mercy of Christ. When the woman is accused, Christ stoops His head, but when the accusers retire He lifts it up again; thus we see that He would

have no man condemned, but all absolved.

18. By the words, Hath no man condemned thee? He briefly overthrows all the quibbles of heretics, who say that Christ knows not the day of judgment. He Who says, But to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, says also in this place, Hath no man condemned thee?¹⁷⁷

How is it that He asks concerning that which He saw? It is for our sakes that He asks, that we might know the

[190 woman was not condemned. And such is the wont of the human mind, often to enquire concerning that which we know. The woman too answered, No man, Lord, that is to say, Who can condemn when Thou dost not condemn? Who can punish another under such a condition as Thou hast attached to his sentence?

19. The Lord answered her, Neither do I condemn thee. Observe how He has modified His own sentence; that the Jews might have no ground of allegation against Him for the absolution of the woman, but by complaining only draw down a charge upon themselves; for the woman is dismissed not absolved; and this because there was no accuser, not because her innocence was established. How then could they complain, who were the first to abandon the prosecution of the crime, and the execution of the punishment?

20. Then He said to her who had gone astray, Go, and sin no more. He reformed the criminal, He did not absolve the sin. Faults are condemned by a severer sentence, whenever a man hates his own sin, and begins the condemnation of it in himself. When the criminal is put to death, it is the person rather than the transgression which is punished, but when the transgression is forsaken, the absolution of the person becomes the punishment of the sin. What is the meaning then of, Go, and sin no more? It is this; Since Christ hath redeemed thee, suffer thyself to be corrected by Grace; punishment would not reform but only afflict thee. Farewell, my son, and love me as a son, for I on my part love you as a parent.

LETTER XXVII. [A.D.387.] WHO Irenaeus was to whom the series of letters from xxvii. to xxxiii. are addressed is not ascertained. From the affectionate and parental way in which S. Ambrose addresses him, and from Irenaeus' applying to him for elucidation of his difficulties in the study of Holy Scripture, it is probable that he was one who had been trained, perhaps converted by him. The Benedictine Editors think that he must have been one of his Milan Clergy. All the letters are occupied in expounding passages of the Old Testament, or in [191 solving questions connected with it; they are specimens of his method of mystical interpretation, in which he took great delight. In this Letter he begins a reply to a question on Exodus viii. 26. and then goes off into a mystical interpretation of Rachel and Leah, making them an allegory, as S. Paul does Hagar and Sarah.

AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING.

1. You tell me that you have felt a difficulty in the text We shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God,¹⁷⁸

But you had the means of solving it, for it is written in the book of Genesis, that a shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians,¹⁷⁹

and this not on account of the shepherd himself, but of his flocks. For the Egyptians were tillers of the ground, but Abraham and Jacob, and afterwards Moses and David, were shepherds, and in this function exercised a certain kingly discipline.

2. The Egyptians then hated sacrifices which were duly offered; the pursuit of virtue, that is, which is perfect and replete with discipline. But that which these evil men hated is in the sight of the good sincere and pious. The licentious man hates the works of virtue, the glutton shrinks from them. And so the Egyptian's body, loving the charms of pleasure, has an aversion to the virtues of the soul, hates its rule, and shrinks from the discipline of virtue, and all such like works.

3. But what the Egyptian shrinks from----he who is an Egyptian rather than a man,----that do thou, who hast the knowledge of what befits man, embrace and follow: and shun those things which they pursue and choose; for these two things cannot agree together, wisdom and folly. Thus as wisdom and continence remove themselves from those who are, as it were, in the ranks of unwisdom and intemperance, so no foolish and incontient man has any part in what belongs to the goods and heritage of the wise and continent man.

4. Again, those women who were sanctified by their marriage, Leah and Rachel, (the one meaning 'wearied,' the other 'strong breath'¹⁸⁰) from aversion not to the ties of

[¹⁹² kindred but to their differing manners, and informed by the much tried Jacob, that he desired to depart in order to shun the envy and sloth of Laban and his sons, made answer thus: Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also all our money?

¹⁸¹ Observe first that the slothful and envious man alienates from himself one who labours and keeps strict discipline; he flies from her and seeks to separate himself. Finding that they will be burthensome to him he thinks he has gained by their removal, and esteems this to be his reward, and this the point of his pleasure.

5. Now let us hear how what virtue has, sloth has not: for they say, For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's.¹⁸²

Rightly do they say that they were taken away by God's appointment, for it is He Who created the good, for whose sake the slothful are despoiled; for weak and evil men cannot apprehend the beauty of the Divine inheritance; and thus the resolute, and he who hath in him the spirit of a brave man, succeeds to it. But who is strong but God alone Who regulates and governs all things?

6. To these therefore the heritage of God is justly due. Wherefore Isaiah also says, There is an heritage for them that believe in the Lord.¹⁸³

Well saith he, There is an heritage, for this is the sole heritage, there is no other. For neither is blind treasure an heritage, nor have any transitory things the advantage of an heritage; that alone is an heritage wherein God is the portion. Wherefore the Saint of the Lord saith, Thou art my portion, O Lord, and again, Thy testimonies have I claimed as mine heritage for ever.¹⁸⁴

You see what are the possessions of the just, the commandments of God, His oracles, His precepts, hereby he is enriched, hereby he is fed, hereby he is delighted as by all manner of riches.

7. Now Leah and Rachel, possessing these, required not their father's riches, for therein there was base coin, a senseless outward show, destitute of spiritual vigour. Again, being rich and liberal themselves they accounted their father rather indigent than rich. For no one who

[193 participates in good and liberal discipline deems any foolish man to be rich, but poor and needy, and even abject; and this although he overflow with royal riches, and in the pride of his gold boasts of his own power.

8. The society of such we must shun then, even though they be united to us by the ties of kindred: the conversation of the foolish is to be avoided, for it infects and discolors the mind, for as with the clean thou shalt be clean, so with the froward thou shalt be froward.¹⁸⁵

For it frequently happens that one who listens to an intemperate man against his own resolution, much as he himself desires to maintain the rule of continence, is yet stained by the hue of folly, and thus discipline and insolence truly prove themselves contrary and repugnant to each other.

9. Hence when much-tried Jacob inquired their opinion, they utter the words of virtue now proved by long exercise, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?¹⁸⁶

that is, 'Do you ask us whether we wish to depart from him? As if you knew not that we have no desire of his society, nor are we possessed with that thirst for riches and delight in luxury which is so sweet to most worldlings. These are the things which we deem miserable and alien to our feelings, these are the things which we deem to be full of poverty and want.'

10. They add also the cause of their departure, that Laban had lost the true glory and those stores of good treasure in which we are born. Vigour of mind has been given us, and the good coinage of God's image and likeness, which is a spiritual coinage. He lost these because he preferred the splendour of this world to things true and profitable for his true life; for the beauty of these things escapes one who is ignorant of the good things of God, while in his judgment of what is beautiful he deludes and deceives himself. Hear then his words and judge.

11. He pursued holy Jacob and his daughters, thinking haply to find upon them some of his own vices, and thus to have a plea for reclaiming them to himself, censuring the righteous, whereas he himself was refuted by reason, and could give no answer or reply why he had any right

[194 to detain him. Wherefore, says he, didst thou not tell me, that I might have sent thee away?

¹⁸⁷ Wherein he discloses what it was the just man feared, namely, such attendance, such a convoy, lest he should go forth escorted by such a company; in the first place because it behoved him not to submit himself to the service of many masters, so as to be dismissed by Laban as a servant: and next because this man, intent upon good discipline and desirous of following the true path of virtue, sought no man to guide him but the heavenly oracles. These, said he, have commanded me to depart from hence and now accompany me on my journey.

12. But how wouldst thou have dismissed me, he would say? Would it have been with such joy as thine which is full of sadness, with cymbals namely and instruments of ill-modulated harmony, and with the sweet notes of flutes sounding forth unpleasing strains, dissonant sounds, discordant noises, mute voices, cymbals jarring upon the sense? Didst thou believe that I could be delighted, that I could be recalled by such things? It is from them that I fled, nor do I fear thy reproachful

words. I fled that such things might not follow me, that I might receive no present from thee on my departure.

13. It is not by such guides as these that we arrive at the Church of Christ, to which Jacob was bending his steps, to carry down thither the wealth of the nations and the riches of the Gentiles, that he might transplant thither his posterity, flying from the shadows of empty things? preferring to senseless images of virtues their breathing beauty, and serious things to outward show. You see how the Gentiles deck out their banquets, and proclaim their feasts; but such things are hateful to pious minds, for by their means many are deceived, they are captivated by pleasant food, by the bands of dancers, while they fly from our fasts, deeming them irksome to them, and noxious and troublesome to the body.

14. Or didst thou think that I should desire thy gold? But thou hast not gold tried by that fire

188 wherein the just are proved. Or was it silver that I desired? But thou hast not silver, for thou possessest not the brightness of

[195 the heavenly words. But perhaps I hoped that thou wouldst give me some of thy slaves to serve me? Nay, I seek for free men, and not the slaves of sin. But perhaps companions of my journey and guides of my path were necessary? Would that they had power to follow me! for I would have shewn them the ways of the Lord. But ye who know not God, how can ye know His ways? The elect of the Lord walk in His ways, not every one who enters them, and yet no man is excluded.

15. Let him who is prepared follow, let him enter upon the way which leads to Mesopotamia; so that he who seeks that country may pass through the waters, the waters of Tigris and Euphrates, the waters of courage and righteousness, through the tears of penitence, the baptism of grace. Here is the path of the army of God, for all who are in the Church are God's soldiers. There is that flock marked with divers virtues, which Jacob chose for himself;¹⁸⁹ for every soul which is not so marked is unlearned and uninstructed, ignorant of discipline: but that which is marked is rich in works and fertile in grace.

16. Let him who comes to it first be reconciled to his angry brother. Let him who comes to it inhabit Shechem, that precious and active laboratory of virtue, where injured chastity is so deeply avenged. Let him who comes to it wrestle with God, that he may inure himself to imitate Him, that he may come in contact with the humility of Christ and His sufferings.¹⁹⁰ Let him take up his cross and follow Christ. Lastly, a good combatant envieth not, is not puffed up, nay, he even blesses his antagonist with a like gift.¹⁹¹

17. Let us then follow holy Jacob and his ways, that we may reach these sufferings, these combats, that we may reach the shoulder

192, that we may attain to patience, the mother of the faithful, and to their father Isaac, that is, one capable of delight

193, abounding in joy. For where patience is, there also is joy, for after tribulation comes patience, and patience worketh experience, wherein is hope, whereby we are not ashamed,¹⁹⁴

for whoso is not ashamed [196 the cross of Christ, neither will Christ be ashamed of him.

Farewell, my son; blush not to ask questions of your father, as you blush not to glory in the sufferings of Christ.

LETTER XXVIII. [A.D.387]

S. AMBROSE in this Letter maintains that Pythagoras derived much of his wisdom from a knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, and dwells on his maxim, 'not to follow the beaten track,' as one specially addressed to the priesthood.

AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING.

1. IN the writings of certain authors we find a precept of Pythagoras forbidding his disciples to enter upon the common path trodden by the people. Now the source from whence he drew this is not unknown. For as he derived (according to the general opinion) his descent from the Jews, from their learning he derived also the precepts of his school. This rendered him highly esteemed among philosophers, so that he hardly met, it is said, with his equal. Now he had read in the book of Exodus that by the Divine command Moses was bid put off his shoes from off his feet. This command was also given to Joshua the son of Nun, namely that they, when desired to walk along the Lord's path, should shake off the dust of the beaten and vulgar tracks. He had also read the command to Moses to go up to the mount with the priests, while the people stood apart. So God separated the priests from the people, and subsequently commanded Moses himself to enter into the cloud.¹⁹⁵

2. You see then the separation. Nothing vulgar, nothing popular, nothing in common with the desires and usages and manners of the rude multitude is looked for in priests. The dignity of the priesthood claims for itself a sober and unruffled calmness, a serious life, an especial gravity. How can he be respected by the people, who is in nothing distinct from the people, or different from the [197 multitude? And what can a man look up to in you who recognizes himself in you, who sees nothing in you which is beyond himself, and who finds in you, to whom he deems respect to be due, the things which he blushes at in himself?

3. Wherefore let us pass over the opinions of the people, and the resorts of the common herd, and the line of the beaten track, the ground also of that common path along which he runs, whose days are swifter than a post, of whom it is said, they flee away, they see no good.¹⁹⁶

But let us find for ourselves a path secluded from the conversation of the proud, inaccessible to the works of the unlearned, trodden by no polluted person, polluted that is by the stains of his own sloth, and smeared by the smoke of iniquity, his soul darkened and ruinous, "one who has never tasted the sweetness of virtue, or at any rate has thought that she should be looked upon askance rather than met with direct regard and with open arms, who moreover (as is the wont of many who seem to themselves witty and polite, and transform the beauty of wisdom into dishonourable guile,) regards not true Grace, but shrouded as it were in darkness, gives no credence to those who live in the light of day, being of the number of the men of Tema and Sheba, who fall off and turn away from the truth; of whom Job says, Behold ye the ways of them of Tema, the paths of the Sabaeans, for they shall be confounded who put their hopes in cities and in riches. So ye also have risen against me without pity, therefore when ye see my wound, be afraid.¹⁹⁷

4. Let us then abandon these devious paths of them that turn aside, and this dust of those who fail, who through their lust fall oftentimes in the desert, and let us be converted and follow the way of wisdom, that way which the children of those who boast and glorify themselves have not trodden, that way which destruction knows not, and death is ignorant of; for God hath marked it out; the depth saith, It is not in me, and the sea saith, It is not with me.

198 But if you seek for the way of wisdom and discipline, to worship God, and to be subject to Him is wisdom, and to abstain from sin is discipline.

[198

5. What then have we to do with the way of this world, wherein is temptation; yea the life itself of men is temptation, and more empty even than vain fables, living in houses of clay, spending nights and days in quest of gain, with their thoughts ever upon it, seeking like hired servants their daily wages, and as they say grasshoppers do

199, feeding on the empty breath of desires. Truly, like grasshoppers, living from day to day, they burst with their own complainings

200. For what is the semblance of men without gravity or discipline, but that of grasshoppers, born to a daily death, chirping rather than speaking? These beneath the heat of burning desires soothe themselves with a song hurtful to themselves, and quickly die bearing no fruit, and possessed of no grace. Noxious and crooked are their ways as those of serpents, whose bodies are drawn along in poisoned folds, who gather themselves up into a coil of wickedness

201, and cannot raise themselves to heavenly things.

6. But let us enter the gates of the Lord, the gates of righteousness, which the righteous entereth and giveth praise unto the Lord.²⁰²

But few enter in here, wherefore the Lord saith, Straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.²⁰³

But the wide gate and broad way, wherein the many walk, leads to death, and carries thither them that travel on it.

7. Let our way then be narrow, our virtue abundant, our steps more careful, our faith more lofty, our path narrow, our energy of mind overflowing, our paths straight, for the steps of virtue cannot be turned aside; wherefore Solomon saith, Who leave the paths of uprightness.²⁰⁴

8. Let our steps tend upward, for it is better to ascend. Lastly, as we read to-day, Woe to them that go down to Egypt!

205 Not that to pass over into Egypt is

blameable, but to pass into their habits, to pass into their cruel perfidy and hideous lusts. He that passes over thither descends, he that descends falls. Wherefore let us avoid the

[199 Egyptian, who is man, not God. For the king of Egypt himself was given over to the dominion of his vices, and compared with him Moses was accounted a god, ruling over kingdoms and subjecting to himself powers. Hence we read that he was addressed thus, See I have made thee a

god to Pharoah.206

Farewell, and love me, as indeed you do, with the affection of a son.

LETTER XXIX. [A.D.389.] AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING. THIS letter is in fact a meditation on Christ as the true Chief good of man, the true Source of happiness, and Food of the soul, and Fountain of life, to be sought therefore with eagerness, and clung to with all the affection of the soul, which must therefore scorn all meaner delights.

1. WHILE engaged in reading, after resting my mind for a while and desisting from study, I began to meditate on that versicle which in the evening we had sung at Vigils, Thou art fairer than the children of men, and, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring good tidings of Him.207 And truly nothing is more beautiful than that chief good, the very preaching of which is beyond measure lovely, and specially the progress of continuous discourse, and the foot-steps, so to speak, of Apostolic preaching. But who is equal to these things? They to whom God gave not only to preach Christ, but also to suffer for Him.

2. Let us, as far as we can, direct our minds to that which is beautiful seemly and good, let us be occupied therein, let us keep it in mind, that by its illumination and brightness our souls may become beautiful and our minds transparent. For if our eyes, when obscured by dimness, are refreshed by the verdure of the fields and are able by the beauty of a grove or grassy hill to remedy every defect of the failing vision, while the very pupils and balls of the eye seem to be coloured with the hue of health: how much more does this eye of the mind, beholding that chief good, and dwelling and feeding thereupon, brighten and shine

[200 forth, so as to fulfil that which is written, My soul shall be satisfied even as it were with marrow and fatness.208

Moreover, he who has a skilful knowledge of the souls of his flock, pays attention to wild grasses, that he may obtain much pasturage: for by the sweeter kind of herbage lambs are made fatter, and the milky juice more healthful. On these pastures those fat ones have fed, who have eaten and worshipped, for good indeed are those pastures wherein is placed the saint of God.209

3. There is grass also, whereby the flocks of sheep are nourished, for whence come the fleeces of wisdom, and the clothing of prudence. And perchance this is the grass of the mountain,210

upon which the words of the prophet distil as the showers upon the grass,211

and which the wise man carefully gathers, that he may have a fleece for a covering, that is, for a spiritual garment. And thus proper food and clothing are provided for that soul which cleaves to the chief Good, that Good Which is Divine, and which the Apostle Peter exhorts us to seek for, that by the acquisition of such knowledge we may become partakers of the Divine nature.212

4. The knowledge hereof the good God opens to His saints, and grants it out of His good treasury, even as the sacred Law testifies, saying, The Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee and open unto thee His good treasure.213

From this heavenly treasure He gives rain to His lands, to bless all the works of thy hands. By this rain is signified the utterance of the Law, which moistens the soul fruitful and fertile in good works,

that it may receive the dew of Grace.²¹⁴

5. The knowledge of this good David sought; as he himself declaims, saying, One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require, even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His temple.²¹⁵

And that this is the chief Good he straightway added in the same Psalm, I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.²¹⁶

He must be sought after, there He will be clearly seen face to face. This good is in the house of God, in His secret and hidden place. Wherefore he says again, He

[201 shall be satisfied with the pleasures of thy house.²¹⁷ In another place too he has shown this to be the highest blessing, saying, The Lord shall bless thee out of Sion, and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem.²¹⁸

Wherefore blessed is he who dwells then in the vestibule of faith and in the spiritual abode, the dwelling place of devotion and the life of virtue.

6. In Him therefore let us be and in Him abide, of Whom Isaiah says, How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.²¹⁹

Who are they that preach but Peter, Paul, and all the Apostles? ²²⁰

What do they preach to us but the Lord Jesus? He is our Peace, He is our chief Good, for He is Good from Good, and from a good tree is gathered good fruit. And good also is His Spirit, Who takes of Him and leads His servants forth into the land of righteousness.²²¹

For who that hath the Spirit of God within him will deny that He is good, since He says Himself, Is thine eye evil because I am good?

²²² May this Good which the merciful God gives to them that seek Him come into our soul, and into our inmost heart. He is our Treasure, He is our Way, He is our Wisdom, He is our Righteousness, our Shepherd, the good Shepherd, He is our Life. Thou seest how many goods are in this one Good! These goods the Evangelists preach to us. David seeking for these goods saith, Who will shew us any good?

²²³ And he shews that the Lord Himself is our Good by adding, Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy Countenance upon us. But Who is the Light of the Father's Countenance, but the Brightness of His Glory, and the Image of the invisible God, in Whom the Father is both seen and glorified, as He also glorifies His Son?

²²⁴

8. Wherefore the Lord Jesus Himself is that chief Good which was announced to us by Prophets, declared by Angels, promised by the Father, preached by Apostles.²²⁵ He hath come to us as ripeness; nor as ripeness only, but as ripeness in the mountains; to the intent that in our counsels there should be nothing sour, or unripe, nothing harsh or bitter in our actions or manners, the first Preacher of good tidings hath come among us. Wherefore also He saith, I, Who spoke, am present with

226 you, that is, I |202

Who spoke in the Prophets, am present in that Body which I took of the Virgin; I am present as the inward Likeness of God, and the express Image of His person,²²⁷

I am present too as Man. But who knows Me? For they saw the Man, but His Works made them believe He was above man. Was He not as man when weeping over Lazarus?²²⁸ again, was He not above man, when He raised him to life? Was He not as man when scourged? and again, above man when He took away the sin of the world?²²⁹

9. To Him therefore let us hasten in Whom is the chief Good: for He is the bounty and patience of Israel, Who calls thee to repentance, that thou come not into condemnation but mayest receive the remission of thy sins. He saith, Repent. This is He of Whom the Prophet Amos cries, Seek good.²³⁰ He is the chief Good, Who is in need of nothing, but abounds in all things. And well may He

abound, in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;²³¹ of Whose fulness we have all received, and in Whom we are filled, as saith the Evangelist.²³²

10. If then the mind with its capacities of desire and pleasure hath tasted the chief Good, and by means of these two affections hath drank It in, unalloyed by sorrow and fear, it is wonderfully inflamed. For having embraced the Word of God, she knows no measure and yet feels no satiety, as it is written, Thou art good and gracious, O teach me Thy statutes:²³³

having embraced the Word of God, she desires Him above all beauty, she loves Him above all joy, she is delighted with Him above all perfumes, she desires often to see, often to look upon Him, often to be drawn to Him that she may follow. Thy Name, it is said, is as ointment poured forth; therefore we maidens love Thee, therefore we strive but cannot attain to Thee. Draw us that we may run after Thee, that by the fragrance of Thy ointments we may gain power to follow Thee.²³⁴

11. And the mind presses forward to the sight of internal mysteries, to the place of rest of the Word, to the very dwelling of that chief Good, His light and brightness. In that haven and home-retreat she hastens to hear His words, and having heard, finds them sweeter than all other things. Learn of the Prophet who had tasted and saith, O how

|203 sweet are Thy words unto my throat, yea sweeter than honey unto my mouth.²³⁵

For what can that soul desire which hath once tasted the sweetness of the Word, and seen His brightness? When Moses received the Law he remained forty days on the mount and required no bodily food; Elijah, hastening to this rest, prayed that his life might be taken away;²³⁶ Peter, himself also beholding on the Mount the glory of the Lord's Resurrection, would fain not have come down, saying, It is good for us to be here.²³⁷

How great then is the glory of the Divine Essence and the graces of the Word, which things the Angels desire to look into.²³⁸

12. The soul then which beholds this chief Good, requires not the body, and understands that it ought to have as little connexion with it as possible; it renounces the world, withdraws itself from the chains of the flesh, and extricates itself from all the bonds of earthly pleasures. Thus Stephen

beheld Jesus, and feared not being stoned, nay, while he was being stoned, prayed not for himself but for his murderers.²³⁹ Paul also, when caught up to the third heaven, knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body: caught up, I say, into Paradise, he became invisible to the presence of his own body, and having heard the words of God he blushed to descend again to the infirmities of the body.²⁴⁰

13. Thus, knowing what he had seen and heard in Paradise, he cried saying, Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? Touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using.²⁴¹

For he would have us of this world in figure and semblance, not in use or possession, using as though we used it not, as our place of sojourn, not of rest, walking through it as in a vision, not with desire, so as to pass as lightly as possible over the mere shadow of this world. In this way S. Paul, who walked by faith not by sight, was absent from the body and present with the Lord,²⁴²

and although upon earth conversed not with earthly but with heavenly things.

11. Wherefore let our soul, wishing to draw near to God, raise herself from, the body, and ever adhere to that chief End which is divine, Which is everlasting, Which was from the beginning, and Which was with God,²⁴³

that is, the Word |204 of God. This is that Divine Being, in Whom we live and move and have our being.²⁴⁴

This is That which was in the beginning, the true I AM. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, was not yea nor nay but in Him was yea.²⁴⁵

He bid Moses say, I AM hath sent me.²⁴⁶

15. With this Good therefore let our soul be, and if possible, be continually, that each of us may say, My soul is continually in my hand.²⁴⁷

And such will be the case, if it be not in the flesh, but in the spirit, and does not entangle itself in earthly things. For when it turns back to carnal things, then the allurements of the body creep over it, then it swells with rage and anger, then it is pierced with sorrow, then it is lifted up with arrogance, then it is bowed down with grief.

16. These are the heavy griefs of the soul by which it is often brought down to death, while its eyes are blinded so that they see not the light of true glory, and the riches of its eternal heritage. But by keeping them always fixed on God, it will receive from Christ the brightness of wisdom, so as to have its vision enlightened by the knowledge of God, and to behold that hope of our calling, and see that which is good and well-pleasing and perfect. For that which is good is well-pleasing to the Father, and that which is well-pleasing is perfect, as it is written in the Gospel, Love your enemies, that ye may be the children of your Father Which is in heaven, for, He sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,²⁴⁸

which is surely a proof of goodness. Afterwards He concludes by saying, Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father Which is in heaven is perfect.²⁴⁹

For charity is perfect; in short it is the fulfilling of the Law; for what can be so good as charity which thinketh no evil?250

17. Fly then those regions where dwell envy, ambition, and contention. Therefore let thy mind open itself to receive this Good, that it may mount above the clouds, that it may be renewed as the eagle,251

and like the eagle spread abroad its wings, that with new vigour in its pinions it may fearlessly soar aloft and leave its earthly dwelling-place behind it, for the earthly habitation weigheth down the mind.252

Let it put off old things, let it cast off wandering desires, let it purge its eyes that it may see that Fountain of true wisdom,

[205 that Source of eternal life Which flows and abounds with all things and is in want of nothing. For who hath given to Him, seeing that of Him and through Him and to Him are all things?253

18. The Fountain of life then is that chief Good from Which the means of life are dispensed to all, but It hath life abiding in Itself. It receiveth from none as though It were in need, It confers good on others rather than borrows from others for Itself, for It hath no need of us. Thus in the person of man it is said, my goods are nothing unto Thee.254

What then can be more lovely than to approach to Him, to cleave to Him; what pleasure can be greater? He who has seen and tasted freely of the Fountain of living water, what else can he desire? what kingdoms? what powers? what riches? perceiving how miserable even in this world is the condition of kings, how mutable the state of empires, how short the space of this life, in what bondage sovereigns themselves must live, seeing that their life is according to the will of others, not their own.

19. But what rich man passes to eternal life unless he be supported by the riches of virtue, that gift which is the portion of all, and declared to be impossible for the rich alone?255 Happiness then does not consist in using these things but in perceiving that whereby you may despise them, may regard them as void of truth

256, may judge them to be empty and fruitless, and may love the true beauty of naked truth which confesses the cheating vanities of this world.

20. Lift up therefore your eyes, O my soul; those eyes of which the Word of God saith, Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes.257 Go up then to the palm tree,258

overcome the world, that thou mayest reach the height of the Word. Leave out of doors the vain shows of this world, leave its malice, but bring in with you that goodness of mind which has grace in the tree of life, that is, if she wash her robes and enter into the city which is the true grace of the saints, wherein is the Tabernacle of God,

[206 around which the scribes of the Lord encamp, where neither day nor sun nor moon afford light, but the Lord Himself is the light thereof,259 and enlightens all that city. For He is the Light of the world,260

not indeed the visible light, but the intellectual brightness of the souls which are in this world, upon which He pours the bright beams of reason and of prudence, and in the Gospel is said to inspire with the breath of His spiritual influences the inmost soul, and the recesses of the mind.²⁶¹

21. If then any man hath begun to be an inhabitant of that heavenly city, an inhabitant, that is, by his life and manners, let him not depart from it, let him not go out again, or retrace his steps, the steps, that is, not of his body but of his mind; let him not turn back. Behind is luxury, behind is impurity. When Lot went up into the mountain he left behind him the crimes of Sodom, but she who looked back, could not reach the higher ground.²⁶² It is not your feet but your manners which are never to turn back. Let not your hands hang down, or the knees of your faith and devotion become feeble. Let not the weakness of your will be backsliding, let there be no recurrence of crime. Thou hast entered in, remain therefore; thou hast arrived, stay still; escape for thy life.²⁶³

22. In your ascent your steps must tend directly upwards, no man can safely turn back. Here is the way, there, downfall; here ascent, there a precipice. In ascending there is labour, in descending danger; but the Lord is mighty, Who, when thou art founded there will guard and hedge thee round with prophetic walls and apostolic bulwarks. Therefore the Lord says to thee, Come, get you down, for the press is full.²⁶⁴

Let us be found within, not out of doors. In the Gospel too the Son of God saith,

He which shall be upon the house-top let him not come down to take away his vessels.²⁶⁵

And this He says not of this house-top, but of that of which it is said, He spreadeth out the heavens like a vault.²⁶⁶

23. Remain within therefore, within Jerusalem, within thine own soul, peaceful, meek, and tranquil. Leave her not, nor descend in order to raise up this vessel of thine, either with honour, or wealth, or pride. Remain within,

[²⁰⁷ that aliens may not pass through thee, that sins may not pass through thy mind, vain acts., and idle thoughts: and they will not pass, if thou wilt wage a holy war in the cause of faith and devotion, for the love of truth against the snares of passion, and wilt take up the arms of God against spiritual wickedness and the craft of the devil, who tempts our senses by fraud and stratagem, but who is easily crushed by the gentle warrior, who sees no strife, but, as becomes the servant of God, teaches the faith with modesty, and convinces those who oppose themselves. Of him the Scripture says, Let the warrior who is gentle arise ²⁶⁷, and let him that is weak say, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.²⁶⁸

24. Supported by this faith, even he who is weak shall prevail, and his soul will be holy, and the prophetic or apostolic mountains shall drop down new wine²⁶⁹ for him, and the hills shall flow with milk, like that hill which gave milk to the Corinthians to drink,²⁷⁰ and water shall flow for him from their vessels, and from their well-heads. From his belly shall flow living water,²⁷¹ that spiritual water which the Holy Spirit supplies to His faithful; may He vouchsafe to water thy soul also, that in thee may be a fountain springing up into life eternal. Farewell; love me as a son, for I love you as a father, LETTER XXX. [A.D.389.]

S. AMBROSE here continues the subject of the last Letter, dwelling- especially on the duty of rising above the level of earthly things, and bringing together various passages of the Old

Testament which he interprets spiritually as setting forth this Lesson. The true follower of Christ will build Him a Temple in his heart, which his Lord will fill with the adornment of spiritual graces.

AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING.

1. AFTER I had finished my last letter and directed it to be conveyed to you, the words which the Lord spake

[208 by the prophet Haggai came into my mind, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your

cieled houses?272 What is the meaning of this but that we ought to dwell on high, not in low and subterranean abodes? For they who dwell beneath the earth, cannot build the temple of God, but say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built,273

because it is the mark of sensual persons to seek underground dwellings, courting the cool of summer, being enervated by indulgence and requiring shady retreats to enable them to bear the heat, or because the slothful live at ease beneath the earth, or lastly because dark and shady places suit them best, concealing, (as they believe,) their crimes. I am compassed about with darkness, the walls cover me, what need I to fear?274

But in vain do they hope for this, when God beholds the hidden depths of the abyss, and discovers all things before they take place.

2. But neither Elijah nor Eiisha dwelt in underground dwellings. Moreover the former carried the dead son of the widow up into the loft where he abode, and there raised him to life;275 and for the latter, that great woman, the

Shunamite, prepared a chamber on the wall, and there she obtained the privilege of conceiving a son, for she was barren, and there also she saw the miracle of his restoration to life.276 And what shall I say of Peter who at the sixth hour went up upon the house-top, and there learnt the mystery of the baptism of the Gentiles.277 But the homicide Absalom had reared for himself a pillar in the King's dale, and then, after his death, he was cast into a great pit.278 So then the saints ascend unto the Lord, the wicked descend to crime; the saints are on the mountains, the wicked in the valleys; For God is the God of the hills, not of the plains.279

3. Those therefore who dwelt in the plain, where God dwells not, could not have the house of God in themselves; for this is the house which God required of them, that they should build up themselves, and should erect within them the temple of God with the living stones of faith. For it was not the erection of earthly walls nor of wooden roofs that He required, for these, had they existed, would have been destroyed by the enemies' hand; but He sought for that temple which should be raised in men's minds, to

[209 whom it might be said, Ye are the Temple of God, wherein the Lord Jesus was to dwell, and from whence He was to proceed for the redemption of the world. Thus in the womb of a Virgin a sacred chamber was to be prepared, wherein the King of heaven might dwell, and the human Body might become the temple of God, Which also when It was destroyed, was to be raised again in three days.

4. But such a house as this sensual persons, they who dwell in cieled houses²⁸⁰ and delight in chased silver, do not build. For as they despise pure silver, so also they despise simple dwellings. They enlarge the site of their houses, they add more and more, joining house to house and farm to farm, they dig up the ground; so that the very earth itself gives way to their habitations, and like sons of the earth they are laid up within her womb, and hidden in her bowels. They surely are those of whom Jeremiah says, Woe unto him that buildeth his house in unrighteousness.²⁸¹ For he who builds in righteousness, builds not on earth but in heaven.

5. Thou hast built, saith the Prophet, a house, measure the upper chambers of it, even airy chambers, furnished with windows, deled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.²⁸²

Now he measureth the upper chambers, who, having contemplated the judgment of God, judgeth the judgment of the humble and the judgment of the poor. But he who seeks after gain and the blood of the innocent builds not his chambers with judgment, nor keeps the due measure, because he has not Christ, nor looks for the breath of Divine grace upon him, nor does he desire the brightness of full light, nor has he chambers painted with vermilion, for it cannot be said to him, Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet.²⁸³

6. A man of this sort, it is said, shall not be buried, for he who has burrowed in the earth, and buried himself alive, so to speak, in a tomb, has deprived himself when dead of the rest of burial.²⁸⁴ And thus, laid in the pit of carnal pleasures, he has found no grave from whence to rise. Such a man therefore builds no temple to God, because he hath not known the time of his correction. How then can such men build a temple, who like wild beasts betake themselves

[210 to dens and hiding places, who like serpents bury themselves in ditches, and burrow in the earth like crafty foxes?

7. Neither does he build a sepulchre for himself who dies before the time, for he is dead while he liveth;²⁸⁵ and he hears not the voice of Haggai, that is being interpreted, of the Feaster, for he enters not the Tabernacle of God, in the voice of praise and thanksgiving, the sound of one feasting.²⁸⁶ For how can he hear His voice, who sees not His works? If he saw them, he would have heard the Word which has been put in His Hand, rejoicing in His acts, whereby He knocked and it was opened to Him,²⁸⁷ and He descended into his soul that He might feed therein upon the food of sincerity and truth.

8. Now because he has not heard, the word of Haggai comes again to hand, and says, Rise up from your cieled houses

²⁸⁸ that are weighed down by wickedness, and go up to the mountain of the heavenly Scriptures, and hew wood, the wood of wisdom, the wood of life, the wood of knowledge; and make straight your ways, direct your acts that they may keep their due order which is useful and necessary for building the house of God.

9. For if ye do it not, the heaven over you shall be stayed of her dew,²⁸⁹

that is, the heavenly Word, Which descends as the dew upon the grass, shall not temper the fevered motions of your bodily passions, nor extinguish the fiery darts of your various desires; and the earth, that is, your soul, shall be stayed from her fruit, so that it shall be dried up, unless fully watered by the Word of God, and sprinkled with heavenly dew, even the fulness of spiritual Grace.

10. And as He knew how slothful they are who dwelt beneath the earth, and in the dark abodes of pleasure, I will stir up, it is said, the spirit of Jerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest,²⁹⁰

that they may be stirred up to build the Divine house. For except the Lord build the house, their labour is lost that build it.²⁹¹

Now Zerubbabel means, 'constant overflowing,' like the Fountain of life, and the Word of God, by Whom and from Whom are all things and in Whom all things consist.²⁹²

Thus saith the overflowing Fountain, If any man thirst, let him come unto |²¹¹

Me, and drink;²⁹³ drink, that is, from the stream of the unfailing flood. We read also of Zabulon, a nocturnal flood, that is to say prophetic, but it also is now brightened by the intermixture of this stream, whereby was swallowed up that flood of vanity typified by Jezabel, which was opposed to truth and to the utterances of prophets, and was so torn in pieces by dogs that not a trace of it remained, but all its frame with every mark of its posterity was destroyed. Zerubbabel therefore of the tribe of Judah, and Jesus the High Priest, thus designated both by tribe and name seem to represent two persons, though one only is meant; for He Who as Almighty, is born from the Almighty, as Redeemer is born of the Virgin, being the Same in the diversity of His two divisible natures, hath fulfilled as the Giant of salvation

²⁹⁴ the verity of the one Son of God.

11. Now being about to raise from the dead holy Zerubbabel He says, Yet once, it is a little while, I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.²⁹⁵

Once before he had shaken these things when He delivered his people from Egypt, when there was in heaven a pillar of fire,²⁹⁶ dry land among the waves, a wall in the sea, a path in the waters, when in the desert a daily supply of heavenly food was produced, and the rock was melted into streams of water.²⁹⁷ But He shook them also afterwards in the Passion of the Lord Jesus, when the heaven was covered with darkness, the sun withdrew his light, the rocks were rent,²⁹⁸ the tombs opened, the dead raised, the Dragon, vanquished on his own waves, saw the fishers of men not only sailing, but even walking on the sea without danger.

12. The dry land was also shaken when the barren Gentile nations began to ripen with the harvest of devotion and

|²¹² faith, and the desert and the Gentiles were so much shaken, that the preaching of the Apostles, whom He sent to call the Gentiles, was so loud and vehement, that their sound went out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.²⁹⁹

So greatly, indeed, was the desert shaken that more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife,³⁰⁰

and the desert blossomed as a rose,³⁰¹

the elect of the Gentiles entered in to the remnant of the people, that the remnant might be saved according to the election of grace.³⁰²

13. And I will fill, it is said, this house with My silver and gold,³⁰³ with the heavenly oracles, which are as silver tried in the fire,³⁰⁴

and in the brightness of the true light, glistening like spiritual gold in the secret hearts of the saints. These riches He confers on His Church, riches whereby spiritual treasures are increased, and the glory of the house is exalted above the former glory which the elect people enjoyed.

14. For peace and tranquillity of the soul is above all glory of any house; for peace passeth all understanding.³⁰⁵

This is that peace above all peace which shall be granted after the third shaking of the heaven, the sea, the earth and the dry land, when He shall destroy all Principalities and Powers. For heaven and earth shall pass away,³⁰⁶

and all the fashion of this world; and every man shall rise up against his brother with the sword, that is, with the word piercing the marrow of the soul,³⁰⁷

that whatever opposes itself, the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem may be cut off, as Zechariah says.³⁰⁸ And thus there will be peace over all, the passions of the body offering no resistance, and the unbelieving mind no obstacle, that Christ may be all in all, offering in subjection to the Father the hearts of all men.

15. Wherefore to Him alone is it mystically said, I will take thee, O Zerubbabel, and will make thee as a signet, for I have chosen thee.³⁰⁹

When our mind shall have become peaceful so that it may be said to her, Return, return,

O Shulamite,³¹⁰ which signifies 'peaceful,' or, to use your own

[213 name, Irenice, then shall she receive Christ like a signet on herself, that is, the Image of God, that she may be according to that Image, for as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And it behoves us to bear the image of the heavenly, that is, peace.³¹¹

16. And that we may know the truth of this, it is said in the Canticles to the soul now fully perfect, that which may the Lord Jesus say to you also, Set me as a seal upon thine arm;³¹²

that peace may shine in your heart and Christ in your works, and that wisdom and righteousness and redemption may be formed in you. Farewell, my son: love me for I love you.

1. a A reply of Valentinian the 1st to some Bishops of the Hellespont and Bithynia, who demanded permission to meet 'to amend the doctrine of the faith,' is given by Sozomen. (vi. 7.) His words are, 'It is not lawful for me, as a layman, to busy myself about such matters as these: let the Bishops, whose business it is, meet by themselves wherever they will.' To the same effect are the words of his which Theodoret reports, (iv. (5.)) when bidding the Bishops of the province elect a successor to Auxentius. He bids them choose a fit person, 'that we also, who rule. the. empire, may sincerely bow our heads to him, and welcome his reproofs, (for, being men, we cannot but stumble,) as a remedial discipline.' What law is referred to is uncertain. The Benedictine Editors, after mentioning some which had been suggested 'think it more probable that

the law referred to is not extant.'

2. b Gibbon (ch. xxv.) in his character of Valentinian says, 'In the time of Julian he provoked the danger of disgrace by the contempt which he publicly expressed for the reigning religion.' The story is told by Theod. Eccles. Hist. iii. 16. Valentinian was in official attendance on the Emperor Julian on one occasion when he went to the temple of Fortune to perform rites. 'On either side of the door were stationed attendants, who sprinkled all who came in with lustral water to purify them, as they believed. When some of the drops fell on his cloak, Valentinian struck the attendants with his fist, saying that he was defiled not purified by them.' For this he was dismissed from the court, and sent to a solitary garrison. The same story is told with slight variations by Sozomen. Hist. vi. 6.

3. c He is alluding to his own election.

4. d This is true of the first decision of the Council, but as S. Ambrose says, 'it ended badly,' for the Bishops

were inveigled into accepting a less orthodox formula. See Prof. Bright's Hist. p. 94, 98.

5. c S. Ambrose here delicately alludes to the service; he had rendered to Valentinian in going on his behalf to the court of the usurper Maximus after the death of Gratian, which is referred to in Letter xxiv.

6. a 'This was not so great an inconvenience to them as might appear at first sight, for the early Basilicas were

not unlike the heathen temples, or our own collegiate chapels, that is, part of a range of buildings, which contained the lodgings of the ecclesiastics, and formed a fortress in themselves, which could easily be blockaded either from within or without.' Newman. Ch. of the Fathers, p. 22.

7. 1 S. Pet. v. 8

8. Eph. vi. 12.

9. S. Luke xix. 35.

10. S. Matt. xi. 28. etc.

11. Phil. i. 23.

12. S. Matt. x. 39.

13. b The words 'custodiam' and 'amisit,' are repeated by S. Ambrose from the former part of the sentence.

'Amisit ' as applied here vocal Is the Psalmist's expression, 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious?' Ps. lxxvii. 9.

14. 2 Kings vi. 16. (the sense, not the words.) 15. Rom. vi. 10.

16. S. John xxi. 22.

17. c This refers to a story thus recounted in Paulinus' Life of S. Ambrose ch. 12, 'Among' many who tried to force S. Ambrose into exile, but through God's protection failed of their purpose, one Euthymius more hapless than the rest, was stirred to such a pitch of frenzy that he hired a house

close to the Church, and there kept a carriage, that he might the more readily carry off Ambrose into exile, by seizing him and putting him in the carriage. But his wickedness

fell upon his own pate, (Ps. vii. 7.) for that very day year, he was himself put into the carriage and from the

same house was carried into exile, confessing that it was by the just judgment of God that his wickedness had recoiled on himself, and he was carried into exile in the very chariot which he had prepared for the Bishop. And the Bishop did much to comfort him, by giving him money, and other necessities.'

18. d The word is 'curiales.' see note e on Lett, xviii. To the authorities there referred to add Bingham. Antiq. iv, 4, 4, where Gothofred's enumeration of their duties is given in full in the notes.

19. 1 Zech. v. 1 [E.V. a flying roll. Vulg. volumen volans.] 20. 2 Cor. xi. 14.

21. 2 i.e. by causing them to commit sacrilege.

22. Ps. 1. 16.

23. 2 Cor. vi. 15 24. 1 Kings xxi. 3.

25. S. Luke xix. 40.

26. Ps. viii. 2.

27. Ps. cxviii, 22.

28. Jer. xvii. 1.

29. Gal. ii. 19.

30. Gal. iii. 11.

31. Gal. iv. 4.

32. Gal. iii. 13.

33. Ib.

34. 2 Cor. v. 21.

35. 1 Cor. vi. 1, 2.

36. Ib. vi. 5.

37. Isa. li. 7.

38. 2 Cor. iii. 3.

39. S. Matt, xxii. 17.

40. Ib. 18. sqq.

41. Gen. i. 26.

42. Heb. i. 3.

43. S. John xiv. 9.

44. Ib. x. 30.

45. Ib. xvi. 15.

46. Ib. 16.

47. c There is a play here on the word 'aerarios,' as connected with 'aerarium' the treasury. The aerarii were the lowest class of people at Rome, and

so S. Ambrose calls the 'pauperes Christi' his aerarii, while at the same time they are the treasures of the Church.

48. Prov. xix. 17.

49. f S. Augustine mentions in his Confessions (ix. 7.) S. Ambrose's introduction both of Hymns and chanting during this period of trial. 'Then was it first instituted that, after the manner of the Eastern Churches, Hymns and Psalms should be sung, lest the people should wax faint through the tediousness of sorrow; and from that day to this the custom is retained, divers, yea, almost all Thy Congregations throughout other parts of the world following herein.' Oxf. Transl. He speaks in the same passage of the behaviour of the people: 'The devout people kept watch in the Church, ready to die with their Bishop Thy servant.' He also dwells on the effect produced

on himself, these events happening shortly before his conversion. 'How did I weep in Thy Hymns and Canticles, touched to the quick by the voice of Thy sweet-attuned Church! The voices flowed into mine ears, and the Truth distilled into mine heart, whence the affections of my devotion overflowed, and tears ran down, and happy was I therein.' Ib. ix. 6. It is quite possible that some of the twelve Hymns, acknowledged by the Benedictine Editors as genuine, were then first sung. Among them are the well-known 'Aeterna Christi munera,' 'Aeternae rerum Conditor,' 'Deus Creator omnium,' and others, whose strains are now familiar in English versions.

50. Phil. iii. 7.

51. Rom. v. 19.

52. Ps. lxiv. 7. vulg.

53. S. Luke xx. 4.

54. Is. ix. 6.

55. Eph. iv. 5.

56. a This is said to be the Church now called 'S. Ambrose the greater.' The Roman Church is the one called in the previous letter the 'New Basilica,' and also the Church of the Apostles. It was probably called 'Romana' from being near the Porta Romana.

57. b S. Augustine says that it was revealed to him in a dream.

58. c These were e0nergou&menoi, or persons possessed by evil spirits. On them see Bingh. Antiq. iii. 4, 6. The laying on of hands was part of the rite of exorcism.

59. d The text stands 'arriperetur urna,' nor is there any variation of MSS. noted. But it seems absolutely necessary to read 'una.' An 'urna' could have nothing to do with the matter. It might hold ashes, but surely not the bones of two men of marvellous size. The histories founded on the letter all tacitly adopt the emendation, and speak of 'a woman among the possessed.' See Fleury. B. xviii. 46. Tillemont in Vit.

60. 1 now of S. Vitalis and S. Agricola Fleury p. 104. Eng. Tr.

61. e This is distinctly asserted by S. Augustine in all the three passages referred to in the Introduction.

62. Ps. xix. 1, 63. Phil. iii. 20.

64. S. Mark iii. 17.

65. S. John i. 1.

66. Ib. 18.

67. Job. xxxiii. 1.

68. Ps. xix. 2.

69. Ps. cxiii. 5,6.

70. Ps. cxiii. 7,8.

71. Ib. 9.

72. 1 Cor. xv. 41.

73. Ps. xx. 7.

74. 2 Kings vi. 16 sqq.

75. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

76. Ps. xix. 2.

77. S. Matt. viii. 29.

78. S. John ix. 25.

79. S. John xiv. 12.

80. S. Mark i. 24.

81. S. John ix. 29.

82. Gen. iv. 10.

83. a The word is 'Enneacaidecateris.' Mr. Hensley remarks in his article on Easter, ' It has been often stated that the Council established a particular cycle, that of nineteen years, but this is a

mistake.' 84. S. Luke xxii. 7-12.

85. Gal. iv. 10, 11.

86. b 'Nam iripit espe contrarium.' According to Ducange 'incipio' is used in late Latin in the sense of the Greek verb

me//lw, and here, as it would seem, with the force with which that verb is so often used as equivalent to 'it is

likely' or 'it is sure' that such and such is the case: see Lidd. and Scott. me//lw, ii. 3, 4.

87. c An allusion to Virg. Georg.,1, 276.

Ipsa dies alios alio dedit ordine luna Felices operum; quintam fuge, etc.

88. d Days immediately following the Kalends, Nones or Ides, considered unlucky by the Romans. See, A. Gellius. v. 17. What the 'Egyptian days'

were is not ascertained.

89. Ps. cxviii. 24.

90. e This is the ordinary phrase for the day of the lunar month. See Bright Early Engl. Ch. Hist. p. 195.

91. lb. [Ps.] lxxxix. 36, 37.

92. S. John xvii. 1.

93. S. Luke xiii. 32.

94. Ps. cxix. 126.

95. Eccl. iii. 1.

96. Jerem. viii. 7.

97. Isaiah i. 3.

98. Isa. xlix. 8.

99. 2 Cor.vi. 2.

100. f S. Ambrose's Latin is 'mensis novorum.' The Vulgate ' in mense novarum frugum.'

The LXX has e1n mhnì\ tw~n ne/wn.

101. Exod. xiii. 4.

102. Exod.xii. 2.

103. Lev. xxiii. 5.

104. S. John i. 17.

105. S. Matt. v. 17.

106. 1 bitter herbs E. T. Ex. xii. 8.

107. Ps. cxviii. 24.

108. S. John ii. 19.

109. g The Era of Diocletian was the prevalent one at this time, and till the, general adoption of the Christian Era, which did not become established until the 8th Century. See Mr. Hensley's article 'Era' in Dict. of Christ. Antiq. He gives there the rule, for reducing the Era of Diocletian, the epoch of which is Aug. 29th A.D.284, to the Christian Era, viz, to add 283

years and 240 days to the given date of Diocletian's Era. According to this the Easter of the 89th year of Diocletian would be A.D. 373, and that of the 93rd would be A.D. 377. The 'times lately past' would probably refer to A.D. 383, when, as may be seen by the Table, the 'fourteenth moon' fell on a Sunday.

110. Deut. xvi. 1.

111. h There is a slight error here. The interval is 32 days, not 31.

112. i There is some uncertainty about the reading here. The original reading in the text was 'biennium,' and, as this clearly did not agree with the facts the Benedictine Editors adopted a suggestion that 'biennium' was a mistaken rendering of a MS. which had 'vi-ennium.' But the period of 6 years would not be precise, as the year referred to must be A.D. 379, (see table,) which would be seven years before.

113. 1 Cor. v. 7.

114. k The precise words are not found in either of these passages.

115. Exod. xii. 18. Lev. xxiii. 5. Num. xxviii. 16.

116. Exod. xii. 5-8.

117. 1 in haste E.T 118. 2 against all the gods of Egypt E. T.

119. Exod. xii. 11-14.

120. 1 S.John ii. 18.

121. Exod. xii. 29.

122. Ib. 31.

123. Ib. 33.

124. 1 Cor. x. 2

125. 1 This would seem to be not quite correct. Mr. Hensley remarks that in A.D. 360, Easter day was on April 23rd but that the 'fourteenth moon'

of that year was a Monday and not on a Sunday. The question is discussed in Ideler Chronol. vol. 11 p. 254-257.

126. Col. iv.3.

127. Ps. cxli. 3.

128. 1 Cor. v. 8.

129. a i. e. as Bishop.

130. Isa. i. 17.

131. Ps. lxxviii. 5.

132. b The Juthungi were a German tribe settled on the north bank of the Danube, in what is now Austria Proper and Moravia. It is uncertain whether they were, as Ammianus Marcellinus describes them, a sept of the Alemanni, or whether they were Goths. It has been suggested that the name is only another form of Gothi or Gothones, (Dict. of Antiq.) The want of a detailed and accurate history of these times, which are just beyond the range of Ammianus, makes it difficult to make out clearly the allusions which S. Ambrose here makes. Tillemont explains them thus, 'Bauton seeing the Juthungan Alemanni ravaging Rhaetia, while, the Roman soldiers were engaged in guarding the passes of the Alps against Maximus, summoned the Huns and Alans to make war on them. These tribes accordingly pillaged the territories of the Alemanni up to the frontiers of Gaul. But on Maximus complaining that they had been brought against him, Valentinian, to deprive him of any pretext for breaking off the peace, induced them to retire in the midst of their victories by presents of money.' He also considers that the reason why the Juthungi came to pillage Rhaetia that year was the extraordinary fertility, and that it is this invasion to which allusion is made in Letter xxiv, 21, where S. Ambrose says that Rhaetia Secunda 'drew down an enemy on herself by her abundance.' 133. c S. Ambrose means Maximus' brother.

134. d He scorns to mean that pity for the dead should move him to less harsh treatment. But perhaps the word 'tuam' may have dropped out, and we should read 'tu tuam causam considera,' 'do you consider your own case.' 135. e It seems necessary here to read 'allegabis' for 'allegabas,' as the past tense would be unmeaning.

136. f Cabillonum is the ancient name of Chalons-sur-Saone.

137. g He refers to the Bishops Idacius and Ithacius, who had induced Maximus to put Priscillian and others of his party to death, in spite of the remonstrances of S. Martin, who urged Maximus to be content with their having been condemned by ecclesiastical sentence. Priscillian 'had adopted a

strange compound of various errors,' (Prof. Bright Hist. p. 160.) chiefly Manichean. There is a full account of Maximus' dealings with them in Fleury, xviii. 29, 30. Newman's Transl. vol. 1 p. 66-69. S. Ambrose in Letter xxvi. condemns the conduct of these Bishops, and the appeal to the civil sword in Ecclesiastical cases, in still stronger terms.

138. Rom.xiii. 4.

139. a The Benedictine Editors consider him to be referring to the Novatians.

140. S. Matt. v. 27.

141. Jer. xxii. 29, 30.

142. b S. Ambrose's Latin is 'scribe hoc viros abdicates.' The Vulg. has 'scribe virum istum sterilem.' The LXX.

gra&yon to_n a!ndra tou~ton e0kkh&rukton.

143. 1 abdicati 144. S. John viii. 8.

145. ib. 9.

146. S. John viii. 10, 11.

147. c Fleury remarks on this, 'We must remember that the canonical penances inflicted for great crimes were at that time so very severe, that they were equal to a rigorous punishment.' 148. a See note g on Letter xxiv.

149. b S. Ambrose makes the same statement again, De Spirit, in. 17. 'It is important then to notice where the Lord maintained this argument, for oft-times His oracles derive their value from the quality of the place where He was.' 150. S. John x. 30. ib. vii. 16.

151. Ib. viii. 20.

152. S. Luke xxi. 2.

153. ib. x. 35.

154. Ps. xi. 7.

155. Exod. xii. 3.

156. Lev. xii. 2.

157. S. Luke xxiv. 7.

158. S. Matt. iii. 11.

159. Eccles. xi. 2.

160. Hosea i. 2.

161. Ib. iii. 2.

162. 1 nevel.

163. c These words are not in the Heb. In LXX they take the place of the half-homer of barley, gomo_r kriqw~n kai\ ne/bel oi1nou. S. Ambrose combines both.

164. S. Matt. v. 17.

165. Isa. xxxviii. 8.

166. Mal. iv. 2.

167. Gal. i. 18.

168. d It was said just afterwards, if this story of the woman taken in adultery be in its right place, which is doubtful.

169. S. John viii. 15. Ib. 4, 5. Lev. xx. 8.

170. v. 7.

171. S. Matt. vii. 3.

172. Jer. xvii. 13.

173. S. Luke x. 20.

174. S. John xvi. 32.

175. Ib. i. 29.

176. Ib. viii. 10.

177. S. Matt. xx. 23.

178. Exod. viii. 26.

179. Gen. xlvi. 34.

180. a Leah means 'wearied,' and the name is supposed to refer to her 'tenderness' or weakness of eyes. (Gen. xxix. 16). S. Ambrose gives a mistaken meaning to the name Rachel, which really means 'ewe.' 181. Gen. xxxi. 14, 15.

182. Ib. v. 16.

183. Isa. liv. 17.

184. Ps. cxix. 57. Ib. 111.

185. Ps. xviii. 26.

186. Gen. xxxi. 14.

187. Gen. xxxi, 27.

188. Ps. xii. 7.

189. Gen. xxx. 32.

190. Ib. xxxiv. 25. sqq. Ib. xxxii. 24.

191. 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

192. b S. Ambrose often gives this exposition of the name 'Shechem.' 193. c Isaac means 'laughter.' Gen. xxi. 6.

194. Rom. v. 3,4, 5 195. Exod. iii. 5. Josh. v. 15. Exod. xxiv. 13 14.
196. Job ix. 25.
197. Ib. vi. 19-21.
198. Ib. xxviii. 14.
199. a He is here referring to Virg. Ecl. 5, 77. Dumque thymo pascuntur apes, dum rore cicadae.
200. b Here again he is thinking of Virg. Georg. 3, 328.
- Et cantu querulae rampent arbusta cicadae.
201. c Here again S. Ambrose is thinking of Virg. Georg. 2, 154. Squameus in spiram tractu se colligit anguis.
202. Ps.cxviii. 19.
203. S. Matt. vii. 14.
204. Prov. ii. 13.
205. Is. xxxi. 1.
206. Exod.vii. 1.
207. Ps. xlv.3. Rom. x. 15, Is. lii. 7.
208. Ps. lxiii. 6.
209. Ib. xxii. 29.
210. Prov. xxvii. 25.
211. Deut. xxxii. 2.
212. 2 S. Pet. i. 4.
213. Deut. xxviii. 11, 12.
214. Ib. xxxii. 2.
215. Ps. xxvii. 4.
216. v. 13.
217. Ps. lxv. 4.
218. Ps. cxxviii.5.
219. Isa. iii. 7.
220. 1 Cor. i. 1.
221. S. Matt. vii. 17. Ps. cxliii. 10.

222. S. Matt. xx. 15.
223. Ps. iv. 6.
224. Heb. i. 3.
225. 1 Tim. iii. 16.
226. a Perhaps quoted from memory from S. John iv. 26.
227. Heb. i. 3.
228. S. John xi. 35.
229. Ib. i. 29.
230. S. Matt. iv. 17. Amos v. 14.
231. Col. ii. 9.
232. S John i. 16.
233. Ps. cxix. 68.
234. Cant. i. 3.
235. Ps. cxix. 103.
236. Exod. xxxiv.28. 1 Kings xix. 4.
237. S. Matt. xvii. 4.
238. 1 Pet. i. 12.
239. Acts vii. 55.
240. 2 Cor. xii. 2.
241. Col. ii. 20-22.
242. 2 Cor. v. 8.
243. S. John i. 1.
244. Acts xvii. 28.
245. 2 Cor. i. 19.
246. Exod. iii. 14.
247. Ps. cxix. 109.
248. S. Matt. v. 44, 45.
249. Ib. 48.
250. Rom. xiii. 10.

251. Isa. xl. 31.

252. Wisd. ix. 15.

253. Rom. xi. 36.

254. Ps. xvi. 2.

255. S. Matt. xix. 26.

256. b 'Veri vana.' This is simply one of the Virgilian expressions of which S. Ambrose is so full. It is taken

from Aen x. 630, Nunc manet insontem gravis exitus, aut ego veri Vana feror.

257. Cant. iv. 9.

258. Ib. vii. 8.

259. Rev. xxi. 23.

260. S. John viii. 12.

261. S. Luke xxiv. 32.

262. Gen. xix. 30.

263. Ib. 17.

264. Joel iii. 13.

265. S. Luke xvii. 31.

266. Ps. civ. 2.

267. Joel iii. 9. c The Engl. Vers. is 'Prepare war, wake up the mighty men.' The Vulg. 'Sanctificate bellum, suscite robustos.' 268. Phil. iv. 13.

269. Joel iii. 18, 270. 1 Cor. iii. 2.

271. S. John iv. 14.

272. Hag. i. 4. Ib. 2.

273. Ecclus. xxiii. 18.

274. 1 Kings xvii. 19, 275. 2 Kings iv. 8, 10.

276. Ib. 16 et seq.

277. Acts x. 9.

278. 2 Sam. xviii. 17, 18.

279. 1 Kings xx. 23.

280. Hag. i. 4.

281. Jer. xxii. 13.

282. Ib. 14.

283. Cant. iv. 3.

284. Jer. xxii. 19. He shall be buried with the burial of an ass. Engl. Vers.

285. 1 Tim. v. 6.

286. Ps. xlii.5.

287. S. Matt. vii. 7.

288. Hag. i. 8.

289. Ib. 10.

290. Hag. i. 14.

291. Ps. cx x vii. 1.

292. Col.i. 16, 17.

293. S. John vii. 37.

294. a This refers to Ps. xix. 5. where the sun, that rejoiceth as a giant to run his course, is usually interpreted by the Fathers of the Messiah. It was a very favourite thought with S. Ambrose. In his Hymn 'De Adventu Domini' he adapts the language of the Psalm to it in words of beautiful simplicity, *Procedit e thalamo suo, Pudoris aula regia Geminae Gigas substantiae Alacris ut currat viam.*

Egressus Ejus a Patre, Regressus Ejus ad Patrem, Excursus usque ad Inferos, Recursus ad sedem Dei. In the De Incarn. ch. v. he gives a fuller explanation. 'Him the Prophet Daniel describes as a Giant, because being of a twofold nature, He partaketh in one Person both of the Godhead and of a human Body, and exulted in going forth as a Bridegroom from His chamber, like a Giant, to run His course. He is Bridegroom of the soul as being the Word, He is a Giant of earth because He fulfilled all the duties of our daily life, and, though He was ever the eternal God, took upon Him the Mystery of the Incarnation.

295. Hag. ii. 6.

296. Exod.xiii. 21.

297. Ib. xiv. 22. .

298. S. Luke xxiii. 44.

299. Ps. xix. 4.

300. Is. liv. 1.

301. Ib. xxxv. 1.

302. Rom. xi. 5.

303. Hag. ii. 7,8.

304. Ps. xii. 7.

305. Phil. iv. 7.

306. S. Matt. xxiv. 35.

307. Heb. iv. 12.

308. Zech. ix. 10.

309. Hagg. ii. 23.

310. Cant. vi. 13.

311. 1 Cor. xv. 48. Ib. 49.

312. Cant, viii. 6. This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2004. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely.

Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SP Ionic font, free from here.

Early Church Fathers - Additional Texts

Letters - Letters 31-40

St. Ambrose of Milan, Letters (1881). pp. 213-269. Letters
31-40.

- Letter 31: To Irenaeus
- Letter 32: To Irenaeus
- Letter 33: To Irenaeus
- Letter 34: To Honorantius
- Letter 35: To Honorantius
- Letter 36: To Honorantius
- Letter 37: To Simplician
- Letter 38: To Simplician
- Letter 39: To Faustinus
- Letter 40: To the emperor Theodosius

LETTER XXXI.

Irenaeus had asked S. Ambrose whether God had greater love for those who had believed from their early years than for those, who had been converted later in life. In answering this question, S. Ambrose enters into the history of the Jewish and Christian Churches, which he considers as set forth under the figures of David's two wives.

AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING.

1. You have wisely thought it a subject of inquiry, whether there be any difference in God's love towards those who have believed from their childhood, and those who have believed in the course of their youth or more advanced age; for this also has not been past over nor left unnoticed in the sacred Scriptures. For it is not without meaning that the Lord our God says to the Prophet Joel, Lament to me for the spouse girded with sackcloth and for the husband of her youth, expressing his grief for the Synagogue, who, before,

in her virginity, had been espoused to the Word of God, or, it may be, for a soul which had fallen from her good deeds, that by the heinousness of her sins she had incurred hatred, and through the defilement of impiety and the stains of unbelief had become miserable and despised, and far removed from the grace of that Spouse which had before been counted worthy to be told, I will |214 betroth thee unto Me in righteousness and in judgment and in loving kindness and in mercies.

2. Not without reason is she considered miserable, who has lost gifts of so great a price, and suffered so grievous a loss of her dowry of virtues as to be deprived of the Spouse of her virginity. For according to our merits the Word of God either lives or dies in us; for if our desires and works are good, the Word of God lives and acts in us: if our thoughts and actions are darksome, the Sun of righteousness sets within us. And therefore He bids lamentation to be made for such a soul. For as they have cause of congratulation and feasting with whom the Bridegroom dwells, so that soul is to be mourned for, from whom the Spouse has been taken, as it is written of the Apostles in the Gospel; for when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then shall they fast in those days.

3. Thus too this soul, in former times when she possessed the Virgin Word, had joy and gladness. And therefore she fasted not, because it was the season of feasting and refreshment; the Bridegroom was present bestowing by His presence the riches of plenty, stores of heavenly food, and dropping wine, whereby the hearts of men are made glad. But after she lost the Bridegroom by her acts, she is commanded to do penance in sackcloth for her sins, and to bewail herself, because Christ, Who is the Virgin Word, died and was crucified for her.

4. If this soul was espoused from early age, and never bore any other yoke, but from the beginning dedicated the maiden flower of her faith to Christ and as a virgin was united to Him in early days in the mysteries of piety,

received a training in holiness as a heifer does the yoke; she is the very soul of the ancient Jewish stock from the family of the patriarchs, who, had she kept her course of faith without stumbling, would have been counted worthy of great things, the Spouse of the Virginal Word, as she who lays hold of Wisdom, and as a mother shall she meet him, and receive him as a wife married of a virgin.

5. The other likewise is procured from the Gentiles, and both are the Spouse of the One Word, which is a great mystery. And this is set forth to you in the book of [215 Kings; since David had two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreeli-tess and Abigail whom he obtained afterwards; the first more severe, the latter full of mercy and grace, an hospitable and liberal soul, who saw the Father with open face, having beheld His glory; she who received the divine dew of paternal Grace, as the interpretation of the name signifies. Now what is the dew of the Father, but the Word of God, Who has filled the hearts of all with the moisture of faith and justice?

6. Well therefore does the true David say to this soul what was said to Abigail, Blessed is the Lord God of Israel which sent thee this day to meet me. And again he says to her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person. Lastly in the Song of Solomon these are the words of the Bridegroom to the Bride, Let me see thy countenance; let me hear thy voice.

7. And at the time she was dismissed, for she had another husband who in Hebrew was called Nabal, which in Latin means foolish, a man harsh, inhospitable, uncourteous, ungrateful, who knew not how to repay good offices; but after his death, she was set free from the law of her husband, and the prophet David took her to wife. By this marriage the mystery of the Church which was to be called from among the Gentiles is signified, for she, having lost the husband to whom she had been married, became converted to Christ, bringing with her a dowry of piety, of humility and faith, enriched also with the patrimony of mercy.

8. But in this place it is not this wife, but that Ahinoam, who was evilly disposed towards her brother, wherefore her brother was made a trouble to her, and in their person it is said, thou makest us to be a bye-word among the heathen, and that the people shake their heads at us. The devil, finding her off her guard, fell upon her as a lion, and deprived her of her charms, rooted up her vine and fig-tree under which she used to repose, and caused her fruit to wither.

9. But now God, having compassion on them, thus dried up and withered by drought, saith to the prophet, Lament |216 to Me for virgin girded with sackcloth and for the husband of her youth, that is to say, over the dead husband of this soul or of the Synagogue. And with her He expostulates in another place, forasmuch as she had forgotten her resolution, forgotten His grace, had wandered from discipline, and had lost her former affections as a wife. Lastly therefore He reproves her with His words, calling to mind and repeating her tenderness and her expressions of affection: 'Didst Thou not call me one of Thy household, the parent and guide of Thy virginity.'

10. Wherefore for this soul, to whom through her infidelity the Word of God is dead, and this Virgin Word is dead also, He appoints grief and brings in an Intercessor, that so she may be called to penitence, and may thereby earn compassion. But she who is of prudent understanding and very beautiful to look upon, was gained for him, like Abigail, in battle; her adversaries were conquered, and her husband, he who, surrounded by spiritual wickedness, struggled and fought not to lose his beautiful wife, being dead. On her her victorious and loving Spouse confers sweetness and grace, cleansing her from all that might obscure her beauty, and taking off from her the garments of her captivity, that so, laying aside all the hairs of her head, that is, the curls of sins, which seem to be superfluous parts of our person (for if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him), she may strive to come in the unity of the faith, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of

Christ, that she may lay aside all trouble of mind, and founded in love may grow up in the Lord Jesus, and make increase of the whole body.

11. This is that soul whom the Law shews to thee under the figure of a beautiful woman, and if thou seest her among the captives, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife, it says to thee, thou shalt bring her home to thine house, that thou mayest commit to her the whole interior of thy house, the possession of all thy secrets, that thou mayest take away her superfluities, and cut off her transgressions; and with a razor not too sharp, lest it come to evil, may cut off the slough of thy passions, and thy idle senses. Wherefore it is said, she shall shave [217 her head, that so the wise man's eyes that are in his head may meet with no hindrance. And she shall remain, it is said, in thine house a full month, bewailing the sins of her nativity, and the lies of her wicked father the devil, who would fain gather what he hath not laid, that so, cleansed by the purification of this mystic number, she may obtain the keys of marriage.

12. And it is well said, After that thou shalt go in unto her, bidding thee to enter wholly into thy soul, and collect thyself within her, and so dwell in her that thou mayest be not in the flesh but in the spirit, and purpose to associate her to thyself in the commerce of life, knowing that she will communicate to thee of her goods, and that filled with her grace thou mayest say, I was a witty child, and had a good spirit; and she may answer thee, I will take thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, and unto the chamber of her that conceived me.

13. She then shall be thy life, she shall find thee and kiss thee. And it shall be, if thou hast no delight in her, because she chastiseth her body, and bringeth it into slavery, thou shalt not suffer her to be a slave, that is, to the lusts of the body, nor subject her to the flesh, but suffer her to remain free; thou shalt not alienate her, for this were to sell her, nor

shalt thou despise her, but shalt allow her to serve God in the chastity of faith and sobriety of good works. Farewell: love me, for I love you.

LETTER XXXII. [A.D.387.]

S. Ambrose in this Letter applies the words of Jeremiah about the partridge (Jer. xvii. 11.) to Satan, and from it sets forth the way in which Jesus Christ has overcome him, and rescued man from his power.

AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING.

1. The partridge hath cried, she hath gathered what she hath not hatched 1. From the conclusion of my last letter

[218 I may borrow the opening of the ensuing. The question has been much mooted:

with a view therefore of solving it, let us consider what natural history tells

us of the nature of this bird. For it is the part of no little sagacity to

consider even this, for Solomon knew the nature of beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes!

2. Now this bird is said to be full of craft, fraud, and guile,

skilled in the ways of deceiving the fowler, and experienced in the arts of

turning him aside from her young ones; omitting no artful stratagem which may

draw off the pursuer from her nest and lurking place. And we know that on

observing his approach, she beguiles him until she has given her offspring the

signal and opportunity for flight. As soon as she perceives they have escaped,

she also withdraws herself, leaving her enemy deluded by her treacherous wiles.

3. It is said also to be a bird which copulates indiscriminately, and

that the male bird rushes eagerly on the female, and burns with unrestrained

desires. Wherefore it has been thought suitable to compare this impure malicious

and deceitful creature with the adversary and circumventor of the human race,

with him who is the arch-deceiver and author of impurity.

4. The partridge then cried, he that is, who derives his name

from destroying²: even Satan, which in Latin means the adversary³.

He cried first in Eve, he cried in Cain, he cried in Pharoah, in Dathan, Abiram,

Corah. He cried in the Jews, when they demanded gods to be made for them, while the law was being given to Moses. He cried again, when they said of the Saviour, Let Him be crucified, let Him be crucified, and, His blood be on us and on our children. He cried, when they required that a king should be given them, that they might revolt from the Lord God their King. He cried in every one who was vain and faithless.

5. And by these cries he gathered to himself a people whom he had not created; for God made man after His own likeness and image, and the Devil drew man to himself by the allurements of his voice: He gathered to himself the nations of the Gentiles, getting riches not by right⁴.

[219 Wherefore it is a common saying concerning the rich and covetous man, that he is a partridge gathering riches not by right. But my Jesus, as a good Judge, does all things with righteousness ⁵, for He came saying, as it is written, I speak righteousness and judgement⁶ of salvation.

6. By that grace then He despoiled that partridge the Devil, took from him the ill-gotten riches, even the multitude that followed Him, recalled from error the souls of the Gentiles, and the minds of the nations that wandered from the way. And since He knew that they were beguiled by the voice of the Devil, and in order that He might Himself loose the bonds and chains of ancient error, He cried first in Abel, the voice of whose blood cried out. He cried in Moses, to whom He said, Wherefore criest thou unto Me? He cried in Joshua, He cried in David, who says, Unto Thee do I call, help me. He cried too in all the Prophets. Wherefore He says also to Isaiah, Cry, and Isaiah answers, What shall I cry? He cried in Solomon, calling to all with a very loud voice in the power of of Wisdom, Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. He cried also in His Body, as the Beam out of the timber. He cried that He might deceive and circumvent the lurking Enemy, saying, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me. He cried that

He might spoil him of his prey, replying to the thief, Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise. Wherefore when Jesus cried, straightway that partridge was left by those whom he had gathered in the midst of his days.

7. Wherefore some have thought that this also agrees with the nature of the partridge, forasmuch as it steals the eggs of others, and hatches them with its own body, seeking by this treachery to gain for itself the offspring of others. But when she whose eggs have been stolen, or nest invaded, or her young have been tempted by a fraudulent resemblance, and deceived by the appearance of beauty, when she, I say, perceives this, she 'picks out the crow's eyes 7' as the saying is, and, being inferior in strength, puts [220 on and arms herself with cunning. And when all the labour she has bestowed on their nurture has exhausted her store of food, and her young ones have begun to grow up, she utters her cries, and calls to her offspring with the trumpet (as it were) of affection. And they, roused by this natural sound, recognise their mother, and desert their pretended parent. And thus, seeking to gather what he has not hatched, he loses those whom he thought to bring up.

8. Not without need therefore was it that Jesus also cried; it was in order that the whole universe which had been deceived by the voice, the allurements, the art, the specious beauty of the partridge, and enticed by his treacherous wiles, and had wandered from the true Author of their being, might be recalled by the voice of her true Parent, might abandon this deceiver, and desert him in the midst of his days, that is, before the end of this world. From him the Lord Jesus has rescued us, and called us to eternal life. Wherefore now, being dead to the world we live to God.

9. When then this partridge shall have been completely forsaken by his false children, then that foolish one whom God has chosen and who has confounded the wise man, will be saved. Wherefore if any man seemeth to be wise in this world let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

Farewell my son, and love me, as indeed you do, for I love you.

LETTER XXXIII.

S. Ambrose in this Letter explains more fully the text of Deut. (xxi. 15 &c) which he had alluded to in Letter xxi, and makes the two wives represent qualities.

AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING.

1. In a previous letter I said that the soul ought to be delivered from its adversaries, and a bond of life which shall be inseparable entered into with it. And inasmuch as my discourse took as a proof of its assertion that passage²²¹ in the Book of Deuteronomy which speaks of the man who had two wives, one beloved and the other hated, you seem to have felt much concern lest any one should suppose this man had taken to himself two souls, which is impossible.
2. But you yourself know that sometimes, when Scripture uses allegory, it refers some things to the figure of the Synagogue, some to that of the Church; some things to the soul, others to the mystery of the Word, others to souls of different kinds and qualities, which he who has spiritual discernment can distinguish. And so I conceive that it is not two souls, but different qualities of the same soul, which are treated of in the following chapter of the Law. For there is an amiable kind of soul, which desires pleasure, which shuns labour, shrinks from compunction, slights the judgments of God. It is amiable because it seems gentle and sweet for the time, and one that soothes rather than distresses the mind. But there is another severer kind, which is consumed with zeal for God, which, like a strict wife, will not permit or suffer her consort to commit whoredoms, allows no indulgence to the body, gives no licence to delight or pleasure, renounces the hidden deeds of shame, devotes herself to arduous labours and to severe perils.
3. If therefore both have borne children, he may not, it is said, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, make the son of the beloved first⁸ before the son of the hated, which is indeed the first.

The meaning of which I conceive not to be so much a simple preference as between two first ones, but rather a declaration that the son of the hated wife alone has the prerogative of being first. Now the word 'primitives' means as first-born 9, and the firstborn are holy, for every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord. Nevertheless all first-born are not holy, for Esau who was the first-born was not holy.

4. But the holy are the first-born, for it is written in Numbers; Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the first-born that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel. For on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto Me all the first-born in Israel.

Wherefore He took the

Levites for the first-born, as being holy, for we know that the holy are first-born from the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it is written, But ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels and to the Church of the first-born. Wherefore as the first-born of the Church are holy, so also are the Levites, for they also are the first-born. For it is not by the order of their birth but by the gift of sanctification that they are holy; Levi being the third son of Leah and not the first.

5. But he who is sanctified himself opens the womb. What womb? Hear the words, As soon as they are born they go astray. As you have understood the first-born who opens the womb, so understand here the womb of the good mother, from which it is not saints, but sinners who go astray. But the Levites are taken away from the midst of Israel, because they have nothing in common with the people, whose earthly first-born are destroyed. The first-born of the world are of another mother, from whose womb Paul was separated when he was called to the grace of God. He received the Word Who is in the midst of our hearts. Whence it is said also, There standeth One among you. Whom ye know not.

6. This digression then of ours from one part of the Law to the other, for the purpose of shewing that the firstborn is not the son of the beloved, that is of the more remiss and voluptuous wife, has not been needless, although the words of the chapter before us express the same truth: He may not make the son of the beloved first-born before the son of the hated, which is indeed the first-born. He is indeed the first-born who is the holy son of a holy mother; just as she is indeed the mother, from whose womb not her true sons but sinners go astray. Wherefore the former is not the son of the true mother, nor the true first-born, but as though he were so, subsistence is indeed provided for him that he may not want, but he is not honoured, that he may become rich. But the other has received double from all, that he may abound; just as in Genesis each of the patriarchs had

two changes of raiment given to them by |223

their brother Joseph, when they were sent back to their father to tell him that he whom he had believed to be dead was found.

7. Thus the first-born has received the prerogative of inheritance, as the Scripture says, He is the beginning of his strength, the right of the first-born is his. Thus from the first-born Son of God the first-born are holy, and from that beginning, (for He is the Beginning and the Ending,) the beginning is called holy, the beginning is the son to whom the prerogative of the first-fruits is due, according to that which was said to Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.

8. Now the Divine Oracle teaches us that this relates to the inheritance of virtues rather than that of mercy, for the Lord says, In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. What other inheritance was there in Isaac which could ennoble his father, but that of sanctity? The son of the handmaid indeed he set over the Gentiles, as bestowing upon him a simple portion of his patrimony, but

to the son of Sarah he gave a double portion, for on him he bestowed not only temporal but also heavenly and eternal things.

Farewell: love me, for I love you.

LETTER XXXIV.

Horontianus asks whether the soul is from heaven. S.Ambrose first refers him to the Book of Esdras, and then dwells upon S. Paul's statement in Rom. viii.

AMBROSE TO HORONTIANUS 10, GREETING.

1. You have enquired of me whether the soul is formed of a heavenly substance; for you are too well instructed |224
to suppose that the soul is made of blood or fire or any harmony of nerves, as the common herd of philosophers believe, nor as that patrician sect of them, the descendants of Plato assert, does that which moves of itself and is not moved by others appear to you to be the soul, nor indeed have you approved that fifth kind of element which the keen genius of Aristotle has introduced, namely a kind of 11 perfection of which the essence of the soul might be (as it were) framed and compounded.
2. On this subject I advise you to read the book of Esdras, who despised these trifles of the philosophers, and with a deeper wisdom which he had gathered from Revelation, pointed out that the soul is of a nobler substance.
3. The Apostle also, though he has not said it in so many words, has yet given us to understand, like a good master and spiritual husbandman calling forth the faculties of his disciples by the hidden seeds of doctrine, that our souls are of a better creation and a more excellent nature. For when he says that the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, he shews that the grace of souls is not small, seeing that by their strength and excellence mankind rises to the adoption of the sons of God, having within itself that which is given to it to make it in the likeness and

image of God. For souls are not perceived by truth, nor are they seen by the bodily eye, wherefore they bear upon them the likeness of this incorporeal and invisible nature, and excel in their substance corporeal and sensible qualities.

For the things that are seen are temporal, they represent and are united to things that are temporal, but the things that are not seen are united to the Eternal and Chief Good, in Him they live and move and have their being, and suffer not themselves, if they are wise, to be separated or divided from Him.

4. Every soul therefore, seeing herself shut up in the prison-house of the body, if it be not debased by her connexion with this earthly habitation, groans under the burthen of the body to which she is joined; for the [225 corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things, knowing also that she walks by faith not by sight, she is willing to be absent from the body to be present with the Lord.

5. Let us consider then how the creature hath been made subject to vanity, not indeed willingly, but by the Divine ordinance, which has appointed that our souls should be united to our bodies on account of their hopes, in order that, hoping for good, they should make themselves worthy of a heavenly recompense. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things belonging to the body¹².

Every man's soul must therefore consider that she will be rewarded according to deserts of life. And he says well the things belonging to the body, that is to say, the body which was assigned to her to govern, that if she have governed it well she may receive the reward for the sake of which she was subjected in hope, but if ill, she may be punished, forasmuch as she did not trust in God, nor aspire to that adoption of sons, and to the liberty of true glory.

6. So then the Apostle has taught that man is a creature subject to vanity. For what is so truly the man as his soul? of its companions he says, For we

that are in this tabernacle do groan being burthened. David also says, Man is like a thing of nought, and, livery man living is altogether vanity. Wherefore the life of man in this world is vanity, to which vanity the soul is subject. And when a holy man doeth the things of the body, he doeth them not willingly but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope, he does them for obedience sake. From this example of the soul then let us proceed to the other creatures.

7. Consider the sun the moon and the stars; these heavenly luminaries, although they shine with an excellent brightness, are yet but creatures, and rise and set in performance of their daily task, obeying the ordinance of the eternal Creator, dispensing the radiance wherewith they are clothed, and giving light by night and by day. As often as the sun is obscured by clouds, as often as it is hidden ²²⁶ by the interposition of the earth, or when the rays of its light are intercepted, eclipses occur, and, as the Scripture saith, The moon knoweth her going down¹³. She knows when she shines with a full, and when with a diminished orb. The stars also are overclouded and disappear, while going through the service of this earthly ministry, not willingly indeed but in hope; for they hope for the reward of this their toil from Him Who subjected them. Wherefore they go through it for His sake, that is, to do His will.

8. Nor is it surprising that they bear it with patience, knowing that their Lord, the Creator of all things in heaven and in earth, took upon Him our frail body and our servile state. Should not they then patiently bear the bondage of their corruption, seeing that the Lord of all humbled Himself even to death for the whole world, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made the sin of the world, nay even a curse for us? Wherefore the heavenly bodies although they groan in that they are subject to the vanity of this world, yet follow the example of His goodness, and console themselves with the expectation of being delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of glory, when the adoption of the sons of God, that is, the redemption of all men, shall have arrived. For

when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, then all Israel shall be saved. For what people will He not pardon when He even pardons that persecuting people, who said, Crucify Him, crucify Him, and, His blood be on us and on our children. But since even the heavenly creation is subject to vanity, albeit in hope, will not He Who is 'truly Mercy itself and the Redeemer of the world, suffer even the perfidy and insolence into which these men through the vanity of the world have fallen to obtain pardon?

9. To conclude then, both this great and glorious sun, and this moon which is not obscured by the shades of night, and these stars which are the garniture of the heaven, all these now suffer the bondage of corruption, for all creatures are corruptible, and the heavens shall perish and the heaven and earth pass away. But hereafter the sun and moon and the stars of heaven shall rest in the glory of [227] the sons of God, when God shall be all in all, He Who now in His immensity and mercy is in thee and in us.

10. And shall we not believe that the Angels themselves, who in the toils of this world fulfil divers ministeries, as we read in the Revelation of S. John, do not also groan when made the ministers of vengeance and destruction? Seeing that their life is blessed, would they not rather pass it in* their ancient state of tranquillity than be interrupted by the infliction of vengeance on our sins? They who rejoice in the salvation of one sinner must surely groan over the miseries of so grievous sins.

11. If therefore the creatures and powers of heaven suffer the bondage of corruption, but still in hope, that hereafter they may rejoice on our behalf and together with us, let us also alleviate the sufferings of this present time by the hope and expectation of future glory. Farewell, my son; love me, for I love you.

LETTER XXXV. In this Letter S. Ambrose continues his comment on the passage of S. Paul, especially on the 'groans of creation.' AMBROSE TO HORONTIANUS.

1. My former Letter was a reply to your inquiry; this is a part of my

answer, supplemental not contradictory to the former. In reviewing the latter part of the passage I was struck, I confess, with his adding, we know that every creature groaneth, seeing that previously he had said without any addition, The creature was made subject to vanity. For he said not every creature, but, the creature was made subject. And again he says, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. But in the third place he adds that every creature groaneth together.

2. Now what does this addition mean? It means haply |228 that every creature is not subject to vanity, and therefore every creature will not be delivered from the bondage of corruption. For why should that be delivered which is free and secure from the subjection of vanity and the bondage of that corruption? But they all groan together not in their own but in our pangs, and haply are in travail together of the Spirit of Salvation, the Spirit of sweetness, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, that in the redemption of the human race they may attain to a common joy and gladness. So then either because of their charity they all groan for our labour, or for us as a member of their body, whose head is Christ. But you may understand this as you please, either as we have said, or simply that every creature groans and travails together.

3. And now let us consider what follows. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body. We are taught in the previous passage what the adoption of sons is; therefore, in order to explain its meaning, to that passage we must recur.

4. He who through the Spirit, says S. Paul, mortifies the deeds of the body shall live. Nor is it surprising that he should live, since he who has the Spirit of God, becomes the son of God. Wherefore he is the son of God that he may receive not the spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption of sons; to the intent that the Holy Spirit may bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. But this is the testimony of the Holy Spirit, that He it is Who cries in our hearts, Abba Father, as it is written to the Galatians. There is also the great testimony that we are the sons of God; namely that we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Now he is joint heir with Him, who is glorified together with Him, and he is glorified together with Him who by suffering for

Him suffers together with Him.

5. And in order to encourage us to suffer, he adds that all things which we suffer fall far below and are not worthy to be compared with the recompense of our labours, the reward of future good, which shall be revealed in us, when [229 we shall be formed anew after the Image of God, and shall be worthy to behold His Glory face to face.

6. And to exalt the greatness of this future revelation, he adds that the creation also waits for this revelation of the sons of God, which now is made subject to vanity, not willingly, but in hope, because it hopes for the reward of its ministry from Christ, or else because it also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and received into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, that there may be one liberty of the creation and of the sons of God, when their glory shall have been revealed. But now, so long as this revelation is delayed, the whole creation groans together, looking for the glory of our adoption and redemption, already travailing with that Spirit of salvation, and willing to be delivered from the servitude of vanity.

7. And to this the Apostle has conjoined the groans of the saints, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, for they groan also. Of their own merits they are indeed secure, but since the redemption of the whole body of the Church is still future, they suffer together with it. For seeing that the members of this our body still suffer, shall not the other members, although higher, sympathize with the suffering members of one and the same body?

8. And this, I suppose, is why the Apostle has said that the Son Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, for they who still labour are not yet subject, and in these perhaps Christ still thirsts, in these is still hungry, in these is still naked, in that they do not fulfil the word of God, nor put on Christ, Who is the Garment of believers, and the Robe of the faithful. They also in whom He is sick still need medicine, and therefore are not yet subdued, for this subjection is of strength not of

weakness : again, in those who are strong and obey the commands of God, the Son of God is subject. But now His travail is greater in those who do not succour those who are toiling, than in those who still require aid themselves. And this is the pious and true meaning of the subjection of the Lord Jesus, Who will subject Himself, to the intent that God might be all in all.

9. We have received the Apostle's meaning, let us now |230 consider who are they that have the first-fruits of the Spirit. With this view let us inquire what is intended under the name of first-fruits or of beginning, Thou shalt not delay, it is said, to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors; further on, The first of the first-fruits of thy lands thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God. First-fruits and tenths are different, first-fruits are of greater merit, an act of pious consecration. And on this account Abel pleased God, for he delayed not to offer his gift, but offered of the first-fruits of his flock. Although some suppose that there is a difference between 14 first-fruits and first-born¹⁵, in that on gathering in the crops, the beginning, so to speak, of all kinds in the threshing floor are offered, while the first reaping of the harvest is offered to the Lord; but of this we will speak in another place. But by the offering of the first-fruits, the whole harvest appears to be sanctified, but the first-fruits themselves are the most holy.

10. In like manner the saints are the first-fruits of the Lord, and the chief are the Apostles, for God hath set in the Church first Apostles, who have prophesied many things and preached the Lord Jesus, for they first received Him. Simeon too received Him, and the prophet Zacharias, John his son, Nathanael, in whom there was no guile, who rested under the fig tree, Joseph also who was called just, who buried Him. These are the first-fruits of our faith, nevertheless the nature of other seeds is the same as that of the first-fruits, although in some there is less grace, for God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

11. You have an example in the Lord Jesus Himself. In the resurrection of the dead He is called the first-born from the dead. The Apostle also has called Him the first-fruits; In

Christ shall all be made alive, but every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's, who have believed in His coming. His body is as truly a body as our own, nevertheless He is called the first-born from the dead, because He rose first; and He is called the first-fruits because He is holier than all the other fruits, and they by union with Him are hallowed, also. He also as the Image of the invisible God is the Head of those found after that Image; in Him according to His Divinity there is nothing corporeal, nothing temporary; for He is the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express Image of His Person. But in our desire to explain the meaning of first-fruits we have greatly extended the length of our letter.

12. Now the Apostles are our first-fruits, chosen from all the first-fruits of that time; to them it is said, And greater things than these shall ye do, for the Grace of God hath poured itself into them. These, I say, groaned, waiting for the redemption of the whole body, and they still groan, because many are still toiling, who are yet tossing on the sea. Just as, if a man is reaching the higher shore, but the waves still dash up to his middle, he groans and is in travail until he be wholly out of danger. Verily he groans, who still says to us, Who is weak, and I am not weak?

13. We need not then to be perplexed by the words, We, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body, for the sense is plain, forasmuch as they, having the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan, waiting for the adoption of sons. This adoption of sons is the redemption of the whole body, when he who is to be the son of God by adoption shall see face to face that Divine and Eternal Good; for there is the adoption of sons in the Church of God,

when the Spirit cries, Abba, Father, as it is written to the Galatians.

But this will be perfected when all shall rise again in incorruption power and glory who are counted worthy to see the Face of God, for then the human race will judge itself to be truly redeemed. And so the Apostle boasts, saying, For we are saved by hope. For hope saves, as also faith, whereof it is said, Thy faith hath saved thee.

14. Therefore the creature which is made subject to vanity not willingly but in hope, is saved by hope; just as Paul too, knowing that to die was gain to him, that he might be freed from the body and be with Christ, remained in the flesh for their sakes whom he wished to win to Christ. Now what is hope but the expectation of things future? Wherefore he says, But the hope that is seen is not hope. [232 For it is not what is seen but what is unseen that is eternal, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? The things that we see we seem to possess, how then can we hope for that which we already possess? Thus none of those things which we hope for can we see; eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him.

15. Wherefore, if that which is seen cannot be hoped for, it is not well to read as some do, 'for 16 because any one sees a thing he also hopes for it;' unless it may be understood thus, 'for that which any one sees, why does he also hope for or expect it?' For most true it is that we hope for that which we see not, and therefore, although it seem to be absent from us, we still look for it in patience; I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me. And we wait patiently, because the Lord is good unto them that wait for Him. And it seems to agree with this, that through patience He has given it back to us. We wait for the things which we hope for, but see not. For he does much who hopes and looks for those things which are not seen, and endures because he directs his mind to that which is.

16. Now it is well said that hope that is seen is not hope, referring to the power and honour and riches of this world. You may see a man distinguished by his retinue and equipages, but he has not hope in his equipages which are seen. Nor is hope in the firmament of heaven, but in the Lord of heaven. The Chaldaean has not hope in the stars which he watches; nor the rich man in his possessions or the avaricious man in usury; but he hath hope who places his hope in Him Whom he sees not, that is, in the Lord Jesus, Who stands

in the midst of us, yet is not seen. Finally, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. |233

LETTER XXXVI.

S.Ambrose continues, in reply to a question of Horontianus, his discussion of the passage of S. Paul, and explains what are his 'groanings unutterable.' AMBROSE TO HORONTIANUS.

1. Our letters are so linked together that we seem to be holding actual conversation with one another, so well do you with your question and I with my explanations supply subject matter for our correspondence.
2. You have intimated your doubt of what spirit it is said that he maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. Let us then refer to what has gone before, that the passage may make plain what we are seeking. Likewise, it is said, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities. Does it not seem to you that this is the Holy Spirit, for He is our Helper, as He to Whom it is said, Thou hast been my succour, leave me not neither forsake me, O God of my salvation?
3. For what other Spirit could teach Paul how to pray? The Spirit of Christ, like Christ Himself, teaches His disciples to pray, for who could teach us, after Christ, but His Spirit, Whom He sent to teach us, and to direct our prayers, for we pray with the Spirit and we pray with the understanding also. That the understanding may pray well, the Spirit goes before and leads it forth into the right way, so as to prevent carnal things, or what either falls below or exceeds its strength, from secretly stealing over it. For the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. It is written also, Seek great things, and small things shall be added unto you; seek heavenly things, and earthly things shall be added unto you.
4. Wherefore He wishes us to seek greater things, not to linger upon earth. And He knows what to bestow upon us, dividing unto every man severally as He will. Sometimes, knowing our capacity, which we are ignorant of, He says to us, Ye cannot receive it now. I ask for myself the |234

sufferings of martyrdom, the Holy Spirit is willing, but sees the weakness of my flesh, and lest, while I seek for greater things I should lose what is less, says to me, 'Thou canst not bear this.' What opportunities have I not had, and yet when near the goal I have been held back 17. The good physician knows what food is suitable to each disease, and to each season, for the benefit of health. Sometimes food seasonably taken restores health; but if a man eat food unseasonably or of an improper kind, it is dangerous to him.

5. Therefore since we know not what to pray for, nor how to pray, the Holy Spirit prays for us; for He is the Spirit of Jesus our Advocate, and He prays with groans unutterable, for Christ also mourns for us. And God the Father says, My bowels, My bowels, I am pained at the very heart. We often read too of Him as being indignant and grieved. He groans to take away our sins, and to teach us to do penance. For there are pious groans, and of prevailing power with God, whereof the Prophet speaks, And my groaning is not hid from Thee. For he did not hide himself, like Adam, but said, Behold I am the shepherd, but these sheep, what have they done? it is I that have sinned, let Thine hand be on me.

6. Hence then cometh the groaning of the Spirit of God, and those groans of the Prophet¹⁸, truly unutterable because they are divine. So those words which Paul heard in heaven are unspeakable, which it is not lawful for a man to utter, but what is hidden from man is known to God. Now He Who is the Searcher of hearts knows all things, but the things which He searches are those which the Spirit hath cleansed. God therefore knoweth what the Spirit prays for, and what is the wisdom of the Spirit Which intercedes for the saints, as it is written, For the Spirit maketh intercession for us. For those for whom Christ suffered, and whom He cleansed by His Blood, for them the Spirit also intercedes.

Farewell: love me as a Son, for I too love you. [235 LETTER XXXVII. [A.D.387.]

Simplician, to whom this and the following Letters, and several later ones, are addressed, seems, from what little we know of him, to have been a very learned and yet simple-minded man. He was older than S. Ambrose, who speaks in this Letter of his 'fatherly love' towards himself, and was probably his adviser in the early days of his episcopate, and possibly, as the Benedictine Editors, (note on Letter lxxv,) suggest, his 'father in the faith,' as having prepared him for his ordination, or even taught him as a catechumen at Rome in earlier days. Paulinus tells us that when S. Ambrose was on his death-bed he overheard some of his Clergy discussing the probabilities as to his successor, and when they mentioned Simplician's name, he said, "as if he were taking part in the conversation, 'An old man, but a good one.'" Certainly Simplician was unanimously chosen his successor. In this Letter he dwells in detail upon the theme that goodness is true freedom and sin slavery, which he illustrates at great length and with much rarity of argument. It is one of the most interesting of his expository Letters.

AMBROSE TO SIMPLICIAN, GREETING.

1. When we were lately conversing together, in the intimacy of an old-standing affection, you let me see that you were much pleased by my taking a passage from the writings of the Apostle Paul to preach upon to the people. You said further that this was the case, because the depth of his counsels is difficult to grasp, while the loftiness of his sentiment rouses the audience, and stimulates the preacher; and also because his discourses are so fully, for the most part, the interpreters of his meaning, that the expounder of them finds nothing to add of his own, and, if he would say ought, fills the part of a critic rather than of a preacher.
2. However since I recognize herein the feelings of long friendship, and what is still more precious, the tenderness of your paternal regard, (for in length of attachment many may participate, but in paternal love they cannot;) since moreover you consider that I have already done what you ask satisfactorily, I will comply with what you desire, and that the more, as I am admonished and stimulated by my own example, an example not difficult for me to follow, [236 since I shall imitate no great one, but myself only, thus returning to my own humble customs.
3. As to the plan pursued in my discourse, seeing that the image and character of the blessed life is delineated therein, I think I have so arranged the argument of it that it will not be disapproved by others, certainly not by

yourself who are so partial to me, although it is more difficult to satisfy your judgment than theirs, only your affection softens its severity and renders it more indulgent to me.

4. Now this Letter, written as it is in your absence, has for its subject the sentence of the Apostle Paul, who calls us from slavery into liberty, saying, Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men, shewing that our liberty lies in the knowledge of wisdom. This opinion has been bandied to and fro by philosophers in energetic discussions, while they assert that every wise man is free and every fool a slave.

5. But this was said long before by the son of David, The fool changeth as the moon. The wise man on the other hand is not dispirited by fear, nor changed by power, nor exalted by prosperity, nor cast down by sadness; for where wisdom is, there also is strength of mind, constancy, and fortitude. Now the wise man remains the same in mind, neither depressed nor exalted by the vicissitudes of things, he is not tossed to and fro as a child, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, but continues perfect in Christ, grounded in charity, rooted in faith. Hence he is not conscious of failure, he knows not the various losses which befall the soul, but shall shine forth as the Sun of righteousness Who shines in the kingdom of His Father.

6. But let us now consider from what source Philosophy more fully derived this, from what discipline and wisdom of the Patriarchs. Did it not come first from Noah who, perceiving that his son Ham had foolishly derided the nakedness of his father, cursed him in these words, Cursed be Ham 19, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren, and set his brethren as lords over him, seeing that they had wisely deemed their fathers old age worthy of honour?

7. Did not also that source of all good discipline, Jacob, |237 who on account of his wisdom was preferred to his elder brother, instil into the breasts of all the riches of this copious subject? So also the pious father,

whose paternal affection was equally strong towards his two sons, although his judgment varied, (for while the ties of blood sway the affections, our judgments are formed according to desert,) and who therefore dispensed to the one grace, to the other mercy, to the wise grace, to the foolish mercy, seeing that Esau could not raise himself to virtue by his own proper strength nor make progress spontaneously, blessed him in rendering him the subject and servant of his brother, shewing thereby that folly was so much worse than slavery that slavery itself is a remedy for it; because a fool cannot govern himself, and unless he has some director he falls by his own will.

8. His father therefore, loving him and careful for his welfare, made him the servant of his brother that he might be ruled by his counsels. And thus wise rulers are given to an indiscreet nation, that by their vigour they may guide the weakness of the people, ruling them by a show of power, and by this weight of authority constraining them against their wills to obey those wiser than themselves, and to submit to the laws. On the foolish son therefore he laid a yoke as on one untamed, and to him who had said he would live by his sword he denied even freedom; that he might not fall away through presumption he set his brother over him, that being subdued by his authority and governance he might make progress towards conversion. And since there are two kinds of service, (for that which proceeds from necessity is weaker, that from free will stronger, for that good is more transcendent which proceeds not from necessity but from free will,) he therefore first laid upon him the yoke of necessity, and afterwards imparted to him the blessing of voluntary subjection.

9. It is not then nature which makes a person a slave, but folly; not manumission which sets free, but discipline. Esau was born free, and was made a servant, Joseph was sold into slavery, and then elected to power, to rule over those who bought him. He disdained not to be sedulous and obedient, but he maintained the height of virtue, he [238 preserved the liberty of innocence, the dignity of integrity. The Psalmist

therefore says well, Joseph was sold to be a bond-servant; they humbled his feet in fetters. He was sold, it is said, to be a bond-servant, but they could not make him a bond-servant; they humbled his feet, not his soul.

10. For how was that soul humbled of which it is said: His soul pierced the iron? For while sin pierces the souls of others, (for the iron means sin, which has a penetrating power,) the soul of holy Joseph was so far from being vulnerable by sin that it pierced through sin itself. The blandishments of his mistress' charms moved him not, and with reason was he insensible to the flames of lust, seeing that he was consumed by the brighter fire of Divine grace. It is therefore well said of him also, The word of the Lord inflamed him; for thereby he quenched the fiery darts of the Devil.

11. How was he a bond-servant who directed the princes of the people to store up the corn, that thus they might forestall and provide for future dearth? Or how was he a bond-servant, who gained the whole land, and reduced all the Egyptians to bondage? And this, not in order to impose upon them the condition of an ignoble bondage, but that he might establish a tribute from all but the lands of the priesthood, which he preserved free from tribute, that among the Egyptians also respect for the priesthood might be held inviolable.

12. His being sold then did not make him a slave; for though of a truth he was sold to merchants, yet, if you regard price merely, you will find many who have bought for themselves maidens of an elegant form, and then, captivated by love, have basely enslaved themselves to them. Apame the concubine of King Darius was once seen sitting at his right hand, taking his diadem off his head, and placing it on her own, and with the palm of her left hand striking his face, while the King gazed upon her with open mouth, glad if she would only smile upon him, and thinking himself miserable and afflicted if she scorned him, laying aside his authority, and seeking to soothe and persuade her to be reconciled to him.

13. But why should I quote this at so great a length? |239

Do we not often see parents who have been made slaves by pirates or cruel barbarians ransomed by their children? Are then the laws of mercy more powerful than the laws of nature? Is natural affection produced in slavery? People often buy lions and yet have no mastery over them, nay are so much their slaves that if they see them becoming enraged and shaking out their manes on their brawny necks, they run away and hide themselves. Money then determines nothing, for it often buys masters over itself, nor do catalogues of auctions, for by them the purchaser himself is often sold and allotted to another. A contract of sale does not change a man's nature, nor deprive wisdom of her liberty. Many free men, as it is written, serve a wise servant, and there is a wise slave, who governs foolish masters.

14. Whom then do you consider as more truly free? Wisdom alone is free, she sets the poor over the rich, and makes the servants lend at usury to their own masters; lend, that is, not money but understanding, lend the talent of that Divine and eternal Treasure which is never wasted, the mere loan of which is precious: to lend that mystical money of the heavenly oracles of which the Law says, Thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow. This the Jew lent to the Gentiles, for he received not instruction from them but imparted it; to him the Lord opened His treasures, that He might moisten the Gentiles with the dew of His Word, and might become the Head of the nations, while He Himself had no head over Him.

15. He then who is wise is free, bought with the price of the heavenly oracles, with that gold, that silver of the Divine Word; bought with the price of blood (for it is no small tiling to acknowledge one's Redeemer;) bought with the price of Grace: he who heard and understood the words, Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and drink and eat.

16. He is free who going forth to war, if he have seen a beautiful

woman, and when he spoils his enemies' goods has found her among them and has a desire unto her, takes her to wife, having first shaved her head and pared her nails, [240 and taken off from her the raiment of her captivity, taking her no longer as a slave but free, for he understands that prudence and discipline are not liable to a state of bondage. And therefore the Law says, Thou shalt not sell her at all for money, for truly she is above all price. And Job says, Take20 wisdom into thine inmost parts. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, for it is more precious than gold and silver.

17. Freedom therefore is not his alone who has never had the auctioneer for his master, nor seen him raising his finger, but he is more truly free, who is free within himself, who is free by the laws of nature, knowing that this law has a moral not merely an arbitrary sanction, and that the measure of its obligations is in accordance not with the will of man but with the discipline of nature. Does such a person therefore seem to you free merely? Does he not rather appear to you in the light of a censor and director of morals? Hence the Scripture says truly that the poor shall be set over the rich, and private men over those who administer the state 21.

18. Think you that he is free who buys votes with money, who courts the applause of the people more than the approbation of the wise? Is he free who is swayed by the popular breath, who dreads the hisses of the populace? That is not liberty which he who is manumitted receives, which he obtains as a gift from the blow of the lictor's palm. For it is not munificence but virtue that I hold to constitute liberty; liberty, which is not bestowed by the suffrages of others, but is won and possessed by a man's own greatness of mind. For a wise man is always free, always honoured, always one who presides over the laws. For the law is not made for the righteous but for the unrighteous, for the just man is a law unto himself, having no need to fetch for himself from a distance the form of virtue, seeing that he bears it within his heart, having the works of the law written on the tablets of his heart, to whom it is said, Drink

waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. For what is so near to [241 us as the Word of God? This word is in our hearts, and in our mouth; we see it not, and yet possess it.

19. The wise man therefore is free, for he who does that which he wills is free. But it is not every will that is good, but it is the part of a wise man to will all things which are good, for he hates what is evil, having chosen that which is good. If therefore he has chosen what is good, he whose choice is free and who has chosen what he will do is free, for he does what he wills to do: the wise man therefore is free. All that the wise man does he does well. But he that does all things well does all things rightly, and he that does all things rightly does them all without offence or reproach, without causing disturbance or loss to himself. Whoever then has this power of doing all things without offence or reproach, without loss or disturbance to himself, does nothing foolishly but does all things wisely. For he who acts wisely has nothing to fear, for fear is in sin. But where no fear is, there is liberty, and where liberty is, there is the power of doing what one wishes: the wise man therefore alone is free.

20. He who can neither be compelled nor forbidden is no slave; now it belongs to the wise man to be neither compelled nor forbidden; the wise man, therefore, is not a slave. Now he is forbidden who does not execute what he desires, but what does the wise man desire but the things which belong to virtue and discipline, without which he cannot exist? For they subsist in him, and cannot be separated from him. But if they are separated from him he is no longer wise, seeing that he is without the use and discipline of virtue, of which he would deprive himself if he were not the voluntary interpreter of virtue. But if he be constrained, it is manifest that he acts unwillingly. Now in all actions there are either corrections proceeding from virtue, or falls proceeding from malice, or things between the two and indifferent. The wise man follows virtue not

compulsorily but voluntarily, for all things that are pleasing he does, as flying from malice, and admits not so much as a dream of it. So far is he from being moved by things indifferent, that no forces have the power to move him hither and thither as they do the herd of men, |242

but his mind hangs as in a balance in equal scales, so that it neither inclines to pleasure, nor in any respect directs its desires however slightly to things which ought to be avoided, but remains unmoved in its affections. Whence it appears that the wise man does nothing unwillingly or by compulsion, because were he a slave he would be so compelled; the wise man therefore is free.

21. The Apostle likewise gives this definition, saying, Am I not an Apostle, am I not free? Truly he was so free that when certain persons had come in privily to spy out his liberty, he gave place, as he himself says, by subjection, no not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might be preached. He therefore who yielded not preached voluntarily. Where free will is, there is the reward of free will; where obligation is, there is the service of obligation. Free will therefore is better than obligation; to will is the part of the wise man, to obey and to serve is the part of the fool.

22. This is also the Apostle's definition, who says, For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward : but if against my will a dispensation is committed to me. On the wise man therefore a reward is conferred, but the wise man acts willingly, according to the Apostle therefore the wise man is free. Wherefore he also exclaims, Ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh. He separates the Christian from the Law, that he may not seem to yield to the Law against his will; he calls him to the Gospel, which the willing both preach and practise. The Jew is under the Law, the Christian is by the Gospel; in the Law is bondage, in the Gospel, where is the knowledge of wisdom, is liberty. Every one therefore who receives Christ is wise, and he who is wise is free, every Christian therefore is both wise and free.

23. But the Apostle has taught me something even beyond freedom itself, namely that to serve is real freedom, Though I be free from all, he says, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. What is that which surpasses liberty but to have the Spirit of grace, to have charity? Liberty renders us free to men, but charity genders us beloved by God. Wherefore Christ also says, [243 But I have called you friends. Good indeed is charity; whereof it is said, By love of the Spirit 22 serve one another.

Christ

also became a servant that He might make all free. His hands served in the baskets: He Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made all things to all men, that He might bring salvation to all. Following this example, Paul was both, as it were, under the Law, and lived without the Law, for the benefit of those whom he desired to gain: to the weak he voluntarily became weak that he might strengthen them; he ran so as to obtain, he kept under his body that he might be victorious over heavenly powers in Christ.

24. To the wise man therefore even bondage is freedom; whence we may gather that even to be in power is bondage to the fool, and what is worse, while he rules over a few, he serves more and severer masters. For he serves his own passions, his own lusts, their tyranny he can escape neither by night nor day, for he carries these masters within his own breast, and suffers within himself an intolerable bondage. For there is a double bondage, one of the body, another of the soul; now the lords of the body are men, but the lords of the soul are evil dispositions and passions, from which liberty of the mind alone frees the wise man and enables him to depart from his bondage.

25. Let us seek therefore that truly wise man, that truly free man, who although he live under the dominion of many, says freely, Who is he that will plead with me? from Whose sight I shall not be able to hide myself, only do Thou withdraw Thy hand far from me, and let not Thy dread make me afraid.

26. And King David, who followed him, said, Against Thee only have I sinned. For being supported by the royal dignity, and being, so to speak, master of the laws, he was not subject to them but was liable to God alone, Who is the Lord of hosts.

27. Hear another free man; But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment : yea, I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing against myself, ... but He that judgeth me is the Lord. [244 The freedom of the spiritual man is a true freedom, because he judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man, because he knows himself to be subject to nothing which has any participation in the creature, but to God alone, Who only is without sin, of Whom Job also says, God liveth Who hath taken away my judgment, for the just man can only be judged by Him in Whose sight the heavens are not clean, nor the light of the stars pure and clean.

28. Will any one bring forward those verses of Sophocles which say 'Jupiter, and no mortal man is ruler over me?' How much more ancient is Job, how much older is David? Let them acknowledge then that they have borrowed from us the more excellent of their sayings.

29. Who then is wise but he who has arrived at the very mysteries of the Godhead, and has known the hidden things of wisdom to be manifested to him. He then alone is wise who has taken God as his guide, to conduct him to the secret resting-place of truth, and although but a mortal man has become by grace the heir and successor of the eternal God, and partaker, as it were, of His sweetness, as it is written, Wherefore God, even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

30. Now if any man will examine more closely these matters, he will perceive what great assistance the wise man finds and what great obstacles the foolish, in the very same things; that to the one freedom is an aid, to the other bondage is an impediment. For the wise man rises as a conqueror, having

vanquished and triumphed over lust, fear, sloth, sadness and other vices. This he does until he casts them out from the possession of his mind, driving and excluding them from all its bounds and limits, for as a cautious general he knows how to guard against the incursions of robbers, and those hostile stratagems which the wicked enemies of our soul are frequently attempting with their fiery darts; for we have both wars in peace and peace in war. Whence also he says, Without were fightings, within were fears. But in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. He says this because he was terrified neither by straits nor persecutions, nor hunger, nor danger, nor death. [245]

31. But he who fears these things, who dreads death, how is he not a slave? Truly he is a slave, and that in a miserable bondage; for nothing so subjects the mind to all kind of bondage as the fear of death. For how can the abject and vile and ignoble sense raise itself up, when it is deeply sunk in the pit of corruption, through the lusts of this life. Behold, how much he is a slave: I shall be hid, he says, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me. Therefore as a slave he received a sign, but even thus he could not escape death. Thus the sinner is a slave to fear, to cupidity, to avarice, to lust, to malice, to anger, nay, he is a greater slave than if he were set under tyrants.

32. But they are free who live by the laws. Now true law is right reason, true law not sculptured on tablets, nor engraved in brass, but impressed on the mind, and fixed in the senses; for the wise man is not under the law, but is a law unto himself, bearing the work of the Law in his heart, inscribed and formed therein by a kind of pen natural to himself. Are we then so blind as not to see the manifest characters of things, and the images of virtues? And how unworthy is it that whole nations should obey human laws, that they may become thereby partakers of liberty : but that wise men should neglect and abandon the

true law of nature formed according to the image of God, and true reason, the sign-bearer of liberty; since there is so much liberty therein, that when children we are unconscious of any bondage to vice, being removed from anger, free from avarice, ignorant of lust. How miserable therefore, that we who are born in liberty should die in bondage!

33. But this arises from the levity of our mind and the infirmity of our character; because we are occupied by idle cares, and superfluous actions: but the heart of the wise man, his works and deeds, ought to be stedfast and immoveable. Moses taught us this, when his hands became heavy, so that Joshua the son of Nun could scarcely hold them up. And therefore the people were victorious when works not of a perfunctory kind, but full of gravity and virtue were being carried on, not the works of a mind |246

unsteady, and staggering to and fro in its affections, but of one firmly rooted and established. The wise man therefore stretches out his hands, but the fool draws them together, as it is written, The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh, meditating on carnal more than spiritual things. But not so did that daughter of Juda, who stretched forth her hands and cried to the Lord, Thou knowest thai they have borne false witness against me. She thought it better not to sin and to incur the calumnies of her accusers, than to commit sin under the veil of impunity. And by the contempt of death she preserved her innocence. Not so, either, the daughter of Jephthah, who by her own consent confirmed and even encouraged her father's vow concerning her own immolation.

34. For I will not produce the books of philosophers on the contempt of death, or the gymnosophists of the Indians, of whom the answer of Calanus 23 to Alexander, when he commanded him to follow him, is especially commended. 'To what praise' said he 'do you consider me entitled, that you require me to travel to Greece, if I can be compelled to do that to which my will consents not?' A reply truly full of dignity, and yet his mind was more full of liberty. He wrote

this letter also.

CALANUS TO ALEXANDER.

35. "Your friends persuade you to lay hands and even constraint on the Indian philosophers, not even in their dreams beholding our works. Our bodies you may remove from place to place, our souls you cannot compel to do what they do not will, no more than wood or stone to utter sounds. A great fire burns pain into living bodies and begets corruption; on this fire we are, for we are burning alive. There is neither king nor prince who can compel us to do what we have not determined to do. Nor are we like the philosophers of Greece, who have conceived words rather than realities, in order to give celebrity to their opinions; in our case realities are associated with words and words with realities; our acts are swift and our discourses short, we enjoy a delightful freedom in the exercise of virtue."

36 and 37. Excellent words, but still words; excellent constancy, but that of a man; excellent letter, but that of |247

a philosopher. But amongst us, even maidens through desire of death have mounted even up to heaven by the lofty steps of virtue. Why should I mention Thecla, Agnes, or Pelagia, who sprouting forth as noble tendrils 24 have

hastened to death as if to immortality? The virgin exulted among lions, and dauntlessly beheld the roaring beasts. And to compare our history with that of the Indian philosophers, what Calanus boasted in words holy Laurence proved by his acts, for he was burnt alive, and surviving the flames said, 'Turn me and eat me.' Nor did the youths of the race of Abraham²⁵ or the sons of the Maccabees strive less boldly; the former sung while in the midst of the flames, and the latter, during their punishment, asked not to be spared, but reproached their persecutor in order to enrage him more. The wise man therefore is free.

38. But what can be more sublime than holy Pelagia, who was surrounded

by persecutors, but before she came into their presence said; 'I die willingly, no man shall touch me, no one with wanton look shall defile my chastity, I will carry away with me my modesty, my honour untainted; these ruffians shall reap no profit from their insolence. Pelagia will follow Christ, no man shall deprive her of her liberty, no man shall see her free faith made captive, her illustrious chastity, her inheritance of wisdom. What is enslaved shall remain here, not amenable to any duty.' Great therefore is the freedom of that pious virgin, who encircled by her persecutors gave way not the least in the midst of these great dangers to her integrity and her life.

39. But he is not free over whom anger reigns, for he is subject to the yoke of sin; for an angry man diggeth out sin, and, Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. Neither is he free who is enslaved to avarice, for he cannot possess his vessel. Neither is he free who seeing his desires and pleasures, fluctuates in his devious course. He is not free who is bowed down by ambition, for he obeys the rule of another. But he is free who is able to say, All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient, all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meals for the belly, and the belly for [248 meats. He is free who says, For why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?

40. Liberty therefore belongs to the wise man not to the fool; for he who binds a stone in a sling is like him who giveth honour to a fool, for he wounds himself, and while brandishing his dart chiefly endangers his own body. Certainly as he is stung by the sling, and by the falling of the stone the evil is increased, so the fall of a fool when he is set at liberty is more rapid. Wherefore the power of a fool is rather to be retrenched than any new liberty added, for slavery is suitable for him. And therefore it is added, As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools. For as he is wounded by his cups, so is the fool by his deeds. The one by drinking

involves himself in sin, the other by acting subjects himself to censure, and by his deeds is drawn into bondage. Paul saw himself brought into captivity by the law of sin, and therefore, in order to be freed, he fled to the grace of liberty.

41. Fools then are not free, for it is said to them, Be ye not like to horse and mule, which have no understanding, whose mouths must be held with bit and bridle lest they fall upon thee. Great plagues remain for the ungodly; for they have need of these, in order that their folly may be restrained. It is good discipline which requires this, not severity. Further, he that spareth his rod hateth his son: for a man's own sins scourge him still more severely. For heavy is the weight of crime, heavy the scourges of sin; they are heavy as a sore burthen, they inflict wounds upon the soul, and make the ulcers of the mind to stink.

42. Wherefore let us lay aside this grievous burthen of slavery, let us renounce sensuality, and the evil delights which bind us with the bonds, as it were, of lusts, and fetter us with chains. For these delights profit not the fool, and whoever has given himself to them from his boyhood will abide in bondage; living he will be as dead. Let sensuality then be cut down, let evil delights be pruned away, and let him who has been wanton bid farewell to his former courses. For the vine which has been cut down bears fruit, that which has been partly pruned puts forth leaves, [249] that which has been neglected grows too luxuriantly. Therefore it is written, Like a field is the foolish man, and like a vineyard the man void of understanding; if you leave him alone, he will become desolate. Let us then tend this body of ours, let us chasten it, let us reduce it to subjection, let us not neglect it.

43. For our members are instruments of righteousness, they are also instruments of sin. If they are raised upwards, they are instruments of righteousness, that sin should not reign in them: if our body has died to

sin, transgression will not reign therein, and our members will be free from sin. Let us not therefore obey its lusts, nor yield our members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. If you have looked upon a woman to lust after her, your members are the instruments of sin. If you have spoken and solicited her, your tongue and your mouth are instruments of sin. If you have removed the landmarks which your fathers set up, your members are instruments of sin. If you have hasted with swift feet to shed the blood of the innocent, your members are instruments of sin.

44. On the other hand, if you have seen a poor man, and taken him into your house, your members are instruments of righteousness. If you have rescued one who was suffering wrong, or one who was being led to execution; if you have cancelled the bond of the debtor, your members are instruments of righteousness. If you have confessed Christ (for the lips of knowledge are the instruments of understanding,) your lips are the members of righteousness. He who can say, I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame, I was a father to the poor, his members are members of righteousness.

45. Being therefore set free from sin, and redeemed, as it were, at the price of the Blood of Christ, let us not be made subject to the bondage of men or of passion. Let us not blush to confess our sins. Behold how free he was who could say, I feared not the multitude of the people; that I should not confess my sin in the sight of all. For he that confesses his sin is released from servitude, and the just accuses himself in the beginning of his speech.

Not only the free

but the just man also; but justice is in liberty [250

and liberty in confession, for as soon as a man shall confess he is absolved.

Lastly, I said I will confess my sins unto the Lord, and so Thou

forgavest the wickedness of my sin. The delay of absolution depends on confessing, the remission of sins follows closely on confession. He therefore is wise who confesses; he is free whose sin is remitted, for he contracts now no

debt of guilt. Farewell: love me as indeed you do, for I also love you.

LETTER XXXVIII. [A.D.387.] In this Letter S. Ambrose continues the subject, maintaining that the truly wise man is not only free but rich also, illustrating his statements with instances from the Old Testament.

AMBROSE TO SIMPLICIAN, GREETING.

1. When we lately pointed out, taking our theme from the epistle of the Apostle Paul, that every wise man is free, we seemed to have fallen into philosophical discussion. But afterwards, in reading the epistle of the Apostle Peter, I perceived that every wise man is also rich: and this he says without distinction of sex, for he writes that all a woman's ornaments consist in a virtuous life, not in costly jewels, Whose adorning, he says, is not that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and, of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart.
2. Here then are two things, both that there is a man within the man, and that he is rich who seeks not for himself the enjoyment of any riches. And he has well said, the man of the heart, in that the whole man of wisdom is hidden, as is wisdom itself, which is not seen but understood. No one before Peter used such an expression as, the man of the heart; for the outward man consists of many members, but the inward man of the heart is entirely full of wisdom, full of grace, full of beauty. [251
3. In that, he says, which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. And he is truly rich, who can appear rich in the sight of God, in whose sight the earth is small, the world itself is narrow, but God considers him only to be rich who is rich for eternity, who lays up the fruit not of riches, but of virtues. And who is rich before God but that meek and quiet spirit which is never corrupted? Does not he appear to you to be rich, who possesses peace of mind and the tranquillity of rest? who desires nothing, is not tossed by the storms of lust; despises not old things, seeks not new, so as by his constant desire to become poor in the midst of riches?

4. That peace is truly rich, which passeth all understanding. Peace is rich, modesty is rich, faith is rich, for to the faithful the whole world is a possession. Simplicity is rich, for there are also the riches of simplicity; for she scrutinizes nothing, has no mean, no suspicious, no deceitful thoughts, but pours herself forth with pure affection.

5. Goodness too is rich, and if a man preserve it he is fed by the riches of the heavenly inheritance. To quote also the more ancient examples of Scripture, Happy, it is said, is the man whom God correcteth. Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty in famine He shall redeem thee from death, and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee, and thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace. For the vices of this flesh being subdued, and those passions which are wont to war against the soul, your tabernacle shall be undisturbed, your house without offence, your seed shall not fail, your posterity shall be as the smell of a fruitful field, your burial as the harvest. For while others are looking for theirs to fail, the heap of your corn will be carried ripe into the heavenly garners.

6. Fit it is that the righteous ever lendeth, while the wicked man is in want. He lendeth justice, he lendeth the commandments of God to the poor and needy; but the fool does not possess even that which he believes himself to possess. Do you suppose that he can be said to possess, [252] who brooding over his treasure night and day, is troubled by covetous and wretched anxiety? Such a one truly wants; although to others he appears rich, to himself he is poor, because he who is still grasping after more and desiring more uses not that which he possesses. For where there are no bounds to desire, what profit can there be in riches? No man is rich who cannot carry away with him that which he has, for that which is left behind, is not our own but

another's.

7. Enoch was rich who carried away with him that which he had, and laid up all the riches of his goodness in the heavenly treasure-house; he was taken away lest that wickedness should alter his understanding. Elias was rich, who riding in a chariot of fire carried the treasures of his virtues up to the heavenly mansions. Not small were the riches he left to his heir, and yet he himself did not lose them. Who would have called him poor even then, when being himself in need of the sustenance of daily food, he was sent to the widow that he might be nourished by her, when at his voice the heaven was shut and opened, when at his word the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil failed not for three years, but overflowed; when it was replenished not diminished by use? Who would call him poor at whose word there came fire down from heaven, whom the river impassible by others could not retard, retiring back to its source that the prophet might pass over dry-shod?

8. Ancient history tells us of two neighbours, king Ahab and the poor Naboth; which of these do we believe to be the richer, which the poorer? The one, endowed with the royal support of riches, insatiable and not to be replenished with wealth, coveted the little vineyard of the poor man; the other, despising in his mind the golden fortunes of kings, and imperial treasures, was content with his own vines. Does not he appear richer and more kingly, who was sufficient to himself, and controlled his own desires, coveting nothing that belonged to another? Does not he, on the other hand, appear most needy, in whose eyes his own gold was accounted vile, and another man's vine precious. But learn for what reason he was most needy: |253

because riches unjustly gotten are vomited up again, but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit, and flourishes like a palm-tree.

9. Is not he more needy than the poor man, who pass-eth away like a shadow? To-day the ungodly is in great power, to-morrow he is not, and his place can no more be found. But what is it to be rich, unless it be to abound? But who

abounds whose mind is contracted, and therefore straightened, and what abundance can there be in straits? He therefore is not rich who does not abound. Wherefore David says well, The rich lack and suffer hunger; for although they possessed the treasures of the Divine Scriptures, they still lacked in that they did not understand, and hungered in that they tasted not the food of spiritual grace.

10. Nothing can therefore be richer than the temper of the wise man, nothing poorer than that of the fool. For since the kingdom of God belongs to the poor, what can be richer? And therefore the Apostle says well, O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Well also David, who had as great delight in the way of the heavenly testimonies as in all manner of riches. And Moses says expressly, Naphtali, satisfied with favour. Now Naphtali means when translated, 'abundance' or 'increase.' So that to be satisfied and to abound go together, but where there is the hunger of desire and insatiable lust, there truly is poverty. But since scarcely any desire of money or of this world can be satisfied, it is added, full with blessing.

11. It is in accordance with these principles that the Apostle Peter has declared that the ornament of women consists not in gold and silver and apparel, but in the secret and hidden man of the heart. Wherefore let no woman put off the dress of piety, the ornament of grace, the inheritance of eternal life.

Farewell: love me, for I love you. [254 LETTER XXXIX. [A.D.387.]

S. Ambrose in this Letter seeks to rouse Faustinus from excessive grief for his sister's death, first on the ground of duty towards the children left to his care and protection, and then on the higher ground of submission to the Divine will, and realization of Christian hopes.

AMBROSE TO FAUSTINUS, GREETING.

1. I was well aware that you would grieve with bitter grief for the

death of your sister: still you should not go into banishment, but rather give yourself back to us, for although mourners are little inclined to receive consolation, it is sometimes necessary for them. But you have fled to the recesses of the mountains, and made your dwelling in the caves of wild beasts, laying aside all customary human converse and, what is worse, the use of your own reason.

2. Is it in accordance with your esteem for your sister, that human nature, which ought to be much regarded by you for producing a woman so excellent, should on her account be of less value in your eyes? In quitting this life it doubtless was a consolation to her to believe that she left you behind her as a parent to your nephews, a guardian of their tender years, a succour to their destitution; but you so utterly withhold yourself both from your nephews and from us, that we do not reap any benefit from what she thus found a ground of consolation. These dear pledges invite you not to grieve, but to comfort them, that in seeing you they may believe their mother to be still alive. In you then let them recognize her, in you let them enjoy her presence, in you think that she still survives to them.

3. But you grieve that she has been lately cut off in the flower of her age. This however is the common fate not only of men, but of states and countries themselves. Coming from Bononia ²⁵⁵ you left behind you Claterna, Bononia ²⁵⁵ itself, Matina, Rhegium; Brixillum was on your right, in front of you Placentia, by its very name still recalling its ancient lustre, on the left you saw with pity the wastes of the Apennines, you surveyed the fortresses of these once flourishing tribes, and remembered them with sorrowful affection. Do not then the carcasses of so many half-ruined cities, and states stretched on their bier beneath your eyes, do not these remind you that the decease of one woman, holy and excellent as she was, is much less deplorable, especially as these are for ever laid prostrate and destroyed, but she though removed from us for a while is passing a more blessed life elsewhere?

4. Wherefore I deem that you ought not so much to deplore her, as to offer for her your prayers; make her not sorrowful by your tears, rather commend her soul to God by oblations.

5. Perhaps however you will declare yourself to be secure of her merits and faith, you cannot endure the feeling of regret at seeing her no longer after the flesh, which is to you a better grief. And does not the Apostolic saying move you that henceforth we know no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. For our flesh cannot be perpetual and lasting, it must needs die that it may rise again, it must be dissolved that it may rest, and sin come to an end. We too have known many according to the flesh, but now we know them no more. We have known the Lord Jesus, says the Apostle, after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. For now He has put off the coil of the body, and is not seen in fashion as a Man, but has died for all and all are dead in Him, to the intent that being renewed by Him and quickened in the Spirit they may no longer live to themselves but to Christ. Wherefore the same Apostle also says elsewhere, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

6. And well indeed was it that he who had before known Christ after the flesh, who had before persecuted and oppressed with bitter hatred the disciples of the Man, and the attendants on His bodily presence, but who now recognized His invisible workings, discerning not His bodily presence [256] but His power,---well indeed was it that he became the teacher of the Gentiles, and began to instruct and prepare the worshippers of His Divinity to become preachers of the Gospel. Wherefore he added, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, that is, he that is perfect in Christ is a new creature, for all flesh is imperfect. And the Lord saith, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh. No carnal man then is in Christ, but if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, formed by newness not of nature but of grace. These old things which are according

to the flesh have past away, all things are made new. And what are they but the things which the scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven knows, like unto that householder, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old; neither old things without new, nor new things without old? Thus too the Church saith, things new and old have I laid up for Thee. For old things, that is, the hidden mysteries of the Law are passed away, all things are made new in Christ.

7. This is the new creature of which the Apostle writing to the Galatians saith, For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, already our flesh now renewed flourishes, and having before borne the thorns of inveterate sin hath now found the fruit of grace. Why then need we grieve, if we can now say to the soul, thy youth is renewed like the eagles? And why should we bewail the dead, now that by our Lord Jesus the world has been reconciled to the Father? Since then we hold the benefits which Christ hath given, we are to you as well as to all ambassadors in Christ's stead, that you may know His Gift to be irrevocable, that you may believe what you always have believed, and not bring your opinion into discredit by too much sorrow. For the Lord Jesus was made sin that He might take away the sin of the world, and we all might be made the righteousness of God in Him; now no longer subject to the penalty of sin, but sure of the reward of righteousness.

Farewell; love me, for I love you. [257 LETTER XL. [A.D.388.] In the year 388 A.D. the synagogue of the Jews at Callinicum in Mesopotamia was burnt by the Christians, at the instance, it was asserted, of the Bishop. Some monks also in the same district, having been insulted by some Valentinian heretics, while singing Psalms in procession on the Festival of the Maccabees, (Aug. 1st.) had burnt their conventicle. Theodosius had ordered that the Bishop should re-build the synagogue at his own cost, and that the monks should be punished, and the whole matter carefully sifted, and justice done. This Letter is written by S. Ambrose to remonstrate. He urges his plea with the boldest importunity, and, as he tells his sister in the following letter, Theodosius eventually yielded. TO THE MOST GRACIOUS PRINCE AND BLESSED EMPEROR HIS MAJESTY THEODOSIUS, BISHOP AMBROSE SENDS GREETING.

1. Nearly incessant are the cares which harass me, most excellent

Emperor, but never was I in such trouble as at present; for I see I must be on my guard against the danger even of a charge of sacrilege. Wherefore I beseech you patiently to hear my address. For if I am unworthy to be heard by you, I am unworthy to offer for you, or to have your vows and prayers intrusted to me. Will you not hear him whom you wish to be heard in your behalf? Will you not hear him pleading for himself whom you have heard when pleading for others? Will you not dread the consequences of your own judgment; and fear to render him unworthy to be heard in your behalf, by treating him as unworthy of a hearing from you.

2. But it is neither the part of an Emperor to deny liberty of speech, nor of a Bishop not to utter what he thinks. There is no quality more amiable and popular in an Emperor than to cherish freedom even in those who owe him military allegiance. For there is this difference between good and bad rulers, that the good love freedom, the bad slavery. And there is nothing in a Bishop so offensive in God's sight, or so base before men, as not freely to declare his opinions. For it is written, I spake of Thy testimonies also even before kings, and was not ashamed, and in another place, Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; with the intent, it proceeds, [258 that if the righteous man doth turn from his righteousness and commit iniquity, because thou hast not given him warning 27

that

is, hast not told him what to beware of, his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Nevertheless, if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou shalt deliver thy soul,

3. I prefer then, to have fellowship with your Majesty in good rather than in evil; and therefore the silence of a Bishop ought to be displeasing to your Clemency, and his freedom pleasing. For you will be implicated in the

danger of my silence, you will share in the benefits of my outspokenness. I am not then an officious meddler in matters beyond my province, an intruder in the concerns of others, but I comply with my duty, I obey the commandment of our God. This I do chiefly from love and regard to you, and from a wish to preserve your well-being. But if I am not believed, or am forbidden to act on this motive, then in truth I speak from fear of offending God. For if my own danger could deliver you, I would consent to be offered for you, though not willingly, for I would rather that without danger to myself you should be accepted and glorified by God. But if I am to suffer under the charge of silence and dissimulation without effecting your exculpation I had rather you should deem me too importunate than useless or mercenary. For it is written, in the words of the holy Apostle Paul, whose teaching you cannot gainsay, Be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

4. We then also have One Whom it is even more dangerous to displease; especially as even Emperors themselves are not offended with any man for fulfilling his function, but you patiently give ear to every one speaking concerning his own department, nay you reprove him for not acting in accordance with his line of duty. Can that then which you readily accept from your soldiers, seem to you offensive in a Bishop; seeing that we speak not according to our own wills, but as we are commanded? For you know that it is written, when ye shall be brought before [259] governors and kings take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which speaketh in you. Were it in civil causes that I had to speak, my not obtaining an audience would not give me such apprehension, although even then justice ought to be observed, but in God's cause whom will you hear, if you hear not the Bishop, at whose great peril it is that sin is committed? Who will dare to tell you the truth, if a Bishop does

not?

5. I know that you are pious, merciful, meek and gentle, having at heart the faith and fear of the Lord; but some failings oftentimes escape our notice. Some men have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, and we ought, I think, to beware lest this steal even over faithful souls. I know your piety towards God, your lenity towards men; I am myself indebted to your courtesy for many benefits. Wherefore I feel greater fear, and deeper solicitude lest even your own judgment should hereafter condemn me for having failed, through cowardice or flattery, in saving you from a fall. If I had seen you sin against myself, I ought not to have kept silence, for it is written, If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault; then rebuke him before two or three witnesses, and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church. Shall I then be silent in the cause of God? Now then let us consider what it is I have to apprehend.

6. The military Count of the East 28 reported that a synagogue had been burnt, and that this had been done at the instigation of the Bishop. You decided that the others should be punished, and that the synagogue should be rebuilt by the Bishop himself. I will not insist on the propriety of calling for the Bishop's own statement; for the clergy are wont to check disturbances and desirous of peace, |260 save when they are themselves moved by some offence against God or insult to the Church. But suppose this Bishop to have been too eager in setting fire to this synagogue, and now to grow timid before the judgment-seat, has your Majesty no fear, lest he should acquiesce in your sentence, no apprehension of his becoming apostate?

7. Do you not fear, what will certainly be the case, that he will meet your officer with a refusal; and so he will be obliged to make him either an apostate or a martyr, and both of these are adverse to your interests and savour of persecution, that he should be forced either to become an apostate or undergo

martyrdom. You see then whereunto this matter tends; if you think the Bishop firm, avoid driving his firmness to martyrdom; if you think him frail, shun exposing his frailty to a fall. For a heavy responsibility lies on him who has caused one who is weak to fall.

8. Under these circumstances I suppose that the Bishop will say that he himself kindled the fire, gathered the crowd, collected the people; so as not to lose an opportunity of martyrdom, and in place of the weak to offer up a bolder victim. O happy falsehood; obtaining for others acquittal, for himself Grace. This is my request also to your Majesty, that you would turn your vengeance upon me, and, if you consider this a crime, impute it to me. Why do you order the absent to be punished? you have the guilty person before you, you hear his confession, I openly affirm that I myself set the synagogue on fire, or at least, that I ordered others to do so; that there might be no place in which Christ is denied. And if it be objected, why did I not set it on fire in this very city? It began to be burnt, I reply, by the Divine judgment, my work was superseded. And to speak the truth, I was the less zealous because I expected no punishment. Why should I do that which being unavenged would also be unrewarded? These words are a shock to modesty, but they also bring back grace; they provide against the commission of that which may offend Almighty God.

9. But suppose that no one will cite the Bishop to do this; for this is what I have begged of your Clemency, and [261
though I have not yet read that the edict is revoked, I will nevertheless assume it to be so. But what if other more timid persons, from a fear of death offer to rebuild the synagogue from their own funds, or the Count, finding this previously ordained, should himself command it to be restored at the expense of the Christians? Your Majesty will then have an apostate Count, and you will entrust your victorious banner, your labarum, which is consecrated by the name of Christ, to one who is the restorer of the synagogue which knows not Christ. Command the labarum to be carried into the synagogue, and let us see if they do

not resist.

10. Shall then a building be raised for perfidious Jews out of the spoils of the Church, and shall that patrimony, which by Christ's mercy has been assigned to Christians, be transferred to the temples of the unbelieving? We read that temples were in former days erected from the spoils of the Cimbri and other enemies of Rome. Shall the Jews inscribe this title on the front of their synagogue: 'The temples of impiety built from the spoils of Christians?'

11. But the maintenance of discipline is perhaps what influences your Majesty. Is the show of discipline then weightier than the cause of religion? Police should give place to religion.

12. Has your Majesty never heard that when Julian commanded the temple at Jerusalem to be restored, they who cleared away the rubbish were destroyed by fire from heaven? Are you not afraid lest this should now happen? Surely you ought not to have commanded what Julian commanded.

13. But why are you thus moved? Is it generally because a public building has been burnt, or because it is a synagogue? If you are moved by the conflagration of the meanest edifice, (and what else could there have been in so obscure a town,) does not your Majesty remember how many prefects' houses have been burnt at Rome, and yet no man enacted vengeance for them? Nay, if any Emperor had desired to punish such an act severely, he would rather have injured the cause of those who had suffered so great a loss. Which then is the more fitting, that the partial burning of some houses at Callinicum 29, or the burning of the city of Rome should be punished, if indeed either of them ought to have been so. At Constantinople, a while ago, the Bishop's 30 house was burnt, and your Majesty's son interceded with you, that you would not avenge the wrong done to him, the youthful Emperor, nor the burning of the Bishop's palace. Your Majesty should consider, that, if you should in like manner command this act to be punished, he may again intercede to prevent it. The former boon however was

happily obtained from the father by the son, for it was only fitting that he should first remit the injury to himself. A good distribution of favour and well allotted it is, that the son should be petitioned for his own loss, and the father for the offence against his son. In this case there is nothing which you need keep back on your son's account, beware also lest you derogate ought from God.

14. There is then no adequate reason for any such commotion, that the people should be so severely punished for the burning of any building; much less seeing that it is a synagogue that has been burnt, a place of unbelief, a house of impiety, a receptacle of madness, which God Himself hath condemned. For thus we read what the Lord our God spake by the mouth of Jeremiah, Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by My Name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you, and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I wilt cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me, for I will not hear thee. Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah? God forbids him to intercede for those whom you think worthy of being avenged.

15. Were I pleading according to the law of nations, I should assuredly recount how many Churches the Jews burnt in the time of Julian's reign: two at Damascus, one [263 of which is but just repaired, and that at the expense, not of the synagogue, but of the Church, while the other is still a mass of shapeless ruins. Churches were likewise burnt at Gaza, Ascalon, Berytus, and nearly every town in that region, and yet no man asked for vengeance. At Alexandria too the most beautiful Church of all was burnt down by the Gentiles and Jews. The Church has not been avenged, shall then the synagogue be?

16. And shall the burning of the temple of the Valentinians likewise be punished? For what but a temple is the place where Gentiles assemble? The Gentiles indeed reckon twelve gods, the Valentinians worship thirty two Aeons 31,

whom they call gods. Concerning these I am informed that they have called for punishment upon some monks. For the Valentinians having endeavoured to stop them as they were going in procession according to ancient custom, chanting psalms, to celebrate the festival of the Maccabees, the monks exasperated by this affront, set fire to one of their rudely constructed temples in some country village.

17. How many have to offer themselves to this choice, remembering that in Julian's time he who threw down the altar and disturbed the sacrifice was condemned by the judge, and suffered martyrdom. And accordingly the judge who tried him was never considered other than a persecutor, no man would associate with him, no man deemed him worthy of a kiss of greeting. Were he not now dead, I should fear your Majesty's taking vengeance upon him. Nevertheless he escaped not the Divine vengeance, but saw his son die before him.

18. But it is reported that the judge was ordered to take cognizance of the matter, and was informed that he ought not to have reported upon it, but to have punished it, that the offerings which had been taken away were to be demanded back. Other particulars I will omit; but when the Jews burnt our Churches, nothing was restored, nothing demanded, nothing sought for. But what could the synagogue possess in that distant place, when everything in it was but of little value, nothing precious or abundant. |264

In short of what could a fire deprive the treacherous Jews? These are devices of the Jews who wish to accuse us falsely, that through their representations an extraordinary military tribunal may be appointed, and an officer sent, who perhaps will say what one said here before your accession, 'How shall Christ help us, when we fight for the Jews against Christ? when we are sent to take vengeance on their behalf? They have lost their own armies, and they wish to destroy ours.'

19. Nay, what are the calumnies into which they will not rush, who by false witnesses have slandered Christ Himself? who are false even in matters

relating to God? Whom will they not charge with the guilt of this sedition? whom will they not thirst after, even though they know them not? They desire to see rank after rank of Christians in chains, to see the necks of the faithful placed under the yoke, the servants of God hidden in darkness, smitten with the axe, delivered to the fire, or sent to the mines, that their pains may be slow and lingering.

20. Will your Majesty give this triumph to the Jews over the Church of God? this victory over the people of Christ, this joy to the unbelievers, this felicity to the Synagogue, this grief to the Church? They will place this solemnity among their feast-days; numbering it among those wherein they triumphed over the Ammonites, or Canaanites, or over Pharaoh king of Egypt, or which delivered them from the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. This festival they will add in memory of the triumph they have gained over Christ's people.

21. Although they refuse to be bound by Roman laws, deeming them even criminal, they now pretend to claim vengeance according to those laws. Where were those laws, when they burnt the roofs of the consecrated Basilicas? If Julian avenged not the Church because he was an Apostate, will your Majesty, being a Christian, avenge the injury done to the Synagogue?

22. And what will Christ hereafter say to you? Do you not remember what he said to holy David by the prophet Nathan? 'I have chosen thee the youngest of thy brethren, and from private life have made thee Emperor. [265

I have placed thy offspring upon the Imperial throne. I have put barbarous nations under thy feet, I have given thee peace, I have delivered thine enemy captive into thy hands. Thou hadst no corn to support thy army, I opened to thee the enemies' gates, the enemies' granaries, by their own hand; they gave thee the very stores which they had provided for themselves. I confounded the counsels of thy enemy, so that he laid bare his own plans. The very usurper of thy empire I so bound, and so fettered his mind, that although he had the means

of flying from you he shut himself in with all his followers, as if fearing lest any should escape you. His lieutenant³² and his forces on the other element, whom I had before dispersed to prevent their combining to make war on thee, I now called together again to render thy victory complete. Thy army, an assemblage of many fierce nations, I caused to keep faith and peace and concord, as if they had been one nation. And when there was imminent danger lest the perfidious plots of the barbarians should penetrate the Alps, I gave thee victory within the very barrier of the Alps, that thy victory might be without loss. Thus I made thee to triumph over thy enemy, and thou art giving my enemies a triumph over my people.'

23. Was it not the very reason why Maximus was abandoned, that before he set out on his expedition, hearing that a synagogue had been burnt at Rome, he sent an edict thither, acting as if he were the guardian of public order. Wherefore the Christians said, No good awaits this man. That king is become a Jew, and we have heard of him as a protector of order, but Christ, who died for sinners, shortly after put him to the proof³³. And if this was said of words only, what will be said of actual punishment? So he was soon defeated by the Franks and by the Saxons, in Sicily, at Siscia ³⁴, at Petavio, and in every ²⁶⁶ quarter of the globe. What has a devout man in common with an unbeliever? The precedents of his impiety ought to be obliterated together with the impious man himself. That which injured the vanquished, that at which he stumbled, the victor ought to condemn, not to imitate.

24. Now I have recounted these things to you not as though you were ungrateful; rather I have spoken of them as being rightly bestowed, that reminded thereby you may love much, as being one on whom much has been bestowed. To Simon's answer our Lord thus replied, Thou hast rightly judged; and then, turning straightway to the woman who had anointed His feet with ointment, and was the type of the Church, He said to Simon, Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much: but to whom little

is forgiven, the same loveth little. This is that woman who entered the house of the Pharisee, and cast out the Jew, but gained Christ. For the Church shut out the Synagogue, and why is it now attempted, that, with the servant of Christ, that is, from the breast of faith, and abode of Christ, the Synagogue should shut out the Church.

25. It is from affection and regard for your Majesty, that I have introduced these things into my pleading. The beneficence which has led you, at my request, to liberate many persons from exile, from prison, from the extreme penalties of death, obliges me to incur the danger of offending you for the sake of your own good, rather than lose in one moment that privilege of every Bishop which I have for so long possessed. For no man can feel greater confidence than he who zealously loves, no man certainly ought to injure him who is careful for his well-being. And yet it is not the loss of favour I deprecate, but the danger to salvation.

26. Yet how important it is that your Majesty should not think of enquiry or punishment in a matter with regard to which no one up to this time has ever held enquiry or inflicted punishment! It is a grievous thing to hazard your faith for the sake of Jews. When Gideon killed the consecrated calf, the Gentiles 35 said, Let the gods [267 themselves avenge this affront towards them. Who is to avenge the Synagogue?

Christ Whom they slew, Whom they denied? Or will God the Father avenge them, seeing that by rejecting the Son they have rejected the Father also. Who is to avenge the heresy of the Valentinians? how will your Piety be able to avenge them, seeing that you have commanded them to be shut out, and forbidden them to meet together? And should I bring forward to you the example of King Josiah as approved of God, will you condemn in this case that for which he is praised.

27. But if you do not place sufficient confidence in me, let your Majesty command the presence of those bishops whom you do approve, and let the question be discussed, what ought to be done so as not to injure the Faith. If

in financial matters you consult your Courts, how much more fitting is it that in the cause of religion you should consult the Bishops of the Lord?

28. Let your Clemency consider what dangerous spies and liars in wait the Church has against her, if they find ever so small an opening they will plant a dart therein. I speak after the manner of men; but God is feared more than men, and is rightly preferred to Emperors themselves. If any man thinks obedience should be paid to a friend, a parent, or a neighbour, am I wrong in deeming that God should be obeyed, and that in preference to all others. Let your Majesty consult for your own well-being, or suffer me to consult for mine.

29. What shall I hereafter answer, if it shall appear that by an edict issued from hence Christians have been slain by the sword, or beaten to death with clubs or thongs loaded with lead? How shall I justify such an act, how shall I excuse it to those Bishops who having discharged the office of the priesthood for thirty years, nay for many more, have now bitterly to bewail, being deprived of their sacred functions and called to undertake municipal offices. If 36 those who fight for you are set free after a certain period of service, how much more ought you to consider those |268 who fight for God! How I repeat, shall I defend this to the Bishops who complain in behalf of the clergy, and write word that the Churches are overborne by violent oppression.

30. This however I desired should be made known to your Majesty; about this you will deign to deliberate and direct according to your will; but as to that which distresses and rightly distresses myself, exclude and reject it from your consideration. You do yourself whatsoever you have commanded to be done; even if he 37 do it not, I would rather that you should be merciful than that he should refuse to do what he has been commanded.

31. Here are persons in dealing with whom you ought still to invite and earn the Clemency of God towards the Roman empire; here are persons for whom rather than for yourself you have to hope; let their grace, their well-being,

appeal to you in what I now say. I fear your entrusting your cause to the judgement of others. As yet you are committed to nothing. Herein I will pledge myself for you to our God, fear not your oath. That change cannot be displeasing to God which is made for His honour. You have no need to alter your former letter whether it be yet dispatched or not, but command another to be written which shall be replete with faith and piety. It is open to you to change, it is not open to me to keep back the truth.

32. You have forgiven the people of Antioch 38

their offence

against you, you have recalled the daughters of your enemy 39, you have committed them to be nurtured by their relative, you have bestowed money from your treasury on the mother of your enemy. This great piety, this great faith towards God will be obscured by your present act. Having thus spared your armed foes, and preserved your enemies, do not, I beseech you, so eagerly seek for vengeance upon Christians. [269

33. And now I entreat your Majesty not to disdain to listen to my fears both for yourself and myself; for it is the saying of an holy man, Woe is me, wherefore was I born to see this misery of my people? is it that I should incur the risk of offending God? Assuredly I have done what is most respectful to you: I have sought that you should listen to me in the palace, that you might not have to listen to me in the Church.

[Footnotes moved to the end and numbered]

1. a The English Version has 'The partridge sitteth on eggs and hatcheth them not.' S. Ambrose is referring to § 11 of the preceding Letter, where he applies the text to Satan. He makes the same application of it in Letter xlvii. 14.

2. 1 perdendo.

3. 2 contrarius.

4. 3 iudicio.

5. 1 iudicio.

6. 2 iudicium

7. b 'Cornici oculum effodere' was a familiar Latin proverb for overcoming craft with craft. See Cic. pro Mur. 11, pro Flacco, 20.

8. 1 primitivus.

9. 2 primogenitus.

10. a Horontianus appears to have been, like Irenaeus, a pupil of S.

Ambrose, and to have been ordained by him, and to have been, as the Benedictine Editors say, 'In clericorum contubernio educatus ab infantia.'

Nothing more is known of him. See Letter lxx. 25.

11. 1 e0ntele/xeia.

12. 1 propria corporis.

13. 2 Sun, E. V. Sol, Vulg.

14. 1 primitias.

15. 2 primogenita.

16. a The difference in the original is only the punctuation; in the first case, 'Natu quod videt quis quid, et sperat:' in the second, 'Nam quod videt quis, quid et sperat? ' 17. a S. Ambrose is evidently referring to his mission to Maximus, and the persecution of Justina.

18. b There is another reading of several MSS., 'et ille profecto gemitus,' which seems to offer a better sense, 'and that groaning is indeed truly unutterable, etc' 19. 1 Canaan E.V.

20. a The Vulgate has, 'Trahitur autem sapientia de occultis.' The B.

V. is, 'The price of wisdom is above rubies.'

21. b This is referred by the Benedictine Editors to Prov. xxii. 7.

but it does not agree with either the Sept. or Vulgate.

22. c tou~ pneu&matoj is inserted in a few MSS, and Spirit us is in the Vulgate.

23. a The story of Calanus and Alexander is related in Arian vii.2. It is also more briefly alluded to by Putarch. Alex. 65. Neither writer mentions this letter.

24. 1 vibulamina. Gr. mosxeu&mata.

25. 2 i. e. the three children in the furnace.

26. a S. Ambrose is here imitating the consolation offered by
Ser. Sulpicius to Cicero on the death of his daughter. See Up. ad Div. iv, 5, 4.

27. 1 distinxisti ei

28. a 'Oriens' or 'the East' was the title of the great civil
'diocese' which included Syria, Palestine, Cilicia, Cyprus, Mesopotamia, and
some adjacent districts, and corresponded to the Patriarchate of Antioch in the
ecclesiastical division. It was originally under one chief called 'Comes
orientis,' but it would appear from this passage, as is asserted by Gothofred, that the
civil and military functions had been divided, and there were now two officers,
'Comes orientis militarium partium,' and 'Comes orientis civilium partium.' The
subject is somewhat obscure.

29. b Callinicum was in Osroene, a name given to the north-western
part of Mesopotamia.

30. c Socrates, B v. ch. 13., mentions that Nectarius' house was burnt by the Arian party in the
same year in which
this letter was written.

31. d See a note in Newman's Fleury, p. 160.

32. e Andragathius, who commanded a fleet in Maximus' interest
expecting Theodosius to come to Italy by sea.

33. f The Benedictine editors say 'tota luce pericope in uno Cod. Reg.
desideratur: forte non male.' It is difficult to elicit any sense from it.

34. g Siscia, now Sissek, was a large town in upper Pannonia,
on the south bank of the Save. Petavio, now Pettau, was on the Drave. It seems likely that
'in Sicilia' should be omitted, as being only a false meaning for 'Sciscia.'
There is no mention of Sicily being in any way connected with the war. But see
Tillemont, Theod. art. xlv.

35. h S. Ambrose is quoting from memory and slightly varies the facts
from the narrative in book of Judges.

36. i See a learned note in Newman's *Fleury* vol. 1 p. 162, on the exemption of the Clergy from municipal offices, compare also letter xviii. 14, and the note there.

37. k i. e. the Count of the East.

38. l This refers to the famous sedition at Antioch, when the mob, enraged at the imposition of new taxes, overthrew the Emperor's statues, and dragged them through the city. After a period of suspense, during which S. Chrysostom preached the Homilies on the Statues, Theodosius, who had at first been violently enraged, sent them a free pardon. This was in the previous year.

39. m i. e. of Maximus. This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2004. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely.

Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SP Ionic font, free from here.

Early Church Fathers - Additional Texts

Letters - Letters 41-50

St. Ambrose of Milan, Letters (1881). pp. 269-324. Letters 41-50.

- Letter 41: To his sister
- The Letter of Pope Siricius to the church of Milan
- Letter 42: The Council of Milan to Pope Siricius
- Letter 43: To Horontianus
- Letter 44: To Horontianus
- Letter 45: To Sabinus
- Letter 46: To Sabinus
- Letter 47: To Sabinus
- Letter 48: To Sabinus
- Letter 49: To Sabinus
- Letter 50: To Chromatius

LETTER XLI. [A.D.388.] In this Letter to his sister S. Ambrose relates the sequel of the affair referred to in the preceding one. That Letter failed to produce the effect which he had hoped for, and so he was driven to fulfil the threat with which he had ended it, and 'make the Emperor listen to him in the Church.' He gives his sister a full account of the sermon which he preached before the Emperor, and how he insisted on a promise that the matter should be quashed altogether, before he would celebrate the Eucharist, and how the Emperor at last gave way, and so all ended as he had wished. THE BROTHER TO HIS SISTER.

1. You have kindly written me word, holy sister, that you are still anxious about me, because I told you of my own anxiety; this makes me wonder that you have not received the letter, in which I told you that tranquillity had been restored to me. Complaints had been made that a synagogue of the Jews had been burnt by the Christians, at the instigation of their Bishop, and also a conventicle of the Valentinians; and while I was at Aquileia a decree was issued that the synagogue should be rebuilt by the Bishop, and that the monks who had set fire to this building of the Valentinians should be punished. Wherefore, when I found that my personal endeavours were of little avail, I wrote and despatched a letter to the Emperor, and on his going to the Church, I delivered this discourse.

2. In the book of the Prophet it is written, Take to thyself the rod of an almond tree; and with what intent the Lord said this to the prophet we ought to consider, for it

[270 was not written without a purpose, and we also read in the Pentateuch that the rod of Aaron the priest, budded after being long laid up. Now the rod seems to signify that prophetic or sacerdotal authority ought to be unswerving, and to exhort rather to what is useful than to what is pleasing.

3. And the reason why the prophet is bidden to take the rod of an almond is this, that the fruit of this tree has a bitter rind and hard shell, while its inside is juicy, and so in like manner the prophet should hold out what is hard and bitter, and not shrink from declaring painful things. So too with the priest: his teaching may seem bitter for a time to some, and, like Aaron's rod, may for a long while be laid up in the ears of dissemblers, yet afterwards, when it is thought to have withered, it puts forth buds.

4. Hence the Apostle says, What will ye, shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness. First he speaks of a rod, and as with the rod of an almond tree had smitten the wanderers, that he might afterwards comfort them with the spirit of meekness. Just so did meekness restore the man whom the rod had driven from the Divine sacraments. To his disciple too he gave the same injunctions, Reprove, beseech, rebuke. Here are two harsh terms and one gentle; but they are only harsh, that they may themselves be softened. For like as bitter food or drink becomes sweet to these bodies which are laden with excess of gall, and on the other hand sweet repasts are bitter to them, so also when the mind is wounded it languishes under the flattering touch of pleasure, but is healed again by the bitterness of correction.

5. Thus much let it suffice to have gathered from the lesson from the Prophets, let us next consider what that from the Gospel would teach us: And one of the Pharisees desired the Lord Jesus that He would eat with him; and He went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman in the city, which teas a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meal in the Pharisee's house brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping. And then the passage was recited as far as the words, Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.

[271 How simple, I added, are the words of this Gospel lesson, how profound its counsels! Wherefore, seeing that it is spoken by the great Counsellor, let us consider its depth.

6. Our Lord Jesus Christ believed that kindness has a greater power of constraining and inciting men to do what is right than fear; and that love avails more for correction than terror. And so, when He came on earth by the Virgin's womb, He first sent His free grace, forgiving our sins in baptism to make us more grateful to Him. Then if we will repay Him with such services as befit grateful men, He has declared by this example that He will give fresh gifts of grace to every man. Had He only remitted to us our first debt, He would have seemed cautious rather than merciful, more heedful of our amendment than munificent in His rewards. To allure is merely the cunning of a narrow mind, but it is befitting to God that those whom He has invited by grace He should lead forward by the increase of that grace. And so He first bestows on us His gifts in baptism, and afterwards if we serve him faithfully gives more abundantly. And so the benefits of Christ are both the incentives and the rewards of virtue.

7. Let no man be alarmed at the word creditor. We were indeed under an unforgiving creditor, who could not be satisfied by anything less than the death of his debtor; then the Lord Jesus came and found us burthened with a heavy debt. This debt no man could satisfy by his natural

innocence; I had nothing of my own wherewith to purchase my freedom, and therefore He bestowed on me a new kind of acquittance; He made me debtor to Himself, seeing I had no means of discharging my debt. Now we became debtors not by nature but by our own fault; by our sins we contracted heavy debts, so that we who were free came under a bond; for he is a debtor who has received of his creditor's money. Now sin is from the devil, this is the money which belongs to the wicked one as his patrimony; for as virtues are the treasure of Christ, so crimes are the riches of the devil. He had brought the human race under the perpetual slavery of an inherited liability by that heavy debt which our improvident ancestor transmitted by inheritance to his posterity. But then the Lord Jesus came,

[272 He gave His life for the life of all, and shed His blood for the blood of all.

8. Thus we have changed our creditor, not discharged our debt, nay we may even say we have discharged it, for although it remains, our bond is cancelled, the Lord Jesus having said to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves; your sins therefore are forgiven. Thus He has forgiven all, nor is there any one to whom He has not shewn mercy. For so it is written, that He has

forgiven all trespasses; blotting out the hand-writing of the ordinances that was against us. Why then do we hold the bonds of others? why would we exact our claims from others when we have obtained remission of our own? He Who has shewn mercy to all requires of each of us that what he remembers to have been remitted to himself he should himself remit to others.

9. Beware lest you begin to incur heavier blame as a creditor than you did as a debtor; as that servant in the Gospel to whom his Lord forgave all his debt began to exact from his fellow servant what he himself had not paid; wherefore his Lord was wroth, and exacted from him with the greatest severity what he had before remitted to him. Let us beware therefore lest the same evil befall us, lest by not remitting our debts we also be called on to pay what had been forgiven us, for so it is written in the words of the Lord Jesus, So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. Let us then forgive small things to whom great have been forgiven, and understand that the more we forgive the more acceptable we shall be to God, for we are so much the more acceptable to God the more we have been forgiven.

10. Further, when the Pharisee was asked by our Lord, Which of them loved him most, he answered, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. Whereupon the Lord said, Thou hast rightly judged. The Pharisees judgment is praised, but his affection is blamed. Of others he judges correctly, but what he believes of others, he does not believe in his own case. Thus you hear the Jew praising the discipline of the Church, praising its true graces,

[273 honouring its priests; but when you exhort him to believe he refuses to do so, and thus follows not himself what he praises in us. His eulogy then is not complete, though Christ has said to him, Thou hast rightly judged, for Cain also offered rightly, but did not divide rightly, wherefore God said unto him, If thou offer rightly, but divide not rightly, thou hast sinned; be still. And so this man offered rightly, because he judges that Christ, having forgiven Christians many sins, ought to be more earnestly loved by them; but he has not divided rightly, because he believes that He Who remitted the sins of men could possibly be ignorant of them.

11. And therefore He says to Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet, but she hath washed My feet with tears. We are all one body of Christ, the Head is God, and we are the members: some perhaps as the Prophets, may be the eyes; others the teeth, as the Apostles, who have filled our hearts with the food of the Evangelical preaching, and of whom it is written, His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. They are His hands who perform good works: His belly are they who bestow the strength of nourishment on the poor: Some too are His feet also, and would that I might be counted worthy to be even His heel. He then who pardons the very lowest their sins, pours water on the feet of Christ, and Avhile he frees only the mean, yet washes the feet of Christ Himself.

12. He also pours water on the feet of Christ who cleanses his conscience from the pollution of sin; for Christ walks in the breast of each of us. Beware then lest your conscience be defiled, or you thus begin to stain the feet of Christ. Beware lest He encounter the thorn of wickedness within you, whereby His heel as He walks in you may be wounded. The reason why the Pharisee did not pour water on the feet of Christ was because his soul was not clean from the stain of wickedness. How could he cleanse his conscience, who had not received that water which Christ gives? But the Church has that water, and the Church has tears, the waters of Baptism and the tears of penitence. For faith, which mourns for former sins, is also wont to

|274 avoid fresh ones, wherefore Simon the Pharisee as he had no water so neither had he tears. For how could he have them, who did no penance? but as he believed not in Christ so neither had he tears. Had he had them, he would have washed his eyes that he might see Christ, Whom as yet, when he first sat down, he saw not. For had he seen Him, he would not have doubted of His power.

13. Nor had the Pharisee hair, in that he knew not the Nazarite; but the Church had hair, and she sought for the Nazarite. Hairs are considered a superfluous part of the body, but if they are anointed they send forth a good smell, and are an ornament to the head, but if not anointed with oil they grow heavy. So likewise riches are a burthen, if you know not how to use them, if you sprinkle them not with the odours of Christ. But if you feed the poor, if you wash and cleanse their filth, their wounds, you have truly wiped the feet of Christ.

14. Thou gavest Me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. A kiss is the sign of love. But how could the Jew possess this, who knew not peace, who received not peace from Christ when He

said, Peace I have with you, My peace I give unto you? This kiss belongs then not to the Synagogue but to the Church, to her who looked for Him, who loved Him, who said, Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth. For the ardour of that lingering desire, which had grown with waiting for the Lord's coming, she sought slowly to quench by His kiss, and to satisfy her thirst by this gift. Wherefore the holy Prophet says, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall shew Thy praise. He then who praises the Lord Jesus kisses Him; and he who praises surely believes in Him. Thus David Himself says, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; and before, Let my mouth be

filled with Thy praise, and let me sing of Thy glory.

15. Concerning the gift of special grace the same Scripture also teaches thee that he who receives the Spirit kisses Christ, for the holy Prophet says, I opened my mouth, and drew in the spirit 1.

He then kisses Christ, who confesses Him; For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. He

|275 kisses the feet of Christ, who, reading the Gospel, recognizes the acts of the Lord Jesus, and admires them with pious affection; thus religiously kissing, as it were, the Lord's steps as He walks. We kiss Christ then with the kiss of Communion; Whoso readeth let him understand.

16. But how can the Jew have this kiss? For as he believed not in His Advent, so neither did he believe in His Passion, for how can that man believe that He suffered, who believes not that He came? Hence the Pharisee had no kiss save haply that of the traitor Judas. But neither had Judas this kiss, and therefore when he would have shewn to the Jews that kiss which was the concerted sign of his betrayal, the Lord says to him: Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? that is, 'Thou offerest a kiss, though thou hast not the love that the kiss should express, thou offerest a kiss who art ignorant of the mystical meaning² of the kiss.' What is required is not the kiss of the lips, but of the heart and mind.

17. But you will say that he kissed the Lord. True it is he kissed Him with his lips, and this kiss the Jewish people has, wherefore it is said, This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Wherefore he has not the kiss who has not faith and charity; for by a kiss is conveyed the force of love. Where love is not, nor faith, nor charity, how can there be any sweetness in kisses?

19. Now the Church ceases not to kiss the feet of Christ, and therefore in the Song of songs she asks not for one but many kisses; like holy Mary she is attentive to all His discourses, she receives all His words, when the Gospel is read, or the Prophets; she keeps all His sayings in her heart. The Church, alone, then, as being the spouse, has kisses, for a kiss is, as it were, the pledge of marriage and the privilege of wedlock. How can the Jew have kisses who believes not in the Spouse, who knows not that He is already come?

19. Nor is it kisses alone that he lacks, but oil also, wherewith to anoint the feet of Christ, for if he had had oil he would before now have bowed down his neck. For Moses says, It is a stiff-necked people; and the Lord says

|276 that the priest and levite passed by on the other side, nor did either of these pour oil and wine into the wounds of him who had been wounded by robbers; had they possessed this oil they would have poured it into their own wounds. But Isaiah says, They cannot apply ointment nor oil nor bandage.

20. But the Church has oil wherewith she dresses the wounds of her children, that the hardness of the wound may not sink inwards; she has oil, which she has received secretly. With this oil Asher has washed his feet, as it is written, A blessed son is Asher; and he shall be acceptable to his brethren, dip Ms foot in oil. With this oil therefore the Church anoints the necks of her children, that they may receive the yoke of Christ; with this oil she has anointed the martyrs to purify them from the dust of this world; with this oil she has anointed confessors, that so they might not yield to

labour, or sink down through weariness, or be overwhelmed by the waves of this world; it is for the purpose of refreshing them with spiritual oil that she has thus anointed them.

21. The Synagogue possesses not this oil, for she hath not the olive, she did not recognize that dove which brought back the olive branch after the deluge. This same dove afterwards descended, when Christ was being baptized, and abode upon Him, as John testifies in the Gospel, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. But how could he see the dove, who saw Him not upon whom the Spirit descended as a dove?

22. So then the Church both washes the feet of Christ, and wipes them with her hair, and anoints them with oil, and pours ointment upon them, in that she not only tends the wounded and comforts the weary, but also sprinkles over them the sweet odours of grace. Nor is it upon the rich and powerful only that she sheds this grace, but on men of low birth also, she weighs all in an equal balance, she receives all in the same bosom, and cherishes them in the same lap.

23. Christ died once, and was buried once, nevertheless He daily desires that ointment should be poured upon His

[277 feet. Now what are these feet of Christ whereon we pour ointment? The feet of Christ are they of whom He saith Himself, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. These feet that woman in the Gospel tends³, and washes with her tears, when the lowest have their sins remitted, their faults washed away, their pardon granted. These feet he kisses who loves even the lowest of the holy congregation. These feet he anoints with ointment, who imparts even to the weaker brethren the graces of His meekness. In these the martyrs, in these the Apostles, in these the Lord Jesus Himself declares that He is honoured.

24. Thou seest what instruction the Lord imparts, how by His example He stimulates thee to devotion; for He instructs by His censure. And He thus accuses the Jews,

O My people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against Me. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants;

adding, and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Remember what Balak devised against thee, he, that is, who sought the aid of enchantments, but I suffered him not to hurt thee. Truly thou wert oppressed while sojourning in foreign lands, thou wert laden with heavy burthens: I sent Moses Aaron and Miriam before thy face, and he who had spoiled the strangers was himself despoiled. Thou, who hadst lost thine own goods gainedst others, thou wert delivered from the enemies that surrounded thee, and in the midst of the waters thou sawest in safety the death of thine enemies, for the same wave which had separated and carried thee forward flowed back again and drowned the Egyptians. When thou wert in want of food while journeying through the wilderness, did I not rain bread from heaven for thee, and scatter food around thee, whereon thou wentest? Did I not subdue all thy enemies and bring thee into the region of the cluster of grapes? Did I not deliver up to thee Sihon (which means 'proud') king of the Amorites (that is, chief of them that provoked thee); did I not also deliver to thee alive the king of Ai, whom, subject to the sentence of the ancient curse, thou nailedst to the wood and hangedst upon a tree? What shall I say

[278 of the slaughter of the hosts of the five kings, who strove to exclude thee from the promised land? And what doth the Lord require of thee, o man, for all these things, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

25. And to king David himself, that meek and holy man, what was His expostulation by the prophet Nathan? I chose thee, He says, the youngest among thy brethren; I filled thee with the spirit of meekness; by the hand of Samuel, in whom was My Spirit and My Name, I anointed thee king. And from an exile I made thee a conqueror, taking out of the way that former king whom an evil spirit instigated to persecute the priests of the Lord. Upon thy throne I set one of thy seed not so much as an heir as a colleague. I made even strangers subject to thee, that they who resisted might serve thee, and wilt thou deliver My servants into the hands of My enemies, wilt thou take away that which was My servant's, whereby both thou wilt be branded with sin, and My adversaries will have whereof to glory?

26. Seeing therefore, O Emperor, (for I will now not only discourse of you but address myself to you) how severe the Lord's censures are wont to be, you must take care, in proportion as you become more illustrious, to submit so much the more humbly to your Maker. For it is written: When the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into a foreign land, and thou shalt eat the fruits of others, say not, 'By my own strength and righteousness I obtained these things,' but, 'The Lord God gave them to me, Christ in His mercy conferred them on me,' and therefore by loving His body, that is, the Church, pour water on His feet and kiss His feet; thus shalt thou not only absolve those who have been taken in sin, but in giving to them peace you will bring them into concord and restore to them rest. Pour ointment on His feet, that the whole house wherein Christ sits at meat may be filled with the odour of thy ointment, and let all who sit at meat with Him rejoice in thy fragrance; that is to say, pay such regard even to the lowest, that in their absolution the Angels may rejoice, as they do over one sinner that repenteth, the Apostles may be glad,

[279 the Prophets may exult. For the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee, nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Since therefore each member is necessary, do thou protect the whole body of the Lord Jesus, that He also of His divine mercy may protect thy kingdom.

27. On my coming down he says to me, 'You have been preaching at me to-day.' I replied that in my discourse I had his benefit in view. He then said, 'It is true, I did make too harsh a decree concerning the reparation of the synagogue by the Bishop, but this has been rectified. As for the monks, they commit many crimes.' Then Timasius, one of the Generals-in-chief

4, began to be very vehement against the monks. I replied to him, 'With the Emperor I deal as is fitting, because I know that he fears God, but with you, who speak so rudely, I shall deal differently.'

28. After standing for some time, I said to the Emperor, 'Enable me to offer for you with a safe conscience, set my mind at rest.' The Emperor sat still, and nodded, but did not promise in plain words; then, seeing that I still remained standing, he said that he would amend the order. I said at once that he must quash the whole enquiry, for fear the Count 5 should make it an opportunity for inflicting wrong on the Christians. He promised that it should be done. I said to him, 'I act on your promise,' and repeated the words again. 'Do so' said he. Then I went to the altar; but I would not

have gone, if he had not given me his distinct promise. And indeed so great was the grace attending the oblation, that I myself was sensible that this favour he had granted was very acceptable to our God, and that the divine Presence had not been withheld. Then all was done as I wished. [280 THE LETTER OF POPE SIRICIUS TO THE CHURCH OF MILAN. [A.D.389.] The Letter of Siricius was addressed to the Church of Milan to inform them of the sentence of excommunication passed against Jovinian and his followers. Jovinian had been a monk, but had abandoned the ascetic life and rushed into extremes of self-indulgence: there is a good description of him in Tillemont, (Vie de S. Ambr. 63, 61,) who calls him 'cet Epicure des Chretiens.' The false doctrines with which he 'barked at the true doctrines of the Church' are stated in this Letter and in the reply of the Synod of the Church of Milan which follows. Jovinian was answered by S. Jerome, who writes against him with much vehemence.

SIRICIUS TO THE CHURCH OF MILAN.

1. I would fain always, beloved brethren, send you tidings of joys, sincere as you are in love and peace, so that by means of the mutual interchange of letters we might be pleased by the tidings of your welfare

6. Our ancient Adversary however 7

does not suffer us to be free from his attacks, he who is a liar from the beginning, the enemy of truth, envious of man, in order to deceive whom he first deceived himself, the adversary of chastity, the teacher of sensuality, who is fed by cruelty, punished by abstinence, who hates fasts, asserting, as his followers also give out, that they are superfluous, having no hope of things to come, obnoxious to the censure of the Apostle, Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die.

2. O miserable boldness, O craft of a desperate mind! Already was this unknown language of heresy spreading through the Church like a cancer, seeking to fill the breast, and plunge the whole man in destruction: and unless the Lord of Sabaoth had broken through the snare which they had laid, the public exhibition of so much evil and hypocrisy would have led to ruin the hearts of many simple ones, for the human mind is easily drawn aside towards evil, choosing rather to fly through open space, than to travel with pain along the narrow way.

3. Wherefore it was very necessary, most dearly beloved, to commend what has been done here to your notice and consideration, lest through the ignorance of any priest, the Church might be infected by the contagion of these most wicked men who are breaking in upon it under a religious pretext, as it is written and the Lord has said, Many

[281 come to you in sheeps' clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves; ye shall know them by their fruits.

These are they who under a mean garb boast themselves as Christians, that walking under the semblance of piety they may enter the house of prayer and utter the words of wily disputation, that they may privily shoot at them which are true of heart, and, seducing them from Catholic truth, may draw them over, after the example of Satan, to the madness of their own doctrines, beguiling the simplicity of the flock.

4. And indeed from the times of the Apostles up to now we have heard and known by experience of many malignant heresies, but the sacred truth of the Church has never been assailed by the

barking of such dogs as those who have now suddenly broken in upon us, with the doctrines of unbelief fully sprouted, enemies of the faith; who by the fruit of their works have betrayed whose disciples they are. For while other heretics misunderstanding single points have proposed to bear away and abstract from the Divine system of teaching, these men, not having on a wedding garment, wound the Catholics, perverting, as I have said, the continuity of the New and Old Testament, and interpreting it in a diabolical spirit, have by their alluring and false arguments already begun to ruin some Christians, and to make them associates of their madness, not keeping within themselves the poison of their iniquity: but some of their chosen ones have betrayed their blasphemies by writing a rash discourse, which the rage of a desperate mind has led them openly to publish, favouring, as it does, the cause of the Heathens.

5. But of their madness I suddenly received intelligence by means of a shocking writing which certain faithful Christians, men of high rank, and signal piety, caused to be conveyed to me, unworthy as I am, in order that the opposition of these men to the Divine Law might be detected by the discernment of the Clergy and repressed by a spiritual sentence. Assuredly we receive without scorn the vows of those marriages which we assist at with the veil

8, but virgins, for whose existence marriage is necessary, as being devoted to God, we honour more highly.

6. Having therefore held an assembly of my clergy it became clear that their sentiments were contrary to our doctrine, that is, to the Christian law. Therefore, following the Apostolic precept, we, seeing that they were preaching another Gospel than that which we received, have excommunicated them. Know therefore that it was the unanimous sentence of us all, as well of the presbyters and deacons as

[282 of the other clergy, that Jovinian, Auxentius, Genialis, Germinator, Felix, Prontinus

9, Martianus, Januarius, and Ingeniosus, who were discovered to be the promoters of the new heresy and blasphemy, should be condemned by the Divine sentence and our judgment, and remain in perpetual exclusion from the Church.

7. Nothing doubting that your Holinesses will observe the aforesaid decree, I have sent you this Epistle by my brethren and fellow-priests, Crescens, Leopardus and Alexander, that they, with a fervent spirit, may perform a religious and faithful service.

LETTER XLII. [A.D.389.] In this, their reply to Siricius, drawn up in all probability by S. Ambrose himself, the Council of Milan thank him for his care, and announce that they have followed his example and condemned Jovinian and his followers in the same way. They dwell upon his errors, particularly on his disparagement of virginity, on his denial of the true virginity of our Lord's Mother, on his contempt of widowhood, and of fasting, and condemn him as a follower of Manes. They argue in especial detail against his argument with regard to the Virgin Mary, which differs from that of Helvidius and other assailants of the *a_ei\ pa&rqenoj*. TO THEIR LORD, THEIR DEARLY BELOVED BROTHER, POPE SIRICIUS, AMBROSE, SABINUS, BASSANIUS, AND THE REST SEND GREETING.

1. In your Holiness' Letter we recognized the vigilance of a good shepherd, for you faithfully guard the door which has been entrusted to you, and with pious solicitude watch over the fold of Christ,

being worthy to be heard and followed by the sheep of the Lord. Knowing therefore the lambs of Christ, you will easily discover the wolves, and meet them as a wary shepherd, so as to keep them from scattering the Lord's flock by their unbelieving life and dismal barking.

2. We praise you for this, our Lord and brother dearly beloved, and join in cordial commendations of it. Nor are we surprised that the Lord's flock was terrified at the rage of wolves in whom they recognized not the voice of

[283 Christ. For it is a savage barking to shew no reverence to virginity, observe no rule of chastity, to seek to place every thing on a level, to abolish the different degrees of merit, and to introduce a certain meagreness in heavenly rewards, as if Christ had only one palm to bestow, and there was no copious diversity in His rewards.

3. They pretend that they are giving honour to marriage. But what praise can rightly be given to marriage if no distinction is paid to virginity? We do not deny that marriage was hallowed by Christ, for the Divine words say, And they twain shall be one flesh, and one spirit, but our birth precedes our calling, and the mystery of the Divine operation is much more excellent than the remedy of human frailty. A good wife is deservedly praised, but a pious virgin is more properly preferred, for the Apostle says, He that giveth his virgin in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better; for the one careth for the things of the Lord, the other for the things of the world. The one is bound by the chains of marriage, the other is free from chains; the one is under the Law, the other under Grace. Marriage is good, for thereby the means of continuing the human race has been devised, but virginity is better, for thereby the heritage of the heavenly kingdom is regained, and the mode of attaining to heavenly rewards discovered. By a woman care entered the world; by a virgin salvation was brought to pass. Lastly, Christ chose virginity as His own special gift, and displayed the grace of chastity, thus making an exhibition of that in His own person which in His Mother He had made the object of His choice.

4. How great is the madness of their dismal barkings, that the same persons should say that Christ could not be born of a virgin, and yet assert that women, after having given birth to human pledges, remain virgins? Does Christ grant to others what, as they assert, He could not grant to Himself? But He, although He took on Him our flesh, although He was made man that He might redeem man, and recal him from death, still, as being God, came upon earth in an extraordinary way, that as He had said, Behold I make all things new, so also He might be

[284 born of an immaculate virgin, and be believed to be, as it is written, God with us. But from their perverse ways they are induced to say 'She was a virgin when she conceived, but not a virgin when she brought forth.' Could she then conceive as a virgin, and yet not be able to bring forth as a virgin, when conception always precedes, and birth follows?

5. But if they will not believe the doctrines of the Clergy, let them believe the oracles of Christ, let them believe the admonitions of Angels who say, For with God nothing shall be impossible. Let them give credit to the Creed of the Apostles, which the Roman Church has always kept and preserved undefiled. Mary heard the voice of the Angel, and she who before had said How shall this be? not asking from want of faith in the mode of generation, afterwards replied, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. This is the virgin who conceived, this the virgin who brought forth a Son. For thus it is written, Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a

Son; declaring not only that she should conceive as a virgin, but also that she bring forth as a virgin.

6. But what is that gate of the sanctuary, that outward gate which looketh towards the East, which remains shut, and no man, it is said, shall enter in by it but the Lord, the God of Israel. Is not Mary this gate, by whom the Saviour entered into the world? This is the gate of righteousness, as He Himself said, Suffer us to fulfil all righteousness. Blessed Mary is the gate, whereof it is written that the Lord hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut after birth; for as a virgin she both conceived and brought forth.

7. But why should it be incredible that Mary, contrary to the usage of natural birth, should bring forth and yet remain a virgin; when contrary to the usage of nature, the sea saw and fled, and the floods of Jordan retired to their source. It should not exceed our belief that a virgin should bring forth, when we read that a rock poured forth water, and the waves of the sea were gathered up like a wall. Nor need it, again, exceed our belief that a man should be born of a virgin, when a running stream gushed

forth from the rock, when iron swam upon the waters, and a man walked upon them. If therefore the waves carried a man, could not a virgin bring forth a man? But what man? Him of Whom we read, The Lord shall send them a Man Who shall deliver them; and the Lord shall be known to Egypt. Wherefore in the old Testament a Hebrew virgin led the people through the sea, in the New Testament a royal virgin was elected to be a heavenly abode for our salvation.

8. But what more? let us also subjoin the praises of widowhood, since in the Gospel next after that most illustrious birth from a virgin, comes the widow Anna; she who had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served with fastings and prayers night and day.

9. And fitting it is that these men should despise widowhood, which is wont to keep fasts, for they regret that they should have been mortified by these for any time, and avenge the wrong they inflicted on themselves, and by daily banquets and habits of luxury seek to ward off the pain of abstinence. They do nothing more rightly than in thus condemning themselves out of their own mouth.

10. But they even fear lest their former fasting should be reckoned against them. Let them choose whichever they like: if they ever fasted, let them repent of their good work, if never, let them confess their own intemperance and luxury. And so they assert that Paul was a teacher of excess. But who can be a teacher of temperance if he was a teacher of excess, who chastised his body and brought it into subjection, and recorded his performance of the service he owed to Christ by many fastings; and this not for the purpose of praising himself and his doings, but that he might teach us, what example to follow. Did he then teach excess who said, Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? Touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using; who also says, Not in indulgence of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying and love of the flesh, not in the lusts of error; but in the Spirit by Whom we are renewed.

|286

11. If what the Apostle has said is not enough, let them hear the Prophet saying, I chastened myself with fasting. He therefore who fasts not is uncovered and naked and exposed to wounds. And if Adam had clothed himself with fasting he would not have been found to

be naked. Nineveh delivered itself from death by fasting. And the Lord Himself says, This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

12. But why need we say more to our master and teacher? seeing that these persons have now paid the worthy price of their perfidy, who have on this account come even hither, that no place might remain where they were not condemned; who have proved themselves to be truly Manichees, by not believing that He came forth from a virgin. What madness is this, almost equal to that of the modern Jews? If He is not believed so to have come, neither is He believed to have taken upon Him our flesh, therefore He was seen only in figure, He was crucified only in figure. But He was crucified for us in truth, He is in truth our Redeemer.

13. He is a Manichee who denies the truth, who denies that Christ came in the flesh; and therefore the remission of sins is not their's; but it is the impiety of the Manichees which both the most merciful Emperor has abhorred

10, and all who saw them have fled from as a plague. Witnesses thereof are our brethren and fellow-presbyters, Crescens, Leopardus, and Alexander, fervent in the Holy Spirit, by whose means they have been exposed to common execration, and driven as fugitives from the city of Milan.

14. Wherefore you are to know that Jovinian, Auxentius, Germinator, Felix, Plotinus, Genialis, Martianus, Januarius and Ingeniosus, whom your Holiness has condemned, have also, in accordance with your judgment, been condemned by ourselves. May our Almighty God keep you in safety and prosperity, Lord and brother most beloved. [287 Here follows the subscription.

I Eventius 11, Bishop, salute your Holiness in the Lord, and have subscribed this Epistle.

Maximus, Bishop.

Felix, Bishop.

Bassianus, Bishop.

Theodorus, Bishop.

Constantius, Bishop. By command of my lord Geminianus Bishop, and in his presence, I Aper, Presbyter, have subscribed.

Eustasius, Bishop, and all the Orders have subscribed.

LETTER XLIII. This Letter is a reply to a question from Horontianus, why man, the highest work of God's creation, was made the Fast. S. Ambrose brings forward various analogies to shew that the last is first, and each with an enthusiastic and poetical description of man's greatness, and of his dominion over the other works of creation.

AMBROSE TO HORONTIANUS.

1. You have intimated to me your surprise at finding in my Treatise on the Six days of Creation, that, while you found both the Sacred Narrative and the tenor of my discourse assigning greater gifts to man than to any other creature in the earth, still that the land and the waters brought forth all flying and creeping things and things in the waters before him for whose sake they were all created: and you ask me the reason of this, which Moses was silent about, and I did not venture to touch upon.

2. And perhaps that spokesman of the Divine Oracles purposely kept silence, lest he should seem to render himself the judge and counsellor of the Divine ordinances; for to give utterance to that with which he was inspired by the Spirit of God is one thing, to interpret the will of God is

[288 another. I am of opinion however that we, not as speaking in God's Name, but as gathering up scattered principles of reason from human usage, may be able, from the way in which God has disposed other things for man's use, to come to the conclusion that it was fitting for man to be the last work of creation.

3. For he who sets out a banquet, like that rich man in the Gospel, (for we must compare Divine things with each other the better to draw our conclusion,) prepares every thing first, kills his oxen and fatlings, and then bids his friends to supper. The more trivial things therefore are prepared in the first place, and then he who is worthy of honour is invited. Hence the Lord also first provided for the food of man all other animals, and then invited to the feast man himself, as His friend: and truly His friend, seeing that he was partaker of the Divine Charity and heir of His Glory. To man himself it is that He says: Friend, how camest thou in hither? So then all things that precede are to minister to the need of the friend, and it is the friend who is invited last.

4. Take another instance. What is the world but a sort of arena of continual strife? Wherefore also in the Apocalypse the Lord says, To him that overcometh will I give a crown of life; and Paul says, I have fought a good fight; and in another place, No man is crowned except he strive lawfully. He who institutes this combat is Almighty God. Now he who in this world offers a combat, does he not first provide all things which are necessary thereto, and prepare the chaplets of victory before he summons the athletics to contend for the prize; and all this that the conqueror may not suffer delay, but retire from the contest crowned with his reward? Now the rewards of man are the fruits of the earth and the lights of heaven; the former for the use of this present life, the latter for the hope of life eternal.

5. As a wrestler therefore he enters the lists last of all; he raises his eyes to heaven, he sees that even the heavenly creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. He sees that the whole creation groaneth in pain together, waiting

[289 for redemption. He sees that labour awaits us all. He raises his eyes, he sees the circlets of lights, he surveys the orbs of the moon and stars: For the just, who overcome, shall be as the stars in heaven. And he chastises his body, that it may not be his enemy in the combat, he anoints it with the oil of mercy, he exercises it with daily trials of virtue, he smears himself with dust, he runs to the goal of the course but not as uncertainly, he aims his blows, he darts forth his arms, but not into empty space, he strikes the adversary whom he sees not, for he has respect to Him alone to Whom all enemies give way, even those who are invisible, in Whose Name the powers of the air

were turned aside. It is he therefore who poises the blow, but it is Christ Who strikes, it is he who lifts up his heel, but Christ Who directs it to the ground. Lastly, although Paul saw not those whom he struck, he was not as one that beateth the air, because by the preaching of Christ he wounded those evil spirits which assaulted him. Rightly therefore did man, for whom a race was prepared, enter the course last, that he might be preceded by heaven which was to be, as it were, his reward.

6. But we wrestle not only against spiritualities of wicked-ness in high places, but also against flesh and blood. We wrestle with satiety, with the very fruits of the earth, with wine, by which even a righteous man was made drunk, and the whole people of the Jews overthrown; we wrestle with wild animals, with the fowls of the air; for our flesh, if pampered by these, cannot be brought to subjection; we wrestle with perils of the way, with perils of waters, as Paul says; we wrestle with rods of the wood, those rods with which the Apostles were beaten. You see how severe are our combats. Thus the earth is man's trial-ground, heaven is his crown; and fitting therefore it was that as a friend, what was to minister to his wants should precede him, as a combatant, his reward.

7. Take another illustration. In all things the beginning and the ending are most excellent. If you look upon a house, it is the foundation and the roof which are more considerable than the other parts, if you look upon a field it is the sowing and the harvest, the planting and the

|290 vintage. How sweet are the grafts of trees, how pleasant are the fruits! In the same manner also was the heaven created first, and man last, as a kind of heavenly creature upon earth. For although in body he is compared with the beasts, in mind he is numbered among the inhabitants of heaven; for as we have borne the image of the earthy; we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. How should he not be heavenly, who is made after the image and likeness of God?

8. Rightly therefore in the creation of the world the heaven is both first and last, wherein is that which is beyond heaven, even the God of heaven. And of man is rather to be understood the text, Heaven is my throne, for God does not sit above the element, but in the heart of man. Wherefore the Lord also says, We will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him. Heaven therefore is the first work in the creation of the world, and man the last.

9. Heaven is of the world, man above the world; for the former is a portion of the world, the latter is an inhabitant of Paradise, and the possession of Christ. Heaven is thought to be undecaying, yet it passes away; man is deemed to be incorruptible, yet he puts on incorruption; the fashion of the first perishes, the latter rises again as being immortal; yet the hands of the Lord, according to the authority of Scripture, formed them both. For as we read of the heavens, And the heavens are the work of Thy hands; so also man says, Thy hands have made me and fashioned me; and again, The heavens declare the glory of

God. And as the heaven is resplendent with stars, so are men bright with the light of good works, for their works shine before their Father Which is in heaven. The former is the firmament of heaven which is on high, and the latter firmament is not unlike to it, whereof it is said, Upon this rock will I build My Church; the one is the firmament of the elements, the other of virtues, and the last is more excellent; they sucked honey out of the firm rock, for the Rock is the flesh of Christ, which redeemed the heaven and the whole world.

10. Why should I add further, carrying you, as it were, |291

through the whole course, that God made man partaker of the Divine nature, as we read in the Epistle of Peter? Whence one says not improperly, We also are His offspring, for He made us akin to Himself, and we are of a rational nature, that we might seek for that Godhead Which is not far from each one of us, in Whom we live and move and have our being.

11. Having therefore conferred on man that which is the greatest of graces, He granted to him as to that creature who was dearest and very nearest to Him, all the things which are in this world, that he might want for nothing which is necessary either for life or for a good life, some of which things were to be supplied by the abundance of earthly plenty to minister pleasure, others again by the knowledge of heavenly secrets, to arouse man's mind by the love and desire of that discipline which should enable us to reach the summit of the Divine mysteries. Both these therefore are most excellent gifts, both to have all the riches of the world subject to him, all flying and creeping-things and fishes, and, as being lord of the elements, the use of the sea, and without toil or want, after the model and likeness of his adorable Creator, to abound in all things, living in the greatest plenty, and also to open paths for himself, and make progress, so as to ascend to the royal abode of heaven.

12. You will easily discover that the traveller along this arduous path is the man, who has been so fashioned in purpose of heart and will, as to be, as far as possible, estranged from his body, as not to enter into any fellowship with vice, nor suffer himself to be smoothed down by the words of flatterers: one who does not, when riding on the chariot of prosperity, despise the humble, shun sorrow, discard and disparage the praises of the holy, nor, by desire of glory or of wealth, grasped at too prematurely, exhaust all the ardour of hope; one whose mind is not bowed down by sadness nor broken by injury, which is not har-rassed by suspicion, nor excited by lust, whom the passions of the body do not overcome, whom no desire of vanities or charms of pleasure disquiet and disturb. Add to all this the virtues of chastity, soberness and temperance; let

[292 him be able easily to curb the irregular sallies of light passion, set bounds to his pleasures and desires, clear up ambiguity by an equitable judgment, by tranquillity of mind settle what is doubtful, and with all the strifes of the mind and body reconciled, so to speak, preserve in a just balance the concord of the exterior and interior man unimpaired, stilling them as they lie within his own breast, while, should he be called to it, no evil counsellor is able to turn him away from the crown of suffering, such a man surely will be adopted not only as a friend but a son by the Father, that he may obtain the riches of His glory and inheritance.

13. Rightly therefore did he come last, being, as it were, the end of nature, formed to righteousness, and the arbiter of right among other creatures. And, if we may employ the illustration, as among men Christ is the end of the Law

for righteousness to every one that believeth, so are we as beasts in the sight of the Lord, for thus says the Prophet, I became as a beast before Thee. Yet what comparison is there between the two, when He has redeemed those who were ready to perish, and we put them to death, He calls slaves to liberty and we inflict bondage on the free? But who is like God?

14. Man however came forth the last of all created things, in form comely, in mind lofty, to be admired by all creatures, having in him, after the image of the eternal God, an invisible intelligence

12 clothed in human form. This is that intelligence or power of the soul which claims to itself, as the ruling principle, authority over the soul and body. This it is that all other living creatures dread although they see it not, just as we fear God Whom we see not, and fear Him only the more because we see Him not.

15. For, if we may presume to speak of ourselves after His image and likeness, as Scripture says, in the same way as He is established in the fulness of His Majesty, and sees all things, heaven, air, earth and sea, embracing the universe and penetrating each part, so that nothing escapes Him, and there is nothing which does not consist in Him and depend on Him, and which is not full of Him, as He Himself says, I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord, so

[293 likewise the mind of man sees all things and is not seen, but maintains its own essence invisible. By means of discipline forethought and perception she apprehends hidden things, dives into the secret of the deep, and those lurking-places which are spread throughout all lands, scrutinizing the nature of both elements, after the likeness of the great God Whom she imitates and follows, Whose image in minute portions is represented in each individual. She raises herself likewise into the air, and rising above the cloudy region, soars, in zeal for knowledge and thirst for wisdom, to the height of heaven, and resting there awhile, rapt in wonder at the heavenly constellations and charmed with their brightness, looks down upon the things of earth. Then she approaches also to Hesperus and Arcturus and those other stars which although Planets err not, and sees that they keep their course without stumbling, that course along which, in order the better to visit all regions, they seem to circuit and to wander. And thus with greater ardour she raises herself to the very bosom of the Father, wherein is the Only-Begotten Son of God Who declares the secrets of God, which in the time to come are to be revealed face to face. But even now He discloses them partly and in a figure to those whom He deems worthy, and at the same time sheds forth from the Spirit and from His own countenance floods of resplendent light, so that he who is illuminated thereby may say, But it was as a fire blazing in my bones and I am melted on all sides, and cannot stay. And David says, Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence!

16. By this vigour of mind, therefore, to return to the point from whence I have digressed, whereby she subjects to herself things external, comprehends in her view things distant and separate from each other, and subdues the more powerful animals, she has inspired the rest with such reverence for herself, that they emulously obey her as their king, and pay ready attention to her voice. Nay, although they are irrational they still acknowledge reason, and fix within themselves that discipline which nature has not given them. Furthermore wild beasts, seeing man's gentleness, grow gentle under his rule. Often have they closed their jaws,

[294 recalled by the sound of the human voice. We see hares caught without injury by the harmless fangs of dogs, and even lions, if they hear man's voice, letting their prey escape: leopards also and bears urged on and recalled by the sound of his voice: the horses stimulated by the applause of man, and slackening their speed at his silence: nay, often, untouched by the lash they outstrip others that are scourged on, so much more powerfully does the scourge of the tongue incite them.

17. But what shall I say of the creatures' services to man? In order to please him the ram nourishes his fleece, and is plunged in the stream to enhance its beauty; sheep also crop the best herbage to distend with sweeter juice of milk their teeming udders; and, that they may offer to man

their gifts, suffer the pangs of travail; bulls groan all day under the plough pressed down in the furrows; camels, besides the service of bearing burthens, suffer themselves to be shorn like rams, so that each animal contributes to man, as to a king, its service, and pays its annual tribute. The horse, exulting in such a rider, prances proudly, and curving his neck when his master mounts, gives his back to afford him a seat. And if you are still at a loss why man was made last, let the same animal teach us that this is to be deemed an honour not a slight. For he bears one who came after him, not despising but fearing him, and bearing him with pain to himself from place to place. In a moment of time man reaches far distant places and traverses long distances, transported sometimes on single horses, sometimes in triumphal chariots

13.

18. And since I have mentioned triumphal chariots it is needful that I should add thereto the chariot of Elijah which carried him through the air, and those of elephants, whereon man sits as conqueror, and governs although he be last and they precede him. And thus the steersman of a ship sits in the stern, and yet guides the whole ship. Whence I deem it not without a purpose that we are told in the Gospel that the Lord Jesus was asleep in the stern of the ship; and that when awakened He commanded the wind and the sea, and laid the storm, shewing thereby that

[295 He came last because He came as the Pilot. Wherefore the Apostle says, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual; and then he adds, The first man is of the earth, earthy, the second man is from heaven, heavenly.

19. Rightly therefore is man the last, being as it were the consummation of the whole work, the cause of the world, for whose sake all things were made; the habitant, as it were, of all the elements, he lives among beasts, swims with fishes, soars above birds, converses with Angels, dwells upon the earth, and has his warfare in heaven, ploughs the sea, feeds upon air, tills the soil, is a voyager over the deep, a fisher in the floods, a fowler in the air, in heaven an heir even joint-heir with Christ. These things he does by his diligence.

20. Hear also things above man's natural power. Moses walked along the bottom of the sea, the Apostles upon the surface, Habbacuc flew without wings, Elijah conquered upon earth, and triumphed in heaven.¹⁴ Farewell, my son; love me for I also love you.

LETTER XLIV. [A.D.389.]

S.Ambrose here first dwells on the distinction between God and the Universe which is His work. He then speaks of the six days of Creation, and of the mystical meaning of the numbers seven and eight, applying various passages of Scripture in which they occur, and bringing forward analogies from nature.

AMBROSE TO HORONTIANUS.

1. You have done well to mark the prophet's distinction between the Creator and His works, or rather, God's own distinction, for Moses wrote not of himself, but by inspiration and revelation, particularly in what relates to the formation of the world. For the One being impassible,

[296 the other liable to suffering, he has referred that which was impassible to God the Creator, but the passible part, without life or motion of its own, but receiving life and motion and form from its Creator, he has assigned to the world; and as this world, after its creation, ought not to be left without a ruler, or unprotected by any father, he therefore plainly describes the invisible God as the Ruler and Governor of this visible world. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2. He therefore states the creation of the world to have taken place in six days, not that God required time to form it in, for He can do in a moment what He wills, for He spake the word, and they were created,

but because things which are made, need some certain order, and order requires both time and number. And especially for the purpose of giving us a model for our works has He observed a certain number of days and certain seasons; for we also require time wherein to do aught perfectly, so as not to be precipitate in our counsels and works; nor to neglect their proper order. For when we read that God, as Scripture tells us, has made all things in wisdom, and by a certain counsel disposition and order, it is agreeable to reason that He should first have made the heavens which are the most beautiful; it is fitting also that we should first raise our eyes thither and conceive that it behoves us to aim at

arriving thither, and that we should consider that it is to be preferred to all earthly habitations.

3. Wherefore in six days He created the world, on the seventh day He rested from His works. The number seven is good, and we treat it not according to the manner of Pythagoras and other philosophers, but according to the form and divisions of spiritual grace, for the prophet Isaiah has set forth the seven principal virtues of the Holy Spirit. This sacred seven, like the venerable Trinity of the Father Son and Holy Ghost, knows neither time nor order, and is the origin of number, not bound by any of its laws. Wherefore as the heaven the earth and the sea were formed in honour of the eternal Trinity, and also the sun moon and stars, so in like manner we observe that it is according to this sevenfold circle of spiritual virtues, and this swiftly

[297 revolving orbit of Divine operation, that a certain sevenfold ministry of planets, whereby this world is illuminated, has been created. And their service is said to agree with the number of these stars, which are fixed, or, as they are called in Greek,

a)planei=j 15. The North has likewise received its Latin name (Septentrio) from being irradiated by seven stars, upon the brightness of which as their guide pilots are said specially to fix their gaze.

4. And this peculiar property has come down from heaven to earth; for not to speak of the sevenfold fashion of the head, in the two eyes, the two ears and nostrils, and the mouth whereby we enjoy the taste of great sweetness, how wonderful is it that in the seventh month most men are conceived, and he that is afterwards born receives at that time the commencement of his vital course. But in the eighth month we perceive that by a natural law the season of bringing forth is suspended, and if some fatal compulsion has opened the barriers of the womb, the danger both of the mother and her offspring is nigh at hand.

5. But he who is born on the seventh day, although he be born well, is born to labour, but he who on the eighth day, obtains the mysteries of regeneration, is consecrated by grace, and called to

the inheritance of the celestial kingdom. Great in the virtues of the Spirit is the grace of the holy number seven, but the same grace answers to the number seven, and consecrates the number eight. In the first we have the name, but in the latter the fruit, and therefore the grace of the Spirit, conferred on the eighth day, restored to Paradise those whom their own fault had banished.

6. The Old Testament too knew this number eight which in Latin we call the Octave, for the preacher says, give a portion to seven and also to eight. The number seven belongs to the Old Testament, the number eight to the New, for then Christ rose, and the day of new salvation shone upon all. This is the day whereof the Prophet says, This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it: for on that day the brightness of full and

|298 perfect circumcision was infused into the hearts of men. On this account the Old Testament also gave a part to eight in the solemnity of circumcision. But this still lay in darkness: then came the Sun of righteousness, and by the consummation of His passion revealed His rays of light; these He unfolded to all, and opened the brightness of eternal life.

7. These then are that seven and eight whereof Hosea says that by that number he purchased to himself, and acquired the fulness of faith, for thus it is written, So I

bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley, and a measure of wine

16. But in the former verses God had commanded him to hire to himself an harlot, and it is manifest that he did so, in that he has mentioned the price of her hiring. Now the fifteen pieces of silver are made up of the numbers seven and eight, wherefore they represent these numbers. And by the price of the two Testaments, that is, of perfect faith, the prophecy hath received the consummation of its faith and the Church her fulness. For by the first Testament the people of Israel were gained, by the second the heathen and Gentiles. And so by a perfect faith the harlot is hired, seeking herself a consort either among the Gentiles, or from the adulterous people of the Jews, who had deserted their Lord, the Author of their virgin faith, and spread their congregations over the breadth of the whole world.

8. With regard to the words, an homer of barley, and half an homer of barley, in the homer we have a full measure, in the half homer the measure is but partly full; thus we read in our Lord's own words, I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil the law. And in another place the Lord says by the prophet Micah,

Then shall there be peace in the land of Israel, when the Assyrian shall come into his land; and there arose against him seven shepherds, and eight bites

17 of men. For the faithful people will then enjoy perfect peace and be freed from all temptations and vanities, when peace and grace shall have shut out the vanity of this world from our hearts, the peace, that is, of the Old, the grace of the New Testament.

|299

9. The seven shepherds are the precepts of the law, whereby the flock not yet endued with reason are led through the wilderness by the rod of Moses, and governed. The eight bites of man are the commandments of the Gospel, and the words of the Lord's mouth. For with the heart man

believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Those bites are good whereby we have tasted the gift of eternal life, and in the Body of Christ have received the remission of sins. In the Old Testament the bite of death is bitter, wherefore it is said, Prevailing death has devoured

18. In the New Testament sweet is the taste of life, which has swallowed up death, wherefore the Apostle says, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?

10. Moreover, to use the testimony of the Apostles, when God made man, He rested from all His works on the seventh day. But when the Jews wilfully disobeyed the commands of their God, the Lord said, If they shall enter into My rest. And therefore the Lord appointed another day, whereof He says, To-day if ye will hear My voice. For in general Scripture speaks of two days, yesterday and to-day, of which it is said, Jesus Christ the same, yesterday to-day and for ever. On the first day the promise is made, on the second it is fulfilled. But since on the former day neither Moses nor Joshua brought the people into their rest, Christ, to Whom the Father said, This day have I begotten Thee, has brought them in to-day, for by His Resurrection Jesus has obtained peace for His people. The Lord Jesus is our rest; Who says, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise. For rest is in heaven, not on earth.

11. Why then need I watch the rising and setting of the stars, at whose rising the fallows should be ploughed up and pierced by the hard plough-shares, and at whose setting the fruitful crop should be cut down by the sickle? One star suffices for me in the place of all others, the bright and morning Star, at Whose rising was sown the seed not

[300 of corn but of martyrs; when Rachel wept for her children, and offered in the stead of Christ her children washed in her own tears. The setting of this Star raised from the tomb not the senseless relics of the funeral pile, but the triumphant bands of the re-animated dead.

12. Let then this number seven be observed by us, seeing that the life of man passes through seven stages to old age, as Hippocrates the teacher of medicine has explained in his writings. The first age is infancy, the second boyhood, the third youth, the fourth adult age, the fifth manhood, the sixth fulness of years, the seventh old age. Thus we have the infant, the boy, the youth, the young man, the man, the elder, the aged.

13. Solon however made ten periods of life, each of seven years; so that the first period, or infancy, should extend to the growth of the teeth, to chew its food, and utter articulate words so as to seem intelligible; boyhood again extends to the time of puberty and of carnal temptation; youth to the growth of the beard; adult age lasts until virtue has attained its perfection; the fifth is the age of manhood, fitted, during its whole course, for marriage; the sixth belongs also to manhood, in that it is adapted to the combat of prudence, and is strenuous in action; the seventh and eighth period also exhibit man ripe in years, vigorous in faculties, and his discourse endowed with a grace of utterance not unpleasing; the ninth period has still some strength remaining, and its speech and wisdom are of a chastened kind; the tenth period fills up the measure, and he who has strength to reach it, will after a full period of years knock late at the gate of death.

14. Thus Hippocrates and Solon recognized either seven ages, or periods of age consisting of seven years. In this then let the number seven prevail; but the octave introduces one uninterrupted

period during which we grow up into a perfect man, in the knowledge of God, in the fulness of faith, wherein the measure of a legitimate period of life is completed.

15. In our inward parts also the virtue of the seventh number is manifested; for it is said that we have within us seven organs, the stomach, heart, lungs, spleen, liver.

[301 and the two kidneys, and outwardly seven also, the head, the hinder parts, the belly, two hands and two feet.

16. Very excellent are these members, but subject to pain. Who then can doubt that the office of the Octave, which has renewed the whole man, so as not to be susceptible of pain, is more exalted? Wherefore the seventh age of the world being completed, the grace of the Octave has shone upon us, that grace which has made man to be no longer of this world, but above the world. But now we live not according to our own life but to that of Christ. For to us to live is Christ, and to die is gain, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God. So says the Apostle, whence we gather that the day of the world is come to a close. Again, at the last hour the Lord Jesus came, and died for us, and we are all dead in Him, that we may live to God. It is not then our former selves that now live, but Christ liveth in us.

17. The number seven is passed away, the octave is arrived. Yesterday is gone, to-day is come, that promised day wherein we are admonished to hear and follow the word of God. That day of the Old Testament is passed away, that new day is come, wherein the New Testament is perfected, whereof it is said, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. He adds too the reason why the Testament was changed, Because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

18. The priests of the Law, the tribunals of the Law have passed away; let us draw nigh to our new High Priest, to the throne of grace, to the guest of our souls, to the Priest, Who is not made after the law of the carnal commandment, but elected after the power of an endless life 19. For He took not this honour to himself, but was chosen by the Father, as the Father Himself saith, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedech. Other priests offered for

[302 themselves and for their people; this Man, not having sin, that He should offer for Himself, offered Himself for the whole world, and by His own blood entered into the Sanctuary.

19. He then is the new Priest and the new Victim, not of the law but above the law, the universal Mediator, the Light of the world, Who said, Lo I come, and came. To Him then let us draw near in the fulness of faith, adoring and beseeching and hoping in Him, Whom with our eyes we see not, but Whom we embrace with our hearts, to Whom be glory and honour for ever, Farewell, my son; love me, for I love you, LETTER XLV. [A.D. 385.]

S. Ambrose replies to the inquiry of Sabinus whether he had written concerning Paradise, and what was his opinion concerning it. Having first touched on the historical description of the place, he proceeds to the mystical explanation of it. And having shewn that Paradise is situate in the principal region of the soul, he teaches what is signified by the several parts thereof, and what men should imitate in the serpent. Lastly, having declared the greatness of human weakness and

what great love God hns shewn us from the beginning, he exhorts men to fly the pleasures of the senses, AMBROSE TO SABINUS.

1. Having read my work on the six days of creation, you have thought good to enquire whether I have added ought concerning Paradise, and to express your strong desire to know what opinion I hold concerning it. I have, in truth, written on this subject, though not yet a veteran priest.

2. The opinions about it I have found to be many and various. Josephus, as an historian, tells us it is a place filled with trees and thick shrubs, and that it is watered by a river which divides itself into four streams. Its waters being thus gathered into one, this region does not entirely empty and deprive itself of its feeders, but up to this day bursts out into fountains and sends forth its winding streams, nourishing by them her offspring as from the full breasts of a pious mother.

|303

3. Others expound it differently, but all agree that in Paradise is the deep rooted Tree of life, and the Tree of Knowledge whereby good and evil are discerned, the other trees also, full of vigor, and life, endued both with breath and reason. Wherefore we conclude that the real Paradise is no earthly one which can be seen; that it is placed in no spot of ground, but in the highest part of our own nature, which receives animation and life from the powers of the soul, and from the communication of the Spirit of God.

4. Moreover, Solomon by inspiration of the Spirit has plainly shown that Paradise is in man himself. And seeing that he declares the mysteries either of the soul and the Word, or of Christ and the Church, he says of the virgin soul, or of the Church which he wished to present as a chaste virgin to Christ, A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring scaled up, a fountain closed.

5. 'Paradisus' is the Greek, 'hortus' the Latin name. And in the Latin text we read that Susannah was in a paradise. Adam too was in a paradise. Let it not trouble you then that some Latin manuscripts have the word 'hortus,' others 'paradisus.'

6. Where the chaste wife is, there also is the virgin; the chosen virgin has indeed her barriers and enclosures, but both are in a garden, that thus by the shade of virtue they may be shielded from the heats of the body and concupiscence of the flesh.

7. Hence also Paradise is in our highest part, thick set with the growth of many opinions, and wherein chiefly God hath placed the Tree of life, that is, the root of piety, for this is the true substance of our life, that we should offer due service to our Lord and God.

8. He has likewise planted within us a seed-plot of the knowledge of good and evil; for man alone of all creatures of the earth possesses the knowledge of good and evil. Divers other plants are also there, whose fruits are virtues.

9. Now since God knew that man's affections, once endued with knowledge, would more readily incline towards craft than towards perfect prudence, (for how could the qualities of His work be concealed from His discerning

[304 eye, Who had set up certain boundaries in our soul?) He desired to cast out craft from Paradise, and as the provident Author of our salvation, to place therein the desire of life and the discipline of piety. Wherefore He commanded man to eat of every tree which is in Paradise, but that of the tree of knowledge of good and evil he should not eat.

10. But since all creatures are subject to passions, lust, with the stealth of a serpent, has crept over man's affections: well therefore has holy Moses represented lust under the similitude of a serpent; for it creeps upon its belly like a serpent, not walking on foot, nor raised up on legs, gliding along by the sinuous contortions, as it were, of its whole body. Its food, as that of the serpent, is earthly, for it knows not heavenly food, but feeds on carnal things, and changes itself into various kinds of desire, and bends to and fro in tortuous wreaths. It has poison in its fangs, whereby the belly of every luxurious man is ripped up, the glutton is slain, the lick up of dishes perishes. How many have been burst by wine, weakened by drunkenness, distended by gluttony.

11. Now I understand why the Lord God breathed on the face of man; for there is the seat and there are the incitements to lust, the eyes, the ears, the nose and the mouth; it was to fortify our senses against lust. Now it was this lust, which, as a serpent, inspired us with craft, for it is not lust but labour and constant meditation, which, by God's grace, gives perfect wisdom.

12. Now since the posterity of Adam are involved in the snares of the serpent, let us imitate herein the fraud of the serpent, and not run our head into danger, but be careful of its security beyond that of our other members, for the head of every man is Christ. Let this remain safe, that the poison of the serpent may not harm us. For Wisdom is good with an inheritance, that is, with faith, for there is an inheritance to them that believe in God.

13. But if that first man, who, dwelling in Paradise, conversed with God, could fall so easily, though made of that virgin clay which had lately been formed and created by the word of God, nor as yet clotted with gore and the murder of kindred, nor polluted by iniquity and shame;

[305 nor condemned in our flesh to the curse of a guilty posterity; how much more easily afterwards did the smooth-worn path of sin lead the human race to a greater fall, when, one after another, generations more and more depraved succeeded others less wicked?

14. For if the magnet has such natural power as to attract iron to it, and transfuse itself into the character of iron, so that often when persons, wishing to try the experiment, apply iron rings to the same stone, it retains all equally firmly: whereas, if to that ring to which the stone adheres you add another, and so on in succession, although the natural power of the magnet reaches through all in succession, it hinders the first with a firm, the hindermost with a slighter bond: if such be the case, how much more must the condition and nature of the human race have fallen from a pure state into one less pure, seeing that it was always attracted to a generation more wicked than itself?

15. For if the power of nature is diminished even by passing through those substances which are not capable of sin, how much more must its vigour be abated by minds and bodies polluted by the stain of crime? Wherefore, seeing that wickedness had increased, that innocence had decayed, that there was no one that did good, no, not one; the Lord came in order to form anew, nay to augment, the grace of nature; that where sin had abounded, grace might much more abound. It is plain then both that God is the Creator of man, and that there is one God not many gods; but that there is one God Who made the world, and one world, not many worlds, as the philosophers

assert.

10. First therefore He created the world, and then its inhabitant, man, that the whole world might be his country. For if, up to this day, wherever the wise man goes, he finds himself a citizen, he understands his own position, he considers himself no where as a stranger or sojourner, how much more was that first man an inhabitant of the whole world, and, as the Greeks say, a cosmopolite, he who was the recent creation of God, conversing continually with Him, the fellow-citizen of the saints, the seed-plot of virtue, set over all creatures in the earth sea and

|306 air, who considered the whole world to be his dominion; whom the Lord defended as His own work, and as a loving Father and Maker never deserted? In fine He so cherished this His creation, as to redeem him when lost, to receive him when banished, when dead to raise him to life by the passion of His Only-begotten Son. Wherefore God is the Author of man, and, as a good Creator, loves His own work, as a gracious Father, abandons not him, whom, in the character of a rich householder, He has redeemed at the cost of His own possessions.

17. Let us be on our guard therefore that this man, that is, our understanding

20 be not enervated by that woman, that is passion, who was herself deceived and beguiled by the pleasure of our senses; that she do not circumvent and draw him over to her own maxims and opinions. Let us fly pleasure as a serpent; it has many allurements, and especially as regards man. For other animals are captivated by greediness after food; man, in that the powers of his eyes and ears are more varied, is exposed to greater dangers.

Farewell; love me, as you indeed do, for I love you.

LETTER XLVI. [A.D.389.]

Sabinus, who was Bishop of Placentia, had written to S. Ambrose to tell him of an Apollinarian heretic, who appears, after being condemned at Placentia, to have gone to Milan. S. Ambrose in this reply states how he had answered him from Holy Scripture, and refuted his false interpretations, especially of the passage in the Epistle to the Philippians, and announces that he has baffled him, and that he is 'preparing to flee.' AMBROSE TO SABINUS.

1. The man of whom you have written to me as a disseminator of pernicious doctrines is a very light character, and has already received the reward of his poison. For he has been replied to publicly, and what he had sown in private he has reaped openly. I had previously esteemed him vain and envious only, but when this language of his reached

|307 my ears, I immediately answered that he was infected by the venom of Apollinaris, who will not admit that our Lord Jesus became a servant for us when He took upon Him our flesh; and this, although the Apostle declares that He took on Him the form of a servant. This is the bulwark, this is the hedge of our faith; he who destroys this shall be destroyed himself, as it is written, Whoso breaketh an

hedge, a serpent shall bite him.

2. At first I gently asked him, Why do you what is in itself good with evil intent? For I esteem it a favour if any one who reads my writings will tell me of any thing which causes him surprise. And

this, first, because even in things which I know I may be deceived. Many things pass by the ear unheeded, many things sound differently to others, it is well, if it be possible, to be on one's guard in all matters. Next, because it does not become me to be disturbed, seeing that many questions are mooted concerning the words of the Apostles and those of the Gospel and our Lord Himself, if things are found in my writings also, which people consider subjects of dispute. For many indulge their own humour, like that man who compassed the whole world, that he might find some one to censure, not one whom he might deem worthy of imitation.

3. Now this man discovered a nasty means of cavilling at something in my writings, since in commenting upon the passage in which the Lord Jesus said, I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I stated that it was intended to show that He is the Father of the Son and the Lord of the creature. Nevertheless in the Psalm the Son has plainly called the Father, Lord: They that looked upon Me shook their heads: help Me, O Lord My God. For speaking in the form of a servant He called Him Lord Whom He knew to be His Father; though equal in the form of God, proclaiming Himself to be a servant according to the substance of His flesh; for slavery is of the flesh, lordship of the Godhead.

4. First then your great sagacity perceives that what is said in the Gospel has reference to the times of the Gospel, when the Lord Jesus dwelt among men in human form;

but now we know Christ according to the flesh no longer. [308

Be it that He was so seen and known by them of old, now old things are passed away, all things are become new. But all things are from God, Who has reconciled us by Christ unto Himself; for we were dead, and therefore One was made a servant for all. Why do I say, a servant? He was made sin, a reproach, a curse. For the Apostle has said that He was made sin for us, that the Lord Jesus was made a curse for us. He has said, when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall He also Himself be subject. Peter also said in the Acts of the Apostles, In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. Then he said also, that God had glorified His Servant Jesus, and no one brings any charge against him concerning the time. But in the Apocalypse He is called a Lamb by John, in the Psalm He is called a worm and no man. He was made all these things that He might blunt the sting of our death, that He might take away our slavery, that He might abolish our curses, our sins, our reproaches.

5. These things and others and many more you have written me word that you answered to one who consulted you; and, seeing that they are contained in Holy Scripture, how should any one hesitate to utter what has been thus piously written, tending as they do to the glory of Christ, not to His disparagement? For if it is said of His gift, that is, of the manna, that he that gathered little had no lack

21, he that gathered much had nothing over

22, could He Himself suffer diminution or increase? For in what respect was He diminished by taking upon Him our bondage, our infirmities? He was humbled, He was in the form of a servant, but He was also in the glory of God the Father. He was a worm upon the Cross, but He also forgave the sins of His persecutors. He was a reproach, but He is also the glory of the Lord, as it is written, The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. What did He lose Who is wanting in nothing? He had indeed no form or comeliness, but He had the fulness of the

Godhead. He was accounted weak, but He ceased not to be the Power of God. He was seen in human form, but there shone upon earth the Divine Majesty and the glory of the Father.

6. Well therefore has the Apostle repeated the same |309

word, saying of the Lord Jesus, Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant. What is the meaning of in the form of God but in the fulness of the Godhead, in the expression of the Divine perfection? Being therefore in the fulness of the Godhead, He emptied Himself of it, and received the fulness of human nature and perfection: as nothing was wanting to Him as God so neither was there any thing wanting to His completeness as Man, that in either form He might be perfect. Wherefore David also says, Thou art fairer than the children of men.

7. The Apollinarian is confuted, he has no refuge to turn to, he is caught in his own net. For he himself had said, He took upon him the form of a servant, He was not chosen to be a servant. I ask again therefore, what is the meaning of in the form of God? He replies, In the nature of God. For there are those, says the Apostle, which by nature are no gods. I enquire, what is the meaning of took upon Him the form of a servant? Doubtless, as I have stated, the perfection of the nature and condition of man, that He might be in the likeness of man. And he has said well the likeness, not of the flesh, but of men, for He is in the same flesh. But since He alone was without sin, but all men are in sin, He was seen in the form of man. Wherefore the prophet also says, He is a man yet who can know him 23?

Man according to the flesh, but beyond man according to the Divine operation. When he touched the leper He was seen as man, but above man when He cleansed him. When He wept over Lazarus dead, He wept as man, but He was above men when He commanded the dead to come forth with bound feet. He was seen as man when He hung upon the cross, but above man when the graves were opened and He raised the dead.

8. Nor has the Apollinarian venom any cause for complaining because it is thus written, And being found in fashion 24 as a man, for Jesus is not hereby denied to be man, for in another place Paul himself calls Him, The Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, but

|310 rather His manhood is established. For it is the custom and manner of Scripture so to express itself, and we read also in the Gospel, And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father. In the same way therefore that He is called as the only-begotten, yet it is not denied that He is truly the only-begotten Son of God, so He is said to be as man, yet it is not denied that the perfection of manhood existed in Him.

9. While, then, He was in the form of a servant, humbled even unto death, He yet remained in the glory of God. What injury then was His state of subjection to Him? We read that He was made a servant, because we read that He was made of a Virgin and created in the flesh, for every creature is a servant, as the Prophet says; For all things serve Thee. Wherefore also God the Father says, I have found David My servant, with My holy oil have I anointed him. He shall call Me, Thou art my Father, my God, and my strong salvation; and I will make him My

first-born; and in another Psalm, Preserve Thou my soul for I am holy: save Thy servant, and afterwards in the same Psalm, Give Thy strength unto Thy servant, and help the son of Thy

handmaid. Thus I have collected the words of the Father and of the Son, that I may answer not with human arguments but by the Divine oracles.

10. In another passage He says, Into Thy hands I commend My spirit, and, Thou hast set My feet in a large room, and, I became a reproof among all Mine enemies. And in the same Psalm, Shew Thy servant the light of Thy countenance. By the mouth of Isaiah too the Son of God Himself says, From my mother's womb the Lord hath called My name, and He hath made My mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of His hand hath He hid Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver hath He hid Me; and said unto Me, Thou art My servant, O Israel. For the Son of God is also called Israel, as in another place, But thou, Israel, My Servant Jacob, whom I have chosen. For He alone hath truly not only seen but also declared God the Father.

11. And it goes on, In whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have laboured in vain,

I have spent my strength for nothing, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him and Israel. Who hath gathered the people of God but Christ? Who is glorified before the Lord? Who is the Power of God? He to Whom the Father hath said, It is a light thing that Thou shouldst be My servant

25, and He to Whom He says Behold, I will give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, that Thou mightest be My Salvation unto the end of the earth. Of Him He has also spoken by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel, saying, I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even My Servant David, He shall feed them, and He shall be their Shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and My Servant David a Prince among them. Now king David was already dead, and therefore the true David, the truly humble, the truly meek, the true Son of God, strong of hand, is announced by this name; he also is intended in the book of the prophet Zechariah, where God the Father says, Behold I will send my servant, the Orient 26 is His name. Did then His being clothed in filthy garments deprive the Sun of righteousness of the brightness of His Godhead?

12. And why need I say more? Shall we deem servitude to be a state of greater weakness than that of being made sin, of being a curse, a reproach, than the infirmities which He bore for our sakes that we might be saved from them? For He was made all of these that He might relieve the world from them. But they will not admit that He was made a servant, a reproach, a curse, because they affirm that the Word and the flesh are of one substance, and say, Because He redeemed us He is called a servant, and ought to be called sin. And they do not perceive this to be the glory of Christ, that in His Incarnation He took upon Him the state of a servant that He

might restore liberty to all; He bore our sins, that He might take away the sin of the world.

13. He was made a servant, He was made sin and a curse, that thou mightest cease to be a servant of sin, and that He might absolve thee from the curse of the Divine judgment. He therefore took upon Him thy curse, for Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. He was made a curse upon the cross, that thou mightest be blessed in the kingdom of God. He was disgraced, He was vilified and set at nought. He said, I have laboured in vain, through Whom Paul was enabled to say, I have not laboured in vain. This He did that He might confer on His servants the fruit of good works and the glory of the preaching of the Gospel, whereby the world might be released from the

burthen of its toil.

14. On hearing these things the partridge 27 was left in the midst of her days, she who cried that she might gather the things which she did not lay, and was overcome by the voice of the Lord Jesus. And even now is she preparing for flight.

Farewell; love me, for I love you.

LETTER XLVII. [A.D. 390.] This brief letter was sent with a book which Sabinus had asked for. It is a friendly invitation to a regular correspondence, as bringing friends together in spirit who are several in body.

AMBROSE TO SABINUS.

1. I have transmitted the volume you asked for, written more clearly and neatly than the one which I had previously sent, in order that by the facility of its perusal your judgment of it might be unimpeded. For the original copy was written not for appearance, but for use, for I do not always employ a scribe, especially at night, at which time I am unwilling to be a trouble and a burthen to others, and further, because the words I am then dictating flow on with a kind of impetuosity, and in a rapid stream.

2. But as I am desirous to select with precision the |313

words which my old age employs in its familiar intercourse, and to proceed with a slow step, I think the use of my own hands in writing befits me better; that I may seem rather to conceal my words than lustily give vent to them; and may not have to blush at the presence of him who is writing for me, but, having no one in the secret of my words, may weigh what I write with eye as well as with ears. For, in the words of Scripture, the tongue is swifter than the hand; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

3. And though you may perhaps say that the swiftness is here attributed to the writer, the meaning will nevertheless not escape you that it is only the swiftness of a ready writer which can take down the words of the prophetic tongue. The Apostle Paul also wrote with his own hand, as he says himself, I have written unto you with mine own hand. He did it to show honour, we do it from

bashfulness.

4. But while your judgement of my book is still in suspense, let us entertain each other by letters; the advantage whereof is that although severed from each other by distance of space we may be united in affection; for by this means the absent have the image of each other's presence reflected back upon them, and conversation by writing unites the severed. By this means also we interchange thoughts with our friend, and transpose our mind into his.

5. Now if, according to your admonition, there is any savour of ancient writings in our letters, not only do our minds seem to be united by this progress in true doctrine, but also the form and fashion of a more intimate converse seems to be set forth, in that the discussion which is thus entered upon by mutual inquiry and reply appears to place in presence of each other those friends who in this manner challenge and engage one another.

6. And why need I produce the example of our ancestors, who by their letters have instilled faith into the minds of the people, and have written to whole nations together, and have shewn themselves to be present although writing from a distance, according to the words of the Apostle, that he was absent in body, but present in spirit, not only in writing but also in judging. Again, he condemned them

|314 while absent by epistle, and also absolved them by epistle; for the epistle of Paul was a certain image of his presence and form of his work.

7. For the epistles of the Apostles were not, like those of others, weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence weak, and his speech contemptible, but his letter was of that kind that such as was the substance of his work such also was the form of his precept; for such, says he, as we are in word by letters when absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present. He imprinted the image of his presence on his letters, he declared its fruit and testimony in his work.

Farewell; love me, as indeed you do, for I love you.

LETTER XLVIII.

S. Ambrose in this letter begs Sabinus to examine the books which he sends to him carefully, and to criticise them freely, as a proof of true friendship, and at the same time adding to the value of the works.

AMBROSE TO SABINUS.

1. You have sent me back my volumes, and I shall hold them in greater esteem owing to your judgment. I have therefore sent you others, not so much because I was delighted at wishing for your favourable judgment, as of that truth which I have asked and you have promised to declare to me; for should any thing strike you I would rather it had the correction of your judgment before it goes abroad beyond the power of recal, than that you should praise what is blamed by others. It is on this account that I have requested to have your opinion of those things which you asked me to write, for I have not so much desired that what I publish from time to time should be read by you, as that they should be submitted to the account which your judgment shall take of them. And this judgment, as one said of old, will not require

28 a long sitting and delay. For surely it is easy for you to judge of my writings.

|315

2. Thus far, on your invitation, I have thought it right to proceed; it is now your part to discern clearly and examine carefully what requires correction, that you may thus escape being inculpated in those faults which may have stolen unawares upon myself. For somehow over and above that want of caution which envelops me as with a mist, every one is beguiled in what he himself writes, and its faults escape his ear. And as a man takes pleasure in his children even though deformed, so also is a writer flattered by his own discourses however ungraceful. How frequently are words put forth uncautiously or understood less charitably than one means; or some ambiguity escapes from us; things, moreover, which are to be subjected to the judgment of others we ought to weigh not so much by our own as by another's opinion, and to separate from it every grain of malevolence.

3. Be so kind therefore as to lend an ear of keen attention, peruse the whole thoroughly, test my discourses, see whether they contain, not rhetorical charms and persuasive words, but a sound faith and a sober confession. Affix a mark on words of doubtful weight and which are deceitful in the scales, that the adversary may not make out any thing to tell in his favour. Let him meet with defeat if he enters into the contest. That book is in a bad condition, which cannot be defended without a champion; for a book which goes forth without a mediator has to speak for itself; my book however shall not go forth from me, unless it receive authority from you. When then you bid it go forth, and give your word for it, let it be left to its own keeping.

4. But, since the kingdom of God is not in word but in power, if a word offend you consider the power of its profession. By profession I mean that decision of faith which we hold, as handed down by our fathers, against the Sabellians and Arians, that we worship God the Father and His Only-begotten Son and the Holy Spirit, that this Trinity is of one Substance Majesty and Divinity; that in this Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, we baptize, as it is written; that the Son, co-eternal with the Father, took upon Him our flesh, born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, equal to the Father as touching His

[316 Godhead, in the form of God, that is, in all the fulness of the Godhead Which dwells in Him, as the Apostle says, bodily; Who, in the person of man, took upon Him the form of a servant, and humbled Himself even unto death.

5. Wherefore as against Photinus this is our sentence, and as against Apollinaris it is also a proper safeguard; our confession, namely, that as in the form of God He lacked nothing of the Divine nature and fulness, so in that human form there was nothing wanting in Him so as to cause Him to be judged imperfect as Man; for He came in order to save man altogether. Truly it would not have been fitting that He Who had accomplished a perfect work in others should suffer it to be imperfect in Himself; for if aught was wanting to Him as Man, then He did not redeem the whole man, and if He did not redeem the whole man, He deceived us, for He said that He had come in order to save the whole man. But since it is impossible for God to lie, He deceived us not; wherefore, seeing that He came to redeem and save the whole man, He took upon Him the whole of that which belonged to human perfection.

6. Such, as you will remember, is my belief. Should my words in any passage raise a doubt, still they will not raise any prejudice as to my faith, for if the mind continue sted-fast, it extends its protection over ambiguous language, and preserves it from error.

7. This preface then I send you, and will insert it, if you please, in the books of our letters, and place it among their number; that so it may be recommended by your name, and by our letters to each other our mutual love in the Lord, may be increased: that, finally, you may so read as to give me your judgment, and to communicate to me whatever may strike you, for true love is proved by constancy. For the present we have chosen that which old men find more easy, the writing of letters in ordinary and familiar language: subjoining, should such present itself, any appropriate passage from the sacred Scriptures. Farewell, my brother, and love one who is your lover, for I greatly love you. [317 LETTER XLIX. [A.D. 390.]

S. Ambrose says that he never feels less solitary, than when by himself writing to a friend. He then dwells on the benefit of solitude; especially in that we may then have God present with us, and lay

open our souls to Him.

AMBROSE TO SABINUS.

1. Since you also take pleasure in receiving my letters, by means of which, although separated from each other, we discourse together as if present, I will for the future more frequently converse with you by letter when I am alone. For

29 I am never less alone than when I seem to be so, nor ever less at leisure than in the intervals of labour. For then I summon at pleasure whom I will, and associate to myself those whom I love most or find most congenial; no man interrupts or intrudes upon us. Then it is that I more intimately enjoy you, that I confer with you in the Scriptures, that we converse together more at length.

2. Mary was alone when addressed by the Angel, alone when the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her. She was alone when she effected the salvation of the world, and conceived the Redemption of the universe. Peter was alone when the mystery of the sanctification of the Gentiles all over the world was made known to him. Adam was alone, and he fell not, because his mind adhered to God. But when the woman was joined to him he lost his power of abiding by the celestial precepts, and therefore he hid himself when God walked in Paradise.

3. And even now, while I read the sacred Scriptures, God walks in Paradise. The book of Genesis, wherein the virtues of the Patriarchs bud forth, is Paradise; Deuteronomy, wherein grow the precepts of the Law, is also

[318 Paradise, wherein the tree of life brings forth good fruit, and diffuses over all nations the precepts of eternal hope.

4. So when I hear, Love your enemies, when I hear, Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor; when I hear, unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; when I hear these things and do not perform them, nay, when I barely love him who loves me, when I will not part with what I have, when I desire to avenge the injuries I have received, and to recover what has been wrested from me, whereas the Scripture bids me give up more than I have been asked for or deprived of, I perceive that I am acting contrary to the commands of God. Thus opening the eyes of my conscience, I perceive that God is present and walking with me; I desire to hide, I desire to clothe myself; but I am naked in His sight unto Whom all things are naked and opened! I am abashed therefore, and desire to conceal the shame of my crimes as though they were the secret members of my body; but since God sees all things, since I am manifest to Him, though covered with leaves and shaded by thickets, I think to conceal myself from Him by the covering of my body. This is that coat of skins, in which Adam was clothed when he was cast out of Paradise, neither shielded from the cold, nor protected from scorn, but exposed to misery as well as guilt.

5. From whence it appears that it is when alone that we offer ourselves to God, that we open to Him our souls, that we put off the cloak of fraud. Adam was alone when placed in Paradise; alone also when made in the image of God: but when cast out of Paradise he was not alone. The Lord Jesus was alone when He redeemed the world; for it was no herald or messenger, but the Lord Himself alone Who redeemed His people, although He, in Whom the Father always dwells, can never be alone. Let us also then be alone, that the Lord may be with us. Farewell: love me, for I

also love you.

|319

LETTER L. This letter contains an interesting discussion of the question how an evil man like Balaam could be employed by God to utter true prophecies, and deals with other difficulties which arise out of Balaam's history.

AMBROSE TO CHROMATIUS.

1. Does God lie? Truly He lies not, because it is impossible for God to lie. And further, does this impossibility arise from infirmity? No, truly, for how can He be Almighty if He cannot do all things? What then is impossible to Him? Not that which is difficult to His Power, but what is contrary to His Nature. It is impossible, it is said, for Him to lie. This impossibility comes not of infirmity, but of Power and Majesty, for truth admits not of falsehood, nor God's Power of the weakness of error. Wherefore let God be true and every man a liar.

2. The truth therefore is always in Him; He remains faithful; change or deny Himself He cannot. But if He deny that He is true, He lies, but to lie belongs not to power but to weakness. Nor can He change, for His nature admits not infirmity. This impossibility therefore comes of His fulness, which cannot be diminished or increased, not of infirmity, which, in that it increases itself, is weak. Whence we gather that this impossibility on the part of God is indeed most powerful. For what can be more powerful than to be ignorant of all infirmity?

3. There is however another weakness of God which is stronger than men, and a foolishness of God which is wiser than men, but this has reference to the Cross, the former to His Godhead. If then His weakness is strength, how can that which comes of His power be weak? Let it therefore be an axiom with us that God lies not.

4. But there was no diviner of auguries in Israel according to the law of God. How then was it that Balaam said that he was forbidden by the oracle of God to go and curse the people of Israel, and yet he went, and the Angel of the Lord who had forbidden his going, met him, and stood in the way of the ass that carried him, and nevertheless the Angel himself bid him go, only he must speak that which

|320 should be put into his mouth? If there was to be no deceiver in Israel, how did this oracle of God, declaring things for true, come to him who was a deceiver? If he spoke as the oracle of God, whence did he derive the grace of the Divine inspiration?

5. But you are not to wonder that the Lord should put into the mouth of a diviner what he should speak, when you read in the Gospel that it was put into the mouth even of the prince of the Synagogue, one of the persecutors of Christ, that it is expedient that one man should die for the people? Herein then is no merit of prophecy, but an assertion of the truth; that by the testimony even of adversaries the truth might be declared, so that the perfidy of unbelievers might be confuted by the words even of their own diviners. Just so Abraham

30 the Chaldaean is called to belief, that the superstition of the Chaldaeans might be put to silence. It is not therefore the merit of him who utters, but rather the oracle of God Who calls, the grace of God Who reveals.

6. Now what was the guilt which Balaam incurred, but that he spoke one thing, and designed another? For God requires a clean vessel, not one defiled by uncleanness and pollution. Balaam therefore was tried, not approved, for he was full of deceit and treachery. Again, when he first enquired whether he should go to that vain people, and was forbidden, he excused himself: afterwards, when more honourable messages were sent, he who ought to have refused consent, seduced by ampler promises and more abundant gifts, was led again to enquire of God, as if many gifts could influence the mind of God.

7. Answer was made to him as to a covetous man, not as to one who sought the truths that so he might rather be deceived than rightly informed. He set out, an Angel met him in a narrow place, and shewed himself to the ass,

[321 but not to the diviner. To the former he revealed himself, the latter he crushed; yet, that he might at length be recognized by him, he opened his eyes also. He saw, but even yet he did not believe the manifest oracle, and though his very eyes ought to have convinced him, he answered confusedly and doubtingly.

8. Then the Lord, being angry, said to him by the Angel, Go with the men, but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that shall thou speak. As an empty instrument you shall give utterance to My words. It is I Who will speak, not you; you will only echo what you hear and do not understand. You will gain no advantage by going, because you will return without either a reward of money or progress in grace. Again, these are his first words, How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? in order to shew that the benediction of the Hebrew people depended not on his will but on the grace of God.

9. From the top of the rocks, he says, I see him; for I cannot embrace within my ken this people, which shall dwell alone, marking out their boundaries, not so much by the occupation of space as by the abode of virtue, and extending them into eternal ages by the distinctive peculiarity of their manners. For which of the bordering nations shall be numbered with this one, which is raised above their fellowship by its exalted righteousness? Who shall understand the nature of its generation? Their bodies we indeed perceive to have been compounded and fashioned of human seed, but their minds have sprung from higher and wondrous seed-plots.

10. Let my soul die with their souls, die to this bodily life, that with the souls of the just it may attain to the grace of that eternal life. Herein even then was revealed the excellence of our heavenly Sacrament and of holy Baptism, by the operation whereof men die to original sin and to evil works; that being transformed by newness of life into fellowship with the just they may rise again to live as do the just. And what wonder is it that it should be so, when men die to sin in order to live to God?

11. Balak hearing this, was wroth and said, 'I brought thee to curse and thou blessest.' He answered, 'I am

[322 reprov'd for that of which I am not conscious; for I speak nothing of my own, but utter sounds like a tinkling cymbal.' Again, being carried to a second and a third place, although he wished to curse, he blessed; He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel; the Lord his God is with him. And afterwards he commands seven altars and sacrifices to be prepared. He ought, indeed, to have departed, but his weak mind and mutability of purpose led him to believe that he could turn aside the Will of God: he himself, the while, being in a trance,

desired one thing but spoke another.

12. How goodly, said he, are thy tents, O host of the Hebrews! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side and as cedar trees beside the waters. A man shall come out of Jacob, and shall subdue many nations, and his kingdom shall be exalted on high: in the earth also he shall extend his dominion in Egypt. Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee. Now to whom did he point but to the people of Christ? God blesses him into whose heart the Word of God enters, even to the dividing asunder of the soul, and of the joints and marrow; in him Balaam would have found the grace of the Lord if he had acted according to the intent and purpose of his heart. But since an evil mind is confuted by its own counsels, and the secrets of the soul are betrayed by events, his mind was thus discovered by the treachery which followed.

13. Therefore also he met with a worthy reward of his malice. For finding while in his trance that he could not curse, he gives his advice to the king, saying, ' Such is the utterance of what God has commanded, hear now my counsel against the oracles of God. This people is just, it has the protection of God: since it has not given itself to divinations and auguries, but to the eternal God above; and therefore its faith excels that of others. But sometimes even faithful minds fall through corporeal charms and the blandishments of beauty. Numerous are your women, and many of them not uncomely; now the male sex is in no respect more prone to fall than through the frailty with which it is captivated by female beauty, particularly if their

323 minds are excited by frequent converse, and thus become inflamed as by a torch; if, while they drink in the hope of enjoying, their passions are kept in suspense. Let your women therefore cast their hooks by their converse, let them offer no obstacles to a first access, but roam abroad and spread themselves through the camp, exposed to view and affable of speech. Let them so artfully deal with these men as not to admit them to carnal intercourse until they shall have proved the strength of their love by becoming participators in sacrilege. For they may thus be deprived of the protection of heaven, if they shall themselves depart by sacrilege from the Lord their God.'

14. Unrighteous therefore, as the counsellor of fornication and sacrilege, was Balaam; for thus it is plainly written in the Apocalypse of John the Evangelist, when the Lord Jesus says to the Angel of the Church of Pergamos; Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication; so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Wherefore it appears that from hence has flowed the impiety of the Manichees, like that of Manasseh, who mingle and unite sacrilege with impurity.

15. Neither, then, was God unjust, nor His purpose mutable; for He detected Balaam's mind and the secrets of his heart, and He therefore tried him as a diviner, He did not choose him as a prophet. Surely he ought to have been converted if it were only by the grace of such great oracles and the sublimity of his revelations, but his mind, full of iniquity, brought forth words but did not yield belief, seeking to frustrate by its counsels that event which it had predicted. And since he could not defeat the prophecy, he suggested deceitful counsels whereby the fickle people of the Jews were tempted but not overcome; for by the righteousness of one priest all the counsel of this wicked man was overthrown, and that the host of our fathers could be delivered by one man was much more wonderful than that it could be deceived by one man.

10. This little gift I have sent to your Holiness, because |324

you wish me to compile somewhat from the interpretations of the ancient authors. But I had undertaken to write letters in a familiar style, savouring of the tone of thought of our fathers; and should you relish their flavour I shall be emboldened to send you of the same kind hereafter. For I prefer conversing garrulously with you like an old man concerning heavenly things, which is called in Greek

adolesxh~sai: Isaac went forth into the field, adolesxh~sai, seeing in his mind, on the approach of Rebecca, the mysteries of the Church which was to come: this conversing with you with the words of an old man, that I may not seem to have abandoned my art, I prefer, I say, to uttering in a more vehement style things no longer adapted to our studies or strength.

Farewell: love me, for I also love you.

[Footnotes moved to the end and numbered. Marginal biblical references and running headers mostly omitted] 1. 1 spiritum. Rom. x. 10.

2. 2 sacramentum.

3. 1 refrigerat.

4. a The Latin title is 'Magister equitum et peditum' When the Praefecti Praetorio became civil rather than military officers, the chief command of the armies was transferred to two high officers, called, one 'Magister equitum,' and the other 'Magister peditum. When the empire was divided these

became four, and eventually the number was increased to eight, who were all called 'Magistri equitum et peditum.' See Gibbon ch. xvii. 3.

5. b i. e. the 'Comes Orientis,' under whose jurisdiction the matter was, and who had sent the report to the Emperor, see Lett. xl. 6.

6. 1 sospitatis indicio.

7. a This sentence as it stands in the text is incomplete, the 'quia' having no correlative. The 'at vero quia

seems like 'at enim' in Classical Latin, or perhaps the 'quia' should be omitted.

8. b See Letter xix, 7. S. Ambrose in De Abraham B 1. c 9, 93 alludes to the use of the veil in Christian marriages.

9. c This name appears in the reply of the Milan Synod as Plotinus, which is probably the true form.

10. a There are three laws in the code of Theodosius directed against the Manichees, one of the year 372, A.D. which forbade them to hold assemblies, one of 389, A.D. and one of 391. A.D.

ordering their banishment. It is probably the second of these that is referred to, though Gothofred refers it to the third, in which case the date of the Letter must be altered.

11. b All these names except Geminianus occur in the list of Bishops present at the Council of Aquileia. See p. 60.

12. 1 nou~j.

13. a This whole passage is full of expressions borrowed from Virgil.

14. Exod. xiv. 29. S. John xxi. 7. Bel and the Dragon 36.

15. a This title seems here to be applied especially to the constellations of the Pleiades and Hyades, each of which consisted of seven stars.

16. b See note on Letter xxvi. 9.

17. 1 morsus hominum. E.V. 'principal men.'

18. c Devoravit mors praevalens. The E. V. is, 'He will swallow up death in victory.' The Vulg. has, 'Praecipitabit mortem in sempiternum.' 19. d The word 'vitae' is here inserted as necessary to the sense, and to the accuracy of the quotation.

20. 1 nouj.

21. 1 diminuit. Exod. xvi. 18.

22. 2 ampliavit.

23. a This agrees with the LXX, *kai\ a!nqrwpo&j e0sti kai\ gnw&setai au)to&n*;

24. 1 specie.

25. 2 puerum.

26. b 'Ecce ego mittam servum meum, Oriens nomen Ejus.' Vulg. has 'Ecce ego adducam servum meum Orientem.' 'Oriens nomen Ejus' comes in v. 12. 'Behold I will bring forth my servant the Branch.' The same word in the original is used also in Is. iv. 2. Jerem. xxiii. 5. xxxiii. 15. and in all those passages the Vulg. renders it by 'Germen.' In the passages of Zech. and, Jerem. the LXX. have the word *a0natolh&*. The word in the original means 'a sprout' or 'shoot.' 27. b See Letter xxxii. 1.

28. a He is quoting from a letter of Cicero's. Ep. ix. 3. Longi subsellii, ut noster Pompeius appellat, judicatio et mora.

29. a He is here quoting from Cicero De off. iii. 1, when; Cicero gives as a saying of Scipio Africanus, on the authority of Cato, 'nuquam se minus

otiosum esse quam quum otiosus, nec minus solum quam quum solus esset.' It is quoted, again by S. Ambrose in De off. Min. iii. 1, 107.

30. a This is the reading of most MSS, according to the, Benedictine Editors. And, though the connection of ideas is somewhat abrupt, they explain it to be, that, as the gift of faith was bestowed on Abraham the Chaldean, so the gift of prophecy was bestowed on Balaam. All the other Editions have 'Balaam' instead of 'Abraham.' This makes the connection easier, but then

'adscitur ad fidem' is strangely applied to him, and it could only mean, 'is employed to utter the truth.' He might be called a Chaldean as the common name among the Romans for Eastern diviners generally. This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2004. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely.

Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SPlonic font, free from here.

Early Church Fathers - Additional Texts

Letters - Letters 51-60

St. Ambrose of Milan, Letters (1881). pp. 324-354. Letters

51-60.

- Letter 51: To the emperor Theodosius
- Letter 52: To Titianus
- Letter 53: To the emperor Theodosius
- Letter 54: To Eusebius
- Letter 55: To Eusebius
- Letter 56: To Theophilus of Alexandria
- Letter on the case of Bonosus
- Letter 57: To the emperor Eugenius
- Letter 58: To Sabinus
- Letter 59: To Severus, Bishop of Naples
- Letter 60: To Paternus

LETTER LI. [A.D. 390.] This is the famous Letter addressed by S. Ambrose to Theodosius after the massacre at Thessalonica. The details of that occurrence are too familiar to need repeating here. In this Letter S. Ambrose explains to the Emperor why he had avoided meeting him on his return to Milan, and urges him with respectful and most affectionate, but firm remonstrance, to follow David in penitence as he had followed him in crime, and tells him that God Himself had in a vision forbidden him to offer the Sacrifice of the Eucharist in his behalf while he remained impenitent. The Letter, far from deserving Gibbon's scornful title of 'a miserable rhapsody on a noble subject,' may rather be regarded as a model of dignified remonstrance, well befitting an eminent prelate addressing a great earthly Sovereign.

AMBROSE, BISHOP, TO HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR THEODOSIUS.

1. VERY pleasant to me is the remembrance of your long friendship, and I also bear a grateful sense of those benefits which at my frequent intreaties you have most graciously extended to others. You may be sure then that it could not be from any ungrateful feeling that on your arrival, which I was wont to long for so ardently, I shunned your presence. The motives of my conduct I will now briefly explain.

|325

2. I found that I alone in all your court was denied the natural right of hearing, in order to deprive me of the power of speaking too: for you were frequently displeased at decisions having reached me which were made in your Consistory. Thus I have been debarred from the common privilege of men, though the Lord Jesus says, Nothing is secret which shall not be made manifest. Wherefore I did my utmost to obey with reverence your royal will, and I provided both for you and for myself; for you, that you should have no cause of disturbance, to which end I endeavoured that no intelligence should be brought me of the Imperial decrees; and as to myself, I provided against my not seeming to hear, when present, from fear of others, and thus incurring the charge of connivance, and also against hearing in such manner that while my ears were open my mouth must be closed, and I must not utter what I heard, lest I should injure those who had fallen under suspicion of treachery.

3. What then was I to do? was I not to listen? But I could not close my ears with the wax of the old tales. Must I disclose what I heard? But then I had reason to fear that the same result which I apprehended from your commands would ensue from my own words; that they might become the cause of bloodshed. Was I then to be silent? But this would be the most miserable of all, for my conscience would be bound, my liberty of speech taken away. And what then of the text, if the priest warn not the wicked from his wicked way, the wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but the priest shall be liable to punishment, because he did not warn him?

4. Suffer me, gracious Emperor. You have a zeal for the faith, I own it, you have the fear of God, I confess it: but you have a vehemence of temper, which if soothed may readily be changed into compassion, but if inflamed becomes so violent that you can scarcely restrain it. If no one will allay it, let no one at least inflame it. To yourself I would willingly trust, for you are wont to exercise self-control, and by your love of mercy to conquer this violence of your nature.

5. This vehemence of yours I have preferred secretly to |326

commend to your consideration, rather than run the risk of rousing it publicly by my acts, And so I have preferred to be lacking somewhat in duty rather than in humility, and that others should complain of my want of priestly authority, rather than that you should find any want of respect in me, who am so devoted to you; and this in order that you may restrain your emotions, and have full power of choosing what counsel to follow. I alleged as my reason, bodily sickness, which was in fact severe, and not to be mitigated but by more gentle treatment; still I would rather have died than not have waited two or three days for your arrival. But I could not do so.

6. An act has been committed in the city of Thessalonica, the like of which is not recorded, the perpetration of which I could not prevent, which in my frequent petitions before the court I had declared to be most atrocious, and which by your tardy revocation you have yourself pronounced to be very heinous: such an act as this I could not extenuate. Intelligence of it was first brought to a synod held on the arrival of the Galilean Bishops: all present deplored it, no one viewed it leniently; your friendship with Ambrose, so far from excusing your deed, would have even brought a heavier weight of odium on my head, had there been no one found to declare the necessity of your being reconciled to God.

7. Is your Majesty ashamed to do that which the Royal Prophet David did, the forefather of Christ according to the flesh? It was told him that a rich man, who had numerous flocks, on the arrival of

a guest took a poor man's lamb and killed it, and recognizing in this act his own condemnation, he said, I have sinned against the Lord. Let not your Majesty then be impatient at being told, as David was by the prophet, Thou art the man. For if you listen thereto obediently and say, I have sinned against the Lord, if you will use those words of the royal Prophet, O come let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker, to you also it shall be said, Because thou repentest, the Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die.

8. Another time, when David had commanded the people to be numbered, his heart smote him, and he said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done, and now, I

[327 beseech thee O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly. And Nathan the prophet was sent again to him, to offer him three things, to choose one of them, which he would; seven years famine in the land, or to flee three months before his enemies, or three days pestilence in the land. And David said, I am in a great strait, let us now fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man. His fault lay in wishing to know the number of all the people which were with him, a knowledge which ought to have been reserved for God.

9. And Scripture tells us that when the people were dying, on the very first day and at dinner time, David saw the Angel that smote the people, he said, Lo, I have sinned and done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? let Thine hand, I pray Thee, be against me, and against my father's house. So the Lord repented, and commanded the Angel to spare the people, and that David should offer sacrifice: for there were then sacrifices for sin, but we have now the sacrifices of penitence. So by that humility he was made more acceptable to God, for it is not wonderful that man should sin, but it is indeed blameable if he do not acknowledge his error, and humble himself before God.

10. Holy Job, himself also powerful in this world, saith, I covered not my sin, but declared it before all the people. And to the cruel king Saul Jonathan his son said, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; and Wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood to slay David without a cause? For although he was a king he still would have sinned in slaying the innocent. Again when David was possessed of the kingdom, and heard that innocent Abner had been slain by Joab the Captain of his host, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner, and he fasted for sorrow.

11. This I have written, not to confound you, but that these royal examples may induce you to put away this sin from your kingdom; for this you will do by humbling your soul before God. You are a man; temptation has fallen upon you; vanquish it. Sin is not washed away but by

[328 tears and penitence. Neither Angel nor Archangel can do it. The Lord Himself, Who alone can say I am with you; even He grants no remission of sin save to the penitent.

12. I advise, I entreat, I exhort, I admonish; for I am grieved that you who were an example of singular piety, who stood so high for clemency, who would not suffer even single offenders to be put in jeopardy, should not mourn over the death of so many innocent persons. Successful as you have been in battle, and great in other respects, yet mercy was ever the crown of your actions. The devil has envied you your chief excellence: overcome him, while you still have the means. Add not sin to sin by acting in a manner which has injured so many.

13. For my part, debtor as I am to your clemency in all other things; grateful as I must ever be for this clemency, which I have found superior to that of many Emperors and equalled only by one, though I have no ground for charging you with contumacy, I have still reason for apprehension: if you purpose being present, I dare not offer the Sacrifice. That which may not be done when the blood of one innocent person has been shed, may it be done where many have been slain? I trow not.

14. Lastly, I will write with my own hand what I wish should be read by yourself only. As I hope for deliverance from all tribulation from the Lord, it has not been from man, nor by man's agency that this has been forbidden me, but by His own manifest interposition. For in the midst of my anxiety, on the very night whereon I was about to set out, I saw you in a vision coming into the Church, but I was withheld from offering Sacrifice. Other things I pass over, which I might have avoided, but I bore them for your sake, I believe. May the Lord cause all things to turn out peacefully. Our God gives us divers admonitions, by heavenly signs, by prophetic warnings; and by visions vouchsafed even to sinners, He would have us understand that we ought to beseech Him to remove from us commotions, that He would bestow peace on you, our rulers, that the Church, for whose benefit it is that we should have pious and Christian Emperors, may be kept in faith and tranquillity.

[329

15. Doubtless you wish to be approved by God. To every thing there is a season, as it is written; It is time for Thee Lord, saith the prophet, to lay to Thine hand, and, It is an acceptable time to God. You shall make your oblation when you have received permission to sacrifice, when your offering will be pleasing to God. Would it not be a delight to me to enjoy your Majesty's favour, and act in accordance with your will, if the case permitted it? Prayer by itself is a sacrifice; it obtains pardon while the oblation would be rejected, for the former is evidence of humility, the latter of contempt: for God Himself tells us that He prefers the performance of His commandments to sacrifice. God proclaims this, Moses announces it to the people, Paul preaches it to them. Do that which you understand is for the time better. I will have mercy, it is said, and not sacrifice. Are not those therefore rather to be called Christians who condemn their own sin than those who think to excuse it? The just accuses himself in the beginning of his words. He who, having sinned, accuses himself, not he who praises himself, is just.

16. I would that previously to this I had trusted rather to myself than to your accustomed habits. Remembering that you quickly pardon, and revoke your sentence, as you have often done, you have been anticipated, and I have not shunned that which I had no need to fear. But thanks to the Lord, Who chastises His servants, that they may not be lost. This I share with the prophets, and you shall share it with the saints.

17. Shall not I value the father of Gratian at more than my own eyes? Your other sacred pledges too claim pardon for you. On those whom I regarded with impartial affection I conferred by anticipation a name that is dear to me. You have my love, my affection, my prayers. If you believe my words, I call on you to act according to them; if, I say, you believe, acknowledge it, but if not, excuse my conduct in that I prefer God to my sovereign. May your gracious Majesty, with your holy offspring, enjoy in happiness and prosperity perpetual peace. [330 LETTER LII. [A.D.392.]

TITIANUS, or Tatianus, for both forms of the name are given, was a person in high position under Theodosius, and filled the office of Praetorian Praefect. He had incurred, as this Letter implies, the enmity of the Emperor's favourite minister Rufinus, who eventually procured his exile. He is here congratulated on Rufinus' removal from the position of 'Master of the offices,' and thereby from exercising an unfavourable influence on some private suit in which Tatianus was engaged.

AMBROSE TO TITIANUS.

1. You have obtained a harmless victory, enjoying the security of victory without the bitterness of entreaty; for Rufinus from being Master of the Offices

1, has been made in his consulate a Praetorian Praefect. By this he has acquired more power for himself, but to you he can be hurtful no longer, for he is become the Praefect of another district. I greatly rejoice both with him, as a friend, in having thus received an increase of honour, and at the same time a relief from odium, and also with you, as a son. And this, because you are delivered from him whom you deemed would be too rigid a judge to you, so that if you shall have arranged your business with your grand-daughter, it will have arisen from your affection, not from fear.

2. Exert yourself, therefore, to obtain an adjustment, both the hope and profit of which are now greater: the hope, because the father of your grand-daughter, who promised himself much from the sentence of Rufinus, has no longer anything to hope from him; for Rufinus is now concerned about other things, and neglects the past, or has laid it aside together with the office which he then held; the father now looks rather to the merits of his cause, than to a patron of his sentiments; the fruit too of an adjustment will be sweeter, for the credit of it must be ascribed to yourself; for you might have scorned it, and have not

[331 done so, regarding the pious claims of kindred, rather than the angry suggestions of injury.

Farewell: love me as a son, for I love you as a parent.

LETTER LIII. [A.D.392.]

S. AMBROSE here writes to Theodosius to express his grief at the death of Valentinian II, and mentions the preparations made for his burial. S. Ambrose spoke his funeral oration, which is extant, and is full of expressions of deep attachment. Valentinian had been slain by Arbogastes, who put Eugenius on the throne.

AMBROSE TO THE EMPEROR THEODOSIUS.

1. YOUR Majesty's letter has broken my silence; for I had persuaded myself that in sorrow so great I could do nothing better than withdraw into retirement. But not being able to conceal myself in any retreat, or abdicate my bishopric, I at least retired within myself by silence.

2. I am filled, I confess, with bitter grief, not only because the death of Valentinian has been premature, but also because, having been trained in the faith and moulded by your teaching, he had conceived such devotion towards our God, and was so tenderly attached to myself, as to love one whom he had before persecuted, and to esteem as his father the man whom he had before repulsed as his enemy. I have mentioned this not for the sake of recalling former wrongs, but as a proof of his conversion. For the one he learnt from others, the other was his own, and retained by

him when once received from you, so firmly, as to fortify him against all the arguments of his mother. He .professed that he owed his education to me, he longed for me as for a careful parent, and when some pretended to have received tidings of my arrival, he anticipated it with impatience. Moreover, on those very days of public mourning, although he had within the limits of Gaul holy and eminent bishops of the Lord, he thought proper nevertheless to write to me to confer upon him the Sacrament of Baptism. By this request, in an unreasonable but affectionate way, he gave testimony of his love towards me.

[332

3. Shall I not then sigh after him with my inmost spirit, shall I not embrace him in the secret recesses of my heart and soul? Shall I deem him dead to me? Yes, indeed to me he is assuredly dead. How thankful was I to the Lord, that he was so changed towards me, so improved, and had assumed a character so much more mature. How thankful also was I to your Clemency, in that you had not only restored him to his kingdom, hut also, what is more, had disciplined him in your own faith and piety. Shall I not weep therefore that he, while fresh in years, and before he had obtained as he desired the grace of the Sacraments, has met with a sudden death? It has been a solace to my mind that you have yourself condescended to testify to my grief. I have your Majesty for judge of my affections and interpreter of my thoughts.

4. But hereafter we shall have time for sorrow; let us now care for his sepulture, which your Clemency has commanded to take place in this city. If he has died without Baptism, I now keep back what I know. We have here a most beautiful porphyry vessel, and well adapted for the purpose; for Maximian the colleague of Diocletian was so buried. There are also very precious tablets of porphyry, to encase the covering in which the royal remains are inclosed.

5. All this was prepared, but we waited for your Majesty's order; and its arrival has comforted your holy daughters, sisters of your son Valentinian, who greatly afflict themselves, and the more in that for a long while they received no answer. This has been no small solace to them, but so long as his remains lie unburied, they do not spare themselves, for they daily imagine that they are celebrating the funeral of their brother. And in truth they never are without many tears and heavy sorrow, and whenever they visit his body they return almost lifeless. It will be for their good therefore, and for that of his beloved remains, that the burial should shortly take place, lest the heat of summer should wholly dissolve them, for its first fervour is scarcely past.

6. I observe your command and commend it to the Lord; may He love you, for you love the Lord's servants. [333 LETTER LIV. [A.D.392.] THE Eusebius to whom this and the following letters are addressed is probably not the Bp. of Bologna who took a leading part in the Council of Aquileia, though he appears to be also connected with Bologna, (Lett. Iv. 2.). S. Ambrose does not write to him in the style in which he would address an eminent Ecclesiastic. He was probably a layman, on very intimate terms with S. Ambrose, as the whole tone of the Letters implies. Both are on affairs of private life, both, especially the latter, are written in a tone of playful pleasantry and a not irreverent adaptation of sacred things, such as has often marked the familiar correspondence of a great Bishop.

Eusebius seems to have had a son Faustinus, and this son a large family, of whom another Faustinus an Ambrosius and an Ambrosia are here mentioned. It was to this Eusebius, on the

occasion of Ambrosia's dedication as a professed Virgin, that S. Ambrose wrote the treatise 'De Institutione Virginis.' She is the 'sancta soror,' the 'holy sister' of Lett. liv.

AMBROSE TO EUSEBIUS.

1. The Secretary of the Prefecture, who had got into trouble on account of the works at Portus

2 is now safe in port. He came at the right moment, for as soon as I received your letters I saw the Prefect, and interceded for him; and he immediately pardoned him, and ordered the letter which he had dictated for the sale of his goods to be recalled. Even if his arrival had been less speedy, no man would more readily have admitted the embarrassments attending that work of repairing the port than he who would have made shipwreck therein had he not had you for his pilot; and from whence he could otherwise only have escaped with his bare life.

2. The little Faustinus is suffering from a cough, and has come to his holy sister to be cured, and came willingly, for he found that the complaint of his stomach is better cared for here. He also considers me to be a physician and looks to me for his dinner. So he has his medicine here twice a day, and he had begun to get strong, but while from their too great love they keep him away, his stomach-cough has

[334 returned, worse than before, and unless he returns to his medicines he will still suffer from it. Farewell: love me, for I also love you.

LETTER LV. [A.D.392.] AMBROSE TO EUSEBIUS.

1. THE two Faustines are herewith restored to you, the two little Ambroses stay with me. You have in the father what is best, in the younger son what is most agreeable; for you have at once the summit of virtue, and shew forth the grace of humility, I have what is intermediate between father and younger son. With you is the head of the whole family, and the continuous succession of a name handed down; with me remains that frugal mean which both depends upon the head, and has a common being with what follows it. You have him who is our common rest, who when he comes to me in my turn, smooths all the cares of my soul. You have him who alike by his life and works, and by his offspring has found favour with our Lord, you have him who in the storms of this world nourished a spiritual dove, to bring him the fruit of peace, anointed with the oil of chastity. You have him who built an altar to the Lord, he whom God blessed together with his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply; with whom He established the covenant of His peace, that it might be unto him and his sons for perpetual generations.

2. You have then one who is an heir of Divine benediction, a partner in grace, a sharer in righteousness. But take care, I beseech you, that this our husbandman Noah, the good planter of the fruitful vineyard, does not become inebriated with the cup of your love and favour, as one filled with wine, and so indulge too long in rest, and then if haply he fall asleep the longing for our Shem awake him.

3. There also is Japhet the youngest of the brethren, who with pious reverence may cover his father's nakedness,

[335 whom his father may see even in sleep and never dismiss from his remembrance, but keep him ever in his sight and in his bosom, and when he wakes may know what his younger son has

done unto him. In Latin his name signifies 'health' in that grace is spread over his lips and over his life, wherefore God hath blessed him, because he, going backward, one may say, to Bologna, covered his father with the pious garment of charity, and shewed honour to piety; of whom also his father said, God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem. Wherefore also in the enumeration of this generation he is preferred to his elder brother, he is substituted for him in the blessing: he is preferred in regard of honour to his name, he is substituted in regard of the prerogative of elder birth and the honour due to nature.

4. Now in Latin Shem signifies a 'name.' And truly is this Ambrose of ours a good name, in whose tents Japhet may be enlarged, because a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. Let him therefore also be blessed, let his name be above gold and silver, let the seed of Abraham be in his portion, let all his blessing rest on his posterity, and on the whole family of the just man. But no one is cursed, all are blessed, for blessed is the fruit of Sarah.

5. The Ambroses salute you, the beloved Parthenius salute you, so does Valentinian, disposed to humility, which is in Hebrew 'Canaan', being as it were the servant of his brother, to whom he has also given place as regards his name. And therefore he is like Nimrod, mighty in his double name, a great hunter upon the earth, of whom it is said; Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. For being somewhat rude in intellect, but of great bodily strength, he surpasses in strength those whose genius he cannot equal; so that he would seem to carry with him the Comacine

3 rocks, and to resemble them in his outward appearance, being as he is somewhat like a bull, wrathful at being set aside, at being deprived of his paternal name,

[336 at being subjected, through an inhabitant of the capital, to one from Bologna, for he knows not the blandishments of infancy, and sprung without suffering injury from his nurse's bosom.

Farewell: love me for I love you.

LETTER LVI. [A.D. 392.] A NOTE in p. 71 gives a brief outline of the schism in the Church of Antioch up to the time of the Council of Aquileia, which made some efforts to bring about a settlement. Meletius was then succeeded by Flavian, so that there still remained two rival Bishops, Flavian and Paulinus. Another opportunity for closing the schism came at Paulinas' death, at the end of 388 A.D., but so far from allowing the wound to be so healed Paulinus on his deathbed consecrated Evagrius as his successor in violation of the Canons of Nicaea, (Theod. H.E. v. 23) which 'do not allow a Bishop to appoint his successor, but require all the Bishops of the province to be summoned to elect, and forbid consecration without at least three consecrating Bishops.' The western Bishops therefore continued to press Theodosius to call a Council to deal with the matter, which was accordingly assembled at Capua. Flavian, though ordered by the Emperor, did not appear, and the Council referred the question to the decision of Theophilus of Alexandria and the Bishops of Egypt, who were not committed to either side, and in this letter S. Ambrose replies to Theophilus who had written to him that Flavian still refused to submit himself to their decision and again appealed to the Emperor, and urges him to summon Flavian once more, and endeavour to bring the matter to a peaceful issue, advising him to consult also Siricius, the Bishop of Rome. He points out that both parties rely rather on the weakness of their opponent's case than on the soundness of their own, and expresses a hope that an end may be put to the schism, and peace restored to the Church. Tillemont, in note 41 on the Life of S. Ambrose, discusses the date of the

Synod of Capua, and fixes it at the end of A.D. 391, chiefly on the ground that Theodosius did not return to Constantinople from Milan till November of that year, while it must have been held before the disturbance in the west occasioned by the revolt of Arbogastes and the death of Valentinian, which took place in the spring of A.D. 392.

AMBROSE TO THEOPHILUS.

1. EVAGRIUS has no good ground for preferring his claim, Flavian has cause to fear, and therefore avoids the trial. Let our brethren pardon our just grief, for on account of these men the whole world is agitated, yet they do not sympathize with our grief. Let them at least patiently

[337 suffer themselves to be censured by those whom they perceive to have been for so long a time harassed by their obstinacy. For between these two who would agree upon nothing which appertains to the peace of Christ, a grievous discord has arisen and spread through the whole world.

2. To this shipwreck of pious peace the holy Council of Capua had at length opened an haven of tranquillity; that communion should be given to all throughout the East who profess the Catholic faith, and that the cause of these two men should be referred to the judgment of your Holiness, and to our brethren and fellow-bishops of Egypt, as assessors. For we deemed your judgment likely to be true, in that, having embraced the communion of neither party, it would be inclined by no favour towards either side.

3. But while we were hoping that by these most equitable decrees of the Council a remedy was now provided, and an end put to discord, your Holiness writes word that our brother Flavian has again had recourse to the aid of prayers, and to the support of Imperial Rescripts. And thus the toil of so many Bishops has been spent to no purpose; we must have recourse once more to the civil tribunals, to the Imperial Rescripts, once more must they cross the seas, once more, though weak in body, exchange their own country for a foreign soil, once more must the Holy Altars be deserted that we may travel to distant lands, once more crowds of indigent Bishops, whose poverty was before no burthen to them, but who now need external aid, must suffer want themselves, or at any rate use for their journey what else had fed the poor.

4. Meanwhile Flavian, alone exempt, as he fancies, from the laws, does not come when all others are assembled. The money-lender and debtor meet each other, these men alone cannot meet: Flavian by his own will deprives himself of Episcopal fellowship, and will not appear in person either at the Imperial order, or when cited by his brethren.

5. Nevertheless, even this cause of offence does not induce me to consider our brother Evagrius entirely in the right, although he seems to himself the more defensible

[338 either because Flavian avoids him, or because he thinks his opponent to be in no better case than himself, each of them relying more on the defects of his opponent's ordination than on the validity

4 of his own. We however would recall them to a better course, wishing them to be aided rather by the goodness of their own cause than by the defects of others.

6. Now since you have stated in your letter that some form may be devised touching this matter, whereby the discord of our brethren may be removed; and as the holy Synod has trusted the right of cognizance to the unanimous judgment of yourself and our other fellow-bishops from Egypt, it is fitting that you should again summon our brother Flavian, so that, if he should persist in not choosing to appear, you may then without prejudice to the decrees of the Council of Nice, and also of the Synod of Capua, take such measures for the preservation of general peace as may not destroy what has been built up: For if I destroy what I have built, or build again what I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. Let the grace of that peace which has been obtained be thus preserved by all, and the refusal of either party to appear will not have the effect of frustrating it.

7. Moreover we are of opinion that it will be well for you to refer to our holy brother the Bishop of the Roman Church; for we do not doubt that what you shall determine he also will approve. For the resolution that is come to will be useful, and our peace and quiet will be secure, if such a decree is made by your advice as shall not create discord in our communion. And thus we also, receiving the series of your decrees, and assured that the Roman Church has given its undoubting approbation to what has been done, shall with gladness participate in the result of this trial. [339 LETTER ON THE CASE OF BONOSUS. [A.D. 392 or 393.] THIS letter is certainly not written by S. Ambrose, though included among his letters. The writer of it speaks of 'our brother Ambrose.' Tillemont discusses the authorship in a note, (45.) and makes it probable that it was written by Siricius. The case of Bonosus had been brought before the Synod of Capua, and they had decided that it should be referred to the Bishops of Macedonia, under the presidency of Amysius Bishop of Thessalonica, as being his nearest neighbours. These Bishops seem to have written a letter to consult Siricius, the Bishop of Rome, and this is believed to be his reply, in which he declines to interfere with their decision, only adding a few remarks upon one point. Bonosus was Bishop of Sardica 5 in Illyria, and the founder of an obscure sect. They were accused of Photinianism, and Bonosus is called a fore-runner of Nestorius, but the Helvidian doctrines of which this letter speaks are the most clearly ascertained of their errors. The sect survived at least till the sixth Century. A LETTER CONCERNING THE DECIDING OF THE CASE OF BONOSUS, ACCORDING TO THE DECREE OF THE SYNOD OF CAPUA.

1. You have written to us a Letter concerning Bishop Bonosus in which, either from love of truth or from modesty, you enquire our opinion. But since it has been the judgment of the Council of Capua that those who are neighbours to Bonosus and his accusers should be assigned as his judges, and specially the Macedonian Bishops, who, with the Bishop of Thessalonica, should judge of his acts and writings, we have to remark that the function of judging cannot appertain to ourselves. Otherwise, were the question of the Synod at this day still open, we might well have decided concerning these things which are included in what you have written at length. Having taken upon yourselves this judgment, it is now your part to form your decision on the whole question, to give no power of retreat or escape either to the accusers or the accused; for, being chosen by the Synod to conduct the examination, you have taken upon you its functions.

2. Again, when Bishop Bonosus, after your judgment, sent to our brother Ambrose to enquire his opinion whether he should break into and enter upon the church which was closed to him, he received for reply that he must do nothing rashly, that everything must be carried on modestly, patiently and in order, that nothing contrary to your decision must be attempted, that you, to whom the Synod had committed such authority, would appoint what appeared to you agreeable to

[340 justice. The first point therefore is that judgment should be given by those to whom the power of judging has been given; for you, as we have said, judge in place of the entire Synod; as to ourselves it does not befit us to judge as though by the authority of the Synod.

3. Assuredly we cannot deny that he is justly blamed concerning the sons of Mary, and that your Holiness deservedly repudiated the opinion that from the same Virgin womb, of which according to the flesh Christ was born, other offspring was produced. For the Lord Jesus would not have chosen to be born of a Virgin, if He had conceived she would be so wanting in continence as to suffer that birthplace of the Lord's Body, that palace of the eternal King, to be polluted by human intercourse. To propound such an opinion as this, what is it but to fortify the unbelief of the Jews who say that it was impossible He could be born of a Virgin, and who, thus confirmed by the authority of Christian Bishops, will strive with greater

earnestness to overthrow the true faith?

4. What else can be the meaning of that text wherein the Lord says to His Mother of John the Evangelist, Woman, behold thy son, and again to John of Mary, Behold thy mother? With what purpose was it that while the Lord was hanging upon the cross and atoning for the sins of the world, He declared also the integrity of His Mother? Wherefore was it said but that unbelief might close its lips and be silent, nor dare to offer any insult to the Mother of the Lord? He therefore, in pronouncing upon and asserting His Mother's chastity, likewise bears witness that she was only espoused to her husband Joseph; and that she was ignorant of that carnal commerce which is the accustomed right of the marriage bed; for, had it been that she was to conceive children of Joseph, He would not have chosen to separate her from the company of her husband.

5. But if this is not enough, the Evangelist has added his testimony, saying that the disciple took her unto his own home. Did he then cause a divorce? Did he carry her off from her husband? How can he who reads this in the Gospel stagger and waver to and fro as one who has been shipwrecked?

6. This then is the testimony of the Son concerning His Mother's chastity, this is the rich heritage of Mary's immaculate Virginity, this is the consummation of the entire work. He spake thus, and gave up the ghost, crowning the whole mystery with a good end of filial duty.

7. We have also read and perused the whole of the instructions, as well what relates to Senecio being joined with our brother and fellow-bishop Bassus in the government of his Church, as what relates to other matters, and we now look for the direction of your sentence.

[341

LETTER LVII.

VALENTINIAN II. having been murdered by Arbogastes, one of his Generals, the latter, not venturing to claim the empire for himself, set up Eugenius, who was really his puppet, as Emperor of the West. Theodosius temporised with him, till he should be fully prepared to attack him, and it was whilst he was thus for a time accepted as Emperor that S. Ambrose addressed this letter to him. He excuses himself in it for withdrawing from Milan when Eugenius came there, on the plea that he was bound to fear God rather than man, and reproves him for granting the restoration of their former revenues to the heathen temples, which Gratian and Valentinian had before refused,

and exposes the futility of his plea that he was merely granting favour to his friends, reminding him that God sees the heart. He quotes at length the conduct of the Jews in the time of Antiochus, as recorded in the Book of Maccabees, as a precedent which Christians were bound to follow. At the same time he says that he is willing to address Eugenius in matters which do not affect his duty to God. TO THE MOST GRACIOUS EMPEROR EUGENIUS, AMBROSE, BISHOP, SENDS GREETING.

1. I withdrew from Milan from fear of God, to Whom I am wont to refer, as far as I am able, all my acts, never turning my mind from Him nor making more account of any man's favour than of the grace of Christ. By preferring God to every one else I wrong no man, and trusting in Him, I dare to tell your Majesties, the Emperors, my poor thoughts. Wherefore I will not refrain from saying to your most gracious Majesty what I never refrained from saying before other Emperors. And that I may preserve the order of events, I will touch one by one the points which relate to this transaction. The illustrious Symmachus, when prefect of the city, memorialised

6 the Emperor Valentinian the younger, of august memory, begging that he would command what had been withdrawn from the temples to be restored. He performed his part in accordance with his own wishes and mode of worship. It became me also, as Bishop, to recognize the duties of my office. I presented two petitions to the Emperors wherein

[342 I declared that a Christian man could not contribute to the expenses of the sacrifices; that I had not advised the withdrawal of the payments, but that I did advise that they should not be now decreed, and lastly, that he would seem to be giving rather than restoring these expenses to the images; for what he had not withdrawn, he could not be said to restore, but of his own free-will to give it for the uses of supersition. Lastly, if he had done so, he either must not come to the Church, or if he did, he would either not find a priest, or one who would withstand him. Nor could it be offered as an excuse that he was only a catechumen, for it is not lawful for catechumens to contribute to the expense of idols.

3. My petitions were read in the Consistory; Count Bauto, a man of the highest military rank, and Rumoridus, himself too of the same dignity, and from the first year of his boyhood attached to the Gentile worship, were present. Valentinian then listened to my suggestion, and did nothing but what our faith reasonably required. And they submitted to his officer.

4. Afterwards I openly addressed myself to the most gracious Emperor Theodosius, and hesitated not to speak to him face to face. He having received the intimation of a similar message from the Senate, although it was not the whole Senate who asked it, at length gave his consent to my suggestion, and so for some days I did not come near him, nor was he displeased thereat, for I did not act for my own advantage but for his profit, and that of my own soul also; I was not ashamed to speak in the king's presence.

5. Once more an Embassy was sent from the senate to the Emperor Valentinian, of blessed memory, when he was in Gaul, but was able to extort nothing from him. At that time I was absent and had not written anything to him.

6. But when your Majesty assumed the reins of government it was found that this boon had been granted to men of eminence in the state but in religion heathens. And perhaps it may be said, your Majesty, that it is not a restitution to the temples on your part, but a boon to men who had

deserved well of you. But the fear of God ought,

[343 you know, to lead us to act with constancy, as is done in the cause of liberty not only by priests but by those who serve in your armies or are reckoned among the provincials. Envoys petitioned you, as Emperor, for restitution to the temples, but you consented not; others again required it, but you resisted; yet subsequently you have thought fit to grant it as a boon to the petitioners themselves.

7. The Imperial power is indeed great, but let your Majesty consider the greatness of God; He sees all hearts, He scrutinizes the inmost conscience, He knows all things before they come to pass, He knows the secrets of your breast. You will not suffer yourselves to be deceived, and do you hope to hide anything from God? Has not this suggested itself to your mind? Although they urged their suit with such perseverance, ought not your Majesty from respect for the most high and true and living God, to have resisted still more perseveringly, and to have refused what was derogatory to the Divine law?

8. Who grudges your bestowing upon others whatsoever you chose? We do not pry closely into your munificence, nor are we jealous of the advantages of others; but we are the ministers of the Faith. How will you offer your gifts to Christ? your acts will be estimated by few, your wishes by all; whatever they have done will be ascribed to you, whatever they have not done to themselves. You are indeed Emperor, but you ought all the more to submit yourself to God. Else how shall the priests of Christ dispense your gifts?

9. There was a question of this kind in former times, and then persecution itself yielded to the faith of our fathers, and heathendom gave way. For when the game that was used every fifth year was kept at Tyre, and the wicked king of Antioch had come hither to see it, Jason sent special messengers from Jerusalem, to carry three hundred silver drachms, and give them to the sacrifice of Hercules.⁷

But our fathers would not give the money to the heathen, but sent trusty persons to make declaration that such money was not to be devoted to sacrifices to the gods, for this was not convenient, but was to be applied to other expenses.

[344 And it was decreed that, forasmuch as Jason had said that the silver was sent for the sacrifice of Hercules, that which was sent ought to be so applied. And yet seeing that they who brought it pleaded in opposition, in their zeal and devotion, that it should not be employed for sacrifice but for other exigencies, the money was applied to build ships. They sent the money, that is, because they were compelled, but it was not applied to sacrifices, but to other public expenses.

10. Again, they who brought the money might have been silent, but they were led to violate secrecy because they knew whither it was being carried, and so they sent men who feared God, and who were to do their endeavour that the money might be applied to the equipment of ships, and not to the temple. Thus they entrusted the money to men who were to plead the cause of the Divine law, and He who cleanses the conscience was made Judge of the matter. If those who were in the power of others took these precautions, it cannot be doubted what it was your Majesty's duty to do. You, whom no man constrained, who were in no man's power, ought certainly to have referred for advice to the priest.

11. For my own part, although I was alone in the resistance I then made, still others both willed and advised it. Being thus bound by my own words both before God and before all men, I have felt that I had no other choice or duty but to consult for myself, for I could not properly trust to you. For a long time I stifled and concealed my grief, I gave no hint to any one, but now I am no longer at liberty to dissemble, or to be silent. And this was why, at the beginning of your reign, I made no reply to your letters, because I foresaw that what you have done would happen. Afterwards, when you found I did not answer, and sent to demand a reply, I said, 'The reason why I do not write is that I think it will be wrung from him

8.'

12. But when a just occasion for the exercise of my office [345

arose, I both wrote and petitioned for those who were anxious on their own account, with a view of shewing that in the cause of God a due fear of Him affected me, and that I did not set a higher value on flattery than on my own soul; but that in the matters wherein petition is proper to be made to you, I paid just deference to your authority, as indeed it is written, honour to whom honour, tribute to whom tribute. For seeing that I cordially deferred to a private person, how should I not defer to the Emperor? But as you desire deference to be shewn to yourselves, suffer us to defer to Him from Whom you would fain prove your authority to be derived.

LETTER LVIII. [A.D.393.] IN this letter S. Ambrose informs Sabinus that Paulinus and Therasia had resolved to give up all their wealth to the poor, and retire to Nola, and complains of the objections raised against such self-denial, ending with a mystical interpretation of David dancing before the ark.

AMBROSE TO SABINUS, BISHOP.

1. CREDIBLE information has reached me that Paulinus, the lustre of whose birth was inferior to none in the region of Aquitania, has sold both his own possessions and those of his wife, and entered upon a course of life which enables him to bestow upon the poor the property which has been converted into money; while he himself having become poor instead of rich, as one relieved of a heavy burden, has bid farewell to his home his country and his kindred, in order to serve God more diligently; and he is reported to have chosen a retreat in the city of Nola, to pass the rest of his days in avoiding the turmoil of life.

2. The lady Therasia too approaches closely to his zeal and virtue, and objects not to the resolve he has taken. Having transferred her own property to other owners, she follows her husband, and contented with his little plat of ground will console herself with the riches of religion and

[346 charity. Offspring they have none, and therefore desire to leave behind them good deeds.

3. When the great of the world hear this, what will they say? That a man of his family, his ancestry, his genius, gifted with such eloquence, should have seceded from the senate, that the succession of a noble family should become extinct, such things, they will say, are not to be borne. And though they, when they perform the rites of Isis, shave their heads and eyebrows, they nevertheless call it an unworthy deed should a Christian man out of zeal for holy religion change his habit.

4. Truly I grieve that, while falsehood is so respected, there should be such negligence as regards the Truth, that many are ashamed of seeming too devoted to our holy religion, not considering His words Who says, Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me before men, of him will I also be ashamed before My Father Which is in heaven. But Moses was not thus ashamed, for though invited into the royal palace he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. David was not thus ashamed when he danced before the Ark of the testimony in the sight of all the people. Isaiah was not thus ashamed, when he walked naked and bare-foot through the people, proclaiming the heavenly oracles.

5. Viewed by the outward eye what can be a more unseemly spectacle than an imitation of the gestures of players, and a wreathing of the limbs after the manner of women? Lascivious dances are the companions of luxury and the pastime of wantonness. What did David himself mean by singing, O clap your hands together, all ye people? If we regard the bodily action we must suppose that he clapped his hands as if mingling with female dancers, and shouted with unseemly noise. Of Ezekiel too it is said, Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot.

6. But the things which viewed corporeally are unseemly, when viewed in regard to holy religion become venerable, so that they who blame such things will involve their own souls in the net of blame. Thus Michal reproves David for his dancing and says to him, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of

[347 his handmaids! And David answered her, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord, and I will be yet more vile thus, and will be base in mine own sight, and of the maid-servants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.

7. David therefore did not shrink from female censure, nor was he ashamed to hear their reproaches for his religious service. For he played before the Lord as being his servant, and was the more pleasing to Him in that he so humbled himself before God, as to lay aside his royal dignity and to offer to God the very lowest ministry, as though he were a servant. She also who censured such dancing was condemned to barrenness and had no children by the king, that she might not bring forth a proud offspring; and so, as it turned out, she obtained no continuance of descendants or of good deeds.

8. If any one is still doubtful, let him hear the testimony of the Gospel, for the Son of God said, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced. Therefore were the Jews abandoned, because they danced not, nor clapped their hands, and the Gentiles were called in, who gave to God spiritual applause. The fool foldeth his hands together and devoureth his own flesh, that is, he entangles himself in corporeal matters, and devours his own flesh, like prevailing death,

11 and so he shall not find eternal life. But the wise man, who so holds up his works that they may shine before his Father Which is in heaven, has not consumed his flesh but has raised it to the grace of the resurrection. This is that glorious dance of the wise man which David danced, and thus by the loftiness of his spiritual dancing he ascended even to the throne of Christ, that he might see and hear the Lord saying to his Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand!

9. Now if you are of opinion that this interpretation of the dancing has not been made unreasonably, do not spare yourself the trouble of reading a little further, in order that we may

consider together the case of Isaiah, how, as is well known to you, he was uncovered, not in mockery but

|348 gloriously, in the sight of the assembled people, as one who reported with his own mouth the oracles of God.

10. But perhaps it may be said, Was it not then disgraceful for a man to walk wholly uncovered through the people, seeing that he must be met both by men and women? Must not the sight itself have shocked the eyes of all, especially of women? Do not we ourselves generally shrink from looking upon naked men? And are not men's persons concealed by garments that they may not offend the eyes of beholders by an unseemly spectacle?

11. In this I also acquiesce; but consider what it was this act represented, and what was set forth under this outward show; it was, that the young men and maidens of the Jews should be led away prisoners, and walk naked, like as My servant Isaiah, it is said, hath walked naked and barefoot. This might also have been impressed in words, but God chose to render it more expressive by example, that the sight itself might thus strike greater terror, and what they shrunk from in the person of the prophet, that they might dread for themselves. In which of the two then does the baseness most shock us; in the person of the prophet, or in the sins of those unbelievers which deserved to fall into this great misery of captivity?

12. But what if there was nothing worthy of reproach in the prophet's body? He indeed alluded not to corporeal but to spiritual things; for in his ecstasy of mind he says, not I will hearken what I shall say, but, what the Lord God shall say in me. Nor does he consider whether he is naked or clothed. Again, Adam before his sin was naked, but knew not he was naked, because he was endued with virtue; after he had committed sin he saw that he was naked, and covered himself. Noah was uncovered, but he blushed not, because he was full of gladness and spiritual joy, while he who derided him for being naked, himself remained subject to the disgrace of perpetual

baseness. Joseph too, that he might not be basely uncovered, left his garment, and fled away naked; now which of the two was base in this instance, she who kept another's garment, or he who put off his own?

13. But that it may be more fully evident that the |349

prophets regard not themselves nor what lies at their feet, but heavenly things, when Stephen was stoned he saw

the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; and therefore he felt not the blows of the stones, he regarded not his bodily wounds, but his eyes were fastened on Christ, he clung closely to him. So also Isaiah looked not on his own nakedness, but offered himself to be the organ of the Divine voice, that he might utter what God spake within him.

14. But be it supposed that he saw himself, could he not do that which he was commanded? Could he believe that to be base which God enjoined? Sarah, because she laughed, was convicted of unbelief; Abraham was praised, because he doubted not the word of God; yea, he received a very great reward, because he believed that at God's command, even parricide might be piously committed.

15. What cause for shame then had the prophet here, when one thing was enacted, but that of which it was a figure was quite different? The Jews, being deserted by God for their wickedness, began to be vanquished by their enemies, and were fain to betake themselves to the Egyptians, to be a protection to them against the Assyrians, whereas had they consulted for good, they ought rather to have returned to the faith. The Lord, being angry, shews that their hope was vain in thinking that the offence against Him could be removed by a greater sin, for that very people in whom the Jews were trusting, were themselves to be vanquished. This was the meaning as regards the actual history.

10. But this history itself is a figure, signifying that he trusts in the Egyptians who is given up to impurity, and enslaved to wantonness. For no man abandons himself to excess but he who departs from the precepts of the true God. But as soon as a man waxes wanton, he begins to fall off from the true faith. And then he commits two grievous crimes, lassitude as regards the flesh, and sacrilege as regards the mind. He then who follows not the Lord his God ingulfs himself in impurity and lust, those pestilential passions of the body. But he who has engulfed and plunged himself in such wallowing places, falls

[350 also into the snare of unbelief; for the people sat down to eat and to drink, and required that gods should be made for them. Hereby the Lord teaches us that he who gives up his soul to these two kinds of vices, is stripped of the garment, not of a woollen vest, but of living virtue; that clothing which is not temporal but eternal. Farewell, love me, for I also love you.

LETTER LIX. [A.D.393.]

S. AMBROSE here writes to Severus, Bishop of Naples, to tell him of one James, a presbyter of Persia, who was seeking a retreat from the world in Campania. This leads him to dwell on the contrast of the many troubles with which he is surrounded at Milan.

AMBROSE TO SEVERUS, BISHOP.

I. JAMES, our brother and fellow-presbyter, has come from the depths of Persia, and chosen the coast of Campania and your pleasant abodes for his resting-place. You see in what spot he has anticipated for himself the enjoyment of a haven sheltered, as it were, from the storms of this world, where, after his long toils, he may spend the remainder of his life.

2. For your coast, removed not only from danger, but from all tumult, fills the senses with tranquillity, and transports the mind from the fearful and raging billows of care to an honourable rest. So that those words of David concerning the holy Church, which belong in common to all, appear to be especially fitting and appropriate to yourselves; For He hath founded it upon the seas, and prepared it upon the floods. For a mind undisturbed by inroads of barbarians and the evils of war, has leisure for prayer, devotes itself to the service of God, cares for the things of the Lord, cherishes those things which belong to peace and tranquillity.

3. We meanwhile, exposed to the outbreaks of the barbarians and the storms of war, are tossing in the midst of troubles, and from these toils and dangers can only gather

[351 that those of our future life will be still more grievous. Wherefore that saying of the Prophet seems to accord with our condition, I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction.

4. For since I have now lived in the body fifty and three years, among the shadows of this world, whereby the truth of future perfection is obscured, and have already endured such heavy afflictions, am I not camping in the tents of Cushan, and having my habitation among the dwellers of Midian? For these, owing to their consciousness of their darksome works, dread being judged even by mortal men, but he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

Farewell, my brother; love me, as indeed you do, for I also love you.

LETTER LX. [A.D.393.] IN this Letter S. Ambrose urges Paternus not to break the laws both of God and man by promoting a marriage between his son and his daughter's daughter, who were within the forbidden degrees of relationship, and shews him what confusion would arise from such an union.

AMBROSE TO PATERNUS.

1. I HAVE read your greeting, my like-minded friend Paternus, but the question on which you ask my advice, wishing to marry your son to your grand-daughter by your daughter, is by no means paternal, but unworthy of you both as grand-father and as father. Consider therefore what it is you ask about, for in all that we wish to do, we ought first to investigate the nature of the deed, and then we shall be able to estimate whether it is worthy of praise or blame. For instance, carnal intercourse with women is a pleasure to some, physicians even say it is healthful to the body; but we must consider whether it be with a wife or a stranger, with a married or an unmarried woman. If a man have commerce with one who is espoused and given to him he calls it marriage; he who assails the chastity of

[352 one who belongs to another commits adultery, by the very name of which the temerity of the attempt is generally repressed. To slay an enemy is accounted a victory, to slay a criminal is justice, to slay an innocent man murder, and if a man is conscious of this he withholds his hand. Wherefore I beg that you also will consider what it is you propose.

2. You wish to arrange a marriage between our children. But I would ask whether you would have equals or those who are unequal joined together? if I mistake not, they are wont to be called 'pairs

12.' He who yokes oxen to the plough, or horses to the chariot, chooses pairs, that both their age and their form may harmonize, that there be no natural difference, nor blemish of diversity. You are proposing to unite your son and your grand-daughter by your daughter, that is, that he should marry his sister's daughter, true though it is that he was born of a different mother from his professed mother in law. Consider what restraint is implied in the very names; he is called her uncle, she is called his niece. Does not the very sound of the names

13 recal you, when the one has in it the sound of grand-father, and the other refers alike to uncle and to grand-father? How great again is the confusion of the other terms? You will be called both grand-father and father in law, she too will receive the different names of niece and daughter in law. The brother and sister also will exchange different names, she will be the mother in law of her brother, he the son in law of his sister. The niece will marry her uncle, and the affection of these your unstained offspring be exchanged for an irregular love.

3. On this point you tell me that the holy man your Bishop is looking for my sentiments. I cannot think or believe this. For if this were so, he would himself have chosen to write, but by not doing so

he has intimated that he considers there is no ground for doubt upon the point. For how can there be any such doubt, when the prohibition of marriage between first cousins extends, according to the Divine law, to those who are related in the fourth

[353 degree. But this is the third degree, which even by the civil law seems to be excepted from the fellowship of marriage.

4. But let us first inquire what are the decrees of the Divine law, for you allege in your letters that an union between such persons must be considered as allowed by that Law, in that it is not forbidden. I however assert that it is actually forbidden; for seeing that first cousins are forbidden slighter familiarities, much more must I deem this forbidden which contains within it the bond of a much closer union. For he who affixes censure to lighter offences does not acquit but rather condemn heavier ones.

5. But if you consider it to be permitted because it is not specially forbidden, neither will you find it forbidden by the words of the Law that the father should take his daughter to wife. But is this lawful, merely because it is not forbidden? By no means; it has been interdicted by the law of nature, by that law which is in the hearts of each of us, by the inviolable rule of piety, on the ground of nearness of kin. How many things of this kind will you find which are not forbidden in the law promulgated by Moses, but which are yet forbidden by the voice of nature.

6. There are many things which are lawful, but which are not expedient, for all things are lawful, but all things are not expedient, all things are lawful, but all things edify not. If then the Apostle recalls us even from those things which edify not, how can we imagine that may be done which is not permitted by the oracle of the Law, and which edifies not, because it differs from the rule of piety? Yet those very things in the old Law which were more severe were mitigated by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.

7. What is so usual as a kiss between an uncle and a niece, which he owes to her as a daughter, she to him as a parent? Will you therefore cast suspicion on this kiss of unoffending piety by proposing such a union, will you deprive your beloved offspring of a sacrament so venerable?

8. But if the Divine law pass by you unheeded, at least the laws of Emperors, from whom you have received such ample honours, ought not to have been so disregarded. Now the Emperor Theodosius forbid even cousins by

[354 either the fathers' or mothers' side to be united under the name of marriage, and affixed a severe penalty upon any rash union of brothers' children. And yet these are equal as regards each other, but, as they are bound together by the ties of mankind and brotherly union, he would have them owe their birth to piety.

9. But you will say this rule has been relaxed in favour of some. The law however is not prejudiced thereby, for that which is [not]

14 enacted for general use is only profitable to him in whose favour the relaxation takes place, and so the odium is much less. Now although we read in the Old Testament of one calling his wife his sister, it is unheard of that any man should marry his niece and call her his wife.

10. It is indeed a curious plea which leads you to assert that your grand-daughter is not connected with your son, her uncle, by any close bond, merely because they have no relationship by the father's side

12. As if an uterine brother and sister, born that is, of the same mother but by a different father, would be united together when of a different sex, for as much as they have no relationship by the father's side

13, but are only united to each other by the mother's side.

11. You ought therefore to relinquish your intention, which, even were it lawful, would not tend to propagate your family, for your son owes to us grand-children, your dear grand-daughter owes to us great-grand-children.

Farewell to you and all yours.

[Footnotes moved to end and renumbered. Biblical references and running titles omitted.]

1. a The Magister officiorum was a sort of Chief Secretary of state, both for home and foreign affairs. A summary of his duties may be, seen in Gibbon ch. xvii, iv, 2. It was the

influence which this post gave him over Theodosius which enabled Rufinus to stir the Emperor's passionateness to the crime of Thessalonica.

2. a The adjective Portuensis generally refers to the town called Portus, which grew up in the times of the Emperors on the harbour of Ostia. It is

probable therefore that the reference is to some work of which the person spoken of had the superintendence.

3. a As Lake Larius was sometimes called Lacus Comacinus in the times of the Emperors, (Dict of Geogr. voc. Comum,) it is probable that the 'Comacinae rupes' were some familiar

rocks on its margin. The comparison to a bull is simply an adaptation of Virgil's 'Et faciem tauro propior,' Georg. iii. 58.

4. a The word 'bonis' must certainly here be inserted in the text, 'uterque alienae magis ordinationis vitiis quam suis bonis fretus,' as suggested by the

Benedictine Editors. It occurs just below in the corresponding sentence, 'suis potius bonis quam alieno vitio defendi.'

5. b He is sometimes spoken of as Bishop of Nairsus in Dacia Mediterranea (see Note in p. 67.) but Tillemont (note 43 in Life of S. Ambrose) has made it probable that there were two

Bishops of the name of Bonosus, one of Nairsus, and the other of Sardica, the latter of whom is the one dealt with by the Synod of Capua.

6. a He is referring to the 'Memorial of Symmachus.' p. 94. The 'two petitions,' libellos duos, are Letters 17 and 18.

7. 2 Macc. iv. 18 sqq.

8. b He means that the reason why he declines all communication with Eugenius, who wished to secure his great political influence on his side, was, that he felt sure that Eugenius, though at present temporising with

both parties, would in the end yield to the pressure of the pagan party, and restore the revenues to the heathen temples. 'Extorquendum' is, in accordance with late Latin idiom, a mere future passive.

9. 1 confusus fuerit.

10. 2 confundar 11. a See Letter xlv. 9, and note e there.

12. 1 compares.

13. a The argument here turns on the Latin words. 'Avunculus,' uncle, is a mere diminutive of 'avus,'

grandfather; and the one word 'neptis' is used both for niece and granddaughter without any distinction.

14. b The 'not' is inserted according to the suggestion of the Benedictine Editors. There seems a contradiction in terms without it. This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2004. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely.

Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SPlonic font, free from here.

Early Church Fathers - Additional Texts

Letters - Letters 61-70

St. Ambrose of Milan, Letters (1881). pp. 354-420. Letters 61-70.

- Letter 61: To the Emperor Theodosius
- Letter 62: To the Emperor Theodosius
- Letter 63: To the church of Vercellae
- Letter 64: To Irenaeus
- Letter 65: To Simplicianus
- Letter 66: To Romulus
- Letter 67: To Simplicianus
- Letter 68: To Romulus
- Letter 69: To Irenaeus
- Letter 70: To Horontianus

LETTER LXI. [A.D.394.] This letter was addressed to Theodosius after his victory over Eugenius. S. Ambrose in it explains his absence from Milan, and after expressing his gratitude to God for His blessing on the arms of Theodosius, urges the Emperor to a merciful use of his victory.

AMBROSE TO THE EMPEROR THEODOSIUS.

1. You seem to have supposed, most blessed Emperor, |355

as I understood from your Majesty's letters, that I had removed to a distance from Milan because I believed your cause was forsaken by God. But in my absence I was not so foolish, nor so unmindful of your virtues and good deeds, as not to feel sure that the assistance of heaven would aid your piety, and assist you to rescue the Roman Empire from the cruelty of a barbarian robber, and the rule of an unworthy usurper.

2. Wherefore I made immediate haste to return, as soon as ever I was aware that he whom I thought it right to avoid was gone, for I had not deserted the Church of Milan, which the judgment of God had committed to me, but I shunned the presence of one who had involved himself in sacrilege. So I returned about the first of August, and from that day I have been in residence here, and here your Majesty's letter

1 has found me.

3. Thanks be to our Lord God, Who has responded to your faith and piety, and revived among us the pattern of ancient sanctity, giving to us to see in our own times what we marvel at in the Lessons of Holy Scripture, so effectual a presence, I mean, of Divine aid in battle

2, that no mountain tops delayed your passage, no hostile arms presented any impediment.

4. For this you think I ought to give thanks to the Lord our God; and this I will willingly do, conscious of your good deeds. That victim is certainly pleasing to God, which is offered in your name; and how great faith and devotion does this evince! Other Emperors, as soon as ever they gain a victory, order triumphal arches or other badges of triumph to be erected, but your Clemency

[356 provides a victim for God, and desires that oblations and thanksgivings should be offered to the Lord by the priests.

5. I therefore, though unworthy and unequal to such an office, and to the offering of such prayers, will yet tell you how I have acted. I carried with me your Majesty's letter to the altar, and laid it thereon, bearing it in my hand, when I offered the Sacrifice; that so your faith might speak with my voice, and the Imperial letter itself might perform the functions of the priestly oblation.

6. Truly the Lord is merciful to the Roman Empire, seeing that He hath chosen such a prince and parent of princes, whose virtue and power, raised on so great and triumphant an eminence of dominion, is supported by such humility as to vanquish Emperors in valour and priests in humility. What shall I wish for, or what shall I desire? You possess everything; from your stores therefore I will obtain the sum of my wishes; your Majesty is pitiful, and has great clemency.

7. But I desire for you again and again an increase of mercy, than which the Lord hath given nothing more excellent; that by your clemency, the Church of God, as it rejoices in the peace and tranquillity of the innocent, so it may also rejoice in the absolution of the guilty. I would chiefly ask you to pardon those who have sinned for the first time. May the Lord preserve your Clemency. Amen.

LETTER LXII. [A.D. 394.] IN this letter also S. Ambrose urges on Theodosius a merciful use of his victory, and appeals to him specially for some of the defeated party who had sought the protection of the Church. He acknowledges the greatness of the request, but pleads for it on the score of the divine favour which had been miraculously displayed in his behalf.

AMBROSE TO THE EMPEROR THEODOSIUS.

1. ALTHOUGH I lately wrote to your Clemency even a second time, still I was not satisfied to fulfil my duty of corresponding with you letter by letter; for your gracious

[357 benefits have so often laid me under obligation that by no services can I pay my debt to your Majesty, most blessed Emperor.

2. The very first occasion ought not therefore to have been omitted, but through your chamberlain I ought to have offered to you my thanks, and laid before you the expression of my duty; and this that my omitting to write previously might not seem to arise from sloth rather than necessity: I had also to inquire for some mode whereby I might offer to your Goodness my proper and dutiful greeting.

3. Rightly then do I send my son Felix the Deacon, to convey to you my letter, and to offer to you in my name both my dutiful respects, and also a memorial in behalf of those who, suing for mercy, have fled to the Church, the Mother of your piety. Their tears have constrained me to anticipate your Clemency's mind by my petition.

4. Our request is indeed a great one, but it is addressed to one on whom the Lord has bestowed unheard-of and wonderful things, to one whose mercifulness we have experienced, and whose piety we have as a hostage. We confess then that we look for even more, for as you have surpassed yourself in valour, so also you must surpass yourself in pity. For your victory is considered to have been bestowed on you in the primitive manner, and miraculously, as it was on Moses, on holy Joshua the son of Nun, on Samuel and on David, not by human respect but by the outpouring of celestial grace. Wherefore we look for a measure of pity corresponding to that by means of which such a victory has been earned.

LETTER LXIII. [A.D.396.]

THIS, the longest and latest, and certainly not the least interesting, of S. Ambrose's Letters, is addressed to the Church of Vercellae, which, owing to intestine divisions, had been for some time without a Bishop. S. Ambrose first urges them to remember Christ's Presence among them, and to proceed to Election with that thought especially in their minds. He then speaks of two followers of Jovinian, Sarmatio and Barbatianus,

[358 who had introduced their evil doctrines among them, and so fostered divisions. This leads him to dwell at length on the evils of sensuality and the benefits of self-denial, on the profit of fasting, and the excellence of a virgin life, and bids them 'stand fast,' and not be led astray by false teachers. Then he recurs to the subject of the election of a Bishop, and bids them lay aside all evil feelings, and choose one worthy of so high an office, setting before them the examples of our Lord Himself, of Moses and Aaron. He then speaks of the qualities to be looked for in a true Bishop, and urges them to choose one worthy to succeed to the see of the holy martyr Eusebius, and, recurring to the examples of the old Testament, dwells on the history of Elijah. He ends by a general exhortation to all the Church of Vercellae to the chief Christian virtues, after the model of S. Paul's Epistles, to which the outline of this letter bears a general resemblance. Some questions as to its genuineness have been alluded to in the notes. There seems no sufficient reason for doubting that it is a genuine letter of S. Ambrose. It is thoroughly Ambrosian in style and method, and in its treatment of Scripture, especially of the history of the old Testament and of the lives of the great saints of the old dispensation. It was written not more than a year before S. Ambrose's death.

AMBROSE, SERVANT OF CHRIST, CALLED TO BE BISHOP, TO THE CHURCH OF VERCELLAE, AND TO THEM WHO CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, GRACE UNTO YOU FROM GOD THE FATHER AND HIS ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON BE FULFILLED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1. I AM overcome by grief that the Church of the Lord, which is among you, has still no Bishop, and alone in all the regions of Liguria and Aemilia, of Venetia

3 and the adjacent parts of Italy, stands in need of those ministrations which other Churches were wont to ask at her hands, and, what causes me still more shame, the contention

4 which causes this delay is ascribed to me. For as long as there are dissensions among you, how can either we

|359 determine anything, or you make your election, or any man accept the election, so as to undertake among men who are at variance an office difficult to bear the weight of, even among those that agree?

2. Are you the scholars of a confessor, are you the offspring of those righteous fathers, who as soon as they saw holy Eusebius

5, though before he was unknown to them, put aside their own countrymen, and forthwith approved of him; and required no more than the sight of him for their approval? Rightly did he who was chosen unanimously by the Church, turn out so eminent a man, rightly was it believed that he whom all demanded was chosen by the judgment of God. It is fitting therefore that you follow the example of your fathers, especially since it behoves you, who have been trained by so holy a Confessor, to be better than your fathers, forasmuch as you have been trained and taught by a better preceptor; and to show forth a visible sign of your moderation and concord, by unanimously agreeing to the choice of a Bishop.

3. If the Lord has said, If two of you shall agree as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven: For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in, the midst of them; how much less, when many are assembled in the name of the Lord, where all agree together in their petitions, how much less ought we in any wise to doubt that there the Lord Jesus will be present to inspire their will and grant their petition, to preside over the ordination and confer the grace?

4. Make yourselves therefore worthy that Christ should stand in the midst of you; for wheresoever is peace there is Christ, for Christ is Peace; wheresoever is righteousness there is Christ, for Christ is Righteousness. Let Him stand in the midst of you, that you may see Him, that it be not said to you also, There standeth One among you,

|360 Whom ye know not. The Jews saw Him not, for they believed not on Him; we behold Him by devotion, and see Him by faith.

5. Let Him therefore stand in the midst of you, that you may have the heavens which declare the glory of God, opened to you; that you may do His will and work His works. The heavens are opened to him who sees Jesus, as they were opened to Stephen, when he said, Behold I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Jesus stood as an intercessor, He stood, as being eager to assist His soldier Stephen in his combat; He stood as being prepared to crown His martyr.

6. Let Him therefore stand in the midst of you, that you may not fear Him when seated on His throne, for seated thereon He will judge, according to the saying of Daniel, I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the books were opened, and the Ancient of days did sit. And in the 82nd Psalm it is written, God standeth in the congregation of princes, He decideth among gods. So then being seated He judges, standing He decides. He judges concerning them that are not perfected, He decides among the gods. Let Him stand for you as a Defender, as the good Shepherd, that cruel wolves may not attack you.

7. Nor is it without reason that my admonition directs itself to this point; for I hear that Sarmatio and Barbatianus

6 have come among you, vain boasters, who assert that there is no merit in abstinence, no grace in a strict life, none in virginity, that all are to be rated at one price, that they who chastise their flesh, in order to bring it into subjection to the body, are beside themselves. But had the Apostle Paul thought it a madness, he never would have practised it himself, nor written it for the instruction of others. Yet he thus glories, saying, But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself be found a reprobate 7. So that they who chastise not their own bodies, yet would fain preach to others, are themselves accounted reprobates.

[361

8. For is there aught so reprobate 8 as that which excites us to impurity, to corruption, to wantonness? as the fuel of lust, the enticer to pleasure, the nurse of incontinence, the incentive of desire? What new school has sent forth these Epicureans? No school of philosophers, as they affirm, but of ignorant men who are setters forth of pleasure, who persuade to luxury, who hold chastity to be useless. They were with us, but they were not of us, for we blush not to say what the Apostle John said. It was when placed here that they first fasted, within the monastery they were under restraint; there was no room for licence, all opportunity of jesting and altercation was cut off.

9. This these men of delicacy could not bear. They departed, and when they desired to return were not received, for I had heard many things concerning them against which it behoved me to be on my guard; I admonished them, but in vain. Thus they began to boil over and spread abroad what might prove the miserable incentives of all kinds of vice. Thus they lost the fruits of their fasting, they lost the fruits of having contained themselves a little while. And now with Satanic malice they envy others those good works, the fruits of which they have themselves lost.

10. What virgin can hear without grieving that her chastity will have no reward? Far be it from her readily to give credence to this, still less let her lay aside her earnestness, or change the intention of her mind. What widow, were she to find her widowhood profitless, would choose to preserve inviolate her first marriage-vow, and live in sorrow, instead of allowing herself to be comforted? What wife is there who hearing that no honour is due to chastity, might not be tempted by unwatchful heedlessness of mind or body? And that is why the Church, in her sacred Lessons, in the discourses of her priests, daily sends forth the praises of chastity, the glory of virginity.

11. Vainly then has the Apostle said, I wrote to you in an Epistle not to company with fornicators: and lest perhaps they should say, 'We speak not of the fornicators of this world, but we say that he who has been baptized into Christ ought not to be deemed a fornicator, but whatever

[362 his life may be, it will be accepted by God,' the Apostle has added; Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, and below, If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? And to the Ephesians, But fornication, and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints,

adding straightway, For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. This, it is plain, is said of the baptized, for they receive an inheritance who are baptized into the death of Christ, and are buried together with Him, that they may rise together with Him. Wherefore they are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, heirs of God because the Grace of God is conveyed to them, and coheirs of Christ because they are renewed according to His life; heirs also of Christ because by His Death He grants to them as Testator His inheritance.

12. Now such as these, who have somewhat to lose, ought more to take heed to themselves than they who have nothing. These ought to act with greater caution, to avoid the snares of vice and the incentives to sin, which chiefly arise out of meat and drink. The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

13. Even Epicurus himself, whose example these men prefer to that of the Apostles, he, the champion of pleasure, while he denies that it produces evil, denies not that certain consequences flow from it, from which evils are generated: he maintains too that not even the life of the licentious, which is filled with pleasures of this kind, can be said to be objectionable, unless it be assailed by the fear of pain or death. How far removed he is from the truth, may be discovered even from this, that he declares pleasure to be the work of God in man as its originator, as his follower Philomarus

9 maintains in his Epitomes, referring this opinion to the Stoics as its authors.

[363

14. But this is refuted by holy Scripture, which teaches us that pleasure was instilled into Adam and Eve by the snares and enticements of the Serpent. For the Serpent itself is pleasure, and, in accordance with this, the passions of pleasure are various and slippery, and infected by the poison, so to speak, of corrupt enticement. Hence it is plain that Adam, deceived by the sensual appetite, fell from his obedience to God, and the reward of grace. How then can pleasure recal us to Paradise, when it alone cast us out of Paradise?

15. Wherefore the Lord Jesus, willing to strengthen us against the temptations of the Devil, fasted before His combat, to teach us that otherwise we cannot conquer the snares of evil. Moreover, the Devil himself employed the force of pleasure in launching the first dart of his temptations, saying, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. To which the Lord replies, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God; nor would He do it, although within His power, that He might teach us by this wholesome precept to attend rather to love of reading, than to pleasure. Now seeing they deny that we ought to fast, let them be prepared with some reason why Christ fasted, unless it were that His fast might be an example to us. Lastly in a subsequent instance He has taught us that except by fasting evil cannot easily be conquered. These are His words, This kind of evil spirits goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

16. Or what can be the meaning of Scripture which teaches that Peter fasted, and that it was while he was fasting and praying that the mystery of the baptism of the Gentiles was revealed to him? what but to convince us that the Saints themselves by fasting are advanced in virtue? It was while fasting that Moses received the Law, and in like manner, Peter, while fasting, was taught the grace of the New Testament. To Daniel also it was vouchsafed through fasting to stop the mouths of the

lions, and to behold the events of times to come. Lastly, what hope of salvation can there be for us, unless by fasting we wash away our sins, since Scripture says, Fasting and alms purge away sin?

[364

17. Who then are these new teachers who deny the merit of fasting? Are they not heathen words which say, Let us eat and drink? And well does the Apostle tell them, saying, If after the manner of men I have fought with the beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. That is to say, What did it profit me to contend even unto death, save that I might redeem my body? For in vain is it redeemed if there is no hope of the resurrection. If therefore all hope of this is to be abandoned, let us eat and drink, let us not lose the fruit of things present, seeing that future things are not within our grasp. It is for those then to indulge in meat and drink, who have nothing to hope for after death.

18. Lastly, the Epicureans, the champions of pleasure, assert that death is nothing to us: what is dissolved, they say, is insensible, and what is insensible is nothing to us. By this they show plainly that they live by the body only and not by the mind, and do not perform the functions of the soul but of the body only, in that by separation of soul and body they deem all their vital functions to be dissolved, the merits of their virtues and all vigor of their souls to perish, that with his bodily senses the whole man fails, and that, though the body itself is not immediately dissolved, the mind leaves not a relic behind it. Then they would have the soul perish sooner than the body, whereas even according to their own opinion they ought to remember that the flesh and bones remain after death; and, would they abide by the truth, they ought not to deny the grace of the resurrection.

19. Well therefore does the Apostle, confuting these persons, admonish us not to be overthrown by such opinions, saying, Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners. Be sober 10 unto righteousness and sin not; for some are ignorant of God. To be sober then is good, for drunkenness is sin.

20. But as to Epicurus, this advocate of pleasure, him of whom we make such frequent mention, in order to prove that these men are disciples of the heathens, and follow either the sect of the Epicureans or the man himself who

[365 was excluded even by philosophers from their company as the pattern of luxury, what if we can prove even him to be more tolerable than these men? Now he asserts, as Demarchus

11 tells us, that it is not drinking-bouts, nor banquettings, nor the birth of sons, nor the embraces of women, nor a large supply of fish and such delicacies provided for sumptuous feasts, it is not these which make life sweet, but sober discourse. He added also that they who are not excessive in seeking the dainties of the table, are moderate in the use of them. The man who cheerfully limits himself to the juices of plants and to bread and water, despises delicate feasts, for from these arise many evils. Elsewhere too they say that it is not excessive banquets and revels which make pleasure sweet, but a temperate life.

21. Seeing then that philosophy has renounced these men, shall not the Church exclude them? They themselves too, as is usual in a bad cause, often attack themselves by their own arguments. For although it be their main opinion, that there is no sweetness of pleasure but that which arises

from eating and drinking; yet, perceiving that they cannot lay down so shameful a definition without the utmost disgrace, and that none stand by them, they have sought to disguise it under the gloss of colourable arguments, and thus one of them has said, In seeking pleasure by means of feasting and song, we have lost that which is derived from hearing that Word whereby alone we can be saved.

22. Do we not then perceive in this complicated discussion how inconsistent and variable these men are? Scripture condemns them, for it has not passed over those whom the Apostles confuted, as Luke records in the Acts of the Apostles, which he has written in narrative style, Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans

12, and of the |366

Stoics encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods.

23. Yet not even from this number did the Apostle part devoid of success. For Dionysius the Areopagite, and Damaris his wife, with many others, believed. And thus by their acts this assembly of the learned and eloquent proved themselves vanquished by the simple discourse of the faithful. What then do these men mean by attempting to pervert those whom the Apostle has won, and Christ redeemed with His own blood, insisting that the baptized have no need to apply themselves to the exercise of virtue; that they are not injured by revellings, by excess of pleasure; that they who deprive themselves of such things are foolish; that virgins ought to marry and bear children; widows also ought to renew that carnal commerce which they had better never have known; and that although they might be able to contain themselves they are mistaken in refusing again to enter into the bond of marriage?

24. What then? Shall we put off the man and put on the beast? shall we strip off Christ, and be clothed over and over with the garments of Satan? The very heathen sages held that pleasure was not to be esteemed honourable, lest they should seem to couple men with brutes, and can we instil the habits of animals into the human breast, and engrave on the rational mind the irrational instincts of wild beasts?

25. Yet there are many kinds of animals, who when they have lost their mate, will no longer copulate, but lead, as it were, a solitary life. Many also feed on simple herbs and only quench their thirst in the pure stream; you may also often see dogs refuse food which they have been forbidden, and, if bid to refrain, close up their hungry jaws.

13 Do men then require to be recalled from that in which even mute animals have learnt from man's teaching not to transgress?

26. But what is more excellent than abstinence, which |367

makes even the years of youth to be old, and produces an old age of conduct? For as by excess of food and drunkenness even old age is inflamed, so on the other hand, the insolence of youth is restrained by sparing food and by the flowing stream. Fire without us is quenched by the pouring on of water, no wonder then if even internal heat is allayed by draughts from the brook; for the flame is nourished or fails, according as it is fed or not. As hay, stubble, wood, oil, and the like are the fuel of fire, and feed it, and if you withdraw or do not supply them the fire is quenched, so also

the warmth of the body is nourished or diminished by food; by food it is excited and by food allayed. Gluttony therefore is the mother of lust.

27. And shall we not say that temperance is accordant with nature, and with that Divine law, which in the very origin of all things, gave us to drink of the fountains and to eat of the fruit of trees? After the flood the just man found himself tempted by wine. Wherefore let us use the natural drink of temperance, and would that we all could do so. But since we are not all strong, the Apostle says, Use a little wine for thine often infirmities. It is to be drunk then because of infirmity not for pleasure, and therefore as a remedy, sparingly, not as a luxury, profusely.

28. Again, Elijah, when the Lord God was training him to the perfection of virtue, found a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head; and in the strength of that meat he fasted forty days. Our fathers, when they passed over the sea on foot, drank water, not wine. It was when fed on their homely food and drinking water, that Daniel repressed the rage of the lions, and the Hebrew children saw the fiery furnace playing round their limbs with harmless flames.

29. And why should I speak of men only? Judith, in no wise moved by the luxurious banquet of Holofernes, won a triumph which men's arms had found desperate, by the sole merit of her temperance, delivering her country from invasion, and slaying with her own hand the captain of the host: a manifest example both that this warrior dreaded by the people had become enervated by his luxury, and that temperance in food had made this woman stronger

than men. It was not in her sex that she surpassed nature, but by her spare diet she conquered. Esther obtained favour from the proud king by her fasts. Anna, a widow of about fourscore and four years, serving in the temple with fastings and prayers night and day, came to the knowledge of Christ, and John the Teacher of abstinence, and, as it were, a new Angel upon earth, was His herald.

30. O foolish Elisha! to feed the prophets with wild and bitter gourds; O Ezra

14 unmindful of Scripture though from memory thou dost restore Scripture! O sinless Paul, to glory in fasting, if fasting avails nothing!

31. But how can that not profit whereby our vices are purged? And if you offer it together with humility and mercy, then, as Isaiah has said by the Divine Spirit, thy bones shall be made fat, and thou shalt be like a watered garden! Thy soul then is fattened, and its virtues are enriched by the spiritual fat of fasting, and thy fruits are multiplied by the richness of thy mind, that thou mayest be made drunk, as it were, with soberness

15, as is that cup whereof the Prophet speaks, And my cup which inebriateth me, how goodly is it!

32. But not only is that temperance praiseworthy which is sparing in food, but that also which restrains desires. For it is written, Go not after thy lusts, but refrain thyself

from thine appetites. If thou givest thy soul the desires that please her, she will make thee a laughing stock to thine enemies!

and again, Wine and women will make men of understanding to fall away! Hence Paul teaches temperance even in marriage; for he who commits excess therein is, as it were, an adulterer, and

violates the Apostolical law.

33. But how can I express the greatness of the grace of virginity, which was counted worthy to be chosen by Christ, to be the bodily temple of God, wherein dwelt, as we read, the fulness of the Godhead bodily! A virgin conceived the Saviour of the world, a virgin brought forth the Life of the universe. Ought not then virginity to be above all other states

16 which was profitable to all in Christ? A virgin

|369 bore Him Whom this world cannot contain or support. He, born of the womb of Mary, preserved inviolate her chastity, and the seal of her virginity. Therefore Christ found in the Virgin what He would take for His own, what the Lord of all would assume to Himself. By the woman and the man our flesh was cast out of Paradise, by the Virgin it was re-united to God.

34. And what shall I say of the other Mary 17, the sister of Moses, who, leading the female band, passed on foot over the straights of the sea? By the same grace Thecla was revered even by lions, so that the unfed beasts, lying at the feet of their prey, underwent a holy fast, neither with wanton look nor sharp claw venturing to harm the virgin, for even by a look the sanctity of virginity is profaned.

35. Again, with what reverence has the holy Apostle spoken, Noiv concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgement as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord. Commandment he has not, but counsel; for that which is above the Law is not commanded, but counselled and advised. Nor is any authority assumed, but grace is shewn, and that not by any chance person, but by him who hath obtained mercy of the Lord. Are then the counsels of these men better than those of the Apostles? The Apostle says, I give my counsel, but they dissuade all from leading a virgin's life.

36. And we ought to wonder at the greatness of the commendation of it which the Prophet, or rather Christ in the person of the Prophet, has expressed in one short verse. A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Christ says this to the Church, whom He would have a virgin without spot or wrinkle. Virginity is a fertile garden, which bears many fruits of a good odour; a garden inclosed because it is surrounded on all sides with the Avail of chastity; a fountain sealed, in that virginity is the fountain and source of modesty, and that which keeps unbroken the seal of purity; that fountain wherein is reflected the image of God, since with chastity of body accords likewise holy simplicity.

|370

37. Nor can any one doubt that the Church herself is a virgin, whom even at Corinth the Apostle Paul espoused, that he might present her a chaste virgin to Christ. Thus in his first Epistle he gives counsel and sets a high value on the gift of virginity, for that it is not disquieted by the needs of this present world, nor defiled by its corruptions, nor agitated by its storms. In the latter he espouses the Corinthians to Christ, that so, in the purity of that people, he may ratify the virginity of the Church.

38. Answer me now, O Paul, in what way for the present distress dost thou give counsel? He that is unmarried, thou sayest, careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord, adding further, the unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy

both in body and spirit. She has therefore a bulwark against the storms of this world, and thus shielded and fortified by the Divine protection she is disquieted by none of the blasts of this world. Counsel then is good, because therein lies profit, but in commandment is a bond

18. Counsel leads forward the willing, commandment binds the reluctant. So that if any follow this counsel, and repent not, she hath profited; on the other hand, if she change her purpose, she hath no ground to accuse the Apostle, for she ought to have judged better of her own weakness, and thus she is responsible to herself for her own choice, for she has bound herself by a bond and knot heavier than she can bear.

39. Wherefore, as a good physician, who desires both to preserve for the strong the stability of their virtue, and to restore health to the weak, he gives to the one counsel, to the other a remedy; Whoso is weak, let him eat herbs; let him take a wife; he that is stronger, let him use the strong meat of continence. And he well adds; He that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the

[371 Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment, and I think also that I have the Spirit of God. Now having the counsel of God consists in examining all things diligently, in urging what is best, and pointing out what is safest.

40. A careful guide points out many ways, that each person may walk on which he will, and which he finds suitable for himself: provided only he lights on one which will lead him into the camp. Good is the way of virginity, but, being lofty and steep, it requires the stronger sort. Good too is the way of widowhood, not so difficult as the former, but, being rocky and rough, it requires the more cautious sort. Good too is the way of matrimony, but, being smooth and direct, it arrives by a longer circuit at the camp of the faithful, and this way is trodden by the larger number. We have therefore the rewards of virginity, the merits of widowhood, there is also a place for conjugal chastity. They are the degrees and advances of several virtues.

41. Stand stedfast therefore in your hearts, that no man may unsettle or overthrow you. The Apostle has taught us what 'to stand' signifies, that is, what was said to Moses, For the place whereon thou standest is holy ground; for no one stands but he who stands by faith, who stands firm in the resolution of his heart. In another place too we read, But as for thee, stand thou here by Me. Both are addressed to Moses by the Lord, both the place whereon thou standest is holy ground, and stand thou here by Me, that is to say, 'thou standest with Me, if thou standest in the Church. For the place itself is holy, the land itself bears the fruit of holiness, and is rich with the haunts of virtue'

42. 'Stand therefore in the Church, stand where I appeared to thee, there I am with thee. For where the Church is, there is the most secure resting-place for thy soul; there is the support of thy mind, when I appeared to thee out of the bush. Thou art the bush, I am the fire: the fire in the bush, and I in the flesh. And therefore am I the fire, that I may give thee light, that I may burn up thy thorns, that is, thy sins, and discover to thee My grace.'

[372

43. Stand firm therefore in your hearts, and drive away from the Church those wolves which seek to carry off prey. Let there be no sloth in you, nor an evil mouth or bitter tongue. Sit not with vain persons, for it is written, I have not dwelt with vain persons. Listen not to those who detract from their neighbours, lest, hearing others, ye be yourselves excited to do likewise, and it be said to each of you, Thou satest and spakest against thy brother.

44. Sitting we speak against others, but standing up we praise the Lord, as it is said; Behold now, praise the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord; ye that stand in the house of the Lord. He who sits, to speak of the habit of the body, is, as it were, dissolved by ease, and relaxes the energy of his mind. But the careful watchman, the unwearied scout, the wakeful sentinel who keeps the outposts of the camp, these stand. The brave warrior also, who would prevent the designs of his enemy, stands

19 ready in his rank ere he is looked for.

45. Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall. He who stands is free from detraction, for it is by the talk of the idle that slander is disseminated and rancour displayed. Wherefore the Prophet says, I have hated the congregation of the wicked, and will not sit among the ungodly. And in the 37th Psalm, which is full of moral precepts, he has placed in the very outset, Be not malignant among them that are malignant, neither be thou envious against the evil-doers. Malignity does more harm than malice, for its property is neither pure simplicity nor open malice; but a hidden malevolence, and it is more difficult to guard against what is concealed than against what is known; and so our Saviour bids us beware of evil spirits, for they captivate us by the outward show of charming pleasures, and the false show of other things, holding forth honour as a lure to ambition, wealth to riches, power to pride.

40. Wherefore in every act, but especially in the search after a Bishop, by whose model the life of all is formed, malignity ought to be absent, that by a composed and peaceful exercise of judgment he may be preferred to all

[373 who is to be chosen from all and who may heal all. For a gentle-minded man is the physician of the heart, of that whereof our Lord also in the Gospel has professed Himself a Physician, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

47. He is the good Physician, Who has taken upon Him our infirmities, Who has healed our sicknesses, and yet He, as it is written, glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest, but He that said unto Him, even the Father, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee, as He saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck. And as He was to be the type of all priests, He took upon Him our flesh, that in the days of His flesh, He might offer up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto God the Father, and though He were the Son of God, might even learn obedience from the things He suffered, in order to teach us, that He might become to us the Author of salvation. Finally, having accomplished His sufferings, and being Himself made perfect, He gave health to all, He bore the sin of all.

48. Thus He Himself chose Aaron the High Priest, that human ambition might not sway the choice, but the grace of God; no voluntary offering, nor taking upon himself, but a heavenly call, that he might offer gifts for sins, who could have compassion on sinners for that he himself also, it is written, is compassed with infirmity. A man should not take this honour to himself, but he that is

called of God as was Aaron; so also Christ did not assume but received His priesthood.

49. And further, since the succession derived by descent from Aaron produced heirs of his race rather than partakers of his righteousness, therefore there came the antitype of that Melchisedeck whom we read of in the Old Testament, the true Melchisedeck, the true King of Peace, the true King of Righteousness, for this is the interpretation of his name; being without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, which also has reference to the Son of God, for in His Divine generation, He had no mother, and in His birth from the Virgin Mary He knew no father; Who, born of the

[374 Father alone before the world, and from the Virgin alone in the world, could have no beginning of days, for He was in the beginning. And how could He have any end to His life, Who is the Author of life to all? He is the Beginning and the Ending. But this is referred to also by way of example, that a Bishop ought to be without father and without mother, in that it is not nobility of birth, but holiness of life and preeminence in virtue that is chosen in him.

50. Let him possess faith and ripeness of conduct, not one without the other, but let both continue in one, with good works and deeds. Wherefore the Apostle Paul wishes us to be imitators of those who by faith and patience possess the promises of Abraham, of him who by patience was counted worthy to receive and possess the grace of the blessing promised to him. The prophet David has admonished us that we ought to be imitators of holy Aaron, for he has proposed him to us, among the saints of the Lord, as an example for our imitation, saying, Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among such as call upon His Name.

51. An example worthy to be followed by all truly was he, seeing that when death, owing to the rebels, was spreading among the people, he placed himself between the living and the dead, thereby to arrest death so that no more might perish. Of a priestly mind and temper truly was he, who thus with pious zeal offered himself, as a good Shepherd, for the Lord's flock. Thus he broke the sting of death, checked its violence, refused to let it pass. Thus piety aided his services, because he offered himself for those who resisted.

52. Wherefore let those also who separate themselves learn to fear the anger of the Lord, and to appease His priests. What? did not the earth open and swallow up Dathan Korah and Abiram on account of their schism? For when Korah Dathan and Abiram stirred up two hundred and fifty men against Moses and Aaron to separate themselves from them, they rose up against them, saying, Let it suffice for you that all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them.

[375

53. Wherefore the Lord was angry and spake to the whole congregation. The Lord knoweth them that are His, and hath drawn His saints to Himself; and those whom He hath not chosen, He has not so drawn to Himself. And the Lord commanded that Korah and all those who together with him had rebelled against Moses and Aaron, the priests of the Lord, should take censers, and put incense therein, that he who was chosen of the Lord, might be declared to be holy among the ministers of the Lord.

51. And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi, seemeth it but a small thing unto you that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord? and below, Seek ye the priesthood also? for which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord: and what is Aaron that ye murmur against him?

55. The whole people therefore, weighing the cause of offence, that these men, though unworthy, wished to fill the office of the priesthood, and therefore separated themselves, murmuring against the Lord, and censuring His judgment in the choice of their priests, were seized with great fear, and oppressed with apprehension of punishment. But at the general entreaty that all may not be involved in destruction through the insolence of a few, the guilty are marked out, and two hundred and fifty men with their leaders are separated from the rest, the earth quakes and is rent asunder in the midst of the people, a deep gulf is opened and swallows up the offenders, and thus they are removed from the pure elements of creation, so as neither to pollute the air by breathing it, nor the heavens by looking on them, nor the sea by their touch, nor the earth by their burial.

50. The punishment ceased, the wickedness ceased not; for owing to this very act a murmuring arose among the people that by means of the priests the people had perished. Indignant at this the Lord would have destroyed all, had He not first been moved by the prayers of Moses and Aaron, and afterwards, at the intercession of Aaron His

[376 priest, (in order to render their pardon more humiliating,) consented to spare their life at the prayer of those, whose prerogative they had denied.

57. Miriam the prophetess herself, she who with her brethren had crossed the straights of the sea dryshod, because, being still ignorant of the mystery of the Ethiopian woman, she had murmured against her brother Moses, became leprous white as snow, and even at the prayer of Moses was scarcely healed of this great plague. This her murmuring however is to be considered as a type of the Synagogue, which, uninstructed in the mystery of this Ethiopian woman, that is, of the Gentile Church, utters daily reproaches, and envies that people by whose faith she herself will also be relieved from the leprosy of her unbelief, according as we read, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

58. And that we may observe that it is Divine rather than human grace which operates in priests, of all those rods which Moses received from the tribes and laid by, the rod of Aaron alone budded, and thus the people perceived that the Divine commission is a gift which is to be looked for in a priest, and though they before thought that a similar prerogative belonged to themselves, they now ceased to claim the same privilege for a merely human election. But this rod, what else does it indicate, but that priestly grace never decays, and in the utmost lowliness has in the exercise of its functions the flower of strength committed to it, or because this also has reference to a mystery? Nor is it without a meaning that we deem this to have taken place near the end of the life of Aaron the priest. It appears to be intimated that the ancient Jewish people, decaying and worn away by the long-continued infidelity of their priesthood, will in the latter times be reclaimed to zealous faith and devotion by the example of the Church, and by the aid of reviving grace will again put forth the blossoms which have so long been dead.

59. But what is signified by the fact that on the death of Aaron it was not to all the people, but to Moses alone, who is among the priests of the Lord, that God gave the

[377 command to invest with the garments of Aaron the priest Eleazar his son, what but to teach us that a priest ought to be consecrated by a priest, and clothed with his proper garments, that is, with priestly virtues; and then, when it appears that he lacks no part of his priestly array, but is complete in all things, that he should be brought near to the holy altars. For being about to offer for the people, he ought to be chosen by the Lord, and approved by the people; and this lest some grave cause of offence should be found in him whose duty it is to intercede for the sins of others. No ordinary degree of virtue befits a priest, for he ought sedulously to shun not only more heinous sins, but even the smallest; he ought to be open to compassion, not to revoke his promise, to raise the fallen, to sympathise with sorrow, to preserve meekness, to love piety, to drive away or stifle wrath, to be a trumpet to rouse the people to devotion, or to soothe them into tranquillity.

60. It is an old saying; Accustom yourself to be single-minded that your life may be as a picture, and ever preserve the same stamp which it has received. How can he be one and the same, who at one time is inflamed with anger, at another, boils with bitter indignation, whose countenance burns and then changes to paleness, varying and changing colour every moment. But suppose that it is natural to be angry, or that for the most part there is cause to be so; it also is the part of a man to moderate his wrath, and to resist being carried away by brutal fury, so as not to know how to be appeased; it is his duty not to embitter family discord, for it is written, A wrathful man diggeth up sin. He is not one with himself who is double-minded, nor he who cannot restrain his wrath, of whom David says well, Be ye angry, and sin not. Such a one does not command his anger, but rather indulges his natural passions, which cannot indeed be prevented but may be moderated. Although then we are angry, let our passion admit only such emotion as is according to nature, not sin which is contrary to nature. For it is intolerable that he who undertakes to govern others should be unable to govern himself.

[378

61. And so the Apostle has given us a model, that it behoves a Bishop to be blameless, as he also says elsewhere, For a Bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre. For how can the compassion of the almsgiver and the avarice of the coveter agree together?

62. I have set down those things which I have learnt are to be avoided; it is the Apostle who teaches what virtues are needed, and he tells us that the gainsayers are to be convinced with patience, and commands a Bishop to be the husband of one wife, and this not in order to exclude him from marriage, (for this is beyond the bounds of the precept,) but that by conjugal chastity he may preserve the grace of his Washing; nor again, that he may feel that he has the sanction of Apostolical authority for begetting children after he is a priest, for he speaks of one having children, not of one begetting them or marrying again.

63. And I have thought it better to touch upon this, because many persons argue as if the being husband of one wife had reference to a man marrying once after Baptism, seeing that by Baptism all the sin which would interpose any obstacle is removed. True indeed it is that in Baptism all sins and offences are washed away, so that even to one who has polluted his body with many women

not united to him by wedlock, all is remitted. But Baptism does not dissolve marriage, if a man has married again, for it is sin, not the Law, which is destroyed by the Bath, and in marriage there is no sin but a law. Being therefore a law it is not dissolved as if it were a fault, but retained, in that it is a law. Now the Apostle has laid down a rule saying, If any be blameless, the husband of one wife. So that if any man be blameless, the husband of one wife, he comes under the forms of the rule for undertaking the priestly office, but he who marries again incurs not indeed the sin of pollution, but loses the prerogative of a priest.

61. We have declared what the law prescribes, let us speak also of what is prescribed by reason. But in the first place we are to understand that the Apostle has not ordained this with reference to Bishops and Presbyters

[379 only, but that the Fathers of the Nicene Council

20 have also decreed that no man should be a cleric at all who has contracted a second marriage. For how can he give consolation or honour to a widow; how can he exhort her to continue a widow, or to preserve that faith to her husband which he has not preserved to his own first marriage? Or what difference would there be between the people and the priest, if they were bound by the same laws? The life of the priest ought to be pre-eminent as well as his graces, for he who obliges others by his precepts ought himself to observe the precepts of the law.

65. How vehemently I resisted ordination! and when I was at last constrained to consent, how I strove that it might be postponed! but the popular impulse

21 prevailed over prescribed 22

rules. And yet it was approved by the judgement of the Bishops of the West, and its example

followed by those of the East²³; and this notwithstanding the prohibition to ordain a novice, lest he be lifted up with pride. If my ordination was not postponed, it was owing to a constraining force, and if proper humility be not wanting to the priest, where the fault does not lie with him no blame will be imputed.

G6. But if even in other Churches such deliberation is used in ordination, how much care is required in that of Vercellae, where two duties seem equally required of the Bishop, monastic severity and ecclesiastical discipline. For Eusebius of blessed memory was the first to bring together in the West these two differing requisites, and though living in the city observed the monastic institute, and with the government of his Church united the sobriety of an ascetic life. Great increase accrues to the grace of the priesthood

[380 when young men are thus obliged to practise abstinence and to obey the laws of chastity, and, though living within the city, to renounce its customs and ways.

67. Hence sprung those famous men Elijah, Elisha, and John the son of Elizabeth, who clothed in sheepskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, wandered about in deserts, in mountains thickets and precipices, among pathless rocks, in horrid caves, through marshy fords, of whom the world was not worthy. Hence Daniel, Ananias, Azarias and Misael, who were brought up in the royal palace, were fed sparingly as though they had been in the desert, with coarse food and water to drink. Rightly then did the king's servants prevail over kingdoms, shake off the yoke and set at

nought captivity, subdue kingdoms, conquer the elements, quench the violence of fire, escape the edge of the sword, stop the mouths of lions, out of weakness were made strong, shrank not from the mockings of men, seeing that they hoped for heavenly rewards, nor dreaded the darkness of the prison, since on them had shone the brightness of eternal light.

68. Following their example, holy Eusebius 24

left his country and kindred, and preferred foreign sojourn to the enjoyment of home. For the faith's sake he also chose and desired the hardships of exile, having for his companion Dionysius of blessed memory, who chose a voluntary banishment in preference to the Emperor's friendship. Thus when these illustrious men, beset by arms, hemmed round by soldiers, were being carried off from the greater church, they triumphed over the imperial power. Troops of soldiers and the din of arms could not rob them of their faith, but they subdued the fierceness of the brutal mind, depriving it of power to hurt the Saints. For, as it is written in Proverbs, the king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion.

69. He confessed himself vanquished, by requesting them to relinquish their purpose, but they deemed their pen of reeds more powerful than his iron swords. Thus it was unbelief, not the faith of the Saints, which was wounded

[381 and fell: they for whom a heavenly abode was prepared needed not a sepulchre in their own country. They wandered through the world as having nothing, yet possessing all things. Every place whither they were sent appeared full of delights, nor could they feel any want who always abounded in faith. They were tempted but not overcome, in fastings in labours, in watchings, in prisons; out of weakness they were made strong. Fed to the full by fasting they looked not for the charms of pleasure; refreshed by the hope of eternal grace, the burning summer parched them not, nor did the cold of icy regions break them down; for the warm breath of devotion invigorated them; they feared not the bonds of men, for Jesus had loosed them; they desired not to be redeemed from death, for they looked forward to be raised again by Christ.

70. Holy Dionysius again prayed that his life might close in exile, fearing that, if he returned, he should find the minds of the clergy or people perplexed by the doctrines and customs of the unbelieving, and he won this grace and carried with him with calm mind the peace of the Lord. Thus as holy Eusebius first lifted up the standard of confession, so blessed Dionysius, dying in his exile, won a higher title even than martyrdom.

71. Now this endurance in holy Eusebius throve under the monastic discipline, and by being accustomed to a stricter rule, he imbibed a power of bearing hardships. For it is certain that in the higher kinds of Christian devotion these two things are the most excellent, the Clerical function and the Monastic rule. The first is trained to be obliging and courteous in its behaviour, the second is accustomed to abstinence and endurance; the one lives as on a theatre, the other in secret; the one is seen, the other hidden. It is the saying of one who was a noble combatant, We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to Angels. Worthy truly was he to have Angels as his spectators, when he wrestled that he might attain the prize of Christ, when he contended that he might lead on earth an Angel's life, that he might overcome the wickedness of spirits in heaven, for he wrestled with spiritual wickedness. Rightly was the world a spectator of him whom it was called on to imitate.

72. Thus one of these lives is on the stage, the other in the cell; the one contends with the distractions of the world, the other with the lusts of the flesh; the one subdues, the other flees from corporal pleasures; the one regulates, the other refrains itself, for to the perfect it is said, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. Now he follows Christ who can say, Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

73. Paul denied himself, when, knowing that chains, bonds and tribulations awaited him in Jerusalem, he voluntarily exposed himself to these dangers, saying, Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus. And though many stood round him, weeping and beseeching, they did not affect his resolution, so strict a censor over itself is a ready faith.

74. Thus the one kind of life fights, the other retires into seclusion; the world is triumphed over by the one, and placed at a distance by the other; to the one the world is crucified, and to it the world, to the other the world is unknown; the one has more temptations and therefore a more signal victory; the other falls less frequently and more easily keeps guard over itself.

75. So also Elijah himself, that the word of his mouth might be confirmed, was sent by the Lord to the brook Cherith. Both Ahab and Jezebel threatened him, Elijah feared and rose up, and went in the strength of that spiritual meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God; and he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there, and afterwards was sent from thence to anoint kings. Thus he was inured to endurance by dwelling in the desert, and as though fed by coarse viands unto the fatness of virtue, went forth increased in strength.

76. John also grew up in the desert, and baptized the Lord, and there first exercised himself in constancy, that afterwards he might reprove kings.

77. And now, seeing that we have cursorily passed over, in treating of holy Elijah's dwelling in the desert, the names of places which are not without meaning, let us return to

|383 consider this. Elijah was sent to the brook Cherith, there the ravens fed him, in the morning they brought him bread, in the evening flesh. And with reason did they bring him bread in the morning, for bread strengthens man's heart., and it was with mystical food that the prophet was fed.

In the evening he was supplied with flesh. Understand what thou readest; for Cherith is understanding, Horeb signifies, 'heart' or 'as heart;' of Beersheba the signification is the 'well of the seventh' or 'of the oath.'

78. Elijah first went to Beersheba, to the mysteries and sacraments of the Divine and holy Law, afterwards he was sent to the Brook, to the stream of that river which makes glad the city of God. Here you perceive the two Testaments, and their single Author; the ancient Scriptures as a deep and dark well whence you have to draw water with difficulty, for He Who was to fill it full was not yet come, as He said in after times, I am not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it. Therefore the Saint is commanded by the Lord to pass over the brook, for he who shall drink of the New Testament is not only a river, but out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, rivers of understanding, rivers of meditation, spiritual streams, which yet are dried up in time of unbelief,

lest the profane and faithless should drink of them.

79. And there the ravens acknowledged the Lord's prophet whom the Jews acknowledged not. They fed him whom that royal and noble nation persecuted. Who is Jezebel who persecuted him, but the Synagogue, vainly flowing, vainly abounding in the Scriptures, which it neither keeps nor understands? Who are the ravens that fed him, but they whose young ones call upon Him, to whose cattle He giveth fodder, as we read, and feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him. These ravens knew whom they were feeding; for they had a spiritual intelligence, and brought food to that stream of sacred knowledge.

80. He too feeds the prophet who understands and keeps what is written. Our faith supports him, our advance gives him nourishment; he feeds on our minds and senses, his discourse is sustained by our understanding of it. We give him bread in the morning, in that, placed in the light of

[384 the Gospel, we bring to him the stabilising of our hearts. By these things is he nourished and strengthened and fills the mouths of them that fast, to whom the unbelief of the Jews administered no food of faith. All prophetic words are fasting diet to them, for they cannot discern its interior richness, to them it is food weak and thin, such as cannot make fat their bones.

81. Perhaps the reason why they brought him flesh in the evening was that it is, as it were, stronger food, such as the Corinthians, who were weak, could not bear, and were therefore fed with milk by the Apostle; and thus in the evening of the world stronger meat was brought, in the morning of the world bread. And so since it was the Lord Who commanded this food to be administered to him, we may suitably address Him in this place with these prophetic words, Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to praise Thee, and below, Thou preparest their corn, for so Thou providest for the earth.

82. But now I think we have said enough of the teacher, let us now follow up the lives of his disciples, who have given themselves to praise the Divine Name, and celebrate it with hymns night and day. For this is the service of Angels, always to be praising God, and with frequent prayers to propitiate and beseech the Lord. They give themselves to reading, and occupy their minds with continual labours, separated from all female society, they mutually protect each other. What a life this is, wherein there is nothing you need to fear, but much for you to imitate! The pain of fasting is repaid by tranquillity of mind, alleviated by custom, made supportable by rest, or beguiled by occupation; worldly solicitude does not burthen nor outward troubles engross it, nor do the distractions of the city draw down upon it any difficulty.

83. For the maintenance or teaching of this gift an instructor is to be sought: what kind of one he ought to be you perceive, and by your unanimous aid we shall be able to obtain him, if you mutually forgive one another, if any of you consider himself injured by the other. For it is not the sole condition of virtue not to hurt him who has not hurt you, but it consists also in forgiving him who

[385 has injured you. We are generally injured by the fraud of others, by the guile of our neighbour, but we must not deem it to be the part of justice to repay guile with guile, and fraud with fraud. For if justice be a virtue, it must be free from the imputation of crime, and not return evil for evil. For what kind of virtue is it for you to do yourself what you punish in another? This is merely to propagate iniquity, not to punish it; and the character of the person whom you injure, whether he

be just or unjust, makes no difference, for you ought not to have done evil. Nor does the mode of your transgression signify, whether it proceed from the desire of avenging yourself, or of injuring others, for in neither kind are you free from blame. There is no difference between being ungodly and unjust, and therefore it is said, Fret not thyself because of the ungodly, neither be thou envious against the evil-doers, and above, I have hated the congregation of the wicked. Thus he comprehends all, without exception; he points to their wickedness without enquiring for the cause.

84. And what can be a better model than the Divine justice? For the Son of God says, Love your enemies. And again He says, Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. So far does He remove the love of revenge from the perfect, that he enjoins upon them charity towards their persecutors. And as in the Old Testament He said, To Me belongeth vengeance, I will repay, so in the Gospel He commands us to pray for them that injure us, that He Who has threatened to punish them may not do so. For He desires you to pardon of your own free-will, with which He agrees according to His promise. And if you call for vengeance, you know that the unrighteous is more severely punished by his own thoughts, than by judicial severity.

85. And as no man's life can be free from adversities, let us take care that they do not befall us by our own fault. For no man is condemned more severely by another's judgment than the foolish man, who is the author of his own misery, is by his own. Wherefore let us avoid such occupations as are troublesome and contentious, which bear no fruit, but only bring obstacles. But we ought to

[386 see that we have no cause to be ashamed either of our choice or of our act; for it is the part of a prudent man, to guard against having to feel frequent sorrow for his acts, since it is the prerogative of God alone never to repent. For what is the fruit of justice but calmness of mind, or what does living justly bring with it, but a life of tranquillity? According to the model of the master will be the condition of the whole house. But if this is required in a family, how much more in the Church, where both rich and poor, bond and free, Greek and Scythian, noble and plebeian, are all one in Christ Jesus.

86. Let no man suppose that because he is rich more deference ought to be shewn him. In the Church he is rich, who is rich in faith, for the faithful have a whole world of riches. What wonder is it that the faithful should possess the world, seeing he possesses the heritage of Christ, which is more precious than the world? Ye were redeemed with precious blood, is said to all, and not to the rich only. But if ye would be rich, follow him who says, Be ye holy in all manner of conversation. This is said not to the rich only but to all, for He judges without respect of persons, according to the faithful testimony of His Apostle. Wherefore, says he, pass the time of your sojourning here not in indulgence, nor pride, nor elation of heart, but in fear. Upon this earth ye have received what is temporal, not what is eternal, use therefore those temporal things as knowing that you must shortly depart hence.

87. Trust not therefore in riches, for all these things must be left behind, and faith alone will accompany you; justice indeed, if faith precede, will also be your companion. Why do riches entice you? Not with silver and gold, not with silken vests and riches were ye redeemed from your vain conversation; but with the precious blood of Christ. He therefore is rich who is an heir of God, and co-heir of Christ. Despise not then a poor man, it is He Who hath made thee rich. Scorn not a needy man; lo! the poor crieth, and the Lord heareth him. Reject not a needy man; for Christ, when He was rich became poor, and this for thy sake, that by His poverty He might make

[387 thee rich. Exalt not thyself therefore, as though thou wert rich, for He sent forth His disciples without money.

88. And the chief of these said, Silver and gold have I none. He glories in his poverty as if he shunned contamination. Silver and gold he says, have I none, he does not say, gold and silver, for he who knows not the use of these things knows not the relative value of them. Silver and gold have I none, but faith I have. I am rich enough in the name of the Lord Jesus, which is above every name. Silver I have none, nor do I ask for it, gold I have not, nor do I desire it, but I have that which ye that are rich are without, which even ye esteem of more value, and this I give to the poor, namely, to say in the name of Jesus, Strengthen ye the weak hands and lift up the feeble knees.

89. But if ye would be rich, become poor. For ye shall in all things be made rich, if ye become poor in spirit. It is not money but the disposition which makes a man rich.

90. There are those who humble themselves when riches abound, and this is well and prudently done, for the law of nature is enough for all, and what suffices to her is easily found, but where lust is, there, in the abundance of riches, is still poverty. And no man is born poor, but becomes so. Thus poverty lies not in nature but in our notions of it, and therefore to find riches is easy to nature, but difficult for lust. In proportion to man's gains this thirst for gain increases, and he is, as it were, inflamed by the intoxication of his lusts.

91. Why do ye seek to accumulate riches as though they were necessary? Nothing is so necessary as to know what is not necessary. Why do ye cast the blame upon the flesh? it is not the lust of the belly, but the desires of the mind which make a man insatiable. Is it the flesh which blots out the hope of the future; is it the flesh which takes away the sweetness of spiritual grace; is it the flesh which obstructs faith; is it the flesh which in every way defers to the frantic domination of vain opinions? The flesh loves rather that frugal temperance, which relieves it of its burthen, which endues it with health, for so it rids itself of keen anxiety, and obtains for itself tranquillity.

92. But riches in themselves are not blameable. For the [388

ransom of a man's life are his riches, for he who gives to the poor, redeems his soul. There is therefore scope for virtue even in these material riches. Ye are as it were pilots, in a great sea. If any man steers well his ship, he quickly passes over the sea, and reaches his haven, but he who cannot manage his property is sunk together with his burthen. Wherefore it is written, The rich man's strength is his strong city.

93. And what is this city but Jerusalem, which is in heaven, in which is the kingdom of God? Good is this possession, which brings perpetual fruit. Good is this possession, which we do not leave behind us, but possess in heaven. He who finds himself in this possession says, The Lord is my portion. He says not, My portion stretches and extends itself to such and such limits. He says not, My portion is among such and such neighbours, unless haply with reference to the Apostles, the prophets and the saints of the Lord, for these are the portion of the just. He says not, My portion is in the meadows, or in the woods, or in the fields, unless perchance in the fields of the wood, wherein the Church is found, of which it is written, We found it in the wood. He says not, Troops of horses are my portion, for a horse is counted but a vain thing to save a man. He says not, Herds of oxen asses or sheep are my portion, except so far as he numbers himself among those herds which know their owner, and with that ass which shuns not the crib of Christ; that lamb too is his

portion which was brought to the slaughter, and that sheep which before her shearers was dumb, which opened not his mouth; by whose humility judgment has been exalted. And it is rightly said, before her shearers because, on that Cross He put off what was but accidental, not part of His essence, for He put off His body, but lost not His Divinity.

94. It is not every one therefore who can say the Lord is my portion. Not the covetous man, for avarice comes and says; Thou art my portion, I have thee in subjection, thou art my slave, thou hast sold thyself to me with that gold, thou hast adjudged thyself to be mine with these goods. The sensual man says not, Christ is my portion, because luxury comes and says, Thou art my portion, I have brought

[389 thee into subjection to myself by that banquet, I have caught thee by the snare of those feasts, I keep thee in my bondage by the constraints of thy gluttony. Wilt thou not acknowledge that thou didst set a higher value on the indulgence of thy appetite than on thy life? I condemn thee by thine own judgment; deny it if thou canst; but thou canst not. Again, thou hast reserved nothing for thy subsistence, thou hast spent it all on thy table. The adulterer cannot say, The Lord is my portion, for lust comes and says, I am thy portion, thou hast enslaved thyself to me by the love of that damsel, by a night spent with that harlot thou hast committed thyself to my dominion. The traitor cannot say, Christ is my portion, because his wickedness immediately seizes upon him and says, He is deceiving thee, O Lord Jesus, this man is mine.

95. We have an example of this, for, Avhen Judas had received the sop from Christ, the devil entered into his heart, as claiming him for his own possession, retaining his right to his own portion, and saying, This man is not Thine but mine; my servant, Thy betrayer; to me, then, he manifestly belongs. With Thee he sits at table, but it is I who feed him, from Thee he has received bread, from me money; with Thee he drinks, but to me he has sold Thy Blood. And the event proved how truly he spoke. Then Christ departed from him, and Judas also left Jesus, and followed the devil.

96. How many masters has he, who deserts that one Master! But let us not desert Him. Who would fly from Him Whom Paul and Timothy follow, bound with chains, but voluntary ones, chains which do not bind but loose, chains in which they glory, saying, Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy. Bondage under Him is more honourable than freedom and release from others. Who then would fly from peace, who would fly from salvation, who would fly from pity, who would fly from redemption?

97. Ye see, my sons, what they have become who have followed this course, how they, though dead, still work. Now as we join in praising their virtue, let us also study to attain to their diligence, and silently recognize in ourselves that which we speak of with approval in others. Nothing effeminate, nothing frail can deserve praise, The kingdom of

[390 heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Our fathers ate the Paschal lamb in haste. Faith makes good speed, devotion is lively, hope unwearied; it loves not perturbations of the soul, but it loves to pass from profitless inactivity to fruitful labour. Why put off till tomorrow? you may still gain to-day; beware lest you fail to attain the one, and lose the other also. The loss even of one hour is not unimportant; one hour forms part of our whole life.

98. There are some young persons who wish straightway to arrive at old age, that they may no longer be subject to the will of their elders, and there are old men who would return if they could to youth. Now I can approve of neither of these desires; the young men, disdain things present, desire that their life may be changed, the old men that it may be prolonged. But it is in the power of the young to become old by gravity of mind, and of the old to grow young by vigorous actions. For it is not age so much as discipline which brings with it correction of life. How much more therefore ought we to lift up our hopes to the kingdom of God, where our life will be renewed, and where there will be a change not of age but of grace.

99. It is not by indolence or sleep that we obtain for ourselves a reward. The sleeper cannot work, there comes no fruit from indolence, but rather loss. Esau, being slothful, lost the first-fruits of blessing, choosing to receive rather than to seek for food. The industrious Jacob found grace at the hands of both his parents.

100. But Jacob, although superior in virtue and grace, gave way to his brother's anger, who was indignant that his younger brother should be preferred to him. Wherefore it is written, Give place unto wrath, to the intent that displeasure against another may not draw you also into sin, while wishing to resist and to be avenged. If you will consent to yield you may remove the blame both from yourself and from him. Imitate the patriarch, who by his mother's advice went into a far country. And who was this mother? Rebecca, that is, patience. For who could give this counsel but patience? The mother loved her son, and chose that he should be separated from herself rather than from

[391] God. And thus as a good mother she gave benefits to both her sons, but on her younger son she conferred a blessing which he had power to keep. For she did not prefer one son to the other, but she preferred diligence to sloth, faith to unbelief. And even on her elder son she conferred no little favour, for she sent away the younger, to save him from unworthy fratricide.

101. His piety not his fault having thus banished him from his parents, he conversed with God, he increased in his estate, in his children, in grace. Nor was he elated by these things on meeting with his brother, but he humbled himself and did obeisance, not to his brother, implacable as he was, but to God Whom in his person he honoured. Therefore he bowed down to him seven times, being the number which signifies remission, for it was not a man that he adored, but Him of Whom He foresaw in spirit that He should come in the flesh, to take away the sins of the world. And this mystery is unfolded to you in the reply of Peter, who says, How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him, till seven times? Thus you see this forgiveness of sins is a type of that great sabbath, of that perpetual rest of grace; and therefore it receives the gift of contemplation.

102. But what is the meaning of his setting in array his wives, and sons, and all his servants, and commanding them to bow themselves to the earth? It was not to the earth, as an element, which is often filled with blood, which is the receptacle of crimes, and which is made hideous by desolate rocks, or by precipices, or by a barren and hungry soil, but as that Flesh Which was to be our salvation. And perhaps this is that mystery which the Lord has taught thee in the words, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but, until seventy times seven.

103. Do ye therefore forgive the wrongs done to you, that ye may be the sons of Jacob. Be not provoked as was Esau. Imitate holy David, who as a good teacher, has left us an example in the

words, For the love that I had unto them, lo! they take now the contrary part, but I give myself unto prayer, and so when men reviled him, he prayed. Prayer is a good shield, a shield which wards off contumely, which repels curses, and throws them back on

[392 the heads of those who utter them, so that they are wounded by their own weapons: Let them curse, it is said, but bless Thou. That curse of men is to be courted, for it obtains for us a blessing from the Lord.

104. For the rest, my most dearly beloved, remembering that Jesus suffered without the gate, do ye go forth from this earthly city, for your city is Jerusalem, which is above. Do ye dwell there that ye may say, For our conversation is in heaven. Jesus went forth from the city, that ye, going forth from the world, may be above the world. Moses alone, who saw God, had his tabernacle without the camp when he talked with God; and when sacrifices were offered for sin, the blood indeed was carried to the altar, but the bodies were burned without the camp; for no man living among the temptations of this world can lay aside sin, nor can his blood be accepted by God until he has put off the defilement of this body.

105. Love hospitality, for thereby holy Abraham found favour in God's sight, received Christ as his guest, and Sarah, already worn with age, obtained grace to bear a son; Lot also escaped the flames which destroyed Sodom. And thou also must receive Angels, if thou wilt offer hospitality to strangers. And what shall I say of Rahab, who, by performing this office, escaped destruction?

106. Compassionate those who are kept in bondage, as though ye also were bondsmen. Console those who are under sorrow; It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. From the one we win the merit of discharging a duty, from the other the stain of a transgression. And again in the one case the reward is yet hoped for, in the other it is received. Sympathise with those who suffer as if ye suffered together with them.

107. Let a woman be obedient not servile to her husband, let her offer herself to be ruled not coerced. Let the husband also direct his wife as her governor, honour her as the companion of his life, share with her as his fellow-heir in grace.

108. Mothers, wean your own children, love them, and pray for them, but pray that their life

25 may be prolonged above this earth, rather than in it, for there is nothing

[393 longlived in this earth, and that which seems permanent is at the best short and fragile. Admonish them rather to take up the Cross of Christ than to love this life.

109. Mary, the mother of the Lord stood by the cross of her Son; it is no other than the holy Evangelist John who teaches me this. Others have told us that in the Lord's passion the earth was shaken, the heaven covered with darkness, the sun withdrew its light, the thief, after a faithful confession, was received into paradise. John has taught what the others have not, how when nailed to the Cross He spoke to His mother, esteeming rather this exhibition of pious offices to His mother than that gift of a heavenly kingdom, which, after triumphing over His pains, He conferred. For if it be pious to grant pardon to the thief, much more pious is it that the Son should shew such solicitous honour to His Mother: Behold, He says, thy son, Behold thy mother. Christ testified from the Cross, and distributed the offices of piety between the mother and the disciple. The Lord made not only a public but also a private Testament, and John signed this His Testament, a witness

worthy of so great a Testator, a good Testament, not of money but of eternal life, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God, Who says, My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

110. Nor did Mary fall below what became the Mother of Christ. When the Apostles fled she stood before the Cross, and with pious eyes looked upon the wounds of her Son, for she expected to see not the death of her Offspring, but the salvation of the world. Or perhaps because she who was the Palace

26 of the King had learnt that the redemption of the world would ensue from the death of her Son, she thought that by her own death she might add something to the general good. But Jesus needed no helper for the redemption of all, Who without any helper saved all. Wherefore He says, I am become like

|394 a man without help; free among the dead. He received the affection of His Mother, but He sought not aid from others.

111. Imitate her, ye holy mothers, who in her only and beloved Son exhibited such an example of maternal virtue, for your children cannot be dearer to you than hers was, nor did the Virgin seek consolation in the bearing of another son.

112. Masters, command your servants not as your inferiors in rank, but as remembering that they are partakers of the same nature as yourselves. Servants also, serve your masters cheerfully, for every one ought cheerfully to endure that state whereunto he is born; and obey not only the good, but also the froward. For what merit has your service, if ye serve the good diligently; but if ye serve the froward also ye have merit, for neither do the free obtain any reward, if, having transgressed, they are punished by the judges, but herein lies their merit if they suffer wrongfully. Thus if ye, considering Jesus Christ, serve even austere masters with patience, ye will have your reward. For the Lord Himself suffered, the just from the unjust, and with admirable patience nailed our sins to His Cross, that he who shall imitate Him may wash away his sins in His blood.

113. In short, turn all of you to the Lord Jesus. Take pleasure in this life so that it be with a good conscience; let the hope of immortality make you patient of death, let your assurance of the resurrection be confirmed by the grace of Christ; let there be truth and simplicity, faith and confidence, abstinence and holiness, industry and sobriety, modest conversation, learning without vanity, sobriety of doctrine, faith not intoxicated by heresy. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.

|395

LETTER LXIV 27.

S. Ambrose replies to Irenaeus, who had asked why the manna, which was given to the children of Israel, was not given now, that the Body of Christ, Which is given to Christians, is the true Manna, of which the other was a type; as it was also of Divine Wisdom, which is the food of souls.

AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING.

1. You ask me why the Lord God does not now rain manna as He did on our fathers. If you consider. He does rain manna from heaven on those who serve Him, and that day by day. The

earthly manna indeed is to this very day found in many places, but it is not now an event so miraculous because that which is perfect is come. Now that which is perfect is the Bread from heaven, the Body born of the Virgin, as to which the Gospel sufficiently instructs us. O how greatly does this excel what went before it! For they who eat that manna or bread, are dead, but he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

2. But there is also a spiritual manna, the dew that is of spiritual Wisdom, which descends from heaven upon those who sincerely seek for it, and which waters the souls of the righteous, and puts sweetness into their mouths. Wherefore he who comprehends this out-pouring of divine wisdom receives pleasure from it, nor requires any other food, nor lives by bread alone, but by every word of God. He who is more curious, will ask what that is which is sweeter than honey. The servant of God answers him, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. And hear further what this bread is, the word, he says, which the Lord hath commanded. Now this food so commanded by God nourishes the soul of the wise, imparting light and sweetness, brightened by the beams of truth, and communicating to it the soothing sweetness of divers virtues and

[396 the word of wisdom like that of an honey-comb; for pleasant words, it is written in the Proverbs, are as an honeycomb.

3. And now hear the reason why it was small; it was because a grain of mustard-seed which is compared to the kingdom of heaven is also small, and because faith, which is as a grain of mustard-seed, can remove mountains and cast them into the sea. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. Again, Moses ground the head of the golden calf to powder, and cast it into water, and made the people drink of it; for their heart was hardened by the greatness of their perfidy, and he did thus that it might be softened and made refined by faith. Lastly, that woman who grinds meal well and fine shall be taken, but she who grinds ill shall be left.

4. Follow then these examples as regards thy faith, that thou mayest be like that soul which excites in itself the love of Christ, and which, as it ascends aloft, is admired by the host of heaven; that it may rise without impediment, that it may soar above this world with joy and gladness, lifting itself on high like the vine stock and like the smoke, sending forth the fragrance of a holy resurrection, and the sweetness of faith, as it is written, Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like the stock of vine burned with smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of

ointment?

5. The refined nature of this faith is well expressed by being compared with powder or by the mention of perfume; for we read in Exodus of that prophetic incense which is the prayer of the Saints, as being a subtile perfume and compounded of many things, that it may be set forth in the sight of the Lord, as David also says, Let my prayer be set forth in Thy sight as the incense. And so it is in the Greek also,

kateuqunqh&tw h(proseuxh& mou w(j qumi/ama e0nw-pi/on sou. And in the Revelation of John we read that an Angel, stood at the Altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, it is said,

|397 with the prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God out of the Angel's hand.

6. Small too is the navel and the belly of that soul which ascends up to Christ, and therefore it is praised by the words of the spouse saying, Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor, thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies. For it is rounded and polished with all kinds of learning, and is a spiritual drink not failing in fulness, and in the knowledge of heavenly secrets. The belly of the soul is also like the navel, mystical, and not only strong food whereby the heart is strengthened, but also sweet and flowery food whereby it is delighted, is received therein. And perhaps this is what Moses meant, that by many and pious prayers the sacrilege was to be atoned for.

7. In the book of Kings also, when the Lord revealed Himself to holy Elijah, a small still voice was first heard, and then the Lord revealed Himself to him; thereby to teach us that bodily things are solid and gross, but such as are spiritual tender and so fine as not to be perceptible to the eye. In the same way we read in the book of Wisdom that the Spirit of Wisdom is subtile and lively for in her is an understanding spirit, holy, one only, manifold, subtile and lively; and she grinds her words before she speaks, that neither her mode of speech nor her meaning may give offence. Lastly, it shall be said to Babylon herself, when about to be destroyed, And the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee.

8. The manna then was fine, and was gathered each day, not reserved for the day following; because the extemporaneous inventions of Wisdom please the most; when made at leisure they excite not the same admiration as when struck out at the moment by the spark of genius. Or it may be that future mysteries are revealed herein: the manna kept till the rising of the sun was unfit to be eaten, in other words, after the coming of Christ, it lost its grace. For when the Sun of Righteousness arose, and the more illustrious Sacraments of the Body and Blood of Christ appeared, lower things were to cease, and the people were to take in their stead what was more perfect.

Farewell; love me, for I also love you. |398

LETTER LXV. THIS letter contains a mystical explanation of the statement in Exodus xxiv. 6. that Moses put half of the blood of the sacrifices into basons and poured half on the altar.

AMBROSE TO SIMPLICIANUS, GREETING.

1. You were perplexed, you tell me, when reading that Moses, after offering sacrifice and the immolation of salutary victims to the Lord, put half of the blood in basons, and sprinkled half on the altar, to know what could be the purport of this. But why need you doubt and inquire of me, when for the sake of the faith, and of acquiring Divine knowledge, you have traversed the whole world, and night and day have devoted the whole time of your life to constant reading? Thus with your keen intellect you have embraced all the objects of the understanding, and are wont to prove as concerns even the books of philosophy, how far they deviate from the truth, many of them being so futile that the words of their writers perished sooner than their life.

2. But since gathering words, like money, is of great profit, and great increase is thereby obtained for the general good of trade, I cannot refrain from mentioning how wonderful is that division of the blood. For part of it seems to signify the moral, and part the mystical discipline of wisdom. That

part which is put into basons is moral, that which is sprinkled on the altar is mystical; in that by the Divine gift and a certain inspiration it is instilled into men's minds, that the sentiments they conceive of God may be suitable and full of faith.

3. Moreover, they who have spoken of His majesty, and of heavenly things, whether apostles or holy prophets, have only dared to speak of such things as were shewn them by revelation. Hence Paul has testified in his Epistle that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard words which it is not lawful for a man to utter; Stephen also saw the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of

|399 God, and the Prophet David saw Him sitting on His right hand. And what shall I say of Moses, of whom the Scripture says that there arose not such a prophet since in Israel, who kneiv the Lord face to face, in all the signs and the wonders which he did in the land of Egypt.

4. The mystical part therefore is offered to God, Who by the brightness of the Divine Wisdom, Whose Father and Parent He is, quickens the vigour of the soul, and enlightens the mind. But the Wisdom of God is Christ, on Whose breast John lay, that from that secret source of wisdom he might be known to have imbibed Divine mysteries. He himself, conscious of his gift, has recorded this, for he dreaded to claim for himself, and to ascribe to his own genius that which he had received. The Lord also said to the Apostles, opening their mouths, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whereby He declared that He is the same Who said to Moses, I will open thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. Wherefore this wisdom, divine, unspeakable, unadulterated and incorruptible, pours her grace into the minds of her saints, and discloses to them knowledge that they may behold her glory.

5. But that is the discipline of moral wisdom which is poured into basons, and is taken and drank from them. The basons therefore are the organs of the senses. The basons are the two eyes, the ears, the nose, the mouth and other parts suitable to this function; for the eyes are the recipients and ministers of sight, the ears of hearing, the nose of smell, the mouth of taste, and so with the rest. Into these basons that Word in Whom is the Headship of the priestly and prophetic office poured the half of His blood; that He might quicken and animate the irrational parts of our nature, and endow them with reason.

6. Again, having rehearsed and proclaimed the precepts of the Law to the people, and being about to explain the meaning of that mystical ark of the testimony, and of the candlestick, and of the censers, he slew victims, and offered sacrifice, sprinkling half of the blood on the sacred altar, and putting half in basons.

7. A division therefore is made between that mystical or divine and moral wisdom. For the

Lo&goj is a divider |400

of souls and of virtues: the Lo&goj is the Word of God, quick and powerful, which pierces and penetrates even to the dividing asunder of the soul, and which also distinguishes and divides virtues, whose minister, Moses, by the division of the blood, distinguished the kinds of virtue.

8. And forasmuch as nothing is so emphatically declared in the Law as Christ's Advent, or prefigured as His Passion, consider whether this be not the saving victim which God the Word offered by Himself, and sacrificed in His own body. For first both in the Gospel and also in the Law

He taught us moral discipline, and manifested it in His own patience and in very act and deed, transfusing into our lives and senses, as if into basons, the very substance and marrow as it were of wisdom, and quickening thereby men's minds to be a seed-plot of virtue, and instructed in piety, and then, drawing near the altar, He poured out the blood of His offering.

9. Should you choose then to understand it thus, the sense is pious; the interpretation also which follows that of Solomon is, if you prefer it, equally concordant, namely, that whereas the prophet Moses put the blood into basons, this is the same blood whereof it is written that Wisdom hath mingled her wine, bidding men to forsake foolishness, and seek after understanding. From the bason then we drink wisdom, discipline, understanding, correction, amendment of life, regulation of habits and counsels, the grace of piety, increase of virtue, a fountain of plenty.

10. But by this sprinkling the blood on the Altar you may understand the cleansing of the world, the remission of all sins. For He sprinkles that blood on the Altar as a Victim to atone for the sins of many. For the Victim is a Lamb, but a Lamb not of irrational nature but of divine power, of Which it is said, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. For not only has He cleansed with His blood the sins of all men, but has also gifted them with divine power. Does not He seem to you to have indeed shed His blood, from Whose side blood and water flowed over the very altar of His Passion?

Farewell; love me as you do, with the affection of a parent. |401

LETTER LXVI.

HERE is a mystical exposition of Aaron's taking the earrings of the women to make the golden calf, and of other details connected with it.

AMBROSE TO ROMULUS.

1. THERE is no doubt that letter-writing was invented that we might hold a sort of converse with the absent, but this becomes more excellent in use and example when frequent and pleasant colloquies pass between a parent and his sons, whereby is really produced a sort of image of actual presence, even though they are separate in body; for by such offices love attains its growth, just as it is augmented by our mutual letters between ourselves. All this I begin to experience much more abundantly in these last addresses of your affection, wherein you have thought fit to ask me with what intent Aaron took the gold from the people when they required gods to be made them, and why the head of a calf was fashioned with that gold, and why Moses was so deeply incensed that he commanded every man to rise upon his neighbour and slay him with the sword. For it is a great thing that the absent should suffer no loss either of kindness or of the liberal communication of mutual knowledge. My sentiments on this point, therefore, as you require it, I will offer for the purpose rather of comparison than of instruction.

2. While Moses was receiving the Law on Mount Sinai the people were with Aaron the Priest. Prone as they were to transgress, we do not find that they committed sacrilege so long as the Law was being delivered, but when the Divine Voice ceased, sin overtook them, so that they required gods to be made them. Aaron, thus constrained, asked for their rings and the women's earrings, which, when given to him, he cast into the fire, and the head of a calf was molten of them.

3. We can neither excuse this great priest, nor dare we condemn him. It was not however unadvisedly that he deprived the Jews of their rings and earrings; for they who

|402 designed sacrilege could have neither the seal of faith nor ornaments of their ears. The patriarch Jacob too hid the earrings along with the images of the strange gods, when he hid them in Shechem, that no one might come to know of the superstitions of the Gentiles. And he said well, Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives; not as leaving the men their earrings, but in order to shew that they had them not. Fitly also are the earrings taken from the women, that Eve may not again hear the voice of the serpent.

4. Because they had listened to sacrilegious counsel, an image of sacrilege was formed by the melting of their earrings; for he who hears amiss is wont to perpetrate sacrilege. Why the head of a calf came forth, the sequel shews, for it was signified thereby, either that in time to come Jeroboam would introduce this kind of sacrilege, and that the people of the Hebrews should worship golden calves; or else that all unbelief bears the semblance of brutal and savage folly.

5. Moses, incensed by this unworthy act, broke the tables, and ground the head of the calf to powder, that he might abolish all traces of their impiety. The first Tables were broken in order to the restoration of the second, whereby, through the preaching of the Gospel, unbelief was broken to pieces, and done away. And thus Moses brought down this Egyptian pride, and repressed this self-exalting arrogance, by the authority of the eternal Law. Wherefore David also says, The Lord shall break the cedars of Libanus, and shall reduce them to pieces, as a calf of Libanus.

6. The people drank up all their perfidy and pride, that impiety and arrogance might not drink them up. For it is better that every one should prevail over the flesh and its vices, that it may not be said that prevailing 28 death hath swallowed him up, but rather, Death is swallowed up in victory; O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory? And of the Lord it is said, He shall drink of the brook in the way; for He received the vinegar, that He might drink up the temptations of all men.

7. But in his causing every man to slay his neighbour, the |403

parents their children, the brother his brother, we find an evident precept that religion is to be preferred to friendship, piety to kindred. For that is true piety which prefers divine things to human, eternal to temporal. Wherefore also Moses himself said to the sons of Levi, Who is on the Lord's side, let him come to me. And he said unto them. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go throughout the camp, that thus, by the contemplation and love of the Divine Majesty all human ties and affections might be destroyed. It is written that three thousand men were slain, nor need we feel any jealousy of the number being so great, for it is better that by the punishment of a few the body should be exonerated, than that vengeance should be taken on all; nor indeed does any punishment of wrong against God appear too severe.

8. Again, the ministry of the Levites, whose portion is God, was chosen for this work, as being more holy than the others: for they know not how to spare their own who know nothing of their own, for to the holy God is everything. Now he is the true Levite and punisher and avenger, who kills the flesh that he may preserve the spirit, such as he was who says, I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection. And who are such close neighbours as the flesh and the soul? What is so akin to us as the passions of the body? These the good Levite slays within himself with that

spiritual sword which is the word of God, sharp and powerful.

9. There is also a sword of the Spirit, which pierces the soul, as was said to Mary, A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. Is not the flesh united with the soul by a kind of fraternal bond? Is not discourse also related and akin to our mind? When therefore we check our discourse, that we may not incur the sin of much speaking, we put aside the rights of blood, and loose the bonds of this fraternal connexion. Thus by the force of reason the soul severs from itself its irrational and, as it were, cognate part.

10. And so Moses taught the people to rise against their neighbours, by whom faith was in danger of being

[404 mocked, and virtue hindered, that whatever in us was straying from virtue, perplexed by error, or entangled in vice might be cut off. By this direction to the people he obtained not only a mitigation of the Divine wrath and a turning away of offence, but even conciliated for them grace.

11. Thus, according to our apprehension, we have explained, since you asked it, our sentiments. And do you, if you have aught preferable, impart it to us, that from you and from ourselves we may learn which to choose and follow.

Farewell: love me as a son, for I also love you.

LETTER LXVII.

S. AMBROSE begins by pointing out that Moses deferred to Aaron in matters connected with the Priesthood, and then goes on to dwell on the rarity and the blessing of true penitence.

AMBROSE TO SIMPLICIANUS, GREETING.

1. THE greatness of each person as regards his own functions is taught us in that Scripture lesson by which your attention has been justly attracted, that Moses, than whom no man saw God more intimately, neither arose there a prophet since in Israel whom the Lord knew face to face; he who was constantly with the Lord forty days and nights, when he received the law in the Mount, he, I say, to whom the Lord gave the words which he should speak, is found to have approved the counsel of his brother Aaron more than his own. Was there then any man more prudent and learned than Moses? Nay, of Aaron himself we

afterwards read that together with Miriam he transgressed concerning the Ethiopian woman.

2. But I would have you carefully consider this very thing, how Moses excelled in knowledge, Aaron in counsel. Moses was the greatest prophet, who said of Christ, Like unto me, unto Him shall ye hearken. And the Lord Himself says of him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets,

[405 neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

In the matter of prophecy therefore Moses is preferred as a prophet; but where the subject and function and office relates to the Priesthood, Aaron is preferred as being a Priest. Let us now treat the passage itself.

3. A he-goat was slain for sin; offered for an whole burnt-offering. Moses afterwards sought for it, and it was burnt. And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron which were left

alive, saying, Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin-offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation? Ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place as I commanded. Now when Aaron saw that Moses was angry he replied to him meekly, Behold, this day have they offered their sin-offering and their burnt-offering before the Lord, and such things have befallen me, and if I had eaten the sin-offering to-day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the Lord? And when Moses heard that, he was content. Let us consider what these things mean.

4. Not to sin is an attribute of God alone: to amend and correct one's error and to do penance for one's sin is the part of a wise man. But this is very difficult in this human life. For what is so rare as to find a man who will convict himself, and condemn his own act? Rare is the confession of sin, rare is penitence, rare among men is the admission of that word. Nature and shame both recoil from it; nature, because all are under sin, and he who wears flesh is subject to transgression. Thus the nature of the flesh, and the allurements of the world are repugnant to innocence and integrity. Shame recoils also, because every man blushes to confess his own fault, thinking more of the present than of the future.

5. Now Moses desired to find a soul free from sin, that it might lay aside the slough of error, and depart, relieved from transgression, without any cause of shame within itself. But such a soul he found not, because an irrational impulse comes quickly on, and a certain flame, whose motions are very swift, feeds upon the soul, and burns up its innocence. For the future is outweighed by the present,

[406 moderation by violence, worth by numbers, soberness by pleasure, hardness by luxury, sadness by joy, austerity by blandishments, slowness by too great precipitance. And iniquity, which suggests occasions of doing evil, is a thing swift in its nature, for its feet are swift to shed blood; but all virtue uses gentle and long delays, judging beforehand and looking narrowly into what is to be undertaken. And thus the good mind scrutinizes its own counsels, and examines beforehand what is becoming and excellent; but in iniquity the act outstrips consideration. Penitence therefore is tardy and abashed, because it is oppressed and drawn back by present shame; having, in itself, regard only to things future, the hope whereof is late, the fruit tardy, and so the desire of them is tardy also.

6. During these strivings of hope and virtue shameless-ness runs onward, and by the glare of things present, penitence is excluded, its affections are, as it were, burnt up, and all that has respect to it is lost. The Law seeks and finds it not, for it is scorched by the heat and smoke of iniquity, and the anger, as it were, of the Law is roused. Moses says that the sin-offering ought to have been eaten in the holy place, and rebukes the priests as remiss; Aaron replies that the priestly judgment ought to be cautious; that such a function must not be lightly entrusted to an unsound conscience, lest this error be worse than the first. For by a filthy vessel wine or oil is easily tainted and spoiled.

7. But how could sin be burnt out when the fire was strange fire; and this in the sight of the Lord to Whom even hidden things are known? Can it please the Lord, if a man, while he is yet engaged in sin, and keeps unrighteousness in his heart, professes that he is doing penance? It is the same thing as if one who is sick should feign himself well, he will only become worse; for the pretence of health can avail him nothing; since it is but shadowed forth by words, not sustained by any support

of virtue.

8. This strange fire then is lust, this strange fire is every incentive of cupidity, this strange fire is all burning avarice. By this fire man is not cleansed but rather burned

[407 up. For where this strange fire is, if any man offer himself in the sight of the Lord, the celestial fire consumes him as it did Nadab and Abihu who were burned together with those sacrifices which had been offered for sin on the sacred Altars. He therefore who would cleanse his sin let him remove from him strange fire. Let him offer himself to that fire only which burns up the fault not the man.

9. And who this fire is, let us learn from the words, that Jesus shall baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. This is that fire which dried up her issue of blood who had suffered it for twelve years; that fire, which took away the sin of Zacchaeus when he said that he would give half of his goods to the poor, and if he had taken any thing from any man would restore fourfold. This is that fire, which wiped away the thief's crime, for He is a consuming fire Who said, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise. Thus He healed those in whom He found a simple and pure confession; no malice, no fraud.

10. Judas moreover could not obtain a remedy, although he said, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood, for he cherished within his breast strange fire, which urged him on to destroy himself. He was not worthy to be healed, for he wept not through conversion of his inmost mind, nor did he diligently do penance; for such is the love of the Lord Jesus that He would have granted pardon even to him, had he waited for the mercy of Christ.

11. This fault therefore the priests cannot remove, nor the sin of him who offers himself in guile, and still harbours a desire of transgressing. For they cannot eat of that which is full of fraud, and has the serpent's scar within; for the food of the priest lies in the remission of sins. Wherefore Christ the chief of Priests says, My meat is to do the will of My Father which is in heaven. What is the will of God but this, In returning and rest shall ye be saved? In the guileful man therefore there is no food. Neither again can he taste the sweetness of a feast whose conscience is not sincere and pure; for the bitterness of fraud takes away the sweetness of the viands; and an evil conscience will not permit penitence to refresh and feed the guilty soul.

[408

12. Such affections therefore, such petitions, such penitence are neither useful nor a pleasure to the priests. And that he-goat offered as an whole burnt offering for sin was deservedly burnt, because strange fire was found in the sacrifice. On that account it was not a pleasing and acceptable sacrifice to God; for that is not accepted which has not been approved among the riches of sincerity and truth.

13. And so elsewhere also you read of two he-goats, one whereon was the lot of the Lord, the other that of the scape-goat, and that that whereon was the lot of the Lord was offered and sacrificed, while the one whereon was the lot of the scape-goat was sent into the wilderness to take away the iniquities of the people, or of any sinner. For as there are two men in the field, and one of them shall be taken and the other left, so are there two he-goats, one of which is used for sacrifice, and the other sent into the wilderness. The one is of no use, neither to be eaten nor fed

upon by the sons of the priests. For as in matters of food, what is good is eaten, what is useless or bad is thrown away, in the same way we call good works festive, as fit for eating.

14. It will not therefore be pleasing to the Lord if the priest eat of a sacrifice which presents a deceptive offering, not the sincerity of a diligent confession. And therefore that goat is to be sent into the wilderness, where our fathers wandered, where they wandered and could not attain to the land of the resurrection, but the memory of them passed from the land. Hear again what are festive works. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you. For rest in God, which causes tranquillity of mind, is festive and refreshing. And now let us also rest from discoursing.

Farewell; love me as you do, for I also love you. |409

LETTER LXVIII. AN explanation of the text, Thy heaven shall be brass and thy earth iron.

AMBROSE TO ROMULUS.

1. BEING yourself in the country I am surprised at your having been led to inquire of me the reason why God should have said, And thy heaven shall be brass, and thy earth iron. For the very appearance of the country and its present fertility might teach us how great is the mildness of the air, and how genial is the climate, when God vouchsafes to give plenty, but when sterility, how all things are closed up, how dense the air, so as to seem hardened into the very substance of brass. Elsewhere also you read that in the clays of Elijah the heaven was shut up three years and six months.

2. By the heaven then being brass is signified its being shut up, and refusing its use to the earth. The earth also is iron, for it withholds its produce, and with hostile rigour excludes from its fructifying soil the seeds thrown upon it, which its wont is to cherish as in the bosom of a tender mother. For when does iron bring forth fruit, when does brass melt into showers?

3. Those impious men therefore He threatens with miserable famine, that they who know not how to shew filial piety to the common Lord and Father of all, may be deprived of the support of His paternal clemency, that the heaven may be to them as brass, and the air condensed into the substance of metal; that the earth may be to them as iron, deprived of its natural productions, and as is usually the case with poverty, a sower of strife. For they who are in want of food commit robberies, that at the expense of others they may relieve their own hunger.

4. If further the offence of the inhabitants be so great that God stirs up and brings war upon them, then their land is truly iron, bristling with crops of spears, and stripped of

|410 its own fruit, fruitful as regards punishment, barren as regards nourishment. But where is abundance? Behold I will rain bread for you. saith the

Lord.

Farewell; love me, for I also love you.

LETTER LXIX. IN this Letter S. Ambrose answers a question propounded to him as to the ground of the severity of the Mosaic Law against those who disguised their sex.

AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING.

1. You have referred to me, as to a father, the inquiry which has been made of you, why the Law was so severe in pronouncing those unclean who used the garments of the other sex, whether they were men or women, for it is written, The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord.

2. Now, if you will consider it well, that which nature herself abhors must be incongruous. For why do you not wish to be thought a man, seeing that you are born such? why do you assume an appearance which is foreign to you? why do you play the woman, or you, O woman, the man? Nature clothes each sex in their proper raiment. Moreover in men and women, habits, complexion, gestures, gait, strength and voice are all different.

3. So also in the rest of the animal creation; the form, the strength, the roar of the lion and lioness, of the bull and heifer are different. Deer also differ as much in form as they do in sex, so that you may distinguish the stag from the hind even at a distance. But in the case of birds the similitude between them and men, as regards covering, is still closer; for in them Nature distinguishes their sex by their very plumage. The peacock is beautiful, but the feathers of its consort are not variegated with equal beauty. Pheasants also have different colours to mark the

[411 difference of the sexes. And so with poultry. How sonorous is the cock's voice, night by night performing his natural office of calling us from sleep by crowing. They do not change their form; why then do we desire to change ours?

4. A Greek custom has indeed prevailed for women to wear men's tunics as being shorter. Be it allowed however that they should imitate the nature of the more worthy sex; but why should men choose to assume the appearance of the inferior? A falsehood is base even in word, much more in dress. So in the heathen temples, where there is a false faith, there also is a false nature. It is there considered holy for men to assume women's garments, and female gestures. And therefore the Law says that every man who puts on a woman's garment is an abomination unto the Lord.

5. I conceive however that it is spoken not so much of garments as of manners, and of our habits and actions, in that one kind of act becomes a man, the other a woman. Wherefore the Apostle also says, as the interpreter of the Law, Let your women keep silence in the Churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are to be under obedience, as also saith the Law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home. And to Timothy: Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection; but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man.

6. But how unseemly is it for a man to do the works of a woman! As for those who curl their hair, like women, let them conceive also, let them bring forth. Yet the one sex wears veils, the other wages war. Let them however be excused who follow their national usages, barbarous though they be, the Persians and Goths and Armenians. Nature is superior to country.

7. And what shall we say of others who think it belongs to luxury to have in their service slaves wearing curls and ornaments of the neck? It is but just that chastity should be lost where the distinction of sexes is not preserved, a point wherein the teaching of nature is unambiguous, according to the Apostle's words; Is it comely that a woman

[412 pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him: but if a woman hath long hair, it is a glory unto her: for her hair is given her for a covering. Such is the answer which you may make to those who have referred to you.

Farewell; love me as a son, for I love you as a father.

LETTER LXX.

S. AMBROSE in this Letter considers a part of the prophecy of Micah as describing the recovery of a fallen soul.

AMBROSE TO HORONTIANUS.

1. THE Prophets indeed announced the gathering together of the Gentiles, and the future establishment of the Church; but as the Church sees not only the continuous progress of strong souls, but likewise the relapse of weak ones, and their subsequent conversion, we are able to gather from the Prophetical books both how the gracious and strong soul advances without stumbling, and also how the weak soul falls, and how she repairs her falls and recovers her steps.

2. Accordingly as in the Song of Songs we read of this continuous progress of blessed souls, so let us now consider, as set forth in the prophet Micah, concerning whom we have begun to speak, the conversion of a fallen soul. For it is not without good reason that the prophet's words, But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, excited your attention. For how can that house where Christ was born be the house of wrath? Such is, indeed, what the name of the place signifies, but certain mysterious operations are declared thereby.

3. Let us first consider what Micah signifies in Latin. It means 'Who is from God' or as we find elsewhere 'who is this man,' the son of the Morasthite, that is, the heir? Now, who is this heir, but the Son of God, Who says, All things are given unto Me of My Father; and Who, being

[413 Himself the Heir, would have us His co-heirs. And well may we say 'Who is that man?' not one of the people, but chosen to receive the grace of God, in whom the Holy Spirit speaks, who began to prophesy in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah kings of Judah. By which order is signified the course of the vision, for the progress is from the times of evil kings to that of a good king.

4. Thus as the afflicted soul was first oppressed under evil kings, let us consider what was the progress of her conversion. Being weak she was overthrown, and all her fences were made as a way for the passers-by, or for the inroads of passion; dissolved in luxury and pleasure, she was trodden down and removed from the presence of the Lord. Her tower was decayed, that tower which, as we read in the song of Isaiah, was placed in the midst of a choice vineyard. Now this is the case with the tower, when the vine is withered, and her flock wanders; but when the verdure of the vine comes back, or the sheep returns, it grows bright again, for nothing is so decayed as iniquity, or so bright as righteousness.

5. To this tower the sheep is recalled, when the soul is recalled from her relapse, and in that sheep that reign of Christ returns, which was in the beginning, for He is the Beginning and the Ending, even the beginning of our salvation. Still the soul is first severely rebuked, in that she has grievously transgressed, and she is asked, Why hast thou learnt evil? was there no king in thee?

that is, thou hadst a king to govern and protect thee, thou oughtest not to have strayed from the path of righteousness, nor to have left the ways of the Lord, Who imparted to thee sense and reason. Where were thy thoughts and counsels, whereby by innate vigour thou mightest have guarded against unrighteousness and warded off transgression? Why have pangs taken thee, as a woman in travail; that thou shouldest be in labour of iniquity, and bring forth unrighteousness? For there is no greater grief than for a man to wound his conscience with the sword of sin; nor is there any heavier burden than the weight of sin and the load of transgression. It bows down the soul, it bends it even to the earth, so that it cannot raise itself. Heavy, my son, heavy indeed is the weight of sin. Thus that woman in the Gospel, who was bowed together, and thus bore the semblance of a heavy-laden soul, could be made straight by Christ alone.

6. To such a soul it is said, Be in pain and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Sion. For the pains of child-birth work tribulation, and tribulation patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed. At the same time all that is opposed to virtue is plucked up and cast forth, lest its seeds should remain behind and revive, and put out new buds and fruit.

7. Nor is it without a meaning that horns and hoofs were given to her, that she might bruise all the sheaves of the floor, like the calf of Mount Lebanon. For unless the sheaves were bruised, and the straw winnowed, the corn that is within cannot be found and separated. Wherefore let the soul that would advance in virtue first bruise and thrash out its superfluous passions, that so, when the harvest is come, it may shew forth its fruits. How many are the weeds which choke the good seed! These must first be rooted out, that they may not destroy the fertile crop of the soul.

8. Then the provident guide of the soul has regard to this, that he may circumscribe her pleasures and cut off her desires, that she may not delight herself in them. That father's corrections are profitable, who spares not the rod, that he may render his son's soul obedient to salutary precepts. For he visits with a rod, as we read, I will visit their offences with the rod. And so he who smites the soul of the Israelites with a rod on the cheek, by this Divine punishment instructs her in the discipline of patience. But no man need despair who is chastised and corrected, for he who loveth his son chastiseth him. Let no man therefore despair of a remedy.

9. Behold therefore, that house which was to thee 'the house of one seeing wrath' is become 'the house of bread;' where rage was, there is now piety; where the slaughter of the Innocents, there now the redemption of all mankind, as it is written, But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth that is Ruler in Israel. Bethlehem is the

house of bread; Ephratah the house of one seeing wrath. This is the interpretation of these names. In Bethlehem Christ was born of Mary, but Bethlehem is the same as Ephratah. Thus Christ was born in the house of wrath, and therefore it is no longer a house of wrath, but the house of bread, for it received that bread which came down from heaven. But Ephratah is the house of one that was wrath, because while Herod searches there for Christ, he commands the Innocents to be slain, wherefore In Rama was there a voice heard, Rachel weeping for her children.

10. But let no man fear any longer; for that rest which David sought after is heard of at Ephrata, and found in the fields of the wood. A wood, as yet, was the assembly of the

Gentiles, but after it believed in Christ it became fruitful, receiving the fruit of the blessed womb. And Rachel died in childbirth, because even then, as the patriarch's wife, she saw the wrath of Herod, which spared not the tenderest age. Or again, because in Ephratah she gave birth to that Benjamin who excelling in beauty came last in the order of the mystery, I mean Paul, who before his birth caused no small grief to his Mother, by persecuting her sons. And she died, and was buried there, that we, dying and being buried together with Christ, may rise again in His Church. Therefore according to another interpretation, Ephratah signifies 'enriched or filled with fruit.'

11. Now here, that is, in the book of the Prophet, we find the expression, thou art o)ligosto&j, that is, one of few. But in Matthew we find, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not among the few. In one the expression is house of Ephratah, in the other house of Juda; but this is a difference of words not of meaning. For inwardly Judaea saw this exhibition of wrath, outwardly she suffered it. And she is among the few, because they are few who enter the house of bread by the narrow way. But he is not among the few, that is among those that make progress, who knows not Christ. Nor is she the least, who is the house of blessing, and the receptacle of Divine grace; yet in this she is the least, for any thing which is offered to Christ seems to be offered to her. And he who seeks for the Church seeks for Christ; and He is either honoured or despised in every

[416 little one, wherefore He says Himself, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.

12. Now that Bethlehem is the very same place as Ephratah we learn from the passage in Genesis, which says, And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. Holy Rachel, being a type of the Church, was buried in the way, that they who go by might say, The Lord prosper you, and they shall come again with joy.

13. Wherefore every soul which receives that bread which comes down from heaven is the house of bread, that is, the Bread of Christ, being nourished and supported and having its heart strengthened by that heavenly bread which dwells within it. Hence Paul also says, For we being many are one bread. Every faithful soul is Bethlehem, as Jerusalem also is said to be, which has the peace and tranquillity of that Jerusalem which is above, in heaven. That is the true Bread which, when broken into pieces, fed all men.

14. The fifth version 29 has the words, 'the house of Bread.' For 'Beth' signifies a house, and 'lehem' signifies bread. From the other versions I imagine that the unbelief of the Jews, who feared to convict themselves, either led the writers to omit it or others to erase it.

15. And that Bethlehem is of the tribe of Judah we learn from that passage in the book of Judges, where the Levite took to him a concubine out of Bethlehem-judah, and his concubine was incensed against him, and returned to her father's house in Bethlehem-judah.

16. Now Christ's goings forth were from everlasting 30, because our life

31 then commenced, when He went forth to run His course, and gave to Israel the day of salvation. Until the time that that she which travaileth hath brought

forth. To that soul to which Christ hath come fruitfulness or bringing forth hath come also; so it was with the Church, who has brought more than she that had children;

[417 who has brought forth seven, that is, a lawful peaceful and tranquil progeny. Now that soul begins to conceive, and Christ to be formed in her, which welcomes Him on His arrival and is so fed by His plenty that she is in want of nothing, and other souls by seeing her return unto the way of salvation.

17. And there shall be peace to him, but it is by temptations that he must be tried; then, when he has shut out or repulsed vain thoughts, when he has subdued all the motions of his rising passions, when distress and persecution and hunger and peril and the sword press hard upon him, will the value of his peace and tranquillity be tested. Then, it is said, shall be peace; because in all these things we are conquerors through Him that loved us, because we trust in Him that neither death nor the power of temptations shall cast off or separate us from His love. He will send temptations, that the just may be proved. The Lord sends temptations, not that He wishes any man to be beguiled, but because the weak are for the most part vanquished by temptation, whilst the strong are proved by them.

18. Then there shall be to them dew from the Lord, and rest; then the soul of the just shall be as a young lion among the flocks of sheep. I cannot doubt but that this similitude should, after the manner of the Gospel, be referred to Christ, for He has said, Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. For his chariots shall be broken; that is to say, the senseless impulses and motions of the body shall be appeased; that condition shall cease wherein Without are fightings, within are fears, and over all, that is, within and without, tranquillity shall prevail; nor shall there be any resistance or repugnance to this good will, because the obedience of the flesh, when the middle wall of partition is broken down, and both are made one, shall abolish all discord.

19. But if any weak soul, like Israel according to the flesh have stumbled, and, shaken by persecutions, have separated herself in some degree from the love of Christ, she is checked and reprov'd as faithless, and ungrateful, and unbelieving, as one who, after being freed from the vanities

[418 of the world, has looked behind her and so relapsed into them again; as one from whom no gifts, no sacrifice of bulls, but only to know what is good and to do justly, has been required. He hath showed thee, o man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to have mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? But since the weaker soul has not kept this commandment, the Lord says to her, Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage. And the prophet, in whom the Lord spoke, says to that soul, Woe is me, the good man is perished out of the earth. This is as though the Lord Himself spoke, in compassion for the future punishment of sin, and as weeping over our transgressions.

20. Then the soul, learning that she will gather no fruit from what she has sown; that in the loss of her harvest nothing will remain to strengthen her, that she will press her olives, but will find no oil of gladness, nor will drink the wine of pleasantness; finding also in the works of the flesh all things full of blood, full of circumvention, of fraud and deceit, hollow shows of affection, and pre-concerted guile; nay, those of her own household adverse to her; and therefore that the motions of her companion the body, which are grievous enemies of the soul, must be guarded against; turns to God, and begins to hope in Him, and knowing that the flesh is truly an enemy to her, says to it, Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise, when I sit in

darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.

21. Finding moreover that she is mocked by some power which opposes her following a better path, and domineers over her, so that she has been delivered for the destruction of the flesh, to be afflicted with various evils, assigned to her either by the Lord to satisfy for her sins, or by the Evil One who is envious of her conversion, and desires to harass and regain her to himself, finding this, she says, I will bear the indignation of the Lord, Who either chastens me in my fall, or has given thee power to persecute me, because I have sinned against Him, but I will endure until He plead my cause. For unless I shall confess, and pay the price

[419 of my iniquities, I cannot be justified. But being justified and having paid double for my sins, He shall execute judgment for me, laying aside His wrath, since the sentence against me is satisfied. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness and gaze on His delights. Then she that is mine enemy, that is, the malice of the devil, shall see the light of my reconciliation and shame shall cover her which saith to me, Where is the Lord thy God? She shall behold in me His pity and His love.

2.2. Wherefore let us not listen to him when we are in any of the troubles of this world, be it bodily pain, or the loss of our children, or of other necessities, let us not listen to his words, Where is the Lord thy God? It is under severe pain that his temptations are to be feared, it is then that he seeks to turn the sick soul astray.

23. Wherefore the soul which has not listened to his allurements, seeing afterwards the wonderful works of God, seeing herself in heaven, and the devil creeping upon the earth, will congratulate herself saying, Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by transgression? Thou hast not been mindful of Thy indignation, but hast cast all our iniquities into the sea as the lead of Egypt, and hast graciously returned to have pity upon us, both forgiving and hiding our offences, as it is written, Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose

sin is covered. For some sins Thou dost wash away in the blood of Thy Son, others Thou dost remit unto us, that by good works and confession we may cover our errors. The expression therefore that pardoneth iniquities, appertains to remission; because He takes them away altogether, so that the things which He remembers not are as though they did not exist. But the words passeth by transgression, signify that inasmuch as we confess our failings, and cover them with the fruit of our good works, they are referred to the author of our fault, and the instigator of our sin. For what else does he who confesses his fault do but prove himself to have been beguiled by the craft and malice of that spiritual wickedness which is his adversary?

21. For this therefore this soul gives thanks, that the [420

Lord both pardoneth iniquities and passeth by transgressions, and casts them into the deep of the sea. Which may also be referred to Baptism, wherein the Egyptian is drowned, the Hebrew rises again; and whereby by the depths of His wisdom, and the multitude of her good works her former sins are covered, through the riches of the mercy of our God, Who is mindful of the promise which He gave to Abraham, and suffers not that soul which is heir of Abraham to perish.

25. It is by these means that such a soul is recovered. But do you, my son, who from the first flower of boyhood have been an heir of the Church which bore and which sustains you, persevere

in your purpose, mindful of the grace of God, and of the gift which you have received by the imposition of my hands, that in this degree

32 also, as in the holy office of deacon, you may shew faith and industry, and expect a recompense from the Lord Jesus.

Farewell; love me as a son, for I also love you.

[Footnotes moved to the end and numbered. Biblical references from margin and running titles omitted]

1. a 'Apices' here and in § 5 undoubtedly means 'a letter.' 'Apex,' in late Latin, is used for a single letter written, and 'apices,' like 'literae,' for a continuous writing. Aulus Gellius (xiii. 30, 10, xvii, 9., 12.,) quoted in White's Dictionary, uses the phrase 'literarum apices,' and in Cod. Just. ii. 8. 6. we find 'Augusti apices' for 'the Emperor's rescripts.'

2. b Theodoret, v. 24. gives a detailed account of the ways in which the special intervention of heaven was displayed in Theodosius' campaign against

Eugenius. S. Aug. De Civ. Dei, v, 26. says that Theodosius 'contra robustissimum Eugenii exercitum magis orando quam feriendo pugnavit,' and, after mentioning stories told by eyewitnesses of the manifest intervention of God on his behalf, quotes the well-known lines of Claudian, O nimium dilecte Deo cui fundit ab

antris Aeolus armatas hyemes, cui militat aether, Et conjurati veniunt ad classica venti.

3. a The word here used is plural, Venetiarum. From this it has been argued that this letter must be of later date than S. Ambrose's time, as Venetian is the usual name for the city, which was not founded till the time of Attila. (Gibbon ch. xxxv. vol. iv. p. 212 ed. Smith.) But he certainly uses the plural form in Letter xviii. 21, which is undoubtedly his, and therefore, as Tillemont has pointed out, no argument can be founded on this against the present letter. It is

possible that under the plural form he intends to include Venetia and Histria, which are reckoned together as one consular province in the civil division of the empire, (see Marquardt's Table, in Smith's Gibbon vol. ii. p. 315.) and also as one ecclesiastical province in the Exarchate of Milan, (see Bingham ix. 1, 6.) By 'finitimis Italiae partibus' he probably means Flaminia and Picenum Annonarium, which were also included in the 'Diocese' of Italy and Exarchate of Milan.

4. 1 intentio.

5. b It is to be noted that Eusebius, who died in A.D. 371, was not the last Bishop of Vercellae, but Limenius, whose name occurs aiming the Bishops who took part in the Council of Aquileia. This has also been made an argument against S. Ambrose's

authorship, but, there does not seem much weight in it. Eusebius was much the more famous man of the two, and his teaching and example and the memory of his labours and martyrdom are naturally appealed to by S. Ambrose.

6. c These were, it appears, followers of Jovinian. See above, Introd. to Letter of Siricius, p. 280.

7. 1 reprobus.

8. 1 reprobum.

9. d Nothing is known of this man, nor is even the name, certain, as there are many various readings. The Benedictines suggest that it may mean

Philodemus, who is mentioned by Diog. Laert. x, 3. as a follower of Epicurus, and is also spoken of by Cicero, De fin. II,35. and by Horace, Sat. 1, 2, 121.

10. 1 sobrii estote. Vulg.

11. e Nothing is known of Demarchus, whom S. Ambrose here quotes. The Benedictines suggest that it may be a mistake for Hermarchus, who was Epicurus' successor as head of his school, and who wrote

books in defence of the Epicurean philosophy. He is mentioned several times by Cicero.

12. f Though the so-called Epicureans of later days perverted his theory to what is generally known as

Epicureanism, Epicurus himself certainly did not mean by pleasure sensual pleasure. 'Pleasure was not with him a momentary and transitory sensation, but he conceived it as something lasting and imperishable, consisting in pure and noble mental enjoyments. 'He was a man of pure simple and temperate habits.' Dict. of Biog. in voc. Vol. ii. p. 34, 35.

13. g This must be the sense if we retain the interrogation. If it is omitted the passage would mean, 'Men

then are recalled from that, in which' &c, i.e., it is plainly unfitting for men to do that, in which &c.

14. h S. Ambrose, is alluding apparently to Ezra proclaiming and keeping a fast to remove God's anger against his people. Should we not read

'memoriae' for 'memoria?' Ezra did restore the Scriptures to the memory of the people, but it does not appear that he restored them from memory?

15. 1 Sobrietatis inebrietas. Ps. xxiii. 5. Vulg.

16. 1 Sola.

17. i Mary and Miriam are really the same name, the former having come through the Greek form Mari/a.

18. 1 laqueus 19. j A reminiscence of Virgil's, Ante expectatum positus stat in agmine custris. Georg. iii, 348.

20. k The reading here varies. Ben. has 'in Concilio Nicaeni tractatus,' which may mean 'the Council which made the Nicene Creed,' (for the phrase 'Nicaenus tractatus' as applied to the Creed see note 1 on Acts of Council of Aquileia.) Another reading is 'in Concilii Nicaeni tractatu,' and another 'in Concilio Nicaeno tractatus.'

There is a difficulty about S. Ambrose's statement, as there is nothing on the subject in the Canons of Nicaea. The Benedictine editors, after

discussing other explanations, suggest that S. Ambrose may have had an inaccurate copy of the Canons, with the one he here quotes inserted from some other Council. Some unauthentic documents professing to give Nicene regulations on the subject are quoted in Dict. of Christian Antiq. Art. Digamy.

21.1 impressio.

22. 2 praescriptio.

23. l The most conspicuous instance was Nectarius, See note a, on Letter xiii.

24. m Eusebius and Dionysius Bishop of Milan were driven into exile by the Emperor Valens, because they refused at the third Council of Milan, A.D. 355, to subscribe the condemnation of

Athanasius. There is a brief but graphic account of the circumstances in Bright's History of the Church, pages 70-73.

25. 1 longaevi super terram.

26. n The expression 'aula regalis,' applied to the Mother of our Lord, may be

illustrated from De Instit. Virg. ch. xii. § 79. Ipse ergo Rex Israel transivit hanc portam,

ipse Dux sedit in ea, quando verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis, quasi Rex sedens in aula regali uteri virginalis. Compare also the expression in S. Ambrose's Hymn on the Nativity, Procedit e thalamo suo, Pudoris aula regia, &c.

27. a With this Letter begins what the Benedictines have called a second division of the Letters, containing those which furnish no internal evidence of their date sufficient to justify their being assigned a place in chronological order. They are arranged according to their matter, 1st, those which contain expositions of passages of Holy Scripture, (lxi-lxxv.), 2nd, those which discuss important, and mostly doctrinal subjects, (lxxvi-lxxxiii), 3rd, a few brief letters of ordinary friendly intercourse, (lxxxiv- xci.) 28. a See note e on Letter xlv. 10.

29. a Whether the true reading here be 'traditio' as Ben. has, or 'editio' as Rom, the reference must be to the eOkdo&seij or versions which Origen brought together in his Hexajila, of which the fifth, the sixth, and the

seventh, (for there was a seventh,) were only known by their numbers. See Art, by Tregelles on 'Ancient Versions,' in Smith's Dict. of the Bible, vol. iii. p. 1623.

30. 1 a diebus saeculi. Mic. v. 2.

31. 2 Saeculum. Mic. v. 3.

32. f i.e. the priesthood, cf. 1 Tim. iii. 13. This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2004. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely.

Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SP Ionic font, free from here.

Letters - Letters 71-80

St. Ambrose of Milan, Letters (1881). pp. 420-461. Letters
71-80.

- Letter 71: To Horontianus
- Letter 72: To Constantius
- Letter 73: To Irenaeus
- Letter 74: To Irenaeus
- Letter 75: To Clementianus
- Letter 76: To Irenaeus
- Letter 77: To Horontianus
- Letter 78: To Horontianus
- Letter 79: To Bellicius
- Letter 80: To Bellicius

LETTER LXXI.

S. Ambrose in this letter continues the subject of the last, and, having described in that the steps by which the fallen soul recovers herself, here considers how the faithful soul is taken in charge, taught and conducted to perfection by Christ: and shews that the stages in the progress of such a soul are typified by the journies of Christ.

AMBROSE TO HORONTIANUS.

1. In my last letter I spoke of the soul that has made in its progress certain devious circuits, wavering, as Israel according to the flesh did of old, to and fro. For Israel

herself also, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, shall be delivered by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: the Gentile soul meanwhile, whose transgression has been lighter, having by her conversion worked her own recovery. In my present letter I will treat of the daughter of the Church; and consider how the Lord Jesus first took her

|421 under His care, taught her, and, in His Gospel, led her on to perfection.

2. Now it was as she lay in misery and confusion that He first took her under His care,----for how else but miserably can that soul live, which is exiled from Paradise?----and brought her to Bethlehem. The progress then, of this soul is at once signified in that it goes up to the "house of bread

1," where it can know no death or barrenness of faith. Observe, I am now speaking of souls in general, those souls by which we live and move, not of any soul in particular; for it is not of the individual or species, but of souls in general that I purpose to discourse.

3. Christ went down into Egypt, as Protector and Guide of our soul, from thence He returned into Judaea. He was in the wilderness, in Capernaum; near the borders of Zabulon; by the sea coast; He passed through the corn fields; He was in Bethphage; in Ephraim; in Bethany; then He passed over into the garden, where He gave Himself up; on Calvary, where He suffered.

4. All these are the progresses of our soul, and exercised thereby she receives the graces of a holy life

2. For the human race, when excluded from Paradise in Adam and Eve, and banished to the village

3, began to roam up and down and to wander about with careless steps: but in His own good time the Lord Jesus emptied Himself that He might receive this exile into himself, and re-form her again to her previous state of grace. And thus, when found, she retraced, as the Gospel lesson teaches us, her devious course of error, and was recalled to Paradise.

5. He led her through the cornfields that He might satisfy her hunger, first in the desert, then to Capernaum, making her abode to be not in the city but in the field: next He brought her to the borders of Zabulon, near unto the floods of night, that is, the darker riddles of the prophets; that she might learn thereby to reach to the borders of the Gentiles, that common centre, and not to fear the storms and billows of this world. Why should she, seeing that Christ has ships of Tarshish, mystical ships I mean, which traverse the sea, and bring pious offerings for the

building of the Temple? In such ships as these Christ sails, and like a good pilot rests in the stern while the sea is calm; when it is disturbed He awakes, and rebukes the winds, that He may anew shew peace on His disciples. Furthermore, by passing over to the Gentiles, He delivers the soul which was bound by the chains of the Law, that she may not pass over and keep company with the heathen.

6. He came to Bethany to the "place of obedience;" therefore was the dead there raised; for when the flesh is subdued to the spirit, human nature no longer lies as if dead in the tomb, but is raised again by the grace of Christ; there also she professes to offer herself to 'suffering'

4 for the Name of God. From the place of obedience, as John tells us, He is led to Ephraim, that is, to the "fecundity of good fruits." Hence He returns to Bethany, that is, to "obedience;" for she who has once tasted the fruit of holy obedience is for the most part ready to preserve it and to be proved thereby.

7. And now, having been proved, she comes to Jerusalem, being made worthy to become the temple of God wherein Christ may dwell. Here it is that the Lord Jesus, sitting upon the foal of an ass, is received with the joy and congratulation of the age of innocence.

8. Afterwards are taught in the garden the words of eternal life; in that place where the Lord permitted Himself to be taken, as John the Evangelist writes, signifying that our soul, or rather human nature, released from the bonds of error, is restored by Christ to that abode from whence in

Adam she was cast. "Wherefore to the thief who confessed Him it is said, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise. The thief had said, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. Christ answered not concerning His kingdom, but yet to the purpose, To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise, that is, What has been lost must first be restored, then the increase bestowed; that thus the progress may be through Paradise to the kingdom, not through the kingdom to Paradise.

|423

9. For the disciples it is reserved that they may receive an ample reward for their labours; and therefore to the thief He promised a sojourn, but deferred the kingdom. So that to him who is converted under the stroke of death, and confesses the Lord Jesus, to him let an abode in Paradise be vouchsafed, but for him who has undergone long travail, who has fought for Christ, who has won over souls and offered himself for Christ, for his wages let the kingdom of God be prepared; and let him rejoice in the fruition of this reward. To Peter it is said, I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and thus, while the convert from robbery obtains rest, on him who has been proved in the Apostolate authority is bestowed.

10. This is the Evangelical soul, the soul of the Gentiles, the daughter of the Church, far better than the soul cast out of Judaea; raising herself from her earthly course to the Lord Jesus and to higher things by good counsels and works; received by Christ upon Golgotha. Upon Golgotha was the sepulchre of Adam; that Christ by His Cross might raise him from death. Thus where in Adam was the death of all, there in Christ was the resurrection of all.

Farewell, my son; love me, for I also love you.

LETTER LXXII. In this letter S. Ambrose deals with the question of the rite of circumcision, and explains to Constantius why it was established in the Old Testament and yet done away in the New. He speaks also of the true and spiritual circumcision which belongs to Christians.

AMBROSE TO CONSTANTIUS.

1. Many persons have raised an important question why circumcision should be enjoined as profitable by the authority of the Old Testament, and rejected as useless by the teaching of the New; especially since it was Abraham, who saw the day of the Lord Jesus and was glad, who first received the command to observe the rite of circumcision.

|424 For it is manifest that he directed his mind not to the literal but to the spiritual sense of the Divine Law, and so in the sacrifice of the lamb saw the true passion of the Lord's Body.

2. What then shall we consider to have been the aim of our father Abraham, in first instituting that which his posterity were not to follow? or for what reason are the bodies of infants circumcised, and in their very birth subjected to dangers, and this at the Divine command, so that peril of their life ensues from a mystery of religion. What is the meaning of this? For the ground of the truth is hidden, and either something should have been signified by an intelligible mystery, or else it should have been indicated by a mystery which was not so full of danger.

3. And why was the sign of the Divine Testament attached to that member which is considered as less comely to sight; or with what purpose did the Creator of our body Himself, in the very

beginning of our race, choose that His work should be wounded and stained with blood, and a portion of it cut off, which He, Who has disposed all things in order, deemed proper to form together with the other members, as though it were necessary? For this portion of our bodies is either contrary to nature, and then no man ought to have that which is contrary to nature, or it is according to nature, and that ought not to be cut off which was created according to the perfection of nature; especially since aliens from the portion of the Lord our God are wont to make this a chief subject of ridicule. Again as it is God's purpose, as He has frequently declared, to induce as many persons as possible to the observance of holy religion, how much more would they be invited, were not some deterred either by the danger or reproach of this very circumcision.

4. To return therefore to my first purpose and follow the order I have proposed, it seems good to speak of the nature itself of circumcision. The defence of this ought to be twofold, for so is the accusation, the one brought by the Gentiles, the other by those who are considered as belonging to the people of God, more vigorously on the part of the Gentiles, for they deem men marked with

|425 circumcision to be worthy even of scorn and disgrace. Yet their own wisest men approve of circumcision, so as to think it right to circumcise those whom they select to know and celebrate their mysteries

5.

5. The Egyptians too, who apply themselves to geometry and observing the courses of the stars, consider a priest who does not bear the mark of circumcision impious. For they believe that neither the wisdom of incantation, nor geometry, nor astronomy can attain their due power without the seal of circumcision. And therefore, in order to render their operations efficacious they choose to solemnize a certain purification of their own by means of the secret rite of circumcision.

6. And we find in ancient history that not only the Egyptians but also some of the /Ethiopians Arabs and Phoenicians used circumcision. And in maintaining this custom they think that they are maintaining one still to approved, for being thus initiated by means of the first fruits of their own body and blood, they conceive that by the consecration of this small portion, the snares which demons lay for our kind will be defeated; and that those who attempt to injure the well-being of the whole man, may find their power baffled either by the law or the semblance of sacred circumcision. For I am of opinion that heretofore the Prince of devils has deemed that his arts would lose their baneful efficacy if he were to attempt to injure one whom he found initiated by the seal of sacred circumcision, or one who seemed at least in this respect to obey the Divine law.

7. Now he who diligently considers the functions of our several members will be able to judge that it was for no unmeaning purpose that as regards this little portion of this member the child was not only circumcised but circumcised also on the eighth day; when the mother of the child begins to be in pure blood, having before the eighth day been considered as sitting in unclean blood. Let so

|426 much have been said in reply to those who are not joined with us in unity of faith; on which account discussion with them, as differing from us, becomes more difficult.

8. But to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ we have to offer the following reply, which, when we were disputing against the opinions of Gentiles, we were unwilling to disclose. For if we were redeemed not with corruptible silver and gold, but with the precious blood of our Lord Jesus

Christ, and purchased from no one but him who had purchased with money, and was owner of, the services of our now sinful race, beyond a doubt he demanded a price for releasing from his service those whom he kept in bondage. But the price of our freedom was the Blood of the Lord Jesus, which of necessity was to be paid to him to whom we were sold by our sins.

9. Until, therefore, this price should have been paid for all men which by the shedding of the Lords Blood had to be so paid for the absolution of all, the blood of every man, who, by the Law and solemn custom were to follow the precepts of holy religion, was required. But, since one Lord Christ suffered, seeing that the ransom is now paid for all, there is now no longer any need that the blood of every man one by one should be shed by circumcision, for in the Blood of Christ the circumcision of all has been solemnized, and in His Cross we are all crucified together with Him, and buried in His sepulchre, and planted together in the likeness of His death, that henceforth we should not serve sin: for he that is dead, is free from sin.

10. But if any one, such as Marcion and Manichaeus, deem the judgment of God to be worthy of blame, either because He thought fit to give command concerning the observance of circumcision, or because He published a law directing the effusion of blood; he must needs consider the Lord Jesus also worthy of blame, Who shed not a little but much blood for the redemption of the world, and up to this hour commands us also to shed our blood for the great contest of Religion, saying, If any man will follow Me, let him, deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. But if in the case of a man offering his whole self out of piety, and cleansing himself by the effusion of much blood,

[427 such an accusation is not just, how can we blame the Law, for exacting a little drop of blood, when we proclaim the command of the Lord Jesus for the shedding of much blood, and the death of the whole body?

11. Nor was the very symbol and semblance of circumcision useless, for the people of God, signed thereby as by a certain bodily seal, was distinguished from the other nations. But the name of Christ being now bestowed upon them they have no need of a bodily sign, for they have obtained the honour of a Divine appellation. But what was there absurd in somewhat of pain or labour seeming to be imposed for piety's sake, to the intent that by such contests devotion might be better tried? It is becoming also that from the very cradle of life the symbol of religion should grow with our growth, and that all of a maturer age should be ashamed to yield either to labour or pain when their tender infancy had conquered both.

12. But now Christians have no need of the light pain of circumcision, for bearing about with them the Lord's Death, they at every act engrave on their foreheads contempt of their own death, as knowing that without the cross of the Lord they can have no salvation. For who would use a needle to fight with when armed with stronger weapons?

13. And now any one may easily perceive how easily the suggestion may be refuted, that more persons might be incited to the observance of holy religion unless they were withheld by the fear of pain or the appearance of labour. For could this terrify an older person, when many infants endured it without danger? Granting however that some Jewish children unable to bear the pain of circumcision and of so keen a stroke may have died, still this did not deter those of a robuster and more advanced age, and one who thus obeyed the celestial precepts it only made more

praiseworthy.

14. But if they imagine that this light pain was such an obstacle to confession, what will they say of martyrdom? For if they choose to blame the pain of circumcision, they must blame also the death of martyrs, by whom religion so far from being impaired has received its perfection. But

[428 the pain of circumcision is so much removed from being hurtful to faith, that faith is approved by pain, for greater is the grace of faith if any one for religion's sake despise pain; and such a one has a greater reward than he who was only willing to endure the pain of circumcision that he might glory in the Law, and win praise of men rather than of God.

15. It was fitting therefore that this partial circumcision should take place before His advent Who was to circumcise the whole man, and that the human race should receive a partial preparation for believing in that which is perfect. But if circumcision must take place, in what region of the body ought it rather to fall than on that which seems to

some less comely? And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon those we bestow more abundant power; and our uncomely parts have abundant

comeliness. For in what member ought men to be rather reminded of his blood than in that which is wont to minister to transgression?

16. And now is the fitting time to reply to those also who say, If this part of our body is according to nature it ought not to be cut off, but if contrary to nature, then it ought not to have been born together with it. Let these men, being so subtle, themselves answer me, whether the succession of the human race, which arises by generation is according to nature or contrary to nature? If according to nature, it ought never to be interrupted, and then how can we praise the chastity of men, the virginity of maids, the abstinence of widows, the continence of wives? No effort then to promote this succession should be suffered to lie idle. But the Author of nature Himself did not pay this regard to generation, for He gave us, when living in the body, His own example, and exhorted His disciples to chastity, saying, There be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

17. Man being made up of body and soul, (for at present it will suffice to speak of these and not to mention the spirit,) he is not naturally the same in both, but what is according to the nature of the body is contrary to the

[429 nature of the soul, and what is according to the nature of the soul is contrary to the nature of the body; so that were I to speak that which is according to nature in that which is seen, it will be contrary to nature as regards the unseen, and what is according to nature in the unseen is contrary to nature as regards the seen. It is no incongruity therefore in the man of God, if there should be things contrary to the nature of the body which are according to the nature of the soul.

18. With regard to those who say that more would have believed if circumcision had not been instituted, let them receive this answer, that more would have believed if there had been no martyrdom, but the constancy of a few is to be preferred to the remissness of a larger number. For as many kinds of washings preceded, because that one true Sacrament of Baptism with water and the Spirit, whereby the whole man is redeemed, was to follow, so also the circumcision of many was to precede, because the circumcision of the Lord's Passion, which Jesus suffered as the

Lamb of God, that He might take away the sins of the world, was to follow.

19. My object in writing this has been to shew that it was fitting that circumcision, which is outward, should precede, that now after the Lord's Advent it might seem to be justly excluded. But now that circumcision is necessary which is in secret, in spirit not in the letter, seeing that there are two men in one, of whom it is said, Though our out-ward man perish according to the desires of error, yet the inward man is renewed day by day, and in another passage, For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; that is, our inward man which is made according to the image and likeness of God, our outward is that which is formed of clay. So again in Genesis two creations of man are declared to us, and it is signified that by the second man was truly made.

20. As therefore there are two men, so also is his conversation two-fold; one of the inward the other of the outward man. And indeed many acts of the inward man reach to the outward man, in the same way that the chastity of the inward man passes into bodily chastity. He who

[430 is free from adultery of the heart is free from adultery of the body, but it does not also follow that he who has not sinned in body should not have sinned even in heart, for it is written, Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. For although he be not yet an adulterer in body, still in affection he is one. So that there is a circumcision of the inward man, for he who is circumcised has put off, like a foreskin, all the allurements of the flesh, that so he may be in the spirit, not in the flesh, and by the spirit may mortify the deeds of the flesh.

21. And this is that circumcision which is in secret, as Abraham was first in the uncircumcision and afterwards came to be in the circumcision. Thus our inward man, while it is in the flesh, is as it were in uncircumcision, but when he is now no longer in the flesh but in the spirit, he begins to be in the circumcision not in the uncircumcision. And as he who is circumcised does not put off the whole flesh but his foreskin only, where corruption more frequently lies, so he who is circumcised in secret, puts off that flesh of which it is written, All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever;

and there remains the flesh which will see the salvation of God, as it is written, And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. What this flesh is cleanse your ears that you may understand.

22. Now that circumcision which is secret ought to be of such a kind as to bear no comparison with that which is outward. He therefore who is a Jew in secret, is he who excels, he who is from Judah, whose hand is in the neck of his enemies, who stooped down and couched as a lion, and as a lion's whelp, whom, his brethren praise. From this Judah the prince departs not, because his word makes princes, such as are not overcome by worldly allurements and ensnared by the pleasures of this world. And since Judah himself was born into this generation, many of those who were born afterwards are preferred, that they may enjoy a pre-eminence of virtue. Let us have therefore the circumcision which is in secret, and the Jew that is in secret,

[431 that is, the spiritual: but he that is spiritual, as being a prince, judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. It was fitting therefore, that the circumcision commanded by the prescript of the Law, which was partial, should cease after His coming Who was to circumcise the whole man, and fulfil the circumcision of the Law. And who is this but He Who said I am not come to destroy

the Law, but to fulfil it?

24. That the fulness of the Gentiles is come in is another reason, if you will attend to it carefully, why the circumcision of the foreskin ought to cease. For it was not upon the Gentiles but upon the seed of Abraham that circumcision was enjoined, for this is the first Divine promise, And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after in their generations. This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised, and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations. He that is born in thy house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed, must needs be circumcised; and My covenant shall be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised on the eighth day, shall be cut off from the people; he hath broken My Covenant. It is affirmed indeed that the Hebrew text, as Aquila intimates, does not contain the words 'on the eighth day;' but all authority does not rest with Aquila, who being a Jew has passed it by in the letter, and not inserted, 'on the eighth day.'

25. Meanwhile you have heard that both the eighth day and circumcision were given for a sign; now a sign is an indication of a greater matter, a symbol of a future verity; and a covenant was given to Abraham and his seed, to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be. The circumcision of the Jews therefore, or of one born in his house, or bought with his money was permitted. But we cannot extend this to a foreigner or proselyte, unless they were born in the

[432 house of Abraham, or bought with his money, or of his seed. Again, nothing is said of proselytes; when it is wished to speak of them they are expressly mentioned, as it is written: And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them: . . . Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt-sacrifice. When therefore they are intended to be included the Law touches them; when the Divine word does not point to them, how can they seem to be bound? Again, it is written, Speak unto the sons of Aaron, when the priests are intended; and so as regards the Levites also.

26. Thus it is abundantly manifest that even according to the letter of the Law, although the Law be spiritual, yet that according to the very letter of the Law the Gentiles could not be obliged to observe circumcision, but that circumcision itself was a sign, until the fulness of the Gentiles should be come in, and so all Israel be saved by circumcision, not of a small portion of one member, but of the heart. And both the excuse on our parts is sufficient, and the continuance of circumcision among the Jews up to this day is excluded.

27. But as to its being imputed it as a cause of blame, now or in past time, by the Gentiles, I would say, first, it is not competent to them to blame or deride what others who are their fellows do. Suppose however that there were cause for their ridicule, why ought this to move us, when the very cross of the Lord is a stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, but to us the power of God and the wisdom of God. And the Lord Himself has said, Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me before men, of him will I also be ashamed before My Father Which is in heaven; teaching us not to be disturbed by those things which are laughed at by men, if we observe them in the service of religion.

LETTER LXXIII.

IRENÆUS having enquired why the Law was ever given, seeing that Paul declares it to be injurious: S. Ambrose replies that it would have been useless, had we kept that natural law which is written on our hearts, and is found even in infants; but that, this being broken, the former became necessary, that it might take away all excuse by its manifestation of that sin which was afterwards removed by the grace of Christ.

AMBROSE TO IRENÆUS.

1. Greatly, it would seem, have you been moved by the lesson from the Apostle, having heard read to-day, Because the Law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression. And therefore you have thought fit to ask why the Law was promulgated, if it profited nothing, nay rather, by working wrath and bringing in transgression, was injurious.

2. And indeed, according to the tenor of your question, it is certain that the Law, which was given by Moses, was not necessary. For had men been able to keep the natural Law, which our God and Maker implanted in the breast of each, there would have been no need of the Law, which, written on tables of stone, tended rather to entangle and fetter the infirmity of human nature, than to set at large and liberate it. Now that there is a natural Law written in our hearts the Apostle also teaches us, when he writes, that for the most part the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, and, though they have not read the Law, have yet the works of the Law written in their hearts.

3. This law therefore is not written but innate; not acquired by reading, but flowing as from a natural fountain, it springs up in each breast, and men's minds drink it in. This Law we ought to have kept even from fear of a future judgment, a witness whereof we have in our conscience, which shews itself in those silent thoughts we have towards God, and whereby either our sin is reprov'd or our innocence justified. And thus that which has ever been

|434 manifest to the Lord, will be clearly revealed in the day of judgment, when those secrets of the heart, which were thought to be concealed, will be called into account. Now the discovery of these things, these secrets, I mean, would do no harm, if the natural Law still remained in the human breast; for it is holy, free from craft or guile, the companion of justice, free from iniquity.

4. Moreover let us interrogate the age of childhood, let us consider whether any crime can be found therein, avarice, ambition, guile, rage, or insolence. It claims nothing for its own, assumes no honours to itself, never prefers itself to others, neither wishes or knows how to avenge itself. Its pure and simple mind cannot even comprehend the meaning of insolence.

5. Adam broke this Law, seeking to assume to himself that which he had not received, that thus he might become as it were his own maker and creator, and arrogate to himself divine honour. Thus by his disobedience he incurred guilt, and through arrogance fell into transgression. Had he not thus violated his allegiance, but been obedient to the commands of heaven, he would have preserved to his posterity the prerogative of nature and the innocence which he possessed at his birth. Wherefore as by disobedience the authority of the Law of Nature was corrupted and blotted out, the written law was found necessary; in order that man, having lost all, might at least regain a

part; attaining by instruction to the knowledge of that which he had received at his birth, but had subsequently lost. Moreover, since the cause of his fall was pride, and pride arose from the dignity of innocence, it was needful that some law should be passed which should subdue and subject him to God. For without the Law he was ignorant of sin, and thus his guilt was less because he knew it not. Wherefore also the Lord says, If I had not come and spoken to them they had not had sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

6. The Law then was published, first to take away all excuse lest man should say, I knew not sin, because I received no rule what to avoid. And next that all the

world might become guilty ⁷ before God by the confession of

[435 sin. For it made all subject; in that it was not only given to the Jews but also called the Gentiles; for proselytes from the Gentiles were associated with them. Nor can he seem to be excepted, who after being called was found wanting, for the Law also bound those whom she called. And thus the fault of all worked subjection, subjection humility, humility obedience. And thus as pride had drawn after it transgression, so on the other hand, transgression produced obedience. And thus the written Law, which seemed superfluous, was rendered necessary, redeeming sin by sin.

7. But again, lest anyone should be deterred, and say that an increase of sin was caused by the Law, and that the Law not only did not profit but was even injurious, he has a consolation for his solicitude, because although by the Law sin abounded, grace did much more abound. And now let us consider the meaning of this.

8. Sin abounded by the Law because by the Law is the knowledge of sin, and thus it began to be injurious to me to know that which through infirmity I could not avoid; it is good to foreknow in order to avoid, but if I cannot avoid, to have known was injurious. Thus the effect of the Law was changed to me into its opposite, yet by the very increase of sin it became useful to me, because I was humbled. Wherefore David also said, It is good for me that I have been humbled. For by my humiliation I have broken those bonds of that ancient transgression, whereby Adam and Eve had bound the whole line of their posterity. Hence too the Lord came in obedience that He might loose the knot of disobedience and of man's transgression. And so, as by disobedience sin entered, so by obedience sin was remitted. Wherefore the Apostle also says, For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

9. Here is one reason the Law on the one hand was superfluous and yet became necessary. It was superfluous herein, that it would not have been needed could we have kept the natural Law, but as we kept it not, the law of Moses became needful for us, to the intent that it might teach us obedience and loose that knot of Adam's

[436 transgression which has fettered his whole posterity. Guilt indeed was increased by the Law, but pride, the author of this guilt, was overthrown by it, and this was profitable to me, for pride discovered the guilt, and this guilt brought grace.

10. Hear another reason. At first Moses' Law was not needed; it was introduced subsequently, and this appears to intimate that this introduction was in a sense clandestine and not of an

ordinary kind, seeing that it succeeded in the place of the natural Law. Had this maintained its place, the written Law would never have entered in; but the natural Law being excluded by transgression and almost blotted out of the human breast, pride reigned, and disobedience spread itself; and then this Law succeeded, that by its written precepts it might cite us before it, and every mouth be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. Now the world becomes guilty before God by the Law, in that all are made amenable to its precepts, but no man is justified by its works. And since by the Law comes the knowledge of sin, but not the remission of guilt, the Law, which has made all sinners, would seem to have been injurious.

11. But when the Lord Jesus came, He forgave all men that sin which none could escape, and blotted out the handwriting against us

by the shedding of His own Blood. This then is the Apostle's meaning; sin abounded by the Law, but grace abounded by Jesus; for after that the whole world became guilty, He took away the sin of the whole world, as John bore witness, saying: Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. Wherefore let no man glory in works, for by his works no man shall be justified, for he that is just hath a free gift, for he is justified by the Bath. It is faith then which delivers by the blood of Christ, for Blessed is the man to whom sin is remitted, and, pardon granted.

Farewell, my son; love me, for I also love you. |437

LETTER LXXIV. In this letter S. Ambrose explains the meaning of S. Paul's expression, that 'the Law was our schoolmaster,' and shews how, while the letter of the precepts fitted the Jews, the spiritual sense, which lay under the letter applies to Christians.

AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS.

1. You have heard, my son, the lesson of to-day in the Apostle, that the Law was our schoolmaster in Christ, that we might be justified by faith. And by this one text I believe that those questions are resolved, which are wont to perplex many. For there are those who say,

'Since God gave the Law to Moses, what is the reason that there are many things in the Law which now seem abrogated by the Gospel?' And how can the Author of the two Testaments be one and the same, when that which was permitted in the Law, when the Gospel came, was permitted no longer? as for instance there is a circumcision of the body, which was even then only given for a sign, that the verity of spiritual circumcision might be preserved, yet why was it even given as a sign? Why was there such diversity, that then it was esteemed piety to be circumcised, but now it is judged to be impiety? Again it was ordered by the Law that the Sabbath day ought to be a holiday, so that if any one carried a bundle of sticks, he became guilty of death; but now we perceive that the same day is devoted to bearing burthens and to transacting business without any punishment. And there are many precepts of the Law which at the present time would seem to have ceased.

2. Let us consider then what is the cause of this; for it was not without a purpose that the Apostle said, the Law was our schoolmaster in Christ 8.

To whom does a schoolmaster belong, to one of riper years or to a youth? Doubtless to a youth or boy, that is, to one of infirm age. For a paedagogus, as the word is rendered in the Latin, is the teacher of a boy; and he cannot apply perfect precepts

[438 to an imperfect age, because it cannot bear them. Again, the God of the Law says by the Prophet, I gave them also statutes that were not good, that is, not perfect. But the same God has preserved more perfect things for the Gospel, as He says, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil the Law.

3. What then was the cause of this difference, but human diversity? He knew the Jews to be a stiff-necked people, prone to fall, base, inclined to unbelief, that heard with the ear but understood not, that saw with their eyes but perceived not, fickle with the instability of infancy, and heedless of commands; and therefore He applied the Law, as a Schoolmaster, to the unstable temper and impious mind of the people, and moderating the very precepts of the Law, He chose that one thing should be read, another understood; that thus the foolish man might at least keep what he was reading, and depart not from the prescript of the letter; while the wise should understand the sentiments of the Divine mind, which the letter did not alter; that the unwise man might keep the command of the Law, the prudent might observe the mystery. The Law therefore has the severity of the sword, as the schoolmaster holds the rod, that at any rate by the denunciation of punishment it may keep in awe the weakness of the imperfect people; but the Gospel has indulgence whereby sins are forgiven.

4. Rightly therefore does Paul say that the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life. For the letter circumcises a small portion of the body; the understanding spirit keeps the circumcision of the whole soul and body; that the superfluous parts being cut off, (for nothing is so superfluous as the vices of avarice, the sins of lust, which nature had not, but sin caused,) chastity might be observed, and frugality loved. The sign therefore is bodily circumcision, but the truth is spiritual circumcision, the one cuts off the member, the other cuts off sin. Nature has created nothing imperfect in man, nor has she commanded it to be taken away as if it were superfluous, but that they who cut off a part of their body might perceive that sins were much more to be cut off, and those members which led to offences were to

[439 be retrenched, even though they were joined together by a certain unity of body, as it is written, If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee, for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. To the Jews then, as to children, are enjoined not complete precepts but partial ones, and, seeing that they were unable to keep the whole of their bodies clean, they were commanded to keep clean, as it were, one portion of it.

5. They were also commanded to keep the holiday of the Sabbath one day in the week, so as to be subjected to no burthen, and I would that being thus released from earthly works they had escaped, carrying with them to that perpetual sabbath of future ages the burthen of heavy crimes. But as God knew how prone to fall the people were, He enjoined a part upon the weaker by the observance of one day, He reserved the fulness for the stronger: the Synagogue observes the day, the Church immortality. In the Law therefore is a part, in the Gospel is perfection.

6. The people of the Jews are forbidden to carry sticks, that is, such things as are consumed by fire. He keeps in the shade, who flies from the sun. But to you the Sun of Righteousness suffers not the shade to be an hindrance, but pouring forth the full light of His grace says to you, Go, and sin no more. The follower of that eternal Sun says to

you, Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's

work of what sort it is. Wherefore let us build upon Christ, for Christ is our foundation, that which may not be burnt but purified. Gold is purified by fire, and so is silver.

7. You hear me speak of gold and silver, you think it to be the material substance, you desire to gather it, but you are losing your labour. This gold and silver brings burthen but no fruit. The toil of him who seeks it turns to the profit of his heir. This gold is burned like wood, not preserved; this silver will bring detriment not profit to your life in that day. Another kind of gold and silver is required

[440 of you, that is, a good meaning, a word fitly spoken, of which God says that He gives vessels of gold and silver. Theses are the gifts of God. The words of the Lord are pure words; even as the silver which from the earth is tried and purified seven times in the fire. The grace of your understanding, the beauty of chaste discourse is required of you; the brightness of faith not the tinkling of silver. The one remains, the other perishes; the one has reward, and we carry it away with us, the other, which we leave behind, brings loss.

8. If any rich man thinks that the gold and silver which he has hoarded and stored up can avail him for life, let him know that he carries an empty burthen, which the fire of judgment will consume. Leave here your burthens, ye rich men, that your burthen may not add fuel to the fire which is to come. If you will bestow some of these goods, your burthen will be diminished, and what remains will be no burthen. Lay not up wealth, O miser; lest you should become in mere name only a Christian, in work a Jew, perceiving that your burthens are a punishment to you. For it has been said to you, not in the shade but in the sun, If any man's work abide, he shall receive a reward, if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss.

9. And therefore, as a perfect man, taught in the Law, confirmed in the Gospel, receive the faith of both Testaments. For Blessed is he that sows beside all ivaters, that sends forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass, as we read to-day, that is, who sows upon the people who follow the doctrine of both Testaments; this is that ox of the plough, carrying the yoke of the Law, of which the Law says, Thou shall not muzzle the ox, when he treadeth out the corn; that ox which has the horns of the Divine Scriptures. But the foal of the ass the Lord rides upon, in the Gospel, representing the people of the Gentiles.

10. But I think that since the word of God is rich in meanings, we ought also to understand that the ox has horns full of terror, the bull is fierce, the ass mild, and that

this is fitly applied to our present purpose, for happy is he who observes both severity and mildness; that so by the one discipline may be maintained, while by the other innocence

[441 may be cherished; for too great severity is wont by means of terror to tempt to falsehood. God prefers being loved to being feared; for the Lord exacts love, the servant fear, for terror cannot be perpetual in man, for it is written as we read to-day Behold, in your fear, they whom ye feared, shall fear.

Farewell, my son; love me, for I too love you.

LETTER LXXV. This letter is a sequel to the preceding, and deals with the context of the passage of S. Paul which that letter discussed. S. Ambrose ends by maintaining that the Jews were 'heirs' only of the letter of the Old Testament promises, the Christian being the heir of the Spirit.

AMBROSE TO CLEMENTIANUS 9.

1. I am indeed aware that nothing is more difficult than to treat properly concerning the Apostle's meaning, for even Origen's expositions of the New Testament are far inferior to his expositions of the Old. Yet since in my previous letter you think that I have not explained amiss the reason of the Law being called a Schoolmaster; in what I say to-day too I purpose to unfold to you the actual force of the Apostle's statement.

2. Now the former part of his discourse declares that no man shall be justified by the works of the Law, but by faith, For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; but Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us. The inheritance therefore is not given by the Law but by promise. Now to Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed which is Christ. Thus the Law was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and therefore all are concluded under sin, that the promise

[442 by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under the Law, that is, under a schoolmaster; and this because we are all the sons of God, and are all in Christ Jesus. Now if we are all in Christ Jesus, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. And this is the conclusion at which the Apostle arrives.

3. Still however he is met with this objection, that even the Jew might say, I also, being under the Law, have an heirship, for the Law is also called the Old Testament, and where is a Testament there also is an inheritance. And although the Apostle himself told the Hebrews that a testament is of no force, until the death of the testator happen, that is to say, a testament is of no strength while the testator liveth, but is established by his death, yet as in Jeremiah the Lord, speaking of the Jews, has said, Mine heritage is unto Me as a lion, he would not deny that they were heirs. But there are heirs without possessions, there are heirs also with them; and while the testator lives those whose names are written in the will are called heirs, though without possessions.

4. Little children are also heirs, but they differ in nothing from a servant, in that they are still under tutors and governors. Even so we were in bondage under the elements of the world. But, when the fulness of the time was come, Christ also came, and now we are no longer servants but sons, if we believe in Christ. Thus He gave them the semblance of an inheritance, but withheld from them the possession of it. Thus they have the name but not the benefit of being heirs, for like children they possess the bare name of heirship without its privileges, and have no right either to command or to use, waiting for the fulness of their age that they may be delivered from their governors.

5. As then young children, so the Jews also, are under a schoolmaster. The Law is our schoolmaster, the schoolmaster brings us to our Master; and our One Master is Christ: Neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master, even, Christ. The schoolmaster is feared, the Master shews the way of salvation. Thus four brings us to

liberty, [443 liberty to faith, faith to love; love obtains adoption, adoption the inheritance. Where then faith is there is liberty; for the servant acts from fear, the free-man by faith; the one by the

letter, the other by grace; the one in slavery the other by the Spirit; but where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. If then where faith is, there is liberty; where liberty there grace, where grace there inheritance; and he that is a Jew in the letter not in spirit is in bondage, he who hath not faith hath not the liberty of the spirit. Now where there is no liberty there is no grace, where no grace no adoption, where no adoption there no succession.

6. Thus, the tablets being, as it were, closed, he beholds 10

his inheritance but possesses it not, he has no permission to read it. For how can he say 'Our Father' who denies the true Son of God, Him by Whom our adoptive sonship is obtained for us? How can he rehearse the will who denies the death of the testator? How can he obtain liberty, who denies the Blood whereby he has been redeemed? For this is the price of our liberty, as Peter says, ye were redeemed with the precious Blood, not indeed of a lamb, but of Him Who came as a lamb, in meekness and humility, and redeemed the whole world with the one offering of His Body, as He himself says, I was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. Wherefore John also says, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

7. Hence the Jew, being heir in the letter not in the spirit is as a child under tutors and governours; but the Christian, who recognizes that fulness of time wherein Christ came, made of a woman, made under the Law, that He might redeem all who were under the Law; the Christian, I say, by unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God grows up unto a perfect man: unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Farewell, my son; love me, for I also love you. [444

LETTER LXXVI. At Irenaeus' request S. Ambrose points out the scope of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Therein is proposed to us a heavenly inheritance, a seat in heavenly places together with Christ, Who has obtained freedom for us. It sets forth to us charity, whereby we are united to Christ, as the end of faith. He adds that no other Epistle contains the mention of so many blessings, and he briefly recounts these one by one.

AMBROSE TO IRENAEUS, GREETING.

1. You have asked me to set forth to you the scope and substance of the Epistle to the Ephesians, an Epistle which seems somewhat obscure, unless by analyzing it we can gather what those motives are by which the Apostle would persuade us not to despair of the kingdom of God.

2. In the first place then he points out that the hope of reward and the inheritance of those heavenly promises which have been brought within our reach by the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, are wont to be a great encouragement to the good in the pursuit of virtue.

3. To this he has added that not only has a mode of return to Paradise been opened to us by Christ, but that even the honour of sitting in heavenly places has been imparted to this flesh of our body by its fellowship with the Body of Christ; so that you need no longer doubt the possibility of your own ascension, now that you know that your fellowship with the flesh of Christ subsists even in the kingdom of heaven, knowing also that by His Blood reconciliation has been made for all things, both on earth and in heaven, for He descended that He might fill all things: and, further, that by His Apostles, prophets, and priests, the whole world has been established, and the Gentiles gathered in; and that the end of our hope is the love of Him, that we may grow up into

Him in all things; for He is the Head of all things, and unto Him according to the measure of His working we are all raised and built up by charity into one body.

4. We ought not therefore to despair of the members adhering to their Head; especially since from the

[445 beginning we have been predestinated by Jesus Christ to adoption as children of God in Himself: which predestination He has ratified, instructing us that the prediction made from the first, that a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh, is a sacrament of Christ and the Church. If therefore the union of Adam and Eve is a great sacrament which relates to Christ and the Church, it is certain that as Eve was bone of the bones of her husband, and flesh of his flesh, so we are members of the Body of Christ, bone of His Bones and flesh of His Flesh.

5. No other Epistle has pronounced so many blessings over the people of God as this. For herein the pregnant witness of Divine grace has declared that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and predestinated unto the adoption of children, richly endowed also with grace in the Son of God, which things have abounded unto the knowledge of the mystery of His eternal will. Especially now, in the fulness of time, when all things are reconciled in Christ, both in heaven and on earth, have we attained an inheritance in Him, to the intent that both what is of the Law and what is of Grace might be fulfilled in us. For even according to the Law we seemed to be elected in that season of youth, by which is signified a holy life, without either the wantonness of childhood or the infirmity of age. We have been taught also how we must vigorously wage war not only against flesh and blood, but also against spiritual wickedness in high places.

6. Wherefore as the possession of lands taken from the enemy fell to their lot, so to us has fallen the lot of grace, that we may become the heritage of God, Who possesses our reins, the seat of chastity and temperance. Do you seek to know this lot? Remember that lot which fell upon Matthias, that he might be chosen into the number of the twelve Apostles. The Prophet David also says, If ye sleep in the midst of the lots, because he who is placed in the middle, between the lot of the Old and New Testament, resting upon both, arrives at the peace of the heavenly kingdom. This lot of their paternal inheritance the daughters of Zelophehad sought for, and their petition was

[446 admitted by God's judgment. But they sought for it in the shade, for Zelophehad means 'the shade of the mouth;' they sought it then in dark sayings, they spoke not what was revealed. Hence the supplication for their inheritance by the daughters of Zelophehad was couched in dark sayings, but in our case it stands in the light of the Gospel and in the revelation of grace.

7. Let us therefore be the possession of God, and let Him be our portion, for in Him are the riches of His glory and inheritance. For who is rich but God alone, Who created all things? Especially however is He rich in mercy, in that He redeemed all mankind, and, as being the author of nature, changed us, who according to our fleshly nature were the children of wrath, and exposed to trouble, that we might become the children of peace and charity. For who can change nature but He Who created nature? Wherefore He raised the dead, and those that were quickened in Christ He hath made to sit in heavenly places in the Lord Jesus.

8. Not that any man has been thought worthy of the privilege of sitting in that seat of God, for to the Son alone hath the Father said, Sit thou on my right hand; but because in that Flesh of Christ

the flesh of the whole human race has been honoured, because it partakes of the same nature. For as He was subjected in our flesh by His unity therewith, and by the obedience of the body, wherein He was made obedient even unto death, so we, in His Flesh, are sat down together with Him in heavenly places. We therefore are not set down by ourselves but in the Person of Christ, Who alone, as the Son of man, sitteth at the right Hand of God; as He said Himself, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of God. To this end has His Grace and Goodness been formed upon us in Christ Jesus, that being dead according to works, redeemed through faith and saved by grace, we might receive the gift of this great deliverance. Our very nature, raised, as it were, in Him, has been made partaker of the Grace of a new creation, that being new created in Christ, we, who had before fallen away through the corruption of our guilty lineage, might walk in good works.

|447

9. For the strife which before existed in the flesh being removed, an universal peace has been made in heaven; that men might be like Angels upon earth, that the Gentiles and Jews might be made one, that both the new and old man might be united, the middle wall of partition, which, as a hostile barrier, had once divided them, being broken down. For the nature of our flesh having stirred up anger discord and dissension, and the law having bound us with the chains of condemnation, Christ Jesus subdued by mortification the wantonness and intemperance of the flesh, and made void the law of commandment contained in ordinances, declaring thereby that the decrees of the spiritual Law are not to be interpreted according to the letter; putting an end to the slothful rest of the Sabbath and to the superfluous rite of outward circumcision, and opening to all access by one Spirit unto the Father. For how can there be any discord, where there is one calling, one body and one spirit?

10. For what else did the Lord Jesus effect by His descent but our deliverance from captivity into liberty, and the subjection to Himself of that captivity which the bonds of unbelief had fettered, but which is now restrained by the fetters of wisdom, every wise man putting his feet into its bonds? For it is written that when He had descended He ascended also, that He might fill all things, and that we might all receive of His fulness.

11. Wherefore He gave first Apostles in the Church, filling them with the Holy Spirit, others prophets, others evangelists, others pastors and teachers, that by their exhortations the progress of believers might be accomplished, and the work of the ministry of faith might receive increase. Every one by the growth of virtue is built up unto the measure of the inward life, which measure, being that more perfect one of a holy life, that is, of a perfect man, taking of the fulness of Christ, has received the fulness of grace.

12. But who is a perfect man, but he who, being delivered from the weakness of a childish mind, from the unstable and slippery ways of youth, and from the unbridled passions of adult age, has attained to the strength of full manhood, and has grown up unto such maturity of

|448 character as not to be easily turned aside by the address of a wily disputer, nor cast, as it were, upon the rocks by the turbid violence of foolish doctrine? Who but he that betakes himself to the remedies of error, who follows truth not only in his words but also in his works, and, takes upon him the edifying of himself in love, that he may be united with others in the unity of faith and

knowledge, and, as a member, not fall off from his Head, that is, from Christ, Who is the Head of all, from whom the whole body of the faithful and prudent fitted and compacted and joined together by the rational harmony of the Word (for this is the meaning of

sunarmologou&menon, a(rmoni/a| tou~ Lo&gou dedme/non 11,)

by that which every joint supplieth, according to the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying itself in love; that so it may rise as one temple of God in all, and one habitation of the heavenly mansion in the spirit of all.

13. Herein I conceive we are to understand that not only holy men but all believers, and all the heavenly and reasonable hosts and powers are united in faith and spirit; that by a certain concord of powers and offices one body, composed of all spirits of a reasonable nature, may adhere to Christ their Head, being so united to the framework of the building, that in no single point of juncture the several members may seem to be severed from each other. For this is the meaning of the Greek

a(fh_n th~j xorhgi/aj kat' e0ne/rgeian e0n me/trw|. And to unite each one to Himself according to the due measure of his merits and faith will not be difficult: for the edifice of love closes and blocks up every crevice through which offences may enter. We ought not then to doubt that in the building up of this temple the company of the heavenly hosts will be united with us; for it is unreasonable to suppose that while the Temple of God can be so built up by human love as that we shall become an habitation of God in the Spirit, He should not dwell within the heavenly Host.

14. On this account, that the building may be raised [449 within us more rapidly, the Apostle exhorts us to open the eyes of our understanding, to lift them to things above, diligently to follow after the knowledge of God, to unravel the truth, to hide in our hearts the commandments of God, to put off deceitful lusts and hidden deeds of shame, to seek to be renewed by the graces of the Sacraments, to moderate anger, to calm all disturbance of spirit before the sun goes down, to beware lest the adversary gain the upper hand of us, that mighty spirit who entered into the heart of Judas, and broke through the gates of his soul, overpowering his resistance, to shut out theft, to eschew falsehood, to rise from the dead, to put on sobriety. He tells us likewise that wives should be subject to their husbands, as the Church is to Christ, and that husbands should offer up their own lives for their wives, as Christ gave Himself for the Church. And lastly, that, as good soldiers, we should put on the armour of God, and continually fight, not only against flesh and blood, but also against spiritual wickedness; that we may neither be corrupted by friends nor vanquished by enemies. This summary account of the Epistle I offer you as the best which I have in my power to give.

Farewell, my son; love me, for I also love you.

LETTER LXXVII. This letter dwells on the Gospel, as the true Inheritance, and on the contrast between the Jew, who by rejecting Christ made Moses in whom he believed his accuser, and the Christian, who received true liberty in Christ, while the Jew remained a slave.

AMBROSE TO HORONTIANUS.

1. Not without reason have you thought fit to enquire into the nature of the Divine inheritance; and why it should be so highly esteemed that for its sake many should even offer up their lives. But if

you will consider that even in human affairs the advantage of inheriting worldly goods gives an additional sanction to the laws of natural

[450 affection, and that even on this account greater respect is shown to parents, for fear, namely, lest the slighted love of a father may avenge itself by disinheriting or renouncing the rebellious offspring, you will cease to wonder why men so greatly desire a Divine inheritance.

2. Now there is an inheritance offered to all Christians; for Isaiah thus speaks, There is an heritage for them that believe on the Lord, and this inheritance is hoped for by the promise, not by the Law. This the history of the Old Testament proves, in the words of Sarah, Cast out this bond-woman and her son, for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. The son of Sarah was Isaac, the son of the bond-woman was Ishmael; and these were before the Law, wherefore the promise was older than the Law. We are after Isaac sons by the promise, the Jews are the sons of the bond-woman after the flesh. We have a free mother, which bore not, but afterwards, according to the promise, brought forth and produced a child; they have Agar for their mother, gendering to bondage. He is free, to whom grace is promised, he is a slave on whom the yoke of the Law is imposed, wherefore the promise came to us before the Law came to them, and in the course of nature liberty is more ancient than bondage. Liberty therefore comes of the promise, bondage of the Law. But although the promise itself, as we have said, is before the Law, and by the promise comes liberty, and in liberty is love, still love is according to the Law, and love is greater than liberty.

3. Are we not then servants? and is it not written, praise the Lord, all ye servants, or how does the Apostle say, But as the servants of God, doing the will of God from his heart? But there is also a free and voluntary service, whereof the Apostle says, He that is called, being free. is Christ's servant. And this service is from the heart, not of necessity. Wherefore we are the servants of our Creator; but we have a liberty which we have received through the grace of Christ, born of the promise according to faith. Wherefore, being born of the freedwoman, let us, signed in the forehead, offer the sacrifice of liberty as becomes freemen; that we may rejoice and not be confounded, being

[451 signed in 'the spirit and not in the flesh. For to us it is rightly said, Standfast, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. He does not say, Be not slaves, but Be not entangled with the yoke of bondage, for the yoke of bondage is heavier than the bondage itself.

4. Isaac also says to his son Esau, when he sought his blessing, Behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the

earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; and by thy sword shall thou live, and shalt serve thy brother. But the time shall come when thou shalt have the dominion and shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

How then is this to be reconciled, that although he shall break his brother's yoke from off his neck he shall still serve, unless we recognize the difference that there is in servitude? Now in what this difference consists, let the Scripture itself explain to us. Isaac signifies good, and he is good to us, for after him we are born into liberty, and he is a good father to both his sons. His love for them both he proved, in the one case by affection, in the other by blessing, for he commanded his elder son to bring him food, that he might receive his blessing; but while he makes delay and seeks for

wild venison from a distance, the younger brother brings him home-food, from the sheep of the flock.

5. Good food for all is Christ, good food too is faith, sweet food is mercy, pleasant food is faith. These are the meats whereon are fed the people of holy Church. Good food too is the Spirit of God, good food is the remission of sins. But very hard food is the rigour of the Law, and the terror of punishment; and very coarse food is that observance of the letter which is preferred to the grace of pardon. The Jews again are under a curse, we included in a blessing. A ready food too is faith: The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart: the food of the Law is more tardy. For while waiting for the Law the people fell into transgression.

6. Thus it was on the son who was diligent and faithful that the father bestowed his blessing, but he reserved one, for he was a good father, for his elder son also, in that he made him servant to his brother. For he did this, not as wishing to subject his family to any unworthy bondage,

[452 but because he who cannot rule and govern himself ought to serve and be subject to one more prudent; that so he may be governed by his counsel, and not fall through his own folly, nor stumble from walking rashly. It is as a blessing then that such a state of service is given. Moreover it is numbered among blessings, together with the gift of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. Having said, By thy sword thou shalt live, lest he should be harmed by the confidence arising from strength or power, he added, and thou shalt serve thy brother: that thou mayest thus obtain both the rich fruits of the flesh, and the dew of Divine grace, and mayest follow him who is able to direct and govern thee.

7. But it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have broken his yoke from off thy neck,

that thou shalt have the reward of thy willing servitude, and not undergo the evils of a compulsory bondage. For that kind of bondage is dishonourable which is the result of necessity, that is honourable which is offered by piety. Hence the Apostle says, For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward, but if against my will, a dispensation is committed unto me. Better then is it to reap a reward, than to obey a dispensation. Wherefore let us not be restrained by the yoke of bondage, but let us serve in the spirit of charity, for the Apostle says, By love serve one another. The fear of the Law becomes the love of the Gospel. Again, To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but the fulness of the Law is charity. And the Law itself says, For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

8. This therefore is what we asserted, for although bondage is by the Law, liberty is by the Law also, for charity belongs to liberty, fear to bondage. There is therefore both a charity of the Law, and a service of charity, but the Law is the forerunner of charity, the charity of the Gospel is the free giver of a pious service.

9. The Law then is not superfluous; for like a schoolmaster, it attends upon the weak; and by weakness I mean weakness of character not of body; for they are infants who know not how to declare the word of God, who receive

[453 not His works. For if an unspotted life is old age, a life full of stains is the time of youth. The Law then, that is, No~~&~~moj, was our schoolmaster, until faith came. We were kept, it is said, under the Law, as being weak, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. But

afterwards faith came; he does not say the Gospel, but faith, for that only is faith which is in the Gospel. For although the righteousness of God is revealed therein which is from faith to faith, still this of the Law is faith indeed when it attains to the fulness thereof. Rightly therefore is this faith spoken of as single and alone; because without it the former is not faith, and in it alone it has its confirmation. Finally, when this faith came, fulness and the adoption of sons came with it, infirmity ceased, infancy was at an end, we grew into a perfect man, we put on Christ. How then can any one be weak or childish, in whom Christ is the power of God? Thus we have arrived at perfection, and have been instructed in its precepts.

10. You heard read to-day, Of Mine own Self I can do nothing, as I hear, I judge. You heard read, I accuse you not, I judge not. I accuse you not, it is Moses that accuseth you, in whom ye trust. You heard read, If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. Thus I have learnt what kind of judge, what kind of witness I ought to be. For it is not as being weak that He says, Of Mine own self I can do nothing, he rather is weak who so understands it. The Father does nothing without the Son, for between them there is a community of operation and an unity of power; but in this place He speaks as Judge, that we men may learn that, when we judge, we ought to form our sentence equitably and not according to our mere will and power.

11. When a criminal is set before him proved guilty and convicted of crime, who does not frame for himself pleas of defence, but prays for pardon, and prostrates himself at the knees of his judge, the judge answers him, Of myself I can do nothing, it is my justice not my power which I exercise in judgment. It is not I but your own deeds that judge you, they accuse, and they condemn you. The Laws are your tribunal, and I as judge do not alter but keep the

[454 Laws. Of myself I originate nothing, but the judicial sentence against you proceeds from yourself. I judge as I hear, not as I will, and my judgment is true because I consult what is agreeable to equity not to my own will.

12. Let us next consider what is the Divine rule of judgment. The Lord of heaven and earth and the Judge of all says, of Mine own self I can do nothing, as I hear I judge; and man says to his Lord, Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee? But why is not the Lord able? Because, He says, My judgment is just, because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father Who hath sent Me, that is, not the will of man, whom ye see, not the will of man, whom ye only judge as man, not the will of the flesh, (for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,) but the Divine will, which is the Origin of law, and the Rule of judgment. So likewise that witness is true, who bears witness not to himself but to another, for it is written, Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth.

13. In a mystical sense it is well said to the Jews: I judge you not, that is, I, the universal Saviour, I, who am the Remission of sins, judge you not, for ye have not received Me. I judge you not, I freely pardon you. I, who by My Blood redeem sinners, judge you not. I judge you not, for I would not the death but the life of a sinner. I judge you not, for I condemn not but justify those who confess their sins. Moses accuses you, he in whom you trust convicts you. He can accuse you, he cannot judge you, this is reserved to his Creator. He then in whom ye trust accuses you, He in Whom ye would not trust absolves you.

14. O great folly of the Jews! Rightly are they accused of their crimes, for they have chosen one who accuses them, and have rejected a merciful Judge; and therefore they are without absolution, but not without punishment.

15. Well therefore, my son, have you begun by the Law, and been confirmed in the Gospel, from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Farewell; love me for I also love you. |455

LETTER LXXVIII. In this letter S. Ambrose shews, that we, like Abraham, are justified by faith, through which we are sons of the freewoman; that circumcision derived all its efficacy from Christ, and was abolished, after He had undergone it in His own person, by Him. Righteousness is therefore only to be looked for from faith, which if it be perfect, is never destitute of charity.

AMBROSE TO HORONTIANUS.

1. If Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, and that which is accounted for righteousness passes from unbelief to faith, then are we justified by faith, not by the works of the Law. Now Abraham himself had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, one of the bondwoman, the other of the freewoman; and it was told him that he should cast out the bondwoman and the son of the bondwoman, for that the son of the bondwoman should not be his heir. We therefore are children not of the bondwoman but of the free woman, in that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Hence it follows that they are specially Abraham's sons, who are so by faith, for the heirs of faith excel heirs by natural birth. The Law is our schoolmaster, faith is free; let us therefore cast away the works of bondage, let us preserve the grace of liberty, let us leave the shade, and follow the Sun, let us desert Jewish rites.

2. The circumcision of one member is of no avail. For the Apostle says, Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing, not because He cannot, but because He judges those unworthy of His benefits who desert His ways.

3. And Zipporah of old had circumcised her child, and driven off the danger which hung over him; but then Christ profited while perfection was still deferred. While the people of believers were small, the Lord Jesus came, not as small, but as perfect in all things. He was circumcised first, according to the Law, that He might not

|456 break the Law, afterwards by the Cross, that He might fulfil the Law. Thus that which is in part has ceased, because that which is perfect has come; for in Christ the Cross has circumscised not one member only, but the superfluous pleasures of the whole body.

4. But perhaps it may still be asked why He Who had come to declare to us perfect circumcision should choose to be circumcised in part. Concerning this however we need not deliberate long. For if He was made sin that He might expiate our sins, if He was made a curse for us that He might annul the curses of the Law, for the same reason He was also circumcised for us, that being about to bestow salvation by the Cross, He might abolish the circumcision of the Law.

5. The Apostle therefore declares that it is from faith that our hope of righteousness in the spirit is to be derived, and that though called to liberty we are not to use our liberty for an occasion to the flesh. For neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by

love. And therefore it is written, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. Now he who loves also believes, and in believing each man begins to love. Abraham believed, and so began to love, and he believed not in part, but entirely. For otherwise he would not have perfect charity, for it is written, Charity believeth all things. If it believe not all things, charity does not seem to be perfect. Perfect charity then has all faith.

6. But I would not lightly assert that all faith has immediately perfect charity, for the Apostle says, Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. A Christian man has three principal virtues, faith hope and charity, but the greatest of these is charity.

7. On the other hand I conceive the Apostle was led to say this by the tenor of his argument, for I cannot see how he who has all faith, so that he could remove mountains, can be destitute of charity; nor how such can be the case with that man who understands all mysteries and all knowledge; especially as John says, Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and the same Apostle

[457 had said before, Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin. Whence we infer that if he who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and he who is born of God sins not, then he who believes that Jesus is the Christ sins not. But if any man sin, he believes not, and he that believes not loves not, and he that loves not is subject to sin. So then he who sins loves not, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. But if charity exclude the desire of sin, it excludes also fear, charity then is full of perfect faith.

8. The Apostles too, who came to be His friends, said, Increase our faith, begging the good Physician to strengthen their failing faith. Their faith must indeed still have been weak, when even to Peter it could be said, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Thus faith as the herald of charity preoccupies the mind, and prepares the ways of coming love. Thus where is the perfection of charity there is also all faith.

9. For this reason I conceive it is said that charity believeth all things,

that is, leads faith to believe them all, and that a soul of this kind possesses all faith; and hence wherever is perfect charity there is all faith. Moreover, as it believes all things so also it is said to hope all things. And it is on this account the greatest, because it includes the other two.

10. He that has this charity fears nothing, for charity casteth out fear; and fear being thus banished and thrown aside, charity beareth all things, endureth all things. He who by charity endures all things, cannot fear martyrdom; and so in another place he speaks as a conqueror at the end of his course, The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Farewell, my son; love me for I also love you. [458

LETTER LXXIX.

S. Ambrose here assures Bellicius, whose recovery from sickness had occurred just at the time when he professed himself a believer in Christ, that both his sickness and recovery were to be ascribed to his so doing, and exhorts him to endeavour to keep Christ near him, and to prepare himself with all diligence for the other Sacraments.

AMBROSE TO BELLICIUS, GREETING.

1. You have sent me word that while you were lying afflicted by a severe sickness you believed in the Lord Jesus, and straightway began to recover. This sickness therefore was unto salvation, bringing greater pain than danger, for you had long deferred your promise. This is the meaning of the text, I wound, and I heal. He wounded by sickness, He healed by faith. For He saw that the inward affection of your mind was not without pious desires, but that they were shaken and unsettled by delays, and so He thought fit to admonish you, in a way which while it did not injure your health, excited your devotion.

2. For how should He do an injury to health Who is wont to say, as we read in the Gospel, I will come and heal him. Being invited by your friends to visit your house He doubtless said, I will come and heal him; Although you heard Him not, He, as God, spoke to you imperceptibly, and although you saw Him not, still beyond doubt He visited you in spirit.

3. But in truth you have seen Him, for you have believed in Him, you have seen Him, for you have received Him into the dwelling of your mind, you have seen Him in the Spirit, you have seen Him with your inward eyes. Take care then not to let this new Guest depart, long expected, late received, even Him in Whom we live and move and have our being. You have tasted the first beginnings of faith, let not the word be hidden in your heart. Herein lies all grace and every gift. For no man judges of the secret recesses of a house by its entrance, since all the

|459 fruit is within; nor is it the part of a wise man to look from the window into the house, and it is folly for a man to listen at the door.

4. The mysteries of the more perfect Sacraments are of one kind; for the Scripture says, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. Of another kind are the things which the prophets have announced concerning future glory, unto whom it was revealed, and to whom the saints have preached the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the Angels desired to look into. Of another kind again are those mysteries wherein is the redemption of the world, the remission of sins, the distribution of graces, the participation of the Sacraments: when you receive these you will wonder that a gift so transcendent should have been bestowed on man, as to make the manna which we wonder should have been rained down from heaven on the Jews seem to you to have possessed neither so much grace nor so much efficacy towards salvation. For all who received this manna in the wilderness died, save Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb, whereas he who tastes this Sacrament shall never die. May the Lord Jesus send you restoration. Farewell.

LETTER LXXX.

S.Ambrose here shews that the ease of the man who was blind from his birth was the work of Divine power, and censures the question which the disciples asked about him; and dwells on some of the details of the miracle.

AMBROSE TO BELLICIUS.

1. You have heard, my brother, the lesson of the Gospel, wherein it is narrated that as the Lord Jesus passed by He saw a man which was blind from his birth. Now if the Lord saw him He did not pass him by, neither ought we to pass him by whom the Lord overlooked not; especially

[460 since he was blind from his birth, which is not mentioned without reason.

2. Now there is a blindness in which by the operation of illness the sight of the eyes is obscured, and this by the help of time is mitigated; there is a blindness also which is caused by the entrance of humours, and this, when the defect is removed, is cured by the aid of medicine; and this I say that you may know that it was not by skill but by Divine Power that he who was blind from his birth was healed. For the Lord gave him health as a free gift, not by any medicinal skill, for they whom the Lord Jesus healed were they whom no one could cure.

3. But how foolish was the inquiry of the Jews, Who did sin this man or his parents? ascribing bodily diseases to the score of sin. Wherefore the Lord said, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. That which nature created, the Creator, being the Author of nature, was capable of remedying. He added therefore, As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world, that is, all who are blind may see whether they need Me Who am the Light. Approach ye, and be enlightened, that ye may see.

4. In the next place why did He Who restored life at command, Who gave health by His word, saying to the dead, Come forth, and Lazarus came forth from the grave, saying also to the sick of the palsy, Arise and take up thy bed, and the sick of the palsy rose and himself began to carry his bed, whereon, when all his limbs were paralyzed, he had been wont to be carried; why, I say, did He spit on the ground and make clay, and anoint the eyes of the blind man, and say to him, Go, wash in in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation, Sent. He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing----What is the reason of this? Great indeed is the reason, if I mistake not, for he who is taught by Jesus comes to see more clearly.

5. Observe at the same time both His Divinity and His sanctity; as being Himself Light He touched and so communicated light to others; as being a Priest He fulfilled by the figure of Baptism the mysteries of spiritual grace. He spat, that you might learn that the inner parts

[461 of Christ are light; and clearly indeed does he see who receives cleansing thereby. His spittle cleanses, and so does His discourse, as it is written, Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

6. But His making clay and anointing the eyes of the blind was intended to signify to us that the Same Who made man of clay, restored him to health by anointing with clay, and to signify also that this flesh of our clay must receive the light of eternal life by the Sacrament of Baptism. Do you also draw near to Siloam, that is, to Him Who was sent from the Father, as it is written, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. Let Christ wash you that you may see. Come to Baptism, the time itself is at hand, make haste and come that you may say, I went, and washed, and I received sight; that you may also say, whereas I was blind, now I see, that you may say, as that man on whom light was poured said, the night is far spent, the day is at hand.

7. The night was blindness. It was night when Judas received the sop from Jesus, and Satan entered into him. To Judas, in whom the Devil was, it was night; to John, who lay on the breast of Christ, it was day. To Peter also it was day, when he saw the light of Christ on the mount. To others it was night, but to Peter it was day. To Peter himself however it was night when he denied Christ. But the cock crowed, and he began to weep, that he might correct his error, for now the day was at hand.

8. The Jews enquired of the blind man, How were thine eyes opened? What signal folly! They enquired concerning what they saw; they enquired into the cause, seeing the effect.

9. Then they reviled him, and said, thou art His disciple. Their curse is a blessing, for their blessing is a curse. Thou, they say, art His disciple. They confer a benefit, while they think they are doing an injury.

Farewell, my son; love me as you do, for I also love you.

[Footnotes moved to end and renumbered. Marginal biblical references

and running headers omitted]

1. a Bethlehem.

2. 1 institutis.

3. 2 castellum.

4. b [Hebrew] signifying affliction; [Hebrew] one humbled by affliction and so, it was inferred, brought to obedience.

5. a Baehr on Herod, ii. 37, quotes with apparent approval Wesseling's opinion that in fact, though Herodotus does not expressly state it, among

the Egyptians only the priests and those initiated in the mysteries received circumcision. It is to this perhaps that S. Ambrose is here alluding. See also the art. on 'Circumcision' in Smith's Dict. of the Bible.

6. 1 confusus fuerit 7. 1 subditus fiat. Vulg.

8. 1 in Christo. ei0j xristo&n.

9. a Why this letter, which plainly declares itself in the first section to be a sequel of the previous one, is addressed to a different name, it is difficult to say. There is a similar

difficulty about Letter xxvi, and possibly the same solution may apply here as is suggested by the Ben. Edd. there. See Introd. to Lett. xxvi.

10. b The phrase 'cernere hereditatem' is a well-known law-term, meaning 'literally 'to decide to accept an inheritance,' and then 'to enter upon it.' But as this sense will not agree

with the context, it seems necessary to take 'cernere,' as the Benedictine note does, in its common sense of 'to see.'

11. a The words a(rmoni/a] tou~ Lo&gou dedeme/non seem to be a gloss on S. Paul's compound sunarmologou&menon. They are not part of his text, though S. Ambrose seems here to be quoting them as if they were. This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2004. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely.

Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SP Ionic font, free from here.

Early Church Fathers - Additional Texts

Letters - Letters 81-91

St. Ambrose of Milan, Letters (1881). pp. 462-478. Letters 81-91.

- Letter 81: To certain of the clergy
- Letter 82: To Marcellus
- Letter 83: To Sisinnius
- Letter 84: To Cynegius
- Letter 85: To Siricius
- Letter 86: To Siricius
- Letter 87: To bishops Segatius and Delphinus
- Letter 88: To Atticus
- Letter 89: To Alypius
- Letter 90: To Antonius
- Letter 91: To his brother Candidianus

LETTER LXXXI. In this letter S. Ambrose seeks to comfort some of his clergy, who were in despondency on account of their labours and difficulties, and sets before their eyes both the reward they may expect, and also the ready aid they will receive from Christ. He then presses upon them passages of Scripture applicable to their case, and exhorts them not to suffer themselves to be separated from Jesus their Saviour.

AMBROSE TO CERTAIN OF THE CLERGY.

1. It is a fault which frequently besets the human mind, that, if things do not at once fall out according to their wishes, they lightly take offence, and desist from their duty. In other classes of men this is tolerable, but in those who are devoted to the Divine service it is a frequent cause of sorrow.

2. There are certain persons in the clerical function, into whose minds the Enemy, if he cannot otherwise deceive them, thus seeks to creep, that he may instil evil thoughts of the following kind; 'What does it avail me to remain among the clergy, to suffer injuries, to bear toil, as if my own farm could not support me, or, if I have no farm, as if I could not otherwise obtain support?' It is by such thoughts as these that even good dispositions are withdrawn from their duty, as if provision for his own sustenance was the only function of a cleric, and not rather to purchase for himself the Divine assistance after death. Whereas he only shall be rich after death, who on earth has had strength

to contend unharmed against the wiles of his numerous adversaries.

3. It is said therefore in Ecclesiastes, Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour, For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow. Where are the two that are better than one, but where Christ is, and he whom Christ defends? For if he who is with the Lord Jesus falls, Jesus raises him up.

|463

4. But in what sense is it said, for their labour? Is Christ then weary!? Yes truly, for He says, I am weary of crying. He labours, but it is on us. Moreover after His toil He sat down wearied on the well; but what is the mode of His labours? The Apostle by his own humbler example has taught us in the words, Who is weak, and I am not weak? Our Lord Himself has also taught us in the words, I was sick, and ye visited Me not, naked and ye clothed Me not. He labours, in order to raise me in my falls.

5. Hence in Elisha also our Lord is prefigured, for he stretched himself upon the dead child that he might raise him to life, and in this we have a symbol that Christ died with us, that He might rise again for us. Thus Christ placed Himself on the level even of our frailty, that He might raise us again. He did not fall, but of His own will cast Himself down, and in rising raised up His fellow. For He has taken us into fellowship with Himself, being anointed, as it is written, with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

6. Well says the Preacher, If they fall, the One, not being Himself lifted up, will lift up his fellow; for Christ needed not the assistance and aid of another to raise Him, but rose by His own power. Again, Destroy, He says, this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But this He said of the Temple of His Body. And it is well that he who has not fallen should not be raised by another, for he who has been so raised must have fallen, and he who has fallen needs assistance that he may be raised. This is taught also by the words of Scripture which follows, Woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat. For we are dead with Christ, and therefore we also live with Him. And Christ has thus died that He might give us warmth, as He has said, I am come to send fire upon the earth.

7. I was dead, but because in Baptism I died together with Christ, I received the light of life from Christ. And he who dies in Christ, being warmed by Christ, receives the breath of life and resurrection. The boy was cold,

|464 Elisha warmed him with his breath, and imparted to him the warmth of life. He slept together with him that being thus buried with him in a figure the warmth of his rest might raise him up. He is cold then who dies not in Christ; he cannot be warmed to whom no burning fire is applied; he who has not Christ with him cannot grow warm by being near another.

8. And that you may understand it to be said as a mystery and not in reference to the bare number that two are better than one, he adds a mystical saying, A threefold cord is not quickly broken. For that which is threefold and un-compounded cannot be broken. Thus the Trinity, being of an uncompounded nature, cannot be dissolved; for God is, whatever He is, one and simple and uncompounded; and what He is that He continues to be, and is not brought into subjection.

9. It is a good thing therefore to adhere closely to that other One, and to put your neck into His chain, and to bow down your shoulder and bear Him, and be not grieved with His bonds; because He went forth from the house of bondmen to assume His kingdom, that Child who is better than an older and foolish king. Wherefore they who follow Him are also bound with chains. Paul too is the prisoner of Jesus Christ. And Jesus Himself led captivity captive. He thought it not enough to destroy that captivity which the devil had imposed, so that he might not again assault those who were wandering at large. But to dwell in subjection to Christ, putting your feet into the fetters of wisdom, and becoming His captive that you may be free from the adversary, this is what He accounted perfect liberty.

10. Rightly is He called a Child, for unto us a Child is born, and truly a good Child to Whom it has been said by God the Father, It is a light thing that Thou shouldst be My Servant; wise also, as the gospel teaches us, for He increased in wisdom and stature; and properly called poor, for, though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor, that through His poverty might be rich. Wherefore in His kingdom He does not despise the poor man, but listens to him and frees him from all straits and troubles.

|465

11. Let us then live in obedience to Him, that that old and foolish king may have no power over us. For he, desiring to reign and be supreme after his own will, and not to be under subjection to the Lord Jesus, grows old in sin, and falls into the deformity of folly. For what can be more foolish than for a man to relinquish heavenly and apply himself to earthly things, for him to neglect what is eternal, and to choose the frail and perishing?

12. Let no one then say, We have no portion in Jacob nor inheritance in Israel. Let no one say, I am not among the Clergy, for it is written, Give unto Levi his lots 1; and again David says that he who lieth in the midst among the lots ascends to heaven with spiritual wings. Say not of your God, He is grievous to us, nor of your place, it is not for our turn, since Scripture says, Leave not thy place: For the adversary would fain deprive thee of it, he would fain drive thee away, for he envies thee thy hopes and thy function.

13. But thou that art in the lot of the Lord, His portion and possession, depart not therefrom, that thou mayest say to Him, For Thou hast possessed my reins, Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb; and that He may say to thee, as to a good servant, Go, and sit down to meat.

Farewell, my sons: serve the Lord, for the Lord is good.

LETTER LXXXII.

S. Ambrose tells Marcellus that he has been appointed to decide the case in which he and his brother Laetus and their sister were concerned, and why he undertook rather to act as arbiter than as judge in it. He urges Marcellus to submit willingly to his loss, praising him at the same time for having himself offered so equitable an adjustment of the matter, and tells him why he has nevertheless made some change in the settlement, and ends by shewing how the success gained by the several parties has been without general detriment to the Church.

AMBROSE TO MARCELLUS.

1. The law suit which you did not indeed institute of your own accord, but took up when begun by others, the

[466 obligations of piety and a desire of approving your bounty towards the poor leading you thereto, has in the course of its adjudication devolved into my hands. I took cognisance of it by the tenor of the Imperial enactment, and both the authority committed to me by the blessed Apostle and the form and character of your own life and conduct have laid this upon me. Having myself censured the keeping alive amongst you your ancient animosity, I found myself obliged by the parties to hear their cause.

2. I blushed to refuse, I must confess, particularly since the advocates of either party recriminated on each other, asserting that my investigation would make manifest to whose side the suffrages of right and justice would incline. Why need I say more? When the days were almost concluded, and only a few hours remained, in which the Prefect was hearing other business; the advocates in the suit requested that it should be adjourned for a few days, that I might preside as judge. So much zeal was shewn by Christians to prevent the Prefect from interfering with the jurisdiction of the Bishop. They stated moreover that certain matters had been conducted in an unseemly manner, and each party, according to his own inclination, brought forward points as proper to be heard by the Bishop rather than the Prefect.

3. Overcome by these reasons, reminded also of the Apostolical precept, which reproves Christians, saying, Do not ye judge them that are within? and again, If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the Church. I speak to your shame. Is it so that there is not a wise man among you, no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with his brother, and that before unbelievers, I accepted the hearing of the cause, on condition however that I should settle the terms of the compromise. For I saw that, if I decreed in your favour, the other party might not acquiesce; while, if the sentence were given for him, you and your holy sister would abandon your defence. And thus there would have been an unequal rule of decision. Suspicion might also have attached in their eyes to the influence which the

[467 sacerdotal relation would exercise over my mind. For when does the defeated party consider the others to have greater equity than himself? And truly, the expenses of this old-standing contest would have been intolerable to both parties, had its termination been without fruit, or without, at least, the solace of munificence.

4. Since, therefore, I perceived that the issue was doubtful, the law disputed, the pleas on both sides numerous, and that petitions to the emperor of an invidious character were being prepared

1 which contained charges of tampering with his decrees, perceiving also that in case of his being victorious he would rigorously sue for double the mesne profits, and for the costs of this protracted suit; while it was unbecoming your office to demand the expenses of the cause, and not competent for you to claim any of those profits which as possessor you had received, I preferred settling the dispute by a compromise to any aggravation of it by a decree. For there were other disputes liable to be raised, and what was still more grievous, although these disputes might be removed, hatreds would remain which are detrimental to feelings of good will.

5. Involved in these difficulties, and feeling that the office of the priest, the sex of the woman and the gravity of her widowed state, and regard for my friend appealed to me with a threefold and weighty claim, I thought that my course of conduct should be to desire no one's defeat, but the success of all. Nor was my intention baffled; you have all overcome, as regards kindred, as regards nature, as regards Scripture which says, Why do ye not rather take wrong, why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

6. But perhaps you deem yourself aggrieved by the unfavourable issue of the suit, and by your pecuniary losses. Better surely for priests are the losses than the gains of the world; For it is more blessed to give than to receive. But perhaps you will say, I ought not to have been exposed to fraud, to have suffered injury, to undergo loss. What then? Would you have inflicted these things? But although you did not do so, he would have complained of

|468 suffering them. Consider therefore what the Apostle says, Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? So one may almost say that he who suffers not a wrong, inflicts it, for he who is the stronger ought to be the one to bear it.

7. But why do I treat with you as if this was my concern rather than your own? For in order to compound the quarrel you offered that for the time of her life your sister should possess part of the farm, but that after her death all the property should be ceded to your brother, and that no one should sue him either in your name or in that of the Church; but that, if he chose, he should hold it without being called on to dispense any portion to the Church. When I had declared this, and extolled the great grace of munificence which had thus been implanted in your mind, your brother replied that such an arrangement would be pleasing to him if all fear of injury to the property were removed. For how, he asked, could a woman, who was a widow besides, manage a property liable to tribute? How could it profit him, your yielding up to him your right of possession, if he supposed that greater losses would accrue to him from the bad cultivation of the land?

8. The advocates on either side were influenced by these considerations. Wherefore, with the consent of all, it was determined that the honourable

2 Laetus should undertake the farm, and should pay yearly to your sister a certain quantity of corn wine and oil. By this means your holy sister was relieved from anxiety, not deprived of her rights; she relinquished, not the fruits but the labour, not the revenues, but the hazard as it is often called of an uncertain return of them. If violent storms of wind should destroy the harvest, your sister will still retain undiminished the fruits of the seed-time. Laetus will ascribe to himself the unfavourable conditions of the arrangement, and should the pressure of necessity from time to time and of extraordinary imposts become severe, your sister will stand clear both of Laetus' loss and of receiving benefits from you;

|469 while Laetus will console himself with the proprietorship of the estate.

9. Thus all have gained their point: Laetus, because he obtained the right over the property, which he had not before; your sister, because she will now enjoy the annual profits without dispute or strife; no one, however, will have gained so complete and glorious a victory as yourself, for together with the fulfilment of your bountiful dispositions towards your sister, you have rendered her partner of your fraternal union. For you have conceded, to your brother the property, to your sister the usufruct. But as regards the Church, nothing is lost to her which is gained to piety; for

charity is no loss but a gain to Christ, charity also is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And thus the cause has been concluded according to the Apostolic model. We used to grieve that you were at strife, but your strife has been profitable, because it has led you to put on the form of the Apostolical life and discipline. Your strife was unbecoming the priesthood, but this transaction befits even the Apostolic rule.

10. And fear not that the Church should be placed out of the range of your bounty. She also partakes of your fruits, fruits even more plentiful, for she enjoys the fruit of your teaching, the service of your life, she has that fertility which you have watered by your discipline. Rich in these profits she seeks not temporal things, for she is in possession of what is eternal. But you have added not only Apostolical but also Evangelical fruits, for the Lord has said, Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness. You also have made to yourself friends, and, what is remarkable, from those who were at variance with you. You have made brethren return under the laws of kindred, you have assured them by this charity and this grace that they shall be received into eternal habitations.

11. Thus, under the guidance of Christ, and the directions of two priests, yourself, that is, who gave the first outline, and myself who gave the sentence, the peace which we have made will not fail; for there have been so many concurrent voices in favour of fidelity, that perfidy cannot be without punishment.

|470

12. Laetus will now plough for his sister, whereas before he grudged her the services of others; Laetus will now gather the harvest for his sister, though he could not before endure the gifts of others; he will bear the fruits to the granaries of his sister, and this he shall do gladly

3, in renewed accordance with the proper signification of his name.

13. You meanwhile, being conformed to the image of the Apostle of Christ, and assuming the prophetic authority, shall say unto the Lord, Thou hast possessed my reins. This possession better becomes Christ, that He may possess the virtues of His priest, that He may receive those fruits which belong to integrity and continence, and what is more, to charity and tranquillity.

Farewell; love me, for I also love you.

LETTER LXXXIII. In this letter S. Ambrose praises Sisinnius for forgiving his son, who had married without his leave, and compares him with some of the Saints of the Old Testament, and with the father in the parable of the prodigal son.

AMBROSE TO SISINNIUS.

1. Your forgiving our son at my request for having married a wife without your knowledge I attribute to your natural affection rather than to your regard for me; for it is better that natural affection should have gained this from you than any one's request. Assuredly it is in the triumph of virtue that the priest's petition has its chief success, for he then obtains most when virtue is powerful, his petition must always coincide with the dictates of natural affection. And nature and your son obtained the more fully their request, in that the consideration of requests is usually a brief matter, whereas the habit of virtue is lasting and natural affection permanent.

2. It was indeed worthily done to recognize yourself to be a father, particularly since your cause for indignation was a just one; for I prefer to admit the fault, so that your fatherly indulgence may gain higher praise; for it was as

[471 a father that you were offended; since you had a claim to exercise the choice of your judgment as to one to whom you were to become a father, and who was to be to you in the place of a daughter. For we obtain children either by nature or adoption; in nature it is a matter of chance; in adoption, of judgment; and we are more liable to blame in the case of our adopted than of our natural offspring; because it is ascribed to nature if our children by birth should happen to be degenerate, but that those who become ours by adoption or other such tie should prove unworthy of it is ascribed to our own mistake. You had therefore cause of displeasure against your son in this his choice of a wife to himself; you have also reason for forgiving him. For you have obtained a daughter for yourself without the danger of making a selection for yourself; if he has married well, he has obtained for you this advantage; if he has been deceived, you will make them better by receiving them into favour, but worse by disowning them.

3. It is with riper judgment that a father chooses a bride for his son, but when she is brought by the son to his father, when she enters her father-in-law's roof as the chosen of her husband, their purpose of obedience is stronger, the son fearing lest his election should be disapproved, the daughter-in-law that her attentions may not be acceptable. While the distinction of the paternal choice elevates the one, the other is humbled by the fear of giving offence and bowed down by modesty. The son will not be able to throw blame on the wife, as if he himself were not answerable for any of those causes of offence which are wont to occur; on the contrary he will strive more diligently to obtain approbation of his judgment in regard of his wife, of his obedience in regard of himself.

4. You have therefore acted the part of a good parent and pardoned readily, but still upon supplication; before this was made, you would have been not pardoning but sanctioning. When this was done, to defer pardon any longer would have been unprofitable to them and very painful to yourself, for your paternal affection could no longer have held out.

[472

5. Determined by motives of high devotion, Abraham, obeying the oracle of God, offered his son for a whole burnt sacrifice; and, as if destitute of natural affection, drew his sword, that no delay might obscure the brightness of the offering. But when he was commanded to spare his son he willingly sheathed his sword, and he who with this faithful intention was hastening to offer up his only son with still more zealous piety hastened to substitute a ram as a sacrifice.

7. Joseph also, in order to get his younger brother to him, feigned anger against his brethren on the plea, that they had concerted an act of fraud. But when Judah, one of his brethren, fell at his feet, while the others wept, he was moved and overcome by fraternal affection and was no longer able to maintain his assumed severity, but sending away all witnesses he told them they were his brethren, and he that very Joseph whom they had sold. He added that he remembered not his own wrong, making brotherly excuses for the malice of their betrayal of him, and referring what was so blameworthy to higher and deeper causes; forasmuch as by the providence of God it must needs so have been, to the end that by passing over into Egypt he might supply his kindred's need of

provisions from another country, and in the time of dearth assist in supporting his father and his father's sons.

8. And what shall I say of holy David, who at the petition of one woman suffered his mind to be softened, and with paternal compassion received into his house his degenerate son, stained with his brother's blood?

9. So that father in the Gospel, when the younger son had spent all the substance he had received from his father by riotous living, yet when he returned confessing that he had sinned against him, moved by the humility of a single sentence, gave him an affectionate greeting, fell upon his neck, commanded the best robe and a ring and shoes to be brought forth, and having thus honoured him with a kiss, and loaded him with gifts, entertained him with a sumptuous banquet.

10. You have become an imitator of these by that parental affection whereby we approach nearest to the Divine

[473 likeness, and therefore I have exhorted our daughter that, though it be winter, she should undertake the toil of the journey, for that she will pass the winter more commodiously not only in the mansion, but also in the bosom of her father, now that wrath has given place to pardon. Moreover, that you may fully assimilate yourself to the likeness and pattern of the saints, you have accused those who by concocted falsehoods endeavoured to excite your mind against your son.

Farewell; love me, for I also love you.

LETTER LXXXIV. A brief letter of assent and approval.

AMBROSE TO CYNEGIUS.

1. How ingenuous is the modesty with which you have commended yourself, in that you have consulted me concerning a matter which you did not approve, out of deference to your father that you might not injure piety, feeling safe that no reply could be made by me which was unbeseeming holy relationships.

2. But I have willingly taken upon me your burdens, and have reconciled, I hope, the niece to her uncle. Truly I am ignorant with what view he desired that she should become his daughter-in-law, changing his own character of uncle for that of father-in-law. I need not add more, lest this also should be a cause of confusion.

Farewell my son, and love us, for we also love you.

LETTER LXXXV.

S. Ambrose thanks Siricius for sending him letters by the Presbyter Syrus, whose speedy return he promises.

AMBROSE TO SIRICIUS.

1. I am always pleased to receive a letter from you, but when you also send to me some of our fellow servants, as

[474 you have now given our brother and co-presbyter Syrus a letter to me, my joy is doubled. I would however that this pleasure had been more lasting; for as soon as he had arrived he thought he must return, and this diminished my regret and added greatly to my estimation of him.

2. For I love those presbyters and deacons who when they have performed their mission will not allow themselves to remain absent any longer from their duties. For the prophet says, I have not been weary in following thee. And who can be weary in following Jesus, when He Himself says, Come unto Me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Let us therefore never cease from following Jesus, which if we do we shall never fail, for He gives strength to them that follow Him. The more nearly you approach to the Source of power the stronger you will be.

3. Often, while we are thus following Him, the adversaries say to us, Where is the word of the Lord? let it come now. But let us not grow weary in following Him, let us not be turned aside by meeting with this crafty question. It was said to the prophet, when he was thrown into prison, when he was cast into the pit of mire, Where is the word of the Lord? let it come now. But he followed him so much the more, and therefore attained the prize, and received the crowd; for following Jesus he was not weary; for there is no weariness in Jacob, neither shall sorrow be in Israel.

Farewell; love me, for I love one who loves me, and whom I regard as a father.

LETTER LXXXVI.

S. Ambrose speaks briefly in praise of Priscus.

AMBROSE TO SIRICIUS.

1. When Priscus, my friend and co-equal in age, was coming here, you gave him a letter to me, and now that

[475 he is returning I give him the reply which I send both to duty and affection. By this service he has recompensed us both, for he has given me yours, and you mine, and therefore ought to reap the reward of this his service by an increase of favour.

Farewell, my brother; love me, for I love you.

LETTER LXXXVII. A Letter of commendation.

AMBROSE TO BISHOPS SEGATIUS AND DELPHINUS.

1. My son Polybius, on his return from Africa, where he discharged the duties of the proconsulship with credit, passed some days with us, and inspired my heart with singular affection towards him.

2. Then, when he wished to go from hence, he requested me to write to both of you. I promised to do so, and having dictated a letter delivered it to him superscribed with both your names. He asked for another; but I said that I had directed this to both of you according to our custom and usage, forasmuch as your holy minds are gratified not by the number of letters but by the association of names, and that, united as you were in feeling, you would not allow yourselves to be separated in name; farther, that to employ this compendious form of love was a prescribed part of my duty.

3. Why need I say more? He asked for another, and I gave it, but so as neither to deny him what he asked, nor to change my accustomed mode of action. Thus he has a letter to deliver to each of you, for this was all he put forward, his having nothing for one, when he had delivered his letter to the other. And this office of undivided affection I may render to you without any danger of offence, or thought of division; especially since this form of writing is Apostolical, so that either one may write to many as Paul to the Galatians, or two to one, as we read, Paul a

|476 Prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon.

Health to you; love me and pray for me, for I love you.

LETTER LXXXVIII. A friendly letter of commendation of Priscus.

AMBROSE TO ATTICUS.

1. You entrusted my friend Priscus with a letter, which he delivered to me, and I now give mine in turn to Priscus. Continue to love Priscus, as you do, and even more than before; this I advise, because I also value my Priscus highly. For I feel towards him that ancient love, which from our childhood upwards has grown together with our years; but it is long since I saw him before, so that not only in name but from so long an interval of time he came to me as truly Priscus.

Farewell: love me your lover, for I also love you.

LETTER LXXXIX. A brief acknowledgement of letters.

AMBROSE TO ALYPIUS.

1. Antiochus, a man of consular rank, delivered to me your Excellency's letter; nor did I neglect to reply to it; for I sent you a letter by my own messenger, and another occasion having offered, I sent, if I mistake not, a second. But since the offices of friendship are rather, I think, to be added to than balanced; it became my duty, especially on his return who had laid upon me such a debt of obligation by your letters, to make some return in the way of my own correspondence, that so I might stand clear with both of you, and he with you, bound as he was to bring you back what he had brought from you.

Farewell; love me, who love you. |477

LETTER XC.

S. Ambrose dwells on the mutual love of himself and Antonius.

AMBROSE TO ANTONIUS.

1. You never are silent in regard of me, nor ought I ever to complain of being neglected by your silence, knowing that I am not absent from your thoughts. For since you bestow that which is the most precious, how can you withhold that which many others receive, not so much from any habitual affection as from an interchange of civility.

2. And even from my own feelings I can judge in turn of yours, and these lead me to believe that I am never absent from you, nor you from me, so closely are our souls united. Nor do I feel as if we ever required each others' letters, for I daily converse with you as if present in body, turning

towards you my eyes, my affections, and all my regards.

3. In such things as these I delight to cope with you; for, to speak openly with one who is inseparable from my heart, your letters make me ashamed. I beg therefore that you will cease to be always returning me thanks, for my services to you have their highest reward, if I may believe I have not been wanting in my duty towards you.

Farewell; love me, for I also love you.

LETTER XCI. A graceful letter of affection.

AMBROSE TO HIS BROTHER CANDIDIANUS.

1. Great is the beauty of your language, but that of your love is still more apparent, for your letters manifest to me the bright colours of your mind, blessed and most dear brother. The Lord give you His Grace and Blessing,

[478 for in your letters I recognize your good wishes rather than my good deserts. For what merits of mine can equal such commendations as yours?

Love me, my brother, for I love you.

[Footnotes moved to the end and renumbered. Marginal biblical references and running headings omitted] 1. a It seems necessary to the sense here to insert 'quae' before 'obtulerent.' 2. b v. c. here is an abbreviation for vir clarissimus, a title of official rank, see note in p. 101.

3. 1 laetus This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2004. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely.

Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SP Ionic font, free from here.

Early Church Fathers - Additional Texts

Letters - Preface to the online edition

St. Ambrose of Milan, Letters (1881) Preface to the online edition

Everyone knows that there is a selection of letters of St. Ambrose in the Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and Post-Nicene Fathers. I was aware of translations of more, which were in copyright, but while searching catalogues for out of copyright letters, I stumbled across the translation of the complete letters in the old Oxford Movement Library of the Fathers.

Like most people, I had hitherto supposed that all the texts translated in that series had either be retranslated or else incorporated in the Ante-Nicene Fathers series. It now became clear to me that this was not so, and I searched out a list of all the volumes, which can be found elsewhere in this collection as a tool for researchers. The reason why the compilers of the Ante-Nicene Fathers collection did not pick up this volume seems to be that it had only recently appeared. Although prepared in the heyday of the Oxford Movement, the unknown translator had died before it had been published. As the editors grew weary and the project ground to a halt, various texts remained unpublished. These appeared much later in the 19th century; this one almost 40 years later in 1881.

Other translations have since been made. A complete translation, in a different order, appeared in the Fathers of the Church series in 1954. Dr. Mary Whitby has kindly emailed me to let me know that a new translation of book 10 of the letters, together with some additional letters and two political orations, two orations, one on the death of Theodosius I and one on Valentinian II, should appear in 2005 from the >Liverpool University Press Translated Texts for Historians. This should be warmly welcomed, and is undoubtedly much easier to read! The TTH series contains many texts translated into English for the first time, and is undoubtedly one of the most praiseworthy efforts of our times. The Oxford Movement volume was complete, except that letters 5 and 6 concerning false accusations against a holy virgin, Indicia, were not translated. The Latin of these was given at the end, since the topic was rather indecent.

I began by transcribing all the notes and marginal notes; after doing about a third of the volume with great labour, it became clear to me that I would not complete the remainder that way, for lack of time. For these I omitted the very copious biblical references given in the margins in the original. All the footnotes and marginal notes in Latin are included, however.

Roger PEARSE

12th July 2004

Bibliography

Mary Melchior BEYENKA, Saint Ambrose Letters, 1-91, Catholic University of America Press (1954). Reprint 2002, ISBN 0813210917. This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2004. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely.

Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SP Ionic font, free from here.

Early Church Fathers - Additional Texts

Letters - Title page, introduction, contents

St. Ambrose of Milan, Letters (1881) Title page, introduction, contents LIBRARY OF FATHERS OF THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, ANTERIOR TO THE DIVISION OF THE EAST AND WEST TRANSLATED BY MEMBERS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

YET SHALL NOT THY TEACHERS BE REMOVED INTO A CORNER ANY MORE, BUT THINE EYES SHALL SEE THY TEACHERS. Isaiah XXX. 20.

OXFORD:

JAMES PARKER & CO., AND RIVINGTONS, LONDON, OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE. TO THE MEMORY OF THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

WILLIAM LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND, FORMERLY REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, THIS LIBRARY OF ANCIENT BISHOPS, FATHERS, DOCTORS, MARTYRS, CONFESSORS, OF CHRIST'S HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, UNDERTAKEN AMID HIS ENCOURAGEMENT, AND CARRIED ON FOR TWELVE YEARS UNDER HIS SANCTION, UNTIL HIS DEPARTURE HENCE IN PEACE, IS GRATEFULLY AND REVERENTLY

INSCRIBED. THE

LETTERS OF

S. AMBROSE, BISHOP OF MILAN,

TRANSLATED WITH NOTES AND INDICES.

OXFORD, JAMES PARKER AND CO., AND RIVINGTONS, LONDON, OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE.

1881.

PRINTED BY THE DEVONPORT SOCIETY OF THE HOLY TRINITY, HOLY ROOD, OXFORD.
1881 .

NOTICE. THE Translation of S. Ambrose's Epistles was made in the early days of the Library of the Fathers by a friend, now with God, before the check which the Series received through various sorrowful losses. It has now been revised by an accomplished scholar, the Rev. H. Walford, M.A., one of the Masters at Hayleybury.

Over-work has prevented the writing of some introductory remarks.

E. B. P.

CHRIST CHURCH,

Lent, 1881.

CONTENTS.

[Letter of Gratian to AMBROSE.] p. 1 LETTER I. AMBROSE Bishop to the Blessed Emperor and most Christian Prince Gratian. p. 2 LETTER II. AMBROSE to Constantius. p. 5 LETTER III. AMBROSE to Felix. p. 16 LETTER IV. AMBROSE to Felix, health. p. 17 [LETTERS V. and VI. These Letters to Syagrius appear in the original Latin at the end of the Book. pp. 478, 486.] LETTER VII. AMBROSE to Justus, health. p. 20 LETTER VIII. AMBROSE to Justus. p. 27 [The proceedings of the Council of Aquileia against the heretics Palladius and Secundianus.] p. 31

LETTER IX. The Council which is assembled at Aquileia to our most beloved brethren, the Bishops of the Viennese and the first and second Marbonese Provinces in Gaul.

p. 61

LETTER X. The holy Council which is assembled at Aquileia to the most gracious Christian Emperors, and most blessed Princes,

Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius. p. 62

LETTER XI. To the most gracious Emperors and Christian Princes, the most glorious and most blessed

Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius, the Council which is assembled at Aquileia.

p. 67

LETTER XII. To the most gracious and Christian Emperors, the glorious and most blessed Princes,

Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius, the holy Council which is assembled at

Aquileia. p. 70

LETTER XIII. To the most blessed Emperor and most gracious Prince Theodosius, AMBROSE and the other Bishops of Italy.

p. 74

LETTER XIV. To the most blessed Emperor and most gracious Prince Theodosius, AMBROSE and the other Bishops of Italy.

p. 77

LETTER XV. AMBROSE to Anatolius, Numesius, Severus, Philip, Macedonius, Ammianus, Theodosius, Eutropius, Clarus, Eusebius, and Timotheus, Priests of the Lord, and to all the beloved Clergy and people of Thessalonica, health. p. 80 LETTER XVI. Bishop AMBROSE to his brother Anysius. p. 85 LETTER XVII. Bishop AMBROSE to the most blessed Prince and Christian Emperor Valentinian. p. 87 [The Memorial of Symmachus, prefect of the city.] p. 94 LETTER XVIII. Bishop AMBROSE to the most blessed Prince and gracious Emperor, his Majesty Valentinian. p. 100 LETTER XIX. AMBROSE to Vigilius. p. 114 LETTER XX. To Marcellina. p. 127

LETTER XXI. To the most clement Emperor, his blessed Majesty Valentinian, AMBROSE, Bishop, sends greeting. p. 137 SERMON. Against Auxentius on the giving up the Basilicas. p. 142

LETTER XXII. To the lady his Sister whom he loves more than his life and eyes AMBROSE her brother sends greeting.

p. 157

LETTER XXIII. To the lords, his brethren most beloved, the Bishops throughout the Province of Aemilia, AMBROSE, Bishop. p.165 LETTER XXIV. AMBROSE to the Emperor Valentinian. p. 176 LETTER XXV. AMBROSE to Studius. p. 182 LETTER XXVI. AMBROSE to Irenaeus. [Studius?] p. 181 LETTER XXVII. AMBROSE to Irenaeus, greeting. p. 190 LETTER XXVIII. AMBROSE to Irenaeus, greeting, p. 196 LETTER XXIX. AMBROSE to Irenaeus, greeting. p. 199 LETTER XXX. AMBROSE to Irenaeus, greeting. p. 207 LETTER XXXI. AMBROSE to Irenaeus, greeting. p. 213 LETTER XXXII. AMBROSE to Irenaeus, greeting. p. 217 LETTER XXXIII. AMBROSE to Irenaeus, greeting. p. 220 LETTER XXXIV. AMBROSE to Horontianus, greeting. p. 225 LETTER XXXV. AMBROSE to Horontianus. p. 227 LETTER XXXVI. AMBROSE to Horontianus. p. 233 LETTER XXXVII. AMBROSE to Simplician, greeting. p. 235 [Calanus to Alexander.] p. 246 LETTER XXXVIII. AMBROSE to Simplician, greeting. p. 250 LETTER XXXIX. AMBROSE to Faustinus, greeting. p. 254

LETTER XL. To the most gracious Prince and blessed Emperor his Majesty Theodosius, Bishop AMBROSE sends greeting. p. 257 LETTER XLI. The Brother to his Sister. p. 269 [The Letter of Pope Siricius to the Church of Milan.] p. 280

LETTER XLII. To their lord, their dearly beloved brother, Pope Syricius, AMBROSE, Sabinus, Bassianus, and the rest send greeting. p. 282 LETTER XLIII. AMBROSE to Horontianus. p. 287 LETTER XLIV. AMBROSE to Horontianus. p. 295 LETTER XLV. AMBROSE to Sabinus. p. 302 LETTER XLVI. AMBROSE to Sabinus. p. 306 LETTER XLVII. AMBROSE to Sabinus. p. 312 LETTER XLVIII. AMBROSE to Sabinus. p. 314 LETTER XLIX. AMBROSE to Sabinus. p. 317 LETTER L. AMBROSE to Chromatius. p. 319 LETTER LI. AMBROSE, Bishop, to his Majesty the Emperor Theodosius. p. 324 LETTER LII. AMBROSE to Titianus. p. 330 LETTER LIII. AMBROSE to the Emperor Theodosius. p. 331 LETTER LIV. AMBROSE to Eusebius. p. 333 LETTER LV. AMBROSE to Eusebius. p. 334 LETTER LVI. AMBROSE to Theophilus. p. 336 [Letter on the case of Bonosus.] p. 339 LETTER LVII. To the most gracious Emperor Eugenius, AMBROSE, Bishop, sends greeting. p. 341 LETTER LVIII. AMBROSE to Sabinus, Bishop. p. 345 LETTER LIX. AMBROSE to Severus, Bishop. p. 350 LETTER LX. AMBROSE to Paternus. p. 351 LETTER LXI. AMBROSE to the Emperor Theodosius. p. 354 LETTER LXII. AMBROSE to the Emperor Theodosius. p. 356

LETTER LXIII. AMBROSE, servant of Christ, called to be Bishop, to the Church of Vercellae, and to them who called on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, grace unto you from God the Father and His Only-begotten Son he fulfilled in the Holy Spirit. p. 357 LETTER LXIV. AMBROSE to Irenaeus, greeting, p. 395 LETTER LXV. AMBROSE to Simplicianus, greeting. p. 398 LETTER LXVI. AMBROSE to Romulus. p. 401 LETTER LXVII. AMBROSE to Simplicianus, greeting. p. 404 LETTER LXVIII. AMBROSE to Romulus. p. 409 LETTER LXIX. AMBROSE to Irenaeus, greeting, p. 410 LETTER LXX. AMBROSE to Horontianus. p. 412 LETTER LXXI. AMBROSE to

Horontianus. p. 420 LETTER LXXII. AMBROSE to Constantius. p. 423 LETTER LXXIII. AMBROSE to Irenaeus. p. 433 LETTER LXXIV. AMBROSE to Irenaeus. p. 437 LETTER LXXV. AMBROSE to Clementianus. p. 441 LETTER LXXVI. AMBROSE to Irenaeus, greeting. p. 444 LETTER LXXVII. AMBROSE to Horontianus. p. 449 LETTER LXXVIII. AMBROSE to Horontianus. p. 455 LETTER LXXIX. AMBROSE to Bellicius, greeting. p. 458 LETTER LXXX. AMBROSE to Bellicius, greeting. p. 459 LETTER LXXXI. AMBROSE to certain of the Clergy. p. 462 LETTER LXXXII. AMBROSE to Marcellus. p. 465 LETTER LXXXIII. AMBROSE to Sisinnius. p. 470 LETTER LXXXIV. AMBROSE to Cynegius. p. 473 LETTER LXXXV. AMBROSE to Siricius. ib.

LETTER LXXXVI. AMBROSE to Siricius. p. 474 LETTER LXXXVII. AMBROSE to Bishops Sigatinus and Dolphin us. p. 475 LETTER LXXXVIII. AMBROSE to Allicas. p. 476 LETTER LXXXIX. AMBROSE to Alypius. ib.

LETTER XC. AMBROSE to Antonius. p. 477 LETTER XCI. AMBROSE to his brother Candidianus. ib.

ERRATA. p. 20. heading for 'skekel' read 'shekel.' 152. l. 15. for 'Arianism' read Ariminum.' 183. l. 8. for ' unrestored' read ' unstained.' 217. At the end of § 12 add the following' sentence. 'A good mother of souls in that Jerusalem which is in heaven.' ib. l. 18. for ' life' read 'wife.' 219. note, for ' a' read 'f' and for ' cic.' read 'Cic.' 258. marg. for 'distonxisti' read 'distinxisti.' 285. last ref. for ' 1 Col.' read 'Col.' 298. l. 29 after ' partly full' add 'fulness in the Gospel, half-fulness in the Law,' and for 'thus' read 'as.' 368. l. 10. for 'sinless' read 'senseless.' ib. marg. for 'Ezra viii,' read ' Ezra viii. 2.' pp. 370, 374 are printed 270, 274.

429. mag., for ' S. John i. 86,' read 'S. John i. 29.' This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, 2003. All material on this page is in the public domain - copy freely.

Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SP Ionic font, free from here.

Early Church Fathers - Additional Texts

ON THE DUTIES OF THE CLERGY - Book 1

Book I.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Chapter XIII.

Chapter XIV.

Chapter XV.

Chapter XVI.

Chapter XVII.

Chapter XVIII.

Chapter XLX.

Chapter XX.

Chapter XXI.

Chapter XXII.

Chapter XXIII.

Chapter XXIV.

Chapter XXV.

Chapter XXVI.

Chapter XXVII.

Chapter XXVIII.

Chapter XXIX.

Chapter XXX.

Chapter XXXI.

Chapter XXXII.

Chapter XXXIII.

Chapter XXXIV.

Chapter XXXV.

Chapter XXXVI.

Chapter XXXVII.

Chapter XXXVIII.

Chapter XXXIX.

Chapter XL.

Chapter XLI.

Chapter XLII.

Chapter XLIII.

Chapter XLIV.

Chapter XLV.

Chapter XLVI.

Chapter XLVII.

Chapter XLVIII.

Chapter XLIX.

Chapter L.

Book I.

Chapter I. A Bishop's special office is to teach; St. Ambrose himself, however, has to learn in order that he may teach; or rather has to teach what he has not learnt; at any rate learning and teaching with himself must go on together.

1. I Think I shall not seem to be taking too much on myself, if, in the midst of my children, I yield to my desire to teach, seeing that the master of humility himself has said: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord."¹ Wherein one may observe both the humility and the grace of his reverence for God. For in saying "the fear of the Lord," which seems to be common to all, he has described the chief mark of reverence for God. As, however, fear itself is the beginning of wisdom and the source of blessedness-for they that fear the Lord are blessed²-he has plainly marked himself out as the teacher for instruction in wisdom, and the guide to the attainment of blessedness.

2. We therefore, being anxious to imitate his reverence for God, and not without justification in dispensing grace, deliver to you as to children those things which the Spirit of Wisdom has imparted to him, and which have been made clear to us through him, and learnt by sight and by example. For we can no longer now escape from the duty of teaching which the needs of the priesthood have laid upon us, though we tried to avoid it:³ "For God gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."⁴

3. I do not therefore claim for myself the glory of the apostles (for who can do this save those whom the Son of God Himself has chosen?); nor the grace of the prophets, nor the virtue of the evangelists, nor the cautious care of the pastors. I only desire to attain to that care and diligence in the sacred writings, which the Apostle has placed last amongst the duties of the saints;⁵ and this very thing I desire, so that, in the endeavour to teach, I may be able to learn. For one is the true Master, Who alone has not learnt, what He taught all; but men learn before they teach, and receive from Him what they may hand on to others.

4. But not even this was the case with me. For I was carried off from the judgment seat, and the garb [infulis] of office, to enter on the priesthood,⁶ and began to teach you, what I myself had not yet learnt. So it happened that I began to teach before I began to learn. Therefore I must learn and teach at the same time, since I had no leisure to learn before.⁷

Chapter II.

Manifold dangers are incurred by speaking; the remedy for which Scripture shows to consist in silence.

5. Now what ought we to learn before everything else, but to be silent, that we may be able to speak? lest my voice should condemn me, before that of another acquit me; for it is written: "By thy words thou shalt be condemned."⁸ What need is there, then, that thou shouldest hasten to undergo the danger of condemnation by speaking, when thou canst be more safe by keeping silent? How many have I seen to fall into sin by speaking, but scarcely one by keeping silent; and so it is more difficult to know how to keep silent than how to speak. I know that most persons speak because they do not know how to keep silent. It is seldom that any one is silent even when speaking profits him nothing. He is wise, then, who knows how to keep silent. Lastly, the Wisdom of God said: "The Lord hath given to me the tongue of learning, that I should know when it is good to speak."⁹ Justly, then, is he wise who has received of the Lord to know when he ought to speak. Wherefore the Scripture says well: "A wise man will keep silence until there is opportunity."¹⁰

6. Therefore the saints of the Lord loved to keep silence, because they knew that a man's voice is often the utterance of sin, and a man's speech is the beginning of human error. Lastly, the Saint of

the Lord said: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not in my tongue."¹¹ For he knew and had read that it was a mark of the divine protection for a man to be hid from the scourge of his own tongue,¹² and the witness of his own conscience. We are chastised by the silent reproaches of our thoughts, and by the judgment of conscience. We are chastised also by the lash of our own voice, when we say things whereby our soul is mortally injured, and our mind is sorely wounded. But who is there that has his heart clean from the impurities of sin, and does not offend in his tongue? And so, as he saw there was no one who could keep his mouth free from evil speaking, he laid upon himself the law of innocency by a rule of silence, with a view to avoiding by silence that fault which he could with difficulty escape in speaking.

7. Let us hearken, then, to the master of precaution: "I said, I will take heed to my ways;" that is, "I said to myself: in the silent biddings of my thoughts, I have enjoined upon myself, that I should take heed to my ways." Some ways there are which we ought to follow; others as to which we ought to take heed. We must follow the ways of the Lord, and take heed to our own ways, lest they lead us into sin. One can take heed if one is not hasty in speaking. The law says: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God."¹³ It said not: "Speak," but "Hear." Eve fell because she said to the man what she had not heard from the Lord her God. The first word from God says to thee: Hear! If thou hearest, take heed to thy ways; and if thou hast fallen, quickly amend thy way. For: "Wherein does a young man amend his way; except in taking heed to the word of the Lord?"¹⁴ Be silent therefore first of all, and hearken, that thou fail not in thy tongue.

8. It is a great evil that a man should be condemned by his own mouth. Truly, if each one shall give account for an idle word,¹⁵ how much more for words of impurity and shame? For words uttered hastily are far worse than idle words. If, therefore, an account is demanded for an idle word, how much more will punishment be exacted for impious language?

Chapter III.

Silence should not remain unbroken, nor should it arise from idleness. How heart and mouth must be guarded against inordinate affections.

9. What then? Ought we to be dumb? Certainly not. For: "there is a time to keep silence and a time to speak."¹⁶ If, then, we are to give account for an idle word, let us take care that we do not have to give it also for an idle silence. For there is also an active silence, such as Susanna's was, who did more by keeping silence than if she had spoken. For in keeping silence before men she spoke to God, and found no greater proof of her chastity than silence. Her conscience spoke where no word was heard, and she sought no judgment for herself at the hands of men, for she had the witness of the Lord. She therefore desired to be acquitted by Him, Who she knew could not be deceived in any way.¹⁷ Yea, the Lord Himself in the Gospel worked out in silence the salvation of men.¹⁸ David rightly therefore enjoined on himself not constant silence, but watchfulness.

10. Let us then guard our hearts, let us guard our mouths. Both have been written about. In this place we are bidden to take heed to our mouth; in another place thou art told: "Keep thy heart with all diligence."¹⁹ If David took heed, wilt thou not take heed? If Isaiah had unclean lips-who said: "Woe is me, for I am undone, for I am a man, and have unclean lips"²⁰ -if a prophet of the Lord had unclean lips, how shall we have them clean?

11. But for whom was it written, unless it was for each one of us: "Hedge thy possession about with thorns, and bind up thy silver and gold, and make a door and a bar for thy mouth, and a yoke and a balance for thy words"?²¹ Thy possession is thy mind, thy gold thy heart, thy silver thy speech: "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in the fire."²² A good mind is also a good possession. And, further, a pure inner life is a valuable possession. Hedge in, then, this possession of thine, enclose it with thought, guard it with thorns, that is, with pious care, lest the fierce passions of the flesh should rush upon it and lead it captive, lest strong emotions should assault it, and, overstepping their bounds, carry off its vintage. Guard thy inner self. Do not neglect or contemn it as though it were worthless, for it is a valuable possession; truly valuable indeed, for its fruit is not perishable and only for a time, but is lasting and of use for eternal salvation. Cultivate, therefore, thy possession, and let it be thy tilling ground.

12. Bind up thy words that they run not riot, and grow wanton, and gather up sins for themselves in too much talking. Let them be rather confined, and held back within their own banks. An overflowing river quickly gathers mud. Bind up also thy meaning; let it not be left slack and unchecked, lest it be said of thee: "There is no healing balsam, nor oil, nor bandage to apply."²³ Sobriety of mind has its reins, whereby it is directed and guided.

13. Let there be a door to thy mouth, that it may be shut when need arises, and let it be carefully barred, that none may rouse thy voice to anger, and thou pay back abuse with abuse. Thou hast heard it read to-day: "Be ye angry and sin not."²⁴ Therefore although we are angry (this arising from the motions of our nature, not of our will), let us not utter with our mouth one evil word, lest we fall into sin; but let there be a yoke and a balance to thy words, that is, humility and moderation, that thy tongue may be subject to thy mind. Let it be held in check with a tight rein; let it have its own means of restraint, whereby it can be recalled to moderation; let it utter words tried by the scales of justice, that there may be seriousness in our meaning, weight in our speech, and due measure in our words.

Chapter IV. The same care must be taken that our speech proceed not from evil passions, but from good motives; for here it is that the devil is especially on the watch to catch us.

14. If any one takes heed to this, he will be mild, gentle, modest. For in guarding his mouth, and restraining his tongue, and in not speaking before examining, pondering, and weighing his words-as to whether this should be said, that should be answered, or whether it be a suitable time for this remark-he certainly is practising modesty, gentleness, patience. So he will not burst out into speech through displeasure or anger, nor give sign of any passion in his words, nor proclaim that the flames of lust are burning in his language, or that the incentives of wrath are present in what he says. Let him act thus for fear that his words, which ought to grace his inner life, should at the last plainly show and prove that there is some vice in his morals.

15. For then especially does the enemy lay his plans, when he sees passions engendered in us; then he supplies tinder; then he lays snares. Wherefore the prophet says not without cause, as we heard read to-day: "Surely He hath delivered me from the snare of the hunter and from the hard word."²⁵ Symmachus²⁶ said this means "the word of provocation;" others "the word that brings disquiet." The snare of the enemy is our speech-but that itself is also just as much an enemy to us. Too often we say something that our foe takes hold of, and whereby he wounds us as though by our own sword. How far better it is to perish by the sword of others than by our own!

16. Accordingly the enemy tests our arms and clashes together his weapons. If he sees that I am disturbed, he implants the points of his darts, so as to raise a crop of quarrels. If I utter an unseemly word, he sets his snare. Then he puts before me the opportunity for revenge as a bait, so that in desiring to be revenged, I may put myself in the snare, and draw the death-knot tight for myself. If any one feels this enemy is near, he ought to give greater heed to his mouth, lest he make room for the enemy; but not many see him.

Chapter V.

We must guard also against a visible enemy when he incites us by silence; by the help of which alone we can escape from those greater than ourselves, and maintain that humility which we must display towards all.

17. But we must also guard against him who can be seen, and who provokes us, and spurs us on, and exasperates us, and supplies what will excite us to licentiousness or lust. If, then, any one reviles us, irritates, stirs us up to violence, tries to make us quarrel; let us keep silence, let us not be ashamed to become dumb. For he who irritates us and does us an injury is committing sin, and wishes us to become like himself.

18. Certainly if thou art silent, and hidest thy feelings, he is wont to say: "Why are you silent? Speak if you dare; but you dare not, you are dumb, I have made you speechless." If thou art silent, he is the more excited. He thinks himself beaten, laughed at, little thought of, and ridiculed. If thou answerest, he thinks he has become the victor, because he has found one like himself. For if thou art silent, men will say: "That man has been abusive, but this one held him in contempt." If thou return the abuse, they will say: "Both have been abusive." Both will be condemned, neither will be acquitted. Therefore it is his object to irritate, so that I may speak and act as he does. But it is the duty of a just man to hide his feelings and say nothing, to preserve the fruit of a good conscience, to trust himself rather to the judgment of good men than to the insolence of a calumniator, and to be satisfied with the stability of his own character. For that is: "To keep silence even from good words;"²⁷ since one who has a good conscience ought not to be troubled by false words, nor ought he to make more of another's abuse than of the witness of his own heart.

19. So, then, let a man guard also his humility. If, however, he is unwilling to appear too humble, he thinks as follows, and says within himself: "Am I to allow this man to despise me, and say such things to my face against me, as though I could not open my mouth before him? Why should I not also say something whereby I can grieve him? Am I to let him do me wrong, as though I were not a man, and as though I could not avenge myself? Is he to bring charges against me as though I could not bring together worse ones against him?"

20. Whoever speaks like this is not gentle and humble, nor is he without temptation. The tempter stirs him up, and himself puts such thoughts in his heart. Often and often, too, the evil spirit employs another person, and gets him to say such things to him; but do thou set thy foot firm on the rock. Although a slave should abuse, let the just man be silent, and if a weak man utter insults, let him be silent, and if a poor man should make accusations, let him not answer. These are the weapons of the just man, so that he may conquer by giving way, as those skilled in throwing the javelin are wont to conquer by giving way, and in flight to wound their pursuers with severer blows.

Chapter VI. In this matter we must imitate David's silence and humility, so as not even to seem deserving of harm.

21. What need is there to be troubled when we hear abuse? Why do we not imitate him who says: "I was dumb and humbled myself, and kept silence even from good words"?²⁸ Or did David only say this, and not act up to it? No, he also acted up to it. For when Shimei the son of Gera reviled him, David was silent; and although he was surrounded with armed men he did not return the abuse, nor sought revenge: nay, even when the son of Zeruiah spoke to him, because he wished to take vengeance on him, David did not permit it.²⁹ He went on as though dumb, and humbled; he went on in silence; nor was he disturbed, although called a bloody man, for he was conscious of his own gentleness. He therefore was not disturbed by insults, for he had full knowledge of his own good works.

22. He, then, who is quickly roused by wrong makes himself seem deserving of insult, even whilst he wishes to be shown not to deserve it. He who despises wrongs is better off than he who grieves over them. For he who despises them looks down on them, as though he feels them not; but he who grieves over them is tormented, just as though he actually felt them.

Chapter VII.

How admirably Ps. xxxix. [xxxviii.] takes the place of an introduction. Incited thereto by this psalm the saint determines to write on duties. He does this with more reason even than Cicero, who wrote on this subject to his son. How, further, this is so.

23. Not without thought did I make use of the beginning of this psalm, in writing to you, my children. For this psalm which the Prophet David gave to Jeduthun to sing,³⁰ I urge you to regard, being delighted myself with its depth of meaning and the excellency of its maxims. For we have learnt in those words we have just shortly touched upon, that both patience in keeping silence and the duty of awaiting a fit time for speaking are taught in this psalm, as well as contempt of riches in the following verses, which things are the chief groundwork of virtues. Whilst, therefore, meditating on this psalm, it has come to my mind to write "on the Duties."

24. Although some philosophers have written on this subject,-Panaetius,³¹ for instance, and his son amongst the Greek, Cicero amongst the Latin, writers-I did not think it foreign to my office to write also myself. And as Cicero wrote for the instruction of his son,³² so I, too, write to teach you, my children. For I love you, whom I have begotten in the Gospel, no less than if you were my own true sons. For nature does not make us love more ardently than grace. We certainly ought to love those who we think will be with us for evermore than those who will be with us in this world only. These often are born unworthy of their race, so as to bring disgrace on their father; but you we chose beforehand, to love. They are loved naturally, of necessity, which is not a sufficiently suitable and constant teacher to implant a lasting love. But ye are loved on the ground of our deliberate choice, whereby a great feeling of affection is combined with the strength of our love: thus one tests what one loves and loves what one has chosen.

Chapter VIII. The word "Duty" has been often used both by philosophers and in the holy Scriptures; from whence it is derived.

25. Since, therefore, the person concerned is one fit to write on the Duties, let us see whether the subject itself stands on the same ground, and whether this word is suitable only to the schools of the philosophers, or is also to be found in the sacred Scriptures. Beautifully has the Holy Spirit, as it happens, brought before us a passage in reading the Gospel to-day, as though He would urge us to write; whereby we are confirmed in our view, that the word officium, "duty," may also be used with us. For when Zacharias the priest was struck dumb in the temple, and could not speak, it is said: "And it came to pass that as soon as the days of his duty [officii] were accomplished, he departed to his own house."³³ We read, therefore, that the word officium, "duty," can be used by us.

26.³⁴ And this is not inconsistent with reason, since we consider that the word officium (duty) is derived from efficere (to effect), and is formed with the change of one letter for the sake of euphony; or at any rate that you should do those things which injure [officiant] no one, but benefit all.

Chapter IX. A duty is to be chosen from what is virtuous, and from what is useful, and also from the comparison of the two, one with the other; but nothing is recognized by Christians as virtuous or useful which is not helpful to the future life. This treatise on duty, therefore, will not be superfluous.

27. The philosophers considered that duties³⁵ were derived from what is virtuous and what is useful, and that from these two one should choose the better. Then, they say, it may happen that two virtuous or two useful things will clash together, and the question is, which is the more virtuous, and which the more useful? First, therefore, "duty" is divided into three sections: what is virtuous, what is useful, and what is the better of two. Then, again, these three are divided into five classes; that is, two that are virtuous, two that are useful, and, lastly, the right judgment as to the choice between them. The first they say has to do with the moral dignity and integrity of life; the second with the conveniences of life, with wealth, resources, opportunities; whilst a right judgment must underlie the choice of any of them. This is what the philosophers say.³⁶

28. But we measure nothing at all but that which is fitting and virtuous, and that by the rule of things future rather than of things present; and we state nothing to be useful but what will help us to the blessing of eternal life; certainly not that which will help us enjoy merely the present time. Nor do we recognize any advantages in opportunities and in the wealth of earthly goods, but consider them as disadvantages if not put aside, and to be looked on as a burden, when we have them, rather than as a loss when expended.

29. This work of ours, therefore, is not superfluous, seeing that we and they regard duty in quite different ways. They reckon the advantages of this life among the good things, we reckon them among the evil things; for he who receives good things here, as the rich man in the parable, is tormented there; and Lazarus, who endured evil things here, there found comfort.³⁷ Lastly, those who do not read their writings may read ours if they will-if, that is, they do not require great adornment of language or a skilfully-treated subject, but are satisfied with the simple charm of the subject itself.

Chapter X.

What is seemly is often found in the sacred writings long before it appears in the books of the philosophers. Pythagoras borrowed the law of his silence from David. David's rule, however, is the best, for our first duty is to have due measure in speaking.

30. We are instructed and taught that "what is seemly"³⁸ is put in our Scriptures in the first place. (In Greek it is called prepon.) For we read: "A Hymn befits Thee, O God, in Sion." In Greek this is: *Soi prepei umnoj o Qeoj en Siwn*.³⁹ And the Apostle says: "Speak the things which become sound doctrine."⁴⁰ And elsewhere: "For it befitted Him through Whom are all things and for Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."⁴¹

31. Was Panaetius or Aristotle, who also wrote on duty," earlier than David? Why, Pythagoras himself, who lived before the time of Socrates, followed the prophet David's steps and gave his disciples a law of silence. He went so far as to restrain his disciples from the use of speech for five years. David, on the other hand, gave his law, not with a view to impair the gift of nature, but to teach us to take heed to the words we utter. Pythagoras again made his rule, that he might teach men to speak by not speaking. But David made his, so that by speaking we might learn the more how to speak. How can there be instruction without exercise, or advance without practice?

32. A man wishing to undergo a warlike training daily exercises himself with his weapons. As though ready for action he rehearses his part in the fight and stands forth just as if the enemy were in position before him. Or, with a view to acquiring skill and strength in throwing the javelin, he either puts his own arms to the proof, or avoids the blows of his foes, and escapes them by his watchful attention. The man that desires to navigate a ship on the sea, or to row, tries first on a river. They who wish to acquire an agreeable style of singing and a beautiful voice begin by bringing out their voice gradually by singing. And they who seek to win the crown of victory by strength of body and in a regular wrestling match, harden their limbs by daily practice in the wrestling school, foster their endurance, and accustom themselves to hard work.

33. Nature herself teaches us this in the case of infants. For they first exercise themselves in the sounds of speech and so learn to speak. Thus these sounds of speech are a kind of practice, and a school for the voice. Let those then who want to learn to take heed in speaking not refuse what is according to nature, but let them use all watchful care; just as those who are on a watch-tower keep on the alert by watching, and not by going to sleep. For everything is made more perfect and strong by exercises proper and suitable to itself.

34. David, therefore, was not always silent, but only for a time; not perpetually nor to all did he refuse to speak; but he used not to answer the enemy that provoked him, the sinner that exasperated him. As he says elsewhere: "As though he were deaf he heard not them that speak vanity and imagine deceit: and as though he were dumb he opened not his mouth to them."⁴² Again, in another place, it is said: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like to him."⁴³

35. The first duty then is to have due measure in our speech. In this way a sacrifice of praise is offered up to God; thus a godly fear is shown when the sacred Scriptures are read; thus parents are honoured. I know well that many speak because they know not how to keep silence. But it is not often any one is silent when speaking does not profit him. A wise man, intending to speak, first

carefully considers what he is to say, and to whom he is to say it; also where and at what time. There is therefore such a thing as due measure in keeping silence and also in speaking; there is also such a thing as a due measure in what we do. It is a glorious thing to maintain the right standard of duty.

Chapter XI.

It is proved by the witness of Scripture that all duty is either "ordinary" or "perfect." To which is added a word in praise of mercy, and an exhortation to practise it.

36. Every duty is either "ordinary" or "perfect,"⁴⁴ a fact which we can also confirm by the authority of the Scriptures. For we read in the Gospel that the Lord said: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith: Which? Jesus said to him: Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."⁴⁵ These are ordinary duties, to which something is wanting.

37. Upon this the young man says to Him: "All these things have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him: If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all thy goods and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow Me."⁴⁶ And earlier the same is written, where the Lord says that we must love our enemies, and pray for those that falsely accuse and persecute us, and bless those that curse us.⁴⁷ This we are bound to do, if we would be perfect as our Father Who is in heaven; Who bids the sun to shed his rays over the evil and the good, and makes the lands of the whole universe fertile with rain and dew without any distinction.⁴⁸ This, then, is a perfect duty (the Greeks call it *katorqwna*), whereby all things are put right which could have any failings in them.

38. Mercy, also, is a good thing, for it makes men perfect, in that it imitates the perfect Father. Nothing graces the Christian soul so much as mercy; mercy as shown chiefly towards the poor, that thou mayest treat them as sharers in common with thee in the produce of nature, which brings forth the fruits of the earth for use to all. Thus thou mayest freely give to a poor man what thou hast, and in this way help him who is thy brother and companion. Thou bestowest silver; he receives life. Thou givest money; he considers it his fortune. Thy coin makes up all his property.

39. Further, he bestows more on thee than thou on him, since he is thy debtor in regard to thy salvation. If thou clothe the naked, thou clothest thyself with righteousness; if thou bring the stranger under thy roof, if thou support the needy, he procures for thee the friendship of the saints and eternal habitations. That is no small recompense. Thou sowest earthly things and receivest heavenly. Dost thou wonder at the judgment of God in the case of holy Job? Wonder rather at his virtue, in that he could say: "I was an eye to the blind, and a foot to the lame. I was a father to the poor. Their shoulders were made warm with the skins of my lambs. The stranger dwelt not at my gates, but my door was open to every one that came."⁴⁹ Clearly blessed is he from whose house a poor man has never gone with empty hand. Nor again is any one more blessed than he who is sensible of the needs of the poor, and the hardships of the weak and helpless. In the day of judgment he will receive salvation from the Lord, Whom he will have as his debtor for the mercy he has shown.

Chapter XII. To prevent any one from being checked in the exercise of mercy, he shows that God cares for human actions; and proves on the evidence of Job that all wicked men are unhappy in the very abundance of their wealth.

40. But many are kept back from the duty of showing active mercy, because they suppose that God does not care about the actions of men, or that He does not know what we do in secret, and what our conscience has in view. Some again think that His judgment in no wise seems to be just; for they see that sinners have abundance of riches, that they enjoy honours, health, and children; while, on the other hand, the just live in poverty and unhonoured, they are without children, sickly in body, and often in grief.

41. That is no small point. For those three royal friends of Job declared him to be a sinner, because they saw that he, after being rich, became poor; that after having many children, he had lost them all, and that he was now covered with sores and was full of weals, and was a mass of wounds from head to foot. But holy Job made this declaration to them: "If I suffer thus because of my sins, why do the wicked live? They grow old also in riches, their seed is according to their pleasure, their children are before their eyes, their houses are prosperous; but they have no fear; there is no scourge from the Lord on them."⁵⁰

42. A faint-hearted man, seeing this, is disturbed in mind, and turns his attention away from it. Holy Job, when about to speak in the words of such a one, began thus, saying: "Bear with me, I also will speak; then laugh at me. For if I am found fault with, I am found fault with as a man. Bear, therefore, the burden of my words."⁵¹ For I am going to say (he means) what I do not approve; but I shall utter wrong words to refute you. Or, to translate it in another way: "How now? Am I found fault with by a man?" That is: a man cannot find fault with me because I have sinned, although I deserve to be found fault with; for ye do not find fault with me on the ground of an open sin, but estimate what I deserve for my offences by the extent of my misfortunes. Thus the faint-hearted man, seeing that the wicked succeed and prosper, whilst he himself is crushed by misfortune, says to the Lord: "Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."⁵² What good is it that we serve Him, or what use to hasten to Him? In the hands of the wicked are all good things, but He sees not their works."

43. Plato has been greatly praised, because in his book "on the State,"⁵³ he has made the person who undertook the part of objector against justice to ask pardon for his words, of which he himself did not approve; and to say that that character was only assumed for the sake of finding out the truth and to investigate the question at issue. And Cicero so far approved of this, that he also, in his book which he wrote "on the Commonwealth," thought something must be said against that idea.

44. How many years before these did Job live! He was the first to discover this, and to consider what excuses had to be made for this, not for the sake of decking out his eloquence, but for the sake of finding out the truth. At once he made the matter plain, stating that the lamp of the wicked is put out, that their destruction will come;⁵⁴ that God, the teacher of wisdom and instruction, is not deceived, but is a judge of the truth. Therefore the blessedness of individuals must not be estimated at the value of their known wealth, but according to the voice of their conscience within them. For this, as a true and uncorrupted judge of punishments and rewards, decides between the deserts of the innocent and the guilty. The innocent man dies in the strength of his own simplicity,

in the full possession of his own will; having a soul filled as it were with marrow.⁵⁵ But the sinner, though he has abundance in life, and lives in the midst of luxury, and is redolent with sweet scents, ends his life in the bitterness of his soul, and brings his last day to a close, taking with him none of those good things which he once enjoyed-carrying away nothing with him but the price of his own wickedness.⁵⁶

45. In thinking of this, deny if thou canst that a recompense is paid by divine judgment. The former feels happy in his heart, the latter wretched; that man on his own verdict is guiltless, this one a criminal; that man again is happy in leaving the world, this man grieves over it. Who can be pronounced guiltless that is not innocent in the sight of his own conscience? "Tell me," he says, "where is the covering of his tabernacle; his token will not be found."⁵⁷ The life of the criminal is as a dream. He has opened his eyes. His repose has departed, his enjoyment has fled. Nay, that very repose of the wicked, which even while they live is only seeming, is now in hell, for alive they go down into hell.

46. Thou seest the enjoyments of the sinner; but question his conscience. Will he not be more foul than any sepulchre? Thou beholdest his joy, thou admirest the bodily health of his children, and the amount of his wealth; but look within at the sores and wounds of his soul, the sadness of his heart. And what shall I say of his wealth, when thou readest: "For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth"?⁵⁸ When thou knowest, that though he seems to thee to be rich, to himself he is poor, and in his own person refutes thy judgment? What also shall I say of the number of his children and of his freedom from pain-when he is full of grief and decides that he will have no heir, and does not wish that those who copy his ways should succeed him? For the sinner really leaves no heir. Thus the wicked man is a punishment to himself, but the upright man is a grace to himself-and to either, whether good or bad, the reward of his deeds is paid in his own person.

Chapter XIII. The ideas of those philosophers are refuted who deny to God the care of the whole world, or of any of its parts.

47. But let us return to our point, lest we seem to have lost sight of the break we made in answering the ideas of those who, seeing some wicked men, rich, joyous, full of honours, and powerful, whilst many upright men are in want and are weak,-suppose therefore that God either cares nothing about us (which is what the Epicureans say), or that He is ignorant of men's actions as the wicked say-or that, if He knows all things, He is an unjust judge in allowing the good to be in want and the wicked to have abundance. But it did not seem out of place to make a digression to meet an idea of this kind and to contrast it with the feelings of those very persons whom they consider happy-for they think themselves wretched. I suppose they would believe themselves more readily than us.

48. After this digression I consider it an easy matter to refute the rest-above all the declaration of those who think that God has no care whatever for the world. For instance, Aristotle declares that His providence extends only to the moon. But what workman is there who gives no care to his work? Who would forsake and abandon what he believes himself to have produced? If it is derogatory to rule, is it not more so to have created? Though there is no wrong involved in not creating anything, it is surely the height of cruelty not to care for what one has created.

49. But if some deny God to be the Creator, and so count themselves amongst the beasts and irrational creatures, what shall we say of those who condemn themselves to such indignity? They themselves declare that God pervades all things, that all depend upon His power, that His might and majesty penetrate all the elements, -lands, heaven, and seas; yet they think it derogatory to Him to enter into man's spirit, which is the noblest thing He has given us, and to be there with the full knowledge of the divine Majesty.

50. But philosophers who are held to be reasonable laugh at the teacher⁵⁹ of these ideas as besotted and licentious. But what shall I say of Aristotle's idea? He thinks that God is satisfied with His own narrow bounds, and lives within the prescribed limits of His kingdom. This, however, is also what the poets' tales tell us. For they relate that the world is divided between three gods, so that it has fallen to the lot of one to restrain and rule heaven, to another the sea, and to a third the lower regions. They have also to take care not to stir up war one with the other by allowing thoughts and cares about the belongings of others to take hold of them. In the same way, Aristotle also declares that God has no care for the earth, as He has none for the sea or the lower regions. How is it that these philosophers shut out of their ranks the poets whose footsteps they follow?⁶⁰

Chapter XIV.

Nothing escapes God's knowledge. This is proved by the witness of the Scriptures and the analogy of the sun, which, although created, yet by its light or heat enters into all things.

51. Next comes the answer to the question, whether God, not having failed to show care for His work, now fails to have knowledge of it? Thus it is written: "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that made the eye, shall He not regard?"⁶¹

52. This false idea was not unknown to the holy prophets. David himself introduces men to speak whom pride has filled and claimed for its own. For what shows greater pride than when men who are living in sin think it unfit that other sinners should live, and say: "Lord, how long shall the ungodly, how long shall the ungodly triumph?"⁶² And later on: "And yet they say, the Lord shall not see: neither shall the God of Jacob regard it."⁶³ Whom the prophet answers, saying: "Take heed, ye unwise among the people: O ye fools, when will ye understand? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? or He that made the eye, shall He not see? He that rebuketh the nations, shall He not punish? -He that teacheth man knowledge? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man that they are vain."⁶⁴ Does He Who discerns whatsoever is vain not know what is holy, and is He ignorant of what He Himself has made? Can the workman be ignorant of his own work? This one is a man, yet he discerns what is hidden in his work; and God - shall He not know His own work? Is there more depth, then, in the work than in its author? Has He made something superior to Himself; the value of which, as its Author, He was ignorant of, and whose condition He knew not, though He was its Director? So much for these persons.

53. But we are satisfied with the witness of Him Who says: "I search out the heart and the reins."⁶⁵ In the Gospel, also, the Lord Jesus says: "Why think ye evil in your hearts? For He knew they were thinking evil."⁶⁶ The evangelist also witnesses to this, saying: "For Jesus knew their thoughts."⁶⁷

54. The idea of these people will not trouble us much if we look at their actions. They will not have Him to be judge over them, Whom nothing deceives; they will not grant to Him the knowledge of

things hidden, for they are afraid their own hidden things may be brought to light. But the Lord, also, "knowing their works, has given them over unto darkness. In the night," he says, "he will be as a thief, and the eye of the adulterer will watch for the darkness, saying, No eye shall see me; he hath covered up his face."⁶⁸ For every one that avoids the light loves darkness, seeking to be hid, though he cannot be hid from God, Who knows not only what is transacted, but also what will be thought of, both in the depths of space and in the minds of men. Thus, again, he who speaks in the book Ecclesiasticus says: "Who seeth me? The darkness hath covered me, and the walls have hidden me; whom do I fear?"⁶⁹ But although lying on his bed he may think thus, he is caught where he never thought of it. "It shall be," it says, "a shame to him because he knew not what the fear of the Lord was."⁷⁰

55. But what can be more foolish than to suppose that anything escapes God's notice, when the sun which supplies the light enters even hidden spots, and the strength of its heat reaches to the foundations of a house and its inner chambers? Who can deny that the depths of the earth, which the winter's ice has bound together, are warmed by the mildness of spring? Surely the very heart of a tree feels the force of heat or cold, to such an extent that its roots are either nipped with the cold or sprout forth in the warmth of the sun. In short, wherever the mildness of heaven smiles on the earth, there the earth produces in abundance fruits of different kinds.

56. If, then, the sun's rays pour their light over all the earth and enter into its hidden spots; if they cannot be checked by iron bars or the barrier of heavy doors from getting within, how can it be impossible for the Glory of God, which is instinct with life, to enter into the thoughts and hearts of men that He Himself has created? And how shall it not see what He Himself has created? Did He make His works to be better and more powerful than He Himself is, Who made them (in this event) so as to escape the notice of their Creator whensoever they will? Did He implant such perfection and power in our mind that He Himself could not comprehend it when He wished?

Chapter XV.

Those who are dissatisfied with the fact that the good receive evil, and the evil good, are shown by the example of Lazarus, and on the authority of Paul, that punishments and rewards are reserved for a future life.

57. We have fully discussed two questions; and this discussion, as we think, has not turned out quite unfavourably for us. A third question yet remains; it is this: Why do sinners have abundance of wealth and riches, and fare sumptuously, and have no grief or sorrow; whilst the upright are in want, and are punished by the loss of wives or children? Now, that parable in the Gospel ought to satisfy persons like these;⁷¹ for the rich man was clothed in purple and fine linen, and dined sumptuously every day; but the beggar, full of sores, used to gather the crumbs of his table. After the death of the two, however, the beggar was in Abraham's bosom in rest; the rich man was in torment. Is it not plain from this that rewards and punishments according to deserts await one after death?

58. And surely this is but right. For in a contest there is much labour needed-and after the contest victory falls to some, to others disgrace. Is the palm ever given or the crown granted before the course is finished? Paul writes well; He says: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the

Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."⁷² "In that day," he says, He will give it-not here. Here he fought, in labours, in dangers, in shipwrecks, like a good wrestler; for he knew how that "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God."⁷³ Therefore no one can receive a reward, unless he has striven lawfully; nor is the victory a glorious one, unless the contest also has been toilsome.

Chapter XVI. To confirm what has been said above about rewards and punishments, he adds that it is not strange if there is no reward reserved for some in the future; for they do not labour here nor struggle. He goes on to say also that for this reason temporal goods are granted to these persons, so that they may have no excuse whatever.

59. Is not he unjust who gives the reward before the end of the contest? Therefore the Lord says in the Gospel: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."⁷⁴ He said not: "Blessed are the rich," but "the poor." By the divine judgment blessedness begins there whence human misery is supposed to spring. "Blessed are they that hunger, for they shall be filled; Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; Blessed are the merciful, for God will have mercy on them; Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God; Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you for righteousness' sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for plentiful is your reward in heaven."⁷⁵ A reward future and not present,-in heaven, not on earth,-has He promised shall be given. What further dost thou expect? What further is due? Why dost thou demand the crown with so much haste, before thou dost conquer? Why dost thou desire to shake off the dust and to rest? Why dost thou long to sit at the feast before the course is finished? As yet the people are looking on, the athletes are in the arena, and thou-dost thou already look for ease?

60. Perhaps thou sayest: Why are the wicked joyous? why do they live in luxury? why do they not toil with me? It is because they who have not put down their names to strive for the crown are not bound to undergo the labours of the contest. They who have not gone down into the race-course do not anoint themselves with oil nor get covered with dust. For those whom glory awaits trouble is at hand. The perfumed spectators are wont to look on, not to join in the struggle, nor to endure the sun, the heat, the dust, and the showers. Let the athletes say to them: Come, strive with us. The spectators will but answer: We sit here now to decide about you, but you, if you conquer, will gain the glory of the crown and we shall not.

61. They, then, who have devoted themselves to pleasures, luxury, robbery, gain, or honours are spectators rather than combatants. They have the profit of labour, but not the fruits of virtue. They love their ease; by cunning and wickedness they heap up riches; but they will pay the penalty of their iniquity, though it be late. Their rest will be in hell, thine in heaven; their home in the grave, thine in paradise. Whence Job said beautifully that they watch in the tomb,⁷⁶ for they cannot have the calm of quiet rest which he enjoys who shall rise again.

62. Do not, therefore, understand, or speak, or think as a child; nor as a child claim those things now which belong to a future time. The crown belongs to the perfect. Wait till that which is perfect is come, when thou mayest know-not through a glass as in a riddle, but face to face⁷⁷ -the very form of truth made clear. Then will be made known why that person was rich who was wicked and a robber of other men's goods, why another was powerful, why a third had many children, and yet

a fourth was loaded with honours.

63. Perhaps all this happens that the question may be asked of the robber: Thou wast rich, wherefore didst thou seize on the goods of others? Need did not force thee, poverty did not drive thee to it. Did I not make thee rich, that thou mightest have no excuse? So, too, it may be said to a person of power: Why didst thou not aid the widow, the orphans also, when enduring wrong? Wast thou powerless? Couldst thou not help? I made thee for this purpose, not that thou mightest do wrong, but that thou mightest check it. Is it not written for thee "Save him that endureth wrong?"⁷⁸ Is it not written for thee: "Deliver the poor and needy out of the hand of the sinner?"⁷⁹ It may be said also to the man who has abundance of good things: I have blessed thee with children and honours; I have granted thee health of body; why didst thou not follow my commands? My servant, what have I done to thee, or how have I grieved thee? Was it not I that gave thee children, bestowed honours, granted health to thee? Why didst thou deny me? Why didst thou suppose that thy actions would not come to my knowledge? Why didst thou accept my gifts, yet despise my commands?

64. We can gather the same from the example of the traitor Judas. He was chosen among the Twelve Apostles, and had charge of the money bag, to lay it out upon the poor,⁸⁰ that it might not seem as though he had betrayed the Lord because he was unhonoured or in want. Wherefore the Lord granted him this office, that He might also be justified in him; he would be guilty of a greater fault, not as one driven to it by wrong done to him, but as one misusing grace.

Chapter XVII. The duties of youth, and examples suitable to that age, are next put forth.

65. Since it has been made sufficiently plain that there will be punishment for wickedness and reward for virtue, let us proceed to speak of the duties which have to be borne in mind from our youth up,⁸¹ that they may grow with our years.⁸² A good youth ought to have a fear of God, to be subject to his parents, to give honour to his elders, to preserve his purity; he ought not to despise humility, but should love forbearance and modesty. All these are an ornament to youthful years. For as seriousness is the true grace of an old man, and ardour of a young man, so also is modesty, as though by some gift of nature, well set off in a youth.

66. Isaac feared the Lord, as was indeed but natural in the son of Abraham; being subject also to his father to such an extent that he would not avoid death in opposition to his father's will.⁸³ Joseph also, though he dreamed that sun and moon and stars made obeisance to him, yet was subject to his father's will with ready obedience.⁸⁴ So chaste was he, he would not hear even a word unless it were pure; humble was he even to doing the work of a slave, modest, even to taking flight, enduring, even to bearing imprisonment, so forgiving of wrong as even to repay it with good. Whose modesty was such, that, when seized by a woman, he preferred to leave his garment in her hands in flight, rather than to lay aside his modesty.⁸⁵ Moses,⁸⁶ also, and Jeremiah,⁸⁷ chosen by the Lord to declare the words of God to the people, were for avoiding, through modesty, that which through grace they could do.

Chapter XVIII. On the different functions of modesty. How it should qualify both speech and silence, accompany chastity, commend our prayers to God, govern our bodily motions; on which last point reference is made to two clerics in language by no means unsuited to its object. Further he proceeds to say that one's gait should be in accordance with that same virtue, and how careful

one must be that nothing immodest come forth from one's mouth, or be noticed in one's body. All these points are illustrated with very appropriate examples.

67. Lovely, then, is the virtue of modesty, and sweet is its grace! It is seen not only in actions, but even in our words,⁸⁸ so that we may not go beyond due measure in speech, and that our words may not have an unbecoming sound. The mirror of our mind often enough reflects its image in our words. Sobriety weighs out the sound even of our voice, for fear that too loud a voice should offend the ear of any one. Nay, in singing itself the first rule is modesty, and the same is true in every kind of speech, too, so that a man may gradually learn to praise God, or to sing songs, or even to speak, in that the principles of modesty grace his advance.

68. Silence, again, wherein all the other virtues rest, is the chief act of modesty. Only, if it is supposed to be a sign of a childish or proud spirit, it is accounted a reproach; if a sign of modesty, it is reckoned for praise. Susanna was silent in danger,⁸⁹ and thought the loss of modesty was worse than loss of life. She did not consider that her safety should be guarded at the risk of her chastity. To God alone she spoke, to Whom she could speak out in true modesty. She avoided looking on the face of men. For there is also modesty in the glance of the eye, which makes a woman unwilling to look upon men, or to be seen by them.

69. Let no one suppose that this praise belongs to chastity alone. For modesty is the companion of purity, in company with which chastity itself is safer. Shame, again, is good as a companion and guide of chastity, inasmuch as it does not suffer purity to be defiled in approaching even the outskirts of danger. This it is that, at the very outset of her recognition, commends the Mother of the Lord to those who read the Scriptures, and, as a credible witness, declares her worthy to be chosen to such an office. For when in her chamber, alone, she is saluted by the angel, she is silent, and is disturbed at his entrance,⁹⁰ and the Virgin's face is troubled at the strange appearance of a man's form. And so, though she was humble, yet it was not because of this, but on account of her modesty, that she did not return his salutation, nor give him any answer, except to ask, when she had learnt that she should conceive the Lord, how this should be. She certainly did not speak merely for the sake of making a reply.

70. In our very prayers, too, modesty is most pleasing, and gains us much grace from our God. Was it not this that exalted the publican, and commended him, when he dared not raise even his eyes to heaven?⁹¹ So he was justified by the judgment of the Lord rather than the Pharisee, whom overweening pride made so hideous. "Therefore let us pray in the incorruptibility of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price,"⁹² as St. Peter says. A noble thing, then, is modesty, which, though giving up its rights, seizing on nothing for itself, laying claim to nothing, and in some ways somewhat retiring within the sphere of its own powers, yet is rich in the sight of God, in Whose sight no man is rich. Rich is modesty, for it is the portion of God. Paul also bids that prayer be offered up with modesty and sobriety.⁹³ He desires that this should be first, and, as it were, lead the way of prayers to come, so that the sinner's prayer may not be boastful, but veiled, as it were, with the blush of shame, may merit a far greater degree of grace, in giving way to modesty at the remembrance of its fault.

71. Modesty must further be guarded in our very movements and gestures and gait.⁹⁴ For the condition of the mind is often seen in the attitude of the body. For this reason the hidden man of our heart (our inner self) is considered to be either frivolous, boastful, or boisterous, or, on the

other hand, steady, firm, pure, and dependable. Thus the movement of the body is a sort of voice of the soul.

72. Ye remember, my children, that a friend of ours who seemed to recommend himself by his assiduity in his duties, yet was not admitted by me into the number of the clergy, because his gestures were too unseemly. Also that I bade one, whom I found already among the clergy, never to go in front of me, because he actually pained me by the seeming arrogance of his gait. That is what I said when he returned to his duty after an offence committed. This alone I would not allow, nor did my mind deceive me. For both have left the Church. What their gait betrayed them to be, such were they proved to be by the faithlessness of their hearts. The one forsook his faith at the time of the Arian troubles; the other, through love of money, denied that he belonged to us, so that he might not have to undergo sentence at the hands of the Church. In their gait was discernible the semblance of fickleness, the appearance, as it were, of wandering buffoons.

73. Some there are who in walking perceptibly copy the gestures of actors,⁹⁵ and act as though they were bearers in the processions, and had the motions of nodding statues, to such an extent that they seem to keep a sort of time, as often as they change their step.

74. Nor do I think it becoming to walk hurriedly, except when a case of some danger demands it, or a real necessity. For we often see those who hurry come up panting, and with features distorted. But if there is no reason for the need of such hurry, it gives cause for just offence. I am not, however, talking of those who have to hurry now and then for some particular reason, but of those to whom, by the yoke of constant habit, it has become a second nature. In the case of the former I cannot approve of their slow solemn movements, which remind one of the forms of phantoms. Nor do I care for the others with their headlong speed, for they put one in mind of the ruin of outcasts.

75. A suitable gait is that wherein there is an appearance of authority and weight and dignity, and which has a calm collected bearing. But it must be of such a character that all effort and conceit may be wanting, and that it be simple and plain. Nothing counterfeit is pleasing. Let nature train our movements. If indeed there is any fault in our nature, let us mend it with diligence. And, that artifice may be wanting, let not amendment be wanting.

76. But if we pay so much attention to things like these, how much more careful ought we to be to let nothing shameful proceed out of our mouth, for that defiles a man terribly. It is not food that defiles, but unjust disparagement of others and foul words.⁹⁶ These things are openly shameful. In our office indeed must no word be let fall at all unseemly, nor one that may give offence to modesty. But not only ought we to say nothing unbecoming to ourselves, but we ought not even to lend our ears to words of this sort. Thus Joseph fled and left his garment, that he might hear nothing inconsistent with his modesty.⁹⁷ For he who delights to listen, urges the other on to speak.

77. To have full knowledge of what is foul is in the highest degree shameful. To see anything of this sort, if by chance it should happen, how dreadful that is! What, therefore, is displeasing to us in others, can that be pleasing in ourselves? Is not nature herself our teacher, who has formed to perfection every part of our body, so as to provide for what is necessary and to beautify and grace its form? However she has left plain and open to the sight those parts which are beautiful to look upon; among which, the head, set as it were above all, and the pleasant lines of the figure, and the

appearance of the face are prominent, whilst their usefulness for work is ready to hand. But those parts in which there is a compliance with the necessities of nature, she has partly put away and hidden in the body itself, lest they should present a disgusting appearance, and partly, too, she has taught and persuaded us to cover them.⁹⁸

78. Is not nature herself then a teacher of modesty? Following her example, the modesty of men, which I suppose⁹⁹ is so called from the mode of knowing what is seemly,¹⁰⁰ has covered and veiled what it has found hid in the frame of our body; like that door which Noah was bidden to make in the side of the ark;¹⁰¹ wherein we find a figure of the Church, and also of the human body, for through that door the remnants of food were cast out. Thus the Maker of our nature so thought of our modesty, and so guarded what was seemly and virtuous in our body, as to place what is unseemly behind, and to put it out of the sight of our eyes. Of this the Apostle says well: "Those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary, and those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness."¹⁰² Truly, by following the guidance of nature, diligent care has added to the grace of the body. In another place¹⁰³ I have gone more fully into this subject, and said that not only do we hide those parts which have been given us to hide, but also that we think it unseemly to mention by name their description, and the use of those members.

79. And if these parts are exposed to view by chance, modesty is violated; but if on purpose, it is reckoned as utter shamelessness. Wherefore Ham, Noah's son, brought disgrace upon himself; for he laughed when he saw his father naked, but they who covered their father received the gift of a blessing.¹⁰⁴ For which cause, also, it was an ancient custom in Rome, and in many other states as well, that grown-up sons should not bathe with their parents, or sons-in-law with their fathers-in-law,¹⁰⁵ in order that the great duty of reverence for parents should not be weakened. Many, however, cover themselves so far as they can in the baths, so that, where the whole body is bare, that part of it at least may be covered.

80. The priests, also, under the old law, as we read in Exodus, wore breeches, as it was told Moses by the Lord: "And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their shame: from the loins even to the thighs they shall reach, and Aaron and his sons shall wear them, when they enter into the tabernacle of witness, and when they come unto the altar of the holy place to offer sacrifice, that they lay not sin upon themselves and die."¹⁰⁶ Some of us are said still to observe this, but most explain it spiritually, and suppose it was said with a view to guarding modesty and preserving chastity.

Chapter XLX.

How should seemliness be represented by a speaker? Does beauty add anything to virtue, and, if so, how much? Lastly, what care should we take that nothing conceited or effeminate be seen in us?

81. It has given me pleasure to dwell somewhat at length on the various functions of modesty; for I speak to you who either can recognize the good that is in it in your own cases, or at least do not know its loss. Fitted as it is for all ages, persons, times, and places, yet it most beseems youthful and childish years.

82. But at every age we must take care that all we do is seemly and becoming, and that the course of our life forms one harmonious and complete whole. Wherefore Cicero¹⁰⁷ thinks that a certain order ought to be observed in what is seemly. He says that this lies in beauty, order, and in appointment fitted for action. This, as he says, it is difficult to explain in words, yet it can be quite sufficiently understood.

83. Why Cicero should have introduced beauty, I do not quite understand; though it is true he also speaks in praise of the powers of the body. We certainly do not locate virtue in the beauty of the body, though, on the other hand, we do recognize a certain grace, as when modesty is wont to cover the face with a blush of shame, and to make it more pleasing. For as a workman is wont to work better the more suitable his materials are, so modesty is more conspicuous in the comeliness of the body. Only the comeliness of the body should not be assumed; it should be natural and artless, unstudied rather than elaborated, not heightened by costly and glistening garments, but just clad in ordinary clothing. One must see that nothing is wanting that one's credit or necessity demands, whilst nothing must be added for the sake of splendour.

84. The voice, too, should not be languid, nor feeble, nor womanish in its tone,-such a tone of voice as many are in the habit of using, under the idea of seeming important. It should preserve a certain quality, and rhythm, and a manly vigour. For all to do what is best suited to their character and sex, that is to attain to beauty of life. This is the best order for movements, this the employment fitted for every action. But as I cannot approve of a soft or weak tone of voice, or an effeminate gesture of the body, so also I cannot approve of what is boorish and rustic. Let us follow nature. The imitation of her provides us with a principle of training, and gives us a pattern of virtue.

Chapter XX.

If we are to preserve our modesty we must avoid fellowship with profligate men, also the banquets of strangers, and intercourse with women; our leisure time at home should be spent in pious and virtuous pursuits.

85. Modesty has indeed its rocks-not any that she brings with her, but those, I mean, which she often runs against, as when we associate with profligate men, who, under the form of pleasantries, administer poison to the good. And the latter, if they are very constant in their attendance at banquets and games, and often join in jests, enervate that manly gravity of theirs. Let us then take heed that, in wishing to relax our minds, we do not destroy all harmony, the blending as it were of all good works. For habit quickly bends nature in another direction.

86. For this reason I think that what ye wisely do is befitting to the duties of clerics, and especially to those of the priesthood-namely, that ye avoid the banquets of strangers, but so that ye are still hospitable to travellers, and give no occasion for reproach by reason of your great care in the matter. Banquets with strangers engross one's attention, and soon produce a love for feasting. Tales, also, of the world and its pleasures often creep in. One cannot shut one's ears; and to forbid them is looked on as a sign of haughtiness. One's glass, too, even against one's will, is filled time after time. It is better surely to excuse oneself once for all at one's own home, than often at another's. When one rises sober, at any rate one's presence need not be condemned by the insolence of another.

87. There is no need for the younger clergy to go to the houses of widows or virgins, except for the sake of a definite visit, and in that case only with the elder clergy, that is, with the bishop, or, if the matter be somewhat important, with the priests. Why should we give room to the world to revile? What need is there for those frequent visits to give ground for rumours? What if one of those women should by chance fall? Why shouldst thou undergo the reproach of another's fall? How many even strong men have been led away by their passions? How many are there who have not indeed yielded to sin, but have given ground for suspicion?

88. Why dost thou not spend the time which thou hast free from thy duties in the church in reading? Why dost thou not go back again to see Christ? Why dost thou not address Him, and hear His voice? We address Him when we pray, we hear Him when we read the sacred oracles of God. What have we to do with strange houses? There is one house which holds all. They who need us can come to us. What have we to do with tales and fables? An office to minister at the altar of Christ is what we have received; no duty to make ourselves agreeable to men has been laid upon us.

89. We ought to be humble, gentle, mild, serious, patient. We must keep the mean in all things, so that a calm countenance and quiet speech may show that there is no vice in our lives.

Chapter XXI.

We must guard against anger, before it arises; if it has already arisen we must check and calm it, and if we cannot do this either, at least we should keep our tongue from abuse, so that our passions may be like boys' quarrels. He relates what Archites said, and shows that David led the way in this matter, both in his actions and in his writings.

90. Let anger be guarded against.¹⁰⁸ If it cannot, however, be averted, let it be kept within bounds. For indignation is a terrible incentive to sin. It disorders the mind to such an extent as to leave no room for reason. The first thing, therefore, to aim at, if possible, is to make tranquillity of character our natural disposition by constant practice, by desire for better things, by fixed determination. But since passion is to a large extent implanted in our nature and character, so that it cannot be uprooted and avoided, it must be checked by reason, if, that is, it can be foreseen. And if the mind has already been filled with indignation before it could be foreseen or provided against in any way, we must consider how to conquer the passion of the mind, how to restrain our anger, that it may no more be so filled. Resist wrath, if possible; if not, give way, for it is written: "Give place to wrath."¹⁰⁹

91. Jacob dutifully gave way to his brother when angry, and to Rebecca; that is to say, taught by counsels of patience, he preferred to go away and live in foreign lands, rather than to arouse his brother's anger; and then to return only when he thought his brother was appeased.¹¹⁰ Thus it was that he found such great grace with God. With what offers of willing service, with what gifts, did he reconcile his brother to himself again, so that he should not remember the blessing which had been taken away from him, but should only remember the reparation now offered?¹¹¹

92. If, then, anger has got the start, and has already taken possession of thy mind, and mounted into thy heart, forsake not thy ground. Thy ground is patience, it is wisdom, it is reason, it is the allaying of indignation. And if the stubbornness of thy opponent rouses thee, and his perverseness drives thee to indignation: if thou canst not calm thy mind, check at least thy tongue. For so it is

written: "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile. Seek peace and pursue it."¹¹² See the peace of holy Jacob, how great it was! First, then, calm thy mind. If thou canst not do this, put a restraint upon thy tongue. Lastly, omit not to seek for reconciliation. These ideas the speakers of the world have borrowed from us, and have set down in their writings. But he who said it first has the credit of understanding its meaning.

93. Let us then avoid or at any rate check anger, so that we may not lose our share of praise, nor yet add to our list of sins. It is no light thing to calm one's anger. It is no less difficult a thing than it is not to be roused at all. The one is an act of our own will, the other is an effect of nature. So quarrels among boys are harmless, and have more of a pleasant than a bitter character about them. And if boys quickly come to quarrel one with the other, they are easily calmed down again, and quickly come together with even greater friendliness. They do not know how to act deceitfully and artfully. Do not condemn these children, of whom the Lord says: "Except ye be converted and become as this child, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."¹¹³ So also the Lord Himself, Who is the Power of God, as a Boy, when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He was struck, struck not back.¹¹⁴ Set then thy mind on this-like a child never to keep an injury in mind, never to show malice, but that all things may be done blamelessly by thee. Regard not the return made thee by others. Hold thy ground. Guard the simplicity and purity of thy heart. Answer not an angry man according to his anger, nor a foolish man according to his folly. One fault quickly calls forth another. If stones are rubbed together, does not fire break forth?

94. The heathen-(they are wont to exaggerate everything in speaking)-make much of the saying of the philosopher Archites¹¹⁵ of Tarentum, which he spoke to his bailiff: "O you wretched man, how I would punish you, if I were not angry." But David already before this had in his indignation held back his armed hand. How much greater a thing it is not to revile again, than not to avenge oneself! The warriors, too, prepared to take vengeance against Nabal, Abigail restrained by her prayers.¹¹⁶ From whence we perceive that we ought not only to yield to timely entreaties, but also to be pleased with them. So much was David pleased that he blessed her who intervened, because he was restrained from his desire for revenge.

95. Already before this he had said of his enemies: "For they cast iniquity upon me, and in their wrath they were grievous to me."¹¹⁷ Let us hear what he said when overwhelmed in wrath: "Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will flee away and be at rest."¹¹⁸ They kept provoking him to anger, but he sought quietness.

96. He had also said: "Be ye angry and sin not."¹¹⁹ The moral teacher who knew that the natural disposition should rather be guided by a reasonable course of teaching, than be eradicated, teaches morals, and says: "Be angry where there is a fault against which ye ought to be angry." For it is impossible not to be roused up by the baseness of many things;¹²⁰ otherwise we might be accounted, not virtuous, but apathetic and neglectful. Be angry therefore, so that ye keep free from fault, or, in other words: If ye are angry, do not sin, but overcome wrath with reason. Or one might put it thus: If ye are angry, be angry with yourselves, because ye are roused, and ye will not sin. For he who is angry with himself, because he has been so easily roused, ceases to be angry with another. But he who wishes to prove his anger is righteous only gets the more inflamed, and quickly falls into sin. "Better is he," as Solomon says, "that restraineth his anger, than he that taketh a city,"¹²¹ for anger leads astray even brave men.

97. We ought therefore to take care that we do not get into a flurry, before reason prepares our minds. For oftentimes anger or distress or fear of death almost deprives the soul of life, and beats it down by a sudden blow. It is therefore a good thing to anticipate this by reflection, and to exercise the mind by considering the matter. So the mind will not be roused by any sudden disturbance, but will grow calm, being held in by the yoke and reins of reason.

Chapter XXII. On reflection and passion, and on observing propriety of speech, both in ordinary conversation and in holding discussions.

98. There are two kinds of mental motions¹²² -those of reflection and of passion. The one has to do with reflection, the other with passion. There is no confusion one with the other, for they are markedly different and unlike. Reflection has to search and as it were to grind out the truth. Passion prompts and stimulates us to do something. Thus by its very nature reflection diffuses tranquillity and calm; and passion sends forth the impulse to act. Let us then be ready to allow reflection on good things to enter into our mind, and to make passion submit to reason (if indeed we wish to direct our minds to guard what is seemly), lest desire for anything should shut out reason. Rather let reason test and see what befits virtue.

99. And since we have said that we must aim at the observance of what is seemly,¹²³ so as to know what is the due measure in our words and deeds, and as order in speech rather than in action comes first; speech is divided into two kinds: first, as it is used in friendly conversation, and then in the treatment and discussion of matters of faith and justice. In either case we must take care that there is no irritation. Our language should be mild and quiet, and full of kindness and courtesy and free from insult. Let there be no obstinate disputes in our familiar conversations, for they are wont only to bring up useless subjects, rather than to supply anything useful. Let there be discussion without wrath, urbanity without bitterness, warning without sharpness, advice without giving offence. And as in every action of our life we ought to take heed to this, in order that no overpowering impulse of our mind may ever shut out reason (let us always keep a place for counsel), so, too, ought we to observe that rule in our language, so that neither wrath nor hatred may be aroused, and that we may not show any signs of our greed or sloth.

100. Let our language be of this sort, more especially when we are speaking of the holy Scriptures. For of what ought we to speak more often than of the best subject of conversation, of its exhortation to watchfulness, its care for good instruction? Let us have a reason for beginning, and let our end be within due limits.¹²⁴ For a speech that is wearisome only stirs up anger. But surely it is most unseemly that when every kind of conversation generally gives additional pleasure, this should give cause of offence!

101. The treatment also of such subjects as the teaching of faith, instruction on self-restraint, discussion on justice, exhortation to activity, must not be taken up by us and fully gone into all at one time, but must be carried on in course, so far as we can do it, and as the subject-matter of the passage allows. Our discourse must not be too lengthy, nor too soon cut short, for fear the former should leave behind it a feeling of aversion, and the latter produce carelessness and neglect. The address should be plain and simple, clear and evident, full of dignity and weight; it should not be studied or too refined, nor yet, on the other hand, be unpleasing and rough in style.

Chapter XXIII.

Jests, although at times they may be quite proper, should be altogether banished among clerics. The voice should be plain and frank.

102. Men of the world give many further rules about the way to speak,¹²⁵ which I think we may pass over; as, for instance, the way jesting should be conducted.¹²⁶ For though at times jests may be proper and pleasant, yet they are unsuited to the clerical life. For how can we adopt those things which we do not find in the holy Scriptures?

103. We must also take care that in relating stories we do not alter the earnest purpose of the harder rule we have set before us. "Woe unto you that laugh, for ye shall weep,"¹²⁷ says the Lord. Do we seek for something to laugh at, that laughing here we may weep hereafter? I think we ought to avoid not only broad jokes, but all kinds of jests, unless perchance it is not unfitting at the time for our conversation to be agreeable and pleasant.

104. In speaking of the voice, I certainly think it ought to be plain and clear.¹²⁸ That it should be musical is a gift of nature, and is not to be won by exertion. Let it be distinct in its pronunciation and full of a manly vigour, but let it be free from a rough and rustic twang. See, too, that it does not assume a theatrical accent, but rather keeps true to the inner meaning of the words it utters.

Chapter XXIV.

There are three things to be noticed in the actions of our life. First, our passions are to be controlled by our reason; next, we ought to observe a suitable moderation in our desires; and, lastly, everything ought to be done at the right time and in the proper order. All these qualities shone forth so conspicuously in the holy men of Old Testament time, that it is evident they were well furnished with what men call the cardinal virtues.

105. I Think I have said enough on the art of speaking. Let us now consider what beseems an active life. We note that there are three things¹²⁹ to be regarded in connection with this subject. One is, that passion should not resist our reason. In that way only can our duties be brought into line with what is seemly. For if passion yields to reason we can easily maintain what is seemly in our duties. Next, we must take care lest, either by showing greater zeal or less than the matter we take up demands, we look as though we were taking up a small matter with great parade or were treating a great matter with but little care. Thirdly, as regards moderation in our endeavours and works, and also with regard to order in doing things and in the right timing of things, I think that everything should be open and straightforward.

106. But first comes that which I may call the foundation of all, namely, that our passions should obey our reason. The second and third are really the same-moderation in either case. There is room with us for the survey of a pleasing form, which is accounted beauty, and the consideration of dignity. Next follows the consideration of the order and the timing of things. These, then, are the three points, and we must see whether we can show them in perfection in any one of the saints.

107. First there is our father Abraham,¹³⁰ who was formed and called for the instruction of generations to come. When bidden to go forth from his own country and kindred and from his father's house, though bound and held back by many ties of relationship, did he not give proof that in him passion was subject to reason? Who does not delight in the sweet charms of his native land, his kindred, and his own home? Their sweetness then delighted him. But the thought of the

heavenly command and of an eternal reward influenced him more. Did he not reflect that he could not take his wife with him without the greatest danger, unused as she was to hardships, and so tender to bear insults, and so beautiful as to be likely to arouse the lust of profligate men? Yet he decided somewhat deliberately to undergo all this rather than to escape it by making excuses. Lastly, when he had gone into Egypt, he advised her to say she was his sister, not his wife.

108. See here what passions are at work! He feared for the chastity of his wife, he feared for his own safety, he had his suspicions about the lust of the Egyptians, and yet the reasonableness of performing his duty to God prevailed with him. For he thought that by the favour of God he could be safe everywhere, but if he offended the Lord he could not abide unharmed even at home. Thus reason conquered passion, and brought it into subjection to itself.

109. When his nephew was taken captive,¹³¹ without being terrified or dismayed at the hordes of so many kings, he resumed the war. And after the victory was gained he refused his share of the spoil, which he himself had really won. Also, when a son was promised him, though he thought of the lost vigour of his body, now as good as dead, and the barrenness of his wife, and his own great age, he believed God, though it was against the law of nature.¹³²

110. Note how everything meets together here. Passion was not wanting, but it was checked. Here was a mind equable in action, which neither treated great things as unimportant or little things as great. Here there was moderation in different affairs, order in things, fitness of occasion, due measure in words. He was foremost in faith, conspicuous in virtue, vigorous in battle, in victory not greedy, at home hospitable, and to his wife attentive.

111. Jacob also, his holy grandson, loved to pass his time at home free from danger; but his mother wished him to live in foreign parts, and so give place to his brother's anger.¹³³ Sound counsels prevailed over natural feelings. An exile from home, banished from his parents, yet everywhere, in all he did, he observed due measure, such as was fitting, and made use of his opportunities at the right time. So dear was he to his parents at home, that the one, moved by the promptness of his compliance, gave him his blessing, the other inclined towards him with tender love. In the judgment of his brother, also, he was placed first, when he thought that he ought to give up his food to his brother.¹³⁴ For though according to his natural inclinations he wished for food, yet when asked for it he gave it up from a feeling of brotherly affection. He was a faithful shepherd of the flock for his master, an attentive son-in-law to his father-in-law; he was active in work, sparing in his meals, conspicuous in making amends, lavish in repaying. Nay, so well did he calm his brother's anger that he received his favour, though he had feared his enmity.¹³⁵

112. What shall I say of Joseph?¹³⁶ He certainly had a longing for freedom, and yet endured the bonds of servitude. How meek he was in slavery, how unchanging in virtue, how kindly in prison! Wise, too, in interpreting, and self-restrained in exercising his power! In the time of plenty was he not careful? In the time of famine was he not fair? Did he not praiseworthily do everything in order, and use opportunities at their season; giving justice to his people by the restraining guidance of his office?

113. Job also, both in prosperity and adversity, was blameless, patient, pleasing, and acceptable to God. He was harassed with pain, yet could find consolation.

114. David also was brave in war, patient in time of adversity, peaceful at Jerusalem, in the hour of victory merciful, on committing sin repentant, in his old age foreseeing. He preserved due measure in his actions, and took his opportunities as they came. He has set them down in the songs of succeeding years; and so it seems to me that he has by his life no less than by the sweetness of his hymns poured forth an undying song of his own merits to God.

115. What duty connected with the chief virtues was wanting in these men?¹³⁷ In the first place they showed prudence, which is exercised in the search of the truth, and which imparts a desire for full knowledge; next, justice, which assigns each man his own, does not claim another's, and disregards its own advantage, so as to guard the rights of all; thirdly, fortitude, which both in warfare and at home is conspicuous in greatness of mind and distinguishes itself in the strength of the body; fourthly, temperance, which preserves the right method and order in all things that we think should either be done or said.

Chapter XXV. A reason is given why this book did not open with a discussion of the above-mentioned virtues. It is also concisely pointed out that the same virtues existed in the ancient fathers.

116. Perhaps, as the different classes of duties are derived from these four virtues, some one may say that they ought to have been described first of all. But it would have been artificial to have given a definition of duty at the outset,¹³⁸ and then to have gone on to divide it up into various classes. We have avoided what is artificial, and have put forward the examples of the fathers of old. These certainly offer us no uncertainty as regards our understanding them, and give us no room for subtlety in our discussion of them. Let the life of the fathers, then, be for us a mirror of virtue, not a mere collection of shrewd and clever acts. Let us show reverence in following them, not mere cleverness in discussing them.

117. Prudence held the first place in holy Abraham. For of him the Scriptures say: "Abraham believed God, and that was counted to him for righteousness;"¹³⁹ for no one is prudent who knows not God. Again: "The fool hath said, There is no God;"¹⁴⁰ for a wise man would not say so. How is he wise who looks not for his Maker, but says to a stone: "Thou art my father"?¹⁴¹ Who says to the devil as the Manichaeon does: "Thou art the author of my being"?¹⁴² How is Arius¹⁴³ wise, who prefers an imperfect and inferior creator to one who is a true and perfect one? How can Marcion¹⁴⁴ or Eunomius¹⁴⁵ be wise, who prefer to have an evil rather than a good God? And how can he be wise who does not fear his God? For: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."¹⁴⁶ Elsewhere, too, it stands: "The wise turn not aside from the mouth of the Lord, but come near Him in their confession of His greatness."¹⁴⁷ So when the Scripture says: "It was counted to him for righteousness," that brought to him the grace of another virtue.

118. The chief amongst ourselves have stated that prudence lies in the knowledge of the truth. But who of them all excelled Abraham, David, or Solomon in this? Then they go on to say that justice has regard to the whole community of the human race. So David said: "He hath dispersed abroad and given to the poor, His righteousness remaineth for ever."¹⁴⁸ The just man has pity, the just man lends. The whole world of riches lies at the feet of the wise and the just. The just man regards what belongs to all as his own, and his own as common property. The man just accuses himself rather than others. For he is just who does not spare himself, and who does not suffer his secret actions to be concealed. See now how just Abraham was! In his old age he begat a son according

to promise, and when the Lord demanded him for sacrifice he did not think he ought to refuse him, although he was his only son.¹⁴⁹

119. Note here all these four virtues in one act. It was wise to believe God, and not to put love for his son before the commands of his Creator. It was just to give back what had been received. It was brave to restrain natural feelings by reason. The father led the victim; the son asked where it was: the father's feelings were hardly tried, but were not overcome. The son said again: "My father," and thus pierced his father's heart, though without weakening his devotion to God. The fourth virtue, temperance, too, was there. Being just he preserved due measure in his piety, and order in all he had to carry out. And so in bringing what was needed for the sacrifice, in lighting the fire, in binding his son, in drawing the knife, in performing the sacrifice in due order; thus he merited as his reward that he might keep his son.

120. Is there greater wisdom than holy Jacob's, who saw God face to face and won a blessing?¹⁵⁰ Can there be higher justice than his in dividing with his brother what he had acquired, and offering it as a gift?¹⁵¹ What greater fortitude than his in striving with God?¹⁵² What moderation so true as his, who acted with such moderation as regards time and place, as to prefer to hide his daughter's shame rather than to avenge himself?¹⁵³ For being set in the midst of foes, he thought it better to gain their affections than to concentrate their hate on himself.

121. How wise also was Noah, who built the whole of the ark!¹⁵⁴ How just again! For he alone, preserved of all to be the father of the human race, was made a survivor of past generations, and the author of one to come; he was born, too, rather for the world and the universe than for himself. How brave he was to overcome the flood! how temperate to endure it! When he had entered the ark, with what moderation he passed the time! When he sent forth the raven and the dove, when he received them on their return, when he took the opportunity of leaving the ark, with what moderation did he make use of these occasions!

Chapter XXVI. In investigating the truth the philosophers have broken through their own rules. Moses, however, showed himself more wise than they. The greater the dignity of wisdom, the more earnestly must we strive to gain it. Nature herself urges us all to do this.

122. It is said, therefore, that in investigating the truth, we must observe what is seemly. We ought to look for what is true with the greatest care. We must not put forward falsehood for truth, nor hide the truth in darkness, nor fill the mind with idle, involved, or doubtful matters. What so unseemly as to worship a wooden thing, which men themselves have made? What shows such darkness as to discuss subjects connected with geometry and astronomy (which they approve of), to measure the depths of space, to shut up heaven and earth within the limits of fixed numbers, to leave aside the grounds of salvation and to seek for error?

123. Moses, learned as he was in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,¹⁵⁵ did not approve of those things, but thought that kind of wisdom both harmful and foolish. Turning away therefrom, he sought God with all the desire of his heart, and thus saw, questioned, heard Him when He spoke.¹⁵⁶ Who is more wise than he whom God taught, and who brought to nought all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and all the powers of their craft by the might of his works? He did not treat things unknown as well known, and so rashly accept them. Yet these philosophers, though they do not consider it contrary to nature, nor shameful for themselves to worship, and to ask help from an idol

which knows nothing, teach us that these two things mentioned in the words just spoken, which are in accordance both with nature and with virtue, ought to be avoided.

124. The loftier the virtue of wisdom is, the more I say we ought to strive for it, so that we may be able to attain to it. And that we may have no ideas which are contrary to nature, or are disgraceful, or unfitting, we ought to give two things, that is, time and care, to considering matters for the sake of investigating them. For there is nothing in which man excels all other living creatures more than in the fact that he has reason, seeks out the origin of things, thinks that the Author of his being should be searched out. For in His hand is our life and death; He rules this world by His nod. And to Him we know that we must give a reason for our actions. For there is nothing which is more of a help to a good life than to believe that He will be our judge, Whom hidden things do not escape, and unseemly things offend, and good deeds delight.

125. In all men, then, there lies, in accordance with human nature, a desire to search out the truth, which leads us on to have a longing for knowledge and learning, and infuses into us a wish to seek after it. To excel in this seems a noble thing to mankind; but there are only few who attain to it. And they, by deep thought, by careful deliberation, spend no little labour so as to be able to attain to that blessed and virtuous life, and to approach its likeness in their actions. "For not he that saith to Me Lord. Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth those things that I say."¹⁵⁷ To have a desire for knowledge without actions to correspond-well! I do not know whether that carries anything more with it.

Chapter XXVII. The first source of duty is prudence, from whence spring three other virtues; and they cannot be separated or torn asunder, since they are mutually connected one with the other.

126. The first source of duty, then, is prudence.¹⁵⁸ For what is more of a duty than to give to the Creator all one's devotion and reverence? This source, however, is drawn off into other virtues. For justice cannot exist without prudence, since it demands no small amount of prudence to see whether a thing is just or unjust. A mistake on either side is very serious. "For he that says a just man is unjust, or an unjust man is just, is accursed with God. Wherefore does justice¹⁵⁹ abound unto the wicked?"¹⁶⁰ says Solomon. Nor, on the other hand, can prudence exist without justice, for piety towards God is the beginning of understanding. On which we notice that this is a borrowed rather than an original idea among the worldly wise, for piety is the foundation of all virtues.

127. But the piety of justice¹⁶¹ is first directed towards God; secondly, towards one's country; next, towards parents;¹⁶² lastly, towards all. This, too, is in accordance with the guidance of nature. From the beginning of life, when understanding first begins to be infused into us, we love life as the gift of God, we love our country and our parents; lastly, our companions, with whom we like to associate. Hence arises true love, which prefers others to self, and seeks not its own, wherein lies the pre-eminence of justice.

128. It is ingrained in all living creatures,¹⁶³ first of all, to preserve their own safety, to guard against what is harmful, to strive for what is advantageous. They seek food and converts, whereby they may protect themselves from dangers, storms, and sun,-all which is a mark of prudence. Next we find that all the different creatures are by nature wont to herd together, at first with fellows of their own class and sort, then also with others. So we see oxen delighted to be in herds, horses in

droves, and especially like with like, stags, also, in company with stags and often with men. And what should I say on their desire to have young, and on their offspring, or even on their passions, wherein the likeness of justice is conspicuous?

129. It is clear, then, that these and the remaining virtues are related to one another. For courage, which in war preserves one's country from the barbarians, or at home defends the weak, or comrades from robbers, is full of justice; and to know on what plan to defend and to give help, how to make use of opportunities of time and place, is the part of prudence and moderation, and temperance itself cannot observe due measure without prudence. To know a fit opportunity, and to make return according to what is right, belongs to justice. In all these, too, large-heartedness is necessary, and fortitude of mind, and often of body, so that we may carry out what we wish.

Chapter XXVIII. A community rests upon justice and good-will. Two parts of the former, revenge and private possession, are not recognized by Christians. What the Stoics say about common property and mutual help has been borrowed from the sacred writings. The greatness of the glory of justice, and what hinders access to it.

130. Justice,¹⁶⁴ then, has to do with the society of the human race, and the community at large. For that which holds society together is divided into two parts, -justice and good-will, which also is called liberality and kindness. Justice seems to me the loftier, liberality the more pleasing, of the two. The one gives judgment, the other shows goodness.

131. But that very thing is excluded with us which philosophers think to be the office of justice. For they say that the first expression of justice is, to hurt no one, except when driven to it by wrongs received. This is put aside by the authority of the Gospel. For the Scripture wills that the Spirit of the Son of Man should be in us, Who came to give grace, not to bring harm.¹⁶⁵

132. Next they considered it consonant with justice that one should treat common, that is, public property as public, and private as private. But this is not even in accord with nature, for nature has poured forth all things for all men for common use. God has ordered all things to be produced, so that there should be food in common to all, and that the earth should be a common possession for all. Nature, therefore, has produced a common right for all, but greed has made it a right for a few. Here, too, we are told that the Stoics taught that all things which are produced on the earth are created for the use of men, but that men are born for the sake of men, so that mutually one may be of advantage to another.¹⁶⁶

133. But whence have they got such ideas but out of the holy Scriptures? For Moses wrote that God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."¹⁶⁷ And David said: "Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea."¹⁶⁸ So these philosophers have learnt from our writings that all things were made subject to man, and, therefore, they think that all things were produced also for man's sake.

134. That man was made for the sake of man we find stated also in the books of Moses, when the Lord says: "It is not good that man should be alone, let us make him an helpmeet for him."¹⁶⁹ Thus the woman was given to the man to help him. She should bear him children, that one man might always be a help to another. Again, before the woman was formed, it was said of Adam:

"There was not found an help-meet for him."¹⁷⁰ For one man could not have proper help but from another. Amongst all the living creatures, therefore, there was none meet for him, or, to put it plainly, none to be his helper. Hence a woman was looked for to help him.

135. Thus, in accordance with the will of God and the union of nature, we ought to be of mutual help one to the other, and to vie with each other in doing duties, to lay all our advantages as it were before all, and (to use the words of Scripture) to bring help one to the other from a feeling of devotion or of duty, by giving money, or by doing something, at any rate in some way or other; so that the charm of human fellowship may ever grow sweeter amongst us, and none may ever be recalled from their duty by the fear of danger, but rather account all things, whether good or evil, as their own concern.¹⁷¹ Thus holy Moses feared not to undertake terrible wars for his people's sake, nor was he afraid of the arms of the mightiest kings, nor yet was he frightened at the savagery of barbarian nations. He put on one side the thought of his own safety so as to give freedom to the people.

136. Great, then, is the glory of justice; for she, existing rather for the good of others than of self, is an aid to the bonds of union and fellowship amongst us. She holds so high a place that she has all things laid under her authority, and further can bring help to others and supply money; nor does she refuse her services, but even undergoes dangers for others.

137. Who would not gladly climb and hold the heights of this virtue, were it not that greed weakens and lessens the power of such a virtue?¹⁷² For as long as we want to add to our possessions and to heap up money, to take into our possession fresh lands, and to be the richest of all, we have cast aside the form of justice and have lost the blessing of kindness towards all. How can he be just that tries to take from another what he wants for himself?

138. The desire to gain power also enervates¹⁷³ the perfect strength and beauty of justice. For how can he, who attempts to bring others under his own power, come forward on behalf of others? And how can a man help the weak against the strong, when he himself aspires to great power at the cost of liberty?

Chapter XXIX.

Justice should be observed even in war and with enemies. This is proved by the example of Moses and Elisha. The ancient writers learnt in turn from the Hebrews to call their enemies by a gentler term. Lastly, the foundation of justice rests on faith, and its symmetry is perfect in the Church.

139. How great a thing justice is can be gathered from the fact that there is no place, nor person, nor time, with which it has nothing to do. It must even be preserved in all dealings with enemies.¹⁷⁴ For instance, if the day or the spot for a battle has been agreed upon with them, it would be considered an act against justice to occupy the spot beforehand, or to anticipate the time. For there is some difference whether one is overcome in some battle by a severe engagement, or by superior skill, or by a mere chance. But a deeper vengeance is taken on fiercer foes, and on those that are false as well as on those who have done greater wrongs, as was the case with the Midianites.¹⁷⁵ For they had made many of the Jewish people to sin through their women; for which reason the anger of the Lord was poured out upon the people of our fathers. Thus it came about that Moses when victorious allowed none of them to live. On the other hand,

Joshua did not attack the Gibeonites, who had tried the people of our fathers with guile rather than with war, but punished them by laying on them a law of bondage.¹⁷⁶ Elisha again would not allow the king of Israel to slay the Syrians when he wished to do so. He had brought them into the city, when they were besieging him, after he had struck them with instantaneous blindness, so that they could not see where they were going, For he said: "Thou shalt not smite those whom thou hast not taken captive with thy spear and with thy sword. Set before them bread and water, that they may eat and drink and return and go to their own home."¹⁷⁷ Incited by their kind treatment they should show forth to the world the kindness they had received. "Thus" (we read) "there came no more the bands of Syria into the land of Israel."¹⁷⁸

140. If, then, justice is binding, even in war, how much more ought we to observe it in time of peace. Such favour the prophet showed to those who came to seize him. We read that the king of Syria had sent his army to lie in wait for him, for he had learnt that it was Elisha who had made known to all his plans and consultations. And Gehazi the prophet's servant, seeing the army, began to fear that his life was in danger. But the prophet said to him: "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."¹⁷⁹ And when the prophet asked that the eyes of his servant might be opened, they were opened. Then Gehazi saw the whole mountain full of horses and chariots round about Elisha. As they came down to him the prophet says: "Smite, O God, the army of Syria with blindness." And this prayer being granted, he says to the Syrians: "Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek." Then saw they Elisha, whom they were endeavouring to lay hold of, and seeing him they could not hold him fast.¹⁸⁰ It is clear from this that faith and justice should be observed even in war; and that it could not but be a disgraceful thing if faith were violated.

141. So also the ancients used to give their foes a less harsh name, and called them strangers.¹⁸¹ For enemies used to be called strangers after the customs of old. This too we can say they adopted from our writings; for the Hebrews used to call their foes "allophyllous," that is, when put into Latin, "alienigenas" (of another race). For so we read in the first book of Kings: "It came to pass in those days that they of another race put themselves in array against Israel."¹⁸²

142. The foundation of justice therefore is faith,¹⁸³ for the hearts of the just dwell on faith, and the just man that accuses himself builds justice on faith, for his justice becomes plain when he confesses the truth. So the Lord saith through Isaiah: "Behold, I lay a stone for a foundation in Sion."¹⁸⁴ This means Christ as the foundation of the Church. For Christ is the object of faith to all; but the Church is as it were the outward form of justice, she is the common right of all. For all in common she prays, for all in common she works, in the temptations of all she is tried. So he who denies himself is indeed a just man, is indeed worthy of Christ. For this reason Paul has made Christ to be the foundation, so that we may build upon Him the works of justice,¹⁸⁵ whilst faith is the foundation. In our works, then, if they are evil, there appears unrighteousness; if they are good, justice.

Chapter XXX. On kindness and its several parts, namely, good-will and liberality. How they are to be combined. What else is further needed for any one to show liberality in a praiseworthy manner.

143. Now we can go on to speak of kindness, which breaks up into two parts, goodwill and liberality. Kindness to exist in perfection must consist of these two qualities. It is not enough just to wish well; we must also do well. Nor, again, is it enough to do well, unless this springs from a good

source even from a good, will. "For God loveth a cheerful giver."¹⁸⁶ If we act unwillingly, what is our reward? Wherefore the Apostle, speaking generally, says: "If I do this thing willingly, I have a reward, but if unwillingly, a dispensation is given unto me."¹⁸⁷ In the Gospel, also, we have received many rules of just liberality.

144. It is thus a glorious thing to wish well, and to give freely, with the one desire to do good and not to do harm. For if we were to think it our duty to give the means to an extravagant man to live extravagantly, or to an adulterer to pay for his adultery, it would not be an act of kindness, for there would be no good-will in it. We should be doing harm, not good, to another if we gave him money to aid him in plotting against his country, or in attempting to get together at our expense some abandoned men to attack the Church. Nor, again, does it look like liberality to help one who presses very hardly on widows and orphans, or attempts to seize on their property with any show of violence.

145. It is no sign of a liberal spirit¹⁸⁸ to extort from one what we give to another, or to gain money unjustly, and then to think it can be well spent, unless we act as Zacchaeus¹⁸⁹ did, and restore fourfold what we have taken from him whom we have robbed, and make up for such heathenish crimes by the zeal of our faith and by true Christian labour. Our liberality must have some sure foundation.

146. The first thing necessary is to do kindness in good faith, and not to act falsely when the offering is made. Never let us say we are doing more, when we are really doing less. What need is there to speak at all? In a promise a cheat lies hid. It is in our power to give what we like. Cheating shatters the foundation, and so destroys the work. Did Peter grow angry only so far as to desire that Ananias and his wife should be slain?¹⁹⁰ Certainly not. He wished that others, through knowing their example, should not perish.

147. Nor is it a real act of liberality if thou givest for the sake of boasting about it, rather than for mercy's sake. Thy inner feelings give the name to thy acts. As it comes forth from thee, so will others regard it. See what a true judge thou hast! He consults with thee how to take up thy work, and first of all he questions thy mind. "Let not," he says, "thy left hand know what thy right hand doth."¹⁹¹ This does not refer to our actual bodies, but means: Let not him who is of one mind with thee, not even thy brother, know what thou doest, lest thou shouldst lose the fruit of thy reward hereafter by seeking here thy price in boastfulness. But that liberality is real where a man hides what he does in silence, and secretly assists the needs of individuals, whom the mouth of the poor, and not his own lips, praises.

148. Perfect liberality is proved by its good faith, the case it helps, the time and place when and where it is shown. But first we must always see that we help those of the household of faith.¹⁹² It is a serious fault if a believer is in want, and thou knowest it, or if thou knowest that he is without means, that he is hungry, that he suffer distress, especially if he is ashamed of his need. It is a great fault if he is overwhelmed by the imprisonment or false accusation of his family, and thou dost not come to his help. If he is in prison, and upright though he is-has to suffer pain and punishment for some debt (for though we ought to show mercy to all, yet we ought to show it especially to an upright man); if in the time of his trouble he obtains nothing from thee; if in the time of danger, when he is carried off to die, thy money seems more to thee than the life of a dying man; what a sin is that to thee! Wherefore Job says beautifully: "Let the blessing of him that was

ready to perish come upon me."193

149. God, indeed, is not a respecter of persons, for He knows all things. And we, indeed, ought to show mercy to all. But as many try to get help on false pretences, and make out that they are miserably off; therefore where the case is plain and the person well known, and no time is to be lost, mercy ought to be shown more readily. For the Lord is not exacting to demand the utmost. Blessed, indeed, is he who forsakes all and follows Him, but blessed also is he who does what he can to the best of his powers with what he has. The Lord preferred the two mites of the widow to all the gifts of the rich, for she gave all that she had, but they only gave a small part out of all their abundance.¹⁹⁴ It is the intention, therefore, that makes the gift valuable or poor, and gives to things their value. The Lord does not want us to give away all our goods at once, but to impart them little by little; unless, indeed, our case is like that of Elisha, who killed his oxen, and fed the people on what he had, so that no household cares might hold him back, and that he might give up all things, and devote himself to the prophetic teaching.¹⁹⁵

150. True liberality also must be tested in this way:¹⁹⁶ that we despise not our nearest relatives, if we know they are in want. For it is better for thee to help thy kindred who feel the shame of asking help from others, or of going to another to beg assistance in their need. Not, however, that they should become rich on what thou couldst otherwise give to the poor. It is the facts of the case we must consider, and not personal feeling. Thou didst not dedicate thyself to the Lord on purpose to make thy family rich, but that thou mightest win eternal life by the fruit of good works, and atone for thy sins by showing mercy. They think perhaps that they are asking but little, but they demand the price thou shouldst pay for thy sins. They attempt to take away the fruits of thy life, and think they are acting rightly.¹⁹⁷ And one accuses thee because thou hast not made him rich, when all the time he wished to cheat thee of the reward of eternal life.

151. So far we have given our advice, now let us look for our authority. First, then, no one ought to be ashamed of becoming poor after being rich, if this happens because he gives freely to the poor; for Christ became poor when He was rich, that through His poverty He might enrich all."¹⁹⁸ He has given us a rule to follow, so that we may give a good account of our reduced inheritance; whoever has stayed the hunger of the poor has lightened his distress. "Herein I give my advice," says the Apostle, "for this is expedient for you, that ye should be followers of Christ."¹⁹⁹ Advice is given to the good, but warnings restrain the wrong-doers. Again he says, as though to the good: "For ye have begun not only to do, but also to be willing, a year ago."²⁰⁰ Both of these, and not only one, is the mark of perfection. Thus he teaches that liberality without good-will, and good-will without liberality, are neither of them perfect. Wherefore he also urges us on to perfection, saying:²⁰¹ "Now, therefore, perform the doing of it; that as the will to do it was ready enough in you, so also there may be the will to accomplish it out of that which ye have. For if the will be ready, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. But not so that others should have plenty, and ye should be in want: but let there be equality,-your abundance must now serve for their want, that their abundance may serve for your want; that there may be equality, as it is written: "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack."²⁰²

152. We notice how the Apostle includes both good-will and liberality, as well as the manner, the fruits of right giving, and the persons concerned. The manner certainly, for he gave advice to those

not perfect: For only the imperfect suffer anxiety. But if any priest or other cleric, being unwilling to burden the Church,²⁰³ does not give away all that he has, but does honourably what his office demands, he does not seem to me to be imperfect. I think also that the Apostle here spoke not of anxiety of mind, but rather of domestic troubles.

153. And I think it was with reference to the persons concerned that he said: "that your abundance might serve for their want, and their abundance for your want." This means, that the abundance of the people might arouse them to good works, so as to supply the want of food of others; whilst the spiritual abundance of these latter might assist the want of spiritual merits among the people themselves, and so win them a blessing.

154. Wherefore he gave them an excellent example: "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." That example is a great encouragement to all men to show mercy. For he that possesses much gold has nothing over, for all in this world is as nothing; and he that has little has no lack, for what he loses is nothing already. The whole matter is without loss, for the whole of it is lost already.

155. We can also rightly understand it thus. He that has much, although he does not give away, has nothing over. For however much he gets, he always is in want, because he longs for more. And he who has little has no lack, for it does not cost much to feed the poor. In like manner, too, the poor person that gives spiritual blessings in return for money, although he has much grace, has nothing over. For grace does not burden the mind, but lightens it.

156. It can further be taken in this way: Thou, O man, hast nothing over! For how much hast thou really received, though it may seem much to thee? John, than whom none was greater among those born of woman, yet was less than he who is least in the kingdom of heaven.²⁰⁴

157. Or once more. The grace of God is never superabundant, humanly speaking, for it is spiritual. Who can measure its greatness or its breadth, which one cannot see? Faith, if it were as a grain of mustard seed, can transplant mountains-and more than a grain is not granted thee. If grace dwelt fully in thee, wouldst thou not have to fear lest thy mind should begin to be elated at so great a gift? For there are many who have fallen more terribly, from spiritual heights, than if they had never received grace at all from the Lord. And he who has little has no lack, for it is not tangible so as to be divided; and what seems little to him that has is much to him that lacks.

158. In giving we must also take into consideration age and weakness; sometimes, also, that natural feeling of shame, which indicates good birth. One ought to give more to the old who can no longer supply themselves with food by labour. So, too, weakness of body must be assisted, and that readily. Again, if any one after being rich has fallen into want, we must assist, especially if he has lost what he had from no sin of his own, but owing to robbery or banishment or false accusation.

159. Perchance some one may say: A blind man sits here in one place, and people pass him by, whilst a strong young man often has something given him. That is true; for he comes over people by his importunity. That is not because in their judgment he deserves it, but because they are wearied by his begging. For the Lord speaks in the Gospel of him who had already closed his door; how that when one knocks at his door very violently, he rises and gives what is wanted, because of his importunity.²⁰⁵

Chapter XXXI. A kindness received should be returned with a freer hand. This is shown by the example of the earth. A passage from Solomon about feasting is adduced to prove the same, and is expounded later in a spiritual sense.

160. It is also right²⁰⁶ that more regard should be paid to him who has conferred some benefit or girl upon thee, if he ever is reduced to want. For what is so contrary to one's duty as not to return what one has received? Nor do I think that a return of equal value should be made, but a greater. One ought to make up for the enjoyment of a kindness one has received from another, to such an extent as to help that person. even to putting an end to his needs. For not to be the better in returning than in conferring a kindness, is to be the inferior; for he who was the first to give was the first in point of time, and also first in showing a kind disposition.

161. Wherefore we must imitate the nature of the earth²⁰⁷ in this respect, which is wont to return the seed she has received, multiplied a thousand-fold. And so it is written: "As a field is the foolish man, and as a vineyard is the man without sense. If thou leavest him, he will be made desolate."²⁰⁸ As a field also is the wise man, so as to return the seed given him in fuller measure, as though it had been lent to him on interest. The earth either produces fruits of its own accord, or pays back and restores, what it was entrusted with, in fruitful abundance. In both these ways a return is due from thee, when thou enterest upon the use of thy father's possession, that thou mayest not be left to lie as an unfruitful field. It may be that a man can make an excuse for not giving anything, but how can he excuse himself for not returning what was given? It is hardly right not to give anything; it is certainly not right to make no return for kindness done to oneself.²⁰⁹

162. Therefore Solomon says well: "When thou sittest to eat at the table of a ruler consider diligently what is before thee, and put forth thine hand, knowing that it behoves thee to make such preparations. But if thou art insatiable, be not desirous of his dainties, for they have but a deceptive life."²¹⁰ I have written these words as I wish that we all should follow them. It is a good thing to do a service, but he who knows not how to return one is very hard. The earth herself supplies an example of kindliness. She provides fruits of her own accord, which thou didst not sow; she also returns many-fold what she has received. It is not right for thee to deny knowledge of money paid in to thee, and how can it be right to let a service done go without notice? In the book of Proverbs also it is said: that the repayment of kindness has such great power with God, that through it, even in the day of destruction, a man may find grace, though his sins outweigh all else.²¹¹ And why need I bring forward other examples when the Lord Himself promises in the Gospel a fuller reward to the merits of the saints, and exhorts us to do good works, saying: "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom."²¹²

163. But the feasting that Solomon speaks of has not to do with common food only, but it is to be understood as having to do with good works. For how can the soul be feasted in better wise than on good works; or what can so easily fill the mind of the just as the knowledge of a good work done? What pleasanter food is there than to do the will of God? The Lord has told us that He had this food alone in abundance, as it is written in the Gospel, saying: "My food is to do the will of My Father which is in heaven."²¹³

164. In this food let us delight of which the prophet says: "Delight thou in the Lord."²¹⁴ In this food they delight, who have with wonderful knowledge learnt to take in the higher delights; who can

know what that delight is which is pure and which can be understood by the mind. Let us therefore eat the bread of wisdom, and let us be filled with the word of God. For the life of man made in the image of God consists not in bread alone, but in every word that cometh from God.²¹⁵ About the cup, too, holy Job says, plainly enough: "As the earth waiteth for the rain, so did they for my words."²¹⁶

Chapter XXXII.

After saying what return must be made for the service of the above-mentioned feast, various reasons for repaying kindness are enumerated. Then he speaks in praise of good-will, on its results and its order.

165. It is therefore a good thing for us to be bedewed with the exhortations of the divine Scriptures, and that the word of God should come down upon us like the dew. When, therefore, thou sittest at the table of that great man, understand who that great man is. Set in the paradise of delight and placed at the feast of wisdom, think of what is put before thee! The divine Scriptures are the feast of wisdom, and the single books the various dishes. Know, first, what dishes the banquet offers, then stretch forth thy hand, that those things which thou readest, or which thou receivest from the Lord thy God, thou mayest carry out in action, and so by thy duties mayest show forth the grace that was granted thee. Such was the case with Peter and Paul, who in preaching the Gospel made some return to Him Who freely gave them all things. So that each of them might say: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace in me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all."²¹⁷

166. One repays the fruit of a service done him, and repays it, gold with gold, silver with silver. Another gives his labour. Another-and I do not know whether he does not do it in fuller measure-gives but the best wishes of his heart.²¹⁸ But what if there is no opportunity to make a return at hand? If we wish to return a kindness, more depends on the spirit in which we do it than on the amount of our property, whilst people will think more of our good-will, than of our power to make a full return. For a kindness done is regarded in the light of what one has. A great thing, therefore, is good-will. For even if it has nothing to give, yet it offers the more, and though there is nothing in its own possession, yet it gives largely to many, and does that, too, without loss to itself, and to the gain of the many. Thus good-will is better than liberality itself. It is richer in character than the other is in gifts; for there are more that need a kindness than there are that have abundance.

167. But good-will also goes in conjunction with liberality, for liberality really starts from it, seeing that the habit of giving comes after the desire to give. It exists, however, also separate and distinct. For where liberality is wanting, there good-will abide's-the parent as it were of all in common, uniting and binding friendships together. It is faithful in counsel, joyful in times of prosperity, and in times of sorrow sad. So it happens that any one trusts himself to the counsels of a man of good-will rather than to those of a wise one, as David did. For he, though he was the more farseeing, agreed to the counsels of Jonathan, who was the younger.²¹⁹ Remove good-will out of the reach of men, and it is as though one had withdrawn the sun from the world.²²⁰ For without it men would no longer care to show the way to the stranger, to recall the wanderer, to show hospitality (this latter is no small virtue, for on this point Job praised himself, when he said: "At my doors the stranger dwelt not, my gate was open to every one who came"),²²¹ nor even to give

water from the water that flows at their door, or to light another's candle at their own. Thus good-will exists in all these, like a fount of waters refreshing the thirsty, and like a light, which, shining forth to others, fails not them who have given a light to others from their own light.²²²

168. There is also liberality springing from good-will, that makes one tear up the bond of a debtor which one holds, without demanding any of the debt back from him. Holy Job bids us act thus by his own example.²²³ For he that has does not borrow, but he that has not does not put an end to the agreement. Why, then, if thou hast no need, dost thou save up for greedy heirs what thou canst give back immediately, and so get praise for good-will, and that without loss of money?

169. To go to the root of thereafter-good-will starts first with those at home, that is with children, parents, brothers, and goes on from one step to another throughout the world.²²⁴ Having started from Paradise, it has filled the world. For God set the feeling of good-will in the man and woman, saying: "They shall be one flesh,"²²⁵ and (one may add) one spirit. Wherefore Eve also believed the serpent; for she who had received the gift of good-will did not think there was ill-will.

Chapter XXXIII.

Good-will exists especially in the Church, and nourishes kindred virtues.

170. Good-Will expands in the body of the Church,²²⁶ by fellowship in faith, by the bond of baptism, by kinship through grace received, by communion in the mysteries. For all these bonds claim for themselves the name of intimacy, the reverence of children, the authority and religious care of parents, the relationship of brothers. Therefore the bonds of grace clearly point to an increase of good-will.

171. The desire to attain to like virtues also stands one in good stead;²²⁷ just as again good-will brings about a likeness in character. For Jonathan the king's son imitated the gentleness of holy David, because he loved him. Wherefore those words: "With the holy thou shalt be holy,"²²⁸ seem not only to be concerned with our ordinary intercourse, but also to have some connection with good-will. The sons of Noah indeed dwelt together, and yet their characters were not at all alike. Esau and Jacob also dwelt together in their father's house, but were very unlike. There was, however, no good-will between them to make the one prefer the other to himself, but rather a rivalry as to which should first get the blessing. Since one was so hard, and the other gentle, good-will could not exist as between such different characters and conflicting desires. Add to this the fact that holy Jacob could not prefer the unworthy in son of his father's house to virtue.

172. But nothing is so harmonious²²⁹ as justice and impartiality. For this, as the comrade and ally of good-will, makes us love those whom we think to be like ourselves. Again, good-will contains also in itself fortitude. For when friendship springs from the fount of good-will it does not hesitate to endure the great dangers of life for a friend. "If evils come to me through him," it says, "I will bear them."²³⁰

Chapter XXXIV.

Some other advantages of goodwill are here enumerated.

173. Good-Will also is wont to remove the sword of anger. It is also good-will that makes the wounds of a friend to be better than the willing kisses of an enemy.²³¹ Goodwill again makes

many to become one. For if many are friends, they become one; in whom there is but one spirit and one opinion.²³² We note, too, that in friendship corrections are pleasing. They have their sting, but they cause no pain. We are pierced by the words of blame, but are delighted with the anxiety that good-will shows.

174. To conclude, the same duties are not owed to all. Nor is regard ever paid to persons, though the occasion and the circumstances of the case are generally taken into consideration, so that one may at times have to help a neighbour rather than one's brother. For Solomon also says: "Better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off."²³³ For this reason a man generally trusts himself to the good-will of a friend rather than to the ties of relationship with his brother. So far does good-will prevail that it often goes beyond the pledges given by nature.

Chapter XXXV. On fortitude. This is divided into two parts: as it concerns matters of war and matters at home. The first cannot be a virtue unless combined with justice and prudence. The other depends to a large extent upon endurance.

175. We have discussed fully enough the nature and force of what is virtuous from the standpoint of justice.²³⁴ Now let us discuss fortitude, which (being a loftier virtue than the rest) is divided into two parts, as it concerns matters of war and matters at home. But the thought of warlike matters seems to be foreign to the duty of our office, for we have our thoughts fixed more on the duty of the soul than on that of the body; nor is it our business to look to arms, but rather to the affairs of peace. Our fathers, however, as Joshua, the son of Nun, Jerubbaal, Samson, and David, gained great glory also in war.

176. Fortitude, therefore, is a loftier virtue than the rest, but it is also one that never stands alone. For it never depends on itself alone. Moreover, fortitude without justice is the source of wickedness.²³⁵ For the stronger it is, the more ready is it to crush the weaker, whilst in matters of war one ought to see whether the war is just or unjust.

177. David never waged war unless he was driven to it. Thus prudence was combined in him with fortitude in the battle. For even when about to fight single-handed against Goliath, the enormous giant, he rejected the armour with which he was laden.²³⁶ His strength depended more on his own arm than on the weapons of others. Then, at a distance, to get a stronger throw, with one cast of a stone, he slew his enemy. After that he never entered on a war without seeking counsel of the Lord.²³⁷ Thus he was victorious in all wars, and even to his last years was ready to fight. And when war arose with the Philistines, he joined battle with their fierce troops, being desirous of winning renown, whilst careless of his own safety.²³⁸ 178. But this is not the only kind of fortitude which is worthy of note. We consider their fortitude glorious, who, with greatness of mind, "through faith stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong."²³⁹ They did not gain a victory in common with many, surrounded with comrades, and aided by the legions, but won their triumph alone over their treacherous foes by the mere courage of their own souls. How unconquerable was Daniel, who feared not the lions raging round about him. The beasts roared, whilst he was eating.²⁴⁰

Chapter XXXVI.

One of the duties of fortitude is to keep the weak from receiving injury; another, to check the wrong motions of our own souls; a third, both to disregard humiliations, and to do what is right with an

even mind. All these clearly ought to be fulfilled by all Christians, and especially by the clergy.

179. The glory of fortitude, therefore, does not rest only on the strength of one's body or of one's arms, but rather on the courage of the mind.²⁴¹ Nor is the law of courage exercised in causing, but in driving away all harm. He who does not keep harm off a friend, if he can, is as much in fault as he who causes it. Wherefore holy Moses gave this as a first proof of his fortitude in war. For when he saw an Hebrew receiving hard treatment at the hands of an Egyptian, he defended him, and laid low the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.²⁴² Solomon also says: "Deliver him that is led to death."²⁴³

180. From whence, then, Cicero and Panaetius, or even Aristotle, got these ideas is perfectly clear. For though living before these two, Job had said: "I delivered the poor out of the hand of the strong, and I aided the fatherless for whom there was no helper. Let the blessing of him that was ready to perish come upon me."²⁴⁴ Was not he most brave in that he bore so nobly the attacks of the devil, and overcame him with the powers of his mind?²⁴⁵ Nor have we cause to doubt the fortitude of him to whom the Lord said: "Gird up thy loins like a man. Put on loftiness and power. Humble every one that doeth wrong."²⁴⁶ The Apostle also says: "Ye have a strong consolation."²⁴⁷ He, then, is brave who finds consolation in any grief.

181. And in very truth, rightly is that called fortitude, when a man conquers himself, restrains his anger, yields and gives way to no allurements, is not put out by misfortunes, nor gets elated by good success, and does not get carried away by every varying change as by some chance wind.²⁴⁸ But what is more noble and splendid than to train the mind, keep down the flesh, and reduce it to subjection, so that it may obey commands, listen to reason, and in undergoing labours readily carry out the intention and wish of the mind?

182. This, then, is the first notion of fortitude. For fortitude of the mind can be regarded in two ways.²⁴⁹ First, as it counts all externals as very unimportant, and looks on them as rather superfluous and to be despised than to be sought after. Secondly, as it strives after those things which are the highest, and all things in which one can see anything moral (or as the Greeks call it, prepon,) with all the powers of the mind. For what can be more noble than to train thy mind so as not to place a high value on riches and pleasures and honours, nor to waste all thy care on these? When thy mind is thus disposed, thou must consider how all that is virtuous and seemly must be placed before everything else; and thou must so fix thy mind upon that, that if aught happens which may break thy spirit, whether loss of property, or the reception of fewer honours, or the disparagement of unbelievers, thou mayest not feel it, as though thou wert above such things; nay, so that even dangers which menace thy safety, if undertaken at the call of justice, may not trouble thee.

183. This is the true fortitude which Christ's warrior has, who receives not the crown unless he strives lawfully.²⁵⁰ Or does that call to fortitude seem to thee but a poor one: "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope"?²⁵¹ See how many a contest there is, yet but one crown! That call none gives, but he who was strengthened in Christ Jesus, and whose flesh had no rest. Affliction on all sides, fighting without and fears within.²⁵² And though in dangers, in countless labours, in prisons, in deaths²⁵³ -he was not broken in spirit, but fought so as to become more powerful through his infirmities.

184. Think, then, how he teaches those who enter upon their duties in the Church, that they ought to have contempt for all earthly things: "If, then, ye be dead with Christ from the elements of this world, why do ye act as though living in the world? Touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using."²⁵⁴ And further: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, not those things which are on the earth."²⁵⁵ And again: "Mortify, therefore, your members which are on the earth."²⁵⁶ This, indeed, is meant for all the faithful. But thee, especially, my son, he urges to despise riches and to avoid profane and old wives fables-allowing nothing but this: "Exercise thyself unto godliness, for bodily exercise profiteth a little, but godliness is profitable unto all things."²⁵⁷

185. Let, then, godliness exercise thee unto justice, continence, gentleness, that thou mayest avoid childish acts, and that rooted and grounded in grace thou mayest fight the good fight of faith.²⁵⁸ Entangle not thyself in the affairs of this life, for thou art fighting for God.²⁵⁹ For if he who fights for the emperor is forbidden by human laws to enter upon lawsuits, to do any legal business, or to sell merchandise; how much more ought he who enters upon the warfare of faith to keep from every kind of business, being satisfied with the produce of his own little bit of land, if he has it? If he has not that, let him be content with the pay he will get for his service. Here is a good witness to this fact, who says: "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."²⁶⁰ That is the true rest and temperance of the mind which is not excited by the desire of gain, nor tormented by the fear of want.

Chapter XXXVII. An even mind should be preserved in adversity as well as in prosperity. However, evil things must be avoided.

186. There is also that true freedom of the mind from vexation which makes us neither give way too much in our griefs, nor be too elated in prosperity.²⁶¹ And if they who urge men to undertake the affairs of the state give such rules, how much more ought we who are called to do duty in the Church, to act thus and do those things which are pleasing to God, so that Christ's power may show itself forth in us. We too must prove ourselves to our Captain, so that our members may be the weapons of justice; not carnal weapons in which sin may reign, but weapons strong for God, whereby sin may be destroyed. Let our flesh die, that in it every sin may die. And as though living again after death, may we rise to new works and a new life.

187. These, then, are the services of fortitude; and full they are of virtuous and seemly duties. But in all that we do we must look to see, not only if it is virtuous, but whether it is possible, so that we may not enter upon anything that we cannot carry out.²⁶² Wherefore the Lord, to use His own word, wills us to flee in the time of persecution from one city to another;²⁶³ so that no one, whilst longing for the crown of martyrdom, may put himself in the way of dangers which possibly the weak flesh or a mind indulged could not bear and endure.

Chapter XXXVIII.

We must strengthen the mind against troubles to come, and build it up by looking out for them beforehand. What difficulties there are in doing this.

188. But again, no one must retire through cowardice, or give up his faith from fear of danger. With what grace must the soul be equipped, and the mind trained and taught. to stand firm, so as never to be disturbed by any fears, to be broken by any troubles, or to yield to any torments! With what

difficulty indeed are they borne! But as all pains seem less in the fear of greater pains, so also, if thou dost build up thy soul by quiet counsel, and dost determine not to go from thy course, and layest before thee the fear of divine judgment and the torment of eternal punishment, canst thou gain endurance of mind.

189. If a man thus prepares himself, he gives signs of great diligence. On the other hand it is a sign of natural ability, if a man by the power of his mind can foresee the future, and put as it were before his eyes what may happen, and decide what he ought to do if it should take place. It may happen, too, that he will think over two or three things at once, which he supposes may come either singly or together, and that he settles what he will do with them as he thinks will be to the most advantage, in the event of their coming either singly or together.

200. Therefore it is the duty of a brave man not to shut his eyes when anything threatens, but to put it before him and to search it out as it were in the mirror of his mind, and to meet the future with foreseeing thought, for fear he might afterwards have to say: This has come to me because I thought it could not come about. If misfortunes are not looked for beforehand, they quickly get a hold over us. In war an unexpected enemy is with difficulty resisted, and if he finds the others unprepared, he easily overcomes them; so evils unthought of readily break down the soul.

200. In these two points, then, consists the excellency of the soul: so that thy soul, trained in good thoughts, and with a pure heart, first, may see what is true and virtuous (for "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"),²⁶⁴ and may decide that only to be good which is virtuous; and, next, may never be disturbed by business of any kind, nor get tossed about by any desires.

201. Not that this is an easy thing for any one. For what is so difficult as to discern, as though from some watch-tower, the resources of wisdom and all those other things, which to most seem so great and noble? Again, what so difficult as to place one's decision on fixed grounds, and to despise what one has decided to be worthless, as of no good? Or, once more, what so difficult, when some misfortune has happened, and it is looked on as something serious and grieving, as to bear it in such a way that one considers it nothing beyond what is natural, when one reads: "Naked was I born, naked shall I go forth. What the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away"²⁶⁵ (he who said this had lost children and possessions), and to preserve in all things the character of a wise and upright man, as he did who says: "As the Lord pleased, so did He. Blessed be the name of the Lord."²⁶⁶ And again: "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"²⁶⁷

Chapter XXXIX.

One must show fortitude in fighting against all vices, especially against avarice. Holy Job teaches this lesson.

202. Fortitude of soul, then, is not an unimportant thing, nor is it cut off from the other virtues, for it wages war in conjunction with the virtues, and alone defends the beauty of all the virtues, and guards their powers of discernment, and fights against all vices with implacable hate. It is unconquerable as regards labours, brave to endure dangers, stern as against pleasures, hardened against allurements, to which it knows not how to lend an ear, nor, so to speak, to give a greeting. It cares not for money, and flies from avarice as from a plague that destroys all virtue.²⁶⁸ For nothing is so much opposed to fortitude as when one allows one self to be overcome by gain.

Often when the enemy is repulsed and the hosts of the foe are turned to flight, has the warrior died miserably among those whom he has laid low, whilst he is busy with the spoils of the fallen; and the legions, whilst busy with their booty, have called back upon them the enemy that had fled, and so have been robbed of their triumph.

203. Fortitude, then, must repulse so foul a plague and crush it down. It must not let itself be tempted by desires, nor shaken by fear. Virtue stands true to itself and bravely pursues all vices as though they were the poison of virtue. It must repel anger as it were with arms, for it removes counsel far off. It must avoid it as though it were some severe sickness.²⁶⁹ It must further be on its guard against a desire for glory, which often has done harm when sought for too anxiously, and always when it has been once attained.

204. What of all this was wanting in holy Job, or in his virtue, or what came upon him in the way of vice? How did he bear the distress of sickness or cold or hunger? How did he look upon the dangers which menaced his safety? Were the riches from which so much went to the poor gathered together by plunder? Did he ever allow greed for wealth, or the desire for pleasures, or lusts to rise in his heart? Did ever the unkind disputes of the three princes, or the insults of the slaves, rouse him to anger? Did glory carry him away like some fickle person when he called down vengeance on himself if ever he had hidden even an involuntary fault, or had feared the multitude of the people so as not to confess it in the sight of all? His virtues had no point of contact with any vices, but stood firm on their own ground. Who, then, was so brave as holy Job? How can he be put second to any, on whose level hardly one like himself can be placed?

Chapter XL.

Courage in war was not wanting in our forefathers, as is shown by the example of the men of old, especially by the glorious deed of Eleazar.

205. But perhaps renown in war keeps some so bound to itself²⁷⁰ as to make them think that fortitude is to be found in battle alone, and that therefore I had gone aside to speak of these things, because that was wanting in us. But how brave was Joshua the son of Nun, who in one battle laid low five kings together with their people!²⁷¹ Again, when he fought against the Gibeonites and feared that night might stop him from gaining the victory, he called out with deep faith and high spirit:²⁷² "Let the sun stand still;" and it stood still until the victory was complete. Gideon with three hundred men gained a triumph over a great nation and a cruel foe.²⁷³ Jonathan when a young man showed great courage in battle,²⁷⁴ and what shall I say about the Maccabees?

206. First, I will speak of the people of our fathers. They were ready to fight for the temple of God and for their rights, and when attacked on the Sabbath day by the craft of the enemy, willingly allowed wounds to be inflicted on their unprotected bodies, rather than to join in the fight, so that they might not defile the Sabbath.²⁷⁵ They all gladly gave themselves up to death. But the Maccabees thinking that then all the nation would perish, on the Sabbath also, when they were challenged to fight, took vengeance for the death of their innocent brethren. And afterwards when he had been roused by this to fresh exertions, King Antiochus, having begun the war afresh under the leadership of his generals Lysias, Nicanor, and Georgias, was so utterly crushed, together with his Eastern and Assyrian forces, that he left 48,000 lying on the battle-field, slain by an army of but 3,000 men.

207. Mark the courage of the leader, Judas Maccabaeus, as exemplified in the character of one of his soldiers. Eleazar,²⁷⁶ meeting with an elephant higher than all the rest, and with all the royal trappings upon it, and thinking that the king was on it, ran hastily and threw himself into the midst of the legion; and, casting away his shield, with both hands he slew those opposed to him until he reached the beast.²⁷⁷ Then he got beneath it, thrust in his sword and slew it. But the beast in falling crushed Eleazar and so killed him. What courage of mind was his then, first, in that he feared not death, next because, when surrounded by enemies, he was carried by it into the thickest of his foes and penetrated the very centre! Then, despising death, and casting away his shield, he ran beneath the huge beast, wounded it with both his hands, and let it fall upon him. He ran beneath it so as to give a more deadly blow. Enclosed by its fall, rather than crushed, he was buried in his own triumph.

208. Nor was he deceived in his intention though he was deceived by the royal ornaments. For the enemy, startled at such an exhibition of valour, dared not rush upon this single unarmed man, held fast though he was. They were so terrified after the mischance of the slaughter of the beast, that they considered themselves altogether unequal to the valour of one. Nay, King Antiochus, son of Lysias, terrified at the fortitude of one, asked for peace. He had come to the war with 120,000 armed men and with 32 elephants, which glittered and gleamed with the sheen of arms like a line of burning lamps, as the sun rose upon them, marching along one by one, like very mountains for size.²⁷⁸ Thus Eleazar left peace as the heir of his courage. These are the signs of triumphs.

Chapter XLI.

After praising Judas' and Jonathan's loftiness of mind, the constancy of the martyrs in their endurance of tortures, which is no small part of fortitude, is next brought before us.

209. But as fortitude is proved not only by prosperity but also in adversity, let us now consider the death of Judas Maccabaeus. For he, after Nicanor, the general of King Demetrius, was defeated, boldly engaged 20,000 of the king's army with 900 men who were anxious to retire for fear of being overcome by so great a multitude, but whom he persuaded to endure a glorious death rather than to retire in disgraceful flight. "Let us not leave," he says, "any stain upon our glory." Thus, then, engaging in battle after having fought from sunrise till evening, he attacks and quickly drives back the right wing, where he sees the strongest troop of the enemy to be. But whilst pursuing the fugitives from the rear he gave a chance for a wound to be inflicted.²⁷⁹ Thus he found the spot of death more full of glory for himself than any triumph.

210. Why need I further mention his brother Jonathan, who fought against the king's force, with but a small troop.²⁸⁰ Though forsaken by his men, and left with only two, he retrieved the battle, drove back the enemy, and recalled his own men, who were flying in every direction, to share in his triumph.

211. Here, then, is fortitude in war, which bears no light impress of what is virtuous and seemly upon it, for it prefers death to slavery and disgrace. But what am I to say of the sufferings of the martyrs? Not to go too far abroad, did not the children of Maccabaeus gain triumphs over the proud King Antiochus, as great as those of their fathers? The latter in truth were armed, but they conquered without arms. The company of the seven brothers stood unconquered,²⁸¹ though surrounded by the legions of the king-tortures failed, tormentors ceased; but the martyrs failed not.

One, having had the skin of his head pulled off, though changed in appearance, grew in courage. Another, bidden to put forth his tongue, so that it might be cut off, answered: "The Lord hears not only those who speak, for He heard Moses when silent. He hears better the silent thoughts of His own than the voice of all others. Dost thou fear the scourge of my tongue-and dost thou not fear the scourge of blood spilt upon the ground? Blood, too, has a voice whereby it cries aloud to God-as it did in the case of Abel."

212. What shall I say of the mother²⁸² who with joy looked on the corpses of her children as so many trophies, and found delight in the voices of her dying sons, as though in the songs of singers, noting in her children the tones of the glorious harp of her own heart, and a sweeter harmony of love than any strain of the lute could give?

213. What shall I say of those two-year-old children of Bethlehem,²⁸³ who received the palm of victory before they felt their natural life within them? What of St. Agnes, who when in danger as regards two great matters, that is, chastity and life, protected her chastity and exchanged life for immortality?

214. And let us not pass by St. Lawrence, who, seeing Xystus his bishop led to martyrdom, began to weep, not at his sufferings but at the fact that he himself was to remain behind. With these words he began to address him: "Whither, father, goest thou without thy son? Whither, holy priest, art thou hastening without thy deacon? Never wast thou wont to offer sacrifice without an attendant. What are thou displeased at in me, my father? Hast thou found me unworthy? Prove, then, whether thou hast chosen a fitting servant. To him to whom thou hast entrusted the consecration²⁸⁴ of the Saviour's blood,²⁸⁵ to whom thou hast granted fellowship in partaking of the Sacraments, to him dost thou refuse a part in thy death? Beware lest thy good judgment be endangered, whilst thy fortitude receives its praise. The rejection of a pupil is the loss of the teacher; or how is it that noble and illustrious men gain the victory in the contests of their scholars rather than in their own? Abraham offered his son, Peter sent Stephen on before him! Do thou, father, show forth thy courage in thy son. Offer me whom thou hast trained, that thou, confident in thy choice of me, mayest reach the crown in worthy company."

215. Then Xystus said: "I leave thee not nor forsake thee. Greater struggles yet await thee. We as old men have to undergo an easier fight; a more glorious triumph over the tyrant awaits thee, a young man. Soon shalt thou come. Cease weeping; after three days thou shalt follow me. This interval must come between the priest and his levite. It was not for thee to conquer under the eye of thy master, as though thou neededst a helper. Why dost thou seek to share in my death? I leave to thee its full inheritance. Why dost thou need my presence? Let the weak disciples go before their master, let the brave follow him, that they may conquer without him. For they no longer need his guidance. So Elijah left Elisha. To thee I entrust the full succession to my own courage."

216. Such was their contention, and surely a worthy one, wherein priest and attendant strove as to who should be the first to suffer for the name of Christ. When that tragic piece is played, it is said there is great applause in the theatre as Pylades says he is Orestes, whilst Orestes declares that he is really himself. The former acted as he did, that he might die for Orestes, and Orestes, that he might not allow Pylades to be slain instead of himself. But it was not right that they should live, for each of them was guilty of parricide, the one because he had committed the crime, the other because he had helped in its commission. But here there was nothing to call holy Lawrence to act

thus but his love and devotion. However, after three days he was placed upon the gridiron by the tyrant whom he mocked, and was burnt. He said: "The flesh is roasted, turn it and eat." So by the courage of his mind he overcame the power of fire.

Chapter XLII. The powers that be are not needlessly to be irritated. One must not lend one's ears to flattery.

217. I Think we must take care, lest in being led on by too great a desire for glory, we should abuse the powers that be, and arouse the minds of the heathen, who are opposed to us, to desire persecution, and excite them to anger. How many do some cause to perish, that they themselves may continue to the end, and overcome their tortures!

218. We must also look to it that we do not open our ears to flatterers. To allow oneself to be smoothed down by flattery seems to be a sign not only of want of fortitude, but a sign of actual cowardice.

Chapter XLIII. On temperance and its chief parts, especially tranquillity of mind and moderation, care for what is virtuous, and reflection on what is seemly.

219. As we have spoken of three of the virtues, there remains but the fourth for us to speak of.²⁸⁶ This is called temperance and moderation; wherein, before all else, tranquillity of mind, the attainment of gentleness, the grace of moderation, regard for what is virtuous, and reflection on what is seemly are sought and looked for.

220. We must keep to a certain order in life, so that a foundation may be laid with our first feelings of modesty, for that is the friend and ally of calmness of mind. Avoiding over-confidence, averse to all excess, it loves sobriety, guards what is honourable, and seeks only what is seemly.

221. Let choice of intercourse come next. Let us link ourselves with older men of approved goodness. For as the companionship of people of our own age is the pleasanter, so that of our elders is the safer. By their guidance and the conduct of their lives they give colour to the character of younger men, and tinge them as it were with the deep purple of probity. For if they who are ignorant of a locality are very glad to take a journey in the company of skilled guides, how much more ought young men to enter on the path of life, which is new to them, in the company of old men; so that they may not go wrong, and turn aside from the true path of virtue. For nothing is better than to have the same men both to direct us in life, and also to be witnesses of how we live.

222. One must also in every action consider what is suitable for different persons, times, and ages, and what will also be in accordance with the abilities of individuals. For often what befits one does not befit another; one thing suits a youth, another an old man; one thing does in danger, another in good fortune.

223. David danced before the ark of the Lord.²⁸⁷ Samuel did not dance; yet David was not blamed, while the other was praised. David changed his countenance before the king, whose name was Achish.²⁸⁸ If he had done this without any fear of being recognized, he would certainly not have escaped the charge of levity. Saul also, surrounded by the company of prophets, himself prophesied. Yet of him alone, as though he were unworthy, was it said: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"²⁸⁹

Chapter XLIV.

Every one ought to apply himself to the duties suited to his character. Many, however, are hindered by following their fathers' pursuits. Clerics act in a different way.

224. Each one knows his own powers. Therefore let each one apply himself to that which he has chosen as suitable to himself. But he must first consider what will be the consequences. He may know his good points, but he must know his faults also. He must also be a fair judge of himself, so as to aim at what is good and avoid what is bad.

225. One is more fitted for the post of reader, another does better for the singing, a third is more solicitous for exorcising those possessed with an evil spirit, another, again, is held to be more suited to have the charge of the sacred things. All these things a priest should look at. He should give each one that particular duty for which he is best fitted. For whither each one's bent of mind leads him, or whatever duty befits him, that position or duty is filled with greater grace.

226. But as this is a difficult matter in every state of life, so in our case it is most difficult. For each one is wont to follow his parent's choice in life.²⁹⁰ Thus those whose fathers were in the army generally enter the army too. And others do the same with regard to the different professions.

227. In the clerical office, however, nothing is more rare than to find a man to follow his father's footsteps,²⁹¹ either because the difficulties of the work hold him back, or continence in the uncertain days of youth is too difficult to hold to, or the life seems to be too quiet for the activity of youth. So they turn to those pursuits which are thought to be more showy. Most, indeed, prefer the present to the future. They are fighting for the present, we for the future. Wherefore it follows that the greater the cause in which we are engaged, the more must our attention be devoted to it.

Chapter XLV. On what is noble and virtuous, and what the difference between them is, as stated both in the profane and sacred writers.

228. Let us then hold fast modesty, and that moderation which adds to the beauty of the whole of life. For it is no light thing in every matter to preserve due measure and to bring about order, wherein that is plainly conspicuous which we call "decorum," or what is seemly. This is so closely connected with what is virtuous, that one cannot separate the two.²⁹² For what is seemly is also virtuous-and what is virtuous is seemly. So that the distinction lies rather in the words than in the things themselves. That there is a difference between them we can understand, but we cannot explain it.

229. To make an attempt to get some sort of a distinction between them, we may say that what is virtuous may be compared to the good health and soundness of the body, whilst what is seemly is, as it were, its comeliness and beauty. And as beauty seems to stand above soundness and health, and yet cannot exist without them, nor be separated from them in any way-for unless one has good health, one cannot have beauty and comeliness-so what is virtuous contains in itself also what is seemly, so as to seem to start with it, and to be unable to exist without it. What is virtuous, then, is like soundness in all our work and undertaking; what is seemly is, as it were, the outward appearance, which, when joined with what is virtuous, can only be known apart in our thoughts. For though in some cases it seems to stand out conspicuous, yet it has its root in what is virtuous, though the flower is its own. Rooted in this, it flourishes; otherwise it fails and droops. For what is

virtue, but to avoid anything shameful as though it were death? And what is the opposite of virtue, except that which brings barrenness and death? If, then, the essence of virtue is strong and vigorous, seemliness will also quickly spring forth like a flower, for its root is sound. But if the root of its purpose is corrupt, nothing will grow out of it.

230. In our writings this is put somewhat more plainly. For David says: "The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with splendour."²⁹³ And the Apostle says: "Walk honestly as in the day."²⁹⁴ The Greek text has *eusxhmonwj*-and this really means: with good clothing, with a good appearance. When God made the first man, He created him with a good figure, with limbs well set, and gave him a very noble appearance. He had not given him remission of sins. But afterwards He, Who came in the form of a servant, and in the likeness of man, renewed him with His Spirit, and poured His grace into his heart, and put on Himself the splendour²⁹⁵ of the redemption of the human race. Therefore the Prophet said: "The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with splendour."²⁹⁶ And again he says: "A hymn beseems Thee, O God, in Sion."²⁹⁷ That is: It is right and good to fear Thee, to love Thee, to pray to Thee, to honour Thee, for it is written: "Let all things be done decently and in order."²⁹⁸ But we can also fear, love, ask, honour men; yet the hymn especially is addressed to God. This seemliness which we offer to God we may believe to be far better than other things. It befits also a woman to pray in an orderly dress,²⁹⁹ but it especially beseems her to pray covered, and to pray giving promise of purity together with a good conversation.

Chapter XLVI. A twofold division of what is seemly is given. Next it is shown that what is according to nature is virtuous, and what is otherwise must be looked on as shameful. This division is explained by examples.

231. Seemliness, therefore, which stands conspicuous has a twofold division.³⁰⁰ For there is what we may call a general seemli-ness, which is diffused through all that is virtuous, and is seen, as one may say, in the whole body. It is also individual, and shows itself clearly in some particular part. The first has a consistent form and the perfection of what is virtuous harmonizing in every action. For all its life is consistent with itself, and there is no discrepancy in anything. The other is concerned when there is any special action done in a virtuous course of life.

232. At the same time let us note that it is seemly to live in accordance with nature, and to pass our time in accordance with it, and that whatever is contrary to nature is shameful. For the Apostle asks: "Is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered; doth not nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? For it is contrary to nature." And again he says: "If a woman have long hair, it is a glory unto her."³⁰¹ It is according to nature, since her hair is given her for a veil, for it is a natural veil. Thus nature arranges for us both character and appearance, and we ought to observe her directions. Would that we could guard her innocence, and not change what we have received by our wickedness!

233. We have that general seemliness; for God made the beauty of this world. We have it also in its parts; for when God made the light, and marked off the day from the night, when He made heaven, and separated land and seas, when He set the sun and moon and stars to shine on the earth, He approved of them all one by one. Therefore this comeliness, which shone forth in each single part of the world, was resplendent in the whole, as the Book of Wisdom shows, saying: "I existed, in whom He rejoiced when He was glad at the completion of the world."³⁰² Likewise also in the building up of the human body each single member is pleasing, but the right adjustment of

the members all together delights us far more. For thus they seem to be united and fitted in one harmonious whole.

Chapter XLVII.

What is seemly should always shine forth in our life. What passions, then, ought we to allow to come to a head, and which should we restrain?

234. If any one preserves an even tenor in the whole of life, and method in all that he does, and sees there is order and consistency in his words and moderation in his deeds, then what is seemly stands forth conspicuous in his life and shines forth as in some mirror.

235. There should be besides a pleasant way of speaking, so that we may win the good-will of those who hear us, and make ourselves agreeable to all our friends and fellow-citizens, if possible. Let none show himself to be given to flattery, nor to be desirous of flattery from any one. The one is a mark of artfulness, the other of vanity.

236. Let no one ever look down on what another, least of all a good man, thinks of him, for thus he learns to give regard to the good. For to disregard the judgment of good men is a sign of conceitedness or of weakness. One of these arises from pride, the other from carelessness.

237. We must also guard against the motions of our soul. The soul must always watch and look after itself, so as to guard itself against itself. For there are motions in which there is a kind of passion that breaks forth as it were in a sort of rush. Wherefore in Greek it is called *ormh*, because it comes out suddenly with some force. In these there lies no slight force of soul or of nature. Its force, however, is twofold: on the one side it rests on passion, on the other on reason, which checks passion, and makes it obedient to itself, and leads it whither it will; and trains it by careful teaching to know what ought to be done, and what ought to be avoided, so as to make it submit to its kind tamer.

238. For we ought to be careful never to do anything rashly or carelessly, or anything at all for which we cannot give a reasonable ground. For though a reason for our action is not given to every one, yet everybody looks into it. Nor, indeed, have we anything whereby we can excuse ourselves. For though there is a sort of natural force in every passion of ours, yet that same passion is subject to reason by the law of nature itself, and is obedient to it.³⁰³ Wherefore it is the duty of a careful watchman so to keep a lookout, that passion may not outrun reason nor utterly forsake it, lest by outstripping it confusion be caused, and reason be shut out, and come to nothing by such desertion. Disquiet destroys consistency. Withdrawal shows cowardice and implies indolence. For when the mind is disquieted passion spreads wide and far, and in a fierce outburst endures not the reins of reason and feels not the management of its driver so as to be turned back. Wherefore as a rule not only is the soul perturbed and reason lost, but one's countenance gets inflamed by anger or by lust. it grows pale with fear, it contains not itself in pleasure, and cannot bear joy.

239. When this happens, then that natural judgment and weight of character is cast aside, and that consistency which alone in deed and thought can keep up its own authority and what is seemly, can no longer be retained.

240. But fiercer passion springs from excessive anger,³⁰⁴ which the pain of some wrong received kindles within us. The monitions of the psalm which forms the opening of our subject instruct us on this point. Beautifully; then, has it come about that, in writing on duties, we used that declaration of our opening passage which also itself has to do with the direction of duty.

241. But since (as was but right) we there only touched upon the matter, as to how each one ought to take care not to be disturbed when wrong is done him, for fear that our preliminary remarks should run to too great length, I think that I will now discuss it a little more fully. For the occasion is opportune, as we are speaking on the different parts of temperance, to see how anger may be checked.

Chapter XLVIII. The argument for restraining anger is given again. Then the three classes of those who receive wrongs are set forth; to the most perfect of which the Apostle and David are said to have attained. He takes the opportunity to state the difference between this and the future life.

242. We wish if we can to point out three classes of men who receive wrongs in holy Scripture. One of these forms the class of those whom the sinner reviles, abuses, rides over rough-shod.³⁰⁵ And just because justice fails them, shame grows, pain increases. Very many of my own order, of my own number, are like these. For if any one does me, who am weak, an injury, perhaps, though I am weak, I may forgive the wrong done me. If he charges me with an offence I am not such an one as to be content with the witness of my own conscience, although I know I am clear of what he brings against me; but I desire, just because I am weak, to wash out the mark of my inborn shame. Therefore I demand eye for eye, and tooth for tooth, and repay abuse with abuse.

243. If, however, I am one who is advancing, although not yet perfect, I do not return the reproaches; and if he breaks out into abuse, and fills my ears with reproaches, I am silent and do not answer.

244. But if I am perfect (I say this only by way of example, for in truth I am weak), if, then, I am perfect, I bless him that curses me, as Paul also blessed, for he says: "Being reviled we bless."³⁰⁶ He had heard Him Who says: "Love your enemies, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."³⁰⁷ And so Paul suffered persecution and endured it, for he conquered and calmed his human feelings for the sake of the reward set before him, namely, that he should become a son of God if he loved his enemies.

245. We call show, too, that holy David was like to Paul in this same class of virtue. When the son of Shimei cursed him, and charged him with heavy offences, at the first he was silent and humbled himself, and was silent even about his good deeds, that is, his knowledge of good works. Then he even asked to be cursed; for when he was cursed he hoped to gain divine pity.³⁰⁸

246. But see how he stored up humility and justice and prudence so as to merit grace from the Lord! At first he said: "Therefore he cursed me, because the Lord hath said unto him that he should curse."³⁰⁹ Here we have humility; for he thought that those things which are divinely ordered were to be endured with an even mind, as though he were but some servant lad. Then he said: "Behold my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life."³¹⁰ Here we have justice. For if we suffer hard things at the hand of our own family, why are we angry at what is done to us by strangers? Lastly he says: "Let him alone that he may curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on my humiliation and requite me good for this cursing."³¹¹ So he

bore not only the abuse, but left the man unpunished when throwing stones and following him. Nay, more I After his victory he freely granted him pardon when he asked for it.

247. I have written this to show that holy David, in true evangelical spirit, was not only not offended, but was even thankful to his abuser, and was delighted rather than angered by his wrongs, for which he thought some return would be granted to him. But, though perfect, he sought something still more perfect. As a man he grew hot at the pain of his wrongs, but like a good soldier he conquered, he endured like a brave wrestler. The end and aim of his patience was the expectation of the fulfilment of the promises, and therefore he said: "Lord, make me to know mine end and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know what is wanting to me."³¹² He seeks, then, that end of the heavenly promises, when each one shall arise in his own order: "Christ the firstfruits, then they that are Christ's who have believed in His coming. Then cometh the end."³¹³ For when the kingdom is delivered up to God, even the Father, and all the powers are put down, as the Apostle says, then perfection begins. Here, then, is the hindrance, here the weakness of the perfect; there full perfection. Thus it is he asks for those days of eternal life which are, and not for those which pass away, so that he may know what is wanting to him, what is the land of promise that bears everlasting fruits, which is the first mansion in his Father's house, which the second, which the third, wherein each one will rest according to his merits.

248. We then must strive for that wherein is perfection and wherein is truth. Here is the shadow, here the image;³¹⁴ there the truth. The shadow is in the law, the image in the Gospel, the truth in heaven. In old times a lamb, a Calf was offered; now Christ is offered. But He is offered as man and as enduring suffering. And He offers Himself as a priest to take away our sins, here in an image, there in truth,³¹⁵ where with the Father He intercedes for us as our Advocate Here, then, we walk in an image, we see in an image; there face to face where is full perfection. For all perfection rests in the truth.

Chapter XLIX.

We must reserve the likeness of the virtues in ourselves. The likeness of the devil and of vice must be got rid of, and especially that of avarice; for this deprives us of liberty, and despoils those who are in the midst of vanities of the image of God.

249. Whilst, then, we are here let us preserve the likeness, that there we may attain to the truth. Let the likeness of justice exist in us, likewise that of wisdom, for we shall come to that day and shall be rewarded according to our likeness.

250. Let not the adversary find his image in thee, let him not find fury nor rage; for in these exists the likeness of wickedness. "Our adversary the devil as a roaring lion seeketh whom he may kill, whom he may devour."³¹⁶ Let him not find desire for gold, nor heaps of money, nor the appearance of vices, lest he take from thee the voice of liberty. For the voice of true liberty is heard, when thou canst say: "The prince of this world shall come, and shall find no part in me."³¹⁷ Therefore, if thou art sure that he will find nothing in thee, when he comes to search through thee, thou wilt say, as the patriarch Jacob did to Laban: "Know now if there is aught of thine with me."³¹⁸ Rightly do we account Jacob blessed with whom Laban could find naught of his. For Rachel had hidden the gold and silver images of his gods.

251. If, then, wisdom, and faith, and contempt of the world, and spiritual grace, exclude all faithlessness, thou wilt be blessed; for thou regardest not vanity and folly and lying. Is it a light thing to take away from thy adversary the opportunity to speak, so that he can have no ground to make his complaint against thee? Thus he who looks not on vanity is not perturbed; but he who looks upon it is perturbed, and that, too, all to no purpose. Is it not a vain thing to heap up riches? for surely to seek for fleeting things is vain enough. And when thou hast gathered them, how dost thou know that thou shall have them in possession?

252. Is it not vain for a merchant to journey by night and by day, that he may be able to heap up treasures? Is it not vain for him to gather merchandise, and to be much perturbed about its price, for fear he might sell it for less than he gave? that he should strive everywhere for high prices, and thus unexpectedly call up robbers against himself through their envy at his much-vaunted business; or that, without waiting for calmer winds, impatient of delays, he should meet with shipwreck whilst seeking for gain?

253. And is not he, too, perturbed in vain who with great toil amasses wealth, though he knows not what heir to leave it to? Often and often all that an avaricious man has got together with the greatest care, his spendthrift heir scatters abroad with headlong prodigality. The shameless prodigal, blind to the present, heedless of the future, swallows up as in an abyss what took so long to gather. Often, too, the desired successor gains but envy for his share of the inheritance, and by his sudden death hands over the whole amount of the succession, which he has hardly entered upon, to strangers.

254. Why, then, dost thou idly spin a web which is worthless and fruitless? And why dost thou build up useless heaps of treasures like spiders' webs? For though they overflow, they are no good; nay, they denude thee of the likeness of God, and put on thee the likeness of the earthy. If any one has the likeness of the tyrant, is he not liable to condemnation? Thou layest aside the likeness of the Eternal King, and raisest in thyself the image of death. Rather cast out of the kingdom of thy soul the likeness of the devil, and raise up the likeness of Christ. Let this shine forth in thee; let this glow brightly in thy kingdom, that is, thy soul, for it destroys the likeness of all vices. David says of this: "O Lord, in Thy kingdom thou bringest their images to nothing."³¹⁹ For when the Lord has adorned Jerusalem according to His own likeness, then every likeness of the adversary is destroyed.

Chapter L. The Levites ought to be utterly free from all earthly desires. What their virtues should be on the Apostle's own showing, and how great their purity must be. Also what their dignity and duty is, for the carrying out of which the chief virtues are necessary. He states that these were not unknown to the philosophers, but that they erred in their order. Some are by their nature in accordance with duty, which yet on account of what accompanies them become contrary to duty. From whence he gathers what gifts the office of the Levites demands. To conclude, he adds an exposition of Moses' words when blessing the tribe of Levi.

255. If, then, in the Gospel of the Lord the people themselves were taught and led to despise riches,³²⁰ how much more ought ye Levites no longer to be bound down by earthly desires. For your portion is God. For when their earthly possessions were portioned out by Moses to the people of our fathers, the Lord suffered not the Levites to have a share in that earthly possession,³²¹ for He Himself would be the strength of their inheritance. Wherefore David says: "The Lord is the

portion of mine inheritance and of my cup."322 Whence we get the name "Levite," which means: "Himself is mine," or "Himself for me." Great, then, is his honour, that God should say of him: Himself is Mine. Or, as was said to Peter about the piece of money found in the fish's mouth: "Give to them for Me and for thee."323 Wherefore the Apostle, when he said: "A bishop should be sober, modest, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not covetous, nor a brawler, one that rules well his own house," also added: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let them also first be proved, and so let them serve, being found blameless."324

256. We note how much is required of us. The minister of the Lord should abstain from wine, so that he may be upheld by the good witness not only of the faithful but also by those who are without. For it is right that the witness to our acts and works should be the opinion of the public at large, that the office be not disgraced. Thus he who sees the minister of the altar adorned with suitable virtues may praise their Author, and reverence the Lord Who has such servants. The praise of the Lord sounds forth where there is a pure possession and an innocent rule at home.

257. But what shall I say about chastity, when only one and no second union is allowed? As regards marriage, the law is, not to marry again, nor to seek union with another wife. It seems strange to many why impediment should be caused by a second marriage entered on before baptism, so as to prevent election to the clerical office, and to the reception of the gift of ordination; seeing that even crimes are not wont to stand in the way, if they have been put away in the sacrament of baptism.325 But we must learn, that in baptism sin can be forgiven, but law cannot be abolished. In the case of marriage there is no sin, but there is a law. Whatever sin there is can be put away, whatever law there is cannot be laid aside in marriage. How could he exhort to widowhood who himself had married more than once?

258. But ye know that the ministerial office must be kept pure and unspotted, and must not be defiled by conjugal intercourse; ye know this, I say, who have received the gifts of the sacred ministry, with pure bodies, and unspoilt modesty, and without ever having enjoyed conjugal intercourse. I am mentioning this, because in some out-of-the-way places, when they enter on the ministry, or even when they become priests, they have begotten children. They defend this on the ground of old custom, when, as it happened, the sacrifice was offered up at long intervals. However, even the people had to be purified two or three days beforehand, so as to come clean to the sacrifice, as we read in the Old Testament.326 They even used to wash their clothes. If such regard was paid in what was only the figure, how much ought it to be shown in the reality! Learn then, Priest and Levite, what it means to wash thy clothes. Thou must have a pure body wherewith to offer up the sacraments. If the people were forbidden to approach their victim unless they washed their clothes, dost thou, while foul in heart and body, dare to make supplication for others? Dost thou dare to make an offering for them?

259. The duty of the Levites is no light one, for the Lord says of them: "Behold I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, instead of every first-born that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel. These shall be their redemption, and the Levites shall be Mine. For I hallowed unto Me all the first-born in the land of Egypt."327 We know that the Levites are not reckoned among the rest, but are preferred before all, for they are chosen out of all, and are sanctified like the firstfruits and the firstlings which belong to the Lord, since the payment of vows

and redemption for sin are offered by them. "Thou shalt not receive them," He says, "among the children of Israel, but thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it. They shall bear the tabernacle and all the vessels thereof, and they shall minister in it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle. And when the tabernacle setteth forward the Levites shall take it down, and when the camp is pitched they shall set up the tabernacle again. And the stranger that cometh nigh shall surely be put to death."³²⁸

260. Thou, then, art chosen out of the whole number of the children of Israel, regarded as the firstfruits of the sacred offerings, set over the tabernacle so as to keep guard in the camp of holiness and faith, to which if a stranger approach, he shall surely die. Thou art placed there to watch over the ark of the covenant. All do not see the depths of the mysteries, for they are hid from the Levites, lest they should see who ought not to see, and they who cannot serve should take it up. Moses, indeed, saw the circumcision of the Spirit, but veiled it, so as to give circumcision only in an outward sign. He saw the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth; he saw the sufferings of the Lord, but he veiled the unleavened bread of truth in the material unleavened bread, he veiled the sufferings of the Lord in the sacrifice of a lamb or a calf. Good Levites have ever preserved the mystery entrusted to them under the protection of their own faith, and yet dost thou think little of what is entrusted to thee? First, thou shalt see the deep things of God, which needs wisdom. Next, thou must keep watch for the people; this requires justice. Thou must defend the camp and guard the tabernacle, which needs fortitude. Thou must show thyself continent and sober, and this needs temperance.

261. These chief virtues, they who are without have recognized,³²⁹ but they considered that the order resting on society was higher than that resting on wisdom; though wisdom is the foundation, and justice the building which cannot stand unless it have a foundation. The foundation is Christ.³³⁰

262. First stands faith, which is a sign of wisdom, as Solomon says, in following his father: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."³³¹ And the law says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, thou shalt love thy neighbour."³³² It is a noble thing to do one's kindnesses and duties towards the whole of the human race. But it is ever most seemly that thou shouldst give to God the most precious thing thou hast, that is, thy mind,³³³ for thou hast nothing better than that. When thou hast paid thy debt to thy Creator, then thou mayest labour for men, to show them kindness, and to give help; then thou mayest assist the needy with money, or by some duty, or some service that lies in the way of thy ministry; by money to support him; by paying a debt, so as to free him that is bound; by undertaking a duty, so as to take charge of a trust, which he fears to lose, who has put it by in trust.

263. It is a duty, then, to take care of and to restore what has been entrusted to us. But meanwhile a change comes, either in time or circumstances,³³⁴ so that it is no longer a duty to restore what one has received. As, for instance, when a man demands back his money as an open enemy, to use it against his country, and to offer his wealth to barbarians. Or, if thou shouldst have to restore it, whilst another stood by to extort it from him by force. If thou restore money to a raving lunatic when he cannot keep it; if thou give up to a madman a sword once put by with thee, whereby he may kill himself, is it not an act contrary to duty to pay the debt? Is it not contrary to duty to take

knowingly what has been got by a thief, so that he who has lost it is cheated out of it?

264. It is also sometimes contrary to duty to fulfil a promise,³³⁵ or to keep an oath. As was the case with Herod, who swore that whatever was asked he would give to the daughter of Herodias, and so allowed the death of John, that he might not break his word.³³⁶ And what shall I say of Jephthah,³³⁷ who offered up his daughter in sacrifice, she having been the first to meet him as he returned home victorious; whereby he fulfilled the vow which he had made that he would offer to God whatever should meet him first. It would have been better to make no promise at all, than to fulfil it in the death of his daughter.

265. Ye are not ignorant how important it is to look to this. And so a Levite is chosen to guard the sanctuary, one who shall never fail in counsel, nor forsake the faith, nor fear death, nor do anything extravagant, so that in his whole appearance he may give proof of his earnestness. For he ought to have not only his soul but even his eyes in restraint, so that no chance mishap may bring a blush to his forehead. For "whosoever looketh on a woman to desire her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart."³³⁸ Thus adultery is committed not only by actual committal of the foul deed, but even by the desire of the ardent gaze.

266. This seems high and somewhat severe, but in a high office it is not out of place. For the grace of the Levites is such that Moses spoke of them as follows in his blessing: "Give to Levi his men, give Levi his trusted ones, give Levi the lot of his inheritance, and his truth to the holy men whom they tempted in temptation, and reviled at the waters of contradiction. Who said to his father and mother, I know thee not, and knew not his brethren, and renounced his children. He guarded Thy word and kept Thy testimony."³³⁹

267. They, then, are His men, His trusty ones, who have no deceit in their hearts, hide no treachery within them, but guard His words and ponder them in their heart, as Mary pondered them;³⁴⁰ who know not their parents so as to put them before their duty; who hate the violators of chastity, and avenge the injury done to purity; and know the times for the fulfilling of their duty, as also which duty is the greater, which the lesser, and to what occasion each is suited. In all this they follow that alone which is virtuous. And who, where there are two virtuous duties, think that which is the more virtuous must come first. These are in truth tightly blessed.

268. If any one makes known the just works of the Lord, and offers Him incense, then: "Bless, O Lord, his strength; accept the work of his hands,"³⁴¹ that he may find the grace of the prophetic blessing with Him Who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

1: Ps. xxxiv. [xxxiii.] 11.

2: Ib. cxii. [cxi.] 1.

3: Paulinus, in his Life of St. Ambrose, relates various, expedients that he tried, to enable him to avoid the office to which he had been called; e.g. how he caused torture to be applied to prisoners, contrary to his usual practice, in the hope that this might lead to his rejection. More than once, also, he endeavoured to escape the honour by flight.

4: Eph. iv. 11.

5: 1 Cor. xii. 10.

6: St. Ambrose, at the time of his election to the episcopate, was a consular magistrate, and was not even baptized. The infula was a flock of red and white wool formed into a fillet, and worn on the head; from which ribands hung down on either side. It was a mark of religious consecration, and so worn by the priests and vestal virgins. In later times it was adopted also by the emperors and magistrates as a sign of their semi-sacred character.

7: The following is found in many mss., but not, in the Benedictine edition " Et quantumlibet quisque profecerit nemo est qui dacere non egeat dum vivit. "

8: S. Matt. xii. 37.

9: Is I. 4 [LXX.].

10: Ecclus. xx. 7.

11: Ps. xxxix. [xxxviii.] 1.

12: Job v. 21.

13: Deut. vi. 4.

14: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 9.

15: S. Matt. xii. 36.

16: Eccles. iii. 7.

17: Sus. v. 35.

18: S. Matt. xxvi. 63.

19: Prov. iv. 23.

20: Isa. vi. 5.

21: Ecclus. xxviii. 24, Ecclus. xxviii. 25.

22: Ps. xii. [xi.] 6.

23: Isa. i. 6 [LXX.].

24: Ps. iv. 4.

25: Ps. xc. 3 [LXX.].

26: Symmachus, said to have been an Ebionite, lived c. 193-211. He translated the Old Testament into Greek. This was one of the versions Origen made use of in his Hexapla edition of the Bible.

27: Ps. xxxix. [xxxviii.] 2.

28: Ps. xxxix. [xxxviii.] 2.

29: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xvi. 6 ff.

30: This psalm in the Hebrew is inscribed to Jeduthun, one of the three leading musicians in the temple services.

31: A Stoic philosopher who lived and taught at Athens, c. b.c. 120. His chief work was a treatise *peri tou kaghkoutoz* 32: Cic. de Off. I. 2.

33: Luke i. 23. The Vulgate has *officii*; the Greek text reads: *thj leitonrgiaj* .

34: In this section it is impossible to give the point in a translation, but the passage does not affect the argument. The text runs as follows: " *Nec ratio ipsa abhorret, quandoquidem officium ab efficiendo dictum putamus, quasi effcium: sed propter decorera sermonis una immutata litera, officium. nuncupari, vel certe, ut ea agas quoe nulli officiant, prosin omnibus.* "

35: Cic. de Off. I. 3, §9.

36: Cic. de Off. I. 3.

37: S. Luke xvi. 25.

38: Cic. de Off. I. 27.

39: Ps. lxxv. [lxxiv.] 1.

40: Tit. ii. 1.

41: Heb. ii. 10.

42: Ps. xxxviii. [xxxvii.] 13.

43: Prov. xxvi. 4.

44: Cic. de Off. I. 3, §8.

45: S. Matt. xix. 17, Matt. xix. 18, Matt. xix. 19.

46: S. Matt. xix. 20, Matt. xix. 21.

47: S. Matt. v. 44.

48: S. Matt. v. 45.

49: Job xxix. 15, Job xxix. 16.

50: Job xxi. 7-9.

51: Job xxi. 2-4, differing, however, widely from both the Hebrew and Greek text.

52: Job xxi. 14.

53: Plato, de Repub. II. 2.

54: Job xxi. 17.

55: Job xxi. 24.

56: Job xxi. Very freely used all through this section.

57: Job. xxi. 28.

58: S. Luke xii. 15.

59: It is only fair to state that the character of Epicurus is mainly known in modern times from opponents or persons who did not understand him. See the account in Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Biography.

60: Arist. Metaph. i. 2. An allusion to Aristotle's saying that "the poets lie much."

61: Ps. xciv. [xciii.] 9.

62: Ps. xciv. [xciii.] 3.

63: Ps. xciv. [xciii.] 7.

64: Ps. xciv. [xciii.] 8-11.

65: Jer. xvii. 10.

66: S. Matt. ix. 4.

67: S. Luke vi. 8.

68: Job xxiv. 14, Job xxiv. 15.

69: Ecclus. xxiii. 18.

70: Ecclus. xxiii. 31.

71: S. Luke xvi. 19 ff.

72: 2 Tim. iv. 7, 2 Tim. iv. 8.

73: Acts xiv. 22.

74: S. Matt. v. 3.

75: S. Matt. v. 4 ff.

76: Job. xxi. 32.

77: 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

78: Ecclus. iv. 9.

79: Ps. lxxxii. [lxxxi.] 4.

80: S. John xii. 6.

81: Cic. de Off. i. 34.

82: Thus the Benedictine edition reads; most others have: " accressent simul studia bonorum actuum. "

83: Gen. xxii. 9.

84: Gen. xxxvii. 9.

- 85: Gen. xxxix. 12.
- 86: Ex. iv. 10.
- 87: Jer. i. 6.
- 88: Cic. de Off. I. 37, §134.
- 89: Sus. v. 35.
- 90: S. Luke i. 29 ff.
- 91: S. Luke xviii. 13, Luke xviii. 14.
- 92: 1 Pet. iii. 4.
- 93: 1 Tim. ii. 9.
- 94: Cic. de Off. I. 35.
- 95: Cic. de Off. I. 36.
- 96: Cic. de Off. I. 35, §127.
- 97: Gen. xxxix. 12.
- 98: Cic. de Off. I. 35.
- 99: Cic. de Off. I. 40, §142.
- 100: " modestia. quam a modo scientioe, quid deceret, appellarant arbitror. "
- 101: Gen. vi. 16.
- 102: 1 Cor. xii. 22, 1 Cor. xii. 23.
- 103: Ambr. de Noe et Arca. cap. viii.
- 104: Gen. ix. 22.
- 105: Cic. de Off. I. 35, §129.
- 106: Ex. xxviii. 42, Ex. xxviii. 43.
- 107: Cic. de Off. I. 35, §126.
- 108: Cic. de Off. I. 25, §89.
- 109: Rom. xii. 19.
- 110: Gen. xxvii. 42.
- 111: Gen. xxxii. 3 ff.
- 112: Ps. xxxiv. [xxxiii.] 13, Ps. xxxiv. [xxxiii.] 14.
- 113: S. Matt. xviii. 3.

114: 1 Pet. ii. 23.

115: lived c. b.c. 400. A noted philosopher, and also general.

116: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xxv.

117: Ps. lv. [liv.] 3.

118: Ps. lv. [liv.] 6.

119: Ps. iv. 4.

120: Cic. de Off. I. 38, §136.

121: Prov. xvi. 32.

122: Cic. de Off. I. 36, §132.

123: Cic. de Off. I. 37.

124: Cic. de Off. I. 37, §135.

125: Cic. de Off. I. 37.

126: Cic. de Off. I. 29, §103.

127: S. Luke vi. 25.

128: Cic. de Off. I. 37, §133.

129: Cic. de Off. I. 39, §141.

130: Gen. xii. 1 ff.

131: Gen. xiv. 14.

132: Gen. xv. 4; Gen. xvii. 15.

133: Gen. xxvii. 42 ff.

134: Gen. xxv. 34. St. Ambrose at times gets carried away by his his subject and says more than is warranted by the words of the Bible. Cf. also II. §101; II. §154; III. §64.

135: Gen. xxxiii. 4.

136: Gen. xxxix.

137: Cic. de Off. I. 5.

138: Ib. I. 2, §7.

139: Gen. xv. 6.

140: Ps. xiv. [xiii.] 1.

141: Jer. ii. 27.

142: Manes, the founder of Manicheism, living about a.d. 250. He taught that there were two original principles absolutely opposed one to the other. On the one side God, from Whom nothing but good can go forth; on the other original evil-the author of all matter-which therefore is evil too. Man was formed by this evil spirit. For, whilst man's soul is an emanation from the good God, man's body in which the soul is imprisoned was framed of material elements. Hence the Manichaeon is here represented addressing the devil as his father, the author of his earthly existence.

143: The father of Arianism, born a.d. 256, was condemned at the Council of Nicaea a.d. 325. He denied that Christ was "of one substance with the Father;" but held Him to be a kind of secondary God, created out of nothing before the world. But he considered Him to be the creator of the world.

144: Marcion flourished between the years a.d. 140-190. He also taught the existence of more than one Principle, and held that man was created by an inferior Being.

145: Eunomius was the leader of the extreme Arian party, flourishing c. a.d. 360. He maintained the absolute unlikeness of the Son to the Father not only in substance but even in will. Hence his party were called Anomoeans (anomoioi 146: Ps. cxi. [cx.] 10.

147: Prov. xxiv. 7 [LXX.].

148: Ps. cxii. [cxi.] 9.

149: Gen. xxii. 3.

150: Gen. xxxii. 29, Gen. xxxii. 30.

151: Gen. xxxiii. 8.

152: Gen. xxxii. 24-26.

153: Gen. xxxiv. 5.

154: Gen. vi. 14.

155: Acts vii. 22.

156: Ex. iii. 4.

157: S. Matt. vii. 21.

158: Cic. de Off. I. 6.

159: Some mss. have " injustitioe, " others " pecunioe, " which seems to be a correction to bring it into harmony with the LXX: " inati uphrce xrhmata afroni ."

160: Prov. xvii. 15 [LXX.].

161: Cic. de Off. I. 7.

162: Summa Theol. II. 2, q. 101. St. Thomas Aquinas agrees in making piety a part of justice, and a gift of the Holy Spirit, but places parents before instead of after our country.

163: Cic. de Off. I. 4.

164: Cis. de Off. I. I 7.
165: S. Luke ix. 56.
166: Cic. de Off. I. 9.
167: Gen. i. 26.
168: Ps. viii. 7, Ps. viii. 8.
169: Gen. ii. 18.
170: Gen. ii. 20.
171: Cic. de Off. I. 9, §30.
172: Cic. de Off. I. 7, §24.
173: Cic. de Off. I. 8, §26.
174: Cic. de Off. I. 11, §34.
175: Num. xxxi.
176: Josh. ix.
177: 2 [4] Kings vi. 22.
178: 2 [4] Kings vi. 23.
179: 2 [4] Kings vi. 16.
180: 2 [4] Kings vi. 8-23.
181: Cic. de Off. I. 12.
182: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] iv. 1.
183: Cic. de Off. I. 7, §23.
184: Isa. xxviii. 16.
185: 1 Cor. iii. 11.
186: 2 Cor. ix. 7.
187: 1 Cor. ix. 17.
188: Cic. de Off. I, 14, §43.
189: S. Luke xix. 8.
190: Acts v. 11.
191: S. Mat. vi. 3.
192: Gal. vi. 10.

- 193: Job xxix. 13.
- 194: S. Luke xxi. 3, Luke xxi. 4.
- 195: 1 [3] Kings xix. 20.
- 196: Cic. de Off. I. 17, §58.
- 197: " Et se juste facere putant. " These words are omitted in many mss.
- 198: 2 Cor. viii. 9.
- 199: 2 Cor. viii. 10.
- 200: 2 Cor. viii. 10.
- 201: 2 Cor. viii. 11-15.
- 202: Ex. xvi. 18.
- 203: St. Ambrose, allowing clergy to retain some of their patrimony so as not to burden the Church, is less strict than St. Augustine, who would have them give up everything and live in common. Serm. 355.
- 204: S. Matt. xi. 11.
- 205: S. Luke xi. 8.
- 206: Cic. de Off. I. 15, §47.
- 207: Cic. de Off. I. 15, §48.
- 208: Prov. xxiv. 30 [LXX].
- 209: Cic. de Off. I. 15, §48.
- 210: Prov. xxiii. 1 [LXX.].
- 211: Allusion is made to Eccclus. iii. 31.
- 212: S. Luke vi. 37, Luke vi. 38.
- 213: S. John iv. 34.
- 214: Ps. xxxvii. 4.
- 215: S. Matt. iv. 4.
- 216: Job. xxix. 23.
- 217: 1 Cor. xv. 10.
- 218: Cic. de Off. II. 20, §69.
- 219: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xx. 11 ff.
- 220: Cic. de Amic. 13, §47.

221: Job xxxi. 32.

222: Cic. de Off. I. 16.

223: Job xxxi. 35 [LXX].

224: Cic. de Off. I. 16, 17.

225: Gen. ii. 24.

226: Cic. de Off. I. 17, §55.

227: Cic de Off. I. 17, §55.

228: Ps. xviii. 26.

229: Cic. de Off. I. 17, §56.

230: Ecclus. xxiii. 31.

231: Prov. xxvii. 6.

232: Cic. de Off. I. 17, §57.

233: Prov. xxvii. 10.

234: Cic. de Off. I. 18, §61.

235: Cis. de Off. I. 19.

236: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xvii. 39 ff.

237: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] v. 19.

238: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xxi. 15.

239: Heb. xi. 33, Heb. xi. 34.

240: Bel and the Dragon v. 39.

241: Cic. de Off. I. 23.

242: Ex. ii. 11.

243: Prov. xxiv. 11.

244: Job xxix. 12, Job xxix. 13.

245: Cf. Job i. 12, w. Job i. 22, and Job ii. 6, w. Job ii. 10.

246: Job xl. 2, Job xl. 5, Job xl. 6 [LXX].

247: Heb. vi. 18.

248: Cic. de Off. I. 20, §68.

249: Cic. de Off. I. 20, §66.

250: 2 Tim. ii. 5.

251: Rom. v. 3, Rom. v. 4.

252: 2 Cor. vii. 5.

253: 2 Cor. xi. 24 ff.

254: Col. ii. 20, Col. ii. 21, Col. ii. 22.

255: Col. iii. 1, Col. iii. 2.

256: Col. iii. 5.

257: 1 Tim. iv. 8.

258: 1 Tim. vi. 12.

259: 2 Tim. ii. 4 260: Ps. xxxvii. [xxxvi.] 25.

261: Cic. de Off. I. 21, §72.

262: Cic. de Off. I. 21, §73.

263: S. Matt. x. 23.

264: S. Matt. v. 8.

265: Job i. 21.

266: Job. 1. 21.

267: Job. ii. 10.

268: Cic. de Off. I. 20, §68.

269: There is a considerable variation of text here. The original of the translation is: " iracundiam velut quibusdam propulset armis, quoe tollat consilium, et tanquam oegritudinem vitet. " Cod. Dresd. reads: "iracundiam ...propulset arietibus armisque tollat et convicia tanquam oegritudinem vitet."

270: Cic. de Off. I. 22.

271: Josh. x.

272: Josh. x. 12.

273: Judg. vii.

274: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xiv. 1.

275: 1 Macc. ii. 35 ff.

276: 1 Mac. vi. 43.

277: The Latin text has: " utraque manu interficiebat, donec pervenit ad bestiam. " Cod. Dresd., ed. Med. have: " utraque manu interficiebat bestiam, atque intravit sab eam. "

278: Ed. Bened. here has: " ita ut ab ortu solis per singulas bestias velut montes quidam splendor armorum corusco, tanquam lampadibus ardentibus. " Cod. Dresd. and Goth.: " ita ut ...quidam armorum coruscorum ...refulgerent. " Other ancient editions: " ita ut ...quidam armorum corusco ...refulgerent. "

279: 1 Macc. ix. 8.

280: 1 Macc. xi. 68.

281: 2 Macc. vii. 1 ff.

282: 2 Macc. vii. 20.

283: S. Matt. ii. 16.

284: " Consecrationem. " So all mss. Ed. Rom. alone has " dispensationem. "

285: Consecration seems a strange expression in the mouth of a deacon, but it may be explained either by the intimate connection between the celebrant and his deacon, as at the present day in the Liturgy of the Eastern Church; or it may refer to the hallowing of the faithful in the partaking of the Sacrament. The word consecratio is not always restrained to the consecration properly so called, as may be seen by the prayer in the Roman missal said by the priest when he drops a consecrated particle into the chalice which has also been already consecrated;-" Hoc commixtio et consecratio Corporis et Sansguinis ...fiat nobis in vitam oeternam. "

286: Cic. de Off. I. 27.

287: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] vi. 14.

288: 1 Sam, xxi. 13.

289: 1 Sam. xix. 24.

290: Cic. de Off. I. 31, §114.

291: It has been supposed that St. Ambrose in this passage by "father" means "spiritual father," in whose hands the teaching and guidance of the young was put. But there is no reason why the word should not be taken in its ordinary sense. If so, however, the father must have been in one of the inferior orders only, or else his children must have been born before he was admitted to the priesthood. For elsewhere (I. 258), as here, St. Ambrose clearly shows that absolute continence is required of priests, after entering on their sacred office.

292: Cic. de Off. I. 27.

293: Ps. xciii. [xcii.] 1.

294: Rom. xiii. 13.

295: The words decorum and honestum being used in different senses, it is not possible to give the points in a translation as in the original.

296: Ps. xciii. [xcii.] 1.
297: Ps. lxxv. [lxxiv.] 1.
298: 1 Cor. xiv. 40.
299: 1 Tim. ii. 9, 1 Tim. ii. 10.
300: Cic. de Off. I. 27, §96.
301: 1 Cor. xi. 13, 1 Cor. xi. 14.
302: Prov. viii 30, Prov. viii 31 [LXX].
303: Cic. de Off. I. 29, §102.
304: Cic. de Off. I. 38, §137.
305: " inequitat. " Ed. Med. has " inquietat. "
306: 1 Cor. iv. 12.
307: S. Matt. v. 44.
308: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xvi. 12.
309: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xvi. 10.
310: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xvi. 11.
311: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xvi. 11, 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xvi. 12.
312: Ps. xxxix. [xxxviii.] 4.
313: 1 Cor. xv. 23.
314: Heb. x. 1.
315: Cf. St. Amb. Enarr. in Ps. xxxix. [xxxviii].
316: 1 Pet. v. 8.
317: S. John xiv. 30.
318: Gen. xxxi. 32.
319: Ps. lxxii. 20 [LXX].
320: S. Mark x. 23.
321: Num. xviii. 23.
322: Ps. xvi. 5.
323: S. Matt. xvii. 27 324: 1 Tim. iii. 2-10.

325: The question kept coming up from time to time: Did Baptism annul all previous impedimenta ordinationis? Even in the fifth century, as Pope Innocent I. (Ep. XXIX.) shows some maintained that as Baptism puts away all sins committed previous to its reception, so also it removes all impediments to ordination. This same idea St. Ambrose combats here.

326: Ex. xix. 10.

327: Num. iii. 12, Num. iii. 13.

328: Num. i. 49-51.

329: Cic. de Off. I. 43.

330: 1 Cor. iii. 11.

331: Prov. ix. 10, and Ps. cxi. [cx.] 10 .

332: Deut. vi. 5.

333: Cic. de Off. I. 45.

334: Cic. de Off. I. 10.

335: Cic. de Off. I. 10, §32.

336: S. Matt. xiv. 6 ff.

337: Jud. xi. 30 ff.

338: S. Matt. v. 28.

339: Deut. xxxiii. 8, Deut. xxxiii. 9.

340: S. Luke ii. 19.

341: Deut. xxxiii. 11.

ON THE DUTIES OF THE CLERGY - Book 2

Book II.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Chapter XIII.

Chapter XIV.

Chapter XV.

Chapter XVI.

Chapter XVII.

Chapter XVIII.

Chapter XIX.

Chapter XX.

Chapter XXI.

Chapter XXII.

Chapter XXIII.

Chapter XXIV.

Chapter XXV.

Chapter XXVI.

Chapter XXVII.

Chapter XXVIII.

Chapter XXIX.

Chapter XXX.

Book II.

Chapter I.

Happiness in life is to be gained by living virtuously, inasmuch as thus a Christian, whilst despising glory and the favour of men, desires to please God alone in what he does.

1. In the first book we spoke of the duties¹ which we thought befitted a virtuous life, whereon no one has ever doubted but that a blessed life, which the Scripture calls eternal life, depends. So great is the splendour of a virtuous life that a peaceful conscience and a calm innocence work out a happy life. And as the risen sun hides the globe of the moon and the light of the stars, so the brightness of a virtuous life, where it glitters in true pure glory, casts into the shade all other things, which, according to the desires of the body, are considered to be good, or are reckoned in the eyes of the world to be great and noble.

2. Blessed, plainly, is that life which is not valued at the estimation of outsiders, but is known, as judge of itself, by its own inner feelings. It needs no popular opinion as its reward in any way; nor has it any fear of punishments. Thus the less it strives for glory, the more it rises above it. For to those who seek for glory, that reward in the shape of present things is but a shadow of future ones, and is a hindrance to eternal life, as it is written in the Scriptures: "Verily, I say unto you, they have received their reward."² This is said of those who, as it were, with the sound of a trumpet desire to make known to all the world the liberality they exercise towards the poor. It is the same, too, in the case of fasting, which is done but for outward show. "They have," he says, "their reward."

3. It therefore belongs to a virtuous life to show mercy and to fast in secret; that thou mayest seem to be seeking a reward from thy God alone, and not from men. For he who seeks it from man has his reward, but he who seeks it from God has eternal life, which none can give but the Lord of Eternity, as it is said: "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."³ Wherefore the Scripture plainly has called that life which is blessed, eternal life. It has not been left to be appraised according to man's ideas on the subject, but has been entrusted to the divine judgment.

Chapter II. The different ideas of philosophers on the subject of happiness. He proves, first, from the Gospel that it rests on the knowledge of God and the pursuit of good works; next, that it may not be thought that this idea was adopted from the philosophers, he adds proofs from the witness of the prophets.

4. The philosophers have made a happy life to depend, either (as Hieronymus⁴) on freedom from pain, or (as Herillus⁵) on knowledge. For Herillus, hearing knowledge very highly praised by Aristotle⁶ and Theophrastus,⁷ made it alone to be the chief good, when they really praised it as a

good thing, not as the only good; others, as Epicurus,⁸ have called pleasure such; others, as Callipho,⁹ and after him Diodorus,¹⁰ understood it in such a way as to make a virtuous life go in union, the one with pleasure, the other with freedom from pain, since a happy life could not exist without it. Zeno,¹¹ the Stoic, thought the highest and only good existed in a virtuous life. But Aristotle and Theophrastus and the other Peripatetics maintained that a happy life consisted in virtue, that is, in a virtuous life, but that its happiness was made complete by the advantages of the body and other external good things.

5. But the sacred Scriptures say that eternal life rests on a knowledge of divine things and on the fruit of good works. The Gospel bears witness to both these statements. For the Lord Jesus spoke thus of knowledge: "This is eternal life, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent,"¹² About works He gives this answer: "Every one that hath forsaken house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."¹³

6. Let no one think that this was but lately said, and that it was spoken of by the philosophers before it was mentioned in the Gospel. For the philosophers, that is to say, Aristotle and Theophrastus, as also Zeno and Hieronymus, certainly lived before the time of the Gospel; but they came after the prophets. Let them rather think how long before even the names of the philosophers were heard of, both of these seem to have found open expression through the mouth of the holy David; for it is written: "Blessed is the man whom Thou instructest, O Lord, and teachest him out of Thy law."¹⁴ We find elsewhere also: "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, he will rejoice greatly in His commandments,"¹⁵ We have proved our point as regards knowledge, the reward for which the prophet states to be the fruit of eternity, adding that in the house of the man that feareth the Lord, or is instructed in His law and rejoices greatly in the divine commandments, "is glory and riches; and his justice abideth for ever and ever."¹⁶ He has further also in the same psalm stated of good works, that they gain for an upright man the gift of eternal life. He speaks thus: "Blessed is the man that showeth pity and lendeth, he will guide his affairs with discretion, surely he shall not be moved for ever, the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance,"¹⁷ And further: "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, his justice endureth for ever."¹⁸

7. Faith, then, has [the promise of] eternal life, for it is a good foundation. Good works, too, have the same, for an upright man is tested by his words and acts. For if a man is always busy talking and yet is slow to act, he shows by his acts how worthless his knowledge is: besides it is much worse to know what one ought to do, and yet not to do what one has learnt should be done. On the other hand, to be active in good works and unfaithful at heart is as idle as though one wanted to raise a beautiful and lofty dome upon a bad foundation. The higher one builds, the greater is the fall; for without the protection of faith good works cannot stand. A treacherous anchorage in a harbour perforates a ship, and a sandy bottom quickly gives way and cannot bear the weight of the building placed upon it. There then will be found the fulness of reward, where the virtues are perfect, and where there is a reasonable agreement between words and acts.

Chapter III. The definition of blessedness as drawn from the Scriptures is considered and proved. It cannot be enhanced by external good fortune, nor can it be weakened by misfortune.

8. As, then, knowledge, so far as it stands alone, is put aside either as worthless, according to the superfluous discussions of the philosophers,¹⁹ or as but an imperfect idea, let us now note how clearly the divine Scriptures explain a thing about which we see the philosophers held so many involved and perplexing ideas. For the Scriptures state that nothing is good but what is virtuous, and declare that virtue is blessed in every circumstance, and that it is never enhanced by either corporal or other external good fortune, nor is it weakened by adversity. No state is so blessed as that wherein one is free from sin, is filled with innocence, and is fully supplied with the grace of God. For it is written: "Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and hath not stood in the way of sinners, and hath not sat in the seat of pestilence, but in the law of the Lord was his delight."²⁰ And again: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord."²¹

9. Innocence, then, and knowledge make a man blessed. We have also noted already that the blessedness of eternal life is the reward for good works. It remains, then, to show that when the patronage of pleasure or the fear of pain is despised (and the first of these one abhors as poor and effeminate, and the other as unmanly and weak), that then a blessed life can rise up in the midst of pain. This can easily be shown when we read: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you for righteousness' sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."²² And again: "He that will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me."²³

Chapter IV. The same argument, namely, that blessedness is not lessened or added to by external matters, is illustrated by the example of men of old.

10. There is, then, a blessedness even in pains and griefs. All which virtue with its sweetness checks and restrains, abounding as it does in natural resources for either soothing conscience or increasing grace. For Moses was blessed in no small degree when, surrounded by the Egyptians and shut in by the sea, he found by his merits a way for himself and the people to go through the waters.²⁴ When was he ever braver than at the moment when, surrounded by the greatest dangers, he gave not up the hope of safety, but besought a triumph?

11. What of Aaron? When did he ever think himself more blessed than when he stood between the living and the dead, and by his presence stayed death from passing from the bodies of the dead to the lines of the living?²⁵ What shall I say of the youth Daniel, who was so wise that, when in the midst of the lions enraged with hunger, he was by no means overcome with terror at the fierceness of the beasts. So free from fear was he, that he could eat, and was not afraid he might by his example excite the animals to feed on him.²⁶

12. There is, then, in pain a virtue that can display the sweetness of a good conscience, and therefore it serves as a proof that pain does not lessen the pleasure of virtue. As, then, there is no loss of blessedness to virtue through pain, so also the pleasures of the body and the enjoyment that benefits give add nothing to it. On this the Apostle says well: "What things to me were gain, those I counted loss for Christ," and he added: "Wherefore I count all things but loss, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."²⁷

13. Moses, too, thought the treasures of Egypt to be his loss, and thus showed forth in his life the reproach of the Cross of the Lord. He was not rich when he had abundance of money, nor was he afterwards poor when he was in want of food, unless, perchance, there is any one who thinks he was less happy when daily food was wanting to him and his people in the wilderness. But yet manna, that is, angels' food, which surely none will dare deny to be a mark of the greatest good and of blessedness, was given him from heaven; also the daily shower of meat was sufficient to feed the whole multitude.²⁸

14. Bread for food also failed Elijah, that holy man, had he sought for it; but it seemed not to fail him because he sought it not. Thus by the daily service of the ravens bread was brought to him in the morning, meat in the evening.²⁹ Was he any the less blessed because he was poor to himself? Certainly not. Nay, he was the more blessed, for he was rich toward God. It is better to be rich for others than for oneself. He was so, for in the time of famine he asked a widow for food, intending to repay it, so that the barrel of meal failed not for three years and six months, and the oil jar sufficed and served the needy widow for her daily use all that time also.³⁰ Rightly did Peter wish to be there where he saw them. Rightly did they appear in the mount with Christ in glory,³¹ for He Himself became poor when He was rich.

15. Riches, then, give no assistance to living a blessed life, a fact that the Lord clearly shows in the Gospel, saying: "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst now, for they shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh."³² Thus it is stated as plainly as possible that poverty, hunger, and pain, which are considered to be evils, not only are not hindrances to a blessed life, but are actually so many helps toward it.

Chapter V.

Those things which are generally looked on as good are mostly hindrances to a blessed life, and those which are looked on as evil are the materials out of which virtues grow. What belongs to blessedness is shown by other examples.

16. But those things which seem to be good, as riches, abundance, joy without pain, are a hindrance to the fruits of blessedness, as is clearly stated in the Lord's own words, when He said: "Woe to you rich, for ye have received your consolation! Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger, and to those who laugh, for they shall mourn!"³³ So, then, corporal or external good things are not only no assistance to attaining a blessed life, but are even a hindrance to it.

17. Wherefore Naboth was blessed, even though he was stoned by the rich; weak and poor, as opposed to the royal resources, he was rich in his aim and his religion; so rich, indeed, that he would not exchange the inheritance of the vineyard received from his father for the king's money; and on this account was he perfect, for he defended the rights of his forefathers with his own blood. Thus, also, Ahab was wretched on his own showing, for he caused the poor man to be put to death, so as to take possession of his vineyard himself.³⁴

18. It is quite certain that virtue is the only and the highest good; that it alone richly abounds in the fruit of a blessed life; that a blessed life, by means of which eternal life is won, does not depend on external or corporal benefits, but on virtue only. A blessed life is the fruit of the present, and eternal life is the hope of the future.

19. Some, however, there are who think a blessed life is impossible in this body, weak and fragile as it is. For in it one must suffer pain and grief, one must weep, one must be ill. So I could also say that a blessed life rests on bodily rejoicing, but not on the heights of wisdom, on the sweetness of conscience, or on the loftiness of virtue. It is not a blessed thing to be in the midst of suffering; but it is blessed to be victorious over it, and not to be cowed by the power of temporal pain.

20. Suppose that things come which are accounted terrible as regards the grief they cause, such as blindness, exile, hunger, violation of a daughter, loss of children. Who will deny that Isaac was blessed, who did not see in his old age, and yet gave blessings with his benediction?³⁵ Was not Jacob blessed who, leaving his father's house, endured exile as a shepherd for pay,³⁶ and mourned for the violated chastity of his daughter,³⁷ and suffered hunger?³⁸ Were they not blessed on whose good faith God received witness, as it is written: "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"?³⁹ A wretched thing is slavery, but Joseph was not wretched; nay, clearly he was blessed, when he whilst in slavery checked the lusts of his mistress.⁴⁰ What shall I say of holy David who bewailed the death of three sons,⁴¹ and, what was even worse than this, his daughter's incestuous connection?⁴² How could he be unblessed from whom the Author of blessedness Himself sprung, Who has made many blessed? For: "Blessed are they who have not seen yet have believed."⁴³ All these felt their own weakness, but they bravely prevailed over it. What can we think of as more wretched than holy Job, either in the burning of his house, or the instantaneous death of his ten sons, or his bodily pains?⁴⁴ Was he less blessed than if he had not endured those things whereby he really showed himself approved?

21. True it is that in these sufferings there is something bitter, and that strength of mind cannot hide this pain. I should not deny that the sea is deep because inshore it is shallow, nor that the sky is clear because sometimes it is covered with clouds, nor that the earth is fruitful because in some places there is but barren ground, nor that the crops are rich and full because they sometimes have wild oats mingled with them. So, too, count it as true that the harvest of a happy conscience may be mingled with some bitter feelings of grief. In the sheaves of the whole of a blessed life, if by chance any misfortune or bitterness has crept in, is it not as though the wild oats were hidden, or as though the bitterness of the tares was concealed by the sweet scent of the corn? But let us now proceed again with our subject.

Chapter VI. On what is useful: not that which is advantageous, but that which is just and virtuous. It is to be found in losses, and is divided into what is useful for the body, and what is useful unto godliness.

22. In the first book we made our division in such a way as to set in the first place what is virtuous and what is seemly; for all duties are derived from these. In the second place we set what is useful. But as at the start we said that there was a difference between what is virtuous and what is seemly-which one can comprehend more easily than one can explain-so also when we are thinking of what is useful, we have to give considerable thought to what is the more useful.⁴⁵

23. But we do not reckon usefulness by the value of any gain in money, but in acquiring godliness, as the Apostle says: "But godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."⁴⁶ Thus in the holy Scriptures, if we look carefully we shall often find that what is virtuous is called useful: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not profitable" [useful].⁴⁷ Before that he was speaking of vices, and so means: It is lawful to sin, but it

is not seemly. Sins rest in one's own power, but they are not virtuous. To live wantonly is easy, but it is not right. For food serves not God but the belly.

24. Therefore, because what is useful is also just, it is just to serve Christ, Who redeemed us. They too are just who for His Name's sake have given themselves up to death, they are unjust who have avoided it. Of them it says: What profit is there in my blood?⁴⁸ that is: what advance has my justice made? Wherefore they also say: "Let us bind the just, for he is useless to us,"⁴⁹ that is: he is unjust, for he complains of us, condemns and rebukes us. This could also be referred to the greed of impious men, which closely resembles treachery; as we read in the case of the traitor Judas, who in his longing for gain and his desire for money put his head into the noose of treachery and fell.

25. We have then to speak of that usefulness which is full of what is virtuous, as the Apostle himself has laid it down in so many words, saying: "And this I speak for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely."⁵⁰ It is plain, then, that what is virtuous is useful, and what is useful is virtuous; also that what is useful is just, and what is just is useful. I can say this, for I am speaking, not to merchants who are covetous from a desire to make gain, but to my children. And I am speaking of the duties which I wish to impress upon and impart to you, whom I have chosen for the service of the Lord; so that those things which have been already implanted and fixed in your minds and characters by habit and training may now be further unfolded to you by explanation and instruction.

26. Therefore as I am about to speak of what is useful, I will take up those words of the Prophet: "Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies and not to covetousness,"⁵¹ that the sound of the word "useful" may not rouse in us the desire for money. Some indeed put it thus: "Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies and not to what is useful," that is, that kind of usefulness which is always on the watch for making gains in business, and has been bent and diverted by the habits of men to the pursuit of money. For as a rule most people call that only useful which is profitable, but we are speaking of that kind of usefulness which is sought in earthly loss "that we may gain Christ,"⁵² whose gain is "godliness with contentment."⁵³ Great, too, is the gain whereby we attain to godliness, which is rich with God, not indeed in fleeting wealth, but in eternal gifts, and in which rests no uncertain trial but grace constant and unending.

27. There is therefore a usefulness connected with the body, and also one that has to do with godliness, according to the Apostle's division: "Bodily exercise profiteth a little, but godliness is profitable unto all things."⁵⁴ And what is so virtuous as integrity? what so seemly as to preserve the body unspotted and undefiled, and its purity unsullied? What, again, is so seemly as that a widow should keep her plighted troth to her dead husband? What more useful than this whereby the heavenly kingdom is attained? For "there are some who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake."⁵⁵

Chapter VII.

What is useful is the same as what is virtuous; nothing is more useful than love, which is gained by gentleness, courtesy, kindness, justice, and the other virtues, as we are given to understand from the histories of Moses and David. Lastly, confidence springs from love, and again love from confidence.

28. There is therefore not only a close intercourse between what is virtuous and what is useful, but the same thing is both useful and virtuous. Therefore He Who willed to open the kingdom of heaven to all sought not what was useful to Himself, but what was useful for all. Thus we must have a certain order and proceed step by step from habitual or common acts to those which are more excellent, so as to show by many examples the advancement of what is useful.

29. And first we may know there is nothing so useful as to be loved,⁵⁶ nothing so useless as not to be loved; for to be hated in my opinion is simply fatal and altogether deadly. We speak of this, then, in order that we may take care to give cause for a good estimate and opinion to be formed of us, and may try to get a place in others' affections through our calmness of mind and kindness of soul. For goodness is agreeable and pleasing to all, and there is nothing that so easily reaches human feelings. And if that is assisted by gentleness of character and willingness, as well as by moderation in giving orders and courtesy of speech, by honour in word, by a ready interchange of conversation and by the grace of modesty, it is incredible how much all this tends to an increase of love.⁵⁷

30. We read, not only in the case of private individuals but even of kings, what is the effect of ready and willing courtesy, and what harm pride and great swelling words have done, so far as to make even kingdoms to totter and powers to be destroyed. If any one gains the people's favour by advice or service, by fulfilling the duties of his ministry or office, or if he encounters danger for the sake of the whole nation, there is no doubt but that such love will be shown him by the people that they all will put his safety and welfare before their own.

31. What reproaches Moses had to bear from his people! But when the Lord would have avenged him on those who reviled him, he often used to offer himself for the people that he might save them from the divine anger.⁵⁸ With what gentle words used he to address the people, even after he was wronged! He comforted them in their labours, consoled them by his prophetic declarations of the future, and encouraged them by his works. And though he often spoke with God, yet he was wont to address men gently and pleasantly. Worthily was he considered to stand above all men. For they could not even look on his face,⁵⁹ and refused to believe that his sepulchre was found.⁶⁰ He had captivated the minds of all the people to such an extent; that they loved him even more for his gentleness than they admired him for his deeds.

32. There is David too who followed his steps, who was chosen from among all to rule the people. How gentle and kindly he was, humble in spirit too, how diligent and ready to show affection. Before he came to the throne he offered himself in the stead of all.⁶¹ As king he showed himself an equal to all in warfare, and shared in their labours. He was brave in battle, gentle in ruling, patient under abuse, and more ready to bear than to return wrongs. So dear was he to all, that though a youth, he was chosen even against his will to rule over them, and was made to undertake the duty though he withstood it. When old he was asked by his people not to engage in battle, because they all preferred to incur danger for his sake rather than that he should undergo it for theirs.

33. He had bound the people to himself freely in doing his duty; first, when he during the division among the people preferred to live like an exile at Hebron⁶² rather than to reign at Jerusalem; next, when he showed that he loved valour even in an enemy. He had also thought that justice should be shown to those who had borne arms against himself the same as to his own men.

Again, he admired Abner, the bravest champion of the opposing side, whilst he was their leader and was yet waging war. Nor did he despise him when suing for peace, but honoured him by a banquet.⁶³ When killed by treachery, he mourned and wept for him. He followed him and honoured his obsequies, and evinced his good faith in desiring vengeance for the murder; for he handed on that duty to his son in the charge that he gave him,⁶⁴ being anxious rather that the death of an innocent man should not be left unavenged, than that any one should mourn for his own.

34. It is no small thing, especially in the case of a king, so to perform humble duties as to make oneself like the very lowest. It is noble not to seek for food at another's risk and to refuse a drink of water, to countess a sin, and to offer oneself to death for one's people. This latter David did, so that the divine anger might be turned against himself, when he offered himself to the destroying angel and said: "Lo I have sinned: I the shepherd have done wickedly, but this flock, what hath it done? Let Thy hand be against me."⁶⁵

35. What further should I say? He opened not his mouth to those planning deceit, and, as though hearing not, he thought no word should be returned, nor did he answer their reproaches. When he was evil spoken of, he prayed, when he was cursed, he blessed. He walked in simplicity of heart, and fled from the proud. He was a follower of those unspotted from the world, one who mixed ashes with his food when bewailing his sins, and mingled his drink with weeping.⁶⁶ Worthily, then, was he called for by all the people. All the tribes of Israel came to him saying: "Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. Also yesterday and the day before when Saul lived, and reigned, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel. And the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed My people!"⁶⁷ And why should I say more about him of whom the word of the Lord has gone forth to say: "I have found David according to My heart"?⁶⁸ Who ever walked in holiness of heart and in justice as he did, so as to fulfil the will of God; for whose sake pardon was granted to his children when they sinned, and their rights were preserved to his heirs?⁶⁹

36. Who would not have loved him, when they saw how dear he was to his friends? For as he truly loved his friends, so he thought that he was loved as much in return by his own friends. Nay, parents put him even before their own children, and children loved him more than their parents. Wherefore Saul was very angry and strove to strike Jonathan his son with a spear because he thought that David's friendship held a higher place in his esteem than either filial piety or a father's authority.⁷⁰

37. It gives a very great impetus to mutual love if one shows love in return to those who love us and proves that one does not love them less than oneself is loved, especially if one shows it by the proofs that a faithful friendship gives. What is so likely to win favour as gratitude? What more natural than to love one who loves us? What so implanted and so impressed on men's feelings as the wish to let another, by whom we want to be loved, know that we love him? Well does the wise man say: "Lose thy money for thy brother and thy friend."⁷¹ And again: "I will not be ashamed to defend a friend, neither will I hide myself from him."⁷² If, indeed, the words in Ecclesiasticus testify that the medicine of life and immortality is in a friend;⁷³ yet none has ever doubted that it is in love that our best defence lies. As the Apostle says: "It beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; love never faileth."⁷⁴

38. Thus David failed not, for he was dear to all, and wished to be loved rather than feared by his subjects. Fear keeps the watch of temporal protection, but knows not how to keep guard permanently.⁷⁵ And so where fear has departed, boldness often creeps in; for fear does not force confidence but affection calls it forth.

39. Love, then, is the first thing to give us a recommendation. It is a good thing therefore to have our witness in the love of many.⁷⁶ Then arises confidence, so that even strangers are not afraid to trust themselves to thy kindness, when they see thee so dear to many. So likewise one goes through confidence to love, so that he who has shown good faith to one or two has an influence as it were on the minds of all, and wins the good-will of all.

Chapter VIII.

Nothing has greater effect in gaining good-will than giving advice; but none can trust it unless it rests on justice and prudence. How conspicuous these two virtues were in Solomon is shown by his well-known judgment.

40. Two things, therefore, love and confidence, are the most efficacious in commending us to others; also this third quality if thou hast it, namely, what many consider to be worthy of admiration in thee, and think to be rightly worthy of honour⁷⁷ [the power, in fact, of giving good advice].

41. Since the giving of good advice is a great means of gaining men's affections, prudence and justice are much needed in every case. These are looked for by most, so that confidence at once is placed in him in whom they exist, because he can give useful and trustworthy advice to whoever wants it. Who will put himself into the hands of a man whom he does not think to be more wise than himself who asks for advice? It is necessary therefore that he of whom advice is asked should be superior to him who asks it. For why should we consult a man when we do not think that he can make anything more plain than we ourselves see it?

42. But if we have found a man that by the vigour of his character, by his strength of mind and influence, stands forth above all others, and further, is better fitted by example and experience than others; that can put an end to immediate dangers, foresee future ones, point out those close at hand, can explain a subject, bring relief in time, is ready not only to give advice but also to give help,-in such a man confidence is placed, so that he who seeks advice can say: "Though evil should happen to me through him, I will bear it."⁷⁸

43. To a man of this sort then we entrust our safety and our reputation, for he is, as we said before, just and prudent. Justice causes us to have no fear of deceit, and prudence frees us from having any suspicions of error. However, we trust ourselves more readily to a just than to a prudent man, to put it in the way people generally do. But, according to the definition of the philosophers, where there is one virtue, others exist too,⁷⁹ whilst prudence cannot exist without justice. We find this stated also in our writers, for David says: "The just showeth mercy and lendeth."⁸⁰ What the just lends, he says elsewhere: "A good man is he that showeth mercy and lendeth, he will guide his words with discretion."⁸¹

44. Is not that noble judgment of Solomon full of wisdom and justice? Let us see whether it is so.⁸² "Two women," it says, "stood before King Solomon, and the one said to him, Hear me, my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house, and before the third day we gave birth and bore a son apiece,

and were together, there was no witness in the house, nor any other woman with us, only we two alone. And her son died this night, because she overlaid it, and she arose at midnight, and took my son from my breast, and laid it in her bosom, and her dead child she laid at my breast, And I arose in the morning to give my child suck, and found him dead. And I considered it at dawn, and behold it was not my son. And the other woman said, Nay, but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son."

45. This was their dispute, in which either tried to claim the living child for herself, and denied that the dead one was hers. Then the king commanded a sword to be brought and the infant to be cut in half, and either piece to be given to one, one half to the one, and one half to the other. Then the woman whose the child really was, moved by her feelings, cried out: "Dividenot the child, my lord; let it rather be given to her and live, and do not kill it." But the other answered: "Let it be neither mine nor hers, divide it." Then the king ordered that the infant should be given to the woman who had said: Do not kill it, but give it to that woman; "For," as it says, "her bowels yearned upon her son."⁸³

46. It is not wrong to suppose that the mind of God was in him; for what is hidden from God? What can be more hidden than the witness that lies deep within; into which the mind of the wise king entered as though to judge a mother's feelings, and elicited as it were the voice of a mother's heart. For a mother's feelings were laid bare, when she chose that her son should live with another, rather than that he should be killed in his mother's sight.

47. It was therefore a sign of wisdom to distinguish between secret heart-thoughts, to draw the truth from hidden springs, and to pierce as it were with the sword of the Spirit not only the inward parts of the body, but even of the mind and soul. It was the part of justice also that she who had killed her own child should not take away another's, but that the real mother should have her own back again. Indeed the Scriptures have declared this. "All Israel," it says, "heard of the judgment which the king had judged, and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment."⁸⁴ Solomon also himself had asked for wisdom, so that a prudent heart might be given him to hear and to judge with justice.⁸⁵

Chapter IX.

Though justice and prudence are inseparable, we must have respect to the ideas of people in general, for they make a distinction between the different cardinal virtues.

48. It is clear also, according to the sacred Scriptures, which are the older, that wisdom cannot exist without justice, for where one of these two is, there the other must be also. With what wisdom did Daniel expose the lie in the false accusation brought against him by his thorough examination, so that those false informers had no answer ready to hand!⁸⁶ It was a mark of prudence to convict the criminals by the witness of their own words, and a sign of justice to give over the guilty to punishment, and to save the innocent from it.

49. There is therefore an inseparable union between wisdom and justice; but, generally speaking,⁸⁷ the one special form of virtue is divided up. Thus temperance lies in despising pleasures, fortitude may be seen in undergoing labours and dangers, prudence in the choice of what is good, by knowing how to distinguish between things useful and the reverse; justice, in being a good guardian of another's rights and protector of its own, thus maintaining for each his

own. We can make this fourfold division in deference to commonly received ideas; and so, whilst deviating from those subtle discussions of philosophic learning which are brought forth as though from some inner recess for the sake of investigating the truth, can follow the commonly received use and their ordinary meaning. Keeping, then, to this division, let us return to our subject.

Chapter X.

Men entrust their safety rather to a just than to a prudent man. But every one is wont to seek out the man who combines in himself the qualities of justice and prudence. Solomon gives us an example of this. (The words which the queen of Sheba spoke of him are explained.) Also Daniel and Joseph.

50. We entrust our case to the most prudent man we can find, and ask advice from him more readily than we do from others. However, the faithful counsel of a just⁸⁸ man stands first and often has more weight than the great abilities of the wisest of men: "For better are the wounds of a friend than the kisses of others."⁸⁹ And just because it is the judgment of a just man, it is also the conclusion of a wise one: in the one lies the result of the matter in dispute, in the other readiness of invention.

51. And if one connects the two, there will be great soundness in the advice given, which is regarded by all with admiration for the wisdom shown, and with love for its justice. And so all will desire to hear the wisdom of that man in whom those two virtues are found together, as all the kings of the earth desired to see the face of Solomon and to hear his wisdom. Nay, even the queen of Sheba came to him and tried him with questions. She came and spoke of all the things that were in her heart, and heard all the wisdom of Solomon, nor did any word escape her.⁹⁰

52. Who she was whom nothing escaped, and that there was nothing which the truth-loving Solomon did not tell her, learn, O man, from this which thou hearest her saying: "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy words and of thy prudence, yet I did not believe those that told it me until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and behold the half was not told me. Thou hast added good things over and above all that I heard in mine own land. Blessed are thy women and blessed thy servants, which stand before thee, and that hear all thy prudence."⁹¹ Recognize the feast of the true Solomon, and who are set down at that feast; recognize it wisely and think in what land all the nations shall hear the fame of true wisdom and justice, and with what eyes they shall see Him, beholding those things which are not seen. "For the things that are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."⁹²

53. What women are blessed but those of whom it is said "that many hear the word of God and bring forth fruit"?⁹³ And again: "Whosoever doeth the word of God is My father and sister and mother."⁹⁴ And who are those blessed servants, who stand before Him, but Paul, who said: "Even to this day I stand witnessing both to great and small;"⁹⁵ or Simeon, who was waiting in the temple to see the consolation of Israel?⁹⁶ How could he have asked to be let depart, except that in standing before the Lord he had not the power of departing, but only according to the will of God? Solomon is put before us simply for the sake of example, of whom it was eagerly expected that his wisdom should be heard.

54. Joseph also when in prison was not free from being consulted about matters of uncertainty. His counsel⁹⁷ was of advantage to the whole of Egypt, so that it felt not the seven years' famine,

and he was able even to relieve other peoples from their dreadful hunger.

55. Daniel, though one of the captives, was made the head of the royal counsellors. By his counsels he improved the present and foretold the future.⁹⁸ Confidence was put in him in all things, because he had frequently interpreted things, and had shown that he had declared the truth.

Chapter XI. A third element which tends to gain any one's confidence is shown to have been conspicuous in Moses, Daniel, and Joseph.

56. But a third point seems also to have been noted in the case of those who were thought worthy of admiration⁹⁹ after the example of Joseph, Solomon, and Daniel. For what shall I say of Moses whose advice all Israel always waited for,¹⁰⁰ whose life caused them to trust in his prudence and increased their esteem for him? Who would not trust to the counsel of Moses, to whom the elders reserved for decision whatever they thought beyond their understanding and powers?

57. Who would refuse the counsel of Daniel, of whom God Himself said: "Who is wiser than Daniel?"¹⁰¹ How can men doubt about the minds of those to whom God has given such grace? By the counsel of Moses wars were brought to an end, and for his merit's sake food came from heaven and drink from the rock.

58. How pure must have been the soul of Daniel to soften the character of barbarians and to tame the lions!¹⁰² What temperance was his, what self-restraint in soul and body! Not unworthily did he become an object of admiration to all, when-and all men do admire this,-though enjoying royal friendships, he sought not for gold, nor counted the honour given him as more precious than his faith. For he was willing to endure danger for the law of God rather than to be turned from his purpose in order to gain the favour of men.

59. And what, again, shall I say of the chastity and justice of Joseph, whom I had almost passed by, whereby on the one hand he rejected the allurements of his mistress and refused rewards, on the other he mocked at death, repressed his fear, and chose a prison? Who would not consider him a fit person to give advice in a private case, whose fruitful spirit and fertile mind enriched the barrenness of the time with the wealth of his counsels and heart?¹⁰³

Chapter XII. No one asks counsel from a man tainted with vice, or from one who is morose or impracticable, but rather from one of whom we have a pattern in the Scriptures.

60. We note therefore that in seeking for counsel, uprightness of life, excellence in virtues, habits of benevolence, and the charm of good-nature have very great weight. Who seeks for a spring in the mud? Who wants to drink from muddy water? So where there is luxurious living, excess, and a union of vices, who will think that he ought to draw from that source? Who does not despise a foul life? Who will think a man to be useful to another's cause whom he sees to be useless in his own life? Who, again, does not avoid a wicked, ill-disposed, abusive person, who is always ready to do harm? Who would not be only too eager to avoid him?¹⁰⁴

61. And who will come to a man however well fitted to give the best of advice who is nevertheless hard to approach? It goes with him as with a fountain whose waters are shut off. What is the advantage of having wisdom, if one refuses to give advice? If one cuts off the opportunities of giving advice, the source is closed, so as no longer to flow for others or to be of any good to

oneself.

62. Well can we refer this to him who, possessing prudence, has defiled it with the foulness of a vicious life and so pollutes the water at the source. His life is a proof of a degenerate spirit.¹⁰⁵ How can one judge him to be good in counsel whom one sees to be evil in character? He ought to be superior to me, if I am ready to trust myself to him. Am I to suppose that he is fit to give me advice who never takes it for himself, or am I to believe that he has time to give to me when he has none for himself, when his mind is filled with pleasures, and he is overcome by lust, is the slave of avarice, is excited by greed, and is terrified with fright? How is there room for counsel here where there is none for quiet?

63. That man of counsel whom I must admire and look up to, whom the gracious Lord gave to our fathers, put aside all that was offensive. His follower he ought to be, who can give counsel and protect another's prudence from vice; for nothing foul can mingle with that.

Chapter XIII. The beauty of wisdom is made plain by the divine testimony. From this he goes on to prove its connection with the other virtues.

64. Is there any one who would like to be beautiful in face and at the same time to have its charm spoilt by a beast-like body and fearful talons? Now the form of virtues is so wonderful and glorious, and especially the beauty of wisdom, as the whole of the Scriptures tell us. For it is more brilliant than the sun, and when compared with the stars far outshines any constellation. Night takes their light away in its train, but wickedness cannot overcome wisdom.¹⁰⁶

65. We have spoken of its beauty, and proved it by the witness of Scripture. It remains to show on the authority of Scripture¹⁰⁷ that there can be no fellowship between it and vice, but that it has an inseparable union with the rest of the virtues. "It has a spirit sagacious, undefiled, sure, holy, loving what is good, quick, that never forbids a kindness, kind, steadfast, free from care, having all power, overseeing all things." And again:¹⁰⁸ "She teacheth temperance and justice and virtue."

Chapter XIV.

Prudence is combined with all the virtues, especially with contempt of riches.

66. Prudence, herefore, works through all things, she has fellowship with all that is good. For how¹⁰⁹ can she give good advice unless she have justice too, so that she may clothe herself in consistency, not fear death, be held back by no alarm, no fear, nor think it right to be turned aside from the truth by any flattery, nor shun exile, knowing that the world is the fatherland of the wise man. She fears not want, for she knows that nothing is wanting to the wise man, since the whole world of riches is his. What is greater than the man that knows not how to be excited at the thought of money, and has a contempt for riches, and looks down as from some lofty vantage-ground on the desires of men? Men think that one who acts thus is more than man: "Who is this," it says, "and we will praise him. For wonderful things hath he done in his life."¹¹⁰ Surely he ought to be admired who despises riches, seeing that most place them even before their own safety.

67. The rule of economy and the authority of self-restraint befits all, and most of all him who stands highest in honour; so that no love for his treasures may seize upon such a man, and that he who rules over free men may never become a slave to money. It is more seemly that in soul he should be superior to treasures, and in willing service be subject to his friends. For humility increases the

regard in which one is held. It is praiseworthy and right for the chief of men to have no desire for filthy lucre uncommon with Syrian traders and Gilead merchants, nor to place all their hope of good in money, or to count up their daily gains and to calculate their savings like a hireling.

Chapter XV. Of liberality. To whom it must chiefly be shown, and how men of slender means may show it by giving their service and counsel.

68. But if it is praiseworthy to have one's soul free from this failing, how much more glorious is it to gain the love of the people by liberality which is neither too freely shown to those who are unsuitable, nor too sparingly bestowed upon the needy.

69. There are many kinds of liberality.¹¹¹ Not only can we distribute and give away food to those who need it from our own daily supply, so that they may sustain life; but we can also give advice and help to those who are ashamed to show their want openly, so long as the common supplies of the needy are not exhausted. I am now speaking of one set over some office. If he is a priest or almoner, let him inform the bishop of them, and not withhold the name of any he knows to be in any need, or to have lost their wealth and to be now reduced to want; especially if they have not fallen into this trouble owing to wastefulness in youth, but because of another's theft, or through loss of their inheritance from no fault of their own, so that they cannot now earn their daily bread.

70. The highest kind of liberality is, to redeem captives, to save them from the hands of their enemies, to snatch men from death, and, most of all, women from shame, to restore children to their parents, parents to their children, and, to give back a citizen to his country. This was recognized when Thrace and Illyria were so terribly devastated.¹¹² How many captives were then for sale all over the world! Could one but call them together, their number would have surpassed that of a whole province. Yet there were some who would have sent back into slavery those whom the Church had redeemed. They themselves were harder than slavery itself to look askance at another's mercy. If they themselves (they said) had come to slavery, they would be slaves freely. If they had been sold, they would not refuse the service of slavery. They wished to undo the freedom of others, though they could not undo their own slavery, unless perchance it should please the buyer to receive his price again, whereby, however, slavery would not be simply undone but redeemed.

71. It is then a special quality of liberality to redeem captives,¹¹³ especially from barbarian enemies who are moved by no spark of human feeling to show mercy, except so far as avarice has preserved it with a view to redemption. It is also a great thing to take upon oneself another's debt, if the debtor cannot pay and is hard pressed to do so, and where the money is due by right and is only left unpaid through want. So, too, it is a sign of great liberality to bring up children, and to take care of orphans.

72. There are others who place in marriage maidens that have lost their parents, so as to preserve their chastity, and who help them not only with good wishes but also by a sum of money. There is also another kind of liberality which the Apostle teaches: "If any that believeth hath widows let him relieve them, that the Church be not burdened by supplying them, that it may have enough for those that are widows indeed."¹¹⁴

73. Useful, then, is liberality of this sort; but it is not common to all. For there are many good men who have but slender means, and are content with little for their own use, and are not able to give

help to lighten the poverty of others. However, another sort of kindness is ready to their hand, whereby they can help those poorer still. For there is a twofold liberality:¹¹⁵ one that gives actual assistance, that is, in money; the other, which is busy in offering active help, is often much grander and nobler.

74. How much grander it was for Abraham to have recovered his captured son-in-law by his victorious arms,¹¹⁶ than if he had ransomed him! How much more usefully did holy Joseph help King Pharaoh by his counsel to provide for the future. than if he had offered him money! For money would not have bought back the fruitfulness of any one state; whilst he by his foresight kept the famine for five years¹¹⁷ from the whole of Egypt.

75. Money is easily spent; counsels can never be exhausted. They only grow the stronger by constant use. Money grows less and quickly comes to an end, and has failed even kindness itself; so that the more there are to whom one wants to give, the fewer one can help; and often one has not got what one thinks ought to be given to others. But as regards the offer of advice and active help, the more there are to spend it on, the more there seems to be, and the more it returns to its own source. The rich stream of prudence ever flows back upon itself, and the more it has reached out to, so much the more active becomes all that remains.

Chapter XVI.

Due measure must be observed in liberality, that it may not be expended on worthless persons, when it is needed by worthier ones. However, alms are not to be given in too sparing and hesitating a way. One ought rather to follow the example of the blessed Joseph, whose prudence is commended at great length.

76. It is clear, then,¹¹⁸ that there ought to be due measure in our liberality, that our gifts may not become useless. Moderation must be observed, especially by priests, for fear that they should give away for the sake of ostentation, and not for justice' sake. Never was the greed of beggars greater than it is now. They come in full vigour, they come with no reason but that they are on the tramp. They want to empty the purses of the poor-to deprive them of their means of support. Not content with a little, they ask for more. In the clothes that cover them they seek a ground to urge their demands, and with lies about their lives they ask for further sums of money. If any one were to trust their tale too readily, he would quickly drain the fund which is meant to serve for the sustenance of the poor. Let there be method in our giving, so that the poor may not go away empty nor the subsistence of the needy be done away and become the spoil of the dishonest. Let there be then such due measure that kindness may never be put aside, and true need never be left neglected.

77. Many pretend they have debts. Let the truth be looked into. They bemoan the fact that they have been stripped of everything by robbers. In such a case give credit only if the misfortune is apparent, or the person is well known; and then readily give help. To those rejected by the Church supplies must be granted if they are in want of food. He, then, that observes method in his giving is hard towards none, but is free towards all, We ought not only to lend our ears to hear the voices of those who plead, but also our eyes to look into their needs. Weakness calls more loudly to the good dispenser than the voice of the poor. It cannot always be that the cries of an importunate beggar will never extort more, but let us not always give way to impudence. He must be seen who

does not see thee. He must be sought for who is ashamed to be seen. He also that is in prison must come to thy thoughts; another seized with sickness must present himself to thy mind, as he cannot reach thy ears.

78. The more people see thy zeal in showing mercy, the more will they love thee, I know many priests who had the more, the more they gave, For they who see a good dispenser give him something to distribute in his round of duty, sure that the act of mercy will reach the poor. If they see him giving away either in excess or too sparingly, they condemn either of these; in the one case because he wastes the fruits of another's labours by unnecessary payments, on the other hand because he hoards them in his money bags. As, then, method¹¹⁹ must be observed in liberality, so also at times it seems as though the spur must be applied. Method, then, so that the kindness one shows may be able to be shown day by day, and that we may not have to withdraw from a needful case what we have freely spent on waste. A spur, because money is better laid out in food for the poor than on a purse for the rich. We must take care test in our money chests we shut up the welfare of the needy, and bury the life of the poor as it were in a sepulchre.

79. Joseph could have given away all the wealth of Egypt, and have spent the royal treasures; but he would not even seem to be wasteful of what was another's. He preferred to sell the corn rather than to give it to the hungry. For if he had given it to a few there would have been none for most. He gave good proof of that liberality whereby there was enough for all. He opened the storehouses that all might buy their corn supply, lest if they received it for nothing, they should give up cultivating the ground. For he who has the use of what is another's often neglects his own.

80. First of all, then, he gathered up their money, then their implements, last of all he acquired for the king all their rights to the ground.¹²⁰ He did not wish to deprive all of them of their property, but to support them in it. He also imposed a general tax,¹²¹ that they might hold their own in safety. So pleasing was this to all from whom he had taken the land, that they looked on it, not as the selling of their rights, but as the recovery of their welfare. Thus they spoke: "Thou hast saved our lives, let us find grace in the sight of our Lord."¹²² For they had lost nothing of their own, but had received a new right. Nothing of what was useful to them had failed, for they had now gained it in perpetuity.

81. O noble man!¹²³ who sought not for the fleeting glory of a needless bounty, but set up as his memorial the lasting benefits of his foresight. He acted so that the people should help themselves by their payments, and should not in their time of need seek help from others. For it was surely better to give up part of their crops than to lose the whole of their rights. He fixed the impost at a fifth of their whole produce, and thus showed himself clear-sighted in making provision for the future, and liberal in the tax he laid upon them. Never after did Egypt suffer from such a famine.

82. How splendidly he inferred the future. First, how acutely, when interpreting the royal dream, he stated the truth. This was the king's first dream.¹²⁴ Seven heifers came up out of the river well-favoured and fat-fleshed, and they fed at the banks of the river. And other bullocks ill-favoured and lean-fleshed came up out of the river after the heifers, and fed near them on the very edge of the river. And these thin and wretched bullocks seemed to devour those others which were so fat and well-favoured. And this was the second dream.¹²⁵ Seven fat ears full and good came up from the ground. And after them seven wretched ears, blasted with the wind and withered, endeavoured to take their place. And it seemed that the barren and thin ears devoured the rich

and fruitful ears.

83. This dream Joseph unfolded as follows: that the seven heifers were seven years, and the seven ears likewise were seven years,-interpreting the times by the produce of cattle and crops. For both the calving of a heifer takes a year, and the produce of a crop fills out a whole year. And they came up out of the river just as days, years, and times pass by and flow along swiftly like the rivers. He therefore states that the seven earlier years of a rich land will be fertile and fruitful but the latter seven years will be barren and unfruitful, whose barrenness will eat up the richness of the former time. Wherefore he warns them to see that supplies of corn are got together in the fruitful years that they may help out the needs of the coming scarcity.

84. What shall we admire first? His powers of mind, with which he descended to the very resting-place of truth? Or his counsel, whereby he foresaw so great and lasting a need? Or his watchfulness or justice? By his watchfulness, when so high an office was given him, he gathered together such vast supplies; and through his justice he treated all alike. And what am I to say of his greatness of mind? For though sold by his brothers into slavery,¹²⁶ he took no revenge for this wrong, but put an end to their want. What of his gentleness, whereby by a pious fraud he sought to gain the presence of his beloved brother whom, under pretence of a well-planned theft, he declared to have stolen his property, that he might hold him as a hostage of his love?¹²⁷

85. Whence it was deservedly said to him by his father: "My son Joseph is enlarged, my son is enlarged, my younger son, my beloved. My God hath helped thee and blessed thee with the blessing of heaven above and the blessing of the earth, the earth that hath all things, on account of the blessings of thy father and thy mother. It hath prevailed over the blessings of the everlasting hills and the desires of the eternal hills."¹²⁸ And in Deuteronomy: "Thou Who wast seen in the bush, that Thou mayest come upon the head of Joseph, upon his pate. Honoured among his brethren, his glory is as the firstling of his bullocks; his horns are like the horns of unicorns. With his horn he shall push the nations even to the ends of the earth. They are the ten thousands of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh."¹²⁹

Chapter XVII.

What virtues ought to exist in him whom we consult. How Joseph and Paul were equipped with them.

86. Such, then, ought he to be who gives counsel to another, in order that he may offer himself as a pattern in all good works, in teaching, in trueness of character, in seriousness. Thus his words will be wholesome and irreproachable, his counsel useful, his life virtuous, and his opinions seemly.

87. Such was Paul, who gave counsel to virgins,¹³⁰ guidance to priests,¹³¹ so as to offer himself as a pattern for us to copy. Thus he knew how to be humble, as also Joseph did, who, though sprung from the noble family of the patriarchs, was not ashamed of his base slavery; rather he adorned it with his ready service, and made it glorious by his virtues. He knew how to be humble who had to go through the hands of both buyer and seller, and called them, Lord. Hear him as he humbles himself: "My lord on my account knoweth not¹³² what is in his house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand, neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife; how, then, can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"¹³³

Full of humility are his words, full, too, of chastity. Of humility, for he was obedient to his Lord; of an honourable spirit, for he was grateful;¹³⁴ full, also, of chastity, for he thought it a terrible sin to be defiled by so great a crime.

88. Such, then, ought the man of counsel to be. He must have nothing dark, or deceptive, or false about him, to cast a shadow on his life and character, nothing wicked or evil to keep back those who want advice. For there are some things which one flies from, others which one despises.¹³⁵ We fly from those things which can do harm, or can perfidiously and quietly grow to do us hurt, as when he whose advice we ask is of doubtful honour, or is desirous of money, so that a certain sum can make him change his mind. If a man acts unjustly, we fly from him and avoid him. A man that is a pleasure seeker and extravagant, although he does not act falsely, yet is avaricious and too fond of filthy lucre; such an one is despised. What proof of hard work, what fruits of labour, can he give who gives himself up to a sluggish and idle life, or what cares and anxieties ever enter his mind?

89. Therefore the man of good counsel says: "I have learnt in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content."¹³⁶ For he knew that the root of all evils is the love of money,¹³⁷ and therefore he was content with what he had, without seeking for what was another's. Sufficient for me, he says, is what I have; whether I have little or much, to me it is much. It seems as though he wanted to state it as clearly as possible. He makes use of these words: "I am content," he says, "with what I have." That means: "I neither have want, nor have I too much. I have no want, for I seek nothing more. I have not too much, for I have it not for myself, but for the many." This is said with reference to money.

90. But he could have said these words about everything, for all that he had at the moment contented him; that is, he wanted no greater honour, he sought for no further services, he was not desirous of vainglory, nor did he look for gratitude where it was not due; but patient in labours, sure in his merits, he waited for the end of the struggle that he must needs endure. "I know," he says, "how to be abased."¹³⁸ An untaught humility has no claim to praise, but only that which possesses modesty and a knowledge of self. For there is a humility that rests on fear, one, too, that rests on want of skill and ignorance. Therefore the Scripture says: "He will save the humble in spirit."¹³⁹ Gloriously, therefore, does he say: "I know how to be abased;" that is to say, where, in what moderation, to what end, in what duty, in which office. The Pharisee knew not how to be abased, therefore he was cast down. The publican knew, and therefore he was justified.¹⁴⁰

91. Paul knew, too, how to abound, for he had a rich soul, though he possessed not the treasure of a rich man. He knew how to abound, for he sought no gift in money, but looked for fruit in grace. We can understand his words that he knew how to abound also in another way. For he could say again: "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged."¹⁴¹

92. In all things he was accustomed both to be full and to be hungry. Blessed is he that knows how to be full in Christ. Not corporal, but spiritual, is that satiety which knowledge brings about. And rightly is there need of knowledge: "For man lives not by bread alone, but by every word of God."¹⁴² For he who knew how to be full also knew how to be hungry, so as to be always seeking something new, hungering after God, thirsting for the Lord. He knew how to hunger, for he knew that the hungry shall eat.¹⁴³ He knew, also, how to abound, and was able to abound, for he had nothing and yet possessed all things.¹⁴⁴

Chapter XVIII.

We learn from the fact of the separation of the ten tribes from King Rehoboam what harm bad counsellors can do.

93. Justice, then, especially graces men that are set over any office;¹⁴⁵ on the other hand, injustice fails them and fights against them. Scripture itself gives us an example, where it says, that when the people of Israel, after the death of Solomon, had asked his son Rehoboam to free their neck from their cruel yoke, and to lighten the harshness of his father's rule, he, despising the counsel of the old men, gave the following answer at the suggestion of the young men: "He would add a burden to the yoke of his father, and change their lighter toils for harder."¹⁴⁶

94. Angered by this answer, the people said: "We have no portion in David, nor inheritance in the son of Jesse. Return to your tents, O Israel. For we will not have this man for a prince or a leader over us."¹⁴⁷ So, forsaken and deserted by the people, he could keep with him scarce two of the ten tribes for David's sake.

Chapter XIX.

Many are won by justice and benevolence and courtesy, but all this must be sincere.

95. It is plain, then, that equity strengthens empires, and injustice destroys them. How could wickedness hold fast a kingdom when it cannot even rule over a single family? There is need, therefore, of the greatest kindness, so that we may preserve not only the government of affairs in general, but also the rights of individuals. Benevolence is of the greatest value; for it seeks to embrace all in its favours, to bind them to itself by fulfilling duties, and to pledge them to itself by its charm.

96. We have also said that courtesy of speech has great effect in winning favour. But we want it to be sincere and sensible, without flattery, lest flattery should disgrace the simplicity and purity of our address. We ought to be a pattern to others not only in act but also in word, in purity, and in faith. What we wish to be thought, such let us be;¹⁴⁸ and let us show openly such feelings as we have within us. Let us not say an unjust word in our heart that we think can be hid in silence, for He hears things said in secret Who made things secret, and knows the secrets of the heart, and has implanted feelings within. Therefore as though under the eyes of the Judge let us consider all we do as set forth in the light, that it may be manifest to all.

Chapter XX.

Familiarity with good men is very advantageous to all, especially to the young, as is shown by the example of Joshua and Moses and others. Further, those who are unlike in age are often alike in virtues, as Peter and John prove.

97. It is a very good thing to unite oneself to a good man. It is also very useful for the young¹⁴⁹ to follow the guidance of great and wise men. For he who lives in company with wise men is wise himself; but he who clings to the foolish is looked on as a fool too. This friendship with the wise is a great help in teaching us, and also as giving a sure proof of our uprightness. Young men show very soon that they imitate those to whom they attach themselves. And this idea gains ground from the fact that in all their daily life they grow to be like those with whom they have enjoyed

intercourse to the full.

98. Joshua the son of Nun became so great, because his union with Moses was the means not only of instructing him in a knowledge of the law, but also of sanctifying him to receive grace. When in His tabernacle the majesty of the Lord was seen to shine forth in its divine Presence, Joshua alone was in the tabernacle. When Moses spoke with God, Joshua too was covered by the sacred cloud.¹⁵⁰ The priests and people stood below, and Joshua and Moses went up the mount to receive the law. All the people were within the camp; Joshua was without the camp in the tabernacle of witness. When the pillar of a cloud came down, and God spoke with Moses, he stood as a trusty servant beside him; and he, a young man, did not go out of the tabernacle, though the old men who stood afar off trembled at these divine wonders.

99. Everywhere, therefore, he alone kept close to holy Moses amid all these wondrous works and dread secrets. Wherefore it happens that he who had been his companion in this intercourse with God succeeded to his power.¹⁵¹ Worthy surely was he to stand forth as a man who might stay the course of the river,¹⁵² and who might say: "Sun, stand still," and delay the night and lengthen the day, as though to witness his victory.¹⁵³ Why?-a blessing denied to Moses-he alone was chosen to lead the people into the promised land. A man he was, great in the wonders he wrought by faith, great in his triumphs. The works of Moses were of a higher type, his brought greater success. Either of these then aided by divine grace rose above all human standing. The one ruled the sea, the other heaven.¹⁵⁴

100. Beautiful, therefore, is the union between old and young. The one to give witness, the other to give comfort; the one to give guidance, the other to give pleasure. I pass by Lot, who when young clung to Abraham, as he was setting out.¹⁵⁵ For some perhaps might say this arose rather owing to their relationship than from any voluntary action on his part. And what are we to say of Elijah and Elisha?¹⁵⁶ Though Scripture has not in so many words stated that Elisha was a young man, yet we gather from it that he was the younger. In the Acts of the Apostles, Barnabas took Mark with him, and Paul took Silas¹⁵⁷ and Timothy¹⁵⁸ and Titus.¹⁵⁹

101. We see also that duties were divided amongst them according to their superiority in anything. The elders took the lead in giving counsel, the younger in showing activity. Often, too, those who were alike in virtue but unlike in years were greatly rejoiced at their union, as Peter and John were. We read in the Gospel that John was a young man, even in his own words, though he was behind none of the elders in merits and wisdom. For in him there was a venerable ripeness of character and the prudence of the hoarhead. An unspotted life is the due of a good old age.

Chapter XXI. To defend the weak, or to help strangers, or to perform similar duties, greatly adds to one's worth, especially in the case of tried men. Whilst one gets great blame for love of money; wastefulness, also, in the cue of priests is very much condemned.

102. The regard in which one is held is also very much enhanced when one rescues a poor man out of the hands of a powerful one, or saves a condemned criminal from death; so long as it can be done without disturbance, for fear that we might seem to be doing it rather for the sake of showing off than for pity's sake, and so might inflict severer wounds whilst desiring to heal slighter ones. But if one has freed a man who is crushed down by the resources and faction of a powerful person,¹⁶⁰ rather than overwhelmed by the deserts of his own wickedness, then the witness of a

great and high opinion grows strong.

103. Hospitality also serves to recommend many.¹⁶¹ For it is a kind of open display of kindly feelings: so that the stranger may not want hospitality, but be courteously received, and that the door may be open to him when he comes. It is most seemly in the eyes of the whole world that the stranger should be received with honour; that the charm of hospitality should not fail at our table; that we should meet a guest with ready and free service, and look out for his arrival.

104. This especially was Abraham's praise,¹⁶² for he watched at the door. of his tent, that no stranger by any chance might pass by. He carefully kept a lookout, so as to meet the stranger, and anticipate him, and ask him not to pass by, saying: "My lord, if I have found favour in thy sight, pass not by thy servant."¹⁶³ Therefore as a reward for his hospitality, he received the gift of posterity.

105. Lot also, his nephew,¹⁶⁴ who was near to him not only in relationship but also in virtue, on account of his readiness to show hospitality, turned aside the punishment of Sodom from himself and his family.

106. A man ought therefore to be hospitable, kind, upright, not desirous of what belongs to another, willing to give up some of his own rights if assailed, rather than to take away another's. He ought to avoid disputes, to hate quarrels. He ought to restore unity and the grace of quietness. When a good man gives up any of his own rights, it is not only a sign of liberality, but is also accompanied by great advantages. To start with, it is no small gain to be free from the cost of a lawsuit. Then it also brings in good results, by an increase of friendship, from which many advantages rise. These become afterwards most useful to the man that can despise a little something at the time.

107. In all the duties of hospitality kindly feeling must be shown to all, but greater respect must be given to the upright.¹⁶⁵ For "Whosoever receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward,"¹⁶⁶ as the Lord has said. Such is the favour in which hospitality stands with God, that not even the draught of cold water shall fail of getting a reward.¹⁶⁷ Thou seest that Abraham, in looking for guests, received God Himself to entertain.¹⁶⁸ Thou seest that Lot received the angels.¹⁶⁹ And how dost thou know that when thou receivest men, thou dost not receive Christ? Christ may be in the stranger that comes, for Christ is there in the person of the poor, as He Himself says: "I was in prison and thou camest to Me, I was naked and thou didst clothe Me."¹⁷⁰ .

108. It is sweet, then, to seek not for money but for grace. It is true¹⁷¹ that this evil has long ago entered into human hearts, so that money stands in the place of honour, and the minds of men are filled with admiration for wealth. Thus love of money sinks in and as it were dries up every kindly duty; so that men consider everything a loss which is spent beyond the usual amount. But even here the holy Scriptures have been on the watch against love of money, that it might prove no cause of hindrance, saying: "Better is hospitality, even though it consisteth only of herbs."¹⁷² And again: "Better is bread in pleasantness with peace."¹⁷³ For the Scriptures teach us not to be wasteful, but liberal.

109. There are two kinds of free-giving, one arising from liberality, the other from wasteful extravagance.¹⁷⁴ It is a mark of liberality to receive the stranger, to clothe the naked, to redeem

the captives, to help the needy. It is wasteful to spend money on expensive banquets and much wine. Wherefore one reads: "Wine is wasteful, drunkenness is abusive."¹⁷⁵ It is wasteful to spend one's own wealth merely for the sake of gaining the favour of the people. This they do who spend their inheritance on the games of the circus, or on theatrical pieces and gladiatorial shows, or even a combat of wild beasts, just to surpass the fame of their forefathers for these things. All this that they do is but foolish, for it is not right to be extravagant in spending money even on good works.

110. It is a right kind of liberality to keep due measure towards the poor themselves, that one may have enough for more; and not to go beyond the right limit for the sake of winning favour. Whatever comes forth out of a pure sincere disposition, that is seemly. It is also seemly not to enter on unnecessary undertakings, nor to omit those that are needed.

111. But it befits the priest especially to adorn the temple of God with fitting splendour, so that the court of the Lord may be made glorious by his endeavours. He ought always to spend money as mercy demands. It behoves him to give to strangers what is right. This must not be too much, but enough; not more than, but as much as, kindly feeling demands, so that he may never seek another's favour at the expense of the poor, nor show himself as either too stingy or too free to the clergy. The one act is unkind, the other wasteful. It is unkind if money should be wanting for the necessities of those whom one ought to win back from their wretched employments. It is wasteful if there should be too much over for pleasure.

Chapter XXII.

We must observe a right standard between too great mildness and excessive harshness. They who endeavour to creep into the hearts of others by a false show of mildness gain nothing substantial or lasting. This the example of Absalom plainly enough shows.

112. Moreover, due measure befits even our words and instructions, that it may not seem as though there was either too great mildness or too much harshness. Many prefer to be too mild, so as to appear to be good. But it is certain that nothing feigned or false can bear the form of true virtue; nay, it cannot even last. At first it flourishes, then, as time goes on, like a floweret it fades and passes away, but what is true and sincere has a deep root.¹⁷⁶

113. To prove by examples our assertion that what is feigned cannot last, but flourishing just for a time quickly fails, we will take one example of pretence and falsehood from that family, from which we have already drawn so many examples to show their growth in virtue.

114. Absalom was King David's son, known for his beauty, of splendid appearance and in the heyday of youth; so that no other such man as he was found in Israel.¹⁷⁷ He was without a blemish from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. He had for himself a chariot and horses and fifty men to run before him. He rose at early dawn and stood before the gate in the way, and whoever he knew to be seeking the judgment of the king, he called to himself, saying: "From what city art thou?" And he answered: "I thy servant am of one of the tribes of Israel." And Absalom answered: "Thy words are good and right. Is there none given thee by the king to hear thee? Who will make me a judge? And whosoever will come unto me, that hath need of judgment, I will give him justice." With such words he cajoled them. And when they came to make obeisance to him, stretching forth his hand he took hold of them and kissed them.¹⁷⁸ So he turned the hearts of all to himself. For flattery of this sort quickly finds its way to touch the very depths of the heart.

115. Those spoilt and ambitious men chose what for a time seemed an honour to them, and was pleasing and enjoyable. But whilst that delay took place, which the prophet,¹⁷⁹ being prudent above all, thought ought to intervene, they could no longer hold out or bear it. Then David having no doubt about the victory commended his son to those who went out to fight, so that they should spare him.¹⁸⁰ He would not engage in the battle himself lest he should seem to be taking up arms against one who was still his son, though attempting to destroy his father.

116. It is clear, then, that those things are lasting and sound, which are true and grow out of a sincere and not a false heart. Those, however, which are brought about by pretence and adulation can never last for long.

Chapter XXIII. The good faith of those who are easily bought over with money or flattery is a frail thing to trust to.

117. Who would suppose that those who are bought over to obedience by money,¹⁸¹ or those who are allured by adulation, would ever be faithful to them? For the former are ever ready to sell themselves, whilst the latter cannot put up with a hard rule. They are easily won with a little adulation, but if one reproves them by a word, they murmur against it, they give one up, they go away with hostile feelings, they forsake one in anger. They prefer to rule rather than to obey. They think that those whom they ought to have placed over them ought to be subject to themselves, as though indebted to them by their kindness.

118. What man is there that thinks those will be faithful to himself, whom he believes he will have to bind to himself by money or flattery? For he who takes thy money supposes that he is cheaply held, and looked down upon, unless the money is paid again and again. So he frequently expects his price; whilst the other, who is met with prayer and flattery, is always wanting to be asked.

Chapter XXIV.

We must strive for preferment only by right means. An office undertaken must be carded out wisely and with moderation. The inferior clergy should not detract from the bishop's reputation by reigned virtues; nor again, should the bishop be jealous of a cleric, but he should be just in all things and especially in giving judgment.

119. I Think, then, that one should strive to win preferment, especially in the Church, only by good actions and with a right aim; so that there may be no proud conceit, no idle carelessness, no shameful disposition of mind, no unseemly ambition. A plain simplicity of mind is enough for everything, and commends itself quite sufficiently.

120. When in office, again, it is not right to be harsh and severe, nor may one be too easy; lest on the one hand we should seem to be exercising a despotic power, and on the other to be by no means filling the office we had taken up.

121. We must strive also to win many by kindnesses and duties that we can do, and to preserve the favour already shown us. For they will with good reason forget the benefits of former times if they are now vexed at some great wrong. For it often enough happens that those one has shown favour to and allowed to rise step by step, are driven away, if one decides in some unworthy way to put another before them. But it is seemly for a priest to show such favour in his kindnesses and his decisions as to guard equity, and to show regard to the other clergy as to parents.

122. Those who once stood approved should not now become overbearing, but rather, as mindful of the grace they have received, stand firm in their humility. A priest ought not to be offended if either cleric or attendant or any ecclesiastic should win regard for himself, by showing mercy, or by fasting, or by uprightness of life, or by teaching and reading. For the grace of the Church is the praise of the teacher. It is a good thing that the work of another should be praised, if only it be done without any desire to boast. For each one should receive praise from the lips of his neighbour, and not from his own mouth, and each one should be commended by the work he has done, not merely by the wishes he had.

223. But if any one is disobedient to his bishop and wishes to exalt and upraise himself, and to overshadow his bishop's merits by a feigned appearance of learning or humility or mercy, he is wandering from the truth in his pride; for the rule of truth is, to do nothing to advance one's own cause whereby another loses ground, nor to use whatever good one has to the disgrace or blame of another.

124. Never protect a wicked man, nor allow the sacred things to be given over to an unworthy one; on the other hand, do not harass and press hard on a man whose fault is not clearly proved. Injustice quickly gives offence in every case, but especially in the Church, where equity ought to exist, where like treatment should be given to all, so that a powerful person may not claim the more, nor a rich man appropriate the more. For whether we be poor or rich, we are one in Christ. Let him that lives a holier life claim nothing more thereby for himself; for he ought rather to be the more humble for it.

125. In giving judgment let us have no respect of persons. Favour must be put out of sight, and the case be decided on its merits. Nothing is so great a strain on another's good opinion or confidence, as the fact of our giving away the cause of the weaker to the more powerful in any case that comes before us. The same happens if we are hard on the poor, whilst we make excuses for the rich man when guilty. Men are ready enough to flatter those in high positions, so as not to let them think themselves injured, or to feel vexed as though overthrown. But if thou fearest to give offence then do not undertake to give judgment. If thou art a priest or some cleric do not urge it. It is allowable for thee to be silent in the matter, if it be a money affair, though it is always due to consistency to be on the side of equity. But in the cause of God, where there is danger to the whole Church, it is no small sin to act as though one saw nothing.

Chapter XXV.

Benefits should be conferred on the poor rather than on the rich, for these latter either think a return is expected from them, or else they are angry at seeming to be indebted for such an action. But the poor man makes God the debtor in his place, and freely owns to the benefits he has received. To these remarks is added a warning to despise riches.

126. But what advantage is it to thee to show favour to a rich man? Is it that he is more ready to repay one who loves him?¹⁸² For we generally show favour to those from whom we expect to receive a return of favour. But we ought to think far more of the weak and helpless, because we hope to receive, on behalf of him who has it not, a recompense from the Lord Jesus, Who in the likeness of a marriage feast¹⁸³ has given us a general representation of virtue. By this He bids us confer benefits rather on those who cannot give them to us in return, teaching us to bid to our

feasts and meals, not those who are rich, but those that are poor. For the rich seem to be asked that they may prepare a banquet for us in return; the poor, as they have nothing wherewith to make return, when they receive anything, make the Lord to be our recompense Who has offered Himself as surety for the poor.

127. In the ordinary course of things, too, the conferring of a benefit on the poor is of more use than when it is conferred on the rich. The rich man scorns the benefit and is ashamed to feel indebted for a favour. Nay, moreover, whatever is offered to him he takes as due to his merits, as though only a just debt were paid him; or else he thinks it was but given because the giver expected a still greater return to be made him by the rich man. So. in accepting a kindness, the rich man, on that very ground, thinks that he has given more than he ever received. The poor man, however, though he has no money wherewith he can repay, at least shows his gratitude. And herein it is certain that he returns more than he received. For money is paid in coins, but gratitude never fails; money grows less by payment, but gratitude fails when held back, and is preserved when given to others. Next-a thing the rich man avoids-the poor man owns that he feels bound by the debt. He really thinks help has been given him, not that it has been offered in return for his honour. He considers that his children have been again given him, that his life is restored and his family preserved. How much better, then, is it to confer benefits upon the good than on the ungrateful.

128. Wherefore the Lord said to His disciples: "Take neither gold nor silver nor money."¹⁸⁴ Whereby as with a sickle He cuts off the love of money that is ever growing up in human hearts. Peter also said to the lame man, who was always carried even from his mother's womb: "Silver and gold have I none, but what I have give I thee. In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk."¹⁸⁵ So he gave not money, but he gave health. How much better it is to have health without money, than money without health! The lame man rose; he had not hoped for that: he received no money; though he had hoped for that. But riches are hardly to be found among the saints of the Lord, so as to become objects of contempt to them.

Chapter XXVI.

How long standing an evil love of money is, is plain from many examples in the Old Testament. And yet it is plain, too, how idle a thing the possession of money is.

129. But man's habits have so long applied themselves to this admiration of money, that no one is thought worthy of honour unless he is rich.¹⁸⁶ This is no new habit. Nay, this vice (and that makes the matter worse) grew long years ago in the hearts of men. When the city of Jericho fell at the sound of the priests' trumpets, and Joshua the son of Nun gained the victory, he knew that the valour of the people was weakened through love of money and desire for gold. For when Achan had taken a garment of gold and two hundred shekels of silver and a golden ingot¹⁸⁷ from the spoils of the ruined city, he was brought before the Lord, and could not deny the theft, but owned it.¹⁸⁸

130. Love of money, then, is an old, an ancient vice, which showed itself even at the declaration of the divine law; for a law was given to check it.¹⁸⁹ On account of love of money Balak thought Balaam could be tempted by rewards to curse the people of our fathers.¹⁹⁰ Love of money would have won the day too, had not God bidden him hold back from cursing. Overcome by love of

money Achan led to destruction all the people of the fathers. So Joshua the son of Nun, who could stay the sun from setting, could not stay the love of money in man from creeping on. At the sound of his voice the sun stood still, but love of money stayed not. When the sun stood still Joshua completed his triumph, but when love of money went on, he almost lost the victory.

131. Why? Did not the woman Delilah's love of money deceive Samson, the bravest man of all¹⁹¹ So he who had torn asunder the roaring lion with his hands;¹⁹² who, when bound and handed over to his enemies, alone, without help, burst his bonds and slew a thousand of them;¹⁹³ who broke the cords interwoven with sinews as though they were but the slight threads of a net; he, I say, having laid his head on the woman's knee, was robbed of the decoration of his victory-bringing hair, that which gave him his might. Money flowed into the lap of the woman, and the favour of God forsook the man.¹⁹⁴

132. Love of money, then, is deadly. Seductive is money, whilst it also defiles those who have it, and helps not those who have it not. Supposing that money sometimes is a help, yet it is only a help to a poor man who makes his want known. What good is it to him who does not long for it, nor seek it; who does not need its help and is not turned aside by pursuit of it? What good is it to others, if he who has it is alone the richer for it? Is he therefore more honourable because he has that whereby honour is often lost, because he has what he must guard rather than possess? We possess what we use, but what is beyond our use brings us no fruit of possession, but only the danger of watching.

Chapter XXVII. In contempt of money there is the pattern of justice, which virtue bishops and clerics ought to aim at together with some others. A few words are added on the duty of not bringing an excommunication too quickly into force.

133. To come to an end; we know that contempt of riches is a form of justice, therefore we ought to avoid love of money, and strive with all our powers never to do anything against justice, but to guard it in all our deeds and actions.

134. If we would please God, we must have love, we must be of one mind, we must follow humility, each one thinking the other higher than himself. This is true humility, when one never claims anything proudly for oneself, but thinks oneself to be the inferior. The bishop should treat the clerics and attendants, who are indeed his sons, as members of himself, and give to each one that duty for which he sees him to be fit.

135. Not without pain is a limb of the body cut off which has become corrupt. It is treated for a long time, to see if it can be cured with various remedies. If it cannot be cured, then it is cut off by a good physician. Thus it is a good bishop's desire to wish to heal the weak, to remove the spreading ulcers, to burn some parts and not to cut them off; and lastly, when they cannot be healed, to cut them off with pain to himself. Wherefore that beautiful rule of the Apostle stands forth brightly, that we should look each one, not on his own things, but on the things of others.¹⁹⁵ In this way it will never come about that we shall in anger give way to our own feelings, or concede more than is right in favour to our own wishes.

Chapter XXVIII.

Mercy must be freely shown even though it brings an odium of its own. With regard to this, reference is made to the well-known story about the sacred vessels which were broken up by Ambrose to pay for the redemption of captives; and very beautiful advice is given about the right use of the gold and silver which the Church possesses. Next, after showing from the action of holy Lawrence what are the true treasures of the Church, certain rules are laid down which ought to be observed in melting down and employing for such uses the consecrated vessels of the Church.

136. It is a very great incentive to mercy to share in others' misfortunes, to help the needs of others as far as our means allow, and sometimes even beyond them. For it is better for mercy's sake to take up a case, or to suffer odium rather than to show hard feeling. So I once brought odium on myself because I broke up the sacred vessels to redeem captives—a fact that could displease the Arians. Not that it displeased them as an act, but as being a thing in which they could take hold of something for which to blame me. Who can be so hard, cruel, iron-hearted, as to be displeased because a man is redeemed from death, or a woman from barbarian impurities, things that are worse than death, or boys and girls and infants from the pollution of idols, whereby through fear of death they were defiled?

137. Although we did not act thus without good reason, yet we have followed it up among the people so as to confess and to add again and again that it was far better to preserve souls than gold for the Lord. For He Who sent the apostles without gold¹⁹⁶ also brought together the churches without gold. The Church has gold, not to store up, but to lay out, and to spend on those who need. What necessity is there to guard what is of no good? Do we not know how much gold and silver the Assyrians took out of the temple of the Lord?¹⁹⁷ Is it not much better that the priests should melt it down for the sustenance of the poor, if other supplies fail, than that a sacrilegious enemy should carry it off and defile it? Would not the Lord Himself say: Why didst thou suffer so many needy to die of hunger? Surely thou hadst gold? Thou shouldst have given them sustenance. Why are so many captives brought on the slave market, and why are so many unredeemed left to be slain by the enemy? It had been better to preserve living vessels than gold ones.

138. To this no answer could be given. For what wouldst thou say: I feared that the temple of God would need its ornaments? He would answer: The sacraments need not gold, nor are they proper to gold only—for they are not bought with gold. The glory of the sacraments is the redemption of captives. Truly they are precious vessels, for they redeem men from death. That, indeed, is the true treasure of the Lord which effects what His blood effected. Then, indeed, is the vessel of the Lord's blood recognized, when one sees in either redemption, so that the chalice redeems from the enemy those whom His blood redeemed from sin. How beautifully it is said, when long lines of captives are redeemed by the Church: These Christ has redeemed. Behold the gold that can be tried, behold the useful gold, behold the gold of Christ which frees from death, behold the gold whereby modesty is redeemed and chastity is preserved.

139. These, then, I preferred to hand over to you as free men, rather than to store up the gold. This crowd of captives, this company surely is more glorious than the sight of cups. The gold of the Redeemer ought to contribute to this work so as to redeem those in danger. I recognize the fact that the blood of Christ not only flows in cups of gold, but also by the office of redemption has impressed upon them the power of the divine operation.

140. Such gold the holy martyr Lawrence preserved for the Lord. For when the treasures of the Church were demanded from him, he promised that he would show them. On the following day he brought the poor together. When asked where the treasures were which he had promised, he pointed to the poor, saying: "These are the treasures of the Church." And truly they were treasures, in whom Christ lives, in whom there is faith in Him. So, too, the Apostle says: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels."¹⁹⁸ What greater treasures has Christ than those in whom He says He Himself lives? For thus it is written: "I was hungry and ye gave Me to eat, I was thirsty and ye gave Me to drink, I was a stranger and ye took Me in."¹⁹⁹ And again: "What thou didst to one of these, thou didst it unto Me."²⁰⁰ What better treasures has Jesus than those in which He loves to be seen?

141. These treasures Lawrence pointed out, and prevailed, for the persecutors could not take them away. Jehoiachim,²⁰¹ who preserved his gold during the siege and spent it not in providing food, saw his gold carried off, and himself led into captivity. Lawrence, who preferred to spend the gold of the Church on the poor, rather than to keep it in hand for the persecutor, received the sacred crown of martyrdom for the unique and deep-sighted vigour of his meaning. Or was it perhaps said to holy Lawrence: "Thou shouldst not spend the treasures of the Church, or sell the sacred vessels"?

142. It is necessary that every one should fill this office, with genuine good faith and clear-sighted forethought. If any one derives profit from it for himself it is a crime, but if he spends the treasures on the poor, or redeems captives, he shows mercy. For no one can say: Why does the poor man live? None can complain that captives are redeemed, none can find fault because a temple of the Lord is built, none can be angry because a plot of ground has been enlarged for the burial of the bodies of the faithful, none can be vexed because in the tombs of the Christians there is rest for the dead. In these three ways it is allowable to break up, melt down, or sell even the sacred vessels of the Church.

143. It is necessary to see that the mystic cup does not go out of the Church, lest the service of the sacred chalice should be turned over to base uses. Therefore vessels were first sought for in the Church which had not been consecrated to such holy uses. Then broken up and afterwards melted down, they were given to the poor in small payments, and were also used for the ransom of captives. But if new vessels fail, or those which never seem to have been used to such a holy purpose, then, as I have already said, I think that all might be put to this use without irreverence.

Chapter XXIX. The property of widows or of all the faithful, that has been entrusted to the Church, ought to be defended though it brings danger to oneself. This is illustrated by the example of Onias the priest, and of Ambrose, bishop of Ticinum.

144. Great care must be taken that the property entrusted by widows remains inviolate. It should be guarded without causing complaint, not only if it belongs to widows, but to any one at all. For good faith must be shown to all, though the cause of the widow and orphans comes first.

145. So everything entrusted to the temple was preserved in the name of the widows alone, as we read in the book of the Maccabees.²⁰² For when information was given of the money, which Simon treacherously had told King Antiochus could be found in large quantities in the temple at Jerusalem, Heliodorus was sent to look into the matter. He came to the temple, and made known

to the high priest his hateful information and the reason of his coming.

146. Then the priest said that only means for the maintenance of the widows and orphans was laid up there. And when Heliodorus would have gone to seize it, and to claim it on the king's behalf, the priests cast themselves before the altar, after putting on their priestly robes, and with tears called on the living God Who had given them the law concerning trust-money to show Himself as guardian of His own commands. The changed look and colour of the high priest showed what grief of soul and anxiety and tension of mind were his. All wept, for the spot would fall into contempt, if not even in the temple of God safe and faithful guardianship could be preserved. Women with breasts girded, and virgins who usually were shut in, knocked at the doors. Some ran to the walls, others looked out of the windows, all raised their hands to heaven in prayer that God would stand by His laws.

147. But Heliodorus, undeterred by this, was eager to carry out his intention, and had already surrounded the treasury with his followers, when suddenly there appeared to him a dreadful horseman all glorious in golden armour, his horse also being adorned with costly ornaments. Two other youths also appeared in glorious might and wondrous beauty, in splendour and glory and beauteous array. They stood round him, and on either side beat the sacrilegious wretch, and gave him stroke after stroke without intermission. What more need I say? Shut in by darkness he fell to the ground, and lay there nearly dead with fear at this plain proof of divine power, nor had he any hope of safety left within him. Joy returned to those who were in fear, fear fell on those who were so proud before. And some of the friends of Heliodorus in their trouble besought Onias, asking life for him, since he was almost at his last breath.

148. When, therefore, the high priest asked for this, the same youths again appeared to Heliodorus, clad in the same garments, and said to him: Give thanks to Onias the high priest, for whose sake thy life is granted thee. But do thou, having experienced the scourge of God, go and tell thy friends how much thou hast learnt of the sanctity of the temple and the power of God. With these words they passed out of sight. Heliodorus then, his life having come back to him, offered a sacrifice to the Lord, gave thanks to the priest Onias, and returned with his army to the king, saying: "If thou hast an enemy or one who is plotting against thy power, send him thither and thou wilt receive him back well scourged."

149. Therefore, my sons, good faith must be preserved in the case of trust-money, and care, too, must be shown. Your service will glow the brighter if the oppression of a powerful man, which some widow or orphan cannot withstand, is checked by the assistance of the Church, and if ye show that the command of the Lord has more weight with you than the favour of the rich.

150. Ye also remember how often we entered on a contest against the royal attacks, on behalf of the trust-money belonging to widows, yea, and to others as well. You and I shared this in common. I will also mention the late case of the Church at Ticinum, which was in danger of losing the widow's trust-money that it had received.²⁰³ For when he who wanted to claim it on some imperial rescript demanded it, the clergy did not maintain their rights. For they themselves, having once been called to office and sent to intervene, now supposed that they could not oppose the emperor's orders. The plain words of the rescript were read, the orders of the chief officer of the court were there, he who was to act in the matter was at hand. What more was to be said? It was handed over.

151. However, after taking counsel with me, the holy bishop took possession of the rooms to which he knew that the widow's property had been carried. As it could not be carried away, it was all set down in writing. Later on it was again demanded on proof of the document. The emperor repeated the order, and would meet us himself in his own person. We refused. And when the force of the divine law, and a long list of passages and the danger of Heliodorus was explained, at length the emperor became reasonable. Afterwards, again, an attempt was made to seize it, but the good bishop anticipated the attempt and restored to the widow all he had received. So faith was preserved, but the oppression was no longer a cause for fear; for now it is the matter itself, not good faith, that is in danger.

Chapter XXX. The ending of the book brings an exhortation to avoid ill-will, and to seek prudence, faith, and the other virtues.

152. My sons, avoid wicked men, guard against the envious. There is this difference between a wicked and an envious man: the wicked man is delighted at his own good fortune, but the envious is tortured at the thought of an other's. The former loves evil, the latter hates good. So he is almost more bearable who desires good for himself alone, than he who desires evil for all.

153. My sons, think before you act, and when you have thought long then do what you consider right. When the opportunity of a praiseworthy death is given let it be seized at once. Glory that is put off flies away and is not easily laid hold of again.

154. Love faith. For by his devotion and faith Josiah²⁰⁴ won great love for himself from his enemies. For he celebrated the Lord's passover when he was eighteen yearsold, as no one had done it before him. As then in zeal he was superior to those who went before him, so do ye, my sons, show zeal for God. Let zeal for God search you through, and devour you, so that each one of you may say: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." ²⁰⁵ An apostle of Christ was called the zealot.²⁰⁶ But why do I speak of an apostle? The Lord Himself said: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten Me up."²⁰⁷ Let it then be real zeal for God, not mean earthy zeal, for that causes jealousy.

155. Let there be peace among you, which passeth all understanding. Love one another. Nothing is sweeter than charity, nothing more blessed than peace. Ye yourselves know that I have ever loved you and do now love you above all others. As the children of one father ye have become united under the bond of brotherly affection.

156. Whatsoever is good, that hold fast; and the God of peace and love be with you in the Lord Jesus, to Whom be honour and glory, dominion and might, together with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

1: Cic. de Off. II. 1.

2: S. Matt. vi. 2.

3: S. Luke xxiii. 43.

4: Hieronymus, often mentioned by Cicero. Cf. Cic. de Finib. II. 3.-He lived about b.c. 300, at Rhodes. He held that the highest good consisted in freedom from pain and trouble.

5: Herillus. Cf. Cic. de Finib. V. 25. Of Carthage; a Stoic. The chief good, according to him, consisted in knowledge.

6: Aristotle, the famous philosopher and writer. Born b.c. 384. Taught chiefly at Athens, where Theophrastus was his pupil.

7: Theophrastus of Eresus in Lesbos, also a voluminous writer: He is mentioned by Cicero thus: "Soepe ab Aristotele, a Theophrasto mirabiliter caudatur scientia, hoc una captus Herillus scientiam summum bonum esse defendit." (de Fin. V. 25.)

8: Epicurus. Cf. Cic. Tuscul. V. 30. Born b.c. 342 in Samos. The founder of the Epicurean School of Philosophy. With him pleasure constituted the highest happiness, but probably not sensual pleasures. Cf. note on I. 50.

9: Callipho. Cic. Acad. II. 42: A disciple of Epicurus. The chief good of man he said consisted in the union of a virtuous life with bodily pleasure, or, as Cicero puts it, in the union of the man with the beast. (Cic. de Off. III. 33.)

10: Diodorus living about b.c. 110, at Tyre. His view was as stated above by St. Ambrose, whereby an attempt was made to reconcile the Stoics and Epicureans.

11: Zeno of Citium, the founder of the Stoic School.

12: S. John xvii. 3.

13: S. Matt. xix. 29.

14: Ps. xciv. [xciii.] 12.

15: Ps. cxii. [cxi.] 1.

16: Ps. cxii. [cxi.] 3.

17: Ps. cxii. [cxi.] 5, Ps. cxii. [cxi.] 6 .

18: Ps. cxii. [cxi.] 9.

19: See St. Augustine, De Civit. Dei. XIX. 1.

20: Ps. i. 1, Ps. i. 2.

21: Ps. cxix. 1.

22: S. Matt. v. 11, Matt. v. 12.

23: S. Matt. xvi. 24.

24: Ex. xiv.

25: Num. xvi. 48.

26: Bel v. 39.

27: Phil. iii. 7, Phil. iii. 8.

28: Ex. xvi. 13.

29: 1 [3] Kings xvii. 6.

30: 1 [3] Kings xvii. 14.

31: S. Matt. xvii. 3.

32: S. Luke vi. 20, Luke vi. 21.

33: S. Luke vi. 24, Luke vi. 25.

34: 1 [3] Kings xxi. 13-16.

35: Gen. xxvii. 28.

36: Gen. xxxi. 41.

37: Gen. xxxiv. 5.

38: Gen. xlii. 2.

39: Ex. iii. 6.

40: Gen. xxxix. 7.

41: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xii. 16; 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xiii. 31; 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xviii. 33.

42: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xiii. 21.

43: S. John xx. 29.

44: Job i. 14 ff.

45: Cic. de Off. II. 3.

46: 1 Tim. iv. 8.

47: 1 Cor. vi. 12.

48: Ps. xxx. [xxix.] 9.

49: Isa. iii. 10 [LXX.].

50: 1 Cor. vii. 35.

51: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 36.

52: Phil. iii. 8.

53: 1 Tim. vi. 6.

54: 1 Tim. iv. 8.

55: S. Matt. xix. 12.

56: Cic. de Off. II. 7.

57: Cic. de Off. II. 14.
58: Ex. xxxii. 32.
59: Ex. xxxiv. 30.
60: Deut. xxxiv. 6.
61: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xvii. 32.
62: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] ii. 3.
63: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] ii. 20.
64: 1 [3] Kings ii. 5.
65: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xxiv 17.
66: Ps. cii. [ci.] 9.
67: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] v. 1, 2 Sam. [2 Kings] v. 2.
68: Ps. lxxxix [lxxxviii.] 20.
69: 1 [3] Kings xi. 34.
70: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xx. 34.
71: Ecclus. xxix. 10.
72: Ecclus. xxii. 31.
73: Ecclus. vi. 16.
74: 1 Cor. xiii. 7, 1 Cor. xiii. 8.
75: Cic. de Off. II. 7, §23.
76: Cic. de Off. II. 8, §30.
77: Cic. de Off. II. 9.
78: Ecclus. xxii. 31.
79: Cic. de Off. II. 10.
80: Ps. xxxvii. [xxxvi.] 21.
81: Ps. cxii. [cxi.] 5.
82: 1 [3] Kings iii. 26 ff.
83: 1 [3] Kings iii. 26.
84: 1 [3] Kings iii. 28.
85: 1 [3] Kings iii. 9.

86: Bel and the Dragon v. 44 87: Cic. de Off. II. 10, §35.

88: Cic. de Off. II. 9, §34.

89: Prov. xxvii. 6.

90: 1 [3] Kings x. 2, 1 [3] Kings x. 3.

91: 1 [3] Kings x. 6-8.

92: 2 Cor. iv. 18.

93: S. Luke xi. 28.

94: S. Matt. xii. 50.

95: Acts xxvi. 22.

96: S. Luke ii. 25.

97: Gen. xli. 9 ff.

98: Dan. ii.

99: Cic. de Off. II. 10, §36.

100: Ex. xviii. 13.

101: Ezek. xxviii. 3.

102: Bel and the Dragon v. 39.

103: Gen. xli. 33 ff.

104: Cic. de Off. II. 10, §36.

105: Vide Virg. Aen. IV. 13: "degeneres animos timor arguit. "

106: Wisd. vii. 29, Wisd. vii. 30.

107: Wisd. vii. 22, Wisd. vii. 23.

108: Wisd. viii. 7.

109: Cic. de Off. II. 11.

110: Ecclus. xxxi. 9.

111: Cic. de Off. II. 9, §32.

112: This was in the year 378. These provinces were invaded by the Goths, who after the defeat and death of Valens at Hadrianople ravaged the whole country, and carried away with them a vast number of captives and afterwards sold them into slavery. St Ambrose busied himself in redeeming all he could. He tells us himself how his efforts were met by the Arian party.

113: Cic. de Off. II. 16.

- 114: 1 Tim. v. 16.
- 115: Cic. de Off. II. 15, §52.
- 116: Gen. xiv. 16.
- 117: Gen. xli. 53-57.
- 118: Cic. de Off. II. 15, §55.
- 119: Cic. de Off. II. 15, §54.
- 120: Gen. xlvii. 14-20.
- 121: Cic. de Off. II. 21.
- 122: Gen. xlvii. 25.
- 123: Cic. de Off. II. 23, 83.
- 124: Gen. xli. 17 ff.
- 125: Gen. xli. 22 ff.
- 126: Gen. xxxvii. 28.
- 127: Gen. xlv. 2 ff.
- 128: Gen. xlix. 22, Gen. xlix. 25, Gen. xlix. 26.
- 129: Deut. xxxiii. 16, Deut. xxxiii. 17.
- 130: 1 Cor. vii. 25.
- 131: 1 Tim. iv. 12 ff.
- 132: " propter me. " Cod. Dresd., Ed. Med. have " proeter me. "
- 133: Gen. xxxix. 8, Gen. xxxix. 9.
- 134: " humilitatis, quia domino deferebat; honorificentioe, quia referebat gratiam. " Others read: " humilitatis ...deferebat honorificentiam, quia, " etc.
- 135: Cic. de Off. II, 10, §36.
- 136: Phil. iv. 11.
- 137: 1 Tim. vi. 10.
- 138: Phil. iv. 12.
- 139: Ps. xxxiv. [xxxiii.] 18.
- 140: S. Luke xviii. 11.
- 141: 2 Cor. vi. 14.

142: Deut. viii. 3.

143: S. Matt. v. 6.

144: 2 Cor. vi. 10.

145: Cic. de Off. II. 22, §77.

146: 1 [3] Kings xii. 4 ff.

147: 1 [3] Kings xii. 16.

148: Cic. de Off. II. 12, §43.

149: Cic. de Off. II. 13, §46.

150: Ex. xxiv. 12 ff.

151: Deut. xxxiv. 9.

152: Josh. iii. 15 ff.

153: Josh. x. 12, Josh. x. 13.

154: Ex. xiv. 21. Cf. also Josh. x. 12.

155: Gen xii. 5.

156: 1 [3] Kings xix. 21.

157: Acts xv. 39, Acts xv. 40.

158: Acts xvi. 3.

159: Tit. i. 5.

160: Cic. de Off. II. 14, §51.

161: Cic. de Off. II. 18, §64.

162: Gen. xviii 1 ff.

163: Gen. xviii. 3.

164: Gen. xix. 20 165: Cic. de Off. II. 20.

166: S. Matt. x. 41.

167: S. Matt. x. 42.

168: Gen. xviii. 1 ff.

169: Gen. xix. 3.

170: S. Matt. xxv. 36.

171: Cic. de Off. II. 20, §69.

172: Prov. xv. 17.

173: Prov. xvii. 1.

174: Cic. de Off. II. 16.

175: Prov. xx. 1 176: Cic. de Off. II. 12, §43.

177: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xiv. 25.

178: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xv. 1-6.

179: Hushai is probably meant by this, who advised Absalom to delay his attack on the king.

180: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xviii. 5.

181: Cic. de Off. II. 6, §21.

182: Cic. de Off. II. 20, §69.

183: S. Luke xiv. 12, Luke xiv. 13.

184: S. Matt. x. 9.

185: Acts iii. 6.

186: Cic. de Off. II. 20, §71.

187: " linguam auream. " Other readings are: " lineam auream, " or " regulam auream. "

188: Josh. vii. 21.

189: Ex. xx. 17.

190: Num. xxii. 17.

191: Judg. xvi. 6.

192: Judg. xiv. 6.

193: Judg. xv. 14, Judg. xv. 15.

194: Judg. xvi. 20.

195: Phil. ii. 4.

196: S. Matt x. 9.

197: 2 [4] Kings xxiv. 13.

198: 2 Cor. iv. 7.

199: S. Matt. xxv. 35.

200: S. Matt. xxv. 40.

201: 2 [4] Kings xxiii. 35.

202: 2 Macc. iii.

203: This was attempted by the Emperor Valentinian II., who was induced to act in this way by his mother Justina. She being an Arian was only too ready to harass in every possible way a Catholic bishop such as Ambrose of Ticinum was.

204: 2 [4] Kings xxiii. 21ff.

205: Ps. Ixix. [Ixviii.] 9.

206: S. Luke vi. 15.

207: S. John ii. 17. St. John, however, only says: "The disciples remembered that it was written."

ON THE DUTIES OF THE CLERGY - Book 3

Book III.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Chapter XIII.

Chapter XIV.

Chapter XV.

Chapter XVI.

Chapter XVII.

Chapter XVIII.

Chapter XIX.

Chapter XX.

Chapter XXI.

Chapter XXII.

Book III.

Chapter I.

We are taught by David and Solomon how to take counsel with our own heart. Scipio is not to be accounted prime author of the saying which is ascribed to him. The writer proves what glorious things the holy prophets accomplished in their time of quiet, and shows, by examples of their and others' leisure moments, that a just man is never alone in trouble.

1. The prophet David taught us that we should go about in our heart as though in a large house; that we should hold converse with it as with some trusty companion. He spoke to himself, and conversed with himself, as these words show: "I said, I will take heed to my ways."¹ Solomon his son also said: "Drink water out of thine own vessels, and out of the springs of thy wells;"² that is: use thine own counsel. For: "Counsel in the heart of a man is as deep waters."³ "Let no stranger," it says, "share it with thee. Let the fountain of thy water be thine own, and rejoice with thy wife who is thine from thy youth. Let the loving hind and pleasant doe converse with thee."⁴

2. Scipio,⁵ therefore, was not the first to know that he was not alone when he was alone, or that he was least at leisure when he was at leisure. For Moses knew it before him, who, when silent, was crying out;⁶ who, when he stood at ease, was fighting, nay, not merely fighting but triumphing over enemies whom he had not come near. So much was he at ease, that others held up his hands; yet he was no less active than others, for he with his hands at ease was overcoming the enemy, whom they that were in the battle could not conquer.⁷ Thus Moses in his silence spoke, and in his ease laboured hard. And were his labours greater than his times of quiet, who, being in the mount for forty days, received the whole law?⁸ And in that solitude there was One not far away to speak with him. Whence also David says: "I will hear what the Lord God will say within me."⁹ How much greater a thing is it for God to speak with any one, than for a man to speak with himself!

3. The apostles passed by and their shadows cured the sick.¹⁰ Their garments were touched and health was granted.

4. Elijah spoke the word, and the rain ceased and fell not on the earth for three years and six months.¹¹ Again he spoke, and the barrel of meal failed not, and the cruse of oil wasted not the whole time of that long famine.¹²

5. But-as many delight in warfare-which is the most glorious, to bring a battle to an end by the strength of a great army, or, by merits before God alone? Elisha rested in one place while the king of Syria waged a great war against the people of our fathers, and was adding to its terrors by various treacherous plans, and was endeavouring to catch them in an ambush. But the prophet found out all their preparations, and being by the grace of God present everywhere in mental vigour, he told the thoughts of their enemies to his countrymen, and warned them of what places to beware. And when this was known to the king of Syria, he sent an army and shut in the prophet. Elisha prayed and caused all of them to be struck with blindness, and made those who had come to besiege him enter Samaria as captives.¹³

6. Let us compare this leisure of his with that of others.¹⁴ Other men for the sake of rest are wont to withdraw their minds from business, and to retire from the company and companionship of men; to seek the retirement of the country or the solitude of the fields, or in the city to give their minds a rest and to enjoy peace and quietness. But Elisha was ever active. In solitude he divided Jordan on passing over it, so that the lower part flowed down, whilst the upper returned to its source. On Carmel he promises the woman, who so far had had no child, that a son now unhopd for should

be born to her.¹⁵ He raises the dead to life,¹⁶ he corrects the bitterness of the food, and makes it to be sweet by mixing meal with it.¹⁷ Having distributed ten loaves to the people for food, he gathered up the fragments that were left after they had been filled.¹⁸ He makes the iron head of the axe, which had fallen off and was sunk deep in the river Jordan, to swim by putting the wooden handle in the water.¹⁹ He changes leprosy for cleanness,²⁰ drought for rain,²¹ famine for plenty.²²

7. When can the upright man be alone, since he is always with God? When is he left forsaken who is never separated from Christ? "Who," it says, "shall separate us from the love of Christ? I am confident that neither death nor life nor angel shall do so."²³ And when can he be deprived of his labour who never can be deprived of his merits, wherein his labour receives its crown? By what places is he limited to whom the whole world of riches is a possession? By what judgment is he confined who is never blamed by any one? For he is "as unknown yet well known, as dying and behold he lives, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things."²⁴ For the upright man regards nothing but what is consistent and virtuous. And so although he seems poor to another, he is rich to himself, for his worth is taken not at the value of the things which are temporal, but of the things which are eternal.

Chapter II. The discussions among philosophers about the comparison between what is virtuous and what is useful have nothing to do with Christians. For with them nothing is useful which is not just. What are the duties of perfection, and what are ordinary duties? The same words often suit different things in different ways. Lastly, a just man never seeks his own advantage at the cost of another's disadvantage, but rather is always on the lookout for what is useful to others.

8. As we have already spoken about the two former subjects, wherein we discussed what is virtuous and what is useful, there follows now the question whether we ought to compare what is virtuous and useful together, and to ask which we must follow. For, as we have already discussed the matter as to whether a thing is virtuous or wicked, and in another place whether it is useful or useless, so here some think we ought to find out whether a thing is virtuous or useful.²⁵

9. I am induced to do this, lest I should seem to be allowing that these two are mutually opposed to one another, when I have already shown them to be one. For I said that nothing can be virtuous but what is useful, and nothing can be useful but what is virtuous.²⁶ For we do not follow the wisdom of the flesh, whereby the usefulness that consists in an abundance of money is held to be of most value, but we follow that wisdom which is of God, whereby those things which are greatly valued in this world are counted but as loss.

10. For this *xatorqwma*, which is duty carried out entirely and in perfection, starts from the true source of virtue.²⁷ On this follows another, or ordinary duty. This shows by its name that no hard or extraordinary practice of virtue is involved, for it can be common to very many. The desire to save money is the usual practice with many. To enjoy a well-prepared banquet and a pleasant meal is a general habit; but to fast or to use self-restraint is the practice of but few, and not to be desirous of another's goods is a virtue rarely found. On the other hand, to wish to deprive another of his property-and not to be content with one's due-here one will find many to keep company with one. Those (the philosopher would say) are primary duties-these ordinary.²⁸ The primary are found but with few, the ordinary with the many.

11. Again, the same words often have a different meaning. For instance, we call God good and a man good; but it bears in each case quite a different meaning.²⁹ We call God just in one sense, man in another. So, too, there is a difference in meaning when we call God wise and a man wise. This we are taught in the Gospel: "Be ye perfect even as your Father Who is in heaven is perfect." ³⁰ I read again that Paul was perfect and yet not perfect. For when he said: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that. I may apprehend it." ³¹ Immediately he added: "We, then, that are perfect." ³² There is a twofold form of perfection, the one having but ordinary, the other the highest worth. The one availing here, the other hereafter. The one in accordance with human powers, the other with the perfection of the world to come. But God is just through all, wise above all, perfect in all.

12. There is also diversity even among men themselves. Daniel, of whom it was said: "Who is wiser than Daniel?" ³³ was wise in a different sense to what others are. The same may be said of Solomon, who was filled with wisdom, above all the wisdom of the ancients, and more than all the wise men of Egypt.³⁴ To be wise as men are in general is quite a different thing to being really wise. He who is ordinarily wise is wise for temporal matters, is wise for himself, so as to deprive another of something and get it for himself. He who is really wise does not know how to regard his own advantage, but looks with all his desire to that which is eternal, and to that which is seemly and virtuous, seeking not what is useful for himself, but for all.

13. Let this, then, be our rule,³⁵ so that we may never go wrong between two things, one virtuous, the other useful. The upright man must never think of depriving another of anything, nor must he ever wish to increase his own advantage to the disadvantage of another. This rule the Apostle gives thee, saying: "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but each one another's." ³⁶ That is: Let no man seek his own advantage, but another's; let no man seek his own honour, but another's. Wherefore he says in another place: "Let each esteem other better than themselves, looking not each one to his own things, but to the things of others." ³⁷

14. And let no one seek his own favour or his own praise, but another's. This we can plainly see declared in the book of Proverbs, where the Holy Spirit says through Solomon: "My son, if thou be wise, be wise for thyself and thy neighbours; but if thou turn out evil, thou alone shalt bear it." ³⁸ The wise man gives counsel to others, as the upright man does, and shares with him in wearing the form of either virtue.

Chapter III. The rule given about not seeking one's own gain is established, first by the examples of Christ, next by the meaning of the word, and lastly by the very form and uses of our limbs. Wherefore the writer shows what a crime it is to deprive another of what is useful, since the law of nature as well as the divine law is broken by such wickedness. Further, by its means we also lose that gift which makes us superior to other living creatures; and lastly, through it civil laws are abused and treated with the greatest contempt.

15. If, then, any one wishes to please all, he must strive in everything to do, not what is useful for himself, but what is useful for many, as also Paul strove to do. For this is "to be conformed to the image of Christ," ³⁹ namely, when one does not strive for what is another's, and does not deprive another of something so as to gain it for oneself. For Christ our Lord,⁴⁰ though He was in the form of God, emptied Himself so as to take on Himself the form of man, which He wished to enrich with

the virtue of His works. Wilt thou, then, spoil him whom Christ has put on? Wilt thou strip him whom Christ has clothed? For this is what thou art doing when thou dost attempt to increase thine own advantage at another's loss.

16. Think, O man, from whence thou hast received thy name-even from the earth,⁴¹ which takes nothing from any one, but gives freely to all, and supplies varied produce for the use of all living things. Hence humanity is called a particular and innate virtue in man, for it assists its partner.

17. The very form of thy body and the uses of thy limbs teach thee this. Can one limb claim the duties of another? Can the eye claim for itself the duties of the ear; or the mouth the duties of the eye; or the hand the service of the feet; or the feet that of the hands? Nay, the hands themselves, both left and right, have different duties to do, so that if one were to change the use of either, one would act contrary to nature. We should have to lay aside the whole man before we could change the service of the various members: as if, for instance, we were to try to take food with the left hand, or to perform the duties of the left hand with the right, so as to remove the remains of food-unless, of course, need demanded it.

18. Imagine for a moment, and give to the eye the power to withdraw the understanding from the head, the sense of hearing from the ears, the power of thought from the mind, the sense of smell from the nose, the sense of taste from the mouth, and then to assume them itself, would it not at once destroy the whole order of nature? Wherefore the Apostle says well: "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?"⁴² So, then, we are all one body, though with many members, all necessary to the body. For no one member can say of another: "I have no need of thee." For those members which seem to be more feeble are much more necessary and require greater care and attention. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.⁴³

19. So we see how grave a matter it is to deprive another, with whom we ought rather to suffer, of anything, or to act unfairly or injuriously towards one to whom we ought to give a share in our services. This is a true law of nature, which binds us to show all kindly feeling, so that we should all of us in turn help one another, as parts of one body, and should never think of depriving another of anything, seeing it is against the law of nature even to abstain from giving help. We are born in such a way that limb combines with limb, and one works with another, and all assist each other in mutual service. But if one fails in its duty, the rest are hindered. If, for instance, the hand tears out the eye, has it not hindered the use, of its work? If it were to wound the foot, how many actions would it not prevent? But how much worse is it for the whole man to be drawn aside from his duty than for one of the members only! If the whole body is injured in one member, so also is the whole community of the human race disturbed in one man. The nature of mankind is injured, as also is the society of the holy Church, which rises into one united body, bound together in oneness of faith and love. Christ the Lord, also, Who died for all, will grieve that the price of His blood was paid in vain.

20. Why, the very law of the Lord teaches us that this rule must be observed, so that we may never deprive another of anything for the sake of our own advantage. For it says: "Remove not the bounds which thy fathers have set." ⁴⁴ It bids a neighbour's ox to be brought back if found wandering.⁴⁵ It orders a thief to be put to death.⁴⁶ It forbids the labourer to be deprived of his hire,⁴⁷ and orders money to be returned without usury.⁴⁸ It is a mark of kindly feeling to help him

who has nothing, but it is a sign of a hard nature to extort more than one has given. If a man has need of thy assistance because he has not enough of his own wherewith to repay a debt, is it not a wicked thing to demand under the guise of kindly feeling a larger sum from him who has not the means to pay off a less amount? Thou dost but free him from debt to another, to bring him under thy own hand; and thou callest that human kindness which is but a further wickedness.

21. It is in this very matter that we stand before all other living creatures, for they do not understand how to do good. Wild beasts snatch away, men share with others. Wherefore the Psalmist says: "The righteous showeth mercy and giveth."⁴⁹ There are some, however, to whom the wild beasts do good. They feed their young with what they get, and the birds satisfy their brood with food; but to men alone has it been given to feed all as though they were their own. That is so in accordance with the claims of nature. And if it is not lawful to refuse to give, how is it lawful to deprive another? And do not our very laws teach us the same? They order those things which have been taken from others with injury to their persons or property to be restored with additional recompense; so as to check the thief from stealing by the penalty, and by the fine to recall him from his ways.

22. Suppose, however, that some one did not fear the penalty, or laughed at the fine, would that make it a worthy thing to deprive another of his own? That would be a mean vice and suited only to the lowest of the low. So contrary to nature is it, that while want might seem to drive one to it, yet nature could never urge it. And yet we find secret theft among slaves, open robbery among the rich.

23. But what so contrary to nature as to injure another for our own benefit? The natural feelings of our own hearts urge us to keep on the watch for all, to undergo trouble, to do work for all. It is considered also a glorious thing for each one at risk to himself to seek the quiet of all, and to think it far more thankworthy to have saved his country from destruction than to have kept danger from himself. We must think it a far more noble thing to labour for our country than to pass a quiet life at ease in the full enjoyment of leisure.

Chapter IV. As it has been shown that he who injures another for the sake of his own advantage will undergo terrible punishment at the hand of his own conscience, it is referred that nothing is useful to one which is not in the same way useful to all. Thus there is no place among Christians for the question propounded by the philosophers about two shipwrecked persons, for they must show love and humility to all.

24. Hence we infer⁵⁰ that a man who guides himself according to the ruling of nature, so as to be obedient to her, can never injure another. If he injures another, he violates nature, nor will he think that what he has gained is so much an advantage as a disadvantage. And what punishment is worse than the wounds of the conscience within? What judgment harder than that of our hearts, whereby each one stands convicted and accuses himself of the injury that he has wrongfully done against his brother? This the Scriptures speak of very plainly, saying: "Out of the mouth of fools there is a rod for wrong-doing."⁵¹ Folly, then, is condemned because it causes wrong-doing. Ought we not rather to avoid this, than death, or loss, or want, or exile, or sickness? Who would not think some blemish of body or loss of inheritance far less than some blemish of soul or loss of reputation?

25. It is clear, then,⁵² that all must consider and hold that the advantage of the individual is the same as that of all, and that nothing must be considered advantageous except what is for the general good. For how can one be benefited alone? That which is useless to all is harmful. I certainly cannot think that he who is useless to all can be of use to himself. For if there is one law of nature for all, there is also one state of usefulness for all. And we are bound by the law of nature to act for the good of all. It is not, therefore, right for him who wishes the interests of another to be considered according to nature, to injure him against the law of nature.

26. For if those who run in a race⁵³ are, as one hears, instructed and warned each one to win the race by swiftness of foot and not by any foul play, and to hasten on to victory by running as hard as they can, but not to dare to trip up another or push him aside with their hand, how much more in the course of this life ought the victory to be won by us, without falseness to another and cheating?

27. Some ask⁵⁴ whether a wise man ought in case of a shipwreck to take away a plank from an ignorant sailor? Although it seems better for the common good that a wise man rather than a fool should escape from shipwreck, yet I do not think that a Christian, a just and a wise man, ought to save his own life by the death of another; just as when he meets with an armed robber he cannot return his blows, lest in defending his life he should stain his love toward his neighbour. The verdict on this is plain and clear in the books of the Gospel. "Put up thy sword, for every one that taketh the sword shall perish with the sword."⁵⁵ What robber is more hateful than the persecutor who came to kill Christ? But Christ would not be defended from the wounds of the persecutor, for He willed to heal all by His wounds.

28. Why dost thou consider thyself greater than another, when a Christian man ought to put others before himself, to claim nothing for himself, usurp no honours, claim no reward for his merits? Why, next, art thou not wont to bear thy own troubles rather than to destroy another's advantage? For what is so contrary to nature as not to be content with what one has or to seek what is another's, and to try to get it in shameful ways. For if a virtuous life is in accordance with nature-for God made all things very good-then shameful living must be opposed to it. A virtuous and a shameful life cannot go together, since they are absolutely severed by the law of nature.

Chapter V. The upright does nothing that is contrary to duty, even though there is a hope of keeping it secret. To point this out the tale about the ring of Gyges was invented by the philosophers. Exposing this, he brings forward known and true examples from the life of David and John the Baptist.

29. To lay down here already the result of our discussion, as though we had already ended it, we declare it a fixed rule, that we must never aim at anything but what is virtuous.⁵⁶ The wise man does nothing but what can be done openly and without falseness,⁵⁷ nor does he do anything whereby he may involve himself in any wrong-doing, even where he may escape notice. For he is guilty in his own eyes, before being so in the eyes of others; and the publicity of his crime does not bring him more shame than his own consciousness of it. This we can show, not by the made-up stories which philosophers use, but from the true examples of good men.

30. I need not, therefore, imagine a great chasm in the earth, which had been loosened by heavy rains, and had afterwards burst asunder, as Plato does.⁵⁸ For he makes Gyges descend into that chasm, and to meet there that iron horse of the fable that had doors in its sides. When these doors

were opened, he found a gold ring on the finger of a dead man, whose corpse lay there lifeless. He desiring the gold took away the ring. But when he returned to the king's shepherds, to whose number he belonged, by chance having turned the stone inwards towards the palms of his hands, he saw all, yet was seen by none. Then when he turned the ring to its proper position, he was again seen by all. On becoming conscious of this strange power, by the use of the ring he committed adultery with the queen, killed the king, and took possession of the kingdom after slaying all the rest, who he thought should be put to death, so that they might be no hindrance to him.

31. Give, says Plato, this ring to a wise man, that when he commits a fault he may by its help remain unnoticed; yet he will be none the more free from the stain of sin than if he could not be hid. The hiding-place of the wise lies not in the hope of impunity but in his own innocence. Lastly, the law is not laid down for the just but for the unjust.⁵⁹ For the just has within himself the law of his mind, and a rule of equity and justice. Thus he is not recalled from sin by fear of punishment, but by the rule of a virtuous life.

32. Therefore, to return to our subject, I will now bring forward, not false examples for true, but true examples in place of false. For why need I imagine a chasm in the earth, and an iron horse and a gold ring found on the fingers of a dead man; and say that such was the power of this ring, that he who wore it could appear at his own will, but if he did not wish to be seen, he could remove himself out of the sight of those who stood by, so as to seem to be away. This story, of course, is meant to answer the question whether a wise man, on getting the opportunity of using that ring so as to be able to hide his crimes, and to obtain a kingdom,-whether, I say, a wise man would be unwilling to sin and would consider the stain of sin far worse than the pains of punishment, or whether he would use it for doing wickedness in the hope of not being found out? Why, I say, should I need the pretence of a ring, when I can show from what has been done that a wise man, on seeing he would not only be undetected in his sin, but would also gain a kingdom if he gave way to it, and who, on the other hand, noted danger to his own safety if he did not commit the crime, yet chose to risk his own safety so as to be free from crime, rather than to commit the crime and so gain the kingdom.

33. When David fled from the face of King Saul,⁶⁰ because the king was seeking him in the desert with three thousand chosen men to put him to death, he entered the king's camp and found him sleeping. There he not only did him no injury, but actually guarded him from being slain by any who had entered with him. For when Abishai said to him: "The Lord hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day, now therefore I will slay him," he answered: "Destroy him not, for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" And he added: "As the Lord liveth, unless the Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall die in battle, and it be laid to me, the Lord forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed."⁶¹

34. Therefore he did not suffer him to be slain, but removed only his spear, which stood by his head, and his cruse of water. Then, whilst all were sleeping, he left the camp and went across to the top of the hill, and began to reproach the royal attendants, and especially their general Abner, for not keeping faithful watch over their lord and king. Next, he showed them where the king's spear and cruse were which had stood at his head. And when the king called to him, he restored the spear, and said: "The Lord render to every man his righteousness and faithfulness, for the

Lord delivered thee into my hand, but I would not avenge myself on the Lord's anointed."⁶² Even whilst he said this, he feared his plots and fled, changing his place in exile. However, he never put safety before innocency, seeing that when a second opportunity was given him of killing the king, he would not use the chance that came to him, and which put in his reach certain safety instead of fear, and a kingdom instead of exile.

35. Where was the use of the ring in John's case,⁶³ who would not have been put to death by Herod if he had kept silence? He could have kept silence before him so as to be both seen and yet not killed. But because he not only could not endure to sin himself to protect his own safety, but could not bear and endure even another's sin, he brought about the cause of his own death. Certainly none can deny that he might have kept silence, who in the case of Gyges deny that he could have remained invisible by the help of the ring.

36. But although that fable has not the force of truth, yet it has this much to go upon, that if an upright man could hide himself, yet he would avoid sin just as though he could not conceal himself; and that he would not hide his person by putting on a ring, but his life by putting on Christ. As the Apostle says: "Our life is hid with Christ in God."⁶⁴ Let, then, no one here strive to shine, let none show pride, let none boast. Christ willed not to be known here, He would not that His Name should be preached in the Gospel whilst He lived on earth. He came to lie hid from this world. Let us therefore likewise hide our life after the example of Christ, let us shun boastfulness, let us not desire to be made known. It is better to live here in humility, and there in glory. "When Christ," it says, "shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."⁶⁵

Chapter VI.

We ought not to allow the idea of profit to get hold of us. What excuses they make who get their gains by selling corn, and what answer ought to be made to them. In connection with this certain parables from the Gospels and some of the sayings of Solomon are set before our eyes.

37. Let not, therefore, expediency get the better of virtue, but virtue of expediency. By expediency here I mean what is accounted so by people generally. Let love of money be destroyed, let lust die. The holy man says that he has never been engaged in business.⁶⁶ For to get an increase in price is a sign not of simplicity but of cunning. Elsewhere it says: "He that seeketh a high price for his corn is cursed among the people."⁶⁷

38. Plain and definite is the statement, leaving no room for debate, such as a disputatious kind of speaking is wont to give, when one maintains that agriculture is considered praiseworthy by all; that the fruits of the earth are easily grown; that the more a man has sown, the greater will be his meed of praise; further, that the richer returns of his active labours are not gained by fraud, and that carelessness and disregard for an uncultivated soil are wont to be blamed.

39. I have ploughed, he says, carefully. I have sown freely. I have tilled actively. I have gathered good increase. I have stored it anxiously, saved it faithfully, and guarded it with care. Now in a time of famine I sell it, and come to the help of the hungry. I sell my own corn, not another's. And for no more than others, nay, even at a less price. What fraud is there here, when many would come to great danger if they had nothing to buy? Is industry to be made a crime? Or diligence to be blamed? Or foresight to be abused? Perhaps he may even say: Joseph collected corn in a time of abundance, and sold it when it was dear. Is any one forced to buy it at too dear a price? Is force

employed against the buyer? The opportunity to buy is afforded to all, injury is inflicted on none.

40. When this has been said, and one man's ideas have carried him so far, another rises and says: Agriculture is good indeed, for it supplies fruits for all, and by simple industry adds to the richness of the earth without any cheating or fraud. If there is any error, the loss is the greater, for the better a man sows, the better he will reap. If he has sown the pure grain of wheat, he gathers a purer and cleaner harvest. The fruitful earth returns what she has received in manifold measure. A good field returns its produce with interest.

41. Thou must expect payment for thy labour from the crops of the fruitful land, and must hope for a just return from the fruitfulness of the rich earth. Why dost thou use the industry of nature and make a cheat of it? Why dost thou grudge for the use of men what is grown for all? Why lessen the abundance for the people? Why make want thy aim? Why make the poor long for a barren season? For when they do not feel the benefits of a fruitful season, because thou art putting up the price, and art storing up the corn, they would far rather that nothing should be produced, than that thou shouldst do business at the expense of other people's hunger. Thou makest much of the want of corn, the small supply of food. Thou groanest over the rich crops of the soil; thou mournest the general plenty, and bewailest the garners full of corn; thou art on the lookout to see when the crop is poor and the harvest fails. Thou rejoicest that a curse has smiled upon thy wishes, so that none should have their produce. Then thou rejoicest that thy harvest has come. Then thou collectest wealth from the misery of all, and callest this industry and diligence, when it is but cunning shrewdness and an adroit trick of the trade. Thou callest it a remedy, when it is but a wicked contrivance. Shall I call this robbery or only gain? These opportunities are seized as though seasons for plunder, wherein, like some cruel waylayer, thou mayest fall upon the stomachs of men. The price rises higher as though by the mere addition of interest, but the danger to life is increased too. For then the interest of the stored-up crops grows higher. As a usurer thou hidest up thy corn, as a seller thou puttest it up for auction. Why dost thou wish evil to all, because the famine will grow worse, as though no corn should be left, as though a more unfruitful year should follow? Thy gain is the public loss.

42. Holy Joseph opened the garners to all; he did not shut them up. He did not try to get the full price of the year's produce, but assigned it for a yearly payment. He took nothing for himself, but, so far as famine could be checked for the future, he made his arrangements with careful foresight.

43. Thou hast read how the Lord Jesus in the Gospel speaks of that corn-dealer who was looking out for a high price, whose possessions brought him in rich fruits, but who, as though still in need, said: "What shall I do? I have no room where to bestow my goods. I will pull down my barns and build greater,"⁶⁸ though he could not know whether in the following night his soul would not be demanded of him. He knew not what to do, he seemed to be in doubt, just as though he were in want of food. His barns could not take in the year's supply, and yet he thought he was in need.

44. Rightly, therefore, Solomon says: "He that withholdeth corn shall leave it for the nations,"⁶⁹ not for his heirs, for the gains of avarice have nothing to do with the rights of succession. That which is not rightfully got together is scattered as though by a wind by outsiders that seize it. And he added: "He who graspeth at the year's produce is cursed among the people, but blessing shall be his that imparteth it." Thou seest, then, what is said of him who distributes the corn, but not of him that seeks for a high price. True expediency does not therefore exist where virtue loses more than

expediency gains.

Chapter VII.

Strangers must never be expelled the city in a time of famine. In this matter the noble advice of a Christian sage is adduced, in contrast to which the shameful deed committed at Rome is given. By comparing the two it is shown that the former is combined with what is virtuous and useful, but the latter with neither.

45. But they, too, who would forbid the city to strangers⁷⁰ cannot have our approval. They would expel them at the very time when they ought to help, and separate them from the trade of their common parent. They would refuse them a share in the produce meant for all, and avert the intercourse that has already begun; and they are unwilling, in a time of necessity, to give those with whom they have enjoyed their rights in common, a share in what they themselves have. Beasts do not drive out beasts, yet man shuts out man. Wild beasts and animals consider food which the earth supplies to be common to all. They all give assistance to those like themselves; and man, who ought to think nothing human foreign to himself, fights against his own.

46. How much better did he act who, having already reached an advanced age, when the city was suffering from famine, and, as is common in such cases, the people demanded that strangers should be forbidden the city, having the office of the prefectship⁷¹ of the city, which is higher than the rest, called together the officials and richer men, and demanded that they should take counsel for the public welfare. He said that it was as cruel a thing for the strangers to be expelled as for one man to be cast off by another, and to be refused food when dying. We do not allow our dogs to come to our table and leave them unfed, yet we shut out a man. How unprofitable, again, it is for the world that so many people perish, whom some deadly plague carries off. How unprofitable for their city that so large a number should perish, who were wont to be helpful either in paying contributions or in carrying on business. Another's hunger is profitable to no man, nor to put off the day of help as long as possible and to do nothing to check the want. Nay more, when so many of the cultivators of the soil are gone, when so many labourers are dying, the corn supplies will fail for the future. Shall we then expel those who are wont to supply us with food, are we unwilling to feed in a time of need those who have fed us all along? How great is the assistance which they supply even at this time. "Not by bread alone does man live."⁷² They are even our own family; many of them even are our own kindred. Let us make some return for what we have received.

47. But perhaps we fear that want may increase. First of all, I answer, mercy never fails, but always finds means of help. Next, let us make up for the corn supplies which are to be granted to them, by a subscription. Let us put that right with our gold. And, again, must we not buy other cultivators of the soil if we lose these? How much cheaper is it to feed than to buy a working-man. Where, too, can one obtain, where find a man to take the place of the former? And suppose one finds him, do not forget that, with an ignorant man used to different ways, one may fill up the place in point of numbers, but not as regards the work to be done.

48. Why need I say more? When the money was supplied corn was brought in. So the city's abundance was not diminished, and yet assistance was given to the strangers. What praise this act won that holy man from God! What glory among men! He, indeed, had won an honoured name, who, pointing to the people of a whole province, could truly say to the emperor: All these I

have preserved for thee; these live owing to the kindness of the senate; these thy council⁷³ has snatched from death!

49. How much more expedient was this than that which was done lately at Rome. There from that widely extended city were those expelled who had already passed most of their life in it. In tears they went forth with their children, for whom as being citizens they bewailed the exile, which, as they said, ought to be averted; no less did they grieve over the broken bonds of union, the severed ties of relationship. And yet a fruitful year had smiled upon us. The city alone needed corn to be brought into it. It could have got help, if it had sought corn from the Italians whose children they were driving out. Nothing is more shameful than to expel a man as a foreigner, and yet to claim his services as though he belonged to us. How canst thou expel a man who lives on his own produce? How canst thou expel him who supplies thee with food? Thou retainest thy servant, and thrustest out thy kindred! Thou takest the corn, but showest no good feeling! Thou takest food by force, but dost not show gratitude!

50. How wretched this is, how useless! For how can that be expedient which is not seemly. Of what great supplies from her corporations has Rome at times been deprived, yet she could not dismiss them and yet escape a famine, while waiting for a favourable breeze, and the provisions in the hoped-for ships.

51. How far more virtuous and expedient was that first-mentioned management! For what is so seemly or virtuous as when the needy are assisted by the gifts of the rich, when food is supplied to the hungry, when daily bread fails none? What so advantageous as when the cultivators are kept for the land, and the country people do not perish?

52. What is virtuous, then, is also expedient, and what is expedient is virtuous. On the other hand, what is not expedient is unseemly, and what is unseemly is also not expedient.

Chapter VIII. That those who put what is virtuous before what is useful are acceptable to God is shown by the example of Joshua, Caleb, and the other spies.

53. When could our fathers ever have thrown off their servitude, unless they had believed that it was not only shameful but even useless to serve the king of Egypt?

54. Joshua, also, and Caleb, when sent to spy out the land, brought back the news that the land was indeed rich, but that it was inhabited by very fierce nations.⁷⁴ The people, terrified at the thought of war, refused to take possession of their land. Joshua and Caleb, who had been sent as spies, tried to persuade them that the land was fruitful. They thought it unseemly to give way before the heathen; they chose rather to be stoned, which is what the people threatened, than to recede from their virtuous standpoint. The others kept dissuading, the people exclaimed against it, saying they would have to fight against cruel and terrible nations; that they would fall in battle, and their wives and children would be left for a prey.⁷⁵

55. The anger of the Lord burst forth,⁷⁶ so that He would kill all, but at the prayer of Moses He softened His judgment and put off His vengeance, knowing that He had already sufficiently punished those who were faithless, even if He spared them meanwhile and did not slay the unbelievers. However, He said⁷⁷ they should not come to that land which they had refused, as a penalty for their unbelief; but their children and wives, who had not murmured, and who, owing to

their sex and age, were guiltless, should receive the promised inheritance of that land. So the bodies of those of twenty years old and upwards fell in the desert. The punishment of the rest was put aside. But they who had gone up with Joshua, and had thought fit to dissuade the people, died forthwith of a great plague.⁷⁸ Joshua and Caleb⁷⁹ entered the land of promise together with those who were innocent by reason of age or sex.

56. The better part, therefore, preferred glory to safety; the worse part safety to virtue. But the divine judgment approved those who thought virtue was above what is useful, whilst it condemned those who preferred what seemed more in accordance with safety than with what is virtuous.

Chapter IX.

Cheating and dishonest ways of making money are utterly unfit for clerics whose duty is to serve all. They ought never to be involved in a money affair, unless it is one affecting a man's life. For them the example of David is given, that they should injure none, even when provoked; also the death of Naboth, to keep them from preferring life to virtue.

57. Nothing is more odious than for a man to have no love for a virtuous life, but instead to be kept excited by an unworthy business in following out a low line of trade, or to be inflamed by an avaricious heart, and by day and by night to be eager to damage another's property, not to raise the soul to the splendour of a virtuous life, and not to regard the beauty of true praise.

58. Hence rise inheritances sought by cunning words and gained under pretence of being self-restrained and serious. But this is absolutely abhorrent to the idea of a Christian man. For everything gained by craft and got together by cheating loses the merit of openness. Even amongst those who have undertaken no duty in the ranks of the clergy it is considered unfitting to seek for the inheritance of another. Let those who are reaching the end of their life use their own judgment, so that they may freely make their wills as they think best, since they will not be able to amend them later. For it is not honourable to divert the savings that belong to others or have been got together for them. It is further the duty of the priest or the cleric to be of use if possible to all and to be harmful to none.⁸⁰

59. If it is not possible to help one without injuring another, it is better to help neither than to press hard upon one. Therefore it is not a priest's duty to interfere in money affairs. For here it must often happen that he who loses his case receives harm; and then he considers that he has been worsted through the action of the intervener. It is a priest's duty to hurt no one, to be ready to help all. To be able to do this is in God's power alone. In a case of life and death, without doubt it is a grave sin to injure him whom one ought to help when in danger. But it is foolish to gain others' hate in taking up money matters, though for the sake of a man's safety great trouble and toil may often be undertaken. It is glorious in such a case to run risks. Let, then, this be firmly held to in the priestly duties, namely, to injure none, not even when provoked and embittered by some injury.⁸¹ Good was the man who said: "If I have rewarded evil to those who did me good."⁸² For what glory is it if we do not injure him who has not injured us? But it is true virtue to forgive when injured.

60. What a virtuous action was that, when David wished rather to spare the king his enemy, though he could have injured him!⁸³ How useful, too, it was, for it helped him when he succeeded to the throne. For all learnt to observe faith to their king and not to seize the kingdom, but to fear and reverence him. Thus what is virtuous was preferred to what was useful, and then usefulness

followed on what was virtuous.

61. But that he spared him was a small matter; he also grieved for him when slain in war, and mourned for him with tears, saying: "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let neither dew nor rain fall upon you; ye mountains of death, for there the shield of the mighty is cast away, the shield of Saul. It is not anointed with oil, but with the blood of the wounded and the fat of the warriors. The bow of Jonathan turned not back and the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and very dear, inseparable in life, and in death they were not divided. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet with your ornaments, who put on gold upon your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan was wounded even to death. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me. Thy love came to me like the love of women. How have the mighty fallen and the longed-for weapons perished!"⁸⁴

62. What mother could weep thus for her only son as he wept here for his enemy? Who could follow his benefactor with such praise as that with which he followed the man who plotted against his life? How affectionately he grieved, with what deep feeling he bewailed him! The mountains dried up at the prophet's curse, and a divine power filled the judgment of him who spoke it. Therefore the elements themselves paid the penalty for witnessing the king's death.

63. And what, in the case of holy Naboth, was the cause of his death, except his regard for a virtuous life? For when the king demanded the vineyard from him, promising to give him money, he refused the price for his father's heritage as unseemly, and preferred to shun such shame by dying. "The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee;"⁸⁵ that is, that such reproach may not fall on me, that God may not allow such wickedness to be attained by force. He is not speaking about the vines-nor has God care for vines or plots of ground-but he says it of his fathers' rights. He could have received another or the king's vineyards and been his friend, wherein men think there is no small usefulness so far as this world is concerned. But because it was base he thought it could not be useful, and so he preferred to endure danger with honour intact, rather than gain what was useful to his own disgrace. I am here again speaking of what is commonly understood as useful, not that in which there is the grace of virtuous life.

64. The king could himself have taken it by force, but that he thought too shameless; then when Naboth was dead he grieved.⁸⁶ The Lord also declared that the woman's cruelty should be punished by a fitting penalty, because she was unmindful of virtue and preferred a shameful gain.⁸⁷

65. Every kind of unfair action is shameful. Even in common things, false weights and unjust measures are accursed. And if fraud in the market or in business is punished, can it seem free from reproach if found in the midst of the performance of the duties of virtue? Solomon says: "A great and a little weight and divers measures are an abomination before the Lord." ⁸⁸ Before that it also says: "A false balance is abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is acceptable to Him." ⁸⁹

Chapter X.

We are warned not only in civil law, but also in the holy Scriptures, to avoid fraud in every agreement, as is clear from the example of Joshua and the Gibeonites.

66. In everything, therefore, good faith is seemly, justice is pleasing, due measure in equity is delightful. But what shall I say about contracts, and especially about the sale of land, or agreements, or covenants? Are there not rules just for the purpose of shutting out all false deceit,⁹⁰ and to make him whose deceit is found out liable to double punishment? Everywhere, then, does regard for what is virtuous take the lead; it shuts out deceit, it expels fraud. Wherefore the prophet David has rightly stated his judgment in general, saying: "He hath done no evil to his neighbour."⁹¹ Fraud, then, ought to be wanting not only in contracts, in which the defects of those things which are for sale are ordered to be recorded (which contracts, unless the vendor has mentioned the defects, are rendered void by an action for fraud, although he has conveyed them fully to the purchaser), but it ought also to be absent in all else. Candour must be shown, the truth must be made known.

67. The divine Scriptures have plainly stated (not indeed a legal rule of the lawyers but) the ancient judgment of the patriarchs on deceit, in that book of the Old Testament which is ascribed to Joshua the son of Nun. When the report had gone forth among the various peoples that the sea was dried up at the crossing of the Hebrews; that water had flowed from the rock; that food was supplied daily from heaven in quantities large enough for so many thousands of the people; that the walls of Jericho had fallen at the sound of the holy trumpets, being overthrown by the noise of the shouts of the people; also, that the king of Ai was conquered and had been hung on a tree until the evening; then the Gibeonites, fearing his strong hand, came with guile, pretending that they were from a land very far away, and by travelling so long had rent their shoes and worn out their clothing, of which they showed proofs that it was growing old. They said, too, that their reason for undergoing so much labour was their desire to obtain peace and to form friendship with the Hebrews, and began to ask Joshua to form an alliance with them. And he, being as yet ignorant of localities, and not knowing anything of the inhabitants, did not see through their deceit, nor did he enquire of God, but readily believed them.⁹²

68. So sacred was one's plighted word held in those days that no one would believe that others could try to deceive. Who could find fault with the saints in this, namely, that they should consider others to have the same feelings as themselves, and suppose no one would lie because truth was their own companion? They know not what deceit is, they gladly believe of others what they themselves are, whilst they cannot suspect others to be what they themselves are not. Hence Solomon says: "An innocent man believeth every word."⁹³ We must not blame his readiness to believe, but should rather praise his goodness. To know nothing of aught that may injure another, this is to be innocent. And although he is cheated by another, still he thinks well of all, for he thinks there is good faith in all.

69. Induced, therefore, by such considerations to believe them, he made an agreement, he gave them peace, and formed a union with them. But when he came to their country and the deceit was found out, - for though they lived quite close they pretended to be strangers, - the people of our fathers began to be angry at having been deceived. Joshua, however, thought the peace they had made could not be broken (for it had been confirmed by an oath), for fear that, in punishing the treachery of others, he should be breaking his own pledge. He made them pay the penalty, however, by forcing them to undertake the lowest kind of work. The judgment was mild indeed, but it was a lasting one, for in their duties there abides the punishment of their ancient cunning, handed down to this day⁹⁴ in their hereditary service.

Chapter XI.

Having adduced examples of certain frauds found in a few passages of the rhetoricians, he shows that these and all others are more fully and plainly condemned in Scripture.

70. I Shall say nothing of the snapping of fingers, or the naked dancing of the heir, at entering on an inheritance.⁹⁵ These are well-known things. Nor will I speak of the mass of fishes gathered up at a pretended fishing expedition to excite the buyer's desires. For why did he show himself so eager for luxuries and delicacies as to allow a fraud of this character?

71. What need is there for me to speak of that well-known story of the pleasant and quiet retreat at Syracuse and of the cunning of a Sicilian?⁹⁶ For he having found a stranger, and knowing that he was anxious to buy an estate, asked him to his grounds for a meal. He accepted, and on the following day he came. There the sight of a great number of fishermen met his eyes, and a banquet laid out in the most splendid profusion. In the sight of the guests, fishers were placed in the garden-grounds, where no net had ever been laid before. Each one in turn presented to the guests what he had taken, the fish were placed upon the table, and caught the glance of those who sat there. The stranger wondered at the large quantity of fish and the number of boats there were. The answer given was, that this was the great water supply, and that great numbers of fish came there because of the sweetness of the water. To be brief, he drew on the stranger to be urgent in getting the grounds, he willingly allows himself to be induced to sell them, and seemingly with a heavy heart he receives the money.

72. On the next day the purchaser comes to the grounds with his friends, but finds no boat there. On asking whether perhaps the fishermen were observing a festival on that day, he is told that, with the exception of yesterday, they were never wont to fish there; but what power had he to proceed against such a fraud, who had so shamefully grasped at such luxuries? For he who convicts another of a fault ought himself to be free from it. I will not therefore include such trifles as these under the power of ecclesiastical censure, for that altogether condemns every desire for dishonourable gain, and briefly, with few words, forbids every sharp and cunning action.

73. And what shall I say of him who claims to be the heir or legatee, on the proof of a will⁹⁷ which, though falsified by others, yet was known to be so by him, and who tries to make again through another's crime, though even the laws of the state convict him who knowingly makes use of a false will, as guilty of a wrong action. But the law of justice is plain, namely, that a good man ought not to go aside from the truth, nor to inflict an unjust loss on any one, nor to act at all deceitfully or to take part in any fraud.

74. What is clearer, however, on this point than the case of Ananias? He acted falsely as regards the price he got for his land, for he sold it and laid at the apostles' feet part of the price, pretending it was the whole amount.⁹⁸ For this he perished as guilty of fraud. He might have offered nothing and have acted so without committing a fraud. But as deceit entered into his action, he gained no favour for his liberality, but paid the penalty for his artifice.

75. The Lord also in the Gospel rejected those coming to Him with guile, saying: "The foxes have holes,"⁹⁹ for He bids us live in simplicity and innocency of heart. David also says: "Thou hast used deceit as a sharp razor,"¹⁰⁰ pointing out by this the treacherous man, just as an implement of this kind is used to help adorn a man, yet often wounds him. If any one makes a show of favour and

yet plans deceit after the example of the traitor, so as to give up to death him whom he ought to guard, let him be looked on in the light of that instrument which is wont to wound owing to the vice of a drunken mind and a trembling hand. Thus that man drunk with the wine of wickedness brought death on the high priest Ahimelech,¹⁰¹ through a terrible act of treachery, because he had received the prophet with hospitality when the king, roused by the stings of envy, was following him.

Chapter XII.

We may make no promise that is wrong, and if we have made an unjust oath, we may not keep it. It is shown that Herod sinned in this respect. The vow taken by Jephtha is condemned, and so are all others which God does not desire to have paid to Him. Lastly, the daughter of Jephtha is compared with the two Pythagoreans and is placed before them.

76. A Man's disposition ought to be undefiled and sound, so that he may utter words without dissimulation and possess his vessel in sanctification;¹⁰² that he may not delude his brother with false words nor promise aught dishonourable. If he has made such a promise it is far better for him not to fulfil it, rather than to fulfil what is shameful.¹⁰³

77. Often people bind themselves by a solemn oath, and, though they come to know that they ought not to have made the promise, fulfil it in consideration of their oath. This is what Herod did, as we mentioned before.¹⁰⁴ For he made a shameful promise of reward to a dancer-and cruelly performed it. It was shameful, for a kingdom was promised for a dance; and it was cruel, for the death of a prophet is sacrificed for the sake of an oath. How much better perjury would have been than the keeping of such an oath, if indeed that could be called perjury which a drunkard had sworn to in his wine-cups, or an effeminate profligate had promised whilst the dance was going on. The prophet's head was brought in on a dish,¹⁰⁵ and this was considered an act of good faith when it really was an act of madness!

78. Never shall I be led to believe that the leader Jephtha made his vow otherwise than without thought,¹⁰⁶ when he promised to offer to God whatever should meet him at the threshold of his house on his return. For he repented of his vow, as afterwards his daughter came to meet him. He rent his clothes and said: "Alas, my daughter, thou hast entangled me, thou art become a source of trouble unto me."¹⁰⁷ And though with pious fear and reverence he took upon himself the bitter fulfilment of his cruel task, yet he ordered and left to be observed an annual period of grief and mourning for future times. It was a hard vow, but far more bitter was its fulfilment, whilst he who carried it out had the greatest cause to mourn. Thus it became a rule and a law in Israel from year to year, as it says: "that the daughters of Israel went to lament the daughter of Jephtha the Gileadite four days in a year."¹⁰⁸ I cannot blame the man for holding it necessary to fulfil his vow, but yet it was a wretched necessity which could only be solved by the death of his child.

79. It is better to make no vow than to vow what God does not wish to be paid to Him to Whom the promise was made. In the case of Isaac we have an example, for the Lord appointed a ram to be offered up instead of him.¹⁰⁹ Therefore it is not always every promise that is to be fulfilled. Nay, the Lord Himself often alters His determination, as the Scriptures point out. For in the book called Numbers He had declared that He would punish the people with death and destroy them,¹¹⁰ but afterwards, when besought by Moses, He was reconciled again to them. And again, He said to

Moses and Aaron: "Separate yourselves from among this congregation that I may consume them in a moment."¹¹¹ And when they separated from the assembly the earth suddenly clave asunder and opened her mouth and swallowed up Dathan and Abiram.

80. That example of Jephtha's daughter is far more glorious and ancient than that of the two Pythagoreans,¹¹² which is accounted so notable among the philosophers. One of these, when condemned to death by the tyrant Dionysius, and when the day of his death was fixed, asked for leave to be granted him to go home, so as to provide for his family. But for fear that he might break his faith and not return, he offered a surety for his own death, on condition that if he himself were absent on the appointed day, his surety would be ready to die in his stead. The other did not refuse the conditions of suretyship which were proposed and awaited the day of death with a calm mind. So the one did not withdraw himself and the other returned on the day appointed. This all seemed so wonderful that the tyrant sought their friendship whose destruction he had been anxious for.

81. What, then, in the case of esteemed and learned men is full of marvel, that in the case of a virgin is found to be far more splendid, far more glorious, as she says to her sorrowing father: "Do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth."¹¹³ But she asked for a delay of two months in order that she might go about with her companions upon the mountains to bewail fitly and dutifully her virginity now given up to death. The weeping of her companions did not move her, their grief prevailed not upon her, nor did their lamentations hold her back. She allowed not the day to pass, nor did the hour escape her notice. She returned to her father as though returning according to her own desire, and of her own will urged him on when he was hesitating, and acted thus of her own free choice, so that what was at first an awful chance became a pious sacrifice.

Chapter XIII.

Judith, after enduring many dangers for virtue's sake, gained very many and great benefits.

82. See! Judith presents herself to thee as worthy of admiration. She approaches Holophernes, a man feared by the people, and surrounded by the victorious troops of the Assyrians. At first she makes an impression on him by the grace of her form and the beauty of her countenance. Then she entraps him by the refinement of her speech. Her first triumph was that she returned from the tent of the enemy with her purity unspotted.¹¹⁴ Her second, that she gained a victory over a man, and put to flight the people by her counsel.

83. The Persians were terrified at her daring.¹¹⁵ And so what is admired in the case of those two Pythagoreans deserves also in her case our admiration, for she trembled not at the danger of death, nor even at the danger her modesty was in, which is a matter of greater concern to good women. She feared not the blow of one scoundrel, nor even the weapons of a whole army. She, a woman, stood between the lines of the combatants-right amidst victorious arms-heedless of death. As one looks at her overwhelming danger, one would say she went out to die; as one looks at her faith, one says she went but out to fight.

84. Judith then followed the call of virtue, and as she follows that, she wins great benefits. It was virtuous to prevent the people of the Lord from giving themselves up to the heathen; to prevent them from betraying their native rites and mysteries, or from yielding up their consecrated virgins, their venerable widows, and modest matrons to barbarian impurity, or from ending the siege by a

surrender. It was virtuous for her to be willing to encounter danger on behalf of all, so as to deliver all from danger.

85. How great must have been the power of her virtue, that she, a woman, should claim to give counsel on the chiefest matters and not leave it in the hands of the leaders of the people! How great, again, the power of her virtue to reckon for certain upon God to help her! How great her grace to find His help!

Chapter XIV.

How virtuous and useful was that which Elisha did. This is compared with that oft-recounted act of the Greeks. John gave up his life for virtue's sake, and Susanna for the same reason exposed herself to the danger of death.

86. What did Elisha follow but virtue, when he brought the army of Syria who had come to take him as captive into Samaria, after having covered their eyes with blindness? Then he said: "O Lord, open their eyes that they may see."¹¹⁶ And they saw. But when the king of Israel wished to slay those that had entered and asked the prophet to give him leave to do so, he answered that they whose captivity was not brought about by strength of hand or weapons of war must not be slain, but that rather he should help them by supplying food. Then they were refreshed with plenty of food. And after that those Syrian robbers thought they must never again return to the land of Israel.

87. How much nobler was this than that which the Greeks once did!¹¹⁷ For when two nations strove one with the other to gain glory and supreme power, and one of them had the opportunity to burn the ships of the other secretly, they thought it a shameful thing to do so, and preferred to gain a less advantage honourably than a greater one in shameful wise. They, indeed, could not act thus without disgrace to themselves, and entrap by this plot those who had banded together for the sake of ending the Persian war. Though they could deny it in word, yet they could never but blush at the thought of it. Elisha, however, wished to save, not destroy, those who were deceived indeed, though not by some foul act, and had been struck blind by the power of the Lord. For it was seemly to spare an enemy, and to grant his life to an adversary when indeed he could have taken it, had he not spared it.⁸⁸ It is plain, then, that whatever is seemly is always useful. For holy Judith by seemly disregard for her own safety put an end to the dangers of the siege, and by her own virtue won what was useful to all in common. And Elisha gained more renown by pardoning than he would have done by slaying, and preserved those enemies whom he had taken for greater usefulness.

89. And what else did John have in mind but what is virtuous, so that he could not endure a wicked union even in the king's case, saying: "It is not lawful for thee to have her to wife."¹¹⁸ He could have been silent, had he not thought it unseemly for himself not to speak the truth for fear of death, or to make the prophetic office yield to the king, or to indulge in flattery. He knew well that he would die as he was against the king, but he preferred virtue to safety. Yet what is more expedient than the suffering which brought glory to the saint.

90. Holy Susanna, too, when threatened with the fear of false witness, seeing herself hard pressed on one side by danger, on the other by disgrace, preferred to avoid disgrace by a virtuous death rather than to endure and live a shameful life in the desire to save herself.¹¹⁹ So while she fixed

her mind on virtue, she also preserved her life. But if she had preferred what seemed to her to be useful to preserve life, she would never have gained such great renown, nay, perhaps-and that would have been not only useless but even dangerous-she might even not have escaped the penalty for her crime. We note, therefore, that whatsoever is shameful cannot be useful, nor, again, can that which is virtuous be useless. For usefulness is ever the double of virtue, and virtue of usefulness.

Chapter XV.

After mentioning a noble action of the Romans, the writer shows from the deeds of Moses that he had the greatest regard for what is virtuous.

91. It is related as a memorable deed of a Roman general,¹²⁰ that when the physician of a hostile king came to him and promised to give him poison, he sent him back bound to the enemy. In truth, it is a noble thing for a man to refuse to gain the victory by foul acts, after he has entered on the struggle for power. He did not consider virtue to lie in victory, but declared that to be a shameful victory unless it was gained with honour.¹²¹

92. Let us return to our hero Moses, and to loftier deeds, to show they were both superior as well as earlier. The king of Egypt would not let the people of our fathers go, Then Moses bade the priest Aaron to stretch his rod over all the waters of Egypt. Aaron stretched it out, and the water of the river was turned into blood.¹²² None could drink the water, and all the Egyptians were perishing with thirst; but there was pure water flowing in abundance for the fathers. They sprinkled ashes toward heaven, and sores and burning boils came upon man and beast.¹²³ They brought down hail mingled with flaming fire, and all things were destroyed upon the land.¹²⁴ Moses prayed, and all things were restored to their former beauty. The hail ceased, the sores were healed, the rivers gave their wonted draught.¹²⁵

93. Then, again, the land was covered with thick darkness for the space of three days, because Moses had raised his hand and spread out the darkness.¹²⁶ All the first-born of Egypt died, whilst all the offspring of the Hebrews was left unharmed.¹²⁷ Moses was asked to put an end to these horrors, and he prayed and obtained his request. In the one case it was a fact worthy of praise that he checked himself from joining in deceit; in the other it was noteworthy how, by his innate goodness, he turned aside from the foe those divinely ordered punishments. He was indeed, as it is written, gentle and meek.¹²⁸ He knew that the king would not keep true to his promises, yet he thought it right and good to pray when asked to do so, to bless when wronged, to forgive when besought.

94. He cast down his rod and it became a serpent which devoured the serpents of Egypt;¹²⁹ this signifying that the Word should become Flesh to destroy the poison of the dread serpent by the forgiveness and pardon of sins. For the rod stands for the Word that is true-royal-filled with power-and glorious in ruling. The rod became a serpent; so He Who was the Son of God begotten of the Father became the Son of man born of a woman, and lifted, like the serpent, on the cross, poured His healing medicine on the wounds of man. Wherefore the Lord Himself says: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up."¹³⁰

95. Again, another sign which Moses gave points to our Lord Jesus Christ. He put his hand into his bosom, and drew it out again, and his hand was become as snow. A second time he put it in and

drew it out, and it was again like the appearance of human flesh.¹³¹ This signified first the original glory of the Godhead of the Lord Jesus, and then the assumption of our flesh, in which truth all nations and peoples must believe. So he put in his hand, for Christ is the right hand of God; and whosoever does not believe in His Godhead and Incarnation is punished as a sinner; like that king who, whilst not believing open and plain signs, yet afterwards, when punished, prayed that he might find mercy. How great, then, Moses' regard for virtue must have been is shown by these proofs, and especially by the fact that he offered himself on behalf of the people, praying that God would either forgive the people or blot him out of the book of the living.¹³²

Chapter XVI.

After saying a few words about Tobit he demonstrates that Raguel surpassed the philosophers in virtue.

96. Tobit also clearly portrayed in his life true virtue, when he left the feast and buried the dead,¹³³ and invited the needy to the meals at his own poor table. And Raguel is a still brighter example. For he, in his regard for virtue, when asked to give his daughter in marriage, was not silent regarding his daughter's faults, for fear of seeming to get the better of the suitor by silence. So when Tobit the son of Tobias asked that his daughter might be given him, he answered that, according to the law, she ought to be given him as near of kin, but that he had already given her to six men, and all of them were dead.¹³⁴ This just man, then, feared more for others than for himself, and wished rather that his daughter should remain unmarried than that others should run risks in consequence of their union with her.

97. How simply he settled all the questions of the philosophers! They talk about the defects of a house, whether they ought to be concealed or made known by the vendor.¹³⁵ Raguel was quite certain that his daughter's faults ought not to be kept secret. And, indeed, he had not been eager to give her up-he was asked for her. We can have no doubt how much more nobly he acted than those philosophers, when we consider how much more important a daughter's future is than some mere money affair.

Chapter XVII. With what virtuous feelings the fathers of old hid the sacred fires when on the point of going into captivity.

98. Let us consider, again, that deed done at the time of the captivity, which has attained the highest degree of virtue and glory. Virtue is checked by no adversities, for it rises up among them, and prevails here rather than in prosperity. 'Mid chains or arms, 'mid flames or slavery (which is harder for freemen to bear than any punishment), 'midst the pains of the dying, the destruction of their country, the fears of the living, or the blood of the slain,-amidst all this our forefathers failed not in their care and thought for what is virtuous. Amidst the ashes and dust of their fallen country it glowed and shone forth brightly in pious efforts.

99. For when our fathers were carried away into Persia,¹³⁶ certain priests, who then were in the service of Almighty God, secretly buried in the valley the fire taken from the altar of the Lord. There was there an open pit, with no water in it, and not accessible for the wants of the people, in a spot unknown and free from intruders. There they sealed the hidden fire with the sacred mark and in secret. They were not anxious to bury gold or to hide up silver to preserve it for their children, but in their own great peril, thinking of all that was virtuous, they thought the sacred fire ought to be

preserved so that impure men might not defile it, nor the blood of the slain extinguish it, nor the heaps of miserable ruins cover it.

100. So they went to Persia, free only in their religion; for that alone could not be torn from them by their captivity. After a length of time,¹³⁷ indeed, according to God's good pleasure, He put it into the Persian king's heart to order the temple in Judea to be restored, and the regular customs to be again rebuilt at Jerusalem. To carry out this work of his the Persian king appointed the priest Nehemiah. He took with him the grandchildren of those priests who on leaving their native soil had hidden the sacred fire to save it from perishing. But on arriving, as we are told in the history of the fathers, they found not fire but water. And when fire was wanting to burn upon the altars, the priest Nehemiah bade them draw the water, to bring it to him, and to sprinkle it upon the wood. Then, O wondrous sight! though the sky had been overcast with clouds, suddenly the sun shone forth, a great fire flamed forth, so that all, wonder-stricken at such a clear sign of the favour of the Lord, were filled with joy. Nehemiah prayed; the priests sang a hymn of praise to God, when the sacrifice was completed. Nehemiah again bade the remainder of the water to be poured upon the larger stones. And when this was done a flame burst forth whilst the light shining from off the altar shone more brightly yet.

101. When this sign became known, the king of Persia ordered a temple to be built on that spot where the fire had been hidden and the water afterwards found, to which many gifts were made. They who were with holy Nehemiah called it Naphthar,¹³⁸ -which means cleansing-by many it is called Nephi. It is to be found also in the history of the prophet Jeremiah,¹³⁹ that he bade those who should come after him to take of the fire. That is the fire which fell on Moses' sacrifice and consumed it, as it is written: "There came a fire out from the Lord and consumed upon the altar all the whole burnt-offering."¹⁴⁰ The sacrifice must be hallowed with this fire only. Therefore, also, fire went out from the Lord upon the sons of Aaron who wished to offer strange fire, and consumed them, so that their dead bodies were cast forth without the camp.¹⁴¹

101. Jeremiah coming to a spot found there a house like a cave, and brought into it the tabernacle, the ark, and the altar of incense, and closed up the entrance. And when those who had come with him examined it rather closely to mark the spot, they could not discover nor find it. When Jeremiah understood what they wanted he said: "The spot will remain unknown until God shall gather His people together and be gracious to them. Then God shall reveal these things and the majesty of the Lord shall appear."¹⁴²

Chapter XVIII. In the narration of that event already mentioned, and especially of the sacrifice offered by Nehemiah, is typified the Holy Spirit and Christian baptism. The sacrifice of Moses and Elijah and the history of Noah are also referred to the same.

102. We form the congregation of the Lord. We recognize the propitiation of our Lord God, which our Propitiator wrought in His passion. I think, too, we cannot leave out of sight that fire when we read that the Lord Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire,¹⁴³ as John said in his Gospel. Rightly was the sacrifice consumed, for it was for sin. But that fire was a type of the Holy Spirit Who was to come down after the Lord's ascension, and forgive the sins of all, and Who like fire inflames the mind and faithful heart. Wherefore Jeremiah, after receiving the Spirit, says: "It became in my heart as a burning fire flaming in my bones, and I am vile and cannot bear it."¹⁴⁴ In the Acts of the Apostles, also, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles and those others

who were waiting for the Promise of the Father, we read that tongues as of fire were distributed among them.¹⁴⁵ The soul of each one was so uplifted by His influence that they were supposed to be full of new wine,¹⁴⁶ who instead had received the gift of a diversity of tongues.

103. What else can this mean-namely, that fire became water and water called forth fire-but that spiritual grace burns out our sins through fire, and through water cleanses them? For sin is washed away and it is burnt away. Wherefore the Apostle says: "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."¹⁴⁷ And further on: "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."¹⁴⁸

104. This, then, we have stated, so as to prove that sins are burnt out by means of fire. We know now that this is in truth the sacred fire which then, as a type of the future remission of sins, came down upon the sacrifice.

105. This fire is hidden in the time of captivity, during which sin reigns, but in the time of liberty it is brought forth. And though it is changed into the appearance of water, yet it preserves its nature as fire so as to consume the sacrifice. Do not wonder when thou readest that God the Father said: "I am a consuming fire."¹⁴⁹ And again: "They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water."¹⁵⁰ The Lord Jesus, too, like a fire inflamed the hearts of those who heard Him, and like a fount of waters cooled them. For He Himself said in His Gospel that He came to send fire on the earth¹⁵¹ and to supply a draught of living waters to those who thirst.¹⁵²

106. In the time of Elijah, also, fire came down when he challenged the prophets of the heathen to light up the altar without fire. When they could not do so, he poured water thrice over his victim, so that the water ran round about the altar; then he cried out and the fire fell from the Lord from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering.¹⁵³

107. Thou art that victim. Contemplate in silence each single point. The breath of the Holy Spirit descends on thee, He seems to burn thee when He consumes thy sins. The sacrifice which was consumed in the time of Moses was a sacrifice for sin, wherefore Moses said, as is written in the book of the Maccabees: "Because the sacrifice for sin was not to be eaten, it was consumed."¹⁵⁴ Does it not seem to be consumed for thee when in the sacrament of baptism the whole outer man perishes? "Our old man is crucified,"¹⁵⁵ the Apostle exclaims. Herein, as the example of the fathers teaches us, the Egyptian is swallowed up-the Hebrew arises renewed by the Holy Spirit, as he also crossed the Red Sea dryshod-where our fathers were baptized in the cloud and in the sea.¹⁵⁶

108. In the flood, too, in Noah's time all flesh died, though just Noah was preserved together with his family.¹⁵⁷ Is not a man consumed when all that is mortal is cut off from life? The outer man is destroyed, but the inner is renewed. Not in baptism alone but also in repentance does this destruction of the flesh tend to the growth of the spirit, as we are taught on the Apostle's authority, when holy Paul says: "I have judged as though I were present him that hath so done this deed, to deliver him unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁵⁸

109. We seem to have made a somewhat lengthy digression for the sake of regarding this wonderful mystery, in desiring to unfold more fully this sacrament which has been revealed to us, and which, indeed, is as full of virtue as it is full of religious awe.

Chapter XIX. The crime committed by the inhabitants of Gibeah against the wife of a certain Levite is related, and from the vengeance taken it is inferred how the idea of virtue must have filled the heart of those people of old.

110. What regard for virtue our forefathers had to avenge by a war the wrongs of one woman which had been brought on her by her violation at the hands of profligate men! Nay, when the people were conquered, they vowed that they would not give their daughters in marriage to the tribe of Benjamin! That tribe had remained without hope of posterity, had they not received leave of necessity to use deceit. And this permission does not seem to fail in giving fitting punishment for violation, since they were only allowed to enter on a union by a rape, and not through the sacrament of marriage. And indeed it was right that they who had broken another's intercourse should themselves lose their marriage rites.

111. How full of pitiful traits is this story! A man, it says,¹⁵⁹ a Levite, had taken to himself a wife, who I suppose was called a concubine from the word "concubitus." She some time afterwards, as is wont to happen, offended at certain things, betook herself to her father, and was with him four months. Then her husband arose and went to the house of his father-in-law, to reconcile himself with his wife, to win her back and take her home again. The woman ran to meet him and brought her husband into her father's house.

112. The maiden's¹⁶⁰ father rejoiced and went to meet him, and the man stayed with him three days, and they ate and rested. On the next day the Levite arose at daybreak, but was detained by his father-in-law, that he might not so quickly lose the pleasure of his company. Again on the next and the third day the maiden's father did not suffer his son-in-law to start, until their joy and mutual regard was complete. But on the seventh day, when it was already drawing to a close, after a pleasant meal, having urged the approach of the coming night, so as to make him think he ought to sleep amongst friends rather than strangers, he was unable to keep him, and so let him go together with his daughter.

113. When some little progress¹⁶¹ was made, though night was threatening to come on, and they were close by the town of the Jebusites, on the slave's request that his lord should turn aside there, he refused, because it was not a city of the children of Israel. He meant to get as far as Gibeah, which was inhabited by the people of the tribe of Benjamin. But when they arrived there was no one to receive them with hospitality, except a stranger of advanced age—When he had looked upon them he asked the Levite: Whither goest thou and whence dost thou come? On his answering that he was travelling and was making for Mount Ephraim and that there was no one to take him in, the old man offered him hospitality and prepared a meal.

114. And when they were satisfied¹⁶² and the tables were removed, vile men rushed up and surrounded the house. Then the old man offered these wicked men his daughter, a virgin, and the concubine with whom she shared her bed, only that violence might not be inflicted on his guest. But when reason did no good and violence prevailed, the Levite parted from his wife, and they knew her and abused her all that night. Overcome by this cruelty or by grief at her wrong, she fell at the door of their host where her husband had entered, and gave up the ghost, with the last effort of her life guarding the feelings of a good wife so as to preserve for her husband at least her mortal remains.

115. When this became known¹⁶³ (to be brief) almost all the people of Israel broke out into war. The war remained doubtful with an uncertain issue, but in the third engagement the people of Benjamin were delivered to the people of Israel,¹⁶⁴ and being condemned by the divine judgment paid the penalty for their profligacy. The sentence, further,¹⁶⁵ was that none of the people of the fathers should give his daughter in marriage to them. This was confirmed by a solemn oath. But relenting at having laid so hard a sentence on their brethren, they moderated their severity so as to give them in marriage those maidens that had lost their parents, whose fathers had been slain for their sins, or to give them the means of finding a wife by a raid. Because of the villainy of so foul a deed, they who have violated another's marriage rights were shown to be unworthy to ask for marriage. But for fear that one tribe might perish from the people, they connived at the deceit.

116. What great regard our forefathers had for virtue is shown by the fact that forty thousand men drew the sword against their brethren of the tribe of Benjamin in their desire to avenge the wrong done to modesty, for they would not endure the violation of chastity. And so in that war on both sides there fell sixty-five thousand warriors, whilst their cities were burnt. And when at first the people of Israel were defeated, yet unmoved by fear at the reverses of the war, they disregarded the sorrow the avenging of chastity cost them. They rushed into the battle ready to wash out with their own blood the stains of the crime that had been committed.

Chapter XX.

After the terrible siege of Samaria was ended in accordance with Elisha's prophecy, he relates what regard the four lepers showed for what was virtuous.

117. Why need we wonder that the people of the Lord had regard for what was seemly and virtuous when even the lepers-as we read in the books of the Kings-showed concern for what is virtuous?

118. There was a great famine in Samaria,¹⁶⁶ for the army of the Syrians was besieging it. The king in his anxiety was making the round of the guards on the walls when a woman addressed him, saying: This woman persuaded me to give up my son-and I gave him up, and we boiled him and did eat him. And she promised that she would afterwards bring her son and that we should eat his flesh together, but now she hath hidden her son and will not bring him. The king was troubled because these women seemed to have fed not merely on human bodies, but on the bodies of their own children; and being moved by an example of such awful misery, threatened the prophet Elisha with death. For he believed it was in his power to break up the siege and to avert the famine; or else he was angry because the prophet had not allowed the king to smite the Syrians whom he had struck with blindness.¹⁶⁷

119. Elisha sat¹⁶⁸ with the elders at Bethel, and before the king's messenger came to him he said to the elders: "See ye how the son of that murderess hath sent to take away mine head?" Then the messenger entered and brought the king's command threatening instant danger to his life. Him the prophet answered:¹⁶⁹ "To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gate of Samaria." Then when the messenger sent by the king would not believe it, saying: "If the Lord would rain abundance of corn from heaven, not even so would that come about," Elisha said to him: "Because thou hast not believed, thou shall see it with thine eyes, but shall not eat of it."

120. And suddenly¹⁷⁰ in the camp of Syria was there heard, as it were, a sound of chariots and a loud noise of horses and the noise of a great host, and the tumult of some vast battle. And the Syrians thought that the king of Israel had called to his help in the battle the king of Egypt and the king of the Amorites, and they fled at dawn leaving their tents, for they feared that they might be crushed by the sudden arrival of fresh foes, and would not be able to withstand the united forces of the kings. This was unknown in Samaria, for they dared not go out of the town, being overcome with fear and also being weak through hunger.

121. But there were four lepers¹⁷¹ at the gate of the city to whom life was a misery, and to die would be gain. And they said one to another: "Behold we sit here and die. If we enter into the city, we shall die with hunger; if we remain here, there are no means of living at hand for us. Let us go to the Syrian camp, either they will quickly kill us or grant us the means of safety." So they went and entered into the camp, and behold, all was forsaken by the enemy. Entering¹⁷² the tents, first of all on finding food they satisfied their hunger, then they laid hold of as much gold and silver as they could. But whilst they were intent on the booty alone, they arranged to announce to the king that the Syrians had fled, for they thought this more virtuous than to withhold the information and keep for themselves the plunder gained by deceit.

122. At this information the people¹⁷³ went forth and plundered the Syrian camp. The supplies of the enemy produced an abundance, and brought about cheapness of corn according to the prophet's word: "A measure of fine flour for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel." In this rejoicing of the people, that officer on whose hand the king leaned died, being crushed and trodden under foot by the people as the crowds kept hurrying to go out or returned with great rejoicing.

Chapter XXI.

Esther in danger of her life followed the grace of virtue; nay, even a heathen king did so, when death was threatened to a man most friendly to him, For friendship must ever be combined with virtue, as the examples of Jonathan and Ahimelech show.

123. Why did Queen Esther¹⁷⁴ expose herself to death and not fear the wrath of a fierce king? Was it not to save her people from death, an act both seemly and virtuous? The king of Persia himself also, though fierce and proud, yet thought it seemly to show honour to the man who had given information about a plot which had been laid against himself,¹⁷⁵ to save a free people from slavery, to snatch them from death, and not to spare him who had pressed on such unseemly plans. So finally he handed over to the gallows¹⁷⁶ the man that stood second to himself, and whom he counted chief among all his friends, because he considered that he had dishonoured him by his false counsels.

124. For that commendable friendship which maintains virtue is to be preferred most certainly to wealth, or honours, or power. It is not wont to be preferred to virtue indeed, but to follow after it.¹⁷⁷ So it was with Jonathan,¹⁷⁸ who for his affection's sake avoided not his father's displeasure nor the danger to his own safety. So, too, it was with Ahimelech, who, to preserve the duties of hospitality, thought he must endure death rather than betray his friend when fleeing.¹⁷⁹

Chapter XXII.

Virtue must never be given up for the sake of a friend. If, however, one has to bear witness against a friend, it must be done with caution. Between friends what candour is needed in opening the heart, what magnanimity in suffering, what freedom in finding fault! Friendship is the guardian of virtues, which are not to be found but in men of like character. It must be mild in rebuking and averse to seeking its own advantage; whence it happens that true friends are scarce among the rich. What is the dignity of friendship? The treachery of a friend, as it is worse, so it is also more hateful than another's, as is recognized from the example of Judas and of Job's friends.

125. Nothing, then, must be set before virtue; and that it may never be set aside by the desire for friendship, Scripture also gives us a warning on the subject of friendship. There are, indeed various questions raised among philosophers;¹⁸⁰ for instance whether a man ought for the sake of a friend to plot against his country or not, so as to serve his friend? Whether it is right to break one's faith, and so aid and maintain a friend's advantage?

126. And Scripture also says: "A maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow, so is a man that beareth false witness against his friend."¹⁸¹ But note what it adds. It blames not witness given against a friend, but false witness. For what if the cause of God or of one's country compels one to give witness? Ought friendship to take a higher place than our religion, or our love for our fellow-citizens? In these matters, however, true witness is required so that a friend may not be assailed by the treachery of a friend, by whose good faith he ought to be acquitted. A man, then, ought never to please a friend who desires evil, or to plot against one who is innocent.

127. Certainly, if it is necessary to give witness, then, when one knows of any fault in a friend, one ought to rebuke him secretly-if he does not listen, one must do it openly. For rebukes are good,¹⁸² and often better than a silent friendship. Even if a friend thinks himself hurt, still rebuke him; and if the bitterness of the correction wounds his mind, still rebuke him and fear not. "The wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of flatterers:"¹⁸³ Rebuke, then, thy erring friend; forsake not an innocent one. For friendship ought to be steadfast¹⁸⁴ and to rest firm in true affection. We ought not to change our friends in childish fashion at some idle fancy.

128. Open thy breast to a friend that he may be faithful to thee, and that thou mayest receive from him the delight of thy life. "For a faithful friend is the medicine of life and the grace of immortality."¹⁸⁵ Give way to a friend as to an equal, and be not ashamed to be beforehand with thy friend in doing kindly duties. For friendship knows nothing of pride. So the wise man says: "Do not blush to greet a friend."¹⁸⁶ Do not desert a friend in time of need, nor forsake him nor fail him, for friendship is the support of life. Let us then bear our burdens as the Apostle has taught:¹⁸⁷ for he spoke to those whom the charity of the same one body had embraced together. If friends in prosperity help friends, why do they not also in times of adversity offer their support? Let us aid by giving counsel, let us offer our best endeavours, let us sympathize with them with all our heart.

129. If necessary, let us endure for a friend even hardship. Often enmity has to be borne for the sake of a friend's innocence; oftentimes revilings, if one defends and answers for a friend who is found fault with and accused. Do not be afraid of such displeasure, for the voice of the just says: "Though evil come upon me, I will endure it for a friend's sake."¹⁸⁸ In adversity, too, a friend is proved, for in prosperity all seem to be friends. But as in adversity patience and endurance are needed, so in prosperity strong influence is wanted to check and confute the arrogance of a friend who becomes overbearing.

130. How nobly Job when he was in adversity said: "Pity me, my friends, pity me."¹⁸⁹ That is not a cry as it were of misery, but rather one of blame. For when he was unjustly reproached by his friends, he answered: "Pity me, my friends," that is, ye ought to show pity, but instead ye assail and overwhelm a man with whose sufferings ye ought to show sympathy for friendship's sake.

131. Preserve, then, my sons, that friendship ye have begun with your brethren, for nothing in the world is more beautiful than that. It is indeed a comfort in this life to have one to whom thou canst open thy heart,¹⁹⁰ with whom thou canst share confidences, and to whom thou canst entrust the secrets of thy heart. It is a comfort to have a trusty man by thy side, who will rejoice with thee in prosperity, sympathize in troubles, encourage in persecution. What good friends those Hebrew children were whom the flames of the fiery furnace did not separate from their love of each other!¹⁹¹ Of them we have already spoken. Holy David says well: "Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant, inseparable in their life, in death they were not divided."¹⁹²

132. This is the fruit of friendship; and so faith¹⁹³ may not be put aside for the sake of friendship. He cannot be a friend to a man who has been unfaithful to God. Friendship is the guardian of pity and the teacher of equality, so as to make the superior equal to the inferior, and the inferior to the superior.¹⁹⁴ For there can be no friendship between diverse characters,¹⁹⁵ and so the good-will of either ought to be mutually suited to the other. Let not authority be wanting to the inferior if the matter demands it, nor humility to the superior. Let him listen to the other as though he were of like position-an equal, and let the other warn and reprove like a friend, not from a desire to show off, but with a deep feeling of love.

134. Let not thy warning be harsh, nor thy rebuke bitter,¹⁹⁶ for as friendship ought to avoid flattery, so, too, ought it to be free from arrogance. For what is a friend but a partner in love,¹⁹⁷ to whom thou unitest and attachest thy soul, and with whom thou blendest so as to desire from being two to become one; to whom thou entrustest thyself as to a second self, from whom thou fearest nothing, and from whom thou demandest nothing dishonourable for the sake of thine own advantage. Friendship is not meant as a source of revenue,¹⁹⁸ but is full of seemliness, full of grace. Friendship is a virtue, not a way of making money. It is produced, not by money, but by esteem; not by the offer of rewards, but by a mutual rivalry in doing kindnesses.

134. Lastly, the friendships of the poor are generally better than those of the rich,¹⁹⁹ and often the rich are without friends, whilst the poor have many. For true friendship cannot exist where there is lying flattery. Many try fawningly to please the rich, but no one cares to make pretence to a poor man. Whatsoever is stated to a poor man is true, his friendship is free from envy.

135. What is more precious than friendship which is shared alike by angels and by men? Wherefore the Lord Jesus says: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that they may receive you into eternal habitations."²⁰⁰ God Himself makes us friends instead of servants, as He Himself says: "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."²⁰¹ He gave us a pattern of friendship to follow. We are to fulfil the wish of a friend, to unfold to him our secrets which we hold in our own hearts, and are not to disregard his confidences. Let us show him our heart and he will open his to us. Therefore He says: "I have called you friends, for I have made known unto you all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father."²⁰² A friend, then, if he is a true one, hides nothing; he pours forth his soul as the Lord Jesus poured forth the mysteries of His Father.

136. So he who does the will of God is His friend and is honoured with this name. He who is of one mind with Him, he too is His friend. For there is unity of mind in friends, and no one is more hateful than the man that injures friendship. Hence in the traitor the Lord found this the worst point on which to condemn his treachery, namely, that he gave no sign of gratitude and had mingled the poison of malice at the table of friendship. So He says: "It was thou, a man of like mind, My guide and Mine acquaintance, who ever didst take pleasant meals with Me."²⁰³ That is: it could not be endured, for thou didst fall upon Him Who granted grace to thee. "For if My enemy had reproached Me I could have borne it,²⁰⁴ and I would have hid Myself from him who hated Me." An enemy can be avoided; a friend cannot, if he desires to lay a plot. Let us guard against him to whom we do not entrust our plans; we cannot guard against him to whom we have already entrusted them. And so to show up all the hatefulness of the sin He did not say: Thou, My servant, My apostle; but thou, a man of like mind with Me; that is: thou art not My but thy own betrayer, for thou didst betray a man of like mind with thyself.

137. The Lord Himself, when He was displeased with the three princes who had not deferred to holy Job, wished to pardon them through their friend, so that the prayer of friendship might win remission of sins. Therefore Job asked and God pardoned. Friendship helped them whom arrogance had harmed.²⁰⁵

138. These things I have left with you, my children, that you may guard them in your minds-you yourselves will prove whether they will be of any advantage. Meanwhile they offer you a large number of examples, for almost all the examples drawn from our forefathers, and also many a word of theirs, are included within these three books; so that, although the language may not be graceful, yet a succession of old-time examples set down in such small compass may offer much instruction.

1: Ps. xxxix. [xxxviii.] 1.

2: Prov. v. 15.

3: Prov. xx. 5.

4: Prov. v. 17-19.

5: Cic. de Off. III. 1. Scipio, born b.c. 234. He was the greatest Roman of his time, a famous general and the conqueror of Hannibal. His exploits in Africa won him the surname of Africanus. Owing to jealous intrigues he in b.c. 185 left Rome and retired to his estate, where he passed the rest of his days in peaceful employments. Cicero (de Off. III. 1) relates on Cato's authority that he used to say: " Nunquam se minus otiosum esse quam cum otiosus, nec minsolum quam cum solus esset. "

6: Ex. xiv. 16.

7: Ex. xvii. 11.

8: Ex. xxiv. 17.

9: Ps. lxxxv. [lxxxiv.] 8.

10: Acts v. 15, Acts v. 16.

11: 1 [3] Kings xvii. 1.
12: 1 [3] Kings xvii. 16 ff.
13: 2 [4] Kings vi. 8 ff.
14: Cic. de Off. III. 1, §2.
15: 2 [4] Kings iv. 16.
16: 2 [4] Kings iv. 34.
17: 2 [4] Kings iv. 41.
18: 2 [4] Kings iv. 44.
19: 2 [4] Kings vi. 6.
20: 2 [4] Kings v. 10.
21: 2 [4] Kings iii. 17.
22: 2 [4] Kings vii. 1.
23: Rom. viii. 35, Rom. viii. 38.
24: 2 Cor. vi. 9 ff.
25: " utile. " Some read " inutile. "
26: Cic. de Off. III. 3, §11.
27: Cic. de Off. III. 3, §13.
28: Cic. de Off. III. 3, §14.
29: Cic. de Off. III. 4, §16.
30: S. Matt. v. 48.
31: Phil. iii. 12.
32: Phil. iii. 15.
33: Ezek. xxviii. 3.
34: 1 [3] Kings iv. 29, 1 [3] Kings iv. 30.
35: Cic. de Off. III. 4, §19.
36: 1 Cor. x. 23, 1 Cor. x. 24.
37: Phil. ii. 3, Phil. ii. 4.
38: Prov. ix. 12.
39: Rom. viii. 29.

40: Phil. ii. 6, Phil. ii. 7.

41: The text here runs as follows: " Considera, O homo, unde nomen sumseris; ab humo utique. "

42: 1 Cor. xii. 17.

43: 1 Cor. xii. 26.

44: Prov. xxii. 28.

45: Ex. xxiii. 4.

46: Ex. xxii. 2.

47: Lev. xix. 13.

48: Deut. xxiii. 19.

49: Ps. xxxvii. [xxxvi.] 21.

50: Cic. de Off. III. 5, §25.

51: Prov. xiv. 3.

52: Cic. de Off. III. 6.

53: Cic. de Off. III. 10, §42.

54: Cic. de Off. 23, §89.

55: S. Matt. xxvi. 52.

56: Cic. de Off. III. 7, §33.

57: Cic. de Off. III. 7, §37.

58: Cic. de Off. III. 9.

59: 1 Tim. i. 9.

60: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xxvi. 2.

61: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xxvi. 8-10.

62: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xxvi. 23.

63: S. Matt. xiv. 3.

64: Col. iii. 3.

65: Col. iii. 4.

66: Ps. lxxi. 15 [LXX.]. "Sanctus in negotiationem introisse se negat," says St. Ambrose, from Ps. lxxi. 15. According to the Septuagint, " ouk egnwn pragmateia 67: Prov. xi. 26.

68: S. Luke xii. 17.

69: Prov. xi. 26. St. Ambrose cites the same verse each time, but the first time according to LXX. The second time he varies the commencement.

70: Cic. de Off. III. 11, §67.

71: It is not certain to what date the famine mentioned by St. Ambrose is to be referred, nor is the name of the prefect of the city certainly known. The Praefectus Urbis was at this time the highest officer of the city, directly representing the emperor, and except to the latter there was no appeal from his decisions. Amongst other duties he exercised a supervision over the importation, exportation, and prices of provisions. As St. Ambrose, §48, calls him " sanctissimus senex, " he was probably a Christian.

72: Deut. viii. 3.

73: tua curia. Ed. Med. has " tua cura. "

74: Num. xiii. 27, Num. xiii. 28.

75: Num. xiv. 3.

76: Num. xiv. 11 ff.

77: Num. xiv. 29.

78: Num. xiv. 37.

79: Josh. xiv. 6.

80: Cic. de Off. III. 19, §75.

81: Cic. de Off. III. 15, §64.

82: Ps. vii. 4.

83: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xxiv. 10.

84: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] i. 21-27.

85: 1 [3] Kings xxi. 3.

86: This hardly agrees with 1 [3] Kings xxi. 16.

87: 1 [3] Kings xxi. 23.

88: Prov. xx. 10.

89: Prov. xi. i.

90: Cic. de Off. III. 15, §61.

91: Ps. xv. [xiv.] 3.

92: Josh. ix. 3 ff.

93: Prov. xiv. 15.

94: Josh. ix. 27.

95: Cic. de Off. III. 19.

96: Cic. de Off. III. 14. This story is related by Cicero as a clear example of downright fraud, against which in his time there was no remedy at law.

97: Cic. de Off. III. 18.

98: Acts v. 2.

99: S. Matt. viii. 20.

100: Ps. lii. [li.] 2.

101: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xxii. 9.

102: 1 Thess. iv. 6.

103: Cic. de Off. III. 24, §93.

104: c. 5, §35.

105: S. Mark vi. 28.

106: Cic. de Off. III. 25.

107: Judg. xi. 35.

108: Judg. xi. 40.

109: Gen. xxii. 13.

110: Num. xiv. 12.

111: Num. xvi. 21.

112: Cic. de Off. III. 10, §45.

113: Judg. xi. 36.

114: Judith xii. 20.

115: Judith xv. 1 ff.

116: 2 [4] Kings vi. 20.

117: Cic. de Off. III. 11, §49.

118: S. Matt. xiv. 4.

119: Sus. v. 23.

120: This affair happened in the war which Pyrrhus waged against the Roman people. Caius Fabricius was the general who refused to take advantage of the base offer.

121: Cic. de Off. III. 22.

122: Ex. vii. 19.
123: Ex. ix. 10.
124: Ex. ix. 23.
125: Ex. ix. 29.
126: Ex. x. 22.
127: Ex. xii. 29.
128: Num. xii. 3.
129: Ex. vii. 12.
130: S. John iii. 14.
131: Ex. iv. 6, Ex. iv. 7.
132: Ex. xxxii. 32.
133: Tob. ii. 4.
134: Tob. vii. 11.
135: Cec. de Off. III, 13.
136: 2 Macc. i. 19.
137: 2 Macc. i. 20 ff.
138: 2 Macc. i. 36.
139: 2 Macc. ii. 1 ff.
140: Lev. ix. 24.
141: Lev. x. 2.
142: 2 Macc. ii. 5.
143: S. John i. 33.
144: Jer. xx. 9.
145: Acts ii. 3.
146: Acts ii. 13.
147: 1 Cor. iii. 13.
148: 1 Cor. iii. 15.
149: Deut. iv. 24.
150: Jer. ii. 13.

151: S. Luke xii. 49.

152: S. John vii. 37, John vii. 38.

153: 1 [3] Kings xviii. 30 ff.

154: 2 Macc. ii. 11.

155: Rom. vi. 6.

156: 1 Cor. x. 1, 1 Cor. x. 2.

157: Gen. vii. 23.

158: 1 Cor. v. 3, 1 Cor. v. 5.

159: Judg. xix. 1-3.

160: Judg. 4-9.

161: Judg. xix. 10-21.

162: Judg. xix. 22-26.

163: Judg. xx. 1 ff.

164: Judg. xx. 48.

165: Judg. xxi. 1 ff.

166: 2 [4] Kings vi. 25-31.

167: 2 [4] Kings vi. 22.

168: 2 [4] Kings vi. 32.

169: 2 [4] Kings vii. 1, 2 [4] Kings vii. 2.

170: 2 [4] Kings vii. 6, 2 [4] Kings vii. 7.

171: 2 [4] Kings vii. 3, 2 [4] Kings vii. 4.

172: 2 [4] Kings vii. 8, 2 [4] Kings vii. 9.

173: 2 [4] Kings vii. 16-20.

174: Esther iv. 16.

175: Esther vi. 10.

176: Esther vii. 9, Esther vii. 10.

177: Cic. de Off. III. 10, §43.

178: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xx. 27.

179: 1 Sam. [1 Kings] xxii. 17.

- 180: Cic. de Off. III. 10.
- 181: Prov. xxv. 18.
- 182: Cic. de Off. I. 17.
- 183: Prov. xxvii. 6.
- 184: Cic. de Amic. 19, §67.
- 185: Ecclus. vi. 16.
- 186: Ecclus. xxii. 25.
- 187: Gal. vi. 2.
- 188: Ecclus. xxii. 26.
- 189: Job. xix. 21.
- 190: Cic. de Amic. 6, §22.
- 191: Dan. iii. 16 ff.
- 192: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] i. 23.
- 193: Cic. de Off. III. 10, §44.
- 194: Cic. de Amic. 19, §69.
- 195: Cic. de Amic. 14, §50.
- 196: Cic. de Off. I. 38, §137.
- 197: Cic. de Amic. 21, §80.
- 198: Cic. de Amic. 15, §51.
- 199: Cic. Lact. 15, §53.
- 200: S. Luke xvi. 9.
- 201: S. John xv. 14.
- 202: S. John xv. 15.
- 203: Ps. liv. [lv.] 13, Ps. liv. [lv.] 14.
- 204: Ps. liv. [lv.] 12.
- 205: Job xlii. 7, Job xlii. 8.

On Abraham

Two Books of Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, On Abraham.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Book One.
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Book Two.
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.

Book One.

Chapter I.

The title of the book and the method of exposition are explained: then what usefulness is to be sought from the examples of Abraham is demonstrated by divine authority, and by comparison with the philosophers.

1. The title of this book is Abraham, because it occurred to me to consider the actions of this patriarch in order. About him, our moral treatise will be first and simple. For although in a deeper discussion a certain process and form of virtue, and a certain kind is expressed; nevertheless, it is a progress of virtue to also consider the traces of his forensic actions. Indeed, if those things which nature has produced for the sustenance of human beings are not of one, but of twofold or even more abundant grace, how much more should those things by which minds are delighted be estimated as not of narrow, but of more abundant and various use, and of numerous kinds of food.

2. However, the task is not mediocre or idle. For when our Lord God has bestowed this rich blessing on us, in order to provoke others by His grace and correct their institution, Moses has also described for us an example to imitate; so that the hearts of men, slipping into vice, may be revived by the sight of this man, as if from a certain earthly grave, it should not be considered superficial if we also diligently follow in the footsteps of the same man. For if the wise men of this world, like Plato himself, the chief of philosophers, proposed to pursue not a true, but a fictitious and shadowy commonwealth, which we read about in his Republic, in order to teach what kind of commonwealth ought to exist: and thus, though he had neither seen nor heard of anything like it in any city, he thought it should be described so that those who hold this office, might be able to learn how to govern a commonwealth; and if Xenophon, the disciple of Plato, wished to give the character of a wise man in those

Chapter II.

How was the devotion of Abraham proven by the words of divine command? What is meant by leaving one's kindred, and how did the promise of God follow the obedience of the same patriarch? Likewise, when he called upon the Lord, he feared for himself on account of his wife's beauty and took precautions. But Pharaoh, being punished on account of his abduction, shows how great a crime adultery is: hence, by the example of Abraham, we are prompted to pursue devotion.

He was indeed a great man, renowned for many virtues and distinguished by remarkable achievements, which Philosophy could not surpass with its own aspirations. In fact, what he achieved is even greater than what she imagined, and his simple faith in truth is greater than the ambitious deceit of eloquence. Therefore, let us consider what kind of devotion existed in this man. For this virtue is the first in order, being the foundation of all others, and deservedly God demanded it first from him when He said: 'Leave your country, your kindred, and your father's house' (Gen. XII, 1). It was enough to say about your land. For there was a need to leave from family, to leave from the paternal home: but for this reason he added each detail, in order to test his affection so that it would not appear that he had begun the task either thoughtlessly or that some deceit was being prepared for the heavenly commands. But just as the precepts had to be piled up so that nothing would be hidden, so also the rewards had to be presented so that there

would be no despair. He is tested as brave, incited as faithful, provoked as just, and he left deservedly just as the Lord had spoken to him.

4. And Lot went out with him (Ibid., 4). But Abraham accomplished that which is celebrated as a great saying among the seven sages, **■που Θε■**, that is, follow God, and he surpassed the saying of the sages, and he went out following God from his land. But because there had been another land before him, that is, the region of the Chaldeans from which Terah, the father of Abraham, went out and migrated to Haran; and because he brought his nephew with him, to whom it had been said: Go out from your kindred; let us consider lest perhaps this going out is from his land, that is, from a certain dwelling in our body, from which Paul also went out who said: But our conversation is in heaven (Phil. III, 10); and from the allurements and bodily pleasures which he said are, so to speak, connected to our soul, which it is necessary to endure with the body until it is united with it by the bond of the flesh. Therefore, in order to depart from earthly conversation and secular pleasures and the customs and actions of the higher life, we must change not only our surroundings but also ourselves. If we desire to adhere to Christ, let us abandon corruptible things. Now, the corruptible things within us are the flesh, delight, and the voice subject to bodily passions. By voice, we understand passions. Therefore, since our soul is dual, that is, twofold, having both reason and irrationality, which is divided by the flesh and the allurements of bodily delight, and other bodily passions, the righteous man must separate and distance the reason of his soul from the irrational. For this indeed is to go out from the prison, as it were from certain caves, and burrows, and dens. For to lurk is the part of a guilty conscience. And therefore, following Abraham, let us go out from our hiding places. For if we are the children of Abraham, let us do the works of Abraham; that our works may shine before God, and before men. The just man says, Let his works be ruled: a sinner hides himself, as Adam desired to hide himself, but he could not. Abraham therefore obeyed the command, and it is not read that any delay occurred.

5. Having gone out, he traveled the land as far as Shechem (Gen. XII, 6), which in Latin interpretation is said to mean shoulder or neck, through which we understand the execution of the prescribed work. For we also have written below: He bent his shoulder to work (Gen. XLIX, 15). Hence, by the figure of the places, we observe that Saint Abraham proved his devotion not only through zeal, but also through fruitful efficacy, as he reached as far as the oak tree. In that place, the Lord appeared to him and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.' (Gen. 12:7) See how, with frequent promises, he instructs and establishes as though still weak and unformed; and let him entrust himself completely to God, claiming nothing for himself. Therefore, he built an altar to God, who appeared to him; and he went from there to the mountain east of Bethel (Ibid.), desiring to see the rising sun of justice. And so, he did not set up his tent in the valleys, but on the mountain, for God is the God of mountains, not valleys.

6. And he called upon the name of the Lord (ibid., 8). Where Bethel is, that is, the house of God, there is also the altar; where the altar is, there is also the invocation of our God. And not without reason did he undergo so many hardships, because he hoped that God would come to his aid. He exercises himself as a champion of God, and is proven through adversity: he goes into the desert, he encounters hunger, he goes down into Egypt. He discovered that in Egypt there was lasciviousness among the young, insatiable desire, and intemperance in pleasure. He warned that among men of this sort, the chastity of his wife would be in danger, and her beauty would be a threat to himself: he advised his wife to pretend to be her sister. This teaches that the beauty of a

wife should not be sought after so much, as it usually causes the death of the husband. For it is not so much the beauty of a woman that delights a man, but her virtue and dignity. He who seeks the sweetness of marriage should not seek a woman who surpasses him in wealth, unless marital obligations do not bind him: if not adorned with jewelry, but with character. It often offends a man if his wife knows that she is more noble. These are the closest things to pride. Sara was not richer in wealth, nor more splendid in birth; therefore, she did not consider herself inferior to her husband, therefore she loved him as if he were equal in grace, therefore she was not retained for her possessions, nor for her parents, nor for her relatives, but she followed her own husband wherever he went: she went to foreign lands, she claimed to be his sister, she was willing, if necessary, to risk her modesty rather than her husband's safety. In order to protect her husband, she falsely claimed to be his sister, so that the assailants of her modesty would not kill him as a rival and avenger of his wife. Finally, the Egyptians, as soon as they saw her, were amazed at how beautiful she was, and they brought her to their king, and treated Abraham well, as if he were her brother, pleasing the king, and honoring her.

7. And the Lord afflicted Pharaoh with great and most severe afflictions, and his house on account of Sarah, the wife of Abraham (Gen. XII, 17). A great testimony and proof of the preservation of chastity. Such a place of exhortation, that everyone may present themselves chaste, not seek another's bed, not approach another man's wife in the hope of hiding or impunity, not be provoked by the husband's neglect or foolishness, or by his prolonged absence. The overseer of marriage is a god who knows nothing hidden, lets nothing escape, and allows no one to mock. He watches over the absent husband, keeps guard, and even catches the offender before they can act. He recognizes guilt in the minds of individuals and in the thoughts of all. And if you deceive your spouse in adultery, you do not deceive God; and if you escape your spouse, and if you mock the judge of the forum, you do not escape the judge of the entire world. He avenges more severely the injury of the innocent and the insolence of the unwary husband. For it is a great injury to the author to be disregarded and not considered as the guardian of the inner chamber.

8. Even Pharaoh, though the king of the Egyptians whom the insolence of royal power would make haughty and the lasciviousness and luxury of Egypt would lead astray from the pursuit of chastity, called Abraham and accused him, saying: What have you done to me? Why did you not tell me that she is your wife, but said to me that she is your sister, and I took her for my wife? And now behold, your wife is here before you. (Genesis, 18 and 19). Although by nature savage and barbarous, it signifies that even among foreign and barbarous customs there should be concern for modesty, and that adultery should be regarded as a crime even by themselves. He who pretends ignorance, condemns intemperance. And it is not surprising if a barbarian knows the law of nature: mute animals which are not bound by any laws, yet there are some which not only preserve fidelity to their mates, but also guard the chastity of intercourse with one partner. Thus, the law of nature is greater than the prescription of laws. It is not surprising, therefore, if this Egyptian king feared God who did not fear man, and he paid the penalty for adultery, for which he was not guilty under any laws: and as soon as he learned that the wife was another man's, he not only dismissed the husband, but also gave him prosecutors who would bring him to court; so that no one from the barbarian people would inflict violence on the property of the husband or the honor of the wife.

9. This place is very beautiful for igniting the study of devotion, because the one who follows God is always safe. And therefore, we should prefer God above all, neither the sight of our homeland, nor the gratitude of our parents and children, nor the contemplation of our wife should distract us from carrying out divine commandments; because God bestows all those things upon us, and He is powerful to save what He gives. Therefore, the great example of Abraham's devotion, when he descended into Egypt with his beautiful wife. He indeed had a just concern for marital chastity, but his greater zeal was for the advancement of devotion, lest he appear to have preferred the guardianship of the marriage bed to heavenly commands. Therefore, since he despised everything for the sake of God, he received multiplied blessings from God. But God granted him the first reward of chastity, which he knew would be pleasing to his wife. For because of his desire to fulfill a heavenly oracle, he also exposed his wife to the danger of her modesty, and thus defended the chastity of their marriage.

Chapter III.

About the other virtues of Abraham, namely his prudence in settling disputes, his justice in dividing, where also his imprudence in preferring the pleasant and useful to the unwise Lot, and his punishment; then his uncle's love for him, his piety towards God, his self-control in victory, and the choice of the reward promised by God; and finally, about the promise of a future posterity and the birth of Christ.

10. Therefore, devotion claimed the first parts for itself in the right order. Let us also observe the grace of the other virtues. Holy Abraham was soothed by the presence of his grandson, to whom he showed paternal affection. A dispute arose between the servants of the grandson and the uncle. The wiser of the servants noticed that harmony between masters tends to be broken by their disputes, so he cut off the fiber of discord, lest the contagion spread. For he thought it preferable that the bond be severed rather than that grace be separated. What you should do, if by chance something of this sort occurs, is to remove the seedbed of discord. For you are not stronger than Abraham. He thought it necessary to avoid, not to despise, the quarrels of slaves. And if you are stronger, beware that the other, who provides an ear to the whispers of slaves, is not weaker. Often, undivided servitude sows discord between parents. Rather, divide so that friendship may remain. An undivided household cannot support two. Is it not better to emigrate with grace, than to cohabit with discord?

11. The Patriarch also teaches how such a division should be. Let the stronger divide, let the weaker choose, so that they have nothing to complain about. For they cannot accuse the part of their own choice. The opportunity to back out does not reside with the one given the option to choose, nor is the one dividing burdened. For the wiser one, the more cautious; so that they are not restricted in the division, nor deceived in the choice.

12. Abraham divided, because, he said, the land was not big enough for them to live together (Gen. XIII, 6), because they were too rich. It is a worldly vice that the land does not satisfy the desires of the rich. For there is never enough for the greed of the rich. The more one has, the more eager one is to possess. He desires to extend the boundaries of his land and exclude his neighbor. Was Abraham like this? No, even though he was imperfect at the beginning. For where was perfection before the coming of Christ? He had not yet come who would say, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell all your possessions and give to the poor, and come, follow me' (Matt. XIX, 21).

However, in order to offer the least amount of greed, he who is just cuts off discord. 'Let there not be,' he says, 'strife between me and you, and between my shepherds and your shepherds, for we are brothers.' Behold, is not the whole earth before you? Separate from me: if you go to the left, I will go to the right; or if you go to the right, I will go to the left' (Gen. XIII, 8 et seq.). And Lot lifted up his eyes, and chose the well-watered region of the Jordan; for it was all watered, and like the garden of God. Often possessions come by inheritance, some more useful, others more pleasant. Not all are found in the second portion. For the worth of each decreases. But if the more useful parts cannot be obtained, let the more pleasant ones be exchanged for the more useful. People have different preferences: some are pleased by useful things, others by pleasant things. The weaker person chooses the more pleasant things, and despises the more useful things. The steward is sometimes useful, or the actor of the land is compared to the city-dweller. If the fool is the chooser or he selects the cook, or the singer whom he considers of more pleasing grace, he rejects the more useful one. Often even when the advantages are not unequal, the wiser person chooses the more pleasant things. They quickly arouse envy, they quickly excite the mind of the greedy. However, Scripture has said nothing about whether one part is more useful and another more pleasant, lest it should seem that Abraham took the young man's eyes with a desire for what was more useful. He described one pleasant part, but did not add another more useful one. It was necessary for him to divide the whole region into two parts: then he divided it by presence, not absence. One region could not contain both. He offered a choice, which could have been the highest justice.

14. Lot chose a pleasant place, which quickly caught the eyes of the robbers. Hence, war among kings, victory of adversaries, captivity of the inhabitants. Therefore, Lot paid the price of weak decision, deceived not by the barrenness of the land, but by the envy of the beauty, so that he himself would be taken captive; since he had turned away from the fault of servile wickedness, and had chosen a part of the most wicked; for Sodom is full of luxury and debauchery. Therefore, the Latin word 'declinatio' is translated as 'Lot', because it refers to the choosing of vices by those who deviate from virtue and turn away from fairness.

15. Having ascertained, Abram counted his domestic servants; and with three hundred and eighteen men, he obtained victory and rescued his nephew. The affection of division is proven when he loved his nephew so much that he would not turn away from the danger of war for his sake. What is meant by 'he counted'? It means 'he chose'. From this it is not only related to the knowledge of God, but also to the grace of the righteous, as the Lord Jesus said in the Gospel: 'But the very hairs of your head are all numbered' (Luke 12:7). But the Lord knows who are his own: but he does not deign to acknowledge those who are not his own. And he numbered three hundred and eighteen, so that you may know not the quantity of the number, but the express merit of the chosen. For he admitted those whom he judged worthy in number of the faithful, who would believe in the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. For three hundred signifies the Greek letter τ, and eighteen expresses the sum ιϛ. Therefore, Abraham conquered by the merit of faith, not by a populous army. Finally, he triumphed over those to whom the arms of five kings had surrendered, having gone out with a few native soldiers.

16. But he who conquers should not arrogate victory to himself, but defer it to God. This is what Abraham teaches, who, being made more humble by triumph, is not more proud. Finally, he offered a sacrifice, he tithed; and therefore Melchizedek, who is said in the Latin translation to be

the king of justice, the king of peace, blessed him. For he was the priest of the Most High God (Gen. I, 18). Who is the king of justice and the priest of God, except the one to whom it is said: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Ps. CIX, 4), that is, the Son of God, the priest of the Father, who by the sacrifice of his own body reconciled the Father to our sins. But what about the fact that he did not want anything to come from the spoils of victory, nor to accept what was offered? For the acceptance of the reward diminishes the fruit of triumph, and the taking of the favor erodes gratitude. It matters greatly whether you have fought for money or for glory: the former is considered to be like a hired hand, the latter is deemed worthy of the glory of a savior. By right, it is holy to refuse to take anything from the spoils, lest the one who gave say: 'I made him rich'; he testifies that only this is enough for him, that he has benefited the sustenance of the young warriors. Someone may say (23, q. 5, c. Let someone say): When he himself has conquered, how does he say to the king of the Sodomites, 'I will not take anything from you,' when surely the spoils will be in the power of the conqueror? He teaches military discipline, that all things may be preserved for the king. Indeed, he asserts that those who had accompanied him in assistance, perhaps as allies, should receive a portion of the profits as the reward for their labor. And so, since he did not seek reward from a man, he received it from God, as we read written; because after these words the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying: Do not fear, Abram, I will protect you, your reward will be very great (Gen. XV, 1). The Lord is not slow to reward, and he quickly promises and bestows many things; so that weak hearts may not think they have despised the present by any delay: and as if with a kind of usurious generosity, he compensates by restoring more to him who has not been captured by offering the present.

19. Let us also consider the reward that the Lord himself demands. He does not seek riches like the greedy, nor long life like the fearful of death, nor power; but he seeks a worthy heir of his labor: What will you give me, he says? But I am dismissed without children. And further: because you have not given me offspring, my own servant will be my heir. Therefore, let people learn not to despise marriage, nor to join themselves with unequal partners; let them not have such children whom they cannot have as heirs; so that, with the contemplation of transferring inheritance, if they are not moved by any sense of shame, they may strive for a worthy marriage.

20. But if the opinion of Abraham is not helpful for correction, take this oracle of God condemning such an inheritance: your heir shall not be this one, but the one who comes out of you, he shall be your heir (Ibid., 4). Whom does he call the other? For indeed, Hagar bore a son to Abraham, but he does not say that son, but he says the holy Isaac. And therefore he adds: who comes out of you. For he truly came out of Abraham, who was begotten through a legitimate marriage. But by Isaac we can understand the legitimate son, the true legitimate Lord Jesus Christ, whom we read as the son of Abraham at the beginning of the Gospel according to Matthew (Matt. I, 1), who acted as the true heir of Abraham, shining forth as the successor of the author, through whom Abraham looked towards heaven and recognized the brilliance of his own posterity, no less illustrious than the brightness of the celestial stars. For just as star differs from star in brightness, so too does the resurrection of the dead. The Apostle says that by bestowing the fellowship of His resurrection, Christ has made those whom death used to hide in the earth participants in the heavenly kingdom.

21. But how did the lineage of Abraham spread, if not through the inheritance of faith, through which we are joined to heaven, confirmed with angels, equated with stars? Therefore, it is said: Your offspring will be like this. And he believed, Abraham believed God would be the heir of his

body. For you to know that he believed this, the Lord said: Abraham saw my day and was glad. Therefore, it was counted to him as righteousness because he did not seek understanding but believed with the utmost faith. It is good that faith precedes reason; lest we seem to demand an account not only from man, but also from the Lord our God. For how unworthy it is to believe human testimony about others, but not believe the divine oracles about Himself! Therefore, let us imitate Abraham, so that we may be heirs of the land through the righteousness of faith, by which he became an heir of the world.

Chapter IV. Abraham is defended from the crime of adultery upon receiving a son with a handmaid: namely, because he was not immune from human frailty, and at that time he had barely abandoned the superstitions of the Chaldeans: furthermore, because he had not sinned against a law that had not yet been enacted: afterwards, because he was motivated not by lust, but by love for his offspring; where many arguments against adultery are discussed: finally, it is defended that that very act was not a sin. Lastly, it is debated whether it was fitting for circumcision to be instituted and then revoked, containing a minimum of perfection within itself. But perhaps someone may say: How do you propose that we imitate Abraham, who had a child with a maidservant? Or what does this mean, that such a great man was subject to this error, which we admire so much? And so, lest we appear to have deviated from a certain way of thinking, like most people think this place is shallow, it is dear to explain its reasoning. I do not deny that Abraham had a child with a maidservant; so that you may know that Abraham was not of a higher nature and substance, but one among the number and frailty of all men. Finally, he was also called from the region of the Chaldeans, whom we have heard to be more intent on empty superstitions than others; and therefore he found greater favor with God because he renounced previous things, stretched out towards earlier things, to follow God. He was set as an example for you to imitate, so that you also may realize that if you renounce sins, you can earn the mercy of the Lord.

23. However, it can be argued that he was moving some people because he was already speaking with God, and he went in to his servant girl, as it is written: 'For Sarah said to Abraham, "Behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my servant girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her" ' (Gen. XVI, 2; 32, q. 4, c. Dixit Sara). And so it happened. But let us consider, first, that Abraham lived before the law of Moses and before the Gospel: adultery had not yet been prohibited. The punishment of a crime is determined by the time of the law, which prevents the crime: and there is no condemnation before the law; but from the law. Therefore, Abraham did not commit a crime against the law, but anticipated the law. Although God praised marriage in paradise (Gen. I, 28), He did not condemn adultery. For He does not desire the death of the sinner, and therefore, promises a reward instead of punishment. He prefers to provoke the meek rather than to terrify the more savage. And if you have sinned when you were a pagan, you have an excuse: you came to the Church, you heard the law: You shall not commit adultery (Exod. XX, 14), now you have no excuse for your offense. However, since I am speaking to those who have given their name to the grace of baptism, if anyone has committed only this crime, let him know that forgiveness is to be given to him; but let him also know that he must abstain from it for the future, as one who has committed the crime. Finally, the Lord forgave the sins of the adulterous woman brought before Him by the scribes and Pharisees in the Gospel, but He said: Go, and sin no more (John VIII, 11). When he says that to them, he says it to you. Did you commit adultery, you heathen? It is forgiven to you, it is remitted to you through baptism. Go, and after

this, see that you do not sin again. You have one defense, that of Abraham. The second reason is that, not inflamed by any wandering passion, not captivated by the beauty of a flirtatious form, she held conjugal relations with a slave in the place of a marriage bed, but sought offspring and the propagation of children out of a desire for procreation. Even after the flood, there was a scarcity of the human race: there was also a scarcity of religion, so that no one seemed to have failed to pay their debt to nature. Finally, Lot's saintly daughters had this reason for seeking offspring, so that the human race would not perish; and for the sake of a public duty, they concealed their private fault. It is not idle when a wife is persuaded to be the author of the act; in order that the husband may be excused, lest he be believed to have been carried away by wandering error: at the same time, that women may learn to love their husbands, and not be tormented by vain suspicion of adultery, or envy stepchildren, if they themselves have not borne children. It was pleasing to a good wife to excuse her own sterility in front of her husband; and in order that there may not be a reason for the husband not having children, she advises him to enter the maidservant. This was done by Leah, and afterward by Rachel. Learn, woman, to put aside jealousy, which often incites women to madness.

25. But I also warn you, men, especially those who strive for the grace of the Lord, not to mix with an adulterous body (for whoever is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her) and not to give this opportunity for divorce to women. Let no one deceive themselves about human laws. (33, q. 4, cap. Nemo) Every act of fornication is adultery, and what is not permissible for a woman is not permissible for a man. A husband owes the same chastity to his wife as a wife owes to her husband. Whatever is committed with a woman who is not a lawful wife is condemned as the crime of adultery. Therefore, you have been warned what you should beware of, that no one present themselves unworthy of the sacraments.

26. Also, take note of this, that such intemperance weakens the bond of matrimony, creates proud maidservants, irritable matrons, discordant spouses, shameless concubines, and disrespectful husbands. As soon as a maidservant conceives a child by her master, she despises her mistress as if she were more worthy because of her pregnancy. The mistress is hurt by this contempt and accuses her husband as the instigator of her mistreatment. In fact, Sara herself had given her husband the power over her maidservant, and later she says to him: I receive injury from you; I gave my maidservant into your bosom; but when she sees that she is pregnant, she says that she has been despised by her. Let God be the judge between me and you. (Gen. XVI, 5). The magnitude of the pain and the severity of the complaint of women is revealed in their reading. It shows an imprudent and light-minded husband who does not know how to be obedient, and it presents the causes of divorce. But Abraham, a moderate and wise man, said: 'Behold, your maid is in your hands, use her as you please' (Ibid., 6). He preferred to keep his wife rather than a servant. Yet this is not a complete remedy. The angry wife takes power and uses it with excessive vengeance permitted. But if Sarah did not show moderation, who will show it? And so it is written: And Sarah afflicted her, and she fled from her presence. (Ibid.) There are two things that the Scripture includes; it expresses the seriousness of the mistress's anger and the arrogance and pride of the servant. That Sarah afflicted her refers to the anger of the one afflicting: that Hagar fled, she could not bear the insult with submissive patience, which claimed the pinnacle of a master's dwelling: she was angered by the injustice, which had taken on insolence. Finally, when the angel was asked where he was going, he replied, 'I am fleeing from the face of my lady Sarah'

(Genesis 16:8). And by this excessive swelling, that he first mentioned the name of Sarah and then referred to her as his lady. The insult was added to injure, this was added to express the person. The insolence of the maidservant did not please the angel; and therefore he said to her, 'Return to your mistress' (Genesis 16:9). Surely the angel would not have been unaware, if she had been overcome by the force of punishments, and he would have rebuked more the cruelty of the one who was beating than the departure of the one fleeing; but in order to show that she was fleeing as if proudly, so that she would not be proud of her mistress, he added, 'And humble yourself under her hand' (Genesis 16:9). Therefore, I hope that no one will encounter this vice. But if someone does encounter it, let them learn to humble their servant to their wife, so that they do not, while wanting to avenge their servant, exclude their wife.

Therefore, Abraham was one of the gentiles, and for the sake of posterity he entered into a relationship with a handmaid; because his wife, desiring to overshadow her own barrenness, had persuaded him to do so. And yet, it is not without purpose that God immediately, either to test his other works or to elicit repentance for this act, said to him: I am your God, walk before me and be blameless (Gen. XVII, 1), as if he had not fully walked before God, who, despairing of his wife's barrenness, sought posterity from a handmaid. He said this without complaint; this is, without blame; so that your wife does not complain about you, nor anyone reproach your actions. For a name is changed, with a letter added, so that he would be called Abraham instead of Abram, which means 'father of a multitude', as the Latin interpretation has it, or 'sublime father', 'chosen father'; or so that he would become a father and the father of a son. He was vain when he did not know God; he became chosen after he knew God. He was a father when he had offspring by a slave woman; but he was not the father of a son, because he did not have a son who was conceived in lawful marriage. Sarah gave birth, and he became the father of a son. He is commanded to be circumcised, to receive the inheritance of true seed. Is not clearly circumcision a commandment for chastity, so that one may cut off the desire of the flesh and restrain unruly desires of luxury and lasciviousness? Indeed, by the term circumcision, it is prescribed that the foul odor of all impurity be removed, and the incentive of lust be taken away. We have made use of two defenses.

28. The third authority that the Apostle Paul gives us is this, who says: Those things that Abraham did in taking a son from his servant girl were done as a symbol, and were spoken of using an allegory. An allegory is when one thing is done but another thing is symbolized; as the Apostle himself also teaches, saying: Do you wish to be under the law? Have you not read the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, one from his servant girl and one from the free woman; but indeed, the one who was born from the servant girl was born according to the flesh, and the one from the free woman through the promise: which things are spoken of using allegory. For these are the two covenants: one indeed from Mount Sinai, generating into slavery, which is Hagar (Galatians 4:21 et seq.); showing two peoples to descend from the generation of Abraham: one, the Jews, who serve the law by syllables, as if generated into slavery by a maidservant; the other, the Christians, who have received the freedom of heavenly grace for forgiveness of sins. Therefore, what you think is sin, you are advised is a mystery, by which things that were to come in later times were revealed. Finally, he added: But you, brothers, are children of the promise, like Isaac (Galatians, IV, 28). Therefore, he says, do not seek the works of the law; for a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians II, 16). And so that you may

know that he said this to Christians: And we, he says, believe in Christ Jesus; so that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law (Ibid.). Let us therefore understand that these things that happened in a figurative sense were not to their blame: but they will be to ours if we do not want to correct ourselves from them; rather, let us strive to not serve the snares of the law, when Abraham held the free woman, Sara, and cast out the slave woman.

29. In this place (Gen. XVII, 10) I know that many are moved: for if circumcision is good, it should have been observed until today: if useless, it should not have been commanded, especially by a divine oracle. But when the Apostle Paul said (Rom. IV, 11): Because Abraham received the sign of circumcision: surely the sign is not the thing itself, but a sign of another thing, that is, not the truth, but an indication of the truth. Finally, he himself explained and expressed it, saying (Ibid.): Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of righteousness and faith. Hence we rightly understand that bodily circumcision is a sign of spiritual circumcision. Therefore, the sign remained until the truth came. The Lord Jesus came, who said: I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Because he did not circumcise a small part of the body as a sign, but he circumcised the whole person in truth, he removed the sign and brought in the truth. For after what is perfect came, what was only partial was abolished; and therefore, the circumcision of a part ceased, where the circumcision of the whole shone forth. For now, not in part, but the whole man is saved in the body, saved in the soul. For it is written: Whoever wants to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matthew 16:24). This is the perfection of circumcision; for through the offering of the body, the soul is redeemed, of which the Lord himself says: Whoever loses his life for my sake, will find it (Luke 9:24).

30. Now remains the portion of the question as to whether the part should have been sent before the coming perfection. This is an easy point to clarify if we consider to whom the part was entrusted and by whom the perfection was kept. For the part was entrusted to the people of Judaea, to them with hard necks, to them with weakness, to them who did not know their God. So if they could not bear the part, how could they have kept the perfection? If you want to educate a little boy in letters, you must start from the individual elements of the letters, from the individual strokes to syllables, and from syllables in order to words and sentences. No one can sail the sea fearlessly unless they have first sailed on rivers. Finally, if you want to entrust the boy or the more advanced person with anything, either to accomplish a journey or to lighten a burden, are the burdens to be equalized or the effort to be equalized? So, therefore, you should know that the perfection of circumcision was preserved in those who seemed suitable, having been instituted by Christ; so that the faithful would be tested, whose countless multitude would bear the cross; and would devote their own soul for Christ, and unbelievers could not resist, who believed that salvation was sought in the complete sacrifice of the entire body, and who considered the blood of their small circumcision to be salutary.

However, it should be considered that God called what was placed in the foreskin, and while it remained in the foreskin, the inheritance of the legitimate son was promised, so that you may believe that he is not just the father of the Jews, as they assert, but also the author of all believers through faith. Sarah, too, before the circumcision of the man, is blessed with the addition of one letter, with a considerable reward, so that she would have the leadership of virtue and grace; concerning whom, nations and kings of the gentiles are promised to come forth, so that she would be established as a type not of the Synagogue, but of the Church. But when he heard the promise

from his son, Abraham laughed, which was not a sign of disbelief but of joy. In fact, he fell on his face, worshiped, believed, and added: 'If a son is born to me at the age of one hundred, and if Sarah at the age of ninety shall give birth.' And he said: 'May Ishmael live in Your sight' (Gen. XVII, 17 and 18). He is not incredulous in promises, nor greedy in desires. This means, I do not doubt that you will do it, to give a son to a man of a hundred years and to extend the limits of nature for nature itself. Blessed is the one to whom these things are given: but even here Ismael, whom I have from a native land, if he lives in your presence, grace abounds to me. Finally, the Lord both approved his disposition and did not reject his request, and confirmed his own promises.

Chapter V.

Concerning the hospitality of Abraham, the arrival of the guests, and his hastening to meet them. The same virtue is praised, and the empty excuses of some are dismissed. It is explained how diligently the same saint showed himself in this matter, and how he admitted his wife to a share in the merit. What the things offered by both mystically signify is also discussed. Finally, the promise made to Abraham by the ministering angels is explained, just as Sarah's laughter is interpreted.

32. We have spoken about the devotion, faith, prudence, justice, charity, and frugality of Abraham; now let us also speak about hospitality. For it is a virtuous trait of no small importance. Hence the Apostle taught with the authority of a twofold command that it should be present in a bishop: to be ready to receive guests, to go out to meet them, to explore their paths, to be present to those who do not seek, and to snatch up those who pass by. Abraham was sitting before the door, sitting at midday. When others were resting, he would watch for the arrival of guests. It is for good reason that God appeared to him at the oak tree of Mamre, because he greatly valued the fruits of hospitality.

33. And looking up, he saw with his eyes, and behold, three men were standing beside him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them (Gen. XVIII, 2). See first the mystery of faith. God appeared to him, and he saw three. He who sees God, sees the Trinity, he receives the Father with the Son, and confesses the Son with the Holy Spirit. This is explained more fully elsewhere (In lib. de Resurrectione carnis). Now the moral purpose of the place is to be pursued. He who looks from afar does not sit idly, nor is content with having looked, but runs to meet it. He hurried to meet it, because it is not enough to do right, unless you also hasten to do what you do. For the law commands to eat the paschal lamb in haste (Exod. XII, 11). For accelerated devotion has more abundant fruits. Therefore, learn how eager you should be, so that you can surpass the guest; lest someone surpass you and deprive you of the abundance of a good gift.

Hospitality is good, it has its reward, first the gratitude of man, and then, what is greater, the reward of God. We are all guests in this abode; for a time we have a place to stay: we are emigrating soon. Let us beware that if we have been harsh or negligent in receiving guests, even the holy hostels may be denied to us after the course of this life. Hence in the Gospel the Savior says: Make friends for yourselves with unjust wealth, so that they may receive you into eternal dwellings (Luke 16:9). Then also in this body often arises the necessity of wandering. What therefore you have denied to others, you decide for yourself: and what you have granted to others, you will make yourself worthy to seem. If everyone were to follow this opinion of not accepting strangers, where would there be rest for wanderers? Therefore, leaving behind human dwellings, we will seek the retreats of wild animals, the lairs of beasts.

35. But you falsely pretend poverty. The guest does not seek wealth from you, but gratitude; not an adorned feast, but ordinary food. It is better, he says, to offer hospitality with vegetables for friendship and gratitude than to slaughter calves at the mangers with enmity (Prov. XV, 17). These things are pleasing to men and acceptable to God. Hence the Lord Jesus in the Gospel (Matth. X, 42). Whoever gives a drink of cold water to a guest, he asserts, will not be deprived of heavenly rewards. Finally, Jacob watered Rachel's sheep, found favor, and acquired a wife. Then, do you know whether you receive God when you think of a stranger? Abraham, while offering hospitality to travelers, received God and his angels as guests: even though when you receive a stranger, you receive God, as it is written in the Gospel of the law, with the Lord Jesus saying: 'I was a stranger, and you took me in' ... 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me' (Matthew 25:35 and 40). For the hospitality of one hour, that widow who received Elijah and fed him with a small bit of food, found perpetual sustenance for the whole time of famine, and received a remarkable reward, so that never would the jar of flour run out. Elisha, also, with the restoration of the deceased child, paid the rent for the lodging.

36. However, not only the willingness to receive, but also the diligence of the receiver and the affection are sought. Both are taught to you by Abraham. He ran to meet them, and asked beforehand saying: Lord, if I have found favor before you, do not pass by your servant: let water be taken, and wash your feet, and rest under the tree: and let me fetch bread, and you will eat, and after that you may pass on: because you have turned aside to your servant (Gen. XVIII, 3 et seq.). He saw three, and called one Lord, acknowledging himself as his only servant. Then, turning to the other two whom he considered as his ministers, he also desired to show them respect just as he was obligated to do, not by the rightful duty of servitude, but with the gentle name of diligence, and he served them willingly.

37. And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said to her: Hasten and sprinkle three measures of meal, and make cakes baked under the ashes. A good husband does not allow his wife to be without religious offerings, nor does he greedily take the entire gift for himself. Therefore, it is rightly preserved for the sake of both piety and modesty. That which is of piety, he wants to be shared; that which is of modesty, remains intact for Sarah. Before the tent, the man watches for the arrival of the guests; within the tent, Sarah protects the modesty of the woman and safely performs her feminine duties with modesty. Outside the husband invites, inside Sarah prepares the feast. Not only does Abraham himself hurry, but he also said to his wife that they must hurry, showing her a partner in devotion, and not lacking in faith.

38. He says, sprinkle three measures of flour, and make it ash-colored. In Greek, they are called **■γκρ■φια**, that is, hidden; because every mystery should be hidden and covered with faithful silence, lest it be rashly divulged to profane ears. The divine majesty is nourished by this, and it feasts on this affection, which is sparing in speech and does not bring sacred things into the open. But briefly, the mystery of faith is taught by Sarah, making three measures of one likeness, which has the typology of the Church to which it is said: Rejoice, barren one who does not bear; burst forth and cry out, you who are not in labor (Isaiah 54:1). For it is this which nourishes faith with its innermost spirit, asserting the Trinity of the same divinity, with equal measure and reverence for the Father and the Son, adoring the Holy Spirit, and celebrating the unity of majesty and the distinctiveness of the persons, sprinkle your devotion with this affirmation of faith.

39. Let a woman offer a likeness, that is, the inner spiritual substance of wheat or grain, of which it is said that unless it falls into the ground, it brings forth no fruit. Hence, Mary was the first to see the mystery of the Lord's resurrection, and she hastened not to announce the message of sacred salvation to everyone, but only to Peter and John. Let the man run to the oxen, take the calf, and with eager diligence receive the sacrament of the Lord's passion, not with sluggish laziness. Let him entrust it to the boy who will preserve innocence in his tender age, who knows not deceit, who knows not how to report, who will guard the chastity of an incorrupt body. About which the Lord Jesus says: Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3). To this child and others like him, even the holy David assigns the duty of divine praise, saying: Praise the Lord, you children (Psalm 112:1).

40. Nor was it useless, when he ran to the cattle, he took a tender and good calf, and placed it with milk. Finally, in Exodus, when Moses was declaring the Passover of the Lord, he said: The lamb without blemish, clean, complete, a yearling, male, shall be taken for you from sheep and goats. You shall take and kill him, said he, the whole assembly of the synagogue at evening (Exod. XII, 5). Hence, this is also described as midday, when Abraham offers hospitality to the Lord. But at the supper a calf is sacrificed, and is eaten with milk; that is, not in blood, but with the purity of faith. A good calf, capable of washing away sins. Tender, because it recognized the gentle yoke of the law, not with a stiff neck, and did not refuse the cross's gibbet. And deservedly tender, from whose head and feet and internal organs nothing was left, and its bones were not broken, but it yielded completely to the food of those feasting. Such a calf was figuratively portrayed for us by the shadow of the Law, such did the truth of the Gospel demonstrate (John 19:36).

They ate, he said, those people: Abraham, however, was standing under a tree (Gen. XVIII, 8). We observe the duty of humility praising humility. Abraham was standing, and you occupy the first place at the table? Finally, that humility found favor, so that a son was promised to him.

He said to him: Where is your wife Sarah? He responded and said: Behold, she is in the tent. Did the Lord not know that she would be there, who announced the coming destruction of Sodom? He knew, but he wanted to teach us how great the modesty of women should be, that they should not attract the gaze of impudent guests upon themselves, but should carry out their ministry with dignity. Abraham also tells you that Sarah dwells in the tent, so that you may learn what you should expect from your wife. By advanced age, Sarah now guards her youthful modesty, therefore the Lord promised her a son. 'She has ceased to have the ability' he says 'to bear children', so that you may not mistakenly think she still had the capability to give birth.

Sara laughed (Gen., 18:10). This is a sign of the future more than of disbelief, I believe. She laughed, even though she still did not know why she was laughing, because she foretold the joy she would bring forth in Isaac. That is why she denied laughing, because she was ignorant; that is why she laughed, because she prophesied.

Chapter VI. The destruction of Sodom is foretold and divine indulgence is preached in tolerating and examining the sins of the sinners, as well as in forgiving them. The angels come to stay with Lot in the evening. The Sodomites commit an enormous crime and are filled with wickedness. Lot tries to mitigate their fury by offering his daughters, but the angels strike them with blindness. Lot is forbidden to look back and is led away, and how does this also relate to us? Finally, the guilty daughters, along with their relative, are described in the context of incest and the evils of

drunkenness. But when the men arose, they saw the face of Sodom and Gomorrah (Ibid., 16). Just as the visitation of the Lord is shown to those who fear, so too the punishment of sin is given to the wicked. Abraham led the guests, adding kindness to his hospitality. For the Sodomites, on the other hand, in their acts of uncleanness, increased their wickedness in defiance of their duty of piety.

45. 'I will not hide,' he says, 'what I am going to do with my servant Abraham.' Abraham of course, having reached an old age, as the earlier scriptures attest because he had advanced ninety-nine years, how can he refer to this person as a boy? But when he showed him as one who was not forgetful of his age, indefatigable in his explorations, swift in his running, most patient in his standing, and most eager in his accompanying, does not the name of boy seem to be fitting for his roles? He rightly is called a boy, who did not know the weariness of old age, who showed the innocence and obedience of childhood. Therefore, the grace of blessing is given and the inheritance of posterity.

46. The offense of sins, however, is explained. The cry, he says, of Sodom and Gomorrah is filled (cf. Gen. 18:20). Great is the patience of the Lord, so that He does not immediately punish the sinner, but delays in expectation of correction; nor is He moved to revenge unless the sinner exceeds the measure. Hence, the Lord Jesus also said to the Jews in the Gospel: Fill up the measure of your fathers (cf. Matt. 23:32).

Therefore, I will go down to see if they have done altogether according to the cry coming to me, so that I may know (Genesis 18:21). The Lord did not ignore the sins of the Sodomites, but he spoke these words for the purpose of instructing you, so that you may examine more closely the offenses committed by those whom you consider worthy of punishment. 'I will go down,' he says, 'to see,' that is, you too should go down with care, descend with the eagerness of investigation, so that nothing deceives or escapes you in your absence, and so that you may apprehend the crime with your own eyes. Those placed at a distance can easily be ignorant of many things. But who does the shouting, unless perhaps those whom nothing escapes, seem to cry out, each one's crimes are crying out? Finally, it is said to Cain: 'The blood of your brother cries out to me' (Gen. IV, 10), that is, it does not escape, but it cries out your parricide. Therefore, just as God is aroused by the cries of our transgressions, so that He may avenge at some point, He who willingly pardons.

48. Finally, when Abraham asked him not to destroy the righteous along with the wicked, and he asked, 'If there were fifty righteous people in the city, would you destroy them?' (Gen. XVIII, 24 and 26), he replied: 'I will not destroy the city if there are fifty righteous people in it, and I will save the whole place.' And in this manner, through a series of questions and answers, even if he finds ten righteous people in the city, he promises impunity to the entire people on account of the righteousness of a few. Where do we learn how great a wall is for our country, a virtuous man, how we should not envy holy men, nor disrespect them lightly. For their faith saves us, their justice defends us from destruction. Even Sodom, if it had ten righteous men, could have not perished. But what does it mean that those men who had come to Abraham together with the Lord sought out Sodom, if not that their crime would be aggravated, if the impious ones attempted to inflict greater sacrilege on those whom the righteous had honored? For the reason why he called them men is clear; because they displayed the appearance of men.

50. They came to Sodom in the evening, at noon to Abraham; because the presence of the angels shines brightly for the just and brings darkness to the impious. However, it can also refer to the time of the Lord's Passion, when they came to him in the evening, who had to be freed from the contamination of the Sodomites and from the destruction of the entire city. It was evening before Christ came; because the whole world was in darkness. It was evening for all those whom the squalor of heinous crimes pressed in darkness. The Lord Jesus came, he redeemed the world with his blood, he brought light. But two angels came to Sodom in the evening (Gen. XIX, 1). Where grace is to be given, Christ is present: where severity is to be exercised, only the ministers are present, Jesus is absent.

51. Lot was sitting at the gate (Ibid.). The holy ones had amended Lot, made him more anxious over the captivity. Thus, by the course of his age, he had learned to imitate his parent. He was sitting at the gate, therefore, so that he might receive the arrivals. Finally, he rose to meet them. He ran forth to meet them more perfectly: that one rose, and prostrated himself on the ground, and said, Behold my lords, turn aside into the house of your servant (Ibid., 1 and 2). And he compelled those to turn aside who said: 'We will stay in the square.' This is praised as true holiness and the grace of angels. They did not want their arrival to appear burdensome to the host: indeed he knew among whom he would be staying; nevertheless, he offered his home to the dangers that he might take away the guests. Certainly, the more slowly they acquiesced, by testing them for a longer time, the more fully they were proven. But the men of the city of Sodom surrounded the house, from young to old, the whole population alike (ibid., 5). The justice of divine judgment is demonstrated, lest anyone should say: What did the children do, that they should all be involved in the destruction? Thus, there was no righteous person there, no innocent person. Listen to the Scripture testifying that they surrounded the house, from young to old, the whole population alike. No age was immune to guilt, therefore no one was immune to destruction. And he who did not have the possibility of committing the crime had the disposition. The worn-out bodies of the old men, but their minds full of lust. Holy Lot offered the modesty of his daughters. For although that was also a shameful impurity, it was still less against nature to have intercourse than to commit a crime against nature. He preferred the hospitality of his house to the dignity of his modesty, even among barbarous nations inviolable. Finally, there is also unhindered hospitality, where even kinship is not safe enough.

53. However, those angels struck them with blindness, so that they could not find the entrance to the house that they desired to open. Here indeed is declared the wondrous power of the angels, that with blindness poured over them, the doors of the house were not found. But it is also shown that every desire is blind, and does not see before it. Moreover, it is demonstrated by the fact that the holy Lot, called back by the hands of the guests into the house, showed himself forgetful of danger, remembering not to save himself from danger, but to offer.

54. A place of piety is shown, because Lot, a holy man, is instructed through the manifestation of angels, with the total destruction of the whole region, to have his relatives and warn them to flee; lest, by abandoning them or not warning them, he seem to be lacking in piety towards his daughters' husbands: or lest their error be attributed to themselves, who, deprived of their husbands' company, had sought the drunken conceptions of their father. Therefore, the Scripture does not leave the holy man defenseless; since he is shown to have given his daughters in marriage and to have warned his relatives. But it seemed to them that he was joking, and yet Lot

still lingered, to persuade his relatives; and he would have almost not escaped, if it were not for the urgent angels holding his hand, he was forced to leave.

55. Therefore, he was not advanced, but brought out: and he received a command not to look back, nor to resist in the whole region, but to ascend the mountain. When this is said to him, it is said to everyone. Therefore, if you want to escape, do not look back, but ahead. Look where Christ is, who says to you: Get behind me, as he said to Peter: Get behind me (Matthew 16:23), so that he may follow Christ, may see Christ. Behind is Sodom full of wickedness, behind is Gomorrah overflowing with vices, a region of crimes. Do not touch, says the Apostle, do not handle, do not taste, all of which are destined for corruption (Colossians 2:21). Therefore, flee Sodom, quickly leave Gomorrah, abandon the elements of this world, lest impending dangers engulf you: do not resist while fleeing, nor linger in the entire region of vices. He who did not look back escaped; she who looked back could not escape.

Excusantur autem filiae sancti Lot, quia putaverunt non vicinae regionis, sed totius orbis fuisse illud excidium, et se solas cum patre superstites ex omnibus populis remansisse. Et ideo ne genus deficeret humanum, paternum petiisse concubitus; ut semen generationis humanae de patre suo resuscitarent. Non ergo libidinis vitium fuit, sed generationis remedium, quod non puto criminis duci loco. Nam et Eva de viro assumpta, supra cujus costam aedificata est mulier, os de ossibus ejus, et caro de carne ejus; tamen propter seriem successionis humanae viro mixta est. Yet the conscience of a just man is affected by this act; for when he was intoxicated with wine, he did not know what he was doing. Hence it is not surprising that the opinion deceived the girls, who believed that the entire population of the world had perished. The excuse of the holy Lot would not be the same, for he had heard from the Angels that only that place, not the whole world, would be destroyed.

57. Surely we learn to avoid drunkenness (15, q. 1, c. Surely we learn), through which we cannot beware of crimes. For those things we avoid when sober, we commit ignorantly through drunkenness. It is not enough that it inflames desire, it ignites bodily desires: it also undermines the mind itself, and captures the soul, wrenching away reason. Those who indulge in excessive wine do not know what they are saying, they lie buried. And so if they have transgressed through wine, they are indeed granted forgiveness by wise judges, but they are marked as frivolous offenders. How great is that very ugliness, that it weakens strength, that the gait wavers?

58. If many consider themselves strong, are they stronger than Lot? Are they more restrained than Noah? Scripture did not expose the vices of the patriarchs, whom we read were defeated by wine, but rather so that you may learn what to avoid. Lot lay naked, succumbing to the error of his daughters. And Noah, a righteous man, was deceived because the power of wine was still unknown to him. But you have been instructed so that you may not remain ignorant. Lot trusted his daughters and, in his old age, drunkenly engaged in incest unknowingly. Drink in moderation, lest you be ensnared. Instruct yourself to the Patriarch not only as a teacher, but also as one who wanders. Therefore, the example of drunkenness is reiterated, so that the authority of caution may be confirmed.

Chapter VII.

The death of Abimelech, due to his attempted violation of Sarah's chastity, demonstrates the gravity of the crime of adultery committed against God. Therefore, why was Pharaoh punished more severely than Abimelech for the same reason? And how did the infertility that plagued Abraham's household demonstrate the fruitful abundance granted to the Church through his prayers? Isaac is born and nursed by his mother. However, Ishmael is driven out by Sarah's urging and divine response: thus, the moral teachings contained in these events.

59. Finally, Sarah's chastity is tested again, in order to be demanded by all. For even Abimelech had taken her as his wife, and God said to him in the night: Behold, you shall die because of the woman. (Gen. XX, 3). We see that adultery is punished by divine judgment with death. Therefore, it is added: But she continues with her husband. Indeed, every intercourse between a man and a woman that is not celebrated by the legitimate bond of marriage has its own fault. Learn, all of you who strive for the grace of baptism, like certain candidates of faith, the discipline of sobriety in continence. No one is allowed to know a woman, except the wife. And so, the right of marriage has been given to you, so that you do not fall into a trap and commit adultery with another woman. You are bound to your wife, do not seek a way out: because it is not allowed for you, while your wife is alive, to take another wife. For seeking another, when you have your own, is a crime of adultery, which is even more serious because you think that you should seek authority for your own sin through the law. It is more tolerable if the fault remains hidden than if the authority is taken over by the fault. Nor is this the only adultery, when one sins with another's spouse, but every act that lacks the power of marriage. Moreover, this place teaches that a more serious crime is committed when the rights of a celebrated marriage are violated and conjugal honor is dissolved. And so when Abimelech claimed that he was unaware that the woman was another man's wife, and that he had said she was his sister, the Lord answered him: And I too know that you have done this with a pure heart, and I have spared you so that you would not sin against me; for this reason I did not allow you to touch her. We understand God to be like a bishop and guardian of marriage, who does not allow another's bed to be defiled; and if someone does so, they sin against God and violate His law, they should pay the penalty. And because they sin against God, they lose the fellowship of the heavenly sacrament.

Perhaps you are curious about the reason why Pharaoh was severely afflicted by God, as we read above, even though he himself did not know that Sarah, whom he had heard was his sister, was actually Abraham's wife (Genesis XII, 17). However, Abimelech suffered no punishment. But you should know that the king of Egypt was known to be a leader of vice, and the more freedom he had, the more evil he committed. On the other hand, Abimelech was considered so faithful to God that he deserved to hear: 'And I know that you have done this with a pure heart, not out of affliction like the Egyptians, but out of fortification,' as the interpretation tells us, referring to the land of Gerar over which he ruled. Therefore, there is no doubt that through his other works, the indignation of the Lord has been revoked, who is truly the inner judge of conscience and the interpreter of the soul and mind. In conclusion, he did not refuse or reject God's command like that Pharaoh, nor did he delay obedience: but immediately he called Abraham, returned his wife to him, punished himself with a price for having seen another's, and paid the dowry of shame.

61. From this it can also be inferred that Abimelech the king deserved to be more merciful because Abraham prayed for him and obtained it. For his wife and his maidservant also gave birth, whom God had previously closed up because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. This also pertains to the

household management, that the birth of Sarah, given by the promise of God, would be supported by this testimony; considering that by the offense of God, the fertile become sterile, and again by the will of the Lord the sterile become fertile, as it is written, 'Have I not made the barren one give birth?' says the Lord (Isaiah 66:9). Although this mystery is said to apply to the Synagogue and the Church, because the Synagogue ceased to have offspring, being deprived of posterity, and the assembly of nations, which was barren, began to have eternal offspring, since it was ignorant of God. Hence it is written: Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband (Isaiah 54:1). But Isaac was born to Abraham when he was one hundred years old (Gen. XXI, 5). And if you are perfect, you will have a posterity of joy, and an inheritance of exultation. And Sarah said: God has made laughter for me: whoever hears will congratulate me (Ibid., 6). This is not understood to be about that generation which is subject to many accidents, so that sometimes it would have been better not to have produced offspring: but about that generation in which each sinner, doing penance, usually exhibits joy to the angels when he is redeemed from death. And Sarah said: Who will announce to Abraham that Sarah will nurse an infant? Moral lesson. Women are reminded to remember their dignity and to nurse their children. For this is the grace of mothers, this is the honor by which they entrust their children to their own husbands. Lastly, they tend to love their children more, whom they themselves have nourished and nursed at their breasts.

However, Abraham made a great supper on the day when Isaac, his son, was weaned. This was not something ordinary or common. For Abraham did not host a great feast simply because the child was weaned from his nurse, but because Isaac was deemed worthy to partake of a stronger grace as food and nourishment, not yet to be nourished with milk like a Corinthian, but rather strengthening his limbs with more substantial feasts of heavenly commandments.

65. Prosperity quickly follows envy. Sara had borne a son and weaned him: The maidservant saw the son playing with her son Isaac, and she said to Abraham: Cast out the maidservant and her son; for the son of the maidservant shall not be heir with my son Isaac (Genesis, 9 and 10). Abraham found this difficult, to cast out his son, even though he had taken him as his own. And you, do not mix yourself with the maidservant, so that you do not have a son with her, and your wife does not allow him to become a coheir with her son. For you see, the grace of marriage is dissolved here. Certainly, if you have fallen, and you have a son, cast out the slave woman and her son. For it is better for the slave woman to depart than for the wife, and for the son of the slave woman to be cast out than for the legitimate son. But if you hesitate, if you disregard the opinion of your wife and it seems hard to you, God says to you what He said to Abraham; for what He said to him, He says to you, and to everyone: Let it not be hard for you regarding the boy, and regarding the slave woman. Whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your offspring shall be called. Nowhere else did he say, 'Listen to your wife's voice,' except here, that is, you have wronged your wife and have not appeased her affection; you have taken a son by a slave woman, and have not honored the son of your wife. Can your seed be called in the son of a slave woman? Certainly not; for true succession is in the legitimate son. But you fear that because he is your son, he might be cast out and die. Not for his sake will I do it. God sustains all, both the righteous and the unrighteous. He sends rain upon both the just and the unjust. As Abraham did, do likewise. Cast out the maidservant so that she may remain a secure and blameless wife at home. Also cast

out the maidservant's son, so that he does not have a share in the inheritance, as he does not possess the privileges of birth.

Chapter VIII.

God puts Abraham to various tests, but most notably by giving him the command to sacrifice his son. Each word of this command is carefully examined, and the perfect obedience of the Patriarch is demonstrated in his journey and in the preparation for the sacrifice. Finally, after the mystery has been revealed through the substitution of a ram offered in place of Isaac, the third aspect presented is the blessing of Abraham.

66. And it came to pass after these things, God tested Abraham (Gen. XXII, 1). The Devil tests in one way, God tests in another. The Devil tests in order to overthrow; God tests in order to crown. In the end, he tests those who have been approved by him. Hence David says: Test me, O God, and try me (Psal. CXXXVIII, 23). And God tested the holy Abraham before, and thus he tested him; lest if he had tested before he had approved, he would burden him: he commanded him to leave Haran after he had approved, and he found him obedient (Gen. XII, XIV, XVII). He proved, relying on the title of faith, he freed his grandson, even though he had touched no booty, he promised a son to an old man, and he was a hundred years old, even though he considered Sarah's genitals dead; nevertheless, he believed, and did not hesitate in faith, which could be hindered by the reason of sterility or old age: he proved himself in the diligence of hospitality (Gen. XVIII, 1 et seq.). Therefore, he thought it necessary to test him, as one who should be tested with greater trials and more difficult commands. And indeed, by this example we are taught that someone is proven by true things, but is tested by things that are fabricated and false. For God did not desire to be sacrificed by the father, nor did he desire this duty to be fulfilled, who offered a sheep to be sacrificed instead of his son. But he tested the affection of the father, to see if he would prioritize God's commandments over his son, and not sway the force of his devotion through consideration of paternal piety.

67. And he said to him: Abraham, Abraham! The repetition of the name awakens the mind to be more prepared. Finally, he responded: Here I am. And he said: Take your beloved son, whom you loved, Isaac, and go to the high mountain, and offer him to me as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I will tell you. He does not allow the father's affection to be idle. At first, he stirs it up and pricks it with the stings of piety, and he added the name of the son to the name of kinship and the force of love. He did not think it was enough to say 'son', he adds 'whom you loved, Isaac, the beloved one'. Why does he say 'whom you loved' and not 'whom you love'? We can certainly use the divine custom as a defense of Scripture, because often the past is used for the future or present, as you have in the Gospel: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Matt. III, 17), even though the Father always is pleased in the Son. And in the Psalm you have: The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand (Ps. 109:1), with the implication that He always sits there. We can, however, understand it for now as the most beloved person, and you can signify whom you loved in order to show that it was not a recent impulse of love, but a long-standing and proven love. For what is increased for a time, is dissolved for a time: but what has pleased for a long time or always, cannot quickly be removed. It can also be seen that it is not absurd, because we love those who are going to die more. This is the one whom you loved before; as if she loves to be sacrificed. Nor did she add the name of the holy Isaac in vain, that is, the one whom you received

as a only son from your wife, whom you received in old age, whom you received as the reward of your faith, the recompense of your works, whom you received from the promise of God, not from the fecundity of a spouse, from whom you could hope for another. You will offer me a burnt offering: but first go to the high land. A space is inserted, so that the desire of the father may not seem to be suddenly precipitated, but by that delay the grace of devotion is creeping, the desire of the father. He added: In one of the mountains that I mentioned to you. And here likewise, as you ascend from below, the force is broken, your right hand becomes tired, your intention weakens: while seeking to learn the mountain, you unlearn the preparation.

68. But rising not only on the following day, but also at dawn, so that night seemed to have delayed the eager father: He spread out his donkey, and took with him two boys, and Isaac his son, and he cut the wood for the burnt offering (Gen. XXII, 3). We are taught to bring everything prepared for sacrifice: we also learn to claim for ourselves the preparations for the sacrifice and the office of ministry, not delegating them to others. The old man Abraham, rich in flocks and abundant in servants, did not seek a company of companions: he himself also cut the wood and did not cease his greater duties with his own strength. But he came to the place which God had told him, on the third day. And he himself, together with two others, set out on the third day, carrying his offering with him, and came to the place of sacrifice on the third day. This number is significant and fitting for sacrifices. Finally, in later times, Moses said to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt: 'We will go a journey of three days and offer sacrifice to the Lord our God, as he has commanded us.' And correctly on the third day the sacrifice of the Trinity is celebrated. And looking, Abraham saw the place from a distance (Gen. XXII, 4). He carefully examines the one who hastens to fulfill. Although he quickened his step with an old man's eagerness, he thought that this delay preceded his eyes: the duties of each member were flourishing, although the aged limbs could not flourish. The sight of old men tends to grow dull, so that they may not easily see even things close at hand. Here he not only saw the place, but also looked upon it from afar. And he did not hesitate to see, but he said to his servants: Sit here with the donkey: but I and the boy will pass over to that place; and when we have worshipped, we will return to you (Ibid., 5). The donkey is a fitting symbol, for the truth is in the foal of the donkey. In this animal, the people of the Gentiles, previously subjected to burdens, are figuratively represented, now subjected to Christ. Therefore, Isaac is a type of Christ who will suffer. He came riding on a donkey, representing the people of the nations who would believe. Therefore, when the Lord was coming to undergo suffering for us, He loosed a colt of an ass, which He Himself sat upon, one that was already gentle and tame, even though it was believing in Christ's yoke. But when He says, I and the lad will go further, He shows that neither would the Father, who had entered upon so great an undertaking, fail, nor would the Son give in; either because they would pass through the hardness of so great a deed by the remedy of mercy, or because they would return to you, He prophesied what He did not know (22, q. 2, cap. Si quaelibet, § Prophetavit). He himself alone was arranging to return, after his son was sacrificed: but the Lord spoke through his mouth what he was preparing. However, he spoke deceitfully with the servants, so that, with the matter being unknown, no one would hinder, or obstruct with groaning, or weeping.

72. However, he took the wood of the holocaust and laid it upon Isaac his son. He took also in his hands fire and a sword (Gen. XXII, 6). The victim is consecrated by the holy ministry and entrusted to the future. This victim of piety is carried before the ministry of the pious. Isaac carried the wood

for himself, Christ carried the cross of his own execution. Abraham accompanied his son, the Father accompanied Christ. Neither Isaac alone, nor Jesus alone. Lastly, he says: You will leave me alone, yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me (John XVI, 32).

Isaac said to his father Abraham, Father. And he said: Here I am, my son (Gen. 22:7). The fatherly affection is moved by the words of piety, and is beaten by certain waves from here and there. The son calls his father: the father says, Son; so that the father may recognize himself by the very sound of the words: which is impossible for him to strike, whom he would wish to subject himself to the wound. These names of life are accustomed to work grace, not the ministry of death: these words are accustomed to incite to piety, not to death.

Isaac added, saying: Behold the wood, where is the lamb for a burnt offering? (Genesis.) And here he prophesies by speech, not by knowledge. For the lamb was being prepared by the Lord for sacrifice. Finally, Abraham responds in the same way: God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering, my son. (Genesis.) Unwavering from his zeal for devotion, the minister does not hesitate to frequently call his son; thus he is founded on the solidity of his intention: and he thought himself to be a better father, he judged that his son would remain with him forever, if he were to offer him up as a sacrifice to God. Not only did he prophesy, foretelling what would happen immediately, because God provided for himself a sacrifice for Isaac and restored his son to his father; but what is more, that this sacrifice was not of divine disposition, but another sacrifice which God prepared for himself, in order to cleanse the world: this sacrifice was more pleasing to all, because of which many fathers would offer their sons, and would not fear to be separated from their sons in this world. Every day fathers offer their sons, so that they may die in Christ, and be buried in the Lord. How many fathers, after the martyrdom of their sons, returned happier from their tomb!

75. Abraham came to the designated place for sacrifice; And he built an altar there, and placed wood on it. How much effort was made to slaughter, lest his son be suddenly thought to be sacrificed? And having bound his son Isaac's hands and feet, he placed him on the altar on top of the wood. The father binds his son with his own hands; lest, by fleeing, the son, and the sin inflamed by force of fire, incur punishment.

76. And the Angel said, Abraham, Abraham (ibid., 11). The divine voice held his hand in a certain way, and the stroke of the vibrating hand occupied his right hand. It did not call once, lest he either not fully hear or regard it as a chance voice. Thus, it called again, just as it commanded. It repeated the voice, fearing that it would be anticipated by the zeal of devotion, and that one voice could not recall the strike of the one striking. You shall not lay your hand on the boy, nor shall you do anything to him; for now I know that you fear your God, and you have not spared your most beloved son for my sake (ibid., 12; 2-2, q. 2. cap. Si quaelibet, § Non enim): that is to say, I sought your affection, not demanded your action. I tried your patience, if you would not spare even your most beloved son on account of me. I do not take back what I myself gave, nor do I envy the heir, whom I bestowed upon one who had nothing. Nor did he say in vain to him also, his most beloved son, that which he said above, 'Whom you have loved,' so that you would not think that he had already ceased to love.

77. And looking, Abraham saw, and behold, a ram was caught in a bush. In what way a ram? Clearly as excellent compared to the rest of the flock. In what way caught? So that you would notice that that sacrifice was not of the earth. In what cause was it caught by its horns, except that

it would raise its flesh by a higher power above the earth? According to what is written: 'On his shoulders is the government' (Isaiah 9:6). Who is signified, if not the one of whom it is written: 'He has exalted the horn of his people' (Psalm 148:14)? Our horn is Christ, who has shown himself to all, as we read, 'You are the most handsome of the sons of men' (Ps. 45:3). He alone is lifted up and exalted from the earth, as he himself teaches us when he says, 'I am not of this world, I am from above' (John 8:23). Abraham saw him in that sacrifice, he beheld his passion. And therefore the Lord himself said of him, 'Abraham saw my day, and he rejoiced' (Ibid., 56).

78. Therefore the Scripture says: Abraham called the name of that place, The LORD will provide; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided." (Gen. XXII, 14), that is, what appeared to Abraham, revealing the future passion of his body by which he redeemed the world, also showing the type of passion when he showed the suspended tree. That little bush is the gallows of the cross. And on this wood, the most excellent shepherd of the flock, being exalted, drew all things to himself, that he might be known by all. Where he also says: When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am (John 8:28). From this, Abraham also deserved God.

79. Lastly, this is the third blessing. For he received three blessings: one after the victory, when he delivered his grandson, when Melchizedek met him, and when the Lord said to him: Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can. So shall your offspring be. And Abraham believed in God, and it was credited to him as righteousness (Gen. XV, 5 and 6): another when Abraham was commanded to be named (Gen. XVII, 5), and he received the sign of circumcision: the third here, when he did not hesitate to offer his beloved son as a burnt offering to God. This blessing has been given again to the ancestors. For in them, the propagation of the seed of Abraham was promised to come: but in this one it says: And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have listened to my voice (Gen. XXII, 18). And therefore, let us listen to the voice of our God, and let us obey his commandments, if we want to find favor with him.

Chapter IX.

Sara dies and is buried. Abraham provides a wife for his son and binds him with an oath to choose her for himself; and what mystery lies there? In choosing a spouse, especially consider her religion, from which her character depends. How is the nearest, not a foreigner or unwilling, to be sought? In what way is the Church and baptism designated in Rebecca? What gifts should Christian virgins, following the example of Rebecca, desire for themselves; and what do other gifts offered to the same girl signify? What an example of modesty she herself has provided to be imitated, and how well the calling of the Church and the apostolic ministry are expressed in her marriage!

80. The place that follows has the death of a wife, the weeping of a husband, the duty of burial; by these the marital affection is proven. And Abraham rose up from the dead, he said (Gen. XXIII, 3). We are taught not to cling to the dead any longer, but to defer as much as is sufficient for the duty. And he hastened to pay the price for the place of burial, even though it was given for free; so that we do not build tombs for our parents or relatives in foreign places, but rather in our own. For often when the property of others is being sold, which are burial places in the same locations. However, this is why Abraham did it; because there were not yet temples of God like these, in which the remains of the faithful are buried.

Abraham had grown old; therefore, as a good father, he ought to provide a wife for his son. But because of the oracle of God, he could not return to the place from which he had been commanded to depart. However, he was residing in the land of the Canaanites, from whom he was fleeing in order to seek a legitimate heir. And he called the oldest servant of his household (Gen. XXIV, 2), and said to him to go to Haran, and to seek a wife for his younger master from among his relatives. Learn from this that even servants of older age are called boys by their masters, or by anyone superior. Hence, a certain poet believed that this should be followed: whether in the usage of those who appear to be learned and wise to themselves, he himself found this; whether he himself translated it from our language; or whether he found it already translated.

Feed the oxen like before, boys, and bring the bulls forward. (Virgil, Eclogues I.) We also call boys 'pueros' when we mean little servants, not indicating age, but rather their role.

83. Now consider the virtues of a good paterfamilias, and first think about the duty and to whom he entrusts it; so you should train your slaves in such a way that they show paternal affection to your children and carry out their duties. A senior slave was found for the younger master, who would be chosen to provide a wife and would swear an oath with his hand under his master's thigh. By thigh, we understand generation, and the generation of Abraham is Christ. Where the Apostle says: to Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed. He does not say, and to seeds, as if in many: but as in one, and to your seed, which is Christ (Gal. III, 16); showing through him to us the holy sacrament, through him to be a secure help.

84. However, he commanded him not to take a wife from the Canaanites, whose ancestral line his master had not honored, and therefore he passed on to his descendants the inheritance of a curse. This was done so that we may understand faith and seek a certain inheritance of the author's lineage in those whom we wish to join with us. For with the holy, you will be holy, and with the wicked, you will be wicked. If this is true in other matters, how much more so in marriage, where there is one flesh and one spirit. However, how can love be in harmony if faith differs? And therefore, be cautious, Christian, about giving your daughter to a Gentile or a Jew (28, q. 1, cap. Cave). Be cautious, I say, about marrying a Gentile or Jew, or any foreigner, that is, a heretic, and inviting any woman who is foreign to your faith to be your wife. The first requirement of marriage is faithfulness. If one worships idols that promote adultery, if one denies Christ who is the teacher and rewarder of chastity, how can they love chastity? If she is a Christian, it is not enough unless both of you are initiated in the sacrament of baptism. Together, you must rise for night prayer and beseech God with joined prayers. Another important factor is chastity, if you believe that your marriage is given to you by your God. Hence, Solomon says: 'From God,' he says, 'a wife is prepared for a man' (Prov. XIX, 14). Those who have different beliefs cannot believe in this, that the grace of marriage is bestowed upon them by the one they do not worship. Reason teaches, but examples reinforce. Often the allure of a woman deceives even the strongest husbands, and leads them away from their religious duties (3 Kings 11:4). Therefore, be cautious in matters of love and avoid error. First and foremost, religion is sought in marriage. Therefore, Abraham sought a wife for his son from nearby.

85. And you, seek the nearest. Who is the nearest? He who did mercy, he said. The Lord Jesus said this in the Gospel. And you, seek the nearest of Abraham's seed, and the neighbor near you (Luke 10:37). Christ is the seed of Abraham, he is the nearest of all, who has done mercy above

all, taking away the sin of the world. Learn then what is sought in a wife: not gold, not silver did Abraham seek, not possessions, but the grace of good character.

86. Then he was asked if the woman did not want to come, whether he would bring his master's son there. Be careful, he said, not to bring my son back from there. The Lord God of heaven and God of earth took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth, who spoke to me and swore, saying: I will give you this land and to your descendants; he himself will send his angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there. But if the woman does not want to come with you to this land, you will be free from this oath (Gen. XXIV, 6 et seq.). Consider this more carefully to what purpose it advances. It is not allowed for you to take a foreigner. Truly, if she becomes Christian, you will have praise from her. Likewise, if she refuses to become Christian, the desire for marriage should not deviate from faith, as the reading instructs. Abraham was admonished to lead the one who follows, not to seek the one who remains, nor to let his son go there. Truly, the lord who had taken him away from the land in which he dwelled would not lack mercy, so that he would go before the persistent petitioner and incline the girl's mind. As if a prophet, he said this in defense of his son, and as a moral teacher, he taught to hope in the Lord, who deems worthy to help those seeking increases in faith.

87. And the servant arose and went to Mesopotamia (Ibid., 10): and according to the way of his vow that the departing servant had made, Rebecca met him, carrying a pitcher on her shoulder, a very beautiful virgin whom the man did not know. And she went down to the well, and filled the pitcher, and gave the servant a drink, and watered all his camels (Ibid., 15 et seq.). And the servant took golden earrings weighing one drachma each, and two bracelets for her hands, weighing ten shekels of gold, and asked her if there was room for him to lodge, and whose daughter she was. Moral simplicity is expressed in the fact that there is no place for ambition in seeking marriage, but the Lord, the bishop of marriage, fulfills the request for marriage. However, it is permitted to consider the mysteries of the Church. Where is the Church found, if not in Mesopotamia? It is sought there, summoned from there, accompanied by two rivers, the bath of grace, and the tears of repentance. For unless you have washed away your own sins, unless you have received the grace of baptism, the faith of the Church and a certain marital union are not acquired for you. She is fortified by the Tigris, which is prudence, and the Euphrates, which is justice, and fruitful enlightenment, separating her from barbarous nations.

88. But the virgin was exceedingly beautiful, whose beauty no age corrupted. Exceedingly beautiful, because he who acquired her was handsome and more beautiful than the sons of men. Whom no man had known; for she had no union with any man, but was owed only to Christ. Carrying a pitcher on her shoulder, with which she washed the acts of men. And because she consists of the congregation of the Gentiles, whom she washed, she descended to the fountain. And she filled the pitcher and ascended (Ibid., 16). That Samaritan woman came to the well, as it is written in the Gospel (John 4:7), but she did not descend; the well seemed to her, nor did she fill the water jar. Finally, she said, 'I do not have a water jar.' She did not have from where to wash her actions. Only she descended, only she recognized the true well, that is, not a well of water, but of eternal life, as David said: 'For with you is the fountain of life, and in your light we shall see light' (Psalm 36:10). Therefore, he had what to give to those who were thirsty, because he believed. For what she did not believe, she said to this well that was willing to give her a drink: Where do you have for me to give living water (John 4:11)? But she had that from which to not only water a child,

but also to water camels, which not only used to water the righteous, but also to fill the unjust. Therefore, she received golden earrings and bracelets that Abraham sent, as rewards for her merits.

Perhaps, hearing these things, daughters who strive for the favor of the Lord, you may be provoked to have earrings and necklaces, and to say: How do you forbid this, Bishop, that we should have what Rebecca received as a gift, and you encourage us to be like Rebecca? But Rebecca did not have these earrings and necklaces, which often sow discord in the Church and frequently slip away; she had other earrings, which I wish you had, and other necklaces. The earrings of pious Rebecca are symbols of hearing, and the bracelets of Rebecca are adornments of her deeds. She wore these earrings that did not burden the ear, but soothed it; she wore these bracelets that did not weigh down the hand with material gold, but lifted it with spiritual action. Therefore, this adornment pleased both her brother and her parents. And now, take the earrings that Abraham left for you: take the bracelets that he sent. Listen to the words of the Lord your God, as he himself listened; carry out his commands, as he himself hastened to fulfill them.

90. However, the most beautiful place for instructing those to whom something is enjoined, which the boy Isaac had not previously eaten, Abraham's bread was given to him, before he carried out the command of the Lord. Having obtained this, he gave golden and silver vessels and clothing to Rebecca. When the Church was betrothed, she received golden and silver vessels, in which the treasure of faith would be; for these vessels are for honor, and also for dishonor. Listen to what these vessels are: 'But we have this treasure in earthen vessels' (2 Corinthians 4:7). Our bodies are like earthen vessels: our faith is our treasure. And perhaps even our bodies themselves, which possess this treasure, are golden, because they are full of prudence. And the silver vessels are those that seem to shine with heavenly commandments. And parents are also honored with gifts (32, q. 2, c. Honorantur).

91. The girl seeks advice not about betrothal, for she awaits the judgment of her parents, for it is not the place of a virgin's modesty to choose a husband; but now, having been betrothed to a man, she seeks advice about departure. And she has not brought about delay without justification; indeed, she ought to hurry to her husband. Hence that Euripidean saying, which many wonder about, from where it was translated is clear. For he speaks in the persona of a woman who, however, wanted to leave her husband and was being sought for other marriages. My father Merimna will take care of my marriage, not me. So keep what even the philosophers have admired, maidens. But also, women, if any young girl, fearing the trap of her own weakness after quickly losing her husband, wishes to marry, let her marry only in the Lord, so that she may defer the choice of a husband to her parents; so that she may not be considered too bold in her desires if she claims the right to choose her own marriage. A thing sought ought to seem more desired by the man than the man himself desiring it. Let her precede modesty before she marries, for modesty itself recommends the bond of marriage more. But words imitate them, they cannot imitate works.

92. It is also evident that a glorious mystery of the Church is present in it, because no one dared to call it the Church before Christ; for this prerogative of being called belonged only to Christ. But once it was called, it did not delay, and therefore it was more acceptable to the Lord; because the Jewish people who were called to the supper were not worthy to come: but when the assembly of

the Gentiles saw that it was being summoned, it came forward.

93. Finally, so that you may know, not without mystery, when he was being carried on a camel, he came to the bridegroom; because the people of the nations, horrible with a certain beastly deformity of their merits, who had no beauty in their appearance, were to receive the faith and consent of the Church. Nor is this idle, that when Rebecca came, Isaac saw her walking; and when he asked who she was, knowing that she was the one who was to be his wife, he descended and began to cover his head, teaching that modesty should precede marriage: for this reason also weddings are called so, because for the sake of modesty the girls cover their heads. Learn, therefore, young ladies, how to preserve modesty, and do not go forth in public with your heads uncovered, lest, like Rebecca, who was already betrothed, you may not think it necessary to show the designated husband openly.

94. Who is that servant who provides for these weddings? Surely one of the Apostles, and especially he who says: Men and brothers, you know that from ancient days God chose to hear the nations the word of the Gospel from my mouth (Acts 15:7). Or he who is called the teacher of the Gentiles (1 Timothy 2:7). For when they are read, either John the Evangelist or acquire Christ's soul; so that he may believe what he did not believe before: and they show by their words to those who desire to see Christ. And so Abraham, after celebrating the wedding of his son (Gen. XXV, 8), completed his days in old age and good old age.

Book Two.

Chapter I.

After presenting the moral sense, it transitions to a deeper or allegorical meaning: how the soul is urged to leave its earth and its kinship; it also explains from whom it must depart for a complete purification. Finally, it refers to the promised posterity of Abraham.

Indeed, we have pursued a moral subject to the best of our understanding; so that those who read it can draw lessons in character: but because on both sides the edge of the sword is sharp and ready for battle; similarly, the word of God, which is sharper than any sharp sword, penetrates even to the division of the soul, wherever you turn, you will find it ready and opportune, to penetrate the soul of the reader in order to reveal the enigmas of the prophetic Scriptures. Therefore, I think it is not absurd to refer the meaning to higher things and to explain, through the history of various individuals, a certain progression of virtue; especially since we have already tasted the beginnings of a deeper understanding in Adam (From Paradise, Chapter 2). For we have said that Adam represents the intellect, Eve represents the senses, and we have expressed the delight of the serpent's appearance. But there, through the limitation of the senses and the temptation of pleasure, the flow regresses to sin. However, here we are given the opportunity to contemplate the progress of the mind. For the Lawgiver has provided this, so that just as he demonstrated the fall of the mind, we might avoid those paths of error: so too he indicated the process of the mind and a certain superior return, so that we might understand how the broken mind can reform itself. For the Lord had cleansed the earth by the pouring of the flood, he had washed away the mixture of human frailty: but it was not enough for the progress of virtue, unless man was instructed on how to govern and guide himself, Abraham is introduced in place of the mind. Lastly, the transition of Abraham is said. Therefore, in order for the mind, which had given

itself entirely to pleasure and bodily allurements in Adam, to transition into the form and appearance of virtue, a wise man is set before us as an example to imitate. Lastly, according to the Hebrews, Abraham is called father, and according to the Latins, he is called father, because the paternal mind governs the whole man with authority, care, and concern.

2. Therefore, this mind was in Charra, that is, in the caverns, subject to various passions. And therefore it is said to her: 'Leave your land' (Gen. 12:1), that is, your body. He left this land, whose conversation is in heaven. And 'from your kindred,' he says. Our souls are related to the senses of the body. For our soul is divided into two parts: the rational and the irrational. In that which is irrational, there are senses: therefore, the rational part, that is, the mind, is related. And he said, 'And leave from your house.' The word 'house' is a verb of the mind. For just as the head of the household resides in his house, and has the power to govern his own house, so too does the mind reside in our words, and governs our speech, and its power and discipline shine forth in our speech. Just as a good head of the household is assessed from the very entrance of the house, so too is our mind weighed by our words. Lastly, it also knocks and calls with the tones of the voice.

Therefore, whoever wants to achieve perfect purification, must separate themselves from these three things: the body, the bodily senses, and the voice, in which all bodily passions and deceptive sensory limitations reside. None of these three things are good. Not in the flesh, even though the school of Epicurus and many hedonists praise the pleasure of the body; nor in the senses, which are often deceived; nor in the sound of the voice, which often soothes the soul with false songs. These things are corruptible, but what is truly good is incorruptible. But indeed faith remains. For when a man dies, the flesh decays, the senses perish, the voice is lost, but the immortal mind remains, receiving an incorporeal life. Hence it is called to another land full of bliss, where falsehoods are not mistaken for truths, as in this life, but where it sees the living substance of things. For when it is freed from the misty image of the body, the senses, and the voice, it casts off the corruptible darkness and, with unveiled face, gazes upon the grace of blessed life.

I will bless you, he says, and make you a great nation (Gen. XII, 2). He promises immortality when he promises offspring. For the offspring appears to be immortal, while the individuals are mortal, such as humans, horses, bees. About them, someone says: But that which is far better, he said, is the great nation of the Church, the perpetual posterity, and that supernatural generation, which is truly great, that we may die to sin and be born again to God.

Chapter II.

After the departure of Abraham, God speaks to him as a friend. The same is proposed to us for imitation, so that our mind may be reformed by his example. Therefore, Lot goes out with him; and what the significance of the sixtieth year is. Finally, how a wise person possesses their soul.

Abraham went out just as the Lord had spoken to him (Gen. XII, 4). Hence the Gentiles report the saying of the seven sages: Follow God, as if he were found; although Abraham, not to mention Moses, who was much earlier, was the one through whom the law was given, saying: You shall walk after the Lord your God (Deut. XIII, 4). Therefore Abraham went out, in whom not so much his perfection as his devotion of soul and freedom of mind went out from the bonds of the body, from the traps of pleasure. Finally, you have it: Abraham went out, just as God had spoken to him. Above, you have 'Go,' says God, in which the clear command of the one commanding is

expressed: here you have how God spoke to him. The affection of some conversation is included; for he did everything that was ordained. Therefore, before the action, God speaks as if to a subject, after the action, he speaks as if to a friend. For the one who does what is commanded is a friend to God. And in his Gospel, the Lord Jesus says: 'You are my friends, if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants' (John 15:14-15). But, as I said, the process of the wise man is presented to us for imitation, written for the sake of experiment, not perfection. For the mind is still being reformed in Abraham, which has fallen in the first man. And therefore, it gathers itself through stages and progress.

6. And he added: And Lot went out with him (Gen. XII, 4), that is, decline. For the interpretation of the name signifies this; because as travelers, taking an unknown road, are often deceived by certain paths, so that they turn aside from the direct path; and yet if they are prudent, they do not go astray, but, hesitating, they gather the way from the view of the region itself: thus Abraham, though wavering, nevertheless followed the path of truth. He was often led astray by the false appearance of good things, but he was not completely inclined. For it is the mark of the perfect not to deviate, and of the wise not to deviate completely. But that one alone never deviated, of whom it is written: Behold, a virgin shall conceive in her womb, and shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Emmanuel, he shall eat butter and honey, before he knoweth or preferreth evil, let him choose the good; for before the child shall know to prefer the evil or the good, he shall not believe malice, that he may choose what is good (Isaiah 7:14). Abraham could not do this, that he would choose good things before he knew evil things. But he adhered to celestial precepts, so as not to deviate from the truth (Gen. XII, 4). Therefore, he is described as having lived seventy-five years in Charra, because the number seventy signifies perfect remission, it is the feeling that can be influenced. The pleasure of these sensations cause our mind to not always be upright, but sometimes swayed; so that it does not hide within the caves of the body, but within the hiding places of pleasure.

However, even in these warrens, he managed to escape in such a way that he took his wife and grandson and all the souls he possessed in Charra. For those who are wise and self-controlled are possessors of virtue and soul, choosing the beauty of gentle manners. But those who are lovers of the body are ensnared by its pleasures, for in the disposition of the body lie all irrational virtues, while the rational virtues lie in the soul and disciplines. It is written afterwards (Ibid., 5), that he possessed his soul as a free ruler, and subject to no servitude. This, then, is the intention of the doctor; that even in those diversions and deviations, whether of a more recent age, or of a discipline not yet perfect, or in a place open to vice, he resided in such a way that he was not so inclined to fault that he could not depart. Finally, he defended and transferred his mind from that slippery possession.

Chapter III. Abraham walks as far as Shechem, which word denotes exercise. There he sees the God whom, while he was a Chaldean, he could not see: to whom he indeed builds an altar, but does not sacrifice; and for what reason? Nevertheless, having raised the altar again, he invokes the name of the Lord. And he journeyed, he said, Abraham, as far as the place Sychem, to the lofty oak tree (Gen. XII, 6). Don't these seem superfluous, unless you seek the reason, since he did not overlook the height of the oak tree? But where there is reason, there is nothing superfluous. For Sychem signifies either the shoulder or the neck, which is an indication of labor and exercise. Hence Jacob, a man skilled in exercise, bestowed it as a special gift upon his son

Joseph. Therefore, since exercise itself cannot confer perfection without the dowry of nature, and is deprived of the grace of nature if exercise is lacking (for diligence is the support of talent), that man is introduced for your imitation, to whom you are being formed, with the grace of nature accompanied by exercise, thus becoming more solid and elevated, so as to pass as far as the lofty oak tree. The tree, as tall as it is, is also strong, indicating that the soul of the holy Abraham in this age has not been easily curved by storms, but has remained lofty, in order to elevate itself from earthly inquiries to the height of divine knowledge.

9. Finally, God immediately appeared to him (Gen. XII, 7). Nowhere earlier do you have that God was seen by him. Hence it is clear that this can be referred to him, because as long as he was a Chaldean, that is, not only in the region, but also in the opinion of the Chaldeans, he could not see the God whom he sought within the world. For the Chaldeans call the higher world God, and they claim that earthly things are carried by the house of the constellations and the course of the stars, and are constrained by a certain bond. And they called the stars gods because they believe that they have a certain supernatural dominion, since some stars have compassion for earthly matters. However, they should consider that what has compassion cannot have a commanding or ruling power, like a god, over those for whom it feels compassion; since it is also mortal and corruptible. Moreover, even though the world has been made, it itself is not God, but rather its creator and operator. Therefore, as long as the mind is influenced by Chaldean errors, it does not see God, whom it seeks in the things that are seen, not in the things that are unseen: for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal. But God is not temporal, therefore He is not seen. Therefore, the mind does not see God when it follows the teachings of the Chaldeans. Hence, neither did Abraham see Him at first. But how could he see Him, whom he thought to be superior to another? But when he migrated to another not only region, but humble religion, for this is what Chanaan signifies, then he began to see God and to know that the God whose invisible power he perceived rules and governs all things. Therefore, the Scripture teaches us that Abraham, leaving behind the observation of the stars, saw God.

10. Confirmation of the testimony is added (Gen. XII, 7); for in that place he built an altar to the Lord who appeared to him. This strong impression is imprinted on his soul, and a clear faith in the truth is evident: memory is abundant in a grateful man, oblivion creeps in for an ungrateful one. The former cling to those who assist them, the latter lose everything that is given to them. However, he erected an altar but did not offer sacrifice. It could be understood if you remember the development of this thought process, which is preserved in the series of scriptures. And for this reason, he observed the custom of learning the act of sacrifice from God. For he perceived that the sacrifice of an irrational and dumb animal seemed unworthy of divine worship, as it did not appear to be a fitting offering. At that time, he had not yet understood the typology of Isaac's future passion, nor had Melchizedek bestowed upon him the grace of his blessing, so that he might understand these things.

11. He departed, he says, from there to the mountain, opposite Bethel to the East (ibid., 8). The increase of devotion signifies the height of the mountain, of which the ascent is an indication of a more abundant progress. Opposite the East, therefore, because he prophesied the coming of the sun of justice; for there Wisdom prepared a dwelling for herself, and from there she predetermined her rising through the virgin. Therefore, he wanted to receive the light of already known mysteries. For just as the world will be illuminated by the brightness of the sun, so the whole mind will be

illuminated by the splendor of Wisdom. And fittingly he established Bethlehem against the East. For the house of God is called Bethlehem, in which Christ was born. Therefore God says through the prophet: And you, Bethlehem, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people (Micah 5:2). He did not say against Bethlehem, but he called Bethlehem itself the tabernacle. For the Church of the righteous is the tabernacle. Now who does not marvel at the mysteries, that Bethlehem is near the Sea of Galilee from the East. Indeed, either the soul that deserves to be called the temple of God, or the Church, is battered by the waves of worldly cares, but it is not destroyed: it is struck, but it does not falter, it is readily able to suppress and appease the commotions of the waves and the uprisings of bodily affections. It watches the shipwrecks of others, itself immune and devoid of danger, always prepared for Christ to shine upon it, and through His enlightenment, it acquires joy for itself. For just as the eyes are nourished by the light of the first day, so too is our mind nourished by the discoveries of wisdom, and it seems to shine with certain rays of it. For the visible rays of the sun are diffused throughout the earth, but the invisible rays of our heart penetrate its inner recesses.

He built an altar again and invoked in the name of the Lord (Genesis 12:8). The process of faith is signified in the invocation of the Lord. This adds to what was said before.

Chapter IV.

When Abraham had stayed in the desert, where the tranquility of the mind is symbolized, he descended into Egypt, which is a temptation, compelled by hunger. Why did he call her Sarah sister, and not wife? While Pharaoh returns her to her husband with reproof, he marks the mind renouncing continence.

13. And Abraham went forth, and abode in the desert (ibid., 9). Then the mind is tested, when it is in a certain desert, where there is no sensuality of desires, no abundance of money, no extravagance of expenses. Would that I could be in this desert, devoid of all incentives of desires, abandoned by every study of wrongdoing, stripped of boasting and arrogance. But because either God allows us to be tempted, or the tempter attacks, when he deems that the mind is calm in the desert, free from all earthly desires, it is impelled into Egypt, where it can be restrained. For the stimulus of the mind is our flesh, and its passions are our afflictions. It is our Egypt, that is, our flesh, it is our affliction itself. Our mind descends into it when it thinks about carnal things. But it ascends when it desires the invisible. Therefore, Abraham is also said to have descended into Egypt, in order to be afflicted. Our mind suffers this, sometimes separating itself from the body, wanting to act individually, and desiring to strive after and adhere to incorporeal things. Sometimes, because of the connection between the soul and the body, one is inclined towards carnal pleasures, to which the weak are subjected, but the strong are not held captive. Therefore, afflictions are like crowns to a strong man, but weaknesses to a weak one. Hence, he who says, 'For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn - fighting without and fear within' (2 Corinthians 7:5) did not fear the afflictions that served to prove his worthiness.

14. But when there arose a famine in Egypt, hunger forced him to go down (Gen. XII, 10). For a cruel hunger of the mind arises when the desire for this flesh overflows, and long-awaited water is harmful to our well-being. They reduce us to the narrowness of the body when the desire for possessing creeps in, pleasure is to luxury, boasting is to the heart. We are all tempted. Even a

sober mind is swayed, it descends into Egypt, that is, into the affliction of the body. However, it descends in such a way that it seems to dwell as a foreigner for a time, not as a citizen to possess. For He Himself has said: I am a stranger on earth (Ps. CXVIII, 19). And elsewhere: Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged (Ps. CXIX, 5).

15. However, when Abraham went down into Egypt (Gen. XII, 11), that is, to a people with wild and barbarous customs, who were ignorant of virtue; in order to avoid harm through envy, he told Sarah to say that she was his sister, not his wife. And from this arises a great mystery of virtue, which is quickly envied. And therefore, in order to suppress envy, one should show oneself to be more humble. One should not claim superiority over all others: one should not arrogate wisdom to oneself alone as if it were exceptional. This is the wife that Solomon acquired for himself. For a wife is owed to only one. Therefore, everyone desires to be seen as worthy of such a union, so that they may grieve over being preferred to someone else. Who alone possesses such beauty? A sister, however, is connected to many either by the bond of blood or by name. And therefore she preserves her true lover entirely from harm.

16. Therefore, the Egyptians, seeing her, who were unable to discern or recognize the form of virtue, estimating by common judgment, led her to the tyrant, that is, to the proud mind that could not bear the weight of wisdom, and thus she was afflicted. For when the wicked word of virtue enters the soul, it rebukes it for guilt and afflicts it with the shame of error, and torments it with the pain of backsliding. For while we are under the desire to sin, the mind is covered with certain clouds of foolishness, and the eyes are dimmed by a certain smoke of wickedness, so that it may not see the deformity of those things which it desires. But when all the mist has passed and the brightness of wisdom has shone forth, severe torments are inflicted upon a certain secretary who is evilly conscious. Therefore, our mind, burdened by the guilt of conscience, becomes a judge and executes judgment of penance. And if it cannot bear and endure the presence of virtue, either due to sickness caused by fault or weakness, it dismisses and banishes it from itself, and does not allow it to revolve within itself and adhere to its thoughts. And just as weak eyes avoid light, so a weak mind cannot bear the brilliance of wisdom. Such were the Gerasenes who asked Jesus to leave their region.

17. Finally, that king of Egypt said to Abraham: What have you done to me? Why did you not tell me that she is your wife? Instead, you said that she is your sister, and I took her as my wife. And now behold, your wife is before you, take her and go away. Let us consider someone who, having observed the grace of chastity, is captivated by its beauty and thinks it should be followed. Then, unaware of the company she is accompanied by, he approaches, accompanied by sobriety, modesty and reverence, moderation in food, fleeing from lasciviousness, insolence, impudence, serious caution, vigilant custody. Suddenly, inflamed by the heat of either drunkenness, or the burning desire of the flesh, or the encounter with a more attractive form, he is unable to hold himself back and does not resist the law of the flesh; does he not say: I thought it would be easier to follow chastity, but it is beyond my shoulders, beyond my strength. Rare are those things that are joined together. Farewell, purity, withdraw, withdraw from the boundaries of my senses. Return quickly to where you came from: I cannot endure your presence, I am afflicted with serious doubts, while I think I must hold you, whom I cannot hold.

18. Then he turned to someone who has made it his business to impress upon him the habit of chastity, arguing that it would not be difficult or impossible but rather joined with many companions, suitable for those who are diligent, and agreeable to those who are willing. 'What have you done to me?' he said. 'Why did you not tell me that she is your wife?' This is a woman who, in a legitimate marriage and not in a perfunctory manner, brings with her a great dowry, who brings with her heavy burdens of marriage and the harsh obligations of conjugal life. But you said she is a sister, bound by no laws, a companion by nature, not proud or powerful due to any legal dowry. So I, unaware, thought that her burdens should be connected and held by me, but I understood that there is weight and burden in her. Behold your wife, that is, behold your persuasion before you, accept it, and retreat. I do not want her to be before me, I do not want her in my thoughts. Take yourself away with your counsels, with your admonition, quickly take yourself away, quickly retreat, I cannot bear your delays, they are afflictions to me: it is enough that I was deceived before. And he sent his students to whom his mind often wanders, turning over thoughts of lust, ambition, greed, and various temptations, that they might eliminate and push far away chastity, lest it return to the boundaries from which it had been expelled; so that, now secure and free from serious judgment, he would not fear being reproached for his sins.

Chapter V.

Abraham departed from Egypt with his wife Sarah and all his possessions, that is, with the true riches of the soul. What does his return to Bethel symbolize? And why is Lot not called rich in gold and silver?

19. Therefore Abraham departed from there, having his wife Sarah with him (Gen. 13:1), that is, the principal one, not a servant. For this reason it is also said to him: Listen, Sarah, your wife (Gen. 21:12). For she who has stripped herself of the servitude of sins has authority, not slavery. Therefore, the stronger mind has the principal virtue with it, that is, the one that commands the senses of the body, not the one that obeys. She brought everything with her from Egypt and did not lose any of her teachings there. Intemperance, insolence, immodesty of depravity is not colored, the garment of careful moderation is not taken off, the clothing of modesty is not stripped off.

20. He was very wealthy (Gen. XIII, 2), as someone to whom nothing good was lacking, who desired nothing that belonged to others, who needed nothing from anyone else, and who wanted what was rightfully his. For this is what it means to be wealthy, to have enough for one's desires. Frugality has its own measure, but wealth does not, as it depends on the discretion of the one seeking it. He was wealthy in livestock, silver, and gold. What does this mean? Secular wealth does not seem to be praised in a righteous person. Where I understand bodily senses in animals, because they themselves are irrational; in silver, speech; in gold, mind. Abraham was richly blessed, because he governed irrational senses. Finally, he conquered and made them meek, so that they became rational. He possessed a speech shining with the color of faith, purified by the grace of spiritual discipline; he possessed a mind full of wisdom. And therefore, a good mind is compared to gold; because just as gold surpasses other metals, so a good mind is superior to the other parts of human substance. Therefore, in these three aspects of a wise person, namely, in perception, speech, and mind, there is a certain order of progression, just as we also read in the Apostle: And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love (1 Cor.

XIII, 13). And therefore, the mind is greater; because it is the one that grinds the spiritual grain, in order to produce the purification of perceptions and speeches. The persona of a wise man is preserved everywhere.

21. Finally, it is indicated that Abraham returned to that place (Gen. XIII, 3), that is, to Bethel, from which he had descended to Egypt, so that we may understand that even the righteous, who are placed in the house of God and attentively follow the word of God, are indeed tested by worldly afflictions; but they are not estranged from the house of God and the observance of heavenly commands. To be content with their own boundaries, not to be lifted up by the abundance of riches and by things that flow in accordance with sensual pleasure, is the mark of an excellent mind: to always contemplate the beginning and the end, to proceed from there, and to enter from there, is the ultimate good. But wisdom is good. For no one is good, except God alone. From Him we proceed, created by Him: to Him we return, for to be with Christ is much better. And so that you may know that it is good to agree the beginning and the end, Jesus Himself says: I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end (Apoc. I, 8).

Therefore, since our mind is always with him, let it never depart from his temple, from his word. Let it always be in the reading of the Scriptures, in meditations, in prayers, so that his word, who he is, may always work in us, and so that every day as we go to the Church, or as we engage in domestic prayers, we may begin with him and end in him. Therefore, may the whole day of our life and the course of the day take its beginning from him and end in him. For just as it is necessary to believe and be initiated to God from the beginning of life, so perseverance is necessary until the end. And diligence of the best mind is required, so that it may not do anything irrational contrary to the word of God, which would bring about sadness. It should always be conscious of its good actions and keep the joy of a good conscience. For that which is good is without fear and without sadness, full of security and grace. For the possession of the just is pleasing to God, but there is no degree for the foolish. Therefore Isaiah, with good approaching, says: Pain, and sadness, and groaning will flee away (Isa. XXXV, 10). Also, John in the Apocalypse says: And he, God himself, will be with them and will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore (Apoc. XXI, 3 and 4). For in the resurrection of the righteous, there will be eternal joy and grace, when that good begins to exist with his saints, when they rest in the bosom of Abraham, placed in his tabernacle, which is fixed between the house and the word of God and grace: signifying that the faithful act with innocence toward their author, who they do not have reason to regret having been in this world.

Therefore, simple facts explain the foundations of Abraham's great institutions. He is rightly wealthy, who also enriches the discussions of philosophers, who would shape their own precepts about his actions.

24. The Scripture had already expressed his wealth: it remained to know whether Lot, his grandson and as much a part of his succession, was also wealthy. But the Scripture asserts that he was only rich in livestock. In fact, it says: 'Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds, etc.' (Gen. 13:5). He did not have silver, for he was not yet righteous. For silver is the tongue of the righteous. He did not have gold, which he who saw the back parts of Christ had, of whom it is written: 'And his back parts were like gold' (Ps. 68:14). Abraham saw him, as the Lord testified, saying: Abraham saw my day, and he rejoiced (John 8:56). And therefore he

deserved and possessed the appearance of gold.

Chapter VI.

The meaning of the text is: And Lot, who was walking with Abram, likewise: the land did not hold them. About the shepherds, and the fight that broke out between them, which Abraham tries to control. When Lot failed to retain them, he dismisses him with goodwill. About Lot's lack of skill and insolence in choosing; and about the sins of the Sodomites.

25. Now that should by no means be passed over, which seems to have even moved the learned; by which reason it is written thus: 'And Lot, who walked with Abram' (Gen. XIII, 5); as if there were another Lot who did not walk with him, according to what we have heard. And many think that the question is not resolved. Therefore, in order to satisfy them and not depart from the rule of Scripture, we say one person, two things, that in one and the same man two things are signified: he is one in number, but his duty is twofold. For Lot is said to decline, as the Latin interpretation has it. But everyone declines either good or evil. Therefore, when Lot declined evil, that is, error, disgrace, crime, he was joined to his uncle; when he declined good, that is, justice, innocence, holiness, religiosity, he associated with disgrace. Therefore, it is well said: And Lot who walked with Abram; because he had not yet chosen Sodom, he did not dwell with the authors of wickedness. Afterwards, he began to dwell in Sodom. And so, as if changed from himself, he is received as another person; not only by the righteous man, but even by himself, turning away.

26. Finally, because he had begun to deviate from his uncle in his studies, the land could not contain them. For no amount of space is sufficient for those who are in conflict; even narrow spaces abound for those who are at peace. And because I said from the beginning (above, in chapter 1 of this book) that the mind is formed here, which was imperfect from the beginning but progresses through increments and certain stages, he says: The land could not contain them. That is, one soul could not naturally contain conflicting movements. However, it can happen that sometimes not everything is perfect in one and the same person; nevertheless, one can cover up some of his own faults or temper his own movements: either if there are more good things that outweigh fewer faults, or if one can redirect sudden turmoil with more mature advice. But if on both sides there are more conflicting and opposing things, the dwelling of discordant virtues and passions in one soul must necessarily dissolve. Therefore, he figuratively called the soul 'earth' according to the philosophers. For Solomon also says: Just like an imprudent farmer (Prov. XXIV); if the field is fruitful with an abundance of crops, it can hide the thorns. But if the thorns gather with the ear of grain, there is no supply for cutting.

27. Therefore, let us consider who these shepherds are (Gen. XIII, 7), and what kind of animals they have, and what quarrel between the shepherds of Abraham and the shepherds of Lot we should examine. Shepherds are the masters of herds, or diligent and sober, not allowing the crops of the fields to be trampled underfoot and burned by thorns: or negligent and lax, who do not call back their flock, so that it may graze on grassy and not fruitful land, but allow it to roam freely among various crops. Therefore, the careful watchfulness of these shepherds is necessary, lest it be attributed to the diligent, that which is overturned by the carelessness of the negligent. But because speech is not about visible things, therefore let us first consider who the shepherds of these flocks are. We can define these shepherds. Shepherds, he says, of livestock (Gen. XIII, 7). But we have learned that livestock signifies the irrational senses of the body. Therefore, who are

the shepherds of the senses, if not teachers, and as it were, guides of the flocks, their leaders, or the monitors of a certain discourse, or the thoughts of our mind? Those who are knowledgeable and steadfast in the pastoral discipline do not allow the flock of senses to wander further and adhere to useless or harmful pastures, but they call them back with a careful guide, and they remove the reins of reason and resist those who resist. But wicked teachers, either through useless arguments, allow them to be carried away by their own impetuosity, and to rush into the precipice and danger, and trample on cultivated fields, and graze on fruitful ones; so that if there are any such fruits of virtues in the same soul, they too may be scattered. Hence, there is a discord in our thoughts. When the flesh rebels against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, there is a great battle, as the Apostle himself, a chosen vessel of the Lord, says: I see the law of my flesh rebelling against the law of my mind, and taking me captive in the law of sin, which is in my members (Rom. VII, 23). He himself was unable to quell this battle, and therefore he turned to Christ, saying: Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death (Ibid., 24)? This is so that I don't cling to the pleasures of the flesh. Therefore, who is it that will free me from these chains and lead me to God, and turn my senses more towards the sobriety of the soul than towards the intoxication of the body? But because among humans he could hardly find a guide, he turned to God: 'Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!' (Ibid., 25). If a stronger man did not rely on his own strength to escape the body of death, but sought help from Christ, what should we weaker ones do? Abraham knew this battle to be serious, and therefore he thought caution should be exercised at the beginning. For it is the characteristic of a wise person to seek peace, and of a foolish person to engage in friendly quarrels.

28. He said, 'Let there be no strife between me and you, and between my shepherds and your shepherds; for we are brothers.' (Gen. XIII, 8). We read that Abraham was Lot's uncle, and Lot was his nephew; how then does he call him brother? But note that he employs the causes of concord. Hence, he prefaces, 'We are brothers.' Indeed, all men are born of one nature, within the same womb, and are brought forth and poured out from one uterus. Whereby, by right, we are connected as brothers of a certain kinship, as if born from one father and one mother, like uterine brothers. And because we are the reasonable offspring of nature, we ought to love one another as uterine brothers with mutual affection, not to attack and persecute one another. Moreover, it is much truer to refer to one soul, which has reasonable relatives, as we have said above (Chapter I of this book), than to irrational senses; but what is reasonable has the bond of virtues. Where vices and virtues of a person are united by a certain brotherly necessity, because the former are of the flesh and the latter of the rational soul. However, flesh and soul are joined together as if by a certain law of marriage, from which man is composed. Therefore, man ought to reconcile his parts and bring them into peace. But because there was no one so great who could overcome the flesh, our peace came, who made both one, and by breaking down the middle wall of partition, abolished enmities in his flesh, nullifying the law of commandments with its edicts, so as to create in himself one new man, making peace, reconciling both in one body to God through the cross, putting to death enmities in himself (Ephesians 2:14 et seq.). Therefore, the Apostle correctly called himself an unhappy man (Rom. VII, 24) , who endured such a great war within himself that he could not extinguish it. Finally, when Solomon spoke of one aspect of passions, that is, anger, he said: Better, he says, is a wise man than a strong man: but he who contains anger is better than one who captures a city (Prov. XVI, 32) . Therefore, blessed is he who has escaped this war, not as a stranger and foreigner, but as a citizen of the saints and a member of the household of God, whom

earthly things do not shake while he is placed here on earth.

29. Abraham wanted to maintain this disposition. And so, as a peaceful man, he first said: Let there be no quarrel between me and you. He then said: And between my shepherds and your shepherds. He made a third proposition: Behold, he said, all the land is before you, that is, if we cannot agree, I yield it all, take the whole, if there is any disagreement about place or possession. But if it does not fit in with your customs, depart from me. How many things did he say beforehand so that he would not be forced to depart? But this is also a virtue and discipline. For a man who had advanced in the discipline of philosophy before us said that these four things belong to a good man: First, he should make friends with everyone if possible; second, if he cannot make friends, he should at least not make enemies; third, if he cannot even do that, he should withdraw according to his judgment; fourth, if someone pursues him as he retreats, he should defend himself as best he can. But we recognize those three things in Abraham not only in his words, but also in his actions. But the fourth case is not like this, when it even preserved the affection of the parent who was giving way; so that it not only did not pursue him, but even snatched and set free the captive. Finally, the Apostle, while teaching those three things, solves the fourth, which Philosophy had added. For he says, when he wanted to instruct the peaceful people of God: If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with all men (Rom. XII, 18); and then if this is not possible, certainly not disputes or hostilities. And so he added: Not avenging yourselves, dearest (Ibid., 19), in which also that third thing is excluded, that we should by no means desire to avenge ourselves: But give place to wrath. You have a fourth, to depart more, and to commit revenge to God, which you exact for yourself; although he wanted this said more according to the law. For according to the Gospel you have above: Bless those who persecute you (Matt. 5:44). We have these precepts to Timothy in the second letter: For this reason, he says, I admonish you, that you stir up the grace of God which is in you by the imposition of my hands. For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sobriety (2 Timothy 1:6-7). And again: But you, dear son, take strength in grace (2 Timothy 2:1). Therefore, you have the first precept of wisdom, that you may show grace towards all. And if you cannot acquire all with your precepts, be careful not to provoke anyone with words, that is, not to make enemies. Hence it says below: I remind you of these things, testifying before God, not to strive with words, which is no utility, except to the subversion of the hearers (ibid., 14). But the servant of the Lord must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone. After a few well-placed remarks, he presented an argument that Philosophy did not see: 'With gentleness,' he said, 'correcting those who oppose, lest God grant them repentance to know the truth' (Ibid., 25). To the third point, that we should separate from those with whom we cannot agree, you have the following added: when he instructed us to speak what is fitting for sound doctrine, then to avoid disputes about the law, that is, first to sow grace, then to turn away from arguments. The third point is that after one warning, he should avoid a heretic; for he is condemned himself, having sinned (Titus 3:10-11). How cunningly he escapes our condemnation with his own judgment, as if unworthy of the retribution that will be brought upon him! But David clearly removes the desire for revenge by saying: If I have rendered evil to those who have rendered evil to me

Therefore, the mind of a wise man strives to correct either the lapses or the irrational movements of the same soul and to unite them to himself. For it is possible that those things which sometimes displease may be amended with grace. If the outflow of wealth is restrained, it has generosity

without expense. Sometimes modesty is less strict; if it is confirmed, it has both the grace of modesty and the constancy of purpose. If anger is tempered, it puts aside the horror of indignation and assumes the praise of strength. But if it cannot be corrected, let not intemperance worsen it. He detects the fire of lust, which he restrains by marriage, let alone seeking continence, for unchastity creeps in. And therefore the master of the good things says, 'I say, he says, it is good for them if they remain thus, as I do.' But if they cannot be continent, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn.' (I Cor. VII, 8) There are some women who are left unmarried prematurely by their husbands' death, and they cannot restrain themselves. He wants, she says, young women to marry, to bear children, to be mothers of families, to give no occasion to the adversary (I Tim. V, 14). But if any pleasures delight them, and they want to indulge in luxury in Christ, seeking the glory of widowhood but not preserving virginity, he judges that they should be avoided, as it is written: Avoid young widows (Ibid., 11).

Therefore, Abraham rightly and with good permission wanted to dismiss his nephew, whom he could not keep from straying away. In the same way, a good mind separates and sets itself apart from a steep and downward slide into irrationality. 'If you go to the left,' he said, 'I will go to the right; or if you go to the right, I will go to the left' (Genesis 13:9). That is, what is on your right is on my left, and what is on your left is on my right. For in the right hand of the foolish man are those things which pertain to the body: he prefers and sets them in a better place, and he even sets riches and honors before them. But indeed, he holds the grace of obtaining immortality in his left hand, which is on the left side for the wise man. For the length of life is in his right hand. And the foolish man throws all the virtues of the soul into the left side, but the wise man places them on the right side for himself; and those things which pertain to the body, he places on the left side.

33. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the region of Jordan. The further away from the truth, the more boasting there is. Finally, just as Abraham offered his choice more humbly, so Lot arrogantly usurped his choice. Virtue humbles itself, but wickedness exalts itself. He should have entrusted himself to the wiser, in order to be safer. Finally, he did not know how to choose. For at first he lifted up his eyes and beheld the region, that is, that thing which was not first in order, but third, that is, last. First are the goods of the soul: second, those of the body, that is, health, virtue, beauty, grace of form: third are the things that happen, that is, wealth, power, country, friends, glory. Therefore, the region is placed in the third place; it is indeed the property of dwelling.

34. Therefore, He saw the region that was irrigated before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the Garden of God and the land of Egypt, as far as Zoi-pa. (Ibid.) If you do not pay careful attention to this, can you not say that he made a mistake when he chose the vicinity of the Jordan and those regions that were irrigated, like the Garden of God? Not according to the literal interpretation. But when the descent into the Jordan is mentioned, it means descending from the fellowship of virtue, and choosing appearance over truth. The beauty of the perfect blessedness is like a paradise, or the foundation of a fruitful soul, in which are the plants of wisdom, justice, and other virtues. However, the earth of Egypt signifies physical matter, whose plants are the senses and bodily passions. Just as the greenery of virtue have Christ as their source and the spiritual abundance of grace by which they flourish, so too intemperance is a certain source of bodily passions, by which excesses are nourished. But Scripture says beautifully (Gen. XIII, 11): he chose for himself Lot, that is, a turning aside; because God has put before us good and evil, so that each one may choose what he wishes. Therefore, let us not choose what seems more

pleasant in appearance, but what prevails in truth; lest, when the better things are offered to us as a tribute, we raise our eyes diverted by the false charm of delight: but let us obscure the truth of nature, as if our gaze were diverted.

Moreover, the fact that the people in Sodom were cruel (Genesis 13) and sinners in the sight of the Lord, indicates a severe judgment, so that you may observe that God, being kind, is moved by the severity of sins to avenge them. And it is not unreasonable that Abraham could not obtain forgiveness for the people of Sodom, because they were exceedingly wicked. There are many who are not only wicked but also crafty, who elude the scrutiny of men, and conduct themselves without an arbiter, or the righteous are deceived by false testimony. Yet the righteous person remains before God, even if condemned by humans; for God does not judge the outcome of trials, nor does He concern himself with the tangled webs of wickedness, but rather looks at the raw nature of the matter. In the examination of men, false opinions often obscure the power of truth. Susanna, chaste in heart, remained before God, even when condemned of adultery; for God did not examine the faith through the assertions of false witnesses, but rather questioned the intimate conscience of the mind.

Chapter VII.

From the words of the Lord to Abraham, philosophers have derived their doctrine: That all things are of wisdom, and have been drawn from it, and that in it is contained the possession which was promised to Abraham by divine providence. The five kings, namely the senses of the body, are held captive by the four, that is, by bodily allurements. But the same patriarch, fighting in the name of Christ, recalls the cavalry of the people of Sodom, in order to control vices and errors.

37. The place follows where we are clearly taught how much the mind is greatly improved by the removal of the superfluous part of an irrational number, and how much faults, when connected with faults, bring about evil. For Scripture does not state in vain: And God said to Abraham, after Lot had departed from him: Look with your eyes and see from the place where you are now, towards Africa, and the North, and the East, and the sea; because I will give you all the land that you see, to you and to your descendants forever (Gen. XIII, 14 and 15). Hence, the Stoic philosophers drew their doctrine as if from a source, saying that all things belong to the wise (Diogenes Laertius, Book VII, Life of Zeno). For the East and the West, the North and the South are parts of the universe. The whole world is enclosed in them. When God promised Abraham that He would give him these things, what else does He declare but that He will provide everything to the wise and faithful, leaving nothing lacking? Thus, Solomon also says in Proverbs: the whole world of riches belongs to the faithful (Prov. XVII, 6). How much greater is Solomon than Zeno, the master and founder of the Stoic sect! How much greater than Plato, the father of philosophy, or Pythagoras, the inventor of his name! But who is faithful, if not wise? For the fool is like the moon, always changing, but the wise person remains steadfast in their faith. But perhaps you will say: How is the whole world the possession of a wise person? Because nature itself gives them the lot of everything, even if they themselves possess nothing. Wisdom is indeed the mistress and possessor of all things, which considers the gifts of nature to be its own; because they are given for the use of humans, and it needs nothing, even if the necessities of life are lacking. For just as a musician has musical instruments, or a doctor has medicines, or a sailor has the necessary equipment for a ship, even if they may not have them at all times; they still have them in a way that

they can use them, even if the need for their use does not arise at the moment. How much more does a wise person consider everything that is of nature to be their own, who lives according to nature! For he does not lose his right who remembers that he was made in the image of God and that it was said to man by the Lord God, 'Increase and multiply, and fill the Earth, and have dominion over it, and rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the sky, and all the living things that move on the Earth' (Gen. I, 28). And he knows that wisdom is the mother of all things, and she possesses the world. Finally, Solomon, who sought wisdom and received it from our Lord God, said, 'He has given me true knowledge of the things that exist, so that I may know the arrangement of the Earth, the power of the elements, the beginning and end and middle of all things, the divisions of time, the course of the years, the arrangements of the stars, the natures of animals and the tempers of beasts, the force of the winds, the thoughts of men, the differences of plants, the powers of roots, and whatever is hidden and unexpected' (Sap. VII. 17 et seq). But these things are only available to the perfect.

39. Finally, as long as Lot clung to him, that is, a deviation in morals, he did not receive these fortunes. But when he had completely freed himself from this uncertain and winding deviation, he began to follow the straight paths of virtue with steady steps of his soul, and he was sent as the possessor into all the land, and it was said to him: Arise, and walk through the land in its length and width; for I will give it to you, and to your descendants forever (Gen. XIII, 17). Therefore, whoever has earned wisdom and is not the son of a slave, not a servant of sin, not subject to the succession of the flesh; but free, that is, not a servant but a ruler, of good lineage, of good nature, will acquire the inheritance of perfect virtue. Therefore, it is said to Abraham: Arise. It does not signify a bodily resurrection, but a spiritual one, that is, Arise, you who sleep (Ephesians 5:14), rise from earthly things, rise from physical things, leave behind earthly things, behold heaven; and rise from the dead, that is, from vain opinions and Chaldean disquisitions. Behold the world, behold also him who can give the whole world. 'I will give you the world in possession,' he says, 'whom you believed to be God before.'

40. Walk the earth in its length and breadth. Certainly within a moment this earth, enclosed by the Persian empire, could not be walked from the shores of India to the columns of Hercules, as they say, or to the farthest borders of Britain. And one could seem almost irreverent, who did not obey the celestial oracle, if he had received the command to travel through this land: but since his devotion has been proven; because he had only transferred his tent to the oak of Mamre (Genesis, 18), we can certainly understand the perfect power of the land, which would give good fruits and fruitful inventions, the first harvest of thoughts and the harvest of merits, and would fill the inner house with wheat, wine, and oil, the land of resurrection which He promised to our fathers, flowing with milk and honey (Exodus, 3), the sweetness of life, the grace of joy, the splendor of glory, of which the firstborn from the dead, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became the heir. And therefore he did not say 'seeds' but 'seed' (Gal. III, 16), in order to declare him who would be the first to acquire this inheritance for the human race.

We have known the progress of a good mind, which, rising up from the vice of slippery deviation, immediately sought the reward of wisdom, the inheritance of justice. However, the harm that vices attached to levity can cause is taught by the series of following readings. For those four kings who triumphed over the five kings and brought the entire cavalry of the people of Sodom, also took Lot, the son of Abraham's brother, and departed. The five kings (Gen. XIV, 1 et seq.) are the five

senses of our body: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. The four kings are bodily and worldly allurements; for both the flesh of man and the world consist of four elements. Kings are rightly called so because they have dominion over their subjects and possess a great kingdom. Hence, the Apostle says: 'Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body' (Rom. VI, 12). Our senses easily give way to bodily pleasures and worldly desires, and are captivated by their power. But these bodily pleasures and allurements of this world do not conquer unless the mind is spiritual, adhering to God and separating itself completely from earthly things. Every deflection is captured by these. Hence, John says: Woe to the inhabitants of the earth. (Apoc. VIII, 13). Of course, it does not include all people who then complete the course of this life (for there are also those on earth whose conversation is in heaven), but rather those whom the desires of earthly conversation and the grace of this age have overcome. Therefore, we are not inhabitants, but sojourners of this earth. For a sojourner carries the hope of a temporary inn, but an inhabitant seems to place all hope and use of his substance there, where he thinks he should dwell. Therefore, whoever is a dweller of the earth, is an inhabitant of heaven; but whoever is an inhabitant of the earth, is a possessor of death.

Abram counted three hundred and eighteen of his household servants, and he struck them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is to the right of Damascus (Gen. XIV, 14 and 15). And the number is significant. For in it is life, if we believe in suffering in the name of the Lord Jesus. For this is the interpretation of the name of Hobah, which we said is life (Book I of Abraham, c. 2). It is said to be beautiful to the right of Damascus. For indeed Agni to the right, kids to the left. The trained mind knows whom to employ for accomplishing the battle, with what weapons to equip them, with what banners to lead. It does not prefer the images of eagles, nor of dragons: but it advances under the cross of Christ, and in the name of Jesus, to the battle, strong in this sign, faithful in this banner. Therefore, the trained mind, which has received the true wisdom of a just man, deserves praise. But justice is also skillful in reproof, and by accusing, it calls back sinners, and restrains the impulses of passions.

Therefore Scripture says that it recalled all the cavalry of the Sodomites, that is, it held the reins, imposed the bridle of reason, recalled the fault, and overthrew the error. For a horse does not know how to stand still, it is swift to attack, raising its neck, neighing with lust. What is so similar to sin? For at first the fault boils with impetuosity and precludes every thought of the right, and with hasty movement it springs forth, so that reason finds it difficult to recall it. He plunges headlong and throws off his yoke of correction, refusing with a swollen neck to bear his burden. There is a particular form of lust that changes the voice of a man, corrupts the words of a lover, and reveals itself in its own words. Finally, the Lord God says to Judah through Jeremiah: Now your disgrace, your adultery, your neighing, and the alienation of your fornication will be seen upon the hills (Jeremiah 13:25-26). The righteous one called back the cavalry, he also converted the declining customs and called them to himself, so that they would become imitators of him, who had wandered off; because our senses return to the discipline of the mind.

44. It also received substance. It certainly does not signify inheritance, but the vital substance of the soul, in which there is precious wealth, not straw, not hay; in which there is the splendor of faithful conversation, in which our census of hope subsists. For this is our true substance, which is rich in the abundance of wisdom, this is the immortal substance: the daily use of the body or of accidents, rather than lasting use. Hence, some rightly do not consider inheritance to be

substance. For we do not depend on it, since even for those who lack money, substance of life does not fail.

Chapter VIII.

Our mind learns in Melchizedek devotion towards the worship of God, in the king of Sodom temptation even after it has been conquered, still to be feared, in Abraham the avoidance of the contamination of intemperance. Therefore, why is such a great reward promised to him only after the victory; and why does he take care of posterity? Finally, to the same Abraham, defended from the superstitions of divination, a manifold interpretation is added to the sacrifice offered by him.

45. In the moral treatise on Melchizedek, we have fully discussed (Book I on Abraham, ch. 3) the mystery which is by no means overlooked or neglected. In this place, however, it is sufficient to mention only this: that a mind full of prudence and justice is more devoted to the worship of God, and according to higher prudence, it offers tithes of the fruits produced by the earth, so that it may dedicate the perfection of all its senses and works to God, and not claim anything for itself, which it cannot govern unless it is supported by divine favor. Finally, when he thinks he has conquered himself, he is tested and attacked. This lesson expresses and teaches that our body should always act as a guard against passions. For what does it say: The king of Sodom went out to meet Abram and said: Give me the people, but you can keep the horses (Genesis 14:21); unless it is because after victories over these luxuries, a certain force of lustful desire can sneak into the reasonable mind, to infuse irrational passions into it?

46. However, it is the mark of a perfect mind not to take anything from earthly or bodily pleasures, to abstain from earthly things. Therefore, Abraham says: I will not take anything from all that is yours (Gen., 23). It is as if he avoids the contagion of intemperance, as if he shuns the defilement of bodily senses, rejects the pleasures of the world, seeking what is above the world, that is, stretching out his hands towards the Lord. The active hand is the virtue of the soul. He extends this hand not towards the fruit of a terrestrial tree, but towards the Lord, who created, he says, the heaven and the earth (Gen.), that is, the intelligible and visible substance. For intelligible substance is the heavens: visible or sensible substance is the earth. Therefore, it signifies that the power of the soul extends to higher things; so that from that intelligible substance it may assume the elevation of theoretical life, looking not at those things which are seen, but at those which are not seen, that is, not earthly, not corporeal, not present, but incorporeal, eternal, celestial: from this visible substance it may also take up the grace of operative and civic disciplines.

47. The oracle of the Lord spoke to him, saying: Do not fear, Abram, I will protect you, your reward will be very great (Gen. XV, 1). I wonder why after the outcome of the war? The place of receiving the reward was now. For it would make it less admirable if he had followed the promise of God and attacked the enemy. He had proceeded to triumph with confidence in victory, more invited than ready for glory, or prepared to avenge the pain of piety. The purpose of a devout mind does not seek reward, but holds the consciousness of a good deed and the intention of a just work as the reward. Narrow minds are invited by promises, they are lifted up by hoped-for rewards: a good mind that, without the heavenly contract of a reply, undertakes the contest acquires for itself the double fruit of praise; so that it may place both the grace of the most confident bravery and the fullest devotion. This is fitting to be esteemed of holy Abraham; because he considered that divine favor should not be despised by the just in their sorrows, and he struck down the enemy with

contempt in the face of danger, because he thought it glorious to undergo it for the purpose of avenging piety. God's justice is also preached in this, that He gives a reward to pious souls not out of necessity of His promise, but out of the consideration of His own fairness, judging it worthy that those who serve without any earthly compensation should have their reward deposited in His goodness, to which they have deemed their souls worthy of dedication. At the same time, because a reward is prepared either by the use of military victories themselves or for the sake of human favor; but the reward for piety, frugality, purity, and other virtues, as if they were private, is paid by God. What is clear to humans, they reward themselves. But not everything is clear, some things are clear, some uncertain, and most hidden in the heart. Therefore, he also says: You have shown me the unclear and hidden things of the heart (Ps. 50:8), of which God is the observer and examiner. Therefore, God would not have promised a great reward to Abraham unless he had judged his soul as pure from all contamination of sins.

48. However, the care of a holy and prophetic mind for future generations is of greater value. For the offspring of wisdom and faith longs for inheritance. Therefore, it says: What will you give me? But I am departing without children (Gen. 15:2). He desired offspring for the Church, seeking a succession that would not be servile but free: not according to the flesh, but according to grace. Therefore, this divine response emerged, in which he was taught and heard: Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them. And he said, 'So shall your seed be.' And Abram believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness (Gen. XV, 6). What did he believe? It is this: not only the multitude of peoples who believe in Christ, but also the splendor of heavenly grace and the resurrection of immortal life to be bestowed upon the offspring of the Church. But what does it mean when it says, 'He brought him outside' (Ibid.)? It is as if the prophet is led outside, so that he may depart from the prison of the body and the narrowness of the flesh that covers it, and see the infusion of the Holy Spirit, and as it were, a certain descent. We must also go out from the narrow confines of our inn, cleanse the place of our soul from all pollution, cast off the filth of malevolence, if we wish to receive the spirit of wisdom; for wisdom will not enter into an evil soul. However, Abraham believed, not being enticed by gold or silver as a witness, but because he believed in his heart for righteousness. In this, his merit was proven, and in this, the reward was fulfilled.

49. Finally, immediately the Lord gave testimony to his faith, saying: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of the Chaldeans, to give you this land as your inheritance (Gen. XV, 7). And because Abraham had abandoned the practices of the Chaldeans, he now asks: How, he says, will I understand that I am his heir (Ibid., 8)? That is, I have already rejected the divinations of the magicians, teach me how I can know that I will become the heir of this land. Whoever seeks to know how, does not doubt that, with God as the guide, they can come to know themselves: but they desire to understand the method of acquiring this knowledge. For example, in the Gospel, when Mary heard from the angel that she would give birth as a virgin, she responded: How can this be since I do not know a man (Luke 1:34)? And she responded rightly, saying: When that which is according to nature is lacking, because it is not customary for what has not been joined to a man to give birth, I ask how I, as a virgin, can give birth contrary to the laws of nature? But the Lord God said to him: Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years, and a ram of three years, a turtle also, and a pigeon (Gen. 15:9). I would pass over this interpretation of the sacrifice, if I did not observe that there seems to be some scruple arising from the solemnity of

divination; because after the immolation the animals were divided, and the halves laid opposite to each other, and Abraham sat down between them. But if we consider the force of the preceding question and the response to be made, we shall be able to discern that the discipline of this sacrifice is in conformity with our hope and faith. For the calf is a beast of burden, dedicated to earthly labor. The goat is symbolized by the likeness of water through riddles, because it derives its name from the Greek αἴξ, meaning to rush, because it moves with impetuosity. Thus, it runs like water. We can estimate the sound and flow of rivers or the violent waves of the sea. And the ram is compared to air, because this animal is found to be more useful to the human race than any other creature; for it provides us with clothing, just as the air supplies us with the vital substance of this spirit. And I believe that this order was made so that he would first say: Take for me a calf and a goat, and in the third place he would say a ram; because those first ones, that is, the calf and the goat, are compared to the material elements of the earth and the sea, and because they are said to be feminine: but indeed the ram is a certain male animal, with a strong nature, and with violent horns. Similarly, the vital spirit of this air is like a male author and cause of beings that are born, moving the genitals of the earth, and, as it were, mixing itself like a certain copulation. Therefore, something else is mystically represented by these three types of living beings: one to the earth, another to the sea, and another to the vital air. This is a natural tradition: but the moral also agrees and assists. For in all men there is flesh, sensation, and speech. Our flesh is a calf: it labors, in order to sow; it labors, in order to gather; it labors, in order to give birth; it is exhausted by countless labors. Hence the Greeks called the calf 'δῆμῶν' from being tamed itself; because it is subjected to injuries. The labor of male oxen consists in plowing and serving under the yoke, it represents the births of females with a large udder. Our flesh is also subject to the necessities of this life, shaken by frequent pains, and bent senescent by the travail of many afflictions. Now who is ignorant of the fact that the strength of the soul is more vehement, to which, as if married, bodily substance clings in the course of this life? But our senses, like the leaps of a goat, leap out, and feed on more precipitous things, by their own impetus exciting the disturbances of the soul and shaking it. I am always ready for any occasion, whether it be the encounter with female beauty or the scent of some sweetness. They are moved quickly both by hearing and by action, which even bend the constancy of souls and, as it were, alienate it from its nature. Hence, many consider it to be called ἡφύμῃ, because ἡφύμῃ is called an impulse; because it arises from a certain impulse of the senses, causing our bending and alienation. However, the female sex has a certain appearance, so much so that our senses are called αἰσθητικαί in Greek, which is a feminine word. Animals quickly empty themselves of their desires, once they have produced their offspring and satisfied their pleasures, and then, when their desires are aroused again, they bring forth new impulses.

52. However, in the ram there is a similarity to our word and speech, that it is powerful, just as our speech is effective in action, and for the sake of our adornment and covering. The ram, by the use of clothing, leads a flock in a certain order, just as a certain order of life and our use is explained by the word. But I believe that we should understand that word more, which is the Word of God, with whom this ram seems to have a significant connection. The Word truly clothed us with the covering of His fleece and led us into the house of eternal salvation. He offered Himself to be sacrificed for us, who was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and like a ram before the shearer, He did not open His mouth (Isaiah 53:7). From this, we have a certain order of substance and sacred redemption, because through Him we were created and redeemed. Therefore, there are two

causes through the Word: the natural cause by which He created, and the moral cause by which He redeemed. Philosophy also establishes two aspects of itself in word, natural and moral. For both are rational portions. The natural aspect according to the creation of the world, which it assigns to word: the moral aspect according to justice and equality of living, whose life and reason come from word.

53. For this reason, when forty days had been completed after the birth of Mary the Virgin, they brought our Lord Jesus to Jerusalem to offer him to the Lord according to the law, and to give a sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons (Luke 2:22 and following); because in the dove there is spiritual grace, in the turtledove the nature of an incorruptible generation, or the chastity of an immaculate body. Therefore, rightly after the ram, the turtledove and the dove are commanded to be taken for the sacrifice, so that you may understand by the word the incorruptible chastity and the spiritual grace. And by this very thing that the birds are placed, we can understand the flights of celestial merits. For there are birds of the sky that come and dwell in the branches of the tree that has sprung from the mustard seed, which is compared to the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 13:32). And Ezekiel says that the heavens were opened to him, and he saw among other things a wheel connected to the earth with four living creatures (Ezek. 1:15). And further: 'I heard,' he says, 'the sound of their wings, like the sound of many waters, and the voice of the Most High; and as they went, the sound of the word, like the sound of armies' (ibid., 24).

54. Hence some have derived the books of philosophy, because the sky itself is similar to a bird. In fact, Plato said that the sky is a flying chariot, based on the prophet's words: 'When the animals went, the wheels went with them; and when the animals lifted themselves from the earth, the wheels also lifted' (Ibid., 21). But the prophet did not say that the sky itself is a bird, but rather that there are birds in the sky. In fact, David also said: 'The heavens declare the glory of God' (Psalm XIX, 1), that is, the heavenly powers; just as when a beautiful creation is observed, the creator is praised. But the prophet describes the soul, whose movements are like four horses, the rational, the spirited, the desiring, the perceptive. These four animals are the human rational, the lion spirited, the calf desiring, and the eagle perceptive. Therefore reason is mentioned first, so that the rest may follow reason. Therefore when the human is moved on the right side, the lion, that is, reason, is moved on the right side. And when these animals are lifted up, the wheels are also lifted up. But life is like a wheel on earth, on which we live. If the movements of our souls are elevated, our life is also elevated. Therefore, it is added: For the spirit of life, he says, was in the wheels (Ezech. I, 20). Therefore, the soul is more like a chariot, which says in the Song of Songs: You have made me a chariot of Amminadab (Cant. VI, 11), that is, of our Lord. Therefore, the description of philosophy does not coincide with the prophetic tradition. Finally, the prophet says that he heard the sound of wings. These are the virtues which, with the greatest and twofold applause, produce the delightful charm of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice, the sweet melody of life. However, Plato borrowed certain sweet sounds from the celestial sphere generated by the revolution of the stars, following fame and pomp rather than truth. For although our own Origen, devoted to the ecclesiastical office, asserts that there is an indescribable harmony of motion in the planets and stars, producing that most pleasant celestial sound, many of his writings also testify to his great indulgence in the tradition of philosophers. I have written this in order to distinguish the interpretation of this sacrifice from both divination and the tradition of philosophy. Some may want to prove their teaching, but I, following the Apostle, prefer to be timid rather than

seem learned, who says: See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ (Colossians 2:8).

55. But when he says: Abraham divided the bodies and sat down beside them (Gen. XV, 11), I do not deny that these words may be auspicious; for this is what I hear: but while the reading implies a division of the bodies of quadrupeds, it does not imply a division of the bodies of birds, unless their inspection had also been made, so that an inspection might be made. What if this is in agreement with our faith? Therefore, let us seek from tradition what the meaning of the word is above and beyond auspiciousness. We have said above that in the calf we receive the earth, in the goat water, in the ram air, which is gathered by its very name, and which they command to be taken for sacrifice in threes; because the earth itself is divided into three species; either a continent, or an island, or a peninsula: water itself into three, because it is either the sea, or rivers, or lakes; for springs, or wells, are private matters unworthy of general and public division; wells are hidden, springs provide others with their source. The air also has divisions of seasons: spring, summer, autumn, winter; and this division is worldly. What does this achieve? So that we may know that God is the creator and ruler of all of these, who has given order to all things and has distinguished them by this division, so that you may infer that God can grant you the things you ask for with piety, and fulfill what he promises.

Therefore, Abraham, because he had responded to the Lord who promised him the inheritance of the land, 'How will I know that I will be the heir of this land?' (Gen. XV, 8), is instructed through those forms of sacrifices so that he may believe that God is above the world, who has divided all things that belong to the world with wise distinction. But those things that are divided will be dissolved afterwards, but those things that are not divided (for example, birds, that is, the turtledove and the pigeon, are not divided) will never be dissolved; for faith remains intact, which is raised aloft like a dove, surveying the heavens and flying around the sky with the spiritual strokes of its wings. Also, that same mind is compared to a turtle-dove, which is nourished by the use of that secret, seeking the intelligible and indivisible substance of the Trinity, fleeing from a certain crowd of creatures and not mixing itself with the bodily congregation, and separating itself from every stain of passions. This sacrifice is demanded of you. Whoever offers such sacrifices, recognizes himself as the heir of that blessed land: faith and chastity of the mind, grace of simplicity, affection of charity and peace. Just as the Lord also declared explicitly in the Gospel, saying: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall possess the land (Matthew 5:4).

57. Take another division. Our flesh itself, by the order of God, has all its members divided. There are two eyes, two ears, two cheeks, divided nostrils, a double order of teeth, breasts, shoulders, hands, sides, thighs, knees, shins, feet; are not all these things in pairs, so that they seem to perform all our duties relying on double supports? The soul also undergoes a division of its parts. For the discerning, that is, the higher parts, like certain opposing eyes, are both rational and irrational. The rational part of the soul is divided into mind and speech. The sensitive part of the soul pertains to hearing and sight, through which the grace of this life is enhanced. For the sense of smell and taste seem to offer necessary support to the functions of life. The nostrils, through their constant inhalation, nourish the vital essence by receiving the breath, while at the same time providing sustenance to the substance of man through the consumption of food. The sense of taste, on the other hand, is generated by drink and food. The fifth sense, that is, touch, is

seemingly mixed with the other four senses. Smell and taste are certain foods that nourish the body, on which the army of this flesh subsists. Sight and hearing, on the other hand, support the mind. These are the divisions that are divided according to our flesh and soul from the highest operator.

58. Hence we must gather that even this world is, as it were, spread out through certain twin members, and distributed like representatives: the earth into mountains and into fields; just as some parts of our body are more elevated, others flatter. The shoulder blades and the upper parts of the feet or hands are prominent: whereas the sides and the lower parts of the neck are like worn and hollowness valleys. This can also be understood about the palm of the hand. For who would doubt that while the heel of the foot protrudes, the middle part is curved? Water in the salty sea, sweet in the river, or in the springs. The air is cold in winter, temperate in the months of spring, and hot in summer. Therefore, the operator divided these things. However, our mind, which is now carried by the oars of different virtues and its own strength, flies above the sky, not divided; because it adheres to the Trinity that divides everything, to the one that is indivisible. Hence, the philosophers assert that the substance of the higher world, which they call ether, does not consist of a mixture of the other elements: but they affirm that it is splendid and shines with much light, which does not receive anything dirty from the earth, anything wet from the water, anything cloudy from the air, anything glowing from the fire itself. They assert that it is of a certain fifth essence and that the mind of this world is swifter and purer than the other parts. But others are composed and mixed together. However, we believe that nothing is immune or foreign to material composition, except for the sole substance of the venerable Trinity, which is truly pure and simple of an unmixed nature: although some may think that the light from that fifth ουσία is brighter, of which David said that God is surrounded by light as a garment (Psalm 104:2). And the Apostle wrote about the Almighty God himself, that He alone possesses immortality, and dwells in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:16). But by what reasoning he has said that the birds descended upon the divided bodies of a calf, a goat, and a ram (Gen. XV, 11), I do not easily find, unless it be that all earthly, maritime, and even aerial things are full of traps and disturbances. For those birds seem to have descended upon the bodies for the sake of food. Naturally, the more violent and powerful ones attack the weaker ones, and they press down upon them as if they were dead bodies, frequently rushing upon them unexpectedly, or, which I believe to be truer, because the prince of this world and the birds of the sky, with the evil spirits which are in the heavens, incessantly agitate and tear apart with their rough teeth those who are divided by worldly anxieties and cares, as if they were corpses. For it is said about these things: 'Let the dead bury their own dead' (Luke 9:60); because they belong to the kingdom of the devil, who is divided against himself. But those who belong to the kingdom of God, to whom Jesus says, 'The kingdom of God is within you' (Luke 17:21), they are not divided, because they adhere to God; for he who is joined to a harlot is one body: 'For two,' he says, 'shall be in one flesh.' But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit (1 Corinthians 6:16-17). So these are not dead bodies, for the birds of the sky do not eat them, but they are spirits; for God makes His angels spirits. Moreover, they did not descend upon the dove and the turtle dove, because those birds were not divided. For the righteous are not divided, as it is said, 'Be simple as doves' (Matt. X, 16). Therefore, David says, 'Even the sparrow has found a home for herself, and the turtle dove a nest for herself where she may lay her young' (Ps. LXXXIII, 4). Abraham was observing these things, he was contemplating them with deep and spiritual insight.

Therefore it is written: Abram sat down with them (Gen. XV, 12), not as if he were an aruspex, but as if he were an interpreter of heavenly revelation, exploring the signs of divine operation. For the mind, directed towards the grace of Christ, saw that this world was full of iniquity, which flew like a bird from the highest heaven and oppressed the weak of the earth; however, it also saw that chastity, faith, and sincerity were not subject to any passions. But avarice and the anxieties of the world, with which those who enjoy the pleasures of wealth are suffocated, were torn apart and divided. And so riches are called the cares and thoughts of this world (Matt. XIII, 22); which divide the mind and tear it apart, and drag it in different directions, and do not allow it to remain uncorrupted and whole. Therefore, a man of peaceful mind sat and considered how close he could come to preventing those evils that come upon men; for the mind of a wise and just man strives to heal human circumstances, and to prevent and cut off the travail of our souls.

Chapter IX.

Why the excess and fear fell upon Abraham; or what the oracle about his descendants' journey and servitude in Egypt, about his own death, and about the liberation of his descendants signifies? Finally, to what does the vision of the flame and the furnace pertain?

61. Finally, the following things show with what spiritual and prophetic affection Abraham did this. For he fell into a trance at the setting of the sun; and behold, a great and dark terror came upon him. Exodus usually happens to prophets, as you have the Prophet saying: I said in my trance, every man is a liar. For my prophet surpasses certain limits of human prudence when he is filled with God. And before it empties itself of the thoughts and debates of this world, so that it may present itself pure and emptied to the coming spiritual grace, the Holy Spirit comes upon it with great force, so that the mind of man is suddenly disturbed. Finally, the Angel came to Mary, and he came with diligence and grace; and yet Mary was moved at his coming. Therefore, the Angel said to her: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God: and behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bear a son (Luke 1:30-31). Therefore we know that when the grace of God comes upon the prophetic mind, it suddenly rushes in and we read that the Holy Spirit has descended upon and overshadowed the prophets, because it suffers an excess and is troubled, and fears, and is cast into some darkness of ignorance and imprudence. Just as we read in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 9:4) that a light from heaven shone around Saul and he fell down and was troubled in his mind with horror, and he heard a voice from heaven saying: 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' For he ceases to see worldly things who begins to hear divine things. Hence, you should not wonder at the fear of Abraham and the darkness, as if they happened to him beyond his power or merit, when you consider that they are in accordance with the custom of the prophets, who are joined, so that they may know the future.

62. But immediately you have this said to him: Knowing, you shall know that your seed will be a stranger in a land not its own, and they will oppress them and harm them, and they will humble them for four hundred years (Gen. XV, 13). Accordingly, a dark and great horror has been made; because great oracles were being carried, when a command was being given concerning the people of the ages. How could the human mind so easily grasp this, especially one that was being admonished to journey in this foreign land? For it was not so much the future that was declared as what was prescribed for us to do: 'Your seed shall be a stranger,' he says, 'either because all men should be strangers in this land, for Abraham is indeed the father of all; or because the true seed

of Abraham will wander in this world. For that is the true seed of which it is said: 'In Isaac shall your seed be' (Gen. XXI, 12).' Lastly, he who acknowledged himself as the heir of Abraham said: 'I am a stranger and a pilgrim in this land, like all my fathers' (Ps. XXXVIII, 13).' For whoever has been a foreigner here, is a citizen in heaven; but whoever in this land has thought that his entire substance of soul must be established and has exulted in acquiring the inheritance of this land, will be excluded from the kingdom of God. Therefore, the Apostle says to faithful men and citizens of that Jerusalem which is in heaven, and to the sons of the Church: So now you are not strangers and foreigners, but you are citizens of the saints and members of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19). Therefore, this earth is not ours, from which the prince of this world can say, showing all the kingdoms of the world: I will give you this power if you fall down and worship me (Matt. IV, 8): all that they claim as their own and oppress the people of God; to harm His servants and to humiliate the saints of God. Finally, the Son of God Himself thought that He should not claim anything for Himself from this world, which is why He said: The prince of this world is coming, and he will find nothing in me (John XIV, 30). Therefore, various lords want to hold us in servitude; the devil incessantly attacks, his angels infest; passions and movements of the body, like domestic and internal enemies, disturb. There are battles outside, fears inside: battles outside, desires inside. For the substance of the internal body is foreign to the purity of the heart; and therefore it fights against or at least resists it. Therefore, the war is daily, and within the same camp, a serious battle, until God, in His mercy, judges the devil and his ministers, extinguishes passions, and subjects them to the diligent mind, seeks our souls from all offenses and the authors of our danger, who says: I will require the blood of your souls from the hands of all beasts (Gen. IX, 5). And John saw and said: 'Because death and hell have been thrown into the lake of fire' (Rev. 20:15).

Therefore the righteous will go forth, so that they leave nothing of their own in this land; lest their spoils remain with the inhabitants and possessors of this land. They will also depart from the land of Egypt in such a way that the vessels they took from the Egyptians, whether gold or silver, which they used temporarily, they will take with them and plunder the Egyptians. These vessels they have taken with the will of the Lord, and they take them with them, because they are children of the resurrection, of whom it is said: 'Not a hair of your head shall perish.' The Egyptians gave these vessels, which were taken from the afflicted land. And there are some golden, others silver, because every creature of God is good, and especially excellent in humans on earth, whom God honored by breathing the spirit of life into his face, and appointed him as the ruler of all living beings. These are the vessels of which the Apostle says: We have a treasure in earthen vessels (I Cor. IV, 7). This is the clothing of the Egyptians with which our soul is clothed, so that it may depart from here richer and be freed from what it was greatly laboring for here. For not only does every creature groan and travail, but we ourselves also, until the redemption of our body takes place. The Lord takes care of His own work; nature is prompt in most cases to reason and benevolence. For we do not suffer the trees, from which the first fruits break forth around us, to be cut down and destroyed in our later age, if the wind shakes them, or the sun burns them, or the substance fails to provide and supply the necessary strength against droughts. Rather, we await the examination by better judges. And therefore our Lord God, the rewarder of good will, also having the consideration of the first offspring and nature, allows all the inheritance of our soul to be gathered and reserved, to be tested by the time of future coming.

64. Therefore, he admonished of his duty, which he willed to be immortal, but if serious fault had not arisen, which caused humans to not live long, says to Abraham: But you shall go to your parents in peace, nurtured in good old age (Gen. XV, 15). It allows us to depart from this world, so that the soul's separation causes this body to dissolve into its own earth, and brings an end to sin: then through resurrection, it may be transformed by the grace of divine generosity. And so He says to Abraham: You shall go to your fathers. Some thought that the fathers were the elements from which our flesh is made while we live, and into which we are dissolved. But we who remember that Jerusalem is our mother, which is above, which is free, which is the mother of us all, as the Apostle says (Galatians IV, 26), assert that those are the fathers who preceded us in life by merit and order. There was Abel, a pious victim; there was the pious and holy Enoch; there was Noah; to them Abraham is promised as a passage. For the one who departs from this life and migrates to another, he lives the life of a wise and just man who was nurtured in peace. As for the fool, he is nourished in war and discord; but the just man lives a good life in old age. It is not said 'long' but 'good', for the just man ages well; however, no one of the unjust, even if he lives a longer life than lively stags, lives a good life. For to live long is common for both the wise and the foolish, but to live well is special to the wise man, whose old age is venerable and whose old age is a blameless life: not long-lasting, as he says, nor calculated by the number of years, nor by the gray hair on his head, but by his senses. He, therefore, ages well who has sensed well.

65. But in the fourth generation they shall return (Gen. XV, 16). This story seems to apply to the Jews who crossed over into Egypt and then left Egypt. For four hundred and thirty years they were subject to the Egyptians, but not all of them lived one hundred and thirty years, like Moses or Joshua; in order for the time of the fourth generation to be fulfilled. Therefore, let us seek something more mystical, since the number four is fitting for all numbers, and is a certain root of the decimal system and foundation of the week as well. The ninety-third psalm is written on the fourth Sabbath; because this number is in the middle of the preceding and following numbers. Three come before it, the first, second, third; and three follow it, the fifth, sixth, seventh. Whoever sings this psalm, like fitting numbers, passes through the life of this world, as a square, and stable, and perfect. In four books, the Gospel is full and perfect. There are four mystical animals. Also, the parts of this world are four, from which the sons of the Church, gathered together, spread the most sacred kingdom of Christ, coming from the East and the West, the North and the South. Therefore, the holy Church arose from the four-fold side. Also, a group of ten arises from this number. For if you connect from one to four, in this way you make ten. Calculate one, add two to it, there are three: add three to three, there are six: and add four to six, there are ten. Therefore, ten is composed of four and six, the number ten encompasses all numbers. There are also four stages of a person's life: childhood, adolescence, youth, maturity. It gradually rises and establishes itself. Therefore, the highest wisdom comes with the fourth order of stages. And rightfully so, if anyone existed before under the rule of Egypt, still with more mature counsel, he departs from his power and acknowledges the law to be followed. Then, the sea of this life becomes navigable to him. The process is similar to those things that are born from the soil. When the seed has been scattered, it is dissolved in the earth. First, it breaks out into a root, then it sprouts, the fruit is formed, and afterwards it ripens. Trees themselves also first bear fruit, then the fruit itself grows, changing color with the passing of time, it is perfected in the fourth order, that is, finally. So let us also flee to form bricks in this land of affliction: but let us provoke the mercy of the Lord with tears and groaning; so that He may send us Moses and Aaron, that is, the law and the priest: but the true Priest and

prince of priests, who though he lived among men, was called: 'Behold, the Spirit of the Lord Christ is before our face' (Lamentations 4:20); and may He free us from the land of Egypt, so that we may celebrate the Lord's Passover. Let us bear the fruit of faith even from childhood, let us increase it in adolescence, let us cultivate it in youth, let us fulfill it in old age. For now the axe is placed at the root of the tree; so that he who does it, may bear fruit. Let our harvester also find our crop mature and ripe; so that he may store mature fruits in the storehouses, lest winter catches them unripe, lest the wind shakes them, lest the rain spoils them.

However, I believe that it signifies more the time between the first coming of the Lord and the second coming, which will be the day of judgment. For at the setting of the sun, such a great fear came upon this man, because with the world already setting, the future sacrifice was being declared, by which the world would be redeemed, the faith would be the offering, which would not be separated from the sons of Abraham. For those who separate it are not the sons of Abraham. Faith is compared to the kingdom of heaven: For the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed. And: The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. (Matthew 13:31) And: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Ibid., 45-46) The kingdom of heaven is indivisible; for the kingdom of the Trinity is one. Therefore, it is perpetual and eternal, being indivisible; for every divided kingdom will easily be destroyed. The offering dedicated to the Trinity would be chastity, after that sacrifice, the victim of toil would be the calf, for it is a priestly victim; for sins, the goat would be the sacrifice; for the whole world and for the very rams or heavenly ones themselves, not only for men, nor only for lambs, but also for the goats that it may eradicate the stench of the sinful generation. The oracle testifies that the future sons of Abraham are still in the land of affliction, so that they may prove themselves in the midst of many and severe struggles: and thus, with much spoil of golden and silver vessels, they may go forth and return with their souls enriched, possessing precious bodies of diverse virtues, and especially with the treasure of chastity as their possession, even being rewarded by the judgment of Christ against the devil, his ministers, and all those who wished to harm them. Then there will be great fear even among the righteous. For no one is without sin. Everyone will have something to fear; for sins will be fulfilled. And where sin increases, grace will abound as well.

67. Again, when the sun was already setting, a flame appeared: and behold, a smoking furnace and torches of fire passing between those divided pieces. (Gen. XV, 17) Even if there was doubt about the previous things, the following things would confirm it; when we read about the flame made towards the setting, which would illuminate the evening times of the world, and would shine in darkness, and would reveal hidden things. Finally, the smoking furnace was immediately seen. The likeness of human life seems to be entangled in the injustices of this age, lacking the brightness of true clarity and the radiance of sincere light. Within, it boils like a furnace with various desires, and longs for the fires of certain longings. Without, it is covered as if with smoke, so that it may not see the face of truth. Therefore, the eyes of the soul are overshadowed and obscured by a certain darkness; so that the gaze of the mind, like a globe of smoking clouds, is confounded; it cannot gaze upon pure matters until the Lord Jesus, that is, the brightness of His glory, directs celestial lamps. When, he said, they will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun; for the Lord himself will be the light for all (Rev. 22:5), and He will illuminate all things of this world, the division of which is known above, now manifested in light, not through a mirror in an enigma, nor in

part, but face to face in the solidity of truth, and that which is perfect may be seen.

Chapter X.

When it is said, 'To your seed I will give this land,' the true beatitude is promised to Abraham, but it is more prefigured in the Church, whose type is expressed in the barren Sarah, as the Synagogue and heresies are in Hagar the handmaid. What the vigilance of the wise should be, and what God promises to Abraham in those words, 'I will greatly multiply you,' etc.

68. After this, there followed the oracle of God saying: 'To your offspring I will give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates' (Gen. XV, 18). He who had shown future glory should also promise the merits of virtue to be conferred. For He is both the helper of those who labor and the rewarder of the innocent. Egypt here is not the name of a region, but of a river. For so the ancients called the Nile, either because it had given the name to the region or because it had received the name from the region. Finally, even a Greek poet testifies to its existence, saying: And I built new ships by the river in Egypt. (Homer, *Odyssey*, Ξ) But it is narrow and insignificant, as if it has compared earthly things to celestial signs. Therefore, let us consider lest he may have promised the perfect happiness and completion of good deeds. For perfect happiness seems to consist of three things, the body, the soul, and the good qualities, which the Greeks called 'ἐν■ντα'; let there be chastity, patience, or temperance of the body, let there be prudence and justice of the soul. Therefore, Egypt seems to represent the physical body. Hence, the river itself is called Geon (Gen. II, 13), because man is formed from the earth. But the Euphrates represents the soul, for it is the source of justice and the other virtues that enlighten other virtues. Indeed, prudence without justice is harmful, and strength without temperance by justice is insufferable insolence, closer to madness than reason, and closer to domination than freedom. Sobriety and moderation are private goods, and of no use unless you observe them with proper reverence towards God and faithfully practice piety. Justice alone is the virtue that encompasses and commends all virtues. Business, trade, and agriculture are also incidental matters, pertaining to the earning of income from rural work. There are also incidental attributes of the body, such as health and the convenience of well-being, honor, and strength, which occur unexpectedly and change with age.

69. Do not think of this triple grace as insignificant. For you have perfect perfection in the Gospel. For when the Lord Jesus says to the expert in the law: 'You shall love the Lord your God' (Matthew 22:37), He commands the righteousness of the soul to be held. Even though it is right to honor parents, how much more honor should be given to the parent of all? Likewise, when He says: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness' (Matthew 19:18), He admonishes to keep the virtues of the body. But in the following, saying: There is no one who leaves home, or parents, or wife, or children for the sake of the Kingdom of God, and does not receive sevenfold now in this time, and in the age to come eternal life (Luke XVIII, 29 and 30); does he not promise the increase of good things along with the reward for the soul and body?

70. These things which the sacred Scripture expresses in simple words, Aristotle (in Book I of his *Ethics*, chapter 8) and the Peripatetics proclaim and extol with a certain grandeur. They also testify that it is a Pythagorean doctrine. But who among them can compare to Abraham in time? Who with authority and wisdom can equal the Lord, whose oracle Abraham recognizes as the source of

this triple grace?

However, foreign nations are given to him as if in discipline, so that the most observant mind may reject vices and correct errors. However, the mystery of the Church is more clearly revealed, because it is believed that the Church is to be gathered by the peoples of the nations through his apostles, who are Israelites, whose fathers, and from whom the fathers, Christ according to the flesh was made under the law. He did not signify them with the number ten in vain, but to show that those who were previously faithless, when they fulfilled the measure of piety, would certainly obtain the crown of faith.

72. Finally, it follows that Sarah, the wife of Abraham, was barren (Gen. XXVI, 1): she had a Egyptian servant named Hagar, which we have taught pertains to the Church in that exposition which we have written concerning moral matters, by apostolic examples (Book I on Abraham, ch. 4). For the Church appears barren in this age; because she does not give birth to worldly things, nor present things, but to future things, that is, things that are not seen. This servant is the Synagogue, or all heresies, which create slaves, not free people. Therefore, Agar is called a dwelling place. For she cherishes the hope of a temporal, not everlasting, possession. Therefore, in order that she may not become insolent with bodily childbirth and claim the rights of the Church for herself, it is said there: Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son Isaac (Gen. XXI, 10).

73. But even in each of them Sara is, and in each of them Agar. Sara is true virtue, true wisdom: but Agar is cunning, like a handmaid of higher virtue. For there is one spiritual wisdom, and there is another wisdom of this world. Therefore even Egypt is mentioned; because philosophical learning abounded in Egypt. Moreover Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, but he rejected it, preferring the reproach of Christ's name to the treasures of Egypt. For if he had judged wisdom to be of any importance, he would not have said: I pray, Lord, I am not worthy before yesterday and the day before yesterday, nor since you began to speak to your servant; for with a weak tongue and a slow speech I am.

74. But the most excellent mystery was that the law was not fully complete; to persuade the people, and to call the nations, or because it was closed until the coming of Christ, who, explaining to us the prophetic oracles, and bringing forth testimonies of the Old Testament, as it were, opened a certain mouth of the law; so that the cry of faith might reach to the whole world. Whence also Sara mystically says: The Lord has closed me that I may not bear; go in therefore to my handmaid, and she shall bear a son for me. So that you may recognize that the Church of God has always been predestined, and the fertility of faith has been prepared when the Lord commanded it to break forth, but it has been definitely reserved for a certain time by the will of the Lord. Finally, it is written: 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you' (Isaiah 49:8). Therefore, we observe that the faith of the Church was hastening, but its fertility was closed. By this word, it is shown that it was waiting for the time of its delivery; for what is closed usually opens. The Apostle teaches you by what reasoning it has been concluded, saying: 'For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all' (Rom. 11:32). So that grace may not be by the will of man nor of the runner, but of God who shows mercy (Rom. 9:16), in order that you may not justify yourself, but attribute all to God who has called you. Therefore, let no one be lazy and make excuses for their laziness, delaying to believe, for it is written that it is not

of the one who wills or runs. Consider, therefore, what has been added, but the compassion of God, who says: 'Present yourself, therefore, with good zeal and ready faith, so that God may have mercy on you and call you as he called the Church, saying: 'I have appeared openly to those who do not seek me, I have shown myself to those who do not ask about me' (Isaiah 65:1).'

75. And rightly, the inferior things were mentioned first, so that better things would follow. The maid gave birth to servants so that the Church could make them free, and enable nations to be called from servitude to freedom, from guilt to innocence, from offense to grace. If you consider the order of each individual, not all began with the perfect, nor is the first [place] among all, but older virtue is deservedly the more perfect. Therefore, it is the mark of a prudent mind to consider how long the soul is imperfect, to ponder on what it deliberates with itself, so that it may exercise itself in the disciplines of virtues, even in later things, until it becomes strong through the use of exercise. But when it has emerged from the coils of error, and has unraveled itself from every offense, presenting the accomplishment of its own purification, then it strives to produce great results in its own order.

Moreover, it is said of Abraham: 'Be blameless' (Gen. XVII, 1); to whom the Holy Spirit of wisdom was given, whole, well-moving, immaculate. Therefore, it is necessary for the soul of a wise man to always extend itself in constant exercise, like a lookout, day and night, never indulging in sleep, intent on God for the apprehension of those things which are, and for the knowledge of individual causes. But wisdom is also an interpreter of the future, it knows the past, and estimates about the future. He knows the cleverness of words and the solutions to arguments. He knows signs and wonders before they happen, as well as the outcomes of times and ages. Therefore, one who has acquired this cannot be anything but good and perfect, because he possesses all virtue and is an image of goodness. Hence, the sophists of this age have derived the definition of such a person, that a wise man is one who is skilled in speaking.

77. Let us now return to the gift of God, than which there is nothing fuller. For what is better than wisdom? What is worse than vanity? What is more detestable than superstition? And therefore, as if to one to whom he had promised the fullness of perfection, he says: I will greatly increase you and make nations of you, and kings shall come from you (Gen. 17:6): for to him who is faithful, the whole world is a treasury of riches, and it is increased, not diminished, like a fool. Abraham is placed among the nations, that is, his faith is transferred to the nations, and the kings of the world who have believed subject themselves to the Lord Jesus to whom it is said: Kings shall offer gifts to you (Ps. 68:30). And it is not absurd that from the lineage of Abraham there will not only be kings in rank, but also those kings who do not serve sin, nor does wickedness overcome them, over whom death does not hold dominion. We also know that there are kings and princes of good mind, whom, like Abraham, do not have a mediocre offspring of their lineage, but abound in royal qualities. To whom the earth has been given as possession: to rule over the body, and not to be captive to carnal pleasures, but to serve the flesh as if in dutiful humility to the mind. According to the person of Abraham, the evident mystery of the Church, which has possessed the whole world as its inheritance of faith, he is rightly called the father of election, father of faith, father of pious confession.

Chapter XI.

The command of circumcision given to Abraham, what does it signify; and why is it that on the eighth day the uncircumcised infants are in danger? A single letter is added to Sarah's name. Abraham falls on his face and laughs. Did he have the same doubt? The Lord grants it to him as he prays for Ishmael, and promises him a son from Sarah.

78. And because it is called to perfection, it receives the oracle of perfection. "Circumcise," he says, "every male among you, and circumcise your flesh" (Gen. XVII, 10 and 11): but spiritual circumcision is perfect. Finally, the reading itself teaches this when it says: "Circumcise the hardness of your heart" (Deut. X, 16). And here many understand it in such a way that it means: "Circumcise every male among you," that is, your mind; for nothing is stronger than the mind. Then because the male is also called holy: Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord (Exod. XIII, 12). But what is holier in the mind, which gives the seeds of good thoughts, by which it opens the womb of the soul closed by barrenness of giving birth; so that it may bring forth those invisible generations in that spiritual womb, of which Isaiah says: In the womb we received and brought forth the spirit of salvation (Isa. XVI, 18)? The circumcision of the mind is understood, the circumcision of the flesh is also commanded. The former is in truth, the latter is a sign. Therefore, there is a twofold circumcision; because both the restraint of the mind and the body are sought after. Finally, the Egyptians circumcise males in the fourteenth year, and females are said to be circumcised in the same year; this is because the passion of man begins to burn in that year, and women start to have the beginnings of their menstrual cycles. However, the legislator of the eternal seal of carnal circumcision demands it only for males, because the sexual desire of a man toward a woman is stronger; and so he wanted to hinder that desire with the seal of circumcision. Or because men believe it is permissible for them to stray, as long as they abstain from adultery alone, while they consider it sufficient to comply with the law of nature to engage in sexual relations with prostitutes; whereas, besides marriage, it is not lawful for a man to have sexual relations with any other woman, nor for a woman with any other man. However, a deeper interpretation reveals that if the mind is cleansed and sharpened, stripped of excessive pleasures and thoughts, it restrains the soul to chastity of itself, and makes it a generator of good offspring infused with pure senses. On the eighth day, however, the law commands the child to be circumcised, with a mystical obligation, because he is the day of resurrection; for the Lord Jesus rose on the Lord's day. Therefore, if the day of resurrection finds us circumcised and stripped of superfluous sins, washed clean from all filth, freed from bodily vices, if you go out from here clean, you will rise again clean. Therefore, circumcise yourself not with flesh, but with carnal vice. And circumcise not only your servant, but also the one bought with a price. If we consider things individually, natural motions are acquired by purchase, reason, and learning. Both the unlearned and the learned need pruning and cutting off, like shrubs, so that they do not run wild like barren branches and overshadow the fruitful ones. Just as a tree that is burdened with many defects labors in vain, so we must be careful that our mind, burdened with many things, not only produces good offspring but also degenerates into useless ones; at the same time, it is to be preserved as a vine that, though pruned, does not easily grow wild but is reserved for future generations. For the gifted often produce many things that need to be trimmed away, and those who have attained knowledge by diligence should recognize their own ignorance. However, the nature of the mystery is clear. For the Gentiles were bought at a price by the blood of Christ, because the Church was redeemed at a price. Therefore, both the Jew and the Greek, and whoever believes, must know that they must be circumcised from sins in order to be saved. Both the native and the foreigner,

the righteous and the sinner, must be circumcised through the forgiveness of sins, so that sin may no longer have power over them, for no one enters the kingdom of heaven except through the sacrament of baptism. Superior justice of time will be of no benefit if justice is abandoned at the end of life. Therefore Paul says: You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. For they are contrary; for slavery is contracted by sin, and sin is forgiven by a price.

Therefore, we believe that this exposition is rich in simplicity and understanding. And so, we do not concern ourselves with the cubes of Geometry, or the square numbers of Philosophy, or the Pythagorean theorem, as they call it, or the perpetual virgins, as they are called, or the numbers of the week, or the empty care of examining the world with a compass, or seeking the sky in dust, or confining the universe within narrow abaci. Instead, we reveal true mysteries, that the only salvation is Christ's resurrection. Let us complain therefore to the likeness of his death, that we may merit the fellowship of resurrection. And let our old man be crucified together with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed.

81. Moreover, it is mandated by law that males, even those who are born into the family, are to be circumcised primarily through crying as infants. Just as sin begins in infancy, so does circumcision. There should be no moment in time void of protection, for there is no moment void of guilt. And the child must be called back from sin so as not to be tainted by idolatry and so as not to become accustomed to worshiping idols and kissing images, violating the nest of their parent, and injuring piety. Simultaneously, no one should be puffed up and consider themselves righteous, for Abraham is commanded to be circumcised as he progresses into a more mature age. Therefore, neither an elderly proselyte nor a native-born infant is excluded; because every age is liable to sin, and therefore every age is suitable for the sacrament. And it shall be, says he, my testament in your flesh (Gen. XVII, 13). Perhaps it may be referred to this place, how you speak of a spiritual circumcision, when the oracle says: My covenant of circumcision shall be in your flesh. As if indeed temperance were required for the soul alone, and not for the passions of the body. For even the chastity of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and speech is sought; because even a more wanton gaze has its sin, and therefore it is written: Apply not thy heart to a deceitful woman, and be not caught with the dainties of the eyes. (Prov. V, 2). And in hearing itself there is a crime if a prostitute seduces you, and with much flattery of speech and the snares of her lips binds you. And in touch itself there is a crime, therefore it is said to you: Do not be too familiar with another woman, nor engage in embraces that are not your own. And in speech there is fault. For the strongest snare is a man's own lips, and he is led away by the lips of his own mouth. And do not consume too much honey, lest you vomit. Therefore, moderation must be sharp in all senses; lest either passion lead to vice, or excess harm, or delay lead to offense.

83. However, it does not seem to be useless or superfluous for many to be moved by what follows in this place. Did the Lord perhaps say this: 'For any uncircumcised male who does not circumcise the foreskin of his flesh on the eighth day, that soul shall be cut off from his people; because he has broken My covenant' (Gen. XVII, 14)? For it is considered a grave matter that the negligence of parents would result in harm to an infant on the eighth day, to the point that his soul would perish; since the law itself has prescribed cities of refuge even for a manslayer (who, however, has not committed the voluntary act of killing a man), where he may deserve impunity for shedding blood (Josh. XX, 2 and 3). Therefore, how is chance murder dealt with? Or is there no reckoning for infancy, in which there can be no crime of deceit or willfulness; unless perhaps some think that

parents are punished more severely in the death of a child? But it is considered unjust that the punishment of the guilty should be inflicted on the innocent, or that the innocent should be punished in place of the guilty, or that an equal share of punishment should be made for one who deserves it less. Hence, some think that when it is said that a parent is exterminated, it means that their soul, not the soul of the little one, is destroyed. But it is highly ambiguous; it is allowed to support this assertion, which says that it interrupts my will. Therefore, this seems to refer more to the intelligent person rather than the infant. Others think that the Lord God threatens the parents with more serious consequences, either through silence or when the child is spared.

84. But to me it is quite clear what has been said about the mind of each individual. For we have said that the mind is signified by the masculine name, which is the strong vigor of the mind, and it attracts the soul to itself, and is more vehement as if it were stronger in gender and manly strength. Therefore, this is the reason why every mind that has not been circumcised from superfluous corporeal things and purified by the solemn duty, in order to strip itself of passions and vices, will perish. Flesh, he says, will not perish, nor man: but that soul will perish, because it could have been saved, if it had purification. However, that soul, weak in the nakedness of support and the pollution of an uncircumcised heart, could not preserve the salvation of its kind. Yet every kind appears immortal, as is the human kind, as is any species. Man is always spoken of, any is not always, indeed not a certain one fails. The one who lacks faith fails, the person of one fails, the condition or name of men does not fail. Therefore, the sinner who should attribute to his own mind the fault of being incautious and intemperate, or who has not acquired the forgiveness of sins, is led into that which is both temporary and harmful from a long and harmless state. For unless someone is born again of water and the Holy Spirit, they cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). Surely, it makes no exception for anyone, neither an infant nor someone hindered by any necessity. However, they may have that hidden immunity from punishment, although I do not know if they have the honor of the kingdom.

85. Also, one letter is added to Sarah, that is, R, so that she would be called Sarra (Gen. XVII, 15). And this is certainly fitting, as in the previous instances, the addition of one letter is not taken lightly. For it is not the gift of God that is a single letter, but the power of the letter that expresses the grace of the divine gift. Sarah is indeed called **■px■ ■μ■**, that is, my authority, or the beginning of my rule, or the queen. In Greek, Sarah is called **■ρχουσα**, meaning she who rules in Latin. That which is mortal, that which is immortal; that which is special, that which is general. For indeed, in me there is prudence, in me there is chastity, in me there is virtue, in me there is justice, they alone govern me, and they dominate me, and they are mortal. For with my death, they too dissolve and perish. But those things which are generally called prudence, which are called chastity, which are called fortitude, and the other principal virtues, but generally principal, and certain immortal queens, in them is power, that immortal principal, just as the Church, which rules not only me, but all. Therefore, we see a transformation of form into genus, of part into universality, of corruptibility into incorruptibility: all of which is certain to be applicable to the Church. For this is not a special, but a general principle, not the salvation of a part, but of the whole. And therefore, following these preceding things, when prudence has led each individual to this principal and diffused salvation, in which is the source of wisdom and justice, generation is required, and that joyful offspring, whose name is Isaac. For there is no greater pleasure than the satisfaction of a corrected conscience. Hence the Epicureans believed that the highest good is pleasure, but they

valued it more in the pollution of the body than in the sobriety of the mind.

86. What, then, does it mean when it says: And Abraham fell on his face and laughed (Gen. XVII, 17)? Here reverence is signified, that he feared to offend God with a free laugh, even though his laughter showed the joy of a righteous man who was rejoicing in such great promises. For this was not the laughter of doubt, but of belief. At the same time, because all things fall before God, and are changed and pass away, only that unchangeable substance always remains. Perhaps Abraham prophesied about the Lord Jesus in this mystery, that through the reception of the Lord's body and the resurrection, the fulfillment of such a great oracle would be accomplished by the grace of God. Therefore, he worships not the earthly element of which it is said: Worship His footstool, for it is holy (Ps. 98:5). For where the body is, there also the eagles who worship it are present.

87. And he said, in his heart: If a son be born to a man that is a hundred years old, and if Sara that is ninety years old bear a child? The Greek puts it, "in his mind," that we may be able to estimate that he said to himself as if debating: If a son will be born to a man who is a hundred years old, and if a woman who is ninety years old will bear a child? This is past the age of childbearing, but with God all things are possible; and therefore it is easy for him to restore the years of youth to the old, to restore strength, and to grant fertility to the barren.

88. And that should not be overlooked, that Abraham, in response to the promise of legitimate offspring, said to God: Let Ishmael live in your sight (Gen. XVII, 18). It is just for the righteous to intercede for sinners; and therefore, even the Jews should believe this, because he intercedes for them too, if they believe. For this is to live in the sight of God, to carry out worthy deeds according to the Word of God; for the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous.

89. And the Lord said: Yes, behold, Sarah your wife will bear a son for you But I have also heard you concerning Ishmael (Genesis 17:19-20). Even when He speaks, He confirms His promises; for it is a confirming word. And therefore, He first confirms the future generation of the Church, so that the Prophet may know that what God said about Ishmael, he had indeed heard, foreseeing that blindness would partially happen to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles came in, and then all Israel would be saved. And so, just as the wills of men first designate an heir, and then express legacies, with better things going to the heir and lesser things to the legatees, so in the testament of the Lord, from whom we also have received this custom, the heir is written as a good natured, noble person, created by a legitimate marriage; the inferior is granted as a legacy.

90. However, the generation is promised for the following year (Ibid., 21), so that you may understand what generation the Lord promises, that is, not the physical offspring of Sarah, but the offspring of the Church that was to come. Finally, he also says below: I will surely return to you in due season, and Sarah shall have a son (Gen. XVIII, 10). In both of these we can understand the covenant of the Church and the resurrection of the faithful.

91. In the thirteenth year, when Ishmael is circumcised, there is a clear reason: because he who begins to enjoy the knowledge of a woman must first cut off the ardor of lust within himself, so that he may abstain from excessive mixtures and reserve himself only for legitimate union.

92. It is also fitting for the mind of a wise person to be hospitable, so that they may impart their kindness to others and share the fruits of their wisdom with others as well, and thus they may feast

on the nourishing food of knowledge and provide a banquet for those who desire it.

93. Then, moreover, let him not know anything except to live according to nature, in whose plan and order is the law of God. Let him not mix himself with perverted desires, but rather choose the companionship of wisdom alone. Let him not know how to prefer the glory of this world's mandates and a certain inheritance of present praise; and just as he sacrifices his own interests to the altars of the Lord, let him not receive or fear the fire of judgment, but rather strive to rescue others.

On Apostles Creed

Treatise on the Trinity, also known as the Apostles' Creed

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.
- Chapter XII.
- Chapter XIII.
- Chapter XIV.
- Chapter XV.
- Chapter XVI.
- Chapter XVII.
- Chapter XVIII.
- Chapter XIX.
- Chapter XX.
- Chapter XXI.
- Chapter XXII.

- Chapter XXIII.
- Chapter XXIV.
- Chapter XXV.
- Chapter XXVI.
- Chapter XXVII.
- Chapter XXVIII.
- Chapter XXIX.
- Chapter XXX.
- Chapter XXXI.
- Chapter XXXII.
- Chapter XXXIII.
- Chapter XXXIV.
- Chapter XXXV.

Chapter I.

Therefore, none who is wise and sound believes that God, who is omnipotent, Trinity and Spirit, is any visible or palpable body: but rather understands Him as a simple, rational and invisible nature, which is not at all solidified by any composition, nor appears to have anything external or added to it from elsewhere: whom no substance, no creature, no dominion ever precedes. Therefore, the source and origin of all virtues, both visible and invisible creatures, that is, the creator of the heavenly and earthly, is the holy and inseparable Trinity, which contains nothing external within itself; so that it does not appear to be bounded or found to be in need of anything, since it is always pure, indivisible and mystical, and, so to speak, fruitful in unity. For such is the essence of unity in the Holy Trinity, inseparable and indistinguishable, that it seems to do nothing outside of itself: in which Holy and inseparable Trinity there is true eternity, immutable truth, and eternal and perfect charity. Therefore, God is thought of more truly than He is said, because He is always incomprehensible. Therefore, God, who is omnipotent and has no gender, age, or defined bodily parts, desired to be proclaimed most excellently, most clearly, and most magnificently. Eternity therefore is in the Father, beauty in the image, use in the task (Augustine, VI, de Trin. c. 10, ex Hilary, II, de Trinit.) : and these three are one God; not however in the singularity of one person, but in the essence of one Trinity. Therefore, one who loves Him, who is from Him: and one who loves Him, of whom He is: and love itself is the same one of both, that is, the Holy Spirit. And yet these three, as has been said, are one God, good, true, just, light, life, truth, spirit, and charity. Therefore, because God is eternal and the creator of all things, He cannot be understood as composite; lest there be things prior to God, by which He is thought to be composed. Therefore, every creature that is not what God Himself is, is made by Him alone. Therefore, He cannot be called eternal unless He who lacks a beginning and an end, that is, God the Father, who has the Word and the Spirit coeternal and coomnipotent with Himself. This clearly proves that the

substance of the Son and the Holy Spirit exists before all creatures and beyond all times, and that the beginning in God the Father always remains. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is not generated, but rather the sweetness, holiness, and eternity of the generator and the generated. For since the Father is a Spirit, and the Son is a Spirit, and the Father is holy, and the Son is holy, it is properly said of the Spirit that he is the Holy Spirit. Therefore, because he is coeternal and common to both, he is called the same thing that both are.

Chapter II.

How greatly the foolishness and misfortune of the Arians are considered, who say: There was a time when the Son did not exist, the reader understands. For how could there be a time when the Father, without life, without wisdom, without virtue, without the Word, which is Christ, existed? God forbid; since the Father himself declares clearly saying: My heart has brought forth the good Word (Psalm 44:2). Blessed John, confirming this, says: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. Whatever is incorporeal and invisible cannot be separated by a diversity of places. For if our speech, or virtue, or wisdom cannot be separated from us unless we depart from the body, how can these things be separated from the immortal and omnipotent God, who made all things out of nothing through His Word? Whose Father will be the Father of the impious heretics if the nature of the Son is separated from Him? And again, whose Son will He be if His origin is not referred to the Father, so that He may be both the one who begets and the one who is begotten? Therefore, the Father, who is the origin of deity and goodness, is rightly understood and felt both in the Son and in the Holy Spirit: in Him, that is, in the Son, as the Word, by virtue and wisdom; and in the Holy Spirit, as proceeding from Him. So it is right and catholic that we acknowledge one God according to the truth of substance, and that we feel the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in their respective subsistences. Therefore, the divinity of the Holy Trinity must be believed without any end, and it is also difficult for the mind itself to feel. And this alone is what we comprehend from it, because it cannot be comprehended. Therefore, there is one deity in three, and there are three in which deity exists. Therefore, in the unity there is no confusion, nor in the divinity is there division. And therefore the mixture of the foolish Sabellius and the separation of the impious Arius must be equally rejected; for they have proposed opposing but equally impious doctrines. For Sabellius, while he thinks that everything is named, designates nothing to be each thing; indeed, since it ceases to be what it is, it is transferred into the other, that which is said to be the essence of each one: but Arius impiously asserts that the Son, a creature of the Father, and the Holy Spirit, a creature of the Son, are created beings.

Chapter III.

But having cast aside these wickednesses and idolatries, we, as the blessed Apostle Paul says: There is one God the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and one Holy Spirit, in whom are all things (1 Corinthians 8:6). And this very thing that we say, from whom, and by whom, and in whom are all things, we do not divide nature, but we confess the unity of nature, will, and operation. Therefore, there is one God in these three, and these three are one God. The Apostle confirms that it is so, saying: 'From him, and through him, and in him, all things: to him be glory forever and ever, amen' (Rom. XI, 35). In agreement with

this, the prophet David says: 'May God bless us, our God, may God bless us; and may all the ends of the earth fear him' (Psalm LXVI, 8). Therefore, the Father is the Father without beginning; for there is nothing else from which the Father is. And the Son is the Son without beginning, only from the Father, and he is the creator of all times. And therefore, he does not take his beginning from time, for he is the Word, power, and wisdom, which made and anticipated all time (I Cor. I, 24). The Holy Spirit is truly a Spirit, proceeding indeed from the Father, but He is not Himself the Son; for He is not begotten, but proceeds from the Father. For everything that exists is either uncreated, created, or made. Therefore, there is something that is neither begotten nor made; there is something that is begotten and not made; there is something that is neither begotten nor made; there is something that is made and not begotten; there is something that is made and begotten and reborn; there is something that is made and begotten and not reborn. Now, however, let us remember the things that have been proposed and let us designate substances for each of them. Therefore, what is neither born nor made is the Father: for he is not from anyone. But what is born and not made is the Son, who is begotten from the Father. And what is neither born nor made is the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father. And what is also made and not born is the heaven, and the earth, and the other things that exist. But what is made, and born, and reborn is man, who is first born carnal and is reborn spiritual in baptism. But what has been done, and what has been born, and what has been reborn, are animals.

Chapter IV.

So let us teach each individually by examples; for about the Father it is written: For there is one God, from whom are all things (I Cor. VIII, 6) ; about the Son however: One Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things (Ibid.) ; and again: For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus (I Tim. II, 5) ; about the Holy Spirit indeed: For what man knows the things of a man, that is, which are in him, except the spirit of man which is in him? Even so no man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God (I Cor. II, 11) ; and again: But the Spirit searches even the deep things of God (Ibid., 10) . But that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are without beginning is demonstrated from this, because what the Father is, He did not begin to be; and if He did not begin, neither did the Son begin: but the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, also did not begin; because His procession is continuous, and He is from Him who did not begin: for the Father did not begin to be, and because He did not begin, neither did the Spirit begin to be; for He is in Him and of Him. The evangelist testifies again concerning the Son, that He did not begin; saying: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God' (John 1:1-2). Therefore, because He existed, He did not begin; and because He was with God, He did not begin; and because He was God, He did not begin; and because this was in the beginning with God, He did not begin: for God was born of God in such a way as to not know how to begin. Therefore, the Father was not defrauded, because He is unbegotten, or because He begot the Son; nor was the Son defrauded, because He is begotten, or because He is generated from the unbegotten; nor was the Holy Spirit defrauded, because He is of both, that is, of the Father and of the Son. However, it is of them in such a way that they are not restored in the Father or in the Son because he is God, having neither beginning nor any end, as one who is coeternal with the Father and the Son; for he breathes with his own will wherever he wants and whom he wants and as many as he wants and how much he wants (John 3:8). Therefore, he fills with his grace whom he wants and as many as he wants and how much he

wants; he himself is not filled: he provides perfection, he does not receive it; he sanctifies, but he himself is not sanctified.

Chapter V.

Therefore, as the Father and the Son are the life and the giver of life, the light and the illuminator, the good and the goodness, the holy and the holiness (Rom. VIII, 15): here is the Spirit of adoption, here is the one who distributes his gifts to each one according to his will (I Cor. XII, 11): here is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of knowledge and piety, of counsel and power, and of the fear of God (Isa. XI, 2): here is the Holy Spirit, through whom the Father is known, and the Son is glorified; and by whom alone he is known, and who alone knows all things through the unity of nature: this is the one of whom the Son said: And my Father will give good things to those who ask of him (Matt. VII, 11), that is, either himself or all his graces. Just as therefore the Lord Christ is called the Word, and Power, and Wisdom, and Justice, and Pearl, and Light, and Way, and Resurrection, and the other things that are written about Him, so also the Holy Spirit is called the Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear, as it has already been said. Not, however, that He is different according to the differences of names, but that He is one and the same source and principle of all virtues, who always dwelt in the Lord Christ, as being a sharer in His own nature. These are the seven eyes, which in the prophet Zachariah are said to be in one stone (Zech. III, 9), that is, they are said to be in the Lord Christ. Each has its own immovability, but there is one worship, one reverence, one sanctification, always of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. For it is not fitting for the Son to be lacking to the Father, or for the Holy Spirit to be lacking to the Son, as impious heretics falsely claim. Therefore, let us, being aware of these things, keep the good purpose which we have received from the holy Fathers. Let us adore the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, understanding the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Holy Spirit: distinguishing before we unite, and uniting before we distinguish: venerating unity in the Trinity, and confessing Trinity in unity. Therefore, the entire Holy Trinity must be adored by us; because it is entirely regal, because it is of one power, and of one glory above the world, above time, uncreated, invisible, incomprehensible, unfathomable: the order in itself is known only by itself; but it is equally adored by us. In the invisible and ineffable Holy Trinity, we ought to understand nothing as so proper, so fixed, as peace and quiet. For there is no discord in the nature of God, since it is perceived that it cannot be dissolved, being always peace and charity. For if four substances, namely, heat, blood, phlegm, and moisture, make a human being, and yet there is only one human being; how do you not understand the Trinity in unity, or unity in the Trinity? Therefore, God the Father omnipotent, having omnipotent Word and Spirit, is above human understanding, and beyond what can be thought, incomprehensible and eternal: whom then, as much as the weakness of our nature allows, we can recognize; when we know the Lord Christ, who is his form, and the only begotten Son; for as he himself says: He who has seen the Son, has also seen the Father, who sent him, and who is in him, and who remains in him (John 14:9); and again: And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3). Therefore, the omnipotent Father obtained the name of Father through the Son; for no one can be a father or be called a father without a son, nor can a son exist without a father. However, it is honorable to confess that the only-begotten Son of God, the Word, and wisdom, and his Holy Spirit are substantially equal to the Father in all respects. For who has truly assigned a color, form, or size to the Word and wisdom, in accordance with wisdom,

and to the Holy Spirit; so that he may require degrees and establish orders, where all invisible things remain perpetually united and peaceful?

Chapter VI.

Therefore, first of all, it must be believed that there is one God, who created everything out of nothing through his Word, and enlivened them through the Holy Spirit: who, while encompassing all things, is not encompassed by anyone. This is comprehended in one verse by the prophet David, saying: By the word of the Lord the heavens were made firm, and by the breath of His mouth all their power (Psalm 32:6). This is the Holy Spirit, who was carried over the waters in the beginning of the creation and structure of the world (Genesis 1:2). This is the one in whom Moses and Aaron, in the presence of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, performed signs, and of whom the Magi said: This is the finger of God (Exodus 8:9). This is the one who spoke in Moses, and in all the holy patriarchs and prophets and apostles (2 Peter 1:21); of whom the Apostle says: And we have all been made to drink of one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). This is the one who fashioned the flesh of the Word of God in the sacred womb of the Virgin (Luke 1:35): this is the one whom the Father sent upon the Son after baptism (Matthew 3:16): this is the one by whose power Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and went back to Galilee (Luke 4:14): this is the one whom the Father gives to those who ask (Luke 11:13): this is the one who is our advocate with the Father, and is called another Paraclete, whom the Son promised to send to us (John 14:16). If, therefore, the Holy Spirit were not of the same nature with the Father and the Son, he would never be called another Paraclete; therefore, he is called another Paraclete, so that we may recognize the equality of nature and power. Therefore, one who ascends from us to the Father, and another who comes to us from the Father, always declares the paternal and most loving affection towards us. He never allows us to be in the temptations of this world and in miseries without an advocate and without a comforter. This is he who, together with the Father, sent the Son for the salvation of the human race, as the prophet Isaiah testifies in the person of the speaking Son, saying: The Lord sent me, and his Spirit (Isa. XLVIII, 16; Matt. XII, 28). This is he in whom Jesus cast out demons: this is he whom the Lord Jesus Christ, rising from the dead on the third day, gave to his disciples, saying: Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you retain, they are retained (John XX, 22, 23). This is he who, on the day of Pentecost, descending upon the apostles, bestowed upon them diverse languages and graces (Acts 2:3), fulfilling the prophecy of the holy prophet Joel (Joel 2:28). This is he who, speaking in the holy martyrs, conquered the devil and the adversaries of Christ. This is he who filled Paul and separated him for the apostleship (Acts 13:2). This is he who operates his diverse gifts in each member of the Body of Christ until the end of the world (1 Corinthians 12:6). He is the one who not only drives away from us sadness, grief, and evil thoughts, but also gives us the memory of God, so that we can rightfully say with the prophet David: I have been mindful of God, and I have been pleased (Psalm 76:4); and again: I will be mindful of your wonders (ibidem, 12). He is the one who, coming to us when we believe rightly and act well, illuminates our darkness, narrowness of heart, and timidity with his own light, blending our perception with the perception of Christ, so that we may contemplate our life, which is hidden in Christ, and consider what our state will be in eternal and future ages, following Jesus, the Son of God, who has penetrated the heavens, and is seated at the right hand of God, and fills every place, leaving nothing devoid of his presence. But if we think that he, who undertook the dispensation of the body for our salvation, is not contained within

the space of one place, or circumscribed according to the nature of his divinity and incorporeality. The divinity cannot be separated by the diversity of places; which the Savior himself proved when he said: No one ascends to heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven (John 3:13). Therefore, the Spirit, the Word, the power, the wisdom, the brightness, the image, the vapor, and the brightness of God without stain do not need a place to fulfill their works; all of which undoubtedly demonstrate the person of the Son. Therefore, there has never been a time when the Father was without the Son, or the Son was without the Father, or the Holy Spirit was without the Father and the Son.

Chapter VII.

Therefore, it is proper to God to not have begun but to always be the same, which He always is. This is confirmed by God Himself speaking to Moses: Go and say to the children of Israel: He who is, has sent me to you (Exodus III, 14). This is the Holy Spirit, who is neither born nor made, but is uncreated, just as the Father and the Son. This is the Holy Spirit who uplifts the fallen and gives them an opportunity to rise, and dispenses everything according to the diversity of merits and the will of the Father and the Son, knowing all things not through investigation, but through the unity of nature. He is the one of whom the prophet says: The Spirit of the Lord is manifold, pure, and undefiled (Wisdom 7:22). Just as light does not receive darkness, so the Holy Spirit, by nature, has the capacity to be free from all impurities. This is the one who separates himself from thoughts that are without God. This is the one who pours himself into holy souls and establishes them as friends of God and prophets. Therefore, unless someone has the Holy Spirit, neither the Father nor the Son, with whom the one God is united, come to him to make their dwelling with him. This is the spirit of wisdom, which is called manifold for this reason, because it contains many things within itself, and what it has, this also is, and it is one in all things, nor is it changed by anything that it does; just as an image from a ring, which passes into wax and does not leave the ring. This is confirmed by the Lord, saying to Moses: 'Therefore I will take of the spirit that is in you, and will give to them seventy' (Num. XI, 17), as if fire is transferred from a small fire, without any harm to the source from which it is taken. Therefore, because of this immutability and diverse operation, it has been said by the Lord concerning St. John the Baptist that he came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). This is the one whom God sent into our hearts, crying out: Abba, Father (Galatians 4:6); and in whom we cry out: Abba, Father. For it has been said of both that we have received the Spirit crying out: Abba, Father; and that we have received the Spirit in whom we cry out: Abba, Father (Romans 8:15). He explained therefore what he said, shouting, that is, making us shout. This is the Spirit, who with indescribable groans intercedes for us, when human frailty does not know what it ought to pray for. The holy Apostle taught us not only in word, but also demonstrated it to us by his own example, when he prayed unknowingly against his own advantage and perfection, that the thorn of the flesh, which was striking him, would depart from him. Having been taught by the Holy Spirit himself afterwards, he said that it was given to him, so that he would not be exalted by the greatness of his revelations and would suffer some harm. But because the Lord loved him, who always used to show the power of his divinity through weak things, he did not do what he was asking for ignorantly. He himself is the Holy Spirit, who, in the Catholic Church spread throughout the whole world, has poured out himself as a source of all grace. This is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus (Ibidem 9), who, at the end of the world, will destroy the antichrist by his power (II Thess. II, 8). This is the Holy Spirit, whom none of the heretics have;

although they may think they have the baptism of Christ, unless they come to the Church of Christ, they cannot have the Spirit of Christ. This is proven by the blessed apostle Paul, who says: If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him (Rom. VIII, 9). And again: No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. XII, 3). This is confirmed by the blessed apostle and evangelist John, who says: By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now is already in the world; and again: Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (I Joan. V, 5, et seq). This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not in water only, but in water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who testify: the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one.

Chapter VIII.

Therefore, to those who confess him as Lord without the Holy Spirit, he will say in judgement: Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I say (Luke 6:46); and why have you scattered the people and my members, for which I shed my blood? And so, the offering of heretics, who do not have the Holy Spirit, is not for the worship of God, but for the worship of demons. For whatever heretics speak in their synagogues, that is, in the gatherings of Satan, is not the teaching of the Lord, but the howling and trickery of demons. For these are they to whom the Holy Spirit, through the Prophet Isaiah, speaks, saying that the people of the Jews have prepared a table, and says: And you prepare a table for Fortune (Isaiah 65:11); and therefore, both they themselves and the sinners, who do not judge themselves, boldly approach the most holy body and blood of Christ, the Apostle rebukes, saying: You cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons: you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons (1 Corinthians 10:21). Let these remarks about the offering of heretics suffice; now let us return to the order.

Chapter IX.

Therefore, whatever we have said about the Holy Spirit, we also attribute the same to the Father and the Son, untouched and undiscussed; although we know for certain that the holy and inseparable Trinity never operates anything outside of itself. And to make clear what I have said, I will briefly explain. The Trinity made the Incarnation of the Word, and yet the Incarnation belongs only to the Word (Augustine, Against the Sermon of the Arians, chapter 15). A voice from heaven made by the Trinity after the baptism of the Son, and yet it belongs only to the Father. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Son in the form of a dove (Luke 3:22) is made by the Trinity, and yet it belongs only to the Holy Spirit. The blessed Apostle confirms this threefold operation remaining in unity, saying: There are divisions of graces, but the same Spirit; and there are divisions of ministries, but the same Lord; and there are divisions of operations, but the same God who works all in all (1 Corinthians 12:4 et seq). Therefore these three grant grace to those who believe, because the substance of the Holy and inseparable Trinity is not one thing and another. When each, therefore, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are said to work, they all nevertheless work together. Wisdom created, the Spirit gave life, and with just judgment, he ordered. Therefore, by his justice, he distributes the world in various forms, and by his grace, he incomprehensibly dispenses, contains, and governs its members to such an extent that the governance of his

providence is so just, so mysterious, so hidden that what is thought to be punishment is actually a remedy for the patient. Therefore, the one God existing in the Holy Trinity operates as follows: proving this about Himself, He says through the prophet Isaiah: 'I am the Lord, and there is no one else besides me' (Isaiah 45:6 and 7), meaning, besides my Word and my Spirit, my power and wisdom which are always in me; there is no other God and Savior, as the same prophet says: 'And the Lord will send them a savior who will save them from their sins' (ibidem 5). And again, from the person of the Father, the aforementioned prophet says: 'I have sworn by myself, the word has gone forth from my mouth, and it shall not return empty to me' (Isaiah XIX, 20; XLV, 23; LV, 11). Indeed, the Word of the Father did not return to him empty, for he has placed the pledges of our salvation, that is, a true soul and a true body, assumed into the right hand of the Father. Seeing this in the Spirit, the prophet says: 'Truly you are a hidden God' (Isaiah XLV, 15), that is, God the Savior of Israel in the flesh; and again: 'He had no form or comeliness' (Isaiah LIII, 2), so that divine power might be concealed in a human body; and again: 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is perverse' (Jeremiah XVII, 9). And again: Here is our God, who will not be considered like any other who has been seen on earth and has dwelt among men (Baruch 3:36), and again: Man of sorrows, knowing how to bear infirmities (ibid. 38); truly showing the human body through these words, and showing the true soul, who, knowing how to bear infirmities, overcame through divinity, making peace through the blood of his own cross, whether those things that are in the heavens or those things that are on earth (Isaiah 53:4; Colossians 1:28). For it is clear through these words, in the Lord Jesus Christ, not partly truth and partly falsehood: but all truth is in Him, that is, both of God and of man.

Chapter X.

But human wisdom does not understand this, which the blessed Apostle condemns, saying: Let your faith not be in the wisdom of men, whose Lord knows their thoughts, because they are vain; but in the power of God (1 Corinthians II, 5); and again: Not taught in the words of human wisdom, but taught in the Holy Spirit (ibidem 13). Therefore, faith is not in human wisdom, and there is no heresy. In the Father, therefore, the Son and the Holy Spirit are always one; which the Son himself confirms, saying: I and the Father are one (John X, 30): one by nature of divinity, we are by the properties of persons; and again: Behold, the hour is coming. That you may leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me (John 16:32); and again: The works that I do, the Father abiding in me, he does those works (John 14:10). Therefore, the Son is always in the Father, who said to Moses: I am, he sent me to you (Exodus 3:14). He is the one whom the Father rejoiced in when the world was perfected; for he had founded such a great mass of earth upon the seas, and had placed it above the rivers, so that the heaviest element would be suspended by its command over the thin waters. Therefore, in the stability of the orb of the earth, when the Father was establishing its foundations, there was no one with Him except those who were in Him, that is, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Let the impious heretics be ashamed, therefore, who say that the Son of God or the Holy Spirit is a creature, or that there was a time when they did not exist; for the creator of times has no beginning. Whatever the Son speaks, are the words of the Father, and are the words of the Holy Spirit; whatever the Father speaks, are the words of the Son, and are the words of the Holy Spirit; whatever the Holy Spirit speaks, are the words of the Father, and are the words of the Son of God. Therefore, by these words, the knowledge of the Holy Trinity is preached under the mystery; for the Son says, 'The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father' (John 15:26); yet,

due to the unity and communion of nature, the Spirit is sent by the Son. The Son, who was seen by the prophet Isaiah in the form of a ruler, spoke as the Holy Spirit through the prophet due to the partnership of majesty and unity of substance. In the description of the vision of the Cherubim and Seraphim, where the Lord is partly revealed and partly concealed, it is shown that he is covered by two wings and covers his feet with two wings while flying with the other two wings (Isaiah 6:2). Therefore, let us desire those things which were before the world and those things which will be after the world, which neither eye has seen nor ear has heard (1 Corinthians 2:9). But those things which happened in the days of old have come to our knowledge through sacred reading. Therefore, we confess in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit not only one operation, but also equality; for where there is equality, there is the same nature and the same substance. Therefore, the Evangelist says (John 5:19) that the Jews were persecuting him because he not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also by calling himself the Son of God, he was making himself equal to God. Which the Lord himself approves, saying: I and the Father are one, and I am in the Father, and the Father is in me; and again: The Father who gave me is greater than all; and no one can snatch out of my hand; and immediately he adds: And no one can snatch out of the Father's hand (John 10:30; 14:10; 10:29). So if no one can snatch from the hand of the Son what the Father has given, and these same things are in the hand of the Father, which are not snatched away by him, it is clearly proven that all things of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, who is both of the Father and of the Son, are common: and that the things of the Son are held in the hand of the Father, and the things of the Father are held in the hand of the Son. Therefore the Lord, Christ, the Son of God and man, who always was with the Father and in the Father, spoke in two ways, that is, now according to the glory of his divinity, now according to the manhood he assumed of our nature. Therefore, the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father, and in both is the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the correct confession of the mystery of the holy and inseparable Trinity is our ignorance; for when the holy Apostle testifies that the judgments of God are inscrutable (Rom. XI, 33), he himself understands how inscrutable and hidden He is, whose judgments are inscrutable and hidden. However, the holy Apostle did not say that the judgments of God are difficult to find or never found, lest it seem that he was cutting off all hope from those seeking diligently; but he said, 'The judgments of God are unsearchable.' Therefore, although someone may advance in knowledge and be devoted to wisdom, they can never comprehend the substance of the uncreated nature with created understanding. For when they find something, other questions arise; when they discover that, they will also find countless others. Therefore, to someone who is investigating so much, such a great amount of material is always suggested, that the ignorance of the remaining things envelops the knowledge of the earlier ones. Hence, even the wisest Solomon, knowing the nature of things and their difficulties, and applying the measure of his wisdom, says: I said, I will become wise, and Wisdom herself has withdrawn further from me than it was, and the profound depth, who will find it? And again: For the Lord's works are many and hidden; and again: Just as you do not know the way of the spirit, or how the bones are formed in the womb of a pregnant woman; so you do not know the works of God, who is the maker of all; and again: Do not seek things higher than you, and do not investigate things stronger than you; and again: Just as someone who eats a lot of honey, it is not good for him; so the one who investigates majesty is overwhelmed by glory (Wisdom 7:17; Ecclesiasticus 7:24-25; 11:5; 3:12). And truly nothing is so true, nothing so manifest; for it is written: Who understands sins (Psalm XVIII, 3)? Therefore, if men do not understand their own sins, how much less will they be able to

discover the nature of God and His plans! Confirming this, the prophet says: Who can describe His generation? (Isaiah LIII, 8)

Chapter XI.

Therefore, we believe in this one God, the Father Almighty, the creator of visible and invisible things, whose judgments and hidden counsels are never unjust. And yet this Father is a Father to Himself without any other father: and therefore the Son, begotten of Him, whose generation human speech cannot explain, cannot be inferior to Him; because, as it has been said, He is His Word, His Power, and His Wisdom. Therefore, we confess that He is the Lord God, the Son of God the Most High, the unique and only-begotten, and we acknowledge that He is one God with the Father and the Holy Spirit; although the human speech cannot explain His equality, we have come to know the sacred and venerable mysteries of His incarnation from the holy archangel Gabriel speaking to the holy Virgin Mary, who, being informed by words, conceives by the Holy Spirit, and remains a virgin. For he says: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child who will be born will be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). Therefore, this generation, in which he was born of a virgin for our salvation, does not make him inferior to the Father either in time or in power; for he is not a temporal father, so as to be born before the Son in time, because the eternal Father begot the coeternal Son; nor was he born or made from outside, as the heretics claim, but the true faith holds that he was begotten from the Father's own substance. Therefore, it is honorable to confess the true Son, who exists in the eternity and omnipotence of the perfect and holy Trinity. And just as we are obliged to believe in the Father, so too in the Son; for he is truly begotten by the one who has begotten. We also believe in the Holy Spirit, whose majesty, power, and equality, which he possesses with the Father and the Son, we have already shown above, proceeding from the Father, and possessing a common deity, operation, and substance with the Father and the Son, and distinguishing the persons in their properties. Nevertheless, we confess the inseparable deity of the holy Trinity; for what we distinguish by names and persons, we unite by power, deity, and unity. Therefore, the name of the Holy Trinity is a great mystery and secret; and therefore when we speak of spiritual things, nothing of the physical should be proposed at all before the eyes of the heart. Therefore, to the Holy and inseparable Trinity belongs an invisible light, an inseparable power, an incomprehensible substance, an endless life, to which eternal peace is present in every way, which no created being ever penetrates, nor disturbs. Therefore, if anyone calls upon the Father's majesty, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit, it seems that they are seeking hope from themselves, that is, from something similar and not from a higher nature; for everything that is created, insofar as it is concerned, is made from something that was not, and is similar to itself. Therefore, to the Lord Christ God the Father belongs his own generation, but to us belongs voluntary adoption; to him is Father by nature, to us by grace; to him is God by the unity of mystery, to us by power. Therefore, let anyone who holds anything other than this, and does not believe in this way, be anathema.

Chapter XII.

But the Holy Spirit Himself is, as has already been said, He who is of the Father and the Son: He is the one who, like the Father and the Son, fills the earth: He is the one who is proclaimed holy and good by the Son: He is the one who, like the Lord Christ, is proclaimed good and upright by the prophet David (Luke 11:13); for He says: The word of the Lord is upright, referring to the Son; and:

My heart has brought forth a good word. Concerning the Holy Spirit: Renew a righteous spirit in my inner being; and: Your good Spirit will lead me on the right path (Psalm 50:14; 32:4; 43:1; 49:12; 142:10). He is the one who foresees the future as if it were present; he is the one who foretold to us the birth, miracles, persecution, passion, cross, death, burial, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and coming to judgment of Christ the Lord many years before. Just as the Father is without beginning, so too he has the Holy Spirit and the Son without beginning, coeternal, begotten from himself, not after himself. And therefore, just as the Father precedes all antiquity of times, consumes with eternity, surpasses with longevity, so too he begot the Son as his equal in power as well as in the equality we mentioned: but this power, this wisdom, this Word, which is the Son, as the Apostle will use our words (Philippians 2:6 and following), although he was in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God; but he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men, and found in appearance as a man. He humbled himself even to death, death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, the Son of God is called Christ because this mystery signifies his birth according to the flesh, his suffering and death. But this wondrous and singular birth, by which Christ was conceived, was accomplished by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, as the faith of the Holy Creed testifies. Therefore, here the only-begotten Son of God is found in the divine nature, also in His carnal birth through which He assumed our humanity in order to save it; for He alone is born of a Virgin who neither experienced conception from a man nor corruption from childbirth. Therefore, we confess that He was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary according to the flesh; for as it has already been said, the Archangel Gabriel had promised to the blessed Virgin Mary, saying: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and therefore the holy One who will be born from you will be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). The Son of God was crucified under Pontius Pilate for our salvation, and was buried. Therefore, the flesh taken from the Virgin is true, the crucifixion is true, the burial is true, and after the third day, the resurrection is true. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, the creator and sanctifier, came to the sacred womb of the Virgin to receive flesh and form a man there, so that by the union of the Word and the man, Christ, the mediator between God and man, would be born perfectly from the first moment of his formation, without fraudulence of humanity and without corruption of divinity: to die because he was created, and to overcome the chains of death as the creator. Therefore, there must not be said any separation between the Word and the man assumed by him, because we confess one Christ, the Son of God, made up of two natures, that is, the divine and human, in a mystic and ineffable manner.

Chapter XIII.

Therefore, it is impossible to discuss these things but it is permissible to believe them: to seek humbly, not to inquire arrogantly. Therefore, the Word and substance of God, which is entirely incorporeal, could not be inserted into a human body unless by means of some spiritual nature, that is, the soul. Therefore, the soul, receiving the Word of God in a hidden rational art, without any contamination from man, God was born of the Virgin. Therefore, just as the Son of God, offering Himself as an example to all through participation, according to what the Word and wisdom of God is, does not diminish by the sharing of participation, so also the holy soul of Jesus, which was sad

and disturbed on account of our sins, contracted nothing from it. This is what God loved in His predestined ones (Ambrose, On Luke, Book X, §127): this is our life, of which the Apostle says: And your life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3): this is what loved righteousness and hated iniquity (Psalm 44:8): this was not sad unto death, but unto death (Matthew 26:38): this was troubled on the cross not for herself, but for us: not by her own power, not by her own wisdom, not by the Word of God, who took her for the salvation of our souls, and, adorning her with every virtue and sanctity, led her into the fellowship of deity. Therefore, regarding that which is similar to all our souls, the Savior says: I have the power to lay down my life, and I have the power to take it up again; and: No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord, and I have the power to take it up again (John 10:18). This is the blessed soul, which cried out to divinity on the cross, saying: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46). Thus, the man about to die, by the separation of divinity, cried out; for since divinity is free from death, death could not exist unless life were to depart, because life is divinity; for it never experiences either death or corruption, since it is always immortal and incorruptible. Therefore God, who is Word and Spirit, who inspires where He wills (John 3:8), did not unwillingly abandon the flesh or soul He assumed, but, because He willed it, at the time and place and in the way that He willed, He laid it aside and took it up again. Therefore, He was not stripped of His flesh by anyone's right or power, but He stripped Himself of it; for if He did not wish to die, without a doubt, He would not have died, since He is able not to die. The Apostle confirms that it is thus when he says: 'Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in Himself' (Colossians 2:15), namely, by the death of the assumed man, so that, as the blessed Apostle says, by the death of the assumed man He might destroy him who had the power of death (Hebrews 2:14), that is, the devil, and deliver those who were subject throughout life to servitude. Which was thus to happen much earlier, the prophet Isaiah had foretold, saying: Like a sheep led to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearer is silent; and again: He was offered, because he himself wished it, to expiate the sins of many; and again: He delivered his soul unto death, and he was reckoned among the wicked; and he himself took on the sins of many, and for the transgressors he interceded (Isaiah 53:7 et seq.). Therefore, Christ the Lord did not endure the cross out of necessity, but by his own will, saying to Peter, who was scandalized by the mystery of the cross due to the weakness of fear and trembled with human dread: Get behind me, Satan, you are a stumbling block to me; for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men. For the chalice which the Father gave to me, do you not want me to drink it? (Matth. XVI, 23; Joan. XVIII, 11; Matth. XXVI, 23). Otherwise, if it were not offered by his own will, and he wanted to bear the cross, who could indicate and predict the traitor, and he said to the apostles: All of you will be scandalized by me this night (Matth. XXVI, 31)? He could have avoided those who were sent to capture him, but he fearlessly confronted them and said: Whom do you seek? (Joan. XVIII, 4)? Those who immediately fell backwards; for they were unable to bear the voice of the present God. Therefore, it was not a matter of necessity that he suffered, but of free will; not so much his own, but also the Father's, to whom he says: 'To do your will, my God, I desired' (Psalm 39:9). Through the true flesh of the immortal mediator of God and the mortal redemption of humans, we are made alive, saved, and freed from the snares and captivity of the devil, over whom he gave us power, saying: 'Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy' (Luke 10:19). Therefore, the incarnation of humility and mystery was done so that we could receive power over the devil, who, knowing that

he would become through pride, fell into such madness that he wanted to make himself equal to the highest creator, saying: 'I will set my throne on the north wind, and I will be like the Most High' (Isaiah 14:14). This is confirmed by the Apostle, saying: 'For what the Law could not do, weakened as it was by the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and concerning sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, that just as all die in Adam, so also in Christ, who through the passion of the cross dedicated to us a bath and drink from His own side, all might be made alive' (Romans 8:3; Colossians 2:15; 1 Corinthians 15:22).

Chapter XIV.

Therefore, it is necessary for us to look more diligently at who offers, to whom they offer, what they offer, and for whom they offer, that which is the way, the truth, and the gate; concerning which gate the Holy Spirit says through the Prophet: This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter through it; and again: He shall not be confounded when he speaks to his enemies in the gate. But those who have not earned through the grace and help of God to be raised up from the gates of death, that is, from sins, will not come to this gate. Therefore, I proclaim with steadfast profession the torments of Him in whom I believe, and I am not ashamed of those things which the Redeemer of the world undertook for my salvation and triumphed over by His power. Though you, Jew and Gentile, may laugh at the fact that I place my hope in Him whom I profess to be crucified and dead, I nonetheless glory in these wounds through which I please my Redeemer, which you are ignorant of. For the word of the cross, as the Apostle says, is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God (I Cor. I, 24 et 25). Behold, I make mention of Pilate the judge, by whom he was judged, who will be the judge of the world. But what do the punishments of that blessed body, which were destroyed by his swift resurrection, bite at the dignity of my faith? For this is not the end of my faith and confession: instead, accept what follows. On the third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, he sits at the right hand of the Father, from there he will come to judge the living and the dead (Acts 10:42), that is, both the righteous and sinners, the Gentiles and the Jews, both souls and bodies. Have you seen our unwavering and blissful trust, which is placed in someone whom even death itself cannot hinder or resist?

Chapter XV.

Finally, never has the abundance of compassion and patience of our Redeemer been more apparent than when He undertook the task of this mystery, namely, to assume our substance and to take on the rights of the gallows and the tomb. Therefore, in our favorable circumstances, His adversities were spent, and divine and human nature in our Redeemer entered into a sacred exchange; so that divinity might bear witness to humanity, and humanity might receive its reward from divinity. That is to say, our God showed the magnitude of His love for us by the wounds of His body, and our mind and body recognized the repayment of divine fellowship for their obedience. Therefore, it must be considered with what faith and devotion we ought to adhere to and serve this Lord, who has been so generous in bestowing such great gifts upon us; he who has given as much to the faithful as he himself possesses in his kingdom. He has chosen to make us his heirs and even to share in our nature; yet not so as to strip us of our substance from the stronghold of divinity, but rather to draw us, weak and languishing in the extreme poverty and necessity of death, to the glory of resurrection. Because, therefore, He has shown in Himself whatever He

promised us, and taught that the substance of this flesh does not perish by rising again, and He showed by His Ascension where His habitation would be after the resurrection. This, therefore, is a great and altogether great sacrament of piety, which was manifested in the flesh, as the outcome of things, so the Teacher of nations announced. But He was justified in the Spirit, since the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, not only offered to us the hope of happiness, but also presented an example of assuming the truth. Certainly, the sacrament of piety, by which our creator and redeemer embraces us, shone forth in testimony of virtue, and was also celebrated in the ascension assumed in glory by the ministries of angels. Therefore, the nature of human flesh, which has deserved to enter into the substance and fellowship of the holy Trinity through the Lord Christ, should not be despised. I indeed think that, with God's gift, enough has been said about the mystery of the holy Trinity and the incarnation of the Lord Savior. But since the resurrection of our flesh is placed at the end of our teaching, it is necessary to repeat the same more firmly from us on account of heretics and more frequently.

Chapter XVI.

For the Word of God, who is the Lord Christ, who is the firstborn of all creation, and who is the firstborn from the dead, came in his own image, which he himself had created beforehand. Concerning this image it is written: 'And God formed man in his own image and likeness' (Gen. 1:27); and, assuming flesh for the flesh, through a rational soul, he received it from the holy virgin Mary, and purifying the similar things through the similar, he became fully human without sin. By means of both soul and body, here, he who made everyone rich, as the Apostle says, became poor so that through his poverty we might be enriched with divine and heavenly riches (2 Cor. 8:9); through that sign of salvation that God gave to the human race, as the prophet Isaiah says: 'Behold, the Lord will give you a sign, Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel' (Isaiah 7:14); before he knew how to call father or mother, he ate butter and honey, that is, he was filled with the Holy Spirit, whose teaching is sweeter to us than honey and the honeycomb; taking spoils from the Magi, he was proved to be man, king, and God. And concerning this wonderful sign, Saint Simeon said to the Virgin Mary: 'Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted' (Luke 2:34). And concerning this sign, the blessed apostle Paul says: 'Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom' (1 Corinthians 1:22). Therefore, Christ, in his own likeness, which he had created in the first man, which he had seen in the man deceived by the devil's artifice, came in the likeness of sin; so that he might restore man to his original image through the passion of the cross and death (Romans 8:3). This image, though it can be obscured through neglect, cannot be destroyed by nature. Concerning this image, the Prophet says: Although man walks in the image of God, he will be in vain disturbed. Therefore, there is no one who does not have some image, that is, either of sanctity or of sin. We walk in the image of God when good thoughts, which are implanted in us by God, remain in us and lead us to good deeds. Therefore, the memory of God excludes from our hearts all wickedness and sins, which the devil tries to sow and depict in our hearts. Where it is said by the Prophet: Lord, in your city you will reduce their images to nothingness (Psalm 72:20). Therefore, it is of no benefit to read or hear unless you store in the treasure of your memory those things which you have read or heard and are good. Just as there are three things in man, that is, the body, the soul, and the spirit, so there are three higher faculties that lead us either to good or to evil, namely, thought, speech, and action. The Holy Spirit briefly comprehends three things in

the first psalm, saying: Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand on the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the pestilent. These are the three tempters of the devil who plot against a wretched soul, in order to provoke it to sin either in word, deed, or thought. Therefore, in spirit, soul, and body, we either act well or poorly, either we are chaste or commit fornication. And thus, just as the greedy and rapacious are slaves of wealth, and as the gluttonous and drunkards are slaves of the belly and lust, so every sin dominates humans, as the prophet affirms and says: There will be five cities in the land of Egypt, speaking the language of Canaan, that is, the five carnal senses which speak while the wretched soul is oppressed by the darkness of Egypt; for Egypt signifies pursuing, troubling, and constraining. So, unless we overcome the extremely cold north wind with the warmth of faith, with the help of Christ, who teaches and delights in good things, immediately the heat of desire and lust will arise in us. Therefore, let the flesh be weakened by fasting, and let it be circumcised by the knife of every desire, so that sin may not reign in our mortal body (Rom. VI, 12); so that we may be able to escape the fellowship of the world and the reproaches of the devil. Therefore, fasting is the contrition and humiliation of the soul; affliction, however, of the body.

Chapter XVII.

Let these things that have been said about the image of God, to which man was made, be sufficient. Now, let us return to the order at hand. Therefore, He was born from a virgin mother among men, without a human father, because He had God the Father in heaven, whom He had not come to deny, so that He could be born from another. Therefore, because of the sentence of Eve the virgin (Gen. III, 16), which she received after the sin, she, who was once immortal, became mortal after the transgression. He Himself came through a Virgin: and just as death was conquered through a virgin, so He came through the Virgin Mary, who would conquer death. Death entered through the wood, but by the wood the death of the Lord was excluded: a woman was formed from the side of a sleeping man (Gen. II, 22); similarly, the Church was formed from the side of Christ on the cross through the suffering and death-like sleep. The woman was formed from the side of the man; and therefore the Lord was pierced in the side, so that he may suffer for the woman, from whose side she was formed, who persuaded him. But let us see, because the place requires it, what should be responded to heretics who want the soul of Adam to be a part of God, or that it was made before his body was formed from the earth: which is completely foreign to the Catholic faith and is alien. For it is written that God formed man from the dust of the earth and breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul (Gen. II, 7; Wis. XV, 11). This does not teach us, however, that the example of Eve, the woman, who was formed from Adam's rib and later received her soul from God, is the same; for she was preserved in the creation and formation until the end of the world, as the prophet Isaiah testifies, saying: He who forms the spirit of man within him (Isa. 42:5); and David: who fashions the hearts of them all (Ps. 33:15). Therefore, according to such clear evidence, neither is the soul prior to the body, nor was it created earlier, nor is it formed from the substance of God, nor is it found in material and irrational creatures, as the heretics claim, much before this time I do not know where it had been, which they cannot prove.

Chapter XVIII.

Therefore, every day, God of majesty creates and infuses souls into already formed bodies, as Moses the lawgiver testifies concerning pregnant women: those who have a formed or unformed infant. (Exodus 21:23-24). The Lord confirms this, saying: 'My Father works until now, and I work' (John 5:17). Just as it is impious to say that the soul of a human is of the substance of God, or that a soul is from a soul, so it is impious to say that it was made before the formation of the body; since Adam himself declares, saying: 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh' (Genesis 2:23). Therefore, God is one thing, the soul of man is another; because it is made by Him, not of Him. For God is invisible, incorruptible, impenetrable, uncontaminated, who cannot be corrupted in any way, and who cannot be harmed in any way: but the soul of man, which is not God, is susceptible to sin, and is embroiled in suffering, and is led astray by falsehood, is tempted, blinded, troubled, corrupted, and taken captive; and therefore it needs the power of a liberator. Therefore, this change of soul and this variety clearly show me that the soul of man is neither God nor of His substance. For if the soul of man is the substance of God, according to those who say this, then the substance of God is saddened, killed, blinded, corrupted, and captured. And now it is judged, and on the day of judgment, having taken on flesh, it will be damned with the devil in eternal fire. This is how impious it is, understood by anyone who is sane. The Lord himself cries out, strengthening his apostles, and says: Do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul; but fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. 10:28). Will God judge according to these insane people, as it has already been said, their portion or nature? Far be it. And therefore, in the very bodies from which we were born, and from which our souls departed when we died, in those same bodies our souls will enter after the resurrection, by the command of God; and they will rise, if they have done good, to receive the resurrection of life and the glory of the heavenly kingdom; but if they have done evil, to receive the resurrection of judgment and eternal reproach and confusion. This is confirmed by the blessed Apostle who says: We must all be revealed before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10). For at that time, according to the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah, there will be no distinction between noble and common, priest and layperson, slave and master, mistress and her female servant, rich and poor, lender and borrower, buyer and seller (St. Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah). Therefore, all will stand before the tribunal of Christ on equal terms, and there will be no partiality with God. This is also announced by the Holy Job in almost the same words, saying: 'Both the small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master' (Job 3:19). And the Savior in the Gospel, to whom all judgment has been given because of the glorious passion of man, testifies in plain words, saying: 'For when the Son of Man comes in the glory of His Father with His holy angels, He will render to each one according to his deeds' (Matthew 25:31). All these things, therefore, are future; because what is to come, the Lord has spoken through the prophets, who says: I have multiplied visions, and I have been likened to the hand of the prophets (Hosea 12:10).

Chapter XIX.

The above-mentioned prophet marvels at and says: O guardian, what about the night? What about the night, O guardian? My secret is mine, my secret is mine. Woe is me. When, says the prophet, I heard these things; that is, that the God of majesty would assume flesh and that I foresaw the prophecy being fulfilled in him. I spoke to myself with inward affection of the heart; for I cannot tell everything that I see: my tongue clings to my jaws, my voice is concluded by pain and fear;

because such great mysteries are revolving before my eyes. For the present, those things that are future: I understand that the Samaritan guard is the one who, descending from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among thieves. (Luke 10:33). This is the guard to whom the blessed Job said (Job 7:20): O guard of men, why have you set me against yourself, and I have become burdensome to myself? Why do you not take away my sin, and why do you not remove my iniquity? This is the guard who says: I am continually over my guard, standing day and night (Isaiah 21:8); and about whom the Prophet says: Behold, he will not slumber nor sleep, he who guards Israel (Psalm 121:4). Because of these reasons, prophets, and because the characters are frequently changed in them and there are many parables, they are obscure. But now let us return to the order.

Chapter XX.

Therefore, heretics who deny the resurrection of the flesh often oppose the testimony of the blessed Apostle, in which he says: 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God' (1 Corinthians 15:50), conveniently ignoring what follows. For after saying 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,' he continues and says: 'Nor does corruption inherit incorruption' (ibid). These words were spoken not to suggest that the nature of our holy bodies will perish, but to indicate that corruption will put on incorruption, as the same Apostle confirms, saying: 'So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable: what is sown in dishonor, what is raised in glory: what is sown in weakness, what is raised in power: what is sown a natural body, what is raised a spiritual body' (ibid, 42 et seq). For these four orders of resurrection, which were prefigured by that priestly rod which blossomed in the tabernacle of the Lord, were thus to be understood (Num. 17:8; Lev. 26:19) . Therefore, it is to be understood in this way: Flesh and blood shall not possess the kingdom of God, just as God threatens the sinful people, saying: I will set a brazen sky over you, and an iron earth which you tread upon: not that the nature of the elements is changed, but that the greatness of punishments is shown through bronze and iron. Therefore, the Lord Christ has shown us the true future resurrection in himself, who, after his resurrection on the third day, demonstrated to the doubting disciples the marks of the nails and the wound from the spear (Luke 24:40).

Chapter XXI.

Therefore, let us not despise our flesh by living wickedly and lustfully, in which the Lord Christ was born, suffered, and rose again. Let us not scorn the clay of our flesh, which, having been refined in the fire of the divine nature of the Lord Christ, reigns in the purest vessel in heaven. It is indeed worth questioning why the Apostle said: 'For our God is a consuming fire' (Hebrews 12:29). For our God, who is a living, divine, and eternal fire, consumes not these material bodies, but the consciences of sins, and sets our hearts on fire with His love. And therefore the Angels, who are full of charity, are also called fires (Psalms 103:4). But also all the saints, who are kindled by that fire, of which the Lord says: I came to send fire upon the earth, and what would I but that it be kindled? (Luke 12:49)! And again: Let your loins be girt and lamps burning in your hands (Ibidem 35). Of which the Apostle also says: Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord (Romans 12:11). Therefore, the divine word is ignitable and fervent. This is confirmed by the Lord himself, saying to the prophet Jeremiah: 'Behold, I have put my words in your mouth like fire' (Jer. 5:14); which fire the prophet himself declares to be burning within him, saying: 'And it became in my heart as a burning fire' (ibid. 20:9). Therefore, when it is said: 'Our God is a consuming fire,' it is said in this way, not

because God, who is a spirit, is fire, but because he illuminates the righteous, while appearing as a punishment of fire for those who endure it. Now let's return to the order.

Chapter XXII.

How, then, is the resurrection of the flesh denied, when the Lord Christ Himself said through the voice of the prophet long ago: 'My flesh rests in hope' (Psalm 16:9); and in another place: 'His flesh does not see corruption' (Acts 2:31); and again: 'His tomb is taken away'; and again: 'And all flesh shall see the salvation of God'; and again: 'All flesh shall come to worship before the Lord' (Isaiah 66:23; 1 Timothy 2:8), either in the heavenly Jerusalem or in every place where it has fallen or been buried, as the Apostle says: 'I desire that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands'; for if the sun, which is a creature and is commanded to rise, is seen in all parts of the earth and extends its rays, how much more must the Creator and Almighty God be believed to be present in every place! To whom does the Prophet say: 'Whither shall I go from thy face? If I descend into hell, thou art there' (Psalm 138:7-8); and so forth. Therefore, if all flesh is to adore the Lord, and conversely the bodies of men who have transgressed against God will be delivered to eternal fires, there will be a true resurrection of the flesh on both sides. And thus, it is neither to the right nor to the left, from this holy and Catholic faith, that we are to deviate; that is, that we do not follow the Jewish or heretical error, some of whom, being carnal, love only fleshly things; others, ungrateful for the gifts of God, refuse to have what the Lord Jesus Christ both had in His birth and possesses forever in His resurrection. For this is the true resurrection, which so gives glory to the flesh that it does not take away the truth, as it has already been said, the Apostle says: 'This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality'; and again: 'We do not want to be stripped, understand the flesh, but to be clothed with desire for glory, which is from heaven'; and again: 'That we may be found clothed and not naked, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life' (1 Cor. 15:53; 2 Cor. 5:2-3). Therefore, no one is clothed unless they were dressed before; just as our Lord, who was transformed into glory on the mountain, when he exhibited Moses and Elijah as his witnesses (Matthew 17:3); not only his clothing, but also his face shone like the sun; and where the face is mentioned, I believe that the other parts of the body were also seen.

Chapter XXIII.

Therefore, all the righteous will be transformed in the resurrection, as confirmed by John the Evangelist who said: Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared. We know that when he appears, we shall be like him (1 John 3:2). And the righteous person says: As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness (Psalm 17:15). Therefore, our bodies will rise again to either eternal glory or eternal punishment (Daniel 12:2). The witnesses of whom are Elijah and Enoch, who will remain until the second coming of the Lord Christ throughout the entire series of years. This is confirmed by the blessed Job, saying: 'I know that my Redeemer lives, and on the last day I will rise from the earth; and I will be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I will see God. This hope is laid up in my bosom.' (Job 19:25-27) Therefore, let the heretics be ashamed, who falsely claim that the body of the Lord was airy or imaginary, or that it will be ours, or that they believe in metempsychosis.

Chapter XXIV.

Truly, it is impious and unjust that, like Job, who saw with his own eyes the wounds of his own body and touched the decay and worms with his own hands (Job 7:5), it is said that another person, either in the flesh or in the soul, will rise. Therefore, what we have said about the blessed Job, the same applies to Peter, to Paul, and to all the saints who suffered various torments for God. We are mistakenly asked by heretics whether there will be a difference in gender in the resurrection, that is, whether women will rise with men, ignoring the blind opinion of the Lord who says: The Queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and she will condemn them (Luke 11:31). Where, therefore, the true flesh is, there is diversity of sex; and where there is diversity of sex, there is John, and there is Mary. Therefore, the true resurrection of the flesh will be without the works of the flesh; because, as the truth says: They neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven (Matth. XXII, 30). Therefore, an angelic likeness is promised to us, not a denial of the substance of the flesh; for when it is said, They neither marry, nor are given in marriage, it is said concerning those who can marry, and yet do not marry. For if here in this life, which is a trial upon the earth, many for the sake of the kingdom of heaven castrate themselves, not marrying; and not only men, but also women, with the help of Christ, do this: how much more shall we not say that this happens in that blessed life, but neither will it be permissible to think of it! Therefore, it is Catholic and right for both sexes to confess in the resurrection of the flesh without the works of the flesh: since, as it has already been said, we who are still placed in this life strive with the help of God not to fulfill the works of the flesh, which lusts against the spirit; the Apostle approving of this and saying: Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit (Rom. VIII, 9); for by denying those in the flesh whom it was clear were in the flesh, he condemned not the substance of the flesh, but the sins, that is, the works of the flesh in them; and again: That what is mortal may be swallowed up by life (II Cor. V, 4); for though our outer man is corrupted, yet our inner man is renewed: which, however, we know takes place not only in the kingdom of heaven and in baptism, but also in penitents every day, in whom the destruction of the flesh gives way to spiritual progress. Therefore, in that state, there will be no works of the flesh, no growth of limbs, no hair growth, or nail growth, because we will all rise as the perfect man, who is Christ (Ephesians 4:13). For if the Fathers in the desert did not have hair or nails grow for forty years, nor did their clothing or sandals wear out (Deuteronomy 29:5); the wise reader understands that it is impious to seek in the kingdom of heaven, where pain, groaning, and sadness will flee.

Chapter XXV.

But against this true and firm doctrine, supported by such clear evidence and every virtue, heretics often oppose the following statement of the Apostle (Tertullian, On the Resurrection, ch. 52): 'Not all flesh is the same flesh, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, and another for birds' (1 Corinthians 15:39), not understanding, poor wretches, that the blessed Apostle spoke of this honor of the body, not of a difference in species. Therefore, one flesh is for humans, that is, for the servants of God, and another for animals, that is, for the pagans and sinners and heretics, who, though they were redeemed and honored by the blood of Christ, did not understand but became like foolish beasts and were made similar to them (Psalm 48:13). There are different kinds of birds, that is, martyrs, who ascend to the heavenly realms on the wings of the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of fish, that is, those who are taken up after the water of baptism by the Savior. There are different kinds of glory of the sun, that is, of Christ: and different kinds of glory of the

moon, that is, of the Church: and different kinds of glory of the stars, that is, of the seed of Abraham, and of those who through faith and good works show themselves to be his children; for one star differs from another star in glory (1 Cor. 15:41), that is, the apostles and prophets, who desired to see and hear Christ: but those who saw and heard him, and the heavenly bodies and the earthly bodies, that is, of Christians and Jews. Finally, however, in order to demonstrate the resurrection of all, he concluded his argument by saying: so also is the resurrection of the dead. (Ibidem 42). In order for this to be understood, let us consider examples of our condition, which occurs in this world. For when an infant grows into a boy, the boy into a youth, the youth into a man, and the man into an old man, he does not perish at each stage of life, but remains the same as he was. Therefore, this age gradually changes, but not nature. But in that heavenly Jerusalem, where this sun and moon will shine sevenfold, there will be no divisions of ages; for there neither infant, nor old man, nor child will exist, who does not fulfill their days, being a son of the resurrection, and reaching the measure of the fullness of Christ's age, so that neither will there be lacking to anyone the spaces of years, nor will there be an excess. In that time, therefore, when the age of all is one, both the holy and the sinner will be perfected by a similar resurrection, and they will not vary in time among themselves: but one is led to eternal rewards, and to receive goods multiplied a hundredfold, while another is dragged into eternal punishments. Therefore, since in the human race people are born in different ways, in the resurrection of the flesh there will be one resurrection for all and it will be the same; for Adam was born differently, Eve was born differently, Cain and Abel were born differently, and all people are born and have been born differently. But Christ Jesus, who is the mediator between God and humans, was born differently. So even though humans are born in different ways, the nature of humanity does not differ in the resurrection of the flesh and of all the limbs. All these limbs are declared by the same judgment of the Lord, for it spoke of that man who did not have the wedding garment, nor did he keep that commandment: 'At all times may your garments be clean.' He commanded him to be bound and taken away with hands and feet so that he would not recline at the banquet, nor sit on the throne, nor stand at the right hand of God, but to be thrown into the fires of Gehenna, where there is weeping of eyes and gnashing of teeth.

Chapter XXVI.

Moreover, it is impious to doubt the value of our hairs, which the Lord has numbered (Matthew 10:30). They have been counted in vain if they are eventually to perish, but they do not perish, because we will be raised in the likeness of the Lord Christ with all our members. For if the almighty God showed His power in the fiery furnace, which consumes everything it receives, by preserving the hairs of the three young men untouched (Daniel 3:50), will He not raise our hairs in the resurrection? He will certainly restore without any increase or decrease. Therefore, in the resurrection of the dead, there will be no variation or difference, just as now the weakness of the flesh is fragile in us, which is weighed down by the burden of itself, which is dyed, defiled, blinded, injured, wounded, healed, dies, corrupts, and is reduced to dust and ashes; and yet after all these things, on the day of judgment, it will be restored in the simple glory of the first Adam and the second. Therefore, the true resurrection of the dead in the flesh will occur, and there will be a diversity of sexes without the work of flesh and blood. The Lord says, 'There will come an hour when all who are in the tombs will hear the voice of the Son of God and will come forth' (John 5:28-29). They will hear with their ears and come forth with their feet, just like Lazarus and all

those whom the Savior raised (John 11:44). Therefore, those who were brought into the tombs will come forth from the tombs. So all flesh will come not only from the earth, but also from the sea and the rivers; so that they may see the salvation of God (Tertullian, *De Resurrectione Carnis* 31). For He will command the fish of the sea, and the rivers, and the beasts of the earth, and the birds of the sky; and the bones and flesh of all the dead will come forth; so that some may rise to eternal life, and others to everlasting shame and confusion. Then the righteous will see the punishments and tortures of the wicked; for their worm will not die, and their fire will not be extinguished, and they will be a spectacle to all flesh (Isaiah 66:24). Therefore, since we have this hope, truly as we have exhibited our members to serve uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity (Rom. VI, 13); so let us exhibit them to serve righteousness unto sanctification of life: that rising from the dead, we may walk in the newness of life, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh, by reason of his Spirit dwelling in us (II Cor. III, 18). It is therefore just, and truly just, that as we have always carried about in our body the dying of Jesus (II Cor. IV, 12), his life also should be manifested in our body. Therefore, stripping off, as the Apostle says (Colossians 3:9), the old man with his deeds, let us not seek the tunic of error and sin; so that we may put on the new, who is Christ (Ephesians 4:24), imitating his bride saying at night: I have taken off my tunic, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? (Song of Solomon 5:3).

Chapter XXVII.

Therefore, that potter creates this art of majesty and power, that is, the resurrection, who speaks through the prophet Jeremiah to the sinful people, saying: 'Can I not, as the potter, reshape and restore you, O house of Israel?' (Jerem. XVIII, 6). He also shows this incredible work of his majesty in the hand of Moses (Exod. IV, 6 and 7), which he changes from brightness to the original color. However, the very name of resurrection openly signifies not dying but being raised again. Therefore, what dies in a human being is also vivified. So, according to the resurrection of the dead, even when he wanders, he is not ignorant. Finally, that wounded man from Jericho (Luke 10:34) is completely brought back to the inn, and the wounds of his sins are healed through the grace of mercy with immortality. Therefore, the prophecy that truly hung in the completed flesh of the Lord Christ is fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit, desiring to teach us, spoke; for he says: 'Who is this who comes up in garments white, leaning on her beloved, and abounding in delights?' And again: My beloved is white and ruddy (Song of Solomon 8:5; 5:10). Ruddy, therefore, from the incarnation, white, however, from the divinity. Blessed John the Evangelist proves this to be true when he says that the horse on which the Lord sat was red (Revelation 6:4), namely the holy body that he assumed from the holy Virgin. To whom, ascending in heaven, it is said: Who is this that comes from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah, and: Why is your clothing red and your garments like those who tread in the winepress (Isaiah 63:1, 2)? And there is a sense: Who is this, who rises from the earth, whose garments are sprinkled with blood? But that which is said in the prophet Zechariah (Zech. 1:8), that horses of various colors followed him, that is, those who are red in martyrdom, or dark in flight, that is, various in virtues, or white in virginity. But this red horse, white again, is described by Saint John (Rev. 19:11), and his divinity, immortality and incorruption are shown. And for this reason, all those who follow him not only wear white clothes, but also ride white horses (Ibid., 14), with incorruptible and immortal bodies. And for this reason, all the saints imitate him, with his help; because they do not stain their clothes, and virgins, with his grace as a gift, remain. And for this reason, they will be in white clothes, as it has been said, following the

Lamb who took away the sin of the world.

Chapter XXVIII.

Therefore, the Son of God, as it is said, assumed the entire human being from the Virgin, and will raise up the entire and intact person, that is, the soul and body, fulfilling His own statement in which He says: Everything that the Father has given me, I will not lose any of it; but I will raise it up on the last day (John 6:39): we understand that the Lord Christ said this both of Himself and of His members, who speaks in all the holy books with His own mouth and with the mouths of His members. Therefore, the body cries out to God, and the head in the body, and the body in the head, that is, the Church in Christ, and Christ in the Church; because in no way are the members separate from the head, nor is the head separated from the members. Then, therefore, his adversaries, who tormented and shouted: Take him away, take him away, crucify him (John 19:15), will see him. Then the prophecy of the angels will be fulfilled, who said to the astonished apostles: Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? He will come, just as you saw him going into heaven (Acts 1:11). And indeed, this is to be investigated, whether after the resurrection we will eat and drink in the kingdom of heaven, just as the Lord did after the resurrection in order to show his true body, and like Lazarus and others whom he raised. Therefore, the Lord ate in order to show the reality of his body, and to confirm the doubting apostles who thought he was a spirit or a phantom: he ate honeycomb to fulfill the prophecy which speaks in his person saying, 'I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; eat, friends, and be intoxicated, O neighbors' (Song of Solomon 5:1). Therefore, in order to demonstrate this prophecy and the true body after the resurrection, the Lord ate and drank, as the blessed Apostle Peter affirms, saying: 'But he was made manifest to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead' (Acts 10:40-41). Therefore, after the resurrection, there will be the food of the Word, the vision of God, and His praises and hallelujahs, as well as those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, which God has prepared for those who love him (1 Corinthians 2:9). Therefore, after the resurrection, we do not need to eat or drink, nor do incorruptible and immortal bodies need to be sustained by earthly nourishment; otherwise, where there is food, diseases and other afflictions that we endure in this world would also follow.

Chapter XXIX.

Just as, therefore, the Lord truly took on flesh, and truly suffered, and truly rose again, and truly showed his hands and side to the disciples (John 20:14; Luke 24:40); so too he truly ate, truly walked with his feet, and truly spoke with all the apostles and with Cleopas, and truly reclined with them at the dinner, and with his true hands he took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. But what suddenly disappeared from their eyes was of divine power, not a shadow or a phantom; otherwise, both before his passion, when they held him and brought him out of Nazareth to throw him down from the brow of the hill (Luke 4:29) on which their city was built, he passed through the middle of them, that is, he slipped out of their hands. Or did he not have flesh, who made a whip from a cord, and expelled all his enemies and persecutors from the temple? (John 2:15; John 20:26) Where all the power of His divinity shone forth. But that which, after the resurrection, He entered through closed doors to the disciples, was of the same power as that which disappeared from His eyes. For people of this world say that Apollonius the magician, when he stood before the emperor Domitian in the council chamber, suddenly disappeared (Philost.

Lemn. lib. VIII, cap. 2; Lactan. de Instit. l. V, c. 3). However, we say these things not because we compare the Lord Christ, filled with a demonic magician, but to refute the madness of heretics. Therefore, what a magician is allowed to do, if, however, it is true, the Lord is not allowed to do? Lynceus, as the stories go, could see through walls: the Lord, with the doors closed, unless it was a ghost, could not enter. He certainly walked on the sea with a steady step before the resurrection, and he demonstrated this to the Apostle Peter, who, walking on the water with faith, began to sink later due to his lack of faith, unless the right hand of the Lord had held him up quickly. The eagles and vultures sense the foreign corpses: Will the Savior not see his apostles unless he opens the doors? Lastly, I would like you to tell me, what is greater than to balance such a great size of land on three fingers (Isaiah XL, 12), and to hover over uncertain waters; or to pass through a closed creature to reach God? You give to the Creator what is greater, and you accuse Him of what is lesser. Peter the apostle, as it has already been said, walked on water (Matthew XIV, 36), and the soft waves did not yield to his heavy and solid body unless he had hesitated for a little while. And yet you accuse God, why He entered through closed doors? So a little doubt therefore entered Peter's faith, and immediately his body recognized its nature; so that we may know that it was not his body walking on the water, but his faith.

Chapter XXX.

Do not, in your judgment, equate or make the power of the Lord comparable to the tricks of magicians, either making it seem to be what it was not, as if he had eaten without teeth, broken bread without hands, walked without feet, spoken without a tongue, or shown his side without a body. And how, he says, did they not recognize him on the journey if he had the same body that he had before? For you are mistaken, and greatly mistaken, if you do not hear the Evangelist saying: Why were their eyes prevented from recognizing him; and shortly after: Their eyes were opened, he says, and they recognized him (Luke 24:16, 31). Do you foolishly think that he was someone else when he was recognized, and someone else when he was not recognized? And certainly he was one and the same. Therefore, it was the seeing eyes that both recognized and did not recognize, not the one who was seen, so that the prophecy of the holy Jeremiah might be fulfilled, where he says: 'Why will the land mourn and the grass of every field wither?' (Jeremiah 14:8). Finally, to make you understand, the deception that took place was not in the body of the Lord, but in the closed eyes: 'Their eyes were opened' (John 20:16), and immediately they recognized him. For Mary Magdalene, as long as she sought the living among the dead, did not recognize Jesus; but when she recognized him, she immediately confesses him as the Lord. And also, in the boat, with all the disciples gathered, Jesus stood on the shore (John 21:7); but the others did not recognize him. The first to recognize him was John, and he said: It is the Lord. It was fitting and quite appropriate that virginity should first recognize the virgin body. Therefore, he was the same and yet not the same, as seen by all.

Chapter XXXI.

Immediately the Evangelist adds, saying: And no one dared to question him any further, saying: Who are you (John 21:12)? Because those who ate and drank with him saw him as both true man and true God; not, however, that he was one God and another man, but that he was one and the same Son of God and Son of man; for he was known as a man and worshipped as God, fulfilling what the Lord himself had prayed, saying to the Father: And this is eternal life, that they may know

you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3). Therefore, it is worthy and very worthy that the flesh of man be brought into heaven, whose inhabitant God deigned to be: nor can it be seen that man has been made an inhabitant of heaven contrary to his merit, whose sheath the Spirit, who is God, did not disdain. Therefore, it was just that the body, in which God deigned to dwell and visit the earth, through which he became a partaker of ourselves, should be led to immortality and placed in heavenly abodes. So where should the habitation of God be, if not in the kingdom of God? And where is the kingdom of God, if not in the heavens where we all shall be, with His aid and support, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality (I Cor. XV, 53); so that all flesh may see the salvation of God (Isaiah XL, 5), and recognize that He is the redeemer and savior, who struggled with Jacob (Genesis XXXII, 24), who was the strength and helper of Jacob, who, in his voluntary suffering, which was prefigured by that struggle, blessed those who crucified Him and prayed for them, saying: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke XXIII, 34), confirming also what He had foretold through David: While they approached me, who ate my flesh, I, however, prayed (Psalm CVIII, 4). Therefore, the Word is not consumed but the flesh is: it is the flesh, not God, who is spirit, that is eaten. You, he says, who pursue me, have scourged me, have spit upon my face, have crucified me: nevertheless, I challenge you to repentance: For I do not desire the death of the sinner, but only that he may turn away and live (Ezek. 18:32) . This is confirmed by the blessed Apostle, who says: And you, when you were once alienated and enemies to your mind in evil works, hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death (Coloss. 1:21 and 22) .

Chapter XXXII.

But what they object to, that the Apostle has said: They that are in the flesh, cannot please God (Rom. VIII, 8); these things were said, not that the nature of the flesh is condemned, of which God is the creator, and in which many saints have pleased God and reign with Christ: but that the senses and works of the flesh are rejected (Tertul. I. de Resur. carn. cap. 46). Therefore, when the clay of our flesh, as has already been said, has flown to heaven on the wings of spiritual angels, there it has as an eternal pledge of its true and peaceful salvation, to whom we shall be caught up in the clouds to meet Christ in the air (I Thess. IV, 16), as the prophet Isaiah testifies, saying: They shall be carried upon the shoulders and taken to their own place (Isa. LXVI, 12); and again: Who are these that fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows? (Isa. LX, 8)? That is, to the mansions of their merits, of which the Lord says: 'In my Father's house there are many mansions' (John 14:2); and again: 'And they shall bring all your brethren from all nations into Jerusalem, on horses, and mules, and chariots, and carts, and litters, says the Lord God' (Isaiah 66:20). Lest it should perhaps appear doubtful to anyone that a man placed in this body can fly in the air, the Apostle confirms this saying: 'By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death' (Hebrews 11:5); for Elijah also, being placed in this body in which he still is, was carried away in a fiery chariot, that is, by the conveyance of angels, who are spirits and a flame of fire, who do the will of God, as if taken up to heaven (2 Kings 2:2); and Habakkuk the prophet, being led and brought back from Judea to Chaldaea by an angel, was in a moment of time (Daniel 14:35); and the Apostle Paul himself was caught up to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2), and into paradise; and was brought back from there into the world. But to make it even more evident and clear that these vehicles are the spirits of the saints, that is, the angels of God, the example of Saint Philip, one of the seven, whom the Spirit of the Lord caught away from Gaza and suddenly placed in Azotus,

teaches us (Acts 8:39-40). Having examined these things more thoroughly and carefully, and having scrupulously and systematically examined them, as far as the Lord has deigned to help me to further my intention, these words are sufficient. However, so that we do not seem to have omitted anything, the words of our Lord and Savior Himself are to be approved; for He says, when speaking about the field and the wheat and the weeds: 'In the end of the world, my Father will send His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all scandals' (Matthew 13:41), that is, sinners, from the wheat, that is, from the just. These are the angels who carried Lazarus, approved in the trial of poverty and weakness, into the bosom and rest of Abraham (Luke XVI, 22).

Chapter XXXIII.

Truly, as it is written, I have tested you in the furnace of poverty (Isaiah 48:10). Therefore, people are tested in different ways, that is, one through poverty and physical weakness, another through riches and physical health. However, all of these are neither the highest goods nor the highest evils; for the highest evil is eternal death, and the highest good is eternal life. Therefore, all of these things that mortal life has are middling; in both poverty and weakness, there is temptation: for many whom neither poverty nor weakness has broken, health has broken, and riches extinguish. Which the very wise Solomon approves, saying to the Lord: Do not give me riches and poverty, but give me only what is necessary for my livelihood (Prov. XXX, 8); that is, so that he would not be exalted in wealth, nor swear falsely in poverty, nor blaspheme. And that these things we have mentioned are foreign to us, the Lord confirms, saying: If you were not faithful with someone else's, who will give you what is yours (Ambr. I. VII in Luc. sub fin.; Ibid., I. VIII, n. 85)? Therefore, the riches of others are foreign to us, because they are outside of our nature; for they are not born with us, nor do they pass away with us. And therefore, knowing this, we do not serve the things of others, for we should have no other gods but Christ. Therefore, we are guests of our own possessions; whatever is of the world remains in the world: and whatever we acquire for ourselves as heirs, we lose; for with us, we carry nothing but either good or evil deeds. Wealth itself is not bad, but it is bad for those who use it wrongly; for the good things that God has made are very good. Therefore, the philosophers of this world do not consider the greatest good to be anything other than peace, honesty, and virtue; and they do not consider the greatest evil to be anything other than wickedness, dishonor, greed, and immorality. Therefore, the promise and reward of all good things is eternal life, and the threat and punishment of all evil things is the second death.

Chapter XXXIV.

Although these things may seem outwardly spoken, they are nevertheless necessary and useful to us; and therefore we must now return to order. Therefore, when the clay of our flesh, as has already been said, has been baked into a pot; that which was previously pressed down with heavy weight into the earth, having received the wings of spiritual grace, will fly to heaven with the support of angels, and there it will have the true and peaceful pledge of its eternal salvation. What can be found that is more true, more evident, more clear than this? Nevertheless, so that we do not seem to have omitted anything, consider the fullest and strongest example of this hope of ours, the bird of the East called the phoenix, unique, famous for its singularity, and monstrous in its posterity: which, willingly burying itself, dividing and cutting itself with its natural end, is again phoenix, again itself, and not another. For proof of our hope's strength, the Holy Spirit, who is God,

placed in the holy Scriptures, saying: And they shall bloom like the phoenix, that is, they shall bloom from death, from their own funeral, just as the phoenix rises from its own ashes. Therefore, if the flesh of a bird rises from its ashes, will not the flesh of a human rise from its ashes? And where is it written that the Lord Christ declared that many sparrows are better? Where is that which He promised to us through the Prophet, saying: 'Your youth will be renewed like the eagle's' (see Rabbi Kimhi and other interpreters on this passage; also Peter Damian Opusc. 52, c. 23; Albertus Magnus I. XXIII de Animal.; Gesner, Aldrovandus, and others)? They say that the nature of this bird is as follows: when it has reached old age, it is said to soar in the air for a long time, until it reaches the clouds and fire: when it comes into contact with the fire, it immediately plunges into a hidden fountain, submerging itself three times; and then it is restored to the strength and appearance of its former youth. What the blessed Apostle promised to us, saying: The fire will test what kind of work each one has. For different birds eat grapes, olives, and other fruits; and after digesting their grains through excessive heat, the vines and trees are born again. If therefore the birds do this for you, at God's command, will God not do it for you because of your faith and his retribution? Believe me, he will do it because of his promise; for when we were nothing at one time, we were made by the Lord of all creatures, God himself commanding. Therefore, he who made something out of nothing, which did not exist, will be able to make again that which he made before out of nothing.

Chapter XXXV. For if the flesh of man, as the blind heretics falsely claim, does not rise again, how does Isaiah, full of the Spirit of God, who should be called not so much a prophet as an evangelist, say: All flesh will come, that which is going to worship in the sight of the Lord, in Jerusalem; to see the corpses of dead men who have transgressed against God (that is, either the Jews or the wicked or sinners), their worm will not die, and their fire will not be extinguished (Jerome, on the last chapter of Isaiah). Those who desire to understand why the multitude of sinners are conscious of the worm or fire that afflicts those who are placed in punishment, and why, on account of their sin and vice, they have been deprived of so great a good, according to that which is written: 'Walk in the light of your fire, and in the flame that you have kindled for yourselves' (Isaiah 50:11); and again: 'As the moth destroys a garment and the worm eats away at wood, so sorrow tortures the heart of a man' (Proverbs 25:2). For just as joy of mind sometimes alleviates bodily pain, so the pain of the mind weighs down and torments the body, as the prophet says: 'A joyful mind makes a flourishing age, a sad spirit dries up the bones' (Proverbs 17:22). If, therefore, it happens that physical illness affects the body, the affliction of the soul is doubled. However, these things are said in such a way that it is not denied that the eternal punishments of the deceitful and those who deny God exist, as the Scripture says: The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on them in the day of judgment, giving them fire and worms in their flesh; and they will be burned, so that they may feel it forever (Judith, XVI, 20 and 21). Our Lord and Savior confirms that this will indeed happen, saying: And all who have done good shall rise again from the dust of the earth, unto the resurrection of judgment (John, V, 29); and again: Depart into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew, XXV, 41); and again, speaking of the one who did not have a wedding garment: Take him away and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Ibid., XXII, 15). Therefore, when both hands and feet, and weeping, and outer darkness, which pertain to the eyes, and the grinding of teeth are truly pronounced by the Lord to be in the future resurrection, I wonder at certain heretics who attempt to introduce an airy body, gradually dissolving into thin air after the resurrection.

Therefore, just as the holy vestment of God is, and is clothed with the tunic of salvation and joy; so on the contrary, the sinner, who carries the image of the old and earthly man, deserves to hear: Behold, all of you will be devoured like an old garment by the moth (Isaiah 51:8). Therefore, the diversity of customs is signified by various names in the Holy Scriptures. Just as the diversity of trees and musicians in the divine Scriptures signifies the diversity of spiritual gifts, so too the diversity of wild animals and serpents signifies the diversity of sins. However, the different kinds of musicians are mentioned and used by the God of Majesty in the divine books, in order to lead the Jewish people away from carnal sacrifices and invite them to spiritual and praiseworthy offerings. But now these things which have been said are sufficient, although for the magnitude of the thing nothing can be said sufficiently about the causes and the aforementioned matters. And therefore, holy, venerable, perfect, and inseparable Trinity, who is wholly revered and worshipped by us in faith, this work is yours, which I have excerpted for my edification from the books of your servant Fathers, with your assistance and illumination; and your perfection to the glory and praise of your name throughout all ages. Amen.

On Cain and Abel

Two Books by Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, About Cain and Abel.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Book One
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Book Two
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.

Book One

Chapter I.

In the next book, there is a discussion of the transition from the birth of Cain and Abel; and through them, as well as through Esau and Jacob, it is shown that two opposing human sects are being foreshadowed.

1. In the higher realms, we have, to the best of our ability, apprehended the sense of what the Lord has revealed and have arranged it in a manner in which the fall of Adam and Eve can be understood. Now, since the fault does not lie with them, but rather, what is worse, a more wicked heir has been found, we shall now continue with the following history and proceed with the divine events that are connected according to the Scriptures, in our work.

2. But Adam knew Eve his wife, who conceived and bore Cain, and said: I have acquired a man with the help of God (Gen. IV, 1). What we acquire, how, and by whom we acquire it is commonly considered: how, as from matter; by whom, as the author; by what, as through some instrument. Does he say this here: I have acquired a man with the help of God, so that you understand God as the instrument? Certainly not: but so that you understand God as the author and operator. Where he attributed more to God, since he said: I acquired man through God, so that we should defer all successful outcomes more to God than arrogate them to ourselves.

3. And he added to obey Abel (Ibid. 2). When something is added, what was before is taken away. And this is gathered from the parts of arithmetic, or the thoughts of the mind: for when a number is added, another number is made, the higher one is abolished: and the new thought that approaches excludes the previous one. Therefore, when Abel is added, Cain is taken away. Which is more fully understood by the interpretation of the names. For Cain is called acquisition, because he acquired everything for himself: Abel, who with devout attention of a pious mind referred everything to God, arrogating nothing to himself like the older brother, but giving everything to the creator that he had received from him. So there are two sects under the name of two brothers fighting against each other, and opposed to each other. One which attributes everything to its own mind as the principal, and as it were to a certain thought, and the author of all sense and movement; that is, which ascribes all inventions to human genius. The other which ascribes everything to God as the operator and creator of all things, and subjects everything to the helm of God as its parent and ruler. The former is signified by Cain: the latter is called Abel. There are two sects which one soul gives birth to, and they are called sisters, because they are founded in one womb. But they are contrary, because it is necessary for them to be divided and separated when they have been brought forth with a certain birth of the soul. For two combatants cannot forever inhabit one dwelling. Finally, when Rebecca was giving birth to two natures of human character, one of evil and the other of good, and she felt them struggling within her womb (for Esau was a figure of wickedness, while Jacob portrayed goodness), she wondered what this conflict that the conceived offspring displayed might be, and she sought advice from God in order to reveal the suffering and to provide a remedy. Therefore, in response to the prayer, the following answer is given: Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples shall be separated from your body (Gen. XXV, 23). If you refer this to the soul, you will understand that it is the same mother of good and evil, because both flow from the same source of the soul. But this requires sober and true judgment, so that, having rejected evil, it may nourish what is good and strengthen it. Therefore,

before it gives birth to what is good, that is, reverence owed to God, may it offer everything to Him and not prefer itself. But when it has given birth to the confession that is offered to God, it lays aside the swelling of its heart. Therefore, God added the good doctrine of the soul to Abel and took away the wicked doctrine from Cain.

Chapter II.

In the figure of Cain, the Jews, and in Abel, the Christians. On this occasion, certain things are connected with the fathers, but especially the burial of Isaac, through whom the incarnation of Christ is expressed, and of Moses, through whom the same teaching is expressed. Finally, the burials of Moses and Christ are compared to each other.

However, in this place, I understand the mystery of the two peoples according to Scripture more, that God by adding the faith of his Church took away the perfidy of the wayward people, since the very words seem to signify this, with God saying: 'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples shall be separated from your body.' (Gen. XXV, 23). This figure preceded the Synagogue and the Church in these two brothers, Cain and Abel. By Cain is understood the murderous people of the Jews, who persecuted the blood of their Lord and Creator and of his brother, so to speak, according to the birth of the Virgin Mary. By Abel is understood the Christian who adheres to God, as David also says: But for me, to cleave to God is good (Ps. 72:28), so that he might attach himself to heavenly things and separate from earthly things. Elsewhere he says: My soul has fainted for your word (Ps. 118:81), because he put order in his way of life and his use not in earthly pleasures, but in knowledge of the word. From this it is known that what we read in the Books of Kings is not written in vain, but carefully and meticulously, when it says: And he was gathered to his fathers (1 Kings 2:11 and 21). For it is understood and given that he was similar in faith to his fathers. Hence it is clear that it is related not to the burial of the body, but to the sharing of life.

Lastly, it is thought that the account of Isaac was not superficially written because, in seeking the appearance of his body that was attached to his soul, he was determined to be of his own kind; because he adhered to the customs of his father. However, when referring to his kind, it is well said, not to his people, as in other places. For we read in other places that those who were attached to their people were not as outstanding as him: the one who is similar to a few, not to many. There were more in his people than in his kind; and it is considered more outstanding to be similar to a few than to many. Therefore, the one who was born of God by promise, who was chosen for the sacrifice of proving piety, who was satisfied with the companionship of one wife, that is, the society of wisdom alone, of that divine kind which is one and always fitting for itself, was not to be falsely represented as an imitator of common vulgarity according to divine Scripture. For where there is labor, teaching, meditation, there is a common community with many and a certain popular fellowship. For many people make progress by listening, whom he called the people. But where perception is not acquired through a non-human tradition, but through a clever collection without the use of labor, there the sublime sincerity of the incorruptible kind is found. And therefore Isaac is read as being assigned to his own kind rather than to the people, so that you may recognize him as a diligent imitator of divine things rather than of human things.

7. Blessed is that mind which, surpassing the nature and essence itself, deserves to hear what was said to Moses when he was separated from the people: 'But you stand with me' (Deut. V, 31)! For just as in Isaac, a type of the Lord's incarnation surpassing the course of human generation,

overcame his predecessors, so that in him there was not common and popular grace, but a special prerogative excelled, as the reading teaches: For the promises were said to Abraham and his seed: not to seeds as of many, but as of one, and to your seed, which is Christ (Galat. III, 16): so also in Moses there was the figure of the future Teacher, who was to teach the law, preach the gospel, fulfill the old covenant, establish the new, give heavenly nourishment to the people, exceeding even human dignity to such an extent that he was given the name of God, as we have it written, with the Lord saying: 'I have made you like God to Pharaoh' (Exod. VII, 1). For he, the conqueror of all passions, not being captivated by any worldly allurements, who had, according to the purity of his heavenly demeanor, withdrawn all that conversation of his after the flesh from him, governing his mind, subjecting his flesh, and chastising it by a certain royal authority, was called by the name of God, after whose likeness he had formed himself by the abundance of perfect virtue.

8. And therefore, we do not read about him as we do about others, because he died in a state of deficiency: but he died through the word of God (Deuteronomy 34:5). For God neither experiences defection or diminution, nor does he undergo addition. Hence, the Scripture also adds: 'For no one knows his burial place until this day' (ibid. 6), so that you understand it as a translation rather than his demise. For death is a certain separation of the soul and body. Therefore, he was dead through the word of God, as Scripture says, not according to the flesh; so that you may observe not the message of death, but the gift of grace expressed, who was transferred rather than abandoned, of whom no one knows the burial. For who on earth could detect his remains, whom the Son of God Himself showed to be with Him in the Gospel (Matt. XVII, 3)? Finally, even Elijah was seen together, who was transferred in a chariot, not buried or known to be dead (2 Kings II, 11)? For he lives who is with the Son of God. But Moses indeed is said to be dead, but through the word of God, by which all things were made, he is dead. By the word of God, however, the heavens are established. Therefore, through the word of God, there is not a fall of the work, but a firmament. Therefore, he is not apprehended as having relapsed into the earth by the dissolution of the body, but as having been endowed and bestowed by the operation of the heavenly word, so that his flesh received more rest than a tomb.

9. However, a proper distance is maintained between the master and the servant. To understand the prerogative of the master, we read of the favor shown to the servant, as with Moses, because no one knows where he is buried. But with Christ, his burial was taken away from the earth (Isaiah 53:8), for according to the mystery of the law, he was expecting redemption, so that he may rise again. But here, according to the gift of the Gospel, he was not expecting redemption, but giving it. And therefore, his burial was not unknown, but elevated, which the created world could not hold for long; for through him, all creatures hastened to be lifted up from the bondage of corruption. Therefore, no one knows the burial place of Moses, because everyone knew his life. But we have seen the burial place of Christ; however, we do not know it now, those of us who have acknowledged His resurrection. For His tomb should have been known, so that His resurrection might be revealed; and therefore, in the Gospel (Matthew 27:60 et seq.), the tomb is described in detail: it is not sought in the law, because although the law announced His resurrection (Isaiah 11:10), the series of the Gospel has fully confirmed it for us.

Chapter III.

By the process of human wisdom represented in Abel and Cain, who were not found in Christ alone, it is indicated; by the order in which each of the brothers is named, as well as by their functions, it is signified that Abel, although younger, is superior to his brother.

Therefore, let us complete what we have proposed: Abel added, he said, to obey, that is, to produce a better Eve who had sinned heavily before, the decision to abolish the error of the previous judgment. I lie if this is not confirmed in all. For we are born in such a way that before there is a weak sense of infancy in us, later knowing only the care of the body in childhood, having no worship, having no observance of the divine. And to prove the birth of Jesus Christ from a virgin by a clear novelty of nature, the prophet says: Behold, a virgin will conceive in her womb and bear a son, and his name will be called Emmanuel: he will eat butter and honey, before he knows how to refuse evil or choose good. He will not believe in wickedness, in order to choose what is good (Isaiah VII, 14 et seq.). And later: Before the child knows how to call his father or mother, he will receive the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria against the king of Assyria (Isaiah VIII, 4). For he alone was not captivated by the vanity and carnal swelling of this world; because he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, far different from each one of us who are foolishly exalted in the mind of the inflated flesh. Therefore, no one is without sin, not even an infant of one day: but he did not commit sin. And thus in us, Cain is born before Abel, preferring himself: afterwards Abel is generated, in whom there is reverence for divinity. Therefore, first evil creeps in, then goodness is recognized. Where goodness is, there is justice; where justice is, there is holiness, that is, Abel who clings to God.

11. And it happened, he said, that Abel became a shepherd of sheep, but Cain worked the land (Gen. IV, 2). It is not insignificant that even though Cain was born first, as the reading teaches, Abel was preferred in this place; nor is the order of names the same as the order of nature. What does the change of order mean; that it should remember the younger one first, when the state of life and the use of work are described? Let us inquire into the difference of duties, so that we may gather the cause of preference. To work the land is to use it before grace, to pasture sheep. For this is like that of a certain teacher and prince, and rightly an elder has begun what is elder, a younger has preferred what is more recent, which would bear no thorns, no prickles, subject to no judgments. Finally, guilty of sin, Adam was dismissed from paradise's pleasures, so that he might work the land. Therefore, rightly, where these brothers are born, the order of nature is also preserved in preaching: where discipline of living is expressed, the elder is preferred before the younger; for although younger in age, he is more excellent in virtue. For innocence is younger in time than evil, and in a certain sense more aged by the nobility of merits. Indeed, old age is venerable not by years grown grey, but by character. And the age of senescence, it is said, is a blameless life. Therefore, wherever generation is expressed, let Cain come first; wherever preaching of discipline is made, let Abel run ahead. Who would deny that even youth and itself in the beginnings of young adulthood fervently burn with the various allurements of passions? But when a more mature age is succeeded, as if by the storm of a youth's lasciviousness being dissipated, tranquility is restored and the weary soul withdraws its ship into certain quiet harbors. Thus, the tumultuous movements of our youth are calmed by the steady presence of faithful old age.

Chapter IV.

To prefer vice to virtue is a sign of ignorance; this is exemplified by Esau and Jacob, as well as by two scriptural women: one representing virtue, the other representing pleasure. Ultimately, the arts of the latter are described.

12. Therefore, do not hesitate when reminded by such examples of nature, that malice precedes in time, but youthfulness in weakness. It has the pay of that age, but virtue has the prerogative of glory, by which the unjust often yields to the just. The faithful divine Scripture is a witness to this matter, which teaches that Esau, by the surname of folly, patiently yielded his birthright to his brother Jacob, to the extent that he said: Why should I have the birthright? (Gen. XXV, 32)? But those whom that man put before, this man, endowed with the surname of exercise, sought to deserve. Does it not seem to you that Esau, like a defeated man in a contest, and considering himself inferior due to his own weakness of mind, yielded the crown to the victor, whom he saw was not swayed by any enticements of passions, the very dust of which he himself could not endure? Why, he says to me, do I desire preeminence? For among the lazy, there are no insignia of virtue; among the wise, they are considered first; for the studies of virtue are certain instruments. Therefore, just as a warrior cannot be without weapons, so virtue cannot be without exercise. Hence, the Lord says in the Gospel: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12). And elsewhere: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). They promise rewards to those who are not sleeping or idling, but to those who are vigilant and laboring. And there is a reward prepared for labor, which, although it may not be pleasing to grace, is nevertheless fruitful for a prize. This is what the law teaches, as we find it written: If a man has two wives, one beloved and the other hated, and both bear him sons, the beloved and the hated, and the firstborn is the son of the hated wife; on the day he divides his inheritance among his sons, he may not grant the firstborn status to the son of the beloved wife, skipping over the son of the hated wife. But he must acknowledge the firstborn son of the hated wife and give him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength and to him belong the rights of the firstborn (Deut. XXI, 15 et seq.). How deep are the secrets of mysteries hidden in the letters! Recognize, o soul, your offspring, and seek the mystery of that dreadful woman. Within yourself you will find it, if you seek. Repeat your thoughts, reread your senses, and you will recognize to whom the firstfruits are due. For indeed, two women dwell in each of us, differing in enmities and discord, like certain jealousy-filled disputes filling the house of our souls. One of these, to us, is sweet and lovable, the charming mediator of grace, which is called pleasure. We consider this one as our companion and domestic friend: the other one we believe is fierce, rough, and wild, whose name is virtue.

Therefore, with a provocative movement of a prostitute, with a disrupted gait through delights, with wandering eyes, and with playful darting of her eyelids, she captures the precious souls of young men (for the eye of a prostitute is a snare of a sinner), and with doubtful perception, she accosts anyone passing by in the corner of her house, with charming words, causing the hearts of young men to flutter, restless at home, wandering in the streets, prodigal with kisses, cheap in modesty, rich in attire, painted cheeks. For indeed, since it cannot possess true beauty of nature, it entices with the appearance of affected beauty through false dyes, not truth. Adorned with a company of vices and surrounded by a chorus of wickedness, the leader of crimes attacks the wall of the human mind with such contrivances of words: 'Peace offering is to me; today I fulfill my vows.' For

this reason, I have advanced to meet you, desiring to find your face. I have woven my bed with fine linen and spread carpets from Egypt. I have spread my bed with saffron, and my house with cinnamon. Come, let us enjoy friendship until dawn; come, and let us wrestle with desire (Prov. VII, 14 et seq.). For through the mouth of Solomon we see this form of harlot expressed. For what is more similar to harlotry than secular pleasure, which enters through the window of its house, tempting the eyes with its first enticements; and it quickly penetrates if you, looking out into the street, namely the public ways of those passing by, do not direct the gaze of your mind to the internal mysteries of the law. She certainly is the one who, like a kind of bed woven with stronger ties, has entangled us in the bonds of a community, so that whoever reclines on it is bound; and she covers the surface of her body with the veil of shameful deceit, to seduce the minds of young men in the absence of her husband, that is, by disregarding the law. For the law is absent for those who commit sins, for if it were present, they would not commit them; and therefore it says: For my husband is not at home: he has taken the longest journey, with a bundle of money received in his hand (Ibid., 19, 20). What shall I say this is, except perhaps because the rich think there is nothing that does not yield to their money, and they want the law to be for sale in their favor? Pleasure spreads its own scents, because it does not have the scent of Christ, it displays treasures, promises kingdoms, guarantees continuous loves, offers unknown sexual encounters, disciplines without a tutor, conversations without a monitor, a life without worries, soft sleep, insatiable desire. Seducing him, she said, with many flattering words, and binding him with the snares of her lips, she led him home. But he, following her, is caught in a trap. The royal hall shone with luxurious splendor, its walls adorned with carved designs, and the damp floors floated with wine. The ground burned with perfume, covered with thorns of fish, and slippery with withered flowers. There, there was a commotion of feasting, the clamor of those singing, the violence of those arguing, the harmony of those dining, the noise of those dancing, the laughter of those laughing, the applause of those reveling, everything confused, nothing in the order of nature. Dancing prostitutes, boys with curled hair, the crudeness of revelers, the belching of eaters, the thirst of drunkards, yesterday's gluttony, today's drunkenness, the cups of those who drink, filled with a stronger stench of intoxication than if only the wine were aflame. She herself, standing in the middle, says, 'Drink and get drunk, so that each one falls down and does not rise again.' He is the first with me, he who is the most lost of all. He is mine, who is not his own. He is more pleasing to me, who is more harmful to himself. The golden cup of Babylon, intoxicating all the earth, drank my wine. So let the more foolish one turn to me, and to those in need of wisdom, I command, saying: Use hidden breads sweetly, and drink water secretly sweeter. Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die. Our life will pass like the traces of a cloud, and like a mist it will be dispersed (Prov. IX, 17). Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are, and make use of the creatures as in our youth, quickly. Let us fill ourselves with precious wine and ointments, and let not the flower of the time pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with roses before they wither. Let no meadow be untouched by our luxury: let us everywhere leave signs of our joy (Wisdom 2:8 et seq.). All these things are left behind, and one will not carry anything with them except what they have received through the pleasure of the body. Finally, I have embraced this philosophy; and there is no truer one, except for that which asserts that the good is what is pleasant and enjoyable. Therefore, believe in either the philosophy or the wisdom of Solomon.

Chapter V.

Virtue, seeking healthier pleasures, rejects the pursuit of pleasure; it teaches how to resist diabolical temptations, from whom and even temporal things must be sought, and how harmful they are to the wicked; it invites to the feast of wisdom, and it explains how its intoxication differs from drunkenness; and finally, it reveals the evils of greed.

15. His auditis, velut cervus sagittatus in jecore haeret saucius. Quem miserans virtus, et casurum cito videns, improvise occurrit, verita ne inter moras illecebris demulcentibus mens capiatur humana. Palam, inquit, apparui tibi non quaerenti me. Ne fallat imprudentem, et circumveniat te mulier effrenata et luxuriosa quae non novit pudorem: sedet in foribus domus in sella, palam in plateis advocans praeitereuntes (Prov. IX, 14 et 15). Now therefore, my son, listen to me, and attend to the words of my mouth. Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways. For she has cast down many wounded, and there are innumerable whom she has slain. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death (Prov. VII, 24 et seq.). Therefore, remove from yourself a perverse mouth and put far away from you unjust lips. Let your eyes look right ahead (Prov. IV, 24 et 25): do not focus on a deceitful woman (Prov. V, 2). For the lips of an adulterous woman drip honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. She gives no thought to the path of life; her ways wander aimlessly, but she does not know it. Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. Be more like him who leaps over mountains and transcends hills, looking through windows, standing above nets. The chains of pleasure are evil. It delights the eyes, soothes the ears, but corrupts the mind: it tells many lies, adds falsehood, subtracts truth, promises money, offers gold; but takes away discipline (Prov. VIII, 10). But you, rather accept discipline than money, and knowledge rather than tested gold. For precious stones are better. I will not conceal from you what is the sum of its benefits, lest I seem to hide those things which displease in pleasure, and to overshadow those which please. For it elevates and exalts the mind with persuasive words, showing all the kingdoms of the earth, saying: 'All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' But beware that you are not carried away by passing and fleeting things, in which there is great temptation.

16. Certainly, the Lord Jesus taught you how to resist such temptations. The devil had first set a snare of gluttony, saying: If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread (Matthew 4:3-4). The Lord replied: Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. He loosened this snare with these words. Then the devil set a second snare of arrogance, which often strangles a good mind running on successful paths. And he took him, he said, to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him: If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. For it is written that he will command his angels concerning you, to guard you, and that they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone (cf. Matthew 4:6). Therefore, when the Lord Jesus could have easily thrown himself without any danger, since he had the power of spiritual flight, in order to avoid any form of boasting, he replied to the devil: 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test' (cf. Matthew 4:7). At the same time, he taught us to beware of doing the will of the devil. If therefore boasting should truly be avoided, how much more should no one boast false things for true things? The third snare of greed and ambition remains. It shows on a mountain placed all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time (Ibid., 8, et seq.). Well, in a moment, because they

cannot be long-lasting. Wait a little while, and they quickly pass. Therefore, those who pursue them seem to themselves to be on a mountain, but they are not perpetual, as it is written: I have seen the wicked exalted and lifted up above the cedars of Lebanon, and I passed by, and behold, he was not (Ps. XXXVI, 35). But whoever does these things seems to worship the devil, whose god is the stomach, and his glory is in shameful things. But you, seek glory in God, who says to you: 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve only Him' (Matthew 4:10), from whom you receive eternal things, not temporal ones.

However, if these things also delight anyone, let them be sought in moderation from the true source of all. For even the possessions that the devil seems to have for himself are actually someone else's, as he himself said: 'All this authority I will give you, and their glory; for it has been delivered to me' (Luke 4:6). Therefore, hope in him, even though the briefness of life does not require a long provision for the journey; hope in him who created the entire creation, who temporarily handed it over to the devil, not for him to possess, but to test. For a crown could not exist without a competition. The doubtful were to be tested, so that the deserving could be crowned.

So, he gave these things to the devil, because in them is the punishment of the recipient, if he does not know how to use them. For what is a treasure to a luxury-loving person, if not the expense of luxury? Therefore, one is not considered luxurious, but rather frugal. And so, use those things as if you were frugal, so that when you eat a lot, you do not become detestable. For vigilance and torment are for the gluttonous person. And below: If you are forced to eat, rise and vomit, and it will refresh you, and you will not bring weakness to your body. Therefore, gluttony kills many, frugality none: countless wines have harmed, no self-control has saved. Most among the feasts spill souls, and fill their tables with their own blood. To others, rawness snatched voice and sense: and if rawness was not harmful to some, drunkenness brought their ruin. Indeed, drunkenness drove others into crime; although it itself is a crime, it reduced others to poverty. Finally, may Christ exclude the audacious: When the master of the house enters, he says, and has shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying: Open to us. And he will answer, saying: I do not know where you are from, depart from me, all workers of iniquity. Then you will begin to say: We have eaten and drunk in your presence, and you have taught in our streets. And he will say to you: I do not know where you are from (Luke 13:25-27). Have you heard what he said about those who eat? Now listen to what he says about those who fast: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst now, for they will be satisfied (Luke 6:21). And further: Woe to you who are full, for you will hunger (ibid., 25).

19. But do you want to eat, do you want to drink? Come to the banquet of wisdom which invites everyone with great preaching, saying: Come and eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mixed for you (Prov. 9:5). Do songs delight and soothe the feasting? Listen to the exhorter, listen to the Church singing, not only in songs, but also in the Song of Songs: Eat, my friends, and drink, and be intoxicated, my dears (Song of Songs 5:1). But this drunkenness makes the sober; this drunkenness is of grace, not of intoxication. It generates joy, not stumbling. Do not fear that in the banquet of the Church there will be lacking pleasant smells, sweet foods, different drinks, or noble guests, or respectable attendants. What is more noble than Christ, who both serves and is served in the banquet of the Church? Attach yourself to the side of this reclining guest and unite yourself with God; do not despise the table that Christ has chosen, saying: I entered my garden, my sister,

my bride, I gathered my myrrh with my spices: I ate my bread with my honey, and I drank wine with my milk. In the garden, that is, in the paradise, there is a banquet of the Church, where Adam was before he committed sin. There Eve reclined before she created and gave birth to guilt. There you will harvest myrrh, that is, the burial of Christ; so that buried with him through baptism into death, just as he rose from the dead, you may also rise. There you will eat the bread that strengthens the heart of man. You will taste honey, by which the sweetness of your throat's passages is enhanced. You will drink wine with milk, that is, with splendor and sincerity: whether it be because pure simplicity is present, or because of immaculate grace, which is taken for the remission of sins, or because it nourishes the little ones with its consolations, so that they, weaned from delights, may grow into the fullness of perfect age. Therefore, join in this feast. Or do you fear that a narrow house and a small place of the feast will confine you? O Israel, how great is the house of the Lord, and the vastness of His possession! Great, and without end, lofty, and immense (Baruch. III, 24). There were those giants, who from the beginning were of great stature, knowing battle. The Lord did not choose them. And rightly so, because they knew battle, not peace. And therefore learn peace, that you may be chosen by God. But perhaps you might think the unadorned greatness of the house, and the pleasure of the pillars may attract you: wisdom has built itself a house, and it has shone with seven pillars. The Lord Jesus himself also mentions that there are many mansions with his Father (John XIV, 2). In this house, therefore, you will feast on food for the soul and drink for the mind, so that afterwards you will never hunger or thirst. For whoever eats, eats until satisfaction; and whoever drinks, drinks until drunkenness.

20. But this drunkenness is the guardian of chastity: that drunkenness of wine is the fuel of lust, through which the internal organs are steamed by meats, the soul is set on fire, the spirit is consumed. Cruel is the stimulus of crimes, which never allows the affected to remain quiet. It boils at night, gasps during the day, wakes up from sleep, leads away from business, recalls from reason, takes away counsel, disturbs lovers, causes the fallen to stumble, lies in wait for the chaste, inflames through drinking, and is kindled through use. There is no limit to sinning, and an insatiable thirst for wickedness can only be extinguished by the death of love. And therefore the Apostle says: Flee from fornication (I Cor. VI, 18); so that by a swift flight, we may avoid the cruelty of the raging mistress and be able to escape from her foul service.

21. For what can I say about greed, with its insatiable desire for money, and a certain lust for wealth, which believes that the more it has taken away, the more it is impoverished? Envious of all, worthless to itself, destitute in the midst of great riches, it weakens its desires because of its abundant wealth. There is no limit to its greed, where there is no measure of its desires. It inflames the soul, it feeds itself with its own fire, so much so that it is different in this regard, that the former is an adulteress of beauty, while the latter is of the earth. It shakes the elements, cuts through the sea, digs up the earth, wearies the heavens with prayers, and is pleasing neither in fair weather nor in stormy, bringing condemnation upon yearly profits and exposing the offspring of the earth. But this is the affliction of the soul, not of the body. Furthermore, Ecclesiastes says: There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, riches being hoarded up to the hurt of their owner (Eccle. V, 12). And elsewhere: He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver (Ibid., 9). And: There is no end of their acquiring (Baruch 3, 18). If you seek treasures, receive the invisible and hidden ones that are in the highest heavens, not the ones you seek in the veins of the earth. Be poor in spirit, and you will be rich in any measure; for life is not in the abundance of riches, but in virtue

and faith. These riches will truly make you rich, if you are rich in God.

Chapter VI.

Virtue is attained through enthusiasm and hard work. This is proven by the example of Jacob, who achieved primacy over his brother; and the mystical teachings about Abraham, Moses, and the same two brothers are explained.

You have heard the mysteries of pleasures, you have also heard the gifts of our resources, which I thought should not be covered with furniture, but demonstrated by naked speeches of Scriptures; so that they would shine with their own light, and emit their own voice to each other. For the moon does not usually need an interpreter. It has an interpreter of the brightness of its light, with which the whole world is filled. To them, enlightenment is faith without a witness, a certain, so to speak, unclaimed witness that does not need the testimony of others, as it suddenly pours itself out before the eyes of all. Therefore, our works are not reported, but they cry out and report themselves. Indeed, I will not pass over the fact that this is considered laborious in our case; faith is demanded, desire is required, deeds are sought. For the Lord Jesus defined the duties of human devotion with these three things, saying: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you (Matthew 7:7). And below: Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and does them is like a wise man (ibid., 24).

23. Whoever pursues these things diligently will receive the primacy of blessing, just as the patriarch Jacob, who by continence and faith trampled upon the traces of human passions. He said: 'God has had mercy on me, and I have everything' (Gen. XXXIII, 11). Therefore, may we deserve this mercy through faith, study, and works, by which disciplines Israel found the grace of God, and through it, everything. For he rejoiced not in the riches of this world, but in the disciplines of virtues. We heirs substitute for ourselves, whom holy Abraham substituted in Isaac his son, considering all his works as inheritance to a wise and just man, not leaving any hereditary right to the sons of slaves or slave women, but only gifts of donation. For perfect virtues receive the entire inheritance of glory, while something of little value is sprinkled on common and mediocre things. Therefore, Hagar, who is called a foreigner in Latin and a sojourner, and Keturah, which signifies fragrance, are not heirs. For whoever makes use of the intermediate disciplines, resident, is not an inhabitant of wisdom. Sprinkled with fragrance, one is not filled by fruit. However, food conveys health, not fragrance, because fragrance is the messenger of fruits. Therefore, recognizing the main disciplines, we acknowledge that they should be preferred by the residents.

24. This is according to natural disposition. But truly, according to the mystery, Abraham, the father of nations, legally transmitted his entire inheritance to his legitimate seed, which is Christ, who was a stranger in this land; so that he might bring the fragrance of this life rather than its fruits. When the mind hears this, it turns away from pleasure and joins virtue, admiring the grace of true beauty, pure affection, simple thought, moderate attire; that is, not in the persuasion of speech, but in the manifestation of the Spirit, as the form of apostolic sentiment, dressed in the splendor of wisdom and piety, shining more precious than gold, taking on the chorus of prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, which burned with the fragrance of disciplines, instilling reverence, and pouring forth grace. Therefore, moved by such things, he chose pursuits of virtue, to which Jacob, a man full of exercise, directed his mind. And for this reason, he is led to be a shepherd of sheep (Gen. XXX, 31 and seq.); because it is considered more excellent to govern his

body and senses and their pleasures, and to keep a measure of desire, so that he does not wander like a wandering sheep, than to rule peoples or preside over cities. For it is more difficult for someone to control himself than to rule others. To conquer the mind, to restrain anger, and to bring together in one the conflicting laws of the body and the soul, is the task of a certain immortal man whom the gates of hell could not capture. Finally, the Legislator himself claimed this responsibility for himself, to feed the sheep of Jethro (Exod. III, 1), who is called superfluous, and to act in the desert: because he compelled the irrational and superfluous loquacity of common speech to certain indiscreet mysteries of sober doctrine. Therefore, the shepherds of sheep were an abomination to the Egyptians. For all those who are devoted to the passions of the body and indulge in their own pleasures, they turn away from the interpreter of the word and the teacher of virtue with a certain curse. And therefore, through these enigmas, Moses taught that sacrifices are pleasing to God, which every fool avoids, that is, the works and precepts of virtue. And so, Abel, the shepherd, is read as opposed to Cain, the worker of the land, who, as a foolish man, could not bear the expressed form and appearance of virtue in his brother.

Chapter VII.

By indicating the double defect of Cain's sacrifice, he shows that three vices can creep into our offerings; he also brings forward divine testimonies by which the same vices are forbidden.

25. And it came to pass, after some time, that Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruits of the earth (Gen. IV, 3). There are two faults: one is that he brought it after some time, and the other is that he brought it from the fruits, not from the first fruits. However, sacrifice is commendable both for its promptness and for its grace. Hence it is commanded: If you make a vow, do not delay in fulfilling it. For it is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it (Eccle. V, 3, 4). For when you delay, you do not fulfill it. A wish is a request for blessings from God with a promise to fulfill a duty. And so, when you obtain what you have asked for, it is ungrateful to delay the promise. However, sometimes forgetfulness creeps in among those who are negligent or proud. It is the mark of a dull heart to claim credit for achievements and the good that one does or that one receives from God, instead of attributing it to their own virtues, and not to the grace of the Creator, but to consider oneself the author of their own blessings. The third kind is a sin of lesser importance, but of supreme arrogance, namely those who do not deny God as the giver of good things, but attribute to themselves through their own prudence and the merits of their virtues whatever happens. Therefore, they consider themselves worthy of divine favor, because they do not appear in any way unworthy of receiving such divine benefits.

26. So that nothing of this kind happens to you, where your desire becomes a sin for you, the law informs and instructs you, with the Lord who gave the law saying: Be careful not to forget the benefits of the Lord your God, and do not keep His commandments and judgments, and His righteousness which I command you today; when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and begun to live in them, and your sheep and cattle have multiplied, and you have become wealthy with silver, gold, and all your possessions, and your storehouses are full, do not become proud and forget the Lord your God (Deut. VIII, 11 et seq.). So if you forget the Lord, when you have forgotten yourself. But if you realize that you are weak, you will recognize that God is above all, and you will not be able to forget, so that you may pay him the reverence that is due.

27. Now learn how each person is admonished not to attribute the source of his goods to himself. Do not say, it says, in your heart: My power and might have produced for me this great virtue, but in your mind you will have the Lord your God; for He gives strength to perform virtuous acts (Ibid. 17 and 18). Hence, the Apostle well, as the interpreter of the law, did not boast in his own strength, but called himself the least of the Apostles, and whatever he was, he attributed it to the grace of God, not to his own merit, and acknowledged that we possess nothing that we have not received. For what do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? (I Cor. IV, 7) Therefore, you have learned to follow humility rather than arrogance; to strive for diligence rather than power. You have received helpful teachings, do not neglect the useful tools of medicine, by which every deadly wound is excised.

28. He also who justifies himself, let him not be inflated with the swelling of his heart; and he received a salutary command, resulting from this oracle: Do not say in your heart, when the Lord your God begins to consume those nations from before you, saying: It is on account of my justice that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land: but it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord will destroy them from before your face (Deut. 9:4-5). It is not because of your justice, nor because of your goodness, nor because of the fairness of your heart that you enter to possess this land, but because of the wickedness of the nations the Lord will destroy them before your eyes, and he will fulfill the covenant he swore to your ancestors. The covenant is a perfect gift of God's grace; for God does not give anything imperfect: but perfect virtue is, and the works of virtue. However, the covenant is called the inheritance of goods that is transferred. It is called Testament both in a human and divine sense, as the things that are truly good are confirmed by the testimony of heavenly mandates. And it is called Testament because it is dedicated with blood: the old in type, the new in reality. In this Testament we hold the pledge of divine grace; for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son for all of us. Therefore, the Apostle, proclaiming the perfection of grace, says: How will he not also give us all things with him (Rom. VIII, 32)?

Chapter VIII.

The qualities by which the offering of Abraham's sacrifice is pleasing to God are expressed, namely swiftness, perseverance, and faith. God commands swiftness in both Testaments, which he himself exhibits when he not only gives quickly, but also goes before us.

29. Therefore, the first thing to be grateful for is the swiftness of the solution. Indeed, when Abraham was commanded to offer his son as a holocaust, he did not wait for days like Cain did, but he rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two young men with him, along with his son Isaac. After cutting the wood for the holocaust, he rose and went to the place that God had told him, on the third day (Gen. 22:3). First, notice the prompt and eager desire to sacrifice; there was no delay in expectation, except until the oracle was heard. Then, in preparing his donkey and taking care of everything himself, he undertook all the necessary obedience and prepared for the sacrifice. And with these two virtues, faith and hope, accompanying him, he led his own victim, certain of God's power and secure in his goodness.

30. But as He said on the third day, or what should be continuous and perpetual devotion. For time is divided into the past, present, and future. Hence, we are reminded that there should be no forgetfulness of God's past, present, or future blessings, but rather a steadfast memory of His

grace and unwavering obedience. Or because the one who sacrifices should believe in the unity, the splendor, and the light of the Trinity. For indeed, to the one who sacrifices faithfully, the day shines, and there is no night. And so, in Exodus, Moses says: 'We will go for a journey of three days and offer a sacrifice to the Lord our God' (Exod. III, 18). But also elsewhere, when God appeared to Abraham by the oak tree of Mamre: Looking up, Abraham saw with his own eyes, and behold, three men were standing before him. And when he saw them, he ran from the entrance of his tent to meet them, and he bowed down to the ground and said: 'Lord, if I have found favor in your sight' (Gen. XVIII, 2 and 3). He sees three, worships one. He offers three measures of a likeness. For although God is immense, he still holds the measure of all things, as it is written: Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and weighed the heavens with a span, and enclosed the whole earth in his hand (Isaiah 40:12)? Therefore, in each individual person of the Trinity, within the secret recesses of the mind, that is, in the spiritual likeness, the holy Patriarch offered this sacrifice to the Father. This is the likeness, which that woman in the Gospel grinds: For, she says, one will be taken and the other left (Matthew 24:41). Let the Church be assumed, let the Synagogue be abandoned. Or a good mind is assumed, an evil one is abandoned. But so that you may know that Abraham also believed in Christ: Abraham, he said, saw my day and rejoiced (John VIII, 56). And whoever believes in Christ, believes also in the Father. And whoever believes perfectly in the Father, believes in the Son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, there are three measures, one likeness, that is, one sacrifice which was offered to the venerable Trinity with a certain measure of devotion, and with suitable fullness of piety.

31. Still, learn the swift ardor of devotion: He ran, he said, and took a tender and good calf, and gave it to the servant, and hastened to make it (Gen. XVIII, 7). Devotion is diligent everywhere, and therefore it was an acceptable gift to God. You have it elsewhere, so that you may anticipate the sunrise with prayer: Meet it, he said, at the sunrise (Sap. XVI, 28). You have it in the Gospel, with the Lord Jesus saying: Zacchaeus, come down quickly (Luc. XIX, 5). And because he had obtained what he desired, to see Christ; and he had obtained more, to be seen and called by Christ, he hastened and descended, and received him with joy; and therefore the Lord approved his affection, and rewarded him quickly, saying: Because today salvation has come to this house (ibid., 9). For the Lord hastened to do a favor; and therefore he did not wait to promise and later fulfill, but he first did it, and later declared it. For he said: Salvation has come: which indeed was of the one who was to come, not promising. Therefore, the just man commends his vow with swiftness. And our fathers hastened to eat the Passover, having their loins girded, and their feet shod with shoes, and carrying burdens of the body, so that they would be ready for the passage; for the Passover of the Lord is a passage from sufferings to exercises of virtue. And therefore it is called the Passover of the Lord; because even then in that Lamb the truth of the Lord's Passion was announced, and now it is celebrated by his grace.

32. Go quickly, therefore, and search for this, my soul; so that you may quickly also hear, just as Jacob heard: What is this that you have found so quickly, my son (Gen. XXVII, 20)? And he answered according to the teaching: What the Lord your God has handed over into my hands. God gives quickly; for He said, and things were made; He commanded, and they were created. For the word of God is not, as someone says, a work, but a working, as you have written: My Father works until now, and I work (Joan. V, 17). He surpasses all things; for He is before all things, as the Father, and in all things as the same Father, penetrating all things. For He is strong

and sharp, and sharper than any sword, penetrating even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow. He anticipates the thoughts of all, of whom the Father God says: 'Now you will see if my Word comprehends you, or not' (Num. 11:23). For where God is, there is the Word, as He said: 'We will come and make our dwelling place with him' (John 14:23). And as you have read in other places about God: I stood here before you (Exod., XVII, 6): so also the Word says: Before you stood under the fig tree, I saw you (John I, 48). And about him it is said: The Word, that is, the Son of God, stands in the midst of you whom you do not know (Ibid., 26). For wherever the saints are, there the Word of God fills the hearts of each one, encompassing the seas and the lands. And though he is here, he is also elsewhere; not changing his place, but surely filling it with his presence. For the Word of God is everywhere, going through all things and in all things, leaving no place to be immune from itself. And where it is present, it has always been; and where it has been, it is present. And for this reason, one who knows that the Word of God is swift, quickly asks and quickly obtains.

Chapter IX.

Pharaoh is accused because of his delay in obeying. Humility, secrecy, and brevity are commended in prayer, with a rebuke of verbosity. The Lord has taught the form of prayer; and finally, for what things should one especially pray?

33. But Pharaoh, who was devoted to beliefs and vain superstitions (Egypt being filled with frogs, which produced empty sounds and noisy clamor), when Moses said to him: 'Appoint a time for me to pray for you, and for your servants, and for your people, so that the Lord may exterminate the frogs' (Exod. VIII, 9); though he should have been compelled by such great necessity to pray, and not delay any longer, he replied: 'Tomorrow'; idle and negligent, intending to destroy Egypt by incurring the punishment of delay. And so, when he obtained these things, he became ungrateful; and being lifted up in his mind with his flesh, he forgot God.

34. However, humility commends prayer. For indeed, that Pharisee was rebuked who enumerated his fasts as if they were benefits, and as if he were reproaching God, and he recounted himself as devoid of sins. But the tax collector who stood far off was commended, for he refused to lift his eyes to heaven, but beat his chest, saying: 'Lord God, be merciful to me, a sinner' (Luke 18:13). And for this reason, divine judgment preferred him, saying: 'For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted' (Ibid., 14). For he is justified who confesses his own sin, as the Lord Himself has spoken: 'Declare your iniquities, that you may be justified' (Isaiah 43:26). And David says: 'A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit' (Psalm 51:19). And again: 'A contrite and humbled heart, O God, You will not despise' (ibid.). Jeremiah also says: 'The soul in distress and the anxious spirit cry out to You' (Baruch 3:1). Therefore, Pharaoh (Exodus 5:2) and the Assyrian king who said, 'Which of the gods of these nations can deliver his land out of my hand? Because the Lord your God will deliver Jerusalem out of my hand' (2 Kings 18:35). They were cast down by their exaltation. But the righteous, like Jacob, refers all the good things he has achieved to God the Author, saying about all the things he knows have prospered for him: 'For the Lord God delivered them into my hands' (Gen. 27:20). Therefore, this is a better fulfillment of their wishes, as David also says: 'Sacrifice the sacrifice of praise to God, and pay your vows to the Most High' (Ps. 49:14). To praise God is to commend and fulfill a vow. And so that Samaritan is preferred to others, who, having been cleansed from leprosy according to the Lord's command,

alone returned to Christ praising God and giving thanks. Concerning him, Jesus says: 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?'... And he said to him: 'Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well' (Luke 17:18). And there is also the discipline of commendable speech and prayer, that we do not divulge the prayer, but we hold hidden mysteries, just as Abraham held, who made cakes of ashes (Gen. XVIII, 6). The fathers also held, who cooked the sprinkled dough that they had brought from Egypt, making cakes of ashes, which are called in Greek 'egkryphia', because they are hidden in ashes; signifying that yeast which that Gospel woman concealed (Luc. XIII, 21) in three measures of flour, until the whole was leavened, also indicating the need to pound down the teaching of mysteries. What the Lord taught more explicitly in the Gospel, saying: But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. But when you pray, do not use vain repetitions (Matth. 6:5). And further on: For your Father knows the things you have need of, before you ask Him (Ibid., 8). Your room is the secret place of the mind and the hidden sanctuary of the soul. Enter into this room of yours, that is, enter into the deep recesses of your heart, leaving behind the outward court of your body, and shut your door.

36. Learn what your door is: Place, O Lord, a guard at my mouth, and a door protector around my lips (Ps. CXXXIX, 3). And Paul asks to be prayed for: That a door may be opened to me, he says, to speak the mystery of Christ (Col. IV, 3). But as he was chosen to preach the Gospel, he rightly desired that the door of the word be opened to him; for from his mouth salvation of the nations went forth, from his mouth came forth the life of the people. But we shut the door, lest fault enter, lest any slip of speech should go out. Fault enters if a slip goes out. Listen how fault enters. In much speaking, it says, you will not avoid sin (Prov. X, 19). Much speaking went out, sin entered; because in much speaking, the word that goes out is not at all examined. It slips foolishly, though speaking excessively is a great sin in itself.

37. And so be careful not to speak indiscreetly; for the lips of the foolish lead him to evil. Be careful not to exalt yourself in prayer; for the prayer of the humble will pierce the clouds. Be careful not to reveal the mysteries of the Creed or the Lord's Prayer thoughtlessly. Do you not know how serious it is to commit a sin in prayer, where you hoped for a remedy? Certainly the Lord taught through the Prophet that this is a serious curse, saying: And let his prayer be turned into sin (Ps. 108:7); unless perhaps you think it to be of little consequence. For to doubt is to distrust in the power of God, to think that you will not be heard unless you cry out. Let your works cry out, let faith cry out, let your affections cry out, let your passions cry out, let your blood cry out, like holy Abel, of whom God said to Cain: 'The voice of your brother's blood is crying out to Me' (Gen. 4:10). For He hears you in secret, who cleanses in secret. We can only hear someone speaking. To God, they do not speak words, but thoughts. And so that you may know this is true, the Lord Jesus said to the Jews: 'Why do you think evil in your hearts?' (Matt. IX, 4) This is not the voice of one asking, but of one knowing. This is made clear to you by the Evangelist saying: 'But Jesus knew their thoughts' (Luke VI, 8). Just as the Son knows, the Father knows as well. You have come to know the Son, know the Father, hear the counselor and witness of the Father saying: 'For your Father knows what you need before you ask Him' (Matt. VI, 5). Therefore, cook under the ashes of your vapor of the Holy Spirit; also cook the passions of the soul with the heat of the word. And if your passions are more raw, perhaps recently coming out of Egypt, cover them and cook them slowly; so that they cannot

bear a stronger fire and instead they are half-burned rather than cooked. For there are many things that are displeasing when raw, but delightful when cooked. Therefore, cherish in your heart the deep mysteries; do not commit them with premature speech and to unfaithful or weak ears, as if they were uncooked, and the listener turns away and is disgusted with horror, but if he tasted something more cooked, he would perceive the sweetness of spiritual food. But the Lord Jesus taught divinely and the goodness of the Father, who knows how to give good things (Luke XI, 13); so that you may ask for what is good from the One who is good: and he strongly and frequently admonished to pray; not so that prayer is continued out of pride, but so that it is poured out frequently with diligence (Ibid., 9). For often empty glory hinders prolonged prayer, and neglect completely creeps in when it is interrupted. Then he advises (Matt. XVIII, 15) that when you ask for forgiveness for yourself, you should especially know how to grant it to others, so that you may commend your prayer with the voice of your actions. The Apostle also teaches (I Tim. II, 8) to pray without anger and argumentation, so that your prayer may not be disturbed or corrupted. He also teaches to pray in every place, as the Savior says: Enter into your room (Matt. VI, 6). But understand that it is not a room closed by walls, where your limbs are confined: but it is a room within you, in which your thoughts are enclosed, in which your senses move. This room of your prayer is with you everywhere, and it is a secret everywhere, of which the only judge is God alone.

39. But especially you are to pray and teach for the people (1 Tim. 2:1), that is, for the whole body, for all the members of your mother, in which mutual charity is evident. For if you pray only for yourself, you will pray for yourself alone. And if individuals pray only for themselves, the grace of the intercessor is less than that of the sinner. But now, because individuals pray for all, all also pray for individuals. Therefore, to conclude, if you pray only for yourself, you will pray for yourself alone, as we have said. But if you ask for everyone, everyone will ask for you. Indeed, you are in everything. Such is the great reward, that the support of the entire population is obtained through the prayers of individuals. In this there is no arrogance, but rather a greater humility and a higher fruit.

Chapter X. In the first offering, Cain passes by due to a defect and goes to another, namely that he did not offer from the first fruits. The first fruits of the soul are especially to be offered, and what they are. Abel is said to have offered the same, and to have commanded the law to be offered. Similarly, the Canaanites are mentioned there: also why God is said to have sworn that the inward movements of the soul cannot be pacified without His help. Finally, it is said that these offerings should be made for which sexual distinction contributes nothing. But now it is time to move on to another topic, since we have fully discussed what Cain offered after days. It has become an indication of a backward approach, when the very request of a vow should be mature; so that we do not seem to have relied more on human arts, that is, the skill of healing and the juices of herbs, than on seeking help from God. For it is to Him that we must first turn, who is able to heal the passions of our soul. However, some people seek help from others before seeking it from themselves in a misplaced order: but when human resources fail, then they believe that divine favor, grace, should be sought.

Now that this matter has been resolved and Cain has been convicted of the crime, let us discuss another fault in his offering. He offered, he said, fruits of the earth, not the first fruits as an offering to God. This is to claim the first fruits for oneself: but the following fruits should be offered to God. Therefore, since the soul is truly to be preferred to the body as its master, the first fruits of the soul,

that is, of discipline, should be offered before the body. The first fruits of the soul are the preeminence of good disciplines. Although the senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and voice (which are the food, growth, sight, hearing, and touch of the body, while the mind and senses are part of the soul) are later in time than the first-fruits of the body, they are yet prior to the disciplines. The first of which is the thanksgiving offered to God with a pure heart and simple speech.

42. Abel offered these gifts, and for this reason God looked favorably upon his gifts, because he offered from the firstfruits. Furthermore, he approached with the firstfruits of the sheep and their fat. Consider that he did not offer from inanimate things, but from living creatures. For an animal is greater than the earth; indeed, an animal is closest to the spiritual. For that which is spiritual is not prior to that which is animal, but rather that which is animal, and then that which is spiritual. That which is animal breathes, it possesses the vital spirit; it is not so with the fruits of the earth. Then he offered not the second, but the first; not small, but fat: for such the law approved, and commanded to be offered, as it is written: And it shall be, he said, when God shall lead thee into the land of the Chanaanites, as he swore to thy fathers, and shall give it thee; thou shalt offer whatsoever openeth the womb, of the males to the Lord. All that openeth the womb of thy cattle, and of thy sheep, the males shall be the Lord's; all the firstborn of a donkey shalt thou redeem with a sheep: and if thou wilt not give a price for it, it shall be slain (Exodus 13:11 and following). What depth of mystery, what heights of secret wisdom, that you may grasp and draw from the rich abundance of spiritual grace, in certain veins of simple words? For the Canaanites are fickle and restless. Therefore, when you have entered their land, be aware of their levity, restlessness, and instability of character; hold on to constancy in the face of their possession. Let not cheap reasoning, nor trivial speech disturb you; for this is the way of the Canaanite - fickle speech, unstable emotions, and restless contention. Rather, maintain tranquility of heart, and peacefulness of mind; as if a safe haven for ships in the sea, establish a harbor for your thoughts.

43. The Lord promises you this possession, and confirms your constancy with the bond of a certain sacrament. For God does not swear because he needs the faith of a believer, nor does he require the support of testimonies or the suffrage of a sacrament, as we humans do when we bind someone to ourselves by a sacrament, and therefore we swear in order to be believed to have spoken the truth. But God, even when he speaks, is faithful, whose word is a sacrament. For it is not the faithful omnipotent God because of the sacrament, but also because of God the sacrament is faithful. Therefore, in what way does Moses bring about an oath from God? Because we are enclosed by a certain usage of mortals, and, like urchins, we are enveloped by a certain shell of common opinion, or like snails, which cannot breathe or sustain free air unless they are within the covering of a shell: so we are only engaged in certain earthly hiding places of human custom. Therefore, because we are more inclined to believe that which is confirmed by an oath, so that our faith may not falter, God is described as one who does not swear, but rather as the judge and avenger of those who swear falsely. In fact, it is written: 'The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: You are a priest forever' (Ps. 110:4). He has surely kept what he has sworn, giving us an eternal high priest. Therefore, you must also understand that what you have sworn must be upheld; and because you swear by the one who does not lie, you should know that he will be your avenger if you lie.

Therefore, once the restless and unstable thoughts are expelled, God will give you an empty possession of the heart and mind, so that you may exercise it with the cultivation of tranquility and

reap the fruit from it, and not tolerate the Canaanites, that is, the turbulent senses, from recurring in it; you will uproot every conception of the vices of the gentiles; you will destroy their groves with which the truth is overshadowed, and a certain heavenly book of the sight of thought is hidden by the horror of dark debate.

45. But unless you are given this by a divine gift, you cannot accomplish it. Therefore, it is said: God will give you (Exod. XIII, 11), that is, the best thoughts, calm plans, peaceful discoveries. When He has given these, you will take away everything that opens the male womb, and you will sanctify it to the Lord. God does not demand everything from you, who has given everything. For He bestows many things for the use of human substance, and this cannot be a divine sacrifice where the use of nature is present. To eat, to drink, to sleep, and other bodily services are gifts given to you, not things brought by you to God as offerings. But whatever holy thoughts you may have, these are gifts from God, inspirations from God, graces from God; just as, on the other hand, those things which pertain to the use of human nature do not defile man: but what comes out of the mouth, thefts, false testimonies, sacrileges, these are the things that defile man.

Therefore, let us purify our innermost selves, so that our offering may not displease. There, let us seek everything that opens the male vulva, that is, what is just and essential, which we ought to sanctify to the Lord. For it is not these bodily unions, conceptions, and births that sanctify us, through which the female vulva is opened with the deflowering of the modesty of virginity. For although a woman sanctifies a man, and a man sanctifies a woman; nevertheless, it often happens that the vulva of a virgin is opened even without the sanctity of marriage. Nor is masculine grace solely for men, but woman is also foreign to sanctification, or confused by the nature of both sexes, so that both are founded in bodily reproduction. Men have their duties, women have their distinct roles. This generation of human succession befits woman, but is impossible for man.

Therefore, if this sense does not agree with the use of the flesh, let us discuss the functions of the soul. I find, indeed, that it is not differentiated by any sex: and since it has no sex, it represents the functions of both sexes, it marries, conceives, and gives birth. And just as nature has given females a womb in which the generation of every living being is formed through menstrual periods, so there is a certain power of the soul which, like a secret womb, receives the seeds of our thoughts, nurtures the concept, and is accustomed to give birth. For Isaiah would not have said otherwise: In the womb we received and gave birth to the spirit of salvation (Isaiah XXVI 18); unless he knew the womb of the soul. Some of these generations are feminine, such as wickedness, wantonness, luxury, intemperance, impurity, and other such vices, by which the strength of our souls is weakened. The masculine virtues are chastity, patience, prudence, temperance, fortitude, justice, by which our mind and body are strengthened, and are vigorously raised to carry out the duties of virtue. This prophetic womb gave birth to these offspring. And this is why he said: In the womb we received and gave birth to the spirit of salvation. Therefore, he both gave birth and bore a male who poured out the spirit of salvation.

Book Two

Chapter I. The mature production of the offspring of the soul: what is their form? Can the plebeian senses of the mind be subdued by authority? For our kind of sensory perception is twofold; and is it beyond that which is offered to God to stand forth on its own accord? Finally, there is a discussion about the mixture by which we are constituted, and its first principles. May our soul give

birth to these [works], and not only give birth, but also bring forth, and bring forth when the days of giving birth are completed, so that the premature days of judgment may not find us. For concerning these births, the Lord Jesus says: Woe to those who are pregnant and nursing in those days (Luke 21:23)? Therefore, let this birth be completed earlier, and let our thoughts be explained by the processes of good deeds; so that our end may find nothing unfinished, our life's end may not encounter anything unexplained, and our use of work may not leave anything as if placed on an anvil. Therefore, hasten, soul, to shape your offspring, to complete them more quickly, to nourish those you have brought forth more swiftly.

2. The Apostle demonstrates what a great formation is being born, saying: My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you (Galat. IV, 19). Into this form, let all the depths of our mind unite, and in that womb of the soul, let Christ shine forth. Let our faith be our birth, and let the teachings of doctrine be our nourishment. Let our infancy be imbued with these things, let our childhood be instructed, let our youth be nurtured, and let our old age grow white. For old age is an unblemished life. Therefore, old age is truly a good for the soul, which no acts of treachery have stained. And so, Paul defends his offspring from this stain: 'I have begotten you,' he says, 'in the Gospel' (I Cor. IV, 15); lest any cruel whispering might try the faith's infancy. He was generating the masculine, therefore, who was eager to lead the peoples he taught to the perfection of faith, and to hold the perfect measure of the fullness of Christ in the knowledge of the Son of God (Ephes. IV, 13). For He knew that this sacrifice would be acceptable to God, about which it is written: 'You shall separate every offspring that opens the womb, the male belongs to the Lord' (Exodus 13:11). And the one who added: 'Every offspring that opens the womb among your livestock and animals, the male shall be sanctified to the Lord' (Ibid., 12); so that it may not be obscure, let us consider.

He had spoken about the main genera, that is, those capable of reason: he also added about the herd-like genera, that is, the remaining common senses, which are compared to irrational animals. However, when they are governed by some ruler, they easily become tamed; and they are accustomed to carry out commands, to submit to a yoke, to accelerate or stop at the master's voice, or to turn aside, or to perform various tasks of their assigned work, by a kind of human service. Such is the power of education, that it overcomes nature! Therefore, those things which do not have the fellowship of our substance, nevertheless recognize the dominion of our voice: and although they have no reason of their own nature, they take on our reason, and in a certain way acquire it as if transfused. We see horses spurred on by the pursuits of the common people, rejoicing in applause, delighting in flatteries of their masters. We behold fierce lions changing their natural ferocity into obedience, setting aside their own rage, adopting our customs; and although they themselves are terrible, they learn to fear. The dog is beaten so that the lion may be frightened: and he who is exasperated by his own injury is restrained by others, and is broken by the example of another. How often do they prefer to suffer hunger and endure the offense of the master, when there is prepared prey and food in sight? How often, impelled by a sudden movement, do they, commanded, open their mouths for bites? Thus, while they obey our will, they forget their own. Not so with those wild animals, or that herd of horses, or all kinds of cattle, which wander without any ruler, and without any guiding reins of the master, they are exasperated. And for this reason, cattle herders, shepherds, and other keepers were appointed, some as masters of their own flocks, forming their offices according to the condition of the animals entrusted to them.

Therefore, it seems that there is a certain kind of our senses that is tamed and gentle: another kind that is untamed which, with a certain movement of the mind as if lazy and loose, rushes towards irrational bodily pleasures; but the gentle kind that submits and subjects itself to the guidance of the mind. Therefore, whatever is governed by this nature is masculine and perfect; but whatever dominates without any leader, with a kind of plebeian presumption, like a city that is private to the council of the king and the nobles, it weakens all the states and manly vigor of its own body with a kind of feminine dissolution. From these things, that law of the flesh is, which, opposing the law of the Apostolic mind, was dragging it captive by a certain law of sin. And therefore, in order to be liberated from that body of death, Paul placed all his hope not in his own power, but in the grace of Christ (Rom. VII, 25). Hence it is clear that these disturbances which are according to the law of the mind, proceed from divine favor, while other sensations come from bodily pleasure.

Therefore, those things that are holy are the firstfruits of our senses: they are like a certain herd, and of a lowly condition: which seems Moses to have signified by various names. For this is also declared by that mystical ark of the law, of which he says: Thou shalt not make the beginnings of thy ark, and of thy fountains to be the last. The firstfruits of thy children thou shalt give to me. (Exod. 22:29) The holy movements of our senses, which are according to virtues, themselves are the firstfruits of a spiritual ark: therefore they are likened to a rural ark, in which the corn is winnowed. For just as wheat and barley are separated from the chaff when threshed in this rural area and, as they are repeatedly winnowed, the chaff and other impurities of the harvest are scattered by the gentle breath of the air in different directions, but those which are more solid fall back into the same place after the dust is shaken out, so the fruits of our thoughts, which are solid and excellent, present a pure and sincere nourishment of virtue, as it is written: 'Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God' (Luke 4:4). But those which are useless and empty are dispersed like smoke and clouds, for just as smoke irritates the eyes, so wickedness affects those who make use of it. And rightly so, iniquity is compared to smoke, which, like a certain secular darkness, clouds the sharpness of the mind.

6. And therefore the Lord says: When you enter the land which I bring you into, and when you begin to eat from its bread, you shall offer a separate oblation to the Lord, the firstfruits of your sprinkling, bread as an oblation from the threshing floor: thus you shall offer the firstfruits of your mixtures, and give them to the Lord (Num. XV, 2 et seq.). We are a mixture, composed of various elements. For cold is mixed with hot, and moist with dry, within us. This sprinkling has many allurements of the flesh and many delights: but these are not the original senses of this body, because we are made up of soul and body and spirit. This is the principal sprinkling, in which the Apostle desires us to be sanctified, as he says: May the God of peace himself sanctify you in all things; that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess. V, 23). The first fruits of this participation are spiritual, that is, the inventions and generations of the senses that proceed from the vigor of the soul. But not all senses are primitive, except those that are free from malice, wickedness, and all error. However, bodily pleasures are necessary, such as sleeping, eating, drinking, walking, and other such senses; but they are not the first fruits. And therefore, not in these bodily pleasures, but in the sacraments of the Lord, where there is purity, piety, faith, and devotion. The manifest and clear example of this thing is the offering of the patriarch Isaac, whom the father, unaffected by any motion of human passion, offered as a sacrifice in the mode of a sacrifice, offering a pure victim to

God, empty of fear and free from bodily desire, while the piety of the father yielded to the devotion of the one sacrificing.

Chapter II.

First fruits should be valued not by time but by sanctity: when faith, which is especially necessary, should be joined to true sacrifice; labor should be exchanged for fruit, and the soul should be freed from useless things.

Now let us consider what the power of first fruits is, and whether first fruits are valued by time or by holiness, that is, whether all firstborn have the sanctification of first fruits. Indeed, the first fruits of the harvest are considered holy according to the law (Num. XVIII, 8) because in them there is the best sacrifice of eager faith, but they are made holy by devotion, not by time, because it is not the produce that sanctifies, but devotion. Finally, where there is a quick yield, if devotion is delayed, offense is incurred. Therefore, not all firstborn are holy: only those that are holy are also firstborn. Indeed, Cain was the firstborn, but not holy. Likewise, the people of Israel, the holy people of God, are not the first in age; yet they are called firstborn, as it is written in the prophets: 'Israel is my firstborn' (Exodus 4:22). And Levi is holy, but not the firstborn; for it is recorded that he was the third son of Leah (Genesis 29:34); yet the Levites are called firstborn, from whom the name is derived. For it is written in Numbers: Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn that opens the womb among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine; for all the firstborn are mine. On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified every firstborn in Israel (Num. 3:12-13). Therefore, the Levites were called the firstborn, as they were set apart by sanctification before the other children of Israel. To understand why they were called the firstborn, listen to the Apostle saying: But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven (Heb. 12:22). He made four orders: Mount Zion, the city of Jerusalem, the assembly of angels, and the primitive Churches. Therefore, the Lord God took the Levites from the midst of the people of Israel, because he did not want them to be sharers of human cares, but ministers of divine religion. And he made them his firstborn who open the spiritual womb; and therefore they were not from the womb of nature, like sinners of various crimes: but they are chosen after the secular worshippers have been destroyed. Where they do not have fellowship with plebeian possession, nor are they counted among the people; because they possess the word of God among themselves, as it is written in the Gospel: Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst (Matt. XVIII, 20). And elsewhere: There stands among you one whom you do not know (John I, 26).

Therefore, we know that above all faith should commend us to God. When we have faith, let us strive for our works to be perfect. For this is a full and perfect sacrifice, as the Lord himself teaches us, saying: 'You shall offer to me your gifts and offerings on my feast days, without detracting or dividing them; but offering them in full, intact, and perfect.' Now, the feast day of the Lord is where the grace of perfected virtues resides. Those who are truly perfect are those whose mind, having conquered the allurements of worldly anxieties and bodily pleasures, is free from the world and dedicated to God, not diminishing anything from the straight path of their direct intention, nor dividing the times of their own affections now to luxury, now to labor. Therefore, only the wise celebrate this solemnity, no one else. For it is difficult to find a soul immune to such passions.

Divide, therefore, according to the reason of the soul, the principal things and obedience, and then you will understand what is masculine and what is feminine. Virtue is nothing without labor, for labor is the process of virtue. This is also indicated by the very words of the law itself, which says: Whatever opens the womb of a donkey, you shall redeem with a lamb (Exodus 13:13). Indeed, the law separated unclean animals from sacrifice, and instead commanded clean ones to be offered in their place. Therefore, it commands that the offspring of a donkey, that is, something unclean, be replaced with a lamb, which is clean and suitable for sacrifice (Leviticus 27:27). This is according to the literal meaning. But if anyone pursues the meaning of the spiritual law more deeply, it is worth considering that the donkey is a laborious animal, the sheep productive. Therefore, it says that the labor should be changed into fruit, so that the end of one's work is fruitful. Or certainly in this way: you will commend all your labor, all your industry, with pure and simple affection.

9. But if you do not change, he says, you will redeem (Exod., XIII, 13). Therefore, according to the letter, it is commanded that another animal be offered for the unclean animal, or its price, so that nothing unclean or less than a tithe of the fruits appears to be offered. However, a deeper understanding teaches you to free your soul, so that it may abstain from those things that do not bear fruit. For whoever redeems himself, frees himself and in a way pays off a debt. Works that cannot produce true fruit and good results must be abandoned; such are the worldly things whose use cannot be lasting. In these things, he himself became naked and void of reality; and although he was sought after with the greatest effort, it brings no comfort to his soul. For those things which bring slavery to the soul are all useless, even if the effect is not lacking. The victory of the fighters seems great, the glory of the triumphant: but we frequently see those who have won, once again fall under uncertain wars and be transferred to the enemy by the outcome of the battle, and in that very moment when they were conquerors before, become more miserable. Therefore, it is necessary that you direct your actions towards God, and that His favor may aspire to you. The athlete himself, who judges with his own strength and not with that of others, believes that he undergoes uncertain events whenever he competes. And when he reaches the crown, he understands that this worldly glory, like the leaves of the crown itself, withers quickly. When a captain has steered a ship into port, he barely considers the end of his work and immediately seeks the beginning of new work. The soul is separated from the body, and after the end of this life, it is still held in suspense by the uncertain judgement of the future. So there is no end where an end is thought. From there, let us adhere to our God with vows and pure conscience and the spirit of charity, and let us obtain divine favor: praying that we may be able to be freed and stripped away from worldly cares like from cruel and rustic lords, and to exit from worldly service and enter into the freedom of supernatural knowledge, which is true and the only freedom, as we are called.

Chapter III.

He confirms what he had said about exchanging labor for fruit, using the example of the Jews serving in Egypt, and he confirms it with the testimony of the Gospel; he declares from where and in what way the soul must be freed, and that Christ is our true priest, that is, our liberator. Lastly, he presents the beautiful usefulness that the company of the righteous brings.

10. And to illustrate the precept of the law by an example, when the Egyptians oppressed the Jewish people with various works, with mud and stone, the children of Israel groaned and called upon the Lord for mercy. And he said to Moses: I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel,

how the Egyptians oppress them into servitude, and I have remembered my covenant. Go and tell the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from the power of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their slavery, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments, and I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God who brings you out from the power of the Egyptians, and I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod. 3:7 et seq.). See how the people of Hebrews have changed their labor with fruit, so that those who worked in mud would work in the hope of an eternal kingdom. And therefore the Lord, in the Gospel, had compassion on the empty labor of the gentile nations, who were constructing bricks for a muddy superstition and were devoted to the pleasure of the body, and were unable to build a solid wall of faith, as he said to certain offspring of donkeys: Come to me, all you who labor, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:28-29) In this calling, I seem to understand more fully the words of the law and the mysteries: for he taught that the donkey should either be replaced by a sheep or redeemed with money. So that we may not only change the unclean offspring of the donkey, that is, worldly things, for a sheep, but also redeem them. This seems to be expressed by first washing away the impurities of our sins through the sacrifice of purification and the mystery of baptism; and also by redeeming our crimes with good works, the price of faith, and mercy.

11. The price of our blood is Christ's. Hence the Apostle Peter says: 'You were not redeemed with gold or silver, but with precious blood.' (I Pet. I, 18) And Paul says: 'You were bought at a price, do not become slaves of men.' (I Cor. VII, 23) Hence, it is not in vain that we marvel in the Gospel that the Lord Jesus sat upon the foal of an ass (Marc. XI, 7); for the Gentiles began to be the victim of Christ, because according to the law they were considered unclean. And it is written concerning the Levites (Exodus 12:13) that their redemptions are; because they washed away the sins of the people both by the holiness of their life and by their prayers. In this the figure of the lamb preceded the true Levite who was to come, who would take away the sin of the world by the passion of his own body. The Levite is signified as being accepted for me, or he himself is light for me; for he has the mark of perfect virtue to impart to the people's health. Therefore, he who was long-awaited for the salvation of all, was born for me from a virgin womb, offered for me, tasted death for me, and rose again for me. In him, the redemption of all mankind was achieved, and the resurrection was assumed. He is the true Levite, so that he might make us cling to God, pour forth continuous prayers to him, hope for salvation from him, flee earthly affairs, be counted among God's possession, as it is written: Lord, possess us (Exod. XXXIV, 9.). For it is only that possession which bears the fruits of perpetual grace, untouched by any storms. The Redeemer is a physician, for the redemption of the foolish is the wise man's task. Like a physician who comforts the sick mind of the fool and sprinkles stronger remedies of prudence on his soul, imitating the physician who came from heaven to show mankind the ways of prudence and reveal the paths of wisdom to the little ones. For he saw that the suffering could not be saved without remedy, and therefore he gave medicine to the sick. He brought help of salvation to all, so that whoever perishes may attribute the cause of his death to himself, for he did not want to be healed when he had a remedy by which he could escape: but the mercy of Christ must be preached to all openly; because those who perish, perish through their own negligence; but those who are saved, according to the judgment of Christ, shall be set free, for he desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth. Finally, if Sodom had fifty righteous people, it would not have been destroyed,

and if it had ten, it would have been redeemed; because the word of forgiveness of sins frees the soul from servitude and does not allow the mind to be consumed by the destructive fumes of lustful desires.

However, it matters a great deal and builds moral character if we also consider the number of just individuals who contribute to the welfare of the people as a whole. It suppresses and cuts off envy, confounds wickedness, encourages virtue, and increases favor. For no one should envy the praise that benefits themselves; and every wicked individual, when they accept their redeemer, often imitates them, certainly venerates them, and often even loves them. Indeed, even if they know it will be beneficial to others, they are increased by their endeavors, and through that grace they connect people, accumulate the charity of citizens, and enhance the glory of cities. How blessed is the city that has many righteous people, how celebrated it is by the mouths of all! How it is praised from every side, and how its blessed and eternal state is esteemed! How I rejoice when I see some gentle and wise people live for a long time, when I behold chaste virgins, grave widows, elderly women, like a certain grey-haired court of the Church that presents itself with a certain countenance and appearance of gravity, which they revere, which they imitate, which they are adorned with, in order to obtain all the grace of good manners! For I do not rejoice for their own sake, when they experience the many annoyances of this world by living, but because they benefit many others. Similarly, when someone of this kind falls, even though he is laid low by a long old age, I am affected; because the flock of young people is deprived of an old wall. Finally, the first sign of a perishing city, or of impending evils, or of future evils, is this, if wise men depart, or even weighty women. From here, the gate opens for the first onslaught of approaching evils. Therefore, just as a whole city is strengthened and sustained by the gathering of wise people, or is weakened by their deaths: so too weighty speech, indeed one full of wisdom, is accustomed to stabilizing the soul of each individual and confirming the mind. Now if the practice of many readings is added, along with the guidance of many teachers and counsels, a certain senate, like a perpetual state of the city that is in the hearts of individuals, is established.

Chapter IV.

Why did Moses call the Levites firstborns and redeemers, and designate their cities as redeeming ones? Why is it not absurd for the pious to cohabit with the wicked? On the two virtues in God, mercy and justice, and their ministers; and on how the departure from evil always leads to the entrance of virtue, and vice versa; as is proven by examples in the Gospels.

Therefore, therefore, Moses called the firstborns and redeemers of the other Levites (Numbers 3:12); because mature and useful men of a certain old age prefer one senility of the soul, another redemption. Hence Moses also indicated the cities of the Levites as redeemers in the Old Testament (Numbers 35:6); because he who takes refuge in that soul in which the Word of God dwells, which is fortified and surrounded like a city, acquires perpetual freedom for himself. For just as in the cities of the Levites there was a remission of punishments, so that if anyone took refuge there who had not committed voluntary murder, no one was allowed to kill him as long as he stayed within the cities of the Levites; in the same way, if someone repents of their own sin, which they either committed thoughtlessly or unwillingly, and attaches themselves to the Levites as residents, and does not think that they should separate themselves from those teachers who dispense God's commandments, the law itself frees them from all punishment and penalty for the

crime committed.

14. And do not think it absurd that criminals live together with the pious and the sullied live among the sacred. For those who have been contaminated by the contagion of sins need to be purified. And in a way, a different kind of cause converges. For just as the Levites, having renounced worldly pleasures, are exiles from guilt, so the guilty of blood are fugitives from their homeland. But there is this difference, that the former abandons his own out of fear of the law, while the minister of God renounces the company of humans for the sake of passions and, in pursuit of virtue, rejects the enticements of the flesh. Moreover, this does not deviate from the truth, that he, as it were, imposes certain hands on himself, in order to kill the pleasures of his own body and bring about the destruction of his flesh. Moses indeed killed the Egyptian and became a fugitive from the land of Egypt, in order to avoid the tyrant of that land. But he would not have killed that Egyptian man before he had first killed the Egyptian man of spiritual wickedness within himself, and had renounced the luxury of regal honors, considering the reproach of Christ a greater inheritance than the treasures of Egypt. What seems like a disgrace to foolish people is, for us, the power and wisdom of God in the cross of the Lord.

15. Besides, there are two main kinds of virtues in God, one by which He forgives and another by which He punishes. Sins are forgiven through the word of God, whose levite is the interpreter and executor as well (23, q. 5, cap. Remittuntur; et de Poenit. dist. 1, cap. Verbum Dei): they are also forgiven through the office of the priest and the sacred ministry. They are also punished by humans, such as judges who have temporary authority, as the Apostle teaches, saying: Do you not fear the power? Do good, and you will have praise from it; for he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid. For he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. (Rom. XIII, 4). Sins are punished even by nations, as we read (Isa. XIII, 17); for oftentimes, by God's command, aliens are raised up to punish the people of the Jews for the offense against the divine majesty. Nor is he who unwillingly commits homicide outside of his office. For the law says of him: Because God has given him into his hands. Therefore, his hands have served as instruments for divine vengeance. The Levite is therefore a minister of forgiveness; but the one who, though not by his own decision but against his will, commits homicide, is a minister of divine vengeance.

16. Also consider this, that when the wicked is killed, Christ is infused. And where abomination is abolished, sanctification is gathered; for the Lord said: In that day when I slew all the firstborn of Egypt, I sanctified unto me all the firstborn of Israel (Num. III, 13). Which you do not apply to the one day of affliction of Egypt, but to all time. For when wickedness is renounced (32, q. I, cap. Cum renuntiatur), immediately virtue is acquired. For the one who has departed from wickedness works the entrance of virtue: and with the same eagerness with which the crime is excluded, innocence is joined. You have this in the Gospel (John 13:2): because when Satan entered into the heart of Judas, Christ departed from him, and in the moment in which he received him, He lost him. Finally, it is written: And after the morsel, Satan entered into him (Ibid., 27). Therefore, Jesus said to him: What you are doing, do quickly. What is this? That because Satan had entered into him, he would depart from Christ. Therefore, he is cast out and excluded, because he can no longer be with the Lord Jesus, as he had begun to be with the devil: for there is no communion of Christ with Belial. Hence, immediately being expelled by command, he departed, as we read, with the Evangelist saying: He received the morsel, and immediately went out (Ibid., 30); for it was

night. He not only went out, but immediately and in the night he went out. And it is not surprising that he had the darkness of night who abandoned Christ. Truly, just as he was received by the devil, he was excluded from Christ; so Zacchaeus, renouncing greed, received Christ. And rightly seeing his eagerness, that he had climbed up a tree to see Jesus passing by, the Lord says: Zacchaeus, hurry down, for today I must stay at your house. And he hurried down and joyfully welcomed him. But by receiving Christ he excluded greed, banished treachery, renounced deceit. For Christ does not enter otherwise, than to exclude vices; because he does not dwell with errors. Finally, he threw the moneylenders out of the temple, because he himself wanted to dwell there. Therefore, Zachaeus understanding this, that he could not receive Christ with his old affection, commanded his former vices to leave his home, so that Christ would enter. Therefore, while the Pharisees were murmuring because the Lord Jesus had gone to stay with a sinner, he said to the Lord: Behold, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold (Luke 19:8). In this, he responded to those who said that a sinner should not offer hospitality to Christ: This is to say, I am no longer a tax collector, I am not that Zacchaeus, I am not a robber, I am not a fraudster. I return what I took, I return what I used to steal. Now I give to the poor, whom I used to strip: now I offer my own, whom I used to rob. The sins fled after Christ entered. The blindness of all carnal passions has been dispelled, where the light of eternal life has been infused.

Chapter V.

What do the fat and lard of sacrifices and offerings signify?

17. We have spoken about first-borns; let us also speak about fatness, about which David sufficiently teaches, saying: My soul shall be filled as with marrow and fatness (Ps. 62:5-6). And further he says: And let thy burnt-offering be fat (Ps. 20:4). Teaching that an acceptable sacrifice is one that is fat, that is shining, and that has been nourished with the food of faith and devotion, fattened by the abundant nourishment of the heavenly word. We often describe as fat a work that we want to be thick and laborious; and a rich offering is praised, which is not thin, not slender. And hence we rightly call it a rich sacrifice, because we desire to signify its abundance. Moreover, it is also supported by the evidence that fat cows, in prophetic interpretation, have been compared to bountiful years (Gen. XLI, 26).

Chapter VI.

What the Lord meant when he said: If you offer correctly, but divide incorrectly, you have sinned, so be still; and of the four types in which sacrifices were commended, if anything is lacking, the sacrifice is not approved, with the most beautiful moral interpretation of these things.

18. Now let us consider what the Lord says: If you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly, you have sinned, cease. This is an indication that God is not pleased with the offering of gifts, but with the disposition of the offerer. In the end, Cain, the condemned offerer of the gift, understood that his sacrifice was not approved by God because of his insincere conscience in the offering, and he became sad. For when a person's conscience is aware of their righteousness, they rejoice and their spirit is filled with a certain spiritual infusion of joy when their thoughts or works are approved by God. Therefore, sadness is a testimony of Cain's conscience and an indication of rejection. And although he offered a gift, because he did not divide it rightly and justly, he incurred guilt.

19. There are indeed four types of sacrifices that were commended. Whether they were new of new things, or roasted, or divided, or continuous. The new of new things were in the first time of the year, which were valued for their appearance in the firstfruits: but now it has been revealed that they signify those who are renewed through the sacraments of baptism. For this is truly the primitive sacrifice, when each person offers themselves as a victim, and begins with themselves, so that they may later be able to offer their own gift (Rom. XII, 1). Therefore, the new faith of the renewers, strong, youthful, acquiring the growth of virtue, not lax, not weary, not with a certain withering old age, and lazy with vigor, is fit for sacrifice, which sprouts with a green seedling of wisdom, and matures with the fervor of divine knowledge in youth; yet it should have the nourishment of old teachings. For just as the teachings of the new and old Testaments should come together, as it is written: Consume the old things of the ancients, and remove the old things from the face of the new ones (Leviticus 26:10). Let the knowledge of the patriarchs be food for us, let the soul feast on the oracles of the prophets: let the inner being be nourished by such sustenance. But now let it not be the appearance of a lamb, but rather the reality of the body of Christ. Let it not be the shadow of the law that blinds the eyes, but rather let the grace of the Lord's passion openly reveal, and let the splendor of the resurrection illuminate the mind's sight.

20. But if you offer a sacrifice of the first-born sheep, roasted on the fire, roasted fat, you shall offer the sacrifice of the first-born, as it is written (Lev. VII, 2): which signifies that your faith may be tried by fire and may burn with a holy spirit. Finally, Jacob cooked lentils and stole the first-born blessing from his brother, so that his faith might obtain solid rewards. Thus, he grew strong and powerful; while the other, who did not know how to cook his food, grew tired and weak. Therefore, let your soul be ignited by the word of the Lord as by fire. See Joseph burning, as it is written: The word of the Lord burned him (Ps. 104:19). Let your faith be burned like the sheaves of the harvest. For they bring forth the ripeness of fruits when they have been scorched by the heat of the summer sun. Therefore, the abundant words of the Scriptures strengthen the soul and imbue it with a certain spiritual grace; they also support rational truths and dissolve all the power of irrational passions. Therefore, Esau, having his strong bonds of virtue loosened, was dissipated. But those who girded up their loins, were not given raw or boiled in water, but roasted in fire, the head of a lamb to eat, as you have in Exodus, they crossed the seas with a strong and faithful mind, on foot (Exodus 12:9). In the Gospel also, the Lord Jesus ate roasted fish, as it is written (Luke 24:43), in which the fullness of the Holy Spirit overflowed. And perhaps for this reason Esau was lacking, because he desired food cooked in water, which Jacob gave to him as if it were useless for the sick.

However, the offering and prayer should not be confused but distinguished by appropriate division. For in all things, distinction is better than confusion, especially in prayer and offering, which, if it does not have certain divisions, becomes obscure. Therefore, the law often commands the parts of the sacrifice to be divided and the burnt offerings to be offered (Leviticus 1:6), so that the sacrifice may be naked without any mixture or covering, because our faith should fervently burn naked and stripped of all wrappings; so that it may not be influenced by wandering and deceptive opinions, but pure and sincere simplicity of mind may appear. Then let it be divided into suitable parts. For virtue is a kind which is divided into many species: but the principal ones are four, prudence, temperance, fortitude, justice. Therefore, let your speech resound with prudence towards the knowledge of God and the truth of faith. Let it resound with temperance, which the

Apostle also deemed necessary to be demanded of spouses, saying: Do not defraud one another, except perhaps by agreement, for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer (I Cor. VII, 5). And the law commands the purified ones to approach the day before yesterday and the day before the day before yesterday for sacrifice (Exod., XIX, 10). Let prayer hold on to strength, so that it is not interrupted by fear, does not fail due to weariness. For then the intention to pray should be stronger when we are pressed by adversities. Let prayer guard righteousness, which if Judas had held onto, his prayer would not have turned into sin. For when should we abstain more from unjust deeds and wicked pursuits than when we pray for the justice of God? And therefore, the Lord, in order that justice might be dear to us, said: Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:10). This was lacking in Judas; for if it had been present, he would not have handed over the Lord, nor would he have betrayed his Master. Likewise, it was lacking in the sacrifice of Cain, who, if he had maintained justice, should have offered the first fruits to the Lord, not the later ones. Therefore, he lacked division, and for this reason it is said to him: If you offer well, but do not divide well, you have sinned, cease. You see how great a vice it is. Where there is no division, there the whole sacrifice is rejected.

22. It remains for us to speak about continuous and constant prayer, because it is necessary for us to spend time and be vacant for prayer. The Lord spent the night in prayer, not for his own benefit, but to teach us. For frequent prayer produces a discipline of praying; because the very practice makes us teachable by God, while negligence makes us unteachable. Therefore, it is good exercise. Finally, the strength of the body is increased by frequent exercise: but without exercise, it diminishes and weakens. For many exercises also dissolve natural virtue from disuse. Similarly, the strength of the soul is strengthened by the assiduity of exercise; so that the very labor itself will not be a burden, but a benefit. Let us give this food to our mind, which, worn and polished by much meditation, may strengthen the heart of man like heavenly manna. We receive this not in vain, worn and polished; because we should long wear and polish the words of heavenly scripture, turning them over in our entire mind and heart; so that the sap of that spiritual food may spread throughout all the veins of the soul. Therefore, if faith, like a growing adolescent, increases and drives away the deficiency of aging devotion, and burns with spirit, and is maintained by a suitable distinction of legitimate division, and constant practice commends grace; then prayer becomes rich, like a fatty and adipose substance, of which the Prophet says: 'You have anointed my head with oil' (Psalm 23:5). For just as lambs fatten with much milk, and well-fed sheep shine with fat, so does the prayer of the faithful flourish with the nourishment of apostolic juice.

23. If any of these things we have said above are lacking, the sacrifice is not approved. Therefore it was said to Cain: If you offer rightly, but do not rightly divide, you have sinned. For the world itself is read to have been made distinct, when it was an unarranged part; for the Earth was invisible and unarranged (Gen. I, 2). Truly light was made first, and God called the light, and God separated the light from the darkness, and the darkness was called night. And in order we read the things that were done, heaven, earth, fruitful trees, diverse animals. And indeed they are distributed lighter to the higher, such as air and fire: heavier to the lower, that is, earth and water. Certainly all things could have been created at once by God: but He chose to maintain distinction, which we should imitate in all our affairs, and especially in the alternations of gratitude, in which it is not enough to repay what you have received, but to commend what you give back. For if someone pays his debt and in returning does harm to the creditor, it is surely more intolerable than

not having paid back what he owed. Therefore, it is not the amount of payment, but the intention of the one making the payment, and the quality and emotion, that are considered. Therefore, Cain offered correctly; because offering is a remarkable display of devotion and an indication of thanks: but he did not divide correctly; because he should have first offered the first fruits to God, so that he would begin with grace from the author. For here the order of division is such that the second things come before the first, not the first before the second; and heavenly things are preferred to earthly things, not earthly things to heavenly things.

Chapter VII.

God, who taught in Adam not to sin, taught in Cain not to defend sin. And there, how prone one is to fall from impiety into other crimes, He instructs.

24. But because Cain disturbed this order, it is said to him: You have sinned, be quiet (Gen. IV, 7). God teaches everything. First, do not sin, as He advised Adam: secondly, if you have sinned, be quiet, as you are taught in the case of Cain. For we should be ashamed and condemn sin, not defend it; because guilt is diminished by shame, and increased by defense. And by remaining silent, we are corrected, by contention we stumble. Let there at least be shame, where there is no absolution. Hence the saying: 'The just person at the beginning of a speech is the accuser of themselves' (Prov. XVIII, 17). And elsewhere in the Lord's own words we read: 'Declare your iniquities, that you may be justified' (Isaiah XLIII, 26). How great is the grace of modesty, that it holds justice, and how it removes the guilt of sin! Therefore, he says: 'Be silent, for you have nothing to excuse. The turning of his own guilt is towards you. For he is not a brother assigned to him, but an error is attributed, of which he himself is the author.' In you, he said, the crime returns, which began with you. You have no one to blame but yourself. Your own wickedness will be thrown back at you, you are its leader.

25. He says well: You are the leader of that person. For impiety is a certain mother of offenses; and he who has sinned more gravely easily falls into other sins. For how can he who has violated divine things restrain himself from human ones, and be good to people who has harmed God? Therefore, vices follow a more atrocious guilt of crimes; because the more they have inclined towards shameful things, the more they lean towards other things. So you are the leader of your own work, the guide of the crime. You were not unwilling, nor unaware, that error drew you in: but as a willing defendant in judgment, not by a slip, you committed deceit, by which you yourself prove yourself guilty of divine wrongs.

Chapter VIII.

By Cain's rebuke, insolence and crime increase. In his words: 'Let us go to the field,' it is shown that deserted and barren places suit wicked actions.

26. Therefore, being warned to keep quiet, he becomes more insolent, and wickedness becomes more bitter. What, then, does he mean when he says: 'Let us go into the field' (ibid., 8)? Is it not because a bare place where offspring are produced is chosen for the act of parricide? For where did the brother have an opportunity to be killed except where fruit was lacking? As if nature, foreseeing such a great crime, had denied the germination of seeds to that place; because it was not fitting that the same place should receive both the contagion of parricidal blood beyond the bounds of nature and that fruits should be produced naturally according to nature. He rightfully

says: Let us go to the field. He does not say: Let us go to paradise, where fruits flourish, but to some barren and unfruitful place. The murderers themselves indicate that they cannot have the fruit of their crime, nor can it remain with those who have shown such great impiety. For they flee from the kindness of the elements themselves, like this Cain, who seems to fear that the fertile earth's abundant yield would hinder his sad deed, and the accustomed generosity of fertility, which causes various offspring and fruits to sprout, would also recall in this crime or in some silent appearance the affection of a brother. The thief avoids the light of day as though it were a witness to his crime, the adulterer blushes at the light as though it knows of his adultery, the murderer flees from the fertility of the earth. For how could he behold the companionship of common birth who slew the companion of his own blood? Joseph is cast into a dry pit, Ammon is killed within his house. Therefore, nature has justly bestowed judgment upon those places where patricide would occur by depriving them of the gift of her bounty, so that by the condemnation of an innocent land, she might reveal the great punishments that await the guilty. Therefore, both the elements themselves and human beings are condemned because of the wickedness. Finally, David, in the mountains where Jonathan was killed along with his father, desired the punishment of perpetual sterility, saying: O mountains of Gilboa, may neither dew nor rain fall upon you, you mountains of death (2 Samuel 1:21).

Chapter IX.

God questioned Cain, not to learn, but to induce him to confess. His response is impious towards God and nature; and God's opposite response is shown to wonderfully teach the piety of brotherly love. From God, the righteous are heard even when dead, so that they may truly live, and the sinners are dead. These ones are tormented by present and future evils, but are more troubled by present evils.

27. Now let us consider by what reasoning God questioned Cain about his brother, as if he did not know that he had been killed. But with regard to the knowledge of God, he rebukes the one who denies and responds as if knowing: The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me (Gen. IV, 10): but with regard to profound reasoning, he warns sinners to repentance. For confession is a summary of punishments. Hence, in secular judgments, those who deny are tormented on the rack, and the judge is moved by the mercy of the one who confesses. There is a certain shame in admitting certain sins and acknowledging guilt, rather than shifting blame but recognizing it. Shame softens the judge towards the guilty, while obstinacy incites denial. God wants to motivate you to repentance, wants you to hope for forgiveness, wants to demonstrate through your confession that He is not the author of evil. For those who attribute their sins to a certain cause, as the Gentiles argue, they seem to be accusing divine decree or their own actions, as if the cause of their sin is their own power. For whoever kills under compulsion, kills as though unwillingly. But those things that are done by us have no excuse, but those things that are done apart from us are excusable. However, how much more severely to bring back to God what you have done in sin and to transfer the blame for your guilt to the author not of crime, but of innocence. But consider the answer of the murderer: 'I do not know,' he says, 'whether I am the guardian of my brother' (Gen. IV, 9). Although this statement reveals presumption, it nevertheless implies that if he had considered his brother's well-being, he should have been a guardian of piety. For who should have been more obligated to protect his brother than he? But how could he fulfill the duty of brotherhood, when he did not acknowledge the obligations of kinship? Or how could he possibly

show obedience to nature, when he did not show reverence to God? He denies first as if in the presence of an ignorant person: he rejects the duty of fraternal protection, as if he were devoid of nature; he avoids judgment, as if he were free-willed. Why are you surprised if he did not recognize piety, who did not recognize the author? And therefore you are taught by this series of Scriptures that faith is the root of all virtues. Hence the Apostle says: For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus (I Cor. III, 11); and whatever you build upon this foundation, it alone will be for the profit of your work and for the reward of your virtue.

29. Therefore, the Lord fittingly responds to one who foolishly denies, saying: The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me (Gen. IV, 10), that is, why do you not know where your brother is? You were alone with your two parents, your brother should not have been able to hide among so few. Or is it because your parents cannot be accusers? For I do not want that the bond which is the author of salvation becomes the author of danger. In you alone has nature lost its laws. Therefore, do you think that the crime is hidden because parents should not accuse? But the condemnation is even greater for you. For if dear names of relationship should not accuse, much more should they not kill. But if you reject me as a witness and refuse an arbitrator, the voice of your brother's blood is a witness that cries out to me. It accuses you with greater authority than if your brother were alive. You were alone, who else could have killed him? If you accuse your parents, you prove yourself to be a parricide. He could have killed his brother, who does not spare his parents. He could have been a murderer, who desires to prove himself descended from murderers. And he says well: The voice of your brother's blood cries out, not the brother cries out. This innocence and grace of brotherhood also preserves in death itself. The brother Abel does not accuse, so as not to appear a parricide. His own voice does not accuse, nor does his soul, but the voice of his blood accuses, which you yourself shed. Therefore, your crime, not the brother, accuses you. At the same time, the complaint is taken away from the criminal. One cannot complain based on another's testimony when one confesses the crime through their own action. It is a small matter, compared to the deed. Yet even the earth itself is a witness, for it has absorbed the blood. And it is well said: The voice of your brother's blood cries out from the earth - it does not say, cries out from your brother's body, but from the earth it cries out. And if the brother is spared, the earth is not spared. If the brother lies motionless, the earth condemns. It itself is both witness and judge in you: a more bitter witness, still wet with the blood of your fratricide; a harsher judge, so tainted with such a crime that it opened its mouth to receive the blood of your brother from your hand. And she indeed opened her mouth, as if to receive words of piety from her brothers, fearing nothing when she saw her brothers, which she knew to be the source of love due to their shared blood, not hatred. For how could she suspect patricide, when she had not yet witnessed homicide? But you have shed blood, the mourning of which itself is a contamination. 'It will not increase,' she said, 'to give her virtue to you.' How innocent is her revenge, who, having been so gravely violated, is content with not benefitting, and seeks not to harm.

31. Not mediocre also is the doctrine that says: The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me; for God hears even his righteous ones who are dead, because they live to God. And rightly they are considered alive; because even if they have tasted the death of the body, they receive incorporeal life, and are illuminated by the splendor of their merits, and also enjoy eternal light. Therefore, God hears the blood of the righteous: but he turns away from the prayers of the wicked; for even if they seem to be alive, they are more wretched than all the dead, carrying around their

flesh like a tomb in which they have buried their wretched soul. For what else is it but buried, which is rolled within the earth, and enclosed by earthly greed and other vices, so that it cannot breathe the air of heavenly grace? This kind of sinner is cursed by the earth, which is the lowest and last part of the world. Above, indeed, is heaven, and what is in heaven: the sun, moon, and stars, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers, Cherubim and Seraphim. There is therefore no doubt that they condemned him and the things above him, whom the lower things also condemned. For how is he absolved by a pure and celestial sentence whom neither the earth could absolve? And therefore, groaning and trembling, he is commanded to be above the earth.

32. The obvious and general reason is that all that is evil is present and will come. The present evils cause sadness, while the future ones cause fear. But present evil is more disturbing than future evil. Hence Cain said to God: My cause is greater than that I should be forgiven. If you forsake me today, I will hide myself from your face. For there is nothing more serious than being abandoned by God while wandering, so that one cannot repent. The death of the sinner brings an end to sinning: but life, deprived of divine guidance, is precipitated and falls into worse things; just as when a shepherd abandons the flock, wild beasts attack: so when God abandons man, the devil assails. It is a serious matter, especially for the ignorant, to not have a guide. Malice creeps in, wounds increase when there is no medicine. However, he who wants to hide guilt conceals himself and covers up sin. For the one who does evil hates the light and seeks the hiding places of their sins. But the righteous does not hide from their Lord God, but instead offers themselves, saying: Behold, it is I who do not have a guilty conscience, which I fear being discovered.

33. Therefore, rightfully so, he hides himself, feeling guilty, and says: 'Anyone who finds me will kill me.' A person of noble character fears present death, neglects eternal death, and does not shy away from divine judgment; they only pray for the destruction of the body. But why did he fear being killed, when he had only his parents on Earth? Indeed, he could also fear attacks from beasts, as he had violated the laws of divine authority; and he could not presume to harm other subject animals, as he had taught mankind how to kill. He was able to fear even his parents as parricides, who had taught that parricide could be committed. Indeed, parents were also able to learn from their son, what offspring learned from their parent.

Chapter X.

The decree of God, 'If anyone kills Cain, etc.,' is explained morally; in the sign placed above the same [Cain], the divine mercy is declared, as is also in the madness of Cain, that he feared temporal death more than eternal death. Hence, a beautiful discussion is made about the incorruptibility of the soul and the future life. Finally, it is shown that judgment should not be hastily passed, nor should a crime go unpunished.

34. Now let us consider why God said: Whoever kills Cain will suffer vengeance sevenfold (Gen. IV, 15); and why a sign is placed upon him, so that the murderer may not be killed, since it was not foreseen, lest the innocent be killed. The eighth is man, who has reason by which he excels the others, and he also has the five senses of the body, and he also has a voice, and he also has the grace of procreation. These seven things, unless they are ruled by reason, are subject to death; and therefore the foolish person in these matters has every danger to himself. Therefore, whoever loses that rational thing, in vain will flatter themselves with the use of these seven carnal pleasures. All of these dissolve unless they are bound by certain reins of reason. Therefore, the

death of reason operates the death of irrational passions. But that which is better is the seventh number of rest and remission. Therefore, whoever does not spare the sinner, and envies him the gift of forgiveness of sins, will himself lose the hope of forgiveness, and there will be in him an equal measure of vengeance for grace.

35. But the sign which he set upon Cain, *when it was applied to him that his brother's blood had lodged its stain upon his soul*, was intended to represent the wanderer and the exile, wandering away from the presence of the Lord and seeking a habitation, and yet defended by a certain privilege for the sake of his punishment, so that no one might kill him at his pleasure. Yet this grant was but small, for in his very case he had the vengeance of the simpleton who, when liable to lasting penalties, did not make his prayer for pardon, but begged for his life to be spared in this body of ours, where there is at least as much distress as delight. For death is the one and only separation of the soul and body, and at the end of this life, which as soon as it comes, is accustomed to take away all bodily pains, not to increase them. But the fears that frequently assail those who are still alive, bring to the human race many wounds of sorrow, pains, groans, various tortures, burdens of heaviness, and injuries of illnesses, so that this death seems to be a remedy, not a punishment. For it is not a destructive death, by which life is not taken away, but is transferred to better things. For if the guilty die, those who refuse to return from their sins; or even against their will they obtain an end not according to nature, but according to fault, so that they may not commit more, for whom life is interest on sins. But if they are possessors of good hope, they should be believed to migrate rather than to fail.

36. At this point, the doctrine of the incorruption of the soul is inserted, that it is the true and blessed life, which each person lives much more purely and happily when our soul, having cast off this fleshly envelope and having been freed from this bodily prison, flies back to that higher place, from which it groaned within our entrails, infused with compassion for this body, until it fulfilled the duty of the entrusted helm, so that it might govern and restrain the irrational movements of this flesh by rational guidance. Hence, it happened that the prophets later went into captivity with the people of Judah, so that the remaining holy people would not be abandoned, deprived of protection and counsel, and would suffer a more severe affliction. Instead, they were often reminded by the prophecies of the prophets to return with devout affection to their Lord God, lest they fall into the sin of faithlessness amidst the adversities of captivity and despair of eternal salvation. So those who believe that this is the only life, which is in this world (everything is full of faults, full of sorrow), are refuted by a simple series of events. Look, the just, innocent, pious one, due to the grace of devotion, incurs hatred from his brother, and at a young age, still immature, he is taken away by parricide; and the unjust, wicked, impious one, even stained by fratricide, lives a long life, takes a wife, leaves behind descendants, founds cities, and achieves this by divine permission. Doesn't the voice of God openly cry out in these things? You err, those of you who think that all the grace of living is found here: you do not understand, you do not notice that this old age is a veteran of miseries, a procession of the burdens of life, and that we are almost made to echo with a certain reef by daily shipwrecks, to be battered by the waves, to live in rocky dwellings, and to delight in them, just as that not so much eternal creature, as immortal evil? Therefore, even to these descendants of Cain, long life was granted as a punishment; because they lived in fear, and a long and fruitless span of time passed with much labor, in which the punishment was nothing more severe than that one should be the cause of their own punishment for their

ancestors. Therefore, see how the life of the righteous is perpetual, and that of the wicked is non-existent! The blood of the righteous cries out, and the life of the sinner is hidden.

38. The third point is, that since the crime of parricide, which is the chief of crimes, involves the violation of divine law, where sin has intruded, the divine law of clemency should immediately be extended; for if the guilty were immediately punished, men would also have no patience or moderation in their punishment, but would immediately give the accused over to punishment. However, by the providence of divine judgment, it is such that it teaches judges magnanimity and patience, so that no one is hastily carried away by the desire for vengeance, and the judge himself does not punish the innocent with immature deliberation, or make the punishment more severe out of anger: yet it does not allow the one who has shown no remorse for his crime to go completely unpunished. For he drove him from his presence, and deprived him of the love of his parents, and placed him in a separate dwelling, as it were in exile; because he had passed from human gentleness to the cruelty of beasts. Yet he did not desire the punishment of a murderer by murder, but he preferred the correction of a sinner to death. Hence Lamech is avenged seventy-sevenfold, because his guilt is greater, since he did not correct himself after his condemnation. Cain, in a sudden and reckless impulse, sinned before; but Lamech, having observed that he was reprimanded in another, should have taken caution. Indeed, according to his own judgment, he deserved to be condemned so that no one would think that a guilty person should be struck down everywhere. And in order to enter into the mystery, he should not have killed the one who had the time for repentance until the natural end of his life. He could excuse himself by saying that he had redeemed himself or that he had engaged in late repentance, if premature punishment had not taken him away.

On Elijah and Fasting

One Book of Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, On Elijah and Fasting.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.
- Chapter XII.
- Chapter XIII.
- Chapter XIV.
- Chapter XV.
- Chapter XVI.
- Chapter XVII.
- Chapter XVIII.
- Chapter XIX.
- Chapter XX.
- Chapter XXI.
- Chapter XXII.

Chapter I.

Just as in the past the Fathers, when they were advancing to war, and on the days of rejoicing were playing the trumpet, so also to us, on the days of fasting and approaching the Paschal feast, the trumpet is to be played.

1. The divine oracle resulted in the Israelites blowing the trumpet when they went out to battle, so that with the sound of the trumpet the Lord would remember His people and come to their aid, knowing the incentives of His mercy. And on the days of their joy, on their appointed feasts, they would sing with the sound of the trumpets. Hence David also says: Blow the trumpet at the beginning of the month, on the day of your solemn feast. Therefore the day of solemnity will come to us, and it is now approaching. Let us sing with the trumpet as if advancing into battle. Let us sing with the trumpet, to announce the day of solemnity, because both a contest is imminent for us and victory is promised. Our victory is the cross of Christ: our trophy is the Easter of the Lord Jesus. But He has fought the battle before, in order to conquer, not because He needed the struggle Himself; but so that He may beforehand prescribe to us the form of fighting, and afterwards give us the grace of triumph. Our struggle is a fast. Finally, the Savior fasted, and so the tempter approached him. And first, he directed a dart to the stomach, saying: If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread (Luke 4:3). He presented food as a lure, in order to ensnare bodily desire: the Lord preferred fasting, in order to dissolve the snares of the tempter and break his chains. Finally, it is written: Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (ibid., 4). By that noose Adam had been strangled, by this absolution from the devilish question every man is freed.

Chapter II.

How great is the virtue of fasting, and how beautiful and powerful its practice is, is confirmed by the example of Christ and the holy Elijah.

Great is the virtue of fasting. Indeed, its military appearance is so beautiful that it delightfully attracts and elevates humans to heaven for fasting and for Christ: so powerful that it raises men up to heaven. And to use more human than divine examples, from the fasting mouth of Elijah a voice was uttered that closed heaven to the sacrilegious people of the Jews (3 Kings 17:1). For when Ahab, the king, had set up an altar to the idol, according to the words of the prophet, there was no rain for three years and six months upon the earth. A fitting punishment which would appropriately restrain intemperance; that the heavens should be closed to the impious, who have defiled the earth. It is fitting also that the prophet of the sacrilegious king should be sent to the widow in Zarephath of Sidon, who, since she preferred devotion to food, deserved not to feel the hardship of the public drought alone. Therefore, the jug of meal did not run out, even when the flow of the river failed.

3. What does his remaining cover? He, while fasting, raised the widow's son from the dead; he, while fasting, caused rains to fall from his mouth; he, while fasting, brought forth fire from heaven; he, while fasting, was carried up to heaven in a chariot; and through a forty-day fast he obtained divine presence. Then at last he deserved more, when he fasted more. By his fasting he made the waters of the Jordan stand still, and the flowing river bed, suddenly dried up, he crossed over with a dusty footprint. By divine decree, he was deemed worthy to be taken up to heaven with his body;

for he lived a heavenly life in the flesh and displayed the practice of heavenly conduct on earth.

Chapter III. Recommendation of fasting: concerning the fast of Saint John; and what kind of food we should seek. For what is fasting but the substance and image of heavenly things? Fasting is the refreshment of the soul, the food of the mind, the fasting of the Angels, the death of sin, the destruction of transgressions, the remedy of salvation, the root of grace, the foundation of chastity. By this means one may more quickly reach God; by this means Elias ascended before the chariot. Going to heaven, he left this inheritance of sobriety and abstinence to his disciple. In this virtue and spirit, John followed in the steps of Elias. Finally, in the desert, he fulfilled fasting. His food was locusts and wild honey. And because he had exceeded the limits of human capability in sustaining life, he was not considered a man, but an angel. About him, we read: 'More than a prophet.' This is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send my angel before your face, who will prepare your way before you' (Matthew 11:9-10). Who, by human strength, could ascend fiery horses, drive fiery chariots, and control chariots of air, if not he who, by the power of incorruptible fasting, has transformed the nature of the human body?

5. But we have already arranged in numerous discussions the deeds of Elijah, frequent in the discourse of various books; and I think we should be careful not to repeat them, especially since he himself is praised in his own work. Let us imitate him, therefore, and let us seek that food by the virtue of which we can make progress day and night toward the knowledge of heavenly things. For not all food is material, nor is all nourishment physical; there is nourishment for the mind, as we have said, with which the souls are feasted, about which the Lord says: 'My food is to do the will of my Father who is in heaven.' (John IV, 34). This is the food of angels, to serve the divine will. They have no concern for meals, no use for feasting, no stored banquets, no drinking of wine or cider, no overindulgence of the body, no offense to the stomach.

Chapter IV.

On the origin and antiquity of fasting, from which the first use of the world began, from which the first law was established in paradise; which finally covers those whom gluttony has stripped naked.

Therefore, so that no one may think that earthly or new fasting is useless, the first use of the world began with fasting when the bright light shone (Gen. I, 3 et seq.). The second day was a day of fasting when the firmament was made. On the third day, the earth produced food, obedient to nature, yet still observing heavenly discipline. On the fourth day, the luminaries of the sun and moon were made, and fasting continued. On the fifth day, the waters brought forth living creatures, and the flying living creatures flew above the earth under the firmament of heaven. And God saw that they were good, and He blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and let the waters that are in the sea be filled, and let the flying creatures multiply above the earth (Ibid., 22). And still fasting. Finally, he blessed them, as it is written, and said: Increase, and did not say: Eat and consume. On the sixth day, the beasts were created (Dist. 35, c. On the sixth day), and with the beasts arose the power of eating, and the use of food. Where food began, there the end of the world was made. Where it began not to know its own growth, there divine works began to rest upon it. By this sign it was declared that the world would diminish through food, by which it ceased to grow. No one knew the crime, no one feared punishment, no one knew death.

7. The Lord planted a paradise for the enjoyment of the blessed, and placed man there to work and take care of it. And in order that we may know (Dist. et cap. iisdem, § Et ut sciamus) that fasting is not a recent observance, He established the first law concerning fasting there. For He knew that through food man would have the opportunity to fall into sin. The first punishment for transgressing the law of fasting came when God commanded: 'Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die' (Gen. II, 17). However, until then (Dist. and cap. the same, § Until then), no one knew how to transgress, so that what was not yet arisen would be the first transgressed prohibition of abstinence. The law from the Lord God, transgression of the law from the devil: fault through food, hiding place after food. Knowledge of weakness in food, virtue of strength in fasting. In short, as long as they abstained from the forbidden things, they did not know that they were naked: after they ate from the forbidden tree, they realized that they were naked. Therefore, when the woman recognized the author of the fault, she was asked and she replied: The serpent persuaded me, and I ate (Gen. III, 13). The serpent advises the throat, the Lord decrees to fast (Dist. et cap. iisdem, § Serpens). Finally, he himself says: Fast and pray, lest you enter into temptation (Matth. XXVI, 41). Therefore, gluttony expelled the reigning one from paradise, and abstinence called back the one who was wandering to paradise.

8. And God said: Behold, Adam has become like one of us (Gen. III, 22). Surely God is mocking, not approving, and says this: You thought you would be like us: but because you wanted to be what you were not, you ceased to be what you were: you were within yourself, and while you strive to be above yourself, you began to be beneath yourself. Finally, He clothed him in a pelted tunic first, and thus He said: Behold, Adam, as if to say: Behold your garment, behold your worthy clothing, this clothing befits you. Those who seek the divine are considered worthy of such adornment. Behold where your fault has led you, behold now in this tunic of fur you have opened your eyes as one of us. Look around carefully, you see yourself naked, whom you thought was clothed.

9. Therefore, gluttony exposes the naked, while fasting even covers the desolate. Hence David says: I covered my soul in fasting (Ps. LXVIII,11). A good covering, that which covers the soul so that it may not be caught by the tempter, so that it may not be stripped by the tempter. A good veil that covers sin, it is covered by abstinence, it is covered by grace. Blessed are those to whom sins are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. It is covered by grace, while it forgives and abolishes all error; it is covered by abstinence, while it shadows vice and hides it with a sad disposition, and weakens it through repentance. Indeed, fasting and almsgiving free one from sin. Adam was covered with the garment of virtues before he transgressed, but like someone stripped of transgression, he saw himself as naked; for he had lost the garment he had. 'Then shall your light break forth as the morning,' he says, 'and your health will speedily spring forth, and your righteousness will go before you; and the glory of the Lord will surround you.' (Isaiah 58:8). Good clothing is light. It is written: 'He is clothed with light as with a garment' (Ps. 103:2). Good clothing; when the Lord surrounds and covers the fasting ones.

Chapter V.

Noah, who was intoxicated, is excused because of his ignorance; and the evils that arose from the use of wine, as well as the benefits from abstaining from it, are explained with examples from both

sides.

Noah was naked when he became intoxicated, and his sons' piety covered him. But he was naked out of ignorance, not intemperance; for wine was still unknown. In the beginning of the human race, drunkenness was not yet known. Noah himself was the first to plant a vineyard: nature gave the vine, but he was unaware of its power. Therefore, he did not spare the wine from its creator. Is it any wonder that when the Lord himself praised his creatures, Noah was amazed? Therefore, when the creature, more powerful than usual, disturbed the elderly man's unfamiliar limbs, he was pleased with the gift and became intoxicated with a new potion. 'Those who ride horses have fallen asleep', he said (Psalm LXXV, 7). The righteous man succumbs to the pleasures of the body and falls asleep. But the drunkenness of the other persuades us to be sober (Distichs and Chapters on the Same Topic, § Sed illius). For Noah was once intoxicated. However, when he recognized the evil of drunkenness, he tempered his discovery as a remedy and did not pour it out as a vice. And the Apostle also says: Use a little wine for the sake of your frequent infirmities (I Tim. 5:23).

11. Freedom remained intact before wine was discovered, no one knew to demand the services of servitude from a companion of their own nature. There would be no slavery today if there had been no drunkenness. The envy of fraternal precedence had indeed already crept in, but the reverence for paternal piety still remained. Piety is injured while drunkenness is laughed at. Therefore, wine harms not only those who are tempted by it, but also those whose eyes are exposed to the intoxicated limbs of drunkards. From here irreverent laughter is born, from here desire is inflamed; so much so that drunkenness disturbs those whose eyes and minds it has intoxicated, more than those whose bodies it has laid low.

12. We also read (Dist. and cap. iisdem, § Legimus) that the daughters of Lot inebriated their father on that mountain (Gen. XIX, 33 et seq.), to which they had fled in fear of the fires of Sodom, and they dwelt in a cave. Drunkenness agrees with and promotes iniquity, and age, sex, solitude, place, the hiding places of wild animals, are more suited to it than to human dwellings. Therefore, drunkenness was the origin of incest, and the offspring of a most wicked mother were even more wicked.

13. But Abraham did not serve wine at his feast: instead, he sacrificed a calf and also offered butter and milk to the angelic guests. He recognized the Lord of heaven as the creator of the world, but he could not offer wine. However, it was right that there was no opportunity for sin where there was forgiveness of sins.

Finally, John announced about him, neither eating bread, nor drinking wine. For whoever announces about Christ, they must excel in avoiding every incentive to vices. Therefore, intoxication triumphed over the holy Noah, or even the nephew of Abraham, Lot, of whom one survived the flood while fasting, the other, the fire.

Moreover, we have learned that Moses tempered the bitterness of the waters for the thirsty people, not wine. The rock spewed forth water, and with an abundance of wine it was able to not be lacking. Ultimately, God said: 'Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, and the people will drink' (Exodus XVII, 6). He did not say: 'Wine will come out to the people'. For it would have been dangerous to provide wine to the people, which even the strongest would scarcely be able to bear.

Chapter VI.

On the law of fasting given by Moses, and on the fasting of the same. How the abstinence from wine made fruitful the barrenness of Samson's and Samuel's mothers; and with what foods Elisha nourished the sons of the prophets.

16. Finally, Moses gave the law about fasting, but not about wine. He himself, while fasting, was not terrified by loud noises, thunder and cloudy storms, or the smoking Mount Sinai. Indeed, he would not have entered the cloud and heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire without danger to his well-being, unless he had been fortified by the weapons of fasting. For he fasted for forty days on the mountain when he received the Law from the Lord our God. And in the higher parts of the mountain, the Law was given to Moses while fasting, but in the lower parts, the profane transgression was ignited by the luxurious feasting of the people who were eating. In which spectacle, Moses broke the tablets, judging it unworthy that the Law should be given to a drunken people. And so, the abstinence that he obtained caused the tablets of the Law to be broken by drunkenness.

17. But what else shall I say? Did not the abstinence from wine make the barrenness of Samson's mother fertile, and make her who was barren bring forth? For according to the commandment of the Lord, she did not drink wine. Did not the Lord hear Hannah, not partaking of food, and did fasting dissolve her barrenness? From these two, one was born strongest, the other most observant, they both proved themselves worthy, nourished for a long time in the womb of fasting, and seemed to be poured forth from the womb of abstinence. Similarly, Samson, who was conceived by his mother's sobriety, was avenged by the drunkenness of his adversaries.

18. Eliseus the prophet, who had learned from his master the virtue of frugality, when he was feeding the sons of the prophets, loaded their tables with wild grapes and filled the duty of hospitality with tasteless forest herbs. When they were unable to eat because of the bitterness, he tempered all that bitterness with a sprinkling of fine flour, emptying the power of the poison with the gift of prophetic abstinence.

Chapter VII.

Three boys, having entered the furnace with empty stomachs, brought forth a cooling of the flames; and even the lions were taught by Daniel to fast.

There are certain creatures in nature, which are called amiantum, that are not easily consumed by fire. When placed in a fire, they ignite and immediately, when removed from the flame, shine brightly as if infused with water. The bodies of the Hebrew children, when transformed into amiantum through fasting, borrowed the power of fire not to the detriment of themselves, but for their own benefit. For when the fires of the furnace raged, spreading the flames around to a distance of over forty cubits, consuming many of the Chaldeans who supplied fuel to the fires with naphtha, pitch, tow, and kindling, the Hebrew children entered through fasting. The intense heat of the flames dissipated, and in the middle of the furnace they began to be moistened by a refreshing breath of dew. Not a single hair on their heads was burned, for fasting had also nourished their hair.

20. Daniel, a man of longings, also instructed the lions to fast for three weeks. He was thrown into the lake, hardened in the rigidity of abstinence, and his body was made firm and did not yield to injury. Such were the restraints of his fasting, that no place could be found for the bites of wild beasts on his body. The mouths of the lions were closed, which the sanctity of prophetic abstinence held in check, so that those animals, bound by certain chains, could not open them.

21. Therefore, fasting extinguished the power of fire, fasting closed the mouths of lions, fasting solidified the flow of the sea, fasting turned the rock into fountains of water, by the power of fasting, it restrained its own nature and calmed the waves, and the rock overflowed with water.

Chapter VIII.

To highlight the benefits of fasting, it presents a most elegant description comparing the inconveniences of gluttony and the disturbances that the same gluttony often causes; to which an exhortation to moderation is added.

22. But why should I make use of old examples, when even the present gifts of gratitude abound with fasting? Who has ruined his house by fasting? Who has diminished his resources? To whom has luxury been a cause of suspicion? To whom has abstinence not been venerable? Whose bed has frugality desired? Whose modesty has drunkenness not injured? Fasting is the rule of self-control, the discipline of chastity, the humility of the mind, the correction of the flesh, the form of sobriety, the norm of virtue, the purification of the soul, the expense of mercy, the institution of gentleness, the allurements of charity, the grace of old age, the protection of youth. Fasting is a remedy for weakness, a nourishment for health. No one has ever become sick from fasting, no one has ever felt a loss of blood from self-control; on the contrary, it has suppressed and expelled everything. It is a good provision for a journey, a good provision for all of life: it is good on the sea, it calms shipwrecks, it preserves food.

23. Those who say that fasting is burdensome should be asked who has died from fasting. Many have died while eating lunch, and many have vomited up their feast and lost their life. Finally, what animal has groaned that fasting was the cause of its death? A noose is not hidden in food, a hook lies hidden in bait, food leads to a pit, and food leads into a snare; food even binds birds with sticky substance, and food causes flying creatures to fall to their death. Are these not dangers for the stomach? Animals do not know crime, and they are punished only as if for a crime. Moderation of the mind is fasting, in this senses thrive, in this judgments are dealt with, in a feast, drinks. Fasting preserves discipline, while poverty follows luxury. Luxury is the mother of hunger (Tobias IV), according to the prophetic saying. Fasting loves rest, luxury loves restlessness. Fasting sows leisure, luxury sows business.

24. Sometimes the sword of the cook's footsteps will strike. May the butcher rest, who knocks on other people's doors before daybreak and wakes up the sleeping as if a war were imminent. You see him disturbed, panting; you give notice: you ask what is the cause of the disturbance. He demands, he says, that his master wants to know where the wine is best sold, he asks where a harder vagina can be cured, where liver is softer, where pheasant is fatter, where the fish is fresher. He runs through various places; and when he finds something, he hurries with great speed. He disturbs the sleepy master, the prices are raised. If he moves the price of a fish, he says that a better one cannot be found, indeed that it is lacking. Yesterday, he says, there was a

storm, today a tempest, I could barely detect him hiding. Many people crowd in the market: if you give it back, another will give more; and what will you offer for lunch? That wine is his birthday wine, these oysters are selected from that lake: such is the bidding for each item. There is a certain quarrel between the hunter and the shepherd. Disturbed, he questions who is diminishing the rights of his possessions.

25. They run to the kitchen, there is a great noise, there is a commotion. The whole household is in uproar, everyone curses, because no rest is given to them. Finally, finally give the cook some rest. Like a statue, the butler's right hand is frozen by extreme cold. He exercises his hands in the cold, they wash the marbles. They clean the floors wet with wine, and covered with fish spines; and how many are wounded while they walk? In the very banquet, there is the noise of feasting, the groaning of those being flogged. If something happened to displease friends, they laugh, you become angry. Let the house be silent sometimes from the many disturbances of people running here and there, empty of smoke, and the smell of half-cooked food. Do not think it is a kitchen, but a slaughter: a battle is being fought, not a meal prepared; everything is floating in blood.

26. The evil mistress serves gluttony, which always desires, never satisfies. For what is more insatiable than the stomach? Today it indulges, and tomorrow it demands. When it is filled, there is discussion about self-restraint; when it is digested, it says goodbye to virtues and seeks excess. Among drinking cups, philosophy is preached; among philosophers, wine is praised. 'Watchfulness,' he says, 'and anger, and torment for the insatiable man' (Sirach 31:23): he eats and shortly regrets; his own intemperance did not delight him for long.

27. Listen to the rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day, while at his gate lay Lazarus, a beggar covered with sores, longing to be satisfied with what fell from the rich man's table. But after a little while, when he had died, he began to beg, placed in Hades, that the tip of his finger might be dipped in water and cool his tongue, which was burning with fire. Where are those riches? Where are those feasts? He who was getting drunk is thirsty: he who was begging is full. In the very banquet while they drink, they are thirsty; and when they have become drunk, they drink more. Wine is no longer drunk as if from an open fountain, but poured in like from a jug: the cup is not sipped, but emptied.

Chapter IX.

Why are powerful people prohibited from drinking wine? Judith, while fasting, kills Holofernes and with the same tactics liberates her people. Esther, to whom the drunk Aman pays the price, does the same. Finally, the praises of various fasting are enumerated.

28. 'Thorns,' he says, 'are born in the hand of the drunkard' (Prov. 26:9), because he wounds himself with his own hands and throws wounds upon his chest. With these thorns he tears the garment of faith that he received, and he will not be able to preserve his treasure. For every drunkard and fornicator will lack, and he will clothe himself with torn garments of foolishness. And therefore the powerful are prohibited from drinking wine, lest when they drink, they forget wisdom (Prov. 31:4).

Finally, those powerful men who desired to surrender themselves to Holofernes, the prince of the Assyrian army, were drinking wine in drunkenness. But Judith, fasting all the days of her widowhood, did not drink wine except on the solemnities of feast days. Armed with these

weapons, she went forth and surrounded the entire Assyrian army. Sober in the strength of her wisdom, she took off the head of Holophernes, preserved her chastity, and brought back victory. For she pretended before others in the camp that she was girded with fasting, while he, buried in wine, lay unconscious, unable to feel the blow of her weapon. Therefore the fasting of one woman laid low countless armies of drunk men.

Esther also became more beautiful through fasting; for the Lord increased the grace of a sober mind. He delivered his own, that is, the whole people of the Jews, from the bitterness of persecution, so that he made the king subject to him, not inflamed by lust, but converted by heavenly mercy; so that punishment was turned against the wicked, and honor was restored to the sacred altars. Therefore, what she fasted for three days in a row, and washed her body with water, pleased more, and avenged herself. However, while he was boasting at a royal feast, he paid the price of his own drunkenness among the very wines.

31. Therefore, fasting is a sacrifice of reconciliation, an increase of virtue, which has also made women stronger by the addition of grace. Fasting does not know the moneylender, it does not know the interest of loans, the table of the fasting does not smell of usury: it does not strangle the son of a chaste man with the father's hundredth part: it does not torment the widow with the rights of a sober man whose property has been pledged: it does not exclude the heir from the court of fasting if he has not repaid.

32. Even fasting gives grace to feasts themselves. The meals are made sweeter after hunger, which becomes weary with constant repetition and loses value with prolonged continuation. Fasting is the seasoning of food. The hungrier the desire, the more enjoyable the food. Thirst commends the cup, it does not seek the age of wine. Whatever a fasting person drinks, it is transmitted to satisfaction, not to judgment, it floats. Precious things also deteriorate with use: but the difficult possession of them is the enjoyable experience of them. The sun itself is more pleasing after the night, light itself is brighter after darkness, and sleep is sweeter after vigilance, health itself is more enjoyable after the trials of sickness. From the very creator of the world, we have learned that grace often increases with diversity. Therefore, hunger accompanies a feast, so that the meal is more pleasing after periods of fasting.

Chapter X.

The mystical table is prepared with fasting. It is discussed morally and mystically what hunger makes fasting acceptable and what is meant by the statement: When you fast, anoint your head.

33. The mystical table is also compared to fasting: that table, of which David says: You have prepared a table before me against them that afflict me (Psalm 23:5). This table is acquired at the price of hunger: and that cup, by inebriating sobriety, is sought by the thirst for heavenly sacraments. For the Lord said: Come to the water, all you that thirst, and you that have no money, make haste, buy, and eat (Isaiah 55:1). And elsewhere He says: 'Behold, those who serve Me will eat, but you will be hungry. Behold, those who serve Me will drink, but you will be thirsty.' (Isaiah, 65:13). Who are you except those who have drunk before? Of whom it was said above: 'You have prepared a table for demons and filled a cup of fortune.' (Ibid., 11). Therefore, if holy fasts lead us to that venerable table, if by this hunger we obtain eternal treasures, why do we doubt the things that are in human use, since even this fasting makes them sweeter to us?

34. However, not every hunger makes an acceptable fast, but the hunger that is undertaken out of fear of God. Consider: Lent is observed throughout all days except for Saturday and Sunday. This fast concludes with the Lord's Easter. Now the day of resurrection has come, the Elect are baptized, they come to the altar, they receive the sacrament, the thirsty drink from the whole veins. Each one rightly says, having been restored, 'You have prepared a table before me.' . . . and how delightful is your intoxicating cup (Psalm 22, 5)! However, it is not only hunger that is sought, but also the full discipline of fasting. Moreover, it is said to others: 'In the days of your fasts, you find your own desires and provoke all who are subject to you. Do you fast for judgments and quarrels and strike with your fists? Why is this fast chosen by me, so that your voices are heard in clamor? This is not the fast that I have chosen, to humble oneself as a man; and even if you bend your neck like a circle, you still spread ashes and a hairshirt, and you will not call this a pleasing fast.' I have not chosen such a fast, says the Lord (Isaiah 58:3 et seq.). What kind of fast is condemned, we have heard; now let us hear what kind is approved. But undo all the chains of injustice, untie the chords of binding obligations, let the oppressed go free, and break every unjust yoke. Share your food with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, cover them, and do not hide yourself from your own flesh and blood. You see what kind and form is fasting, what disposition of the mind; that you may be empty for prayer, and meditate on the law of God day and night.

35. The very appearance of the body is full of dignity, with no hint of the flush of drunkenness on the cheeks that would offend the gaze of onlookers, but the countenance shines with a chaste pallor, the speech more serious, the eyes more modest, the steps more steady and measured; for often the movements of the soul are revealed by a more disturbed gait. The expression is more intense, a certain arbiter of one's thoughts, and a silent interpreter of the heart; so that neither does it conceal sadness, nor does it burst into immediate laughter. For you should not consider this a superfluous admonition of ours; since Wisdom says in the Gospel: 'When you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, sad' (Matthew 6:16). He called them hypocrites, because they put on the appearance of another person through simulation; just as those who sing tragedies on stage, they provoke their own emotions according to the words of the characters they portray, so that they may either become angry, or mourn, or rejoice. These individuals strive to appear as though they are fasting, desiring to gain approval more from people than from God, just as the Jews did.

36. And therefore it is said to us: But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to men to fast, but to your Father who is in secret: and your Father who sees in secret will repay you (Matthew 6:17-18). What does it mean to anoint your head? But even the indulgent say: Let us fill ourselves with wine and ointments. For they anoint themselves with ointment, who seek the favor of bodily odor. But those ointments are accustomed to stir up the allurements of desire. There is another ointment of sobriety, of which the Church says to its spouse: Your name is poured out ointment (Cant. I, 2): another oil by which the limbs of the soul and certain members grow fat. Hence David says: You have anointed my head with oil (Psal. XXII, 5). And this is the oil of gladness, with which Christ was anointed by God the Father, so that he might excel above all his companions. This commands us to anoint our head, so that all feigned sadness may be covered with the oil of joy; lest you appear to be selling your fasting to men, lest you appear to be saddened about the salvation of your soul. For no one who is sad is crowned, no one who is sorrowful triumphs. Therefore, anoint your head, where the senses of the wise are; for

the eyes of the wise are in their head. You are called to the mysteries, and you do not know: you learn when you come. And remember that: As the ointment on the head, which descends to the beard of Aaron (Ps. CXXXII, 2), then you know what it is: Anoint your head: how you may please God, so that He may reveal His sacraments to you, and grant you spiritual grace.

37. And there is another mystical head. What is that? Listen: The head of a woman is the man; and the head of the man is Christ (I Cor. XI, 3). Send the ointment into Christ, send it also into His head. His head is God. That woman, bearing the type of the Church, who sent the ointment into His head, confessed His divinity; and she who sent it to His feet, confessed His passion. Both are praised. And you, do something for which you may be praised, for which you may receive the forgiveness of sins (Matth. XXVI, 10). Wash your face, cleanse your sinful soul, cleanse your conscience. For the face is often the index of the conscience, and silent speech of the mind, when we are either stung by sin or joyful in integrity. Do not exterminate this face, wash it, and wash away all the filth of your conscience. He exterminates his own face, who carries one thing in his heart and pretends another outside. Let us not, like in some kind of theatrical performance, cover ourselves up: let what is inside shine on the outside, let what is outside work within. No one should include fault in fasting; let them bear innocence purely. For fasting is the slayer of faults.

Chapter XI. The virtue of fasting is illustrated by the bitter example of bitter foods, and although the food may be sweet, its harmfulness is shown in the story of Esau and Jacob; then follows an exhortation to avoid boasting in fasting. No one prefers sweet things to bitter things. Sweet pleasure seems, bitter fasting. Let that sweet thing be taken away from this bitterness. Bitter things are also accustomed to benefit the bodies themselves even more. Just as when worms are born in the innermost organs of boys from the indigestion of food, they cannot be extinguished unless a more bitter drink is poured in, or the strength of harsh medicines is applied, by the smell of which they die; so the profound virtue of the soul, having entered, kills the latent fault of fasting.

39. What did Esau do to his brother? Wasn't the food sweet for a time, but bitter in the future? What did Jacob give to his brother? Wasn't the contempt of the food more bitter for the time being, but healthy in the long run? The same bodies that are often bloated with sweet things are strained by honey; however, the bitterness of the food is tempered. Therefore, it is not a mediocre, but a praised question: From the eater came out food, and from the strong came forth sweetness (Judges 14:14). Others have: And from sadness comes sweetness; the Greeks especially have books. But it is also perhaps laborious; for sweetness arises from sadness or labor.

40. Therefore, do not boast when you fast, do not glory, lest fasting be of no benefit to you. For those things done for show will not bear fruit in the future; they consume their reward in the present. Elijah was in the desert, so that no one would see him fasting, except the ravens who fed him. Elisha was in the desert, where no food could be found, except bitter herbs. John was in the desert, where he could only find locusts and wild honey. The feasts are brought to those who are fasting by the pious ministry of angels. Daniel ate among the fasting lions. He ate a foreign meal, the animals did not touch their own. Feasts fly to those who are fasting, while those who are eating stumble on their feet: for those who are fasting, manna descends from heaven, while for those who are feasting, the guilt of transgression ascends.

Chapter XII.

How drunkenness leads to all kinds of wrongdoing, and how ridiculous and hateful it is, is explained with an elegant description. After that, some things are added about a luxuriant youth who turned to philosophy.

41. But what is this? While I discuss fasting, I hear the noise of feasts. Unless I am mistaken, my speech smells of lunch. Therefore, the sound of letters invites, examples of impatience do not deter. Indeed, the people did not allow the one who was fasting and carrying the things of the Law to wait, they sat down to eat and drink, and they rose to play. We see that sacrilege was combined with drunkenness. For just as temperance is the mother of faith, so drunkenness is the mother of unfaithfulness. Into what crime does this not hurry?

42. Men are sitting at the doors of the taverns without a tunic, nor the expense of the following day. They judge about emperors and powers; in fact, they seem to be kings themselves and to command armies. They become rich through drunkenness, who are poor in truth. They give gold, distribute money to the people, build cities, who do not have from where they can pay the price of their body's drink. For wine ferments in them, and they do not know what they are saying. They are rich while they are getting drunk: but soon when they have digested the wine, they realize that they are beggars. In one day, they consume the labors of many days.

43. From drunkenness, they rise to arms, with cups replacing weapons. For blood is shed for wine, and wine itself sheds blood. How strong men imagine themselves to be in wine, how wise, how eloquent, how even beautiful and graceful, when they cannot even stand! The mind must stumble, the tongue stammers, a pale color suffuses the bloodless face, and the stench of drunkenness nauseates. Barbarians rush to the sword, the common people to brawls. If anyone of them is struck with a fist, you would see their wounded faces shedding tears of wine, singing pitiful epilogues. One thing this drunkenness has, that it softens and dissolves the hearts of drunkards. For just as fire tests hard iron, so also the heat of wine melts even the hearts of proud men.

44. All seem equal to themselves in wine, no one inferior. The poor does not yield to the rich, as he does not know himself to be poor: the weak does not yield to the strong, in whom all strength is in drinking: the beggar does not yield to the wealthy, nor the ignoble to the honorable; when they drink, they consider him a king, who surpasses the others in drinking. And rightly it is written: Wine in drunkenness is equal for all men (Eccl. XXXI, 32). But I wish you also heard what follows: Drink it moderately, that you may be sober (Ibid.). You have nothing to blame: wine is created for pleasure, not for drunkenness from the beginning. It is a delight of the soul and heart, if you drink in moderation; however, excessive drinking incites anger and causes many ruinous consequences.

45. But perhaps they would say that these are the drinks of common and lowly people. Let us then come to the banquets of those who are powerful and strong. I will not here produce perfumed young boys or crowned with roses, such as they say he was who, covered in ointments, adorned with flowers, supported by harlots, drunk with the morning drink, and accompanied by the light of burning candles, entered the room of the philosopher who was delivering a lecture. Upon hearing this, he slowly removed the crowns, as they say, wiped away the ointments, and bid farewell to the prostitutes. The philosopher afterwards became so great that he was an example of sobriety, who had previously been a mockery of drunkenness. For I do not envy them the fact that they have reformed; let me teach you that their kind of luxury is not simulated by me. Certainly, even if he

repented of wine, he was always drunken on sacrilege.

Chapter XIII.

The banquets of soldiers are compared to a certain battle and spectacle; and their individual parts, and as it were a kind of exposition, rising action, and catastrophe, are described with the utmost diligence.

46. Remove therefore from here the slippery young men, we have come to the banquets of warriors. It is necessary to dine among weapons, these are the warlike attendants who serve, girded with gold, and supported by Babylonian belts: their necks shine with golden necklaces, they cover their waist with golden bulla, they enclose their knives in golden sheaths, with which they will fight while dividing the feasts. Boys with long hair standing by, chosen from a barbarian nation for these purposes, in turns according to the distances of their ages. You see the ranks of diverse peoples, you think it is an ordered battle line: silver vessels on display, you believe it to be a pompous procession: a horn in the midst full of wine, not an instrument for battle, but for feasting, which ignites the contest among those reclining.

47. First, in smaller cups, like jockeys, the fight is preluded. But this is not a sign of sobriety, but of drinking discipline. Just as tragedians gradually excite their voices at first, until they open a passage for a clear sound, so these people also exercise themselves in preluding cups at first, to provoke thirst; lest perhaps they quench it, and afterwards cannot drink when satiated. Therefore, when things begin to heat up, they demand larger cups: the March heat flames up, thirst blazes with food, and where it seems to diminish, it is replenished with stronger drink. They compete cups with dishes, and often pause between bites. Then, as the drink progresses further and more intently, there are different and great competitions, who excels in drinking? It is noteworthy and serious if someone excuses themselves, if someone thinks wine should be moderated. And this continues until second courses are reached at the tables.

48 But when the feasts are finished, you would think it is time to rise: then they renew their drinking; and when they have finished that, then they say they begin; then the cups are brought forth, then the great bowls are brought forth, as it were instruments of war. And lest you should think this an immoderate thing, there is a measure set, it is disputed under the umpire, it is determined according to law. The Agonothetae are to them but madness, weakness is their stipend, fault is the reward of victory. The issue of war hangs long and doubtful; for that fury is the fury of a battle. The hands of the servers giving wine yield, and the hot labors of the cooks serving out; the ones weighing out the very good measures exceedingly carefully, not allowing anything to overflow: the drinkers do not yield.

49. Only those contests are without excuse. In war, if someone sees themselves inferior, they turn their weapons and earn forgiveness; but here, if someone turns their cup, they are urged to drink. In a game, if someone raises their hand, they are indeed free from punishment, but immune to injury; but in social gatherings, even if someone withdraws their hand from wine, it is poured into their mouth. Everyone becomes drunk, both the victorious and the defeated lie drunk, many are asleep. They cannot be carried to the grave until the one who feeds them sees himself avenged on all, in order to punish the loss. But those who do not feel the losses consider this the glory of their table, if all the wounded and injured come out of it as if from the arena.

50. A sad spectacle for the eyes of Christians, and a pitiful sight. You see young men being carried out from the feast, terrible to look upon by their enemies, and then being carried back to the feast, filled so that they may empty, and emptied so that they may drink. If someone is more modest, they blush to rise; when they are no longer able to hold excessive drinking, they pant more heavily, sweat, groan, betray with signs what they are ashamed to confess. There, each person recounts their own fights, there they boast of their brave deeds, they narrate the triumphs soaked in wine, and in their sleepy minds they do not know what their tongues utter. Each one snores and drinks, sleeps and fights; and if ever they stand up, the warriors cannot stand, staggering when they exit. The servants laugh at the insults of their masters, carrying the bellicose soldier in their own hands, even putting him on their shoulders. And so they wander here and there like ships without a helmsman; and like those struck by a wound, they fall to the ground unless they are caught by the servants. Others are carried on shields, a mockery procession is made. Those whom you had seen in the morning, distinguished by their weapons and menacing in appearance, you may also see in the evening, even being laughed at by children with impunity, wounded without the use of a sword, killed without battle, disturbed without an enemy, trembling without old age, in the very bloom of their youth.

Chapter XIV. Those who prepare banquets for drunkenness are reproached: and the power of wine is shown to be greater than that of poison. Who mixed such a cup of madness? Who poured so much poison into minds? A man risks drowning in the mud of his own body; and he himself is guilty of voluntary madness, of spontaneous corruption; and yet you are not excused, who call them friends and send them away as enemies. How much better would it have been if you had poured your wine into the earth? But even the earth becomes drunk, and it makes even the wild animals more savage, if they catch a whiff of wine. Finally, during the time of the grape harvest, if they enter the vineyard, they are accustomed to becoming inflamed with drunkenness. What delights you in losses without grace? You ask for pleasure, you compel to death: you invite to a feast, you wish to carry to a grave: you promise food, you inflict tortures: you offer wine, you pour out poison. For indeed, whatever harms, is poison. It takes away the senses, burns the organs, disturbs sleep, vexes the head.

Even the power of wine is greater than that of poison. In fact, poison is excluded by wine, not wine by poison. Justly God, through Moses, compared wine not only to poison, but also to the poison of serpents, saying: The fury of serpents is their wine, and the incurable wrath of asps (Deut. XXXII, 33). And he added beautifully, incurable; for many are cured of the poison of other serpents, but no one is cured of drunkenness. Certainly the flesh is wounded by poison, but the mind is without harm: drunkenness leads to the death of the body, and also adds guilt to the mind. Beware, however, of the poison and deceit of wine, declared by name. For it was said above concerning foreigners, who did not know God. For the wine of their vineyard is the wine of Sodom, and their vine is the vine of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter (Ibid., 32).

Chapter XV. If he had not said everything that could be said about drunkards, he shows this by citing a passage from Isaiah: from where he launches into a discourse about the debauchery of taverns; and at the end he adds certain things about the golden cup of Babylon and the apostolic vessel. Do you think that I, like someone intoxicated with wine, have mixed this speech with excessive zeal for fasting; and yet, because of these most brave men, how much have I left out, how much have I said, how much less than what the Lord has spoken! You have heard what He

said through Moses: listen to what is written in the book of the words of Isaiah. For the Lord inveighs against such people in these verses, saying: Woe to those who rise early in the morning, and pursue strong drink, who are drunk in the evening, for the wine will burn them. For with harp and psaltery and timbrels they drink wine: but the works of the Lord they regard not, nor consider the operations of his hands. Woe unto them, that say: Woe unto him that judges, and to them that cause bitterness. (Isaiah 5:11) They differ, every one from the other, they consume all like drunkards. Woe to them that are drunken, but not with wine: who throw themselves into the evening. (Proverbs 23:29) What will they do then that go early to the morning, and continue until night, till the wine inflame them? Therefore woe to them, because they have forsaken the law of God. They have disputes, they provoke lawsuits, they rush into violence, and they come to the judgement seat or are called. They have judgments, therefore, as if they were things. Sometimes a more serious disturbance arises because the mind of the drunkard is perverted by wine. And neither the king nor the magistrates remember, as it is written: 'And he makes everything speak openly, and they do not remember the times of friendship nor of brotherhood' (3 Esdras 3:21 et seq). But after the disturbance they take up swords, and when they have been intoxicated with wine and have risen, they themselves do not remember what they have done. Therefore, the tumult also deserves a worthy reward.

54. Certainly I had seen lyres, psalteries, and drums, which we know are frequently used at such banquets to excite passions with wine and singing. Moreover, many, following the Persian fashion, order worthy women to be led into the company of the drunkards, and they receive cups from them and kneel down while they sit. And they consider this rite as a sacred observance in the ministry of drunkenness. Therefore, barbarians also have wine; the Romans gladly indulge them so that they themselves become dissolved in drinking and weakened by drunkenness. Not only wine causes drunkenness, but also beer. In fact, the Hebrews call any intoxicating drink by the name 'sicera'.

55. Therefore, not undeservedly, woe to those who seek a morning drink of drunkenness, whom it was fitting to offer praises to God, to anticipate dawn, and to meet in prayer with the only righteousness, who visits his own, and rises for us, if we rise with Christ, not with wine and strong drink. Hymns are sung, and do you hold a lyre? Psalms are chanted, and do you take up the psalter or the tambourine? Deservedly woe, because you forsake salvation and choose death. Scarcely dawn, and already they hurry through taverns, seeking wine, carpets are shaken out, they hasten to spread the drinking couch; silver flagons, golden cups are displayed. Alas, he says, those who seek such things!

56. The golden cup of Babylon in the hand of the Lord, intoxicating the whole earth. From his wine all nations have drunk, therefore they have been mad. And suddenly Babylon has fallen and is broken (Jer. 51:7-8). Therefore, the golden cup is broken; because Babylon is broken, she who was the golden cup. But even though she boasts in gold and price, she is still in the power of the Lord. Finally, she is crushed by divine indignation. In what way is she a golden cup? Since he lacks truth, he seeks deceit; so that at least the precious appearance can lure some to drink there.

Set before your eyes the splendor of this world, you see a specious allure, but empty grace. Let not golden and silver vessels entice you. We also have a treasure in earthen vessels (II Cor. IV, 7). The apostolic vessel is made of clay, but in it is the treasure of Christ. Woe to those who pursue the morning of silk! This vessel is golden, a cup, and in that cup is the poison of death, the

poison of lust, the poison of drunkenness. He who drinks from this is disturbed and falls. He is moved not only in body, but also with a disturbed heart; for to be moved is a result of sin.

Chapter XVI.

Drunken dogs are like the persecutors of the Lord, in fact even more miserable than the demons themselves: they are depicted in their own colors: upon whom the holy Doctor declares the words of Jeremiah to fall.

58. Finally, Cain, exiting from the sight of God, dwelt in the land of Nod, which in interpretation means disturbance. Therefore, whoever is intoxicated with the golden cup is moved by sin. Why do you place yourself under the curse of Cain, the murderer, so that you may tremble and be moved? But even the persecutors of the Lord were stirred as they passed by. For the evil spirit, accustomed to filling bodies and moving them, would agitate them. And when that spirit is absent, the trembling ceases; but drunkenness continually causes trembling. The bodies of the intoxicated sweat wine: if you touch them lightly, you squeeze out the wine.

Drunkenness is the fuel of desire, drunkenness is the incentive of madness, drunkenness is the poison of folly. This frenzy changes the minds and forms of men, turning them into neighing horses. For when the natural heat of the body is inflamed by the unnatural heat of wine, they are unable to restrain themselves and are aroused to bestial desires, so that they have no defined time in which it is suitable to indulge in sexual intercourse. They lose their voice, their color changes, their eyes blaze, they breathe heavily, they snort, they grow furious, they surpass reason. Hence dangerous madness, hence severe punishment of stones, hence deadly rawness, hence frequent vomiting of half-digested feasts mixed with the blood of the internal organs pouring forth. I lie, unless the same Lord spoke through Jeremiah saying: Drink and be drunk, and vomit, and fall, and do not rise (Jer. XXV, 27).

Also from here come empty images, uncertain visions, unstable steps, they often jump over shadows like ditches. The ground appears to sway with these things, suddenly seeming to rise and lean, and as if it were turning, they rush in fear on their faces, and grasp only with their hands, or they seem to be enclosed by approaching mountains. The murmuring in their ears is like the roar of a fluctuating sea, and the shore echoes with the waves. If they see dogs, they think they are lions and flee. Some are dissolved in uncontrolled laughter, others deplore with inconsolable grief, others see irrational terrors. The awake dream, the sleeping quarrel. Life is a dream to them, death is sleep to them: they cannot be awakened by any voices; however much you may think of arousing them with an impulse, unless they come to their senses, they cannot be awakened.

61. Therefore, Jeremiah considers a man like this as a superfluous creature, to be mourned. For what is a drunken man but a superfluous creature? Thus he says: Like Jazer, I will weep for you, O vineyard; because the city of Jazer is deserted (Jer. 48:32). And further: They have not trodden wine in your winepresses, neither have they made wine in the daytime (Ibid. 48:33). Jazer is a superfluous work, it is a superfluous creation. For moderation is natural: anything that exceeds the measure is considered superfluous, and so is drunkenness, which is lamented with prophetic weeping. Where the Apostle says: 'Do not be drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit' (Ephesians 5:18). Therefore, there is drunkenness of sin, and there is also drunkenness of grace. And perhaps it is the nature of the grace that we, who are made in the

image and likeness of God, should be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Chapter XVII.

On supplications, sacraments, and libations of revelers. How often secret things are wrung from wine. And on a miraculous manner of drinking, and how it is pernicious to health.

62. But what shall I say about the entreaties of those in power? What about the sacred oaths that they consider it a crime to violate? They say, 'Let us drink: I wish for the health of the emperors; for whoever does not drink shall be considered guilty of disrespect.' For it seems that one does not love the emperor if they do not drink for his health. Oh, the pious obedience of devotion! Let us drink for the well-being of the armies, for the bravery of the companions, for the health of our children. And they believe that these prayers reach God, just as those who bring cups to the tombs of martyrs and drink there until evening, not believing that they can be heard otherwise. Oh, the foolishness of humans who consider drunkenness a sacrifice: those who believe that pleasure is found in intoxication, and those who have learned to endure suffering through fasting!

63. How many of those we know have come from excessive conviviality to torture? While they fight for their control through drunkenness and promise themselves kingdoms, they promise honors to others, and the unfortunate who did not know what to say have been led to punishment. Hence, many good judges did not consider those things said in drunkenness to be held against them as a crime. Many also use wine like a rack; and those for whom torture does not elicit a voice of treason, they test by drinking; so that they may betray the state of their homeland, the safety of the citizens, and their plans of defense. For virtue generally conquers pain; but excessive drinking excludes faith. I have known many lute-players who, afflicted with sores, denied their name. Who concealed among the cups what he desired to keep hidden?

64. Why should I examine my hearing, not of a cup, but of a flood-like nature, through which wines are poured into the mouths of men like through tubes or channels? Should I consider these men as bags, or rather wineskins? And yet even wineskins, unless the pouring is controlled, often burst. Wines flowing through a horn also pour into the throats of men; and if anyone breathes, the committed offense, a loosened sword, is considered a change in position. Flowing water dissolves rocky cliffs from Mount Lebanon, how do they think that the violent onslaught of flowing wines does not harm the delicate internal organs of the wine drinkers?

65. They also say that elephants can suck up a great deal of water with their trunk; however, they are satisfied with a moderate amount of water to quench their thirst. But if they happen to be cheated by a certain innkeeper, feeling indignant, they fill their trunk with water not to drink it, but to spill it out; and in this way, they flood the inn with temporary inundations, thinking that they are avenging themselves. Suddenly, the lakes dry up and are suddenly poured out, and everything floats. To whom is it not surprising that such huge bodies of beasts can hold nothing superfluous?

Chapter XVIII. How disgraceful and destructive the drunkenness of women is, even to those who witness it! And when one laments this evil, it reveals how beneficial sobriety is and how harmful intemperance is, as exemplified by the Israelites. But why should we speak about men, when even women, who should exercise greater vigilance in preserving their chastity and sobriety, consume alcohol to the point of drunkenness? Then, when they rise, they dare to go out in public, without veiling their heads and with a bold expression, even though it is not appropriate for them to be

heard by others or seen outside the intimate confines of the home. The Apostle (1 Cor. 14:35) commands women to remain silent even in the Church, and at home, he instructs them to question their husbands. Those women, in the streets, shamelessly even lead immodest dances in front of young men, tossing their hair, pulling their tunics, their garments torn, their bare arms exposed, clapping their hands, dancing with their feet, making noisy voices, arousing the lustful desires of the youths with their theatrical movements, their provocative gaze, their shameful mockery. The crowd of young people watches, and a pitiful spectacle is created. Amidst the ruin of the dancers and the falling of the spectators, the sky is polluted by impure gaze, the earth is defiled by indecent movements, which are beaten by obscene dances.

67. How can I speak with patience, pass by with piety, and appropriately lament? Wine has brought us the loss of so many souls. For if wine and women lead us away from God, since either drunkenness or the allure of lustful transgression, if each of these alone accomplishes this, what will they accomplish when united? Therefore, it is not without reason that a certain wise man before us says: A drunken woman, a great anger (Sirach XXVI, 11).

68. But what wonder if the souls of women are deceived by wine, when all those tribes of the fathers, when they drank water from the rock, ate manna, conquered mighty nations, and there was no weak among them: but when they began to desire meat, and they were turned back to Egypt by their desires, they did not deserve to arrive in the promised land except for two out of so many thousands of people? Therefore, what good sobriety is, what evil intemperance is, can be gathered from here: when they murmured seeking the delights of Egypt, they were bitten by serpents: when they crossed the path through the Red Sea, they drank water. So, are we not afraid of setting an example, not avoiding pleasures, lest we deprive ourselves of the attainment of future goods?

Chapter XIX.

The prophecy of Isaiah denounces destruction to the luxuriant: the sea should not be stirred up by merchants, who are consumed by their greed; for it was given not for sailing, but for food, and not for humans, but for fishes to swim in: finally, in what way should luxurious ships be compared?

69. And what will be the opinions of others? Let us hear what those who are well fed and luxurious hope for themselves. Isaiah the prophet brings them in, saying: Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die (Isa. XXII, 13). And he rightly cries out: Howl, you ships of Carthage, that have perished, and will be no more (Isa. XXIII, 1). This is said concerning the vision of Tyre, a city that we know to be luxurious. And for this reason, it is not the ninth vision, but the seventh or eighth, because it neither keeps the law, nor the grace of the Gospel: since it is forbidden to kindle the fires of desire on the legitimate Sabbath, and the eighth day of resurrection shines forth in the series of the Gospel. But the same day is both the first and the eighth, because the Sunday recurs within itself. Therefore, luxury has neither faith nor observance of discipline: luxury is the seedbed and origin of vices. And do not think that I have spoken against the Apostle (1 Tim. VI, 1), for he says that greed is the root of all vices, since luxury is the mother of greed. Indeed, when someone has exhausted their own resources by luxuriously indulging, they then seek greedy shortcuts.

Today's reading is about Merchants. The prophet says that the merchants of the Phoenicians navigate through many waters: the seed of merchants is like a harvest that is brought in. These

cities are nearby, Tyre, Phoenicia, Sidon: nearby in location, as well as in vices. The merchants seek profit from dangerous sea crossings. People lead anxious lives, with unsettled conversations, always in turmoil, more restless than the very winds they are carried by, tossed here and there frequently. Certainly, you accuse frequent shipwrecks, but who compels you to navigate? As if you do not make envy of wealth and lands, and as if you excite many to robbery. God did not make the sea for sailing, but rather for the beauty of the element. He has spread out the wider expanses of the sea, certainly in order to enclose lands with a strait, so that you, as a wanderer and exile, would not roam too far. But the sea is tossed by storms. Therefore, you should fear, not use. The innocent element has done nothing wrong: human recklessness is itself a danger. Finally, he who does not sail does not know how to fear shipwreck. The Lord said: Rule over the fish of the sea (Gen. 1, 28), he did not say: Sail on the waves. Finally, even the prophet Jonah, who was sent to Nineveh to preach repentance, because he wanted to sail away from the presence of God, was disturbed by a storm, and, being chosen by lot, was thrown into the sea, and was swallowed by a whale.

71. The Prophet David also says, when he is speaking of God's grace towards mankind: You have subjected everything under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and the beasts of the field, and the birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea, that roam the paths of the sea (Psalms 8:8-9). He gave the fish the ability to traverse the paths of the sea, not humans. The sea was given to you for sustenance, not for danger: use it for food, not for commerce. Why do you create danger for yourself out of pleasure? Why do you explore the depths of the separate elements? Why do you seek the hidden secrets of the world? Why, as a restless sailor, do you strive to frequently navigate and carve the waves? Why do you often challenge peaceful seas and provoke storms in vain? Oh, insatiable greed of merchants! The sea and its restlessness cannot satisfy you. Finally, the sea itself testifies to the repeat offenses of merchants: Blush, Sidon, said the sea (Isaiah 23:4). This voice of the speaker is like tired elements saying: Blush, Sidon, this is, you blame my waves, though you yourself are more restless than the waves; and blush with shame, since you are not moved by danger. The winds are more modest than your desires. They have their leisure, but your desires are never satisfied. And even when the weather is calm, your ships are never idle. The wave moves under the oarsman when it rests from the winds.

72. 'I did not give birth,' she says, 'nor did I bear, nor did I rear youths.' (Ibid.) Why do I feel disturbed by those whom I do not know, whom I do not recognize? Go to Carthage, howl, you who inhabit the islands. (Ibid. 6) Above, she said: Howl you ships of Carthage. For indeed, the Tyrians founded Carthage, and therefore the Carthaginians follow the luxury of their founders, having absorbed into themselves a disgraceful succession of wickedness, becoming worse heirs of the worst vices. And he called them lavish, the ships. For just as these are tossed by the wind, so are they tossed by food and wine. They inhabit islands full of drink, surrounded by shipwrecks, they are struck by drunkenness with waves, they rest neither day nor night. Therefore, the seed of these merchants is in the water, the harvest is in the waves. For in the water they sow their labors, so that they may reap dangers. In the water, a crop sprouts for them, in the water the harvest abounds. The fruit itself is in the water, never safe and solid. Therefore it rightly says (Ez. 28): He who sows in the land does not enter into business; rather, he who sows in heaven. But there is good land in which whoever sows, heavenly fruits will arise for him.

Chapter XX.

In the cheapness of words, there is often a greater effectiveness. How the chorus of the harlot nations will sing; with an exhortation to moral conversion, as well as the redemption of sins through alms.

73. Ululate, he says, again, O ships of Carthage, since your defense has perished; and it will be on that day, Tyre will be abandoned (Isaiah 23:14). And further: And after seventy years Tyre will be like the song of a prostitute (Ibid. 15). See with what words the prophet speaks, and let him not shy away from the vulgarity of such words. Sometimes we shy away, not because our language is purer than theirs, but because our authority is lesser. For there is greater power in the expression of such words; so that those who are not ashamed of their sins, may be ashamed of even the names of sin. And so Tyre will be, he says, like the song of a prostitute. See, lest when someone sees those shameful dances, they say, 'Behold, Tyre has become like the song of a prostitute.' The oracle of prophetic proclamation has been fulfilled.

74. And he adds: Take up the lyre, and wander about, O forgotten city, O harpist, sing many songs, so that there may be a remembrance of you. And after seventy years Tyre will become like the song of a harlot, and God will visit Tyre (cf. Jer. 25:16). Therefore, we can also take as a good song the story of Rahab the harlot, who received the spies of Joshua with a faithful heart. For the Lord also said: We played the flute for you, and you did not dance (cf. Luke 7:32). And David said: Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord, all the earth (Psalm XCV, 1), this is the song of a prostitute, which that prostitute sang in the land of Adam and Eve, the prostitute among the people of the nations. This prostitute has made many good prostitutes, of whom it is said by the Lord Jesus to the chosen and elder people of God: Tax collectors and prostitutes go before you into the kingdom of God (Matthew XXI, 31).

75. Therefore, since we have such a merciful Lord, who even forgives grave error, let us turn away from vices, let us not depart from the law, let us diligently fulfill the commandment of the Lord like eager servants. What do we have to do with impurities and indecencies? What do we have to do with the works of the devil? You have heard today in the passage read what the legion said: What do I have to do with you, Jesus, Son of God (Luke 8:28)? And you should also say, if perhaps you see the temptations of the devil fighting against you: What do I have to do with you, Belial? I am a servant of Christ, redeemed by his blood, I have given myself entirely to him. What is there for me and for you? I do not know your works, I seek nothing of yours, I possess nothing of yours, I desire nothing of yours. How much more must we separate ourselves from the devil, if he himself distinguishes himself from Christ? And if we were in any way subject to him, we are no longer: we have taken refuge in the physician, he has healed our wounds. And if there is any remaining bitterness, the remedy will not be lacking. And if we have done any wrong, he will not remember, who once granted. And if we have committed serious offenses, we have found a great physician, we have received a great medicine of his grace (De poenit., dist. 1, cap. Medicina). Indeed, great medicine removes great sins.

76. We also have many means by which we redeem our sins. If you have money, redeem your sin. The Lord is not for sale, but you yourself are for sale. You have been sold for your sins, redeem yourself with your works, redeem yourself with your money. Money is worthless, but mercy is precious. Almsgiving, it is said, frees from sin (Tob. XII, 9). And elsewhere it is said: The redemption of a man is his riches (Prov. XIII, 8). And in the Gospel the Lord says: Make friends for

yourselves with the mammon of wickedness (Luc. XVI, 9). And frequently antidote is mixed with poison, that is, poison is excluded by poison. Poison is repelled by poison, life is saved. Do the same, like a good dispenser, provide assistance of mercy from the instrument of greed, grace of sincerity from the lure of corruption.

Chapter XXI.

The prophets also say that future things are present: similarly, the world is not unjustly to be destroyed according to Isaiah's prophecy, for the sake of illustrating this, a fitting comparison with a racecourse is used. On this occasion, it teaches us that we must be athletes and diligently train for the crown; and finally, it prays that Christ may hasten his coming.

77. Have you heard what has been read today: Behold, the Lord is coming to destroy the world (Isaiah XIII, 5). As if by a holy hand the prophet demonstrates, as if he sees with his eyes the coming day of judgment, he says: Behold, the Lord is coming to destroy the world. Indeed, because in the spirit the future is revealed to the prophets as if it were present, what he saw, he desired to also demonstrate to us, so that he may call us to conversion from error.

78. Nevertheless, no one should be broken when he hears that the Lord will destroy the world. Lest perhaps someone should say: Okay, we have committed serious sins, but what sins has the sky, the earth, the sea committed, that they too should be destroyed? Why will such beautiful decoration perish? Such a mindset is narrow-minded. However, if you look deeper, you will find that what you think is against us is actually for us: you will judge that what you consider against the world is actually for the world. The stadium is not always crowded with spectators, not always restless with competitions, not always covered in dust: but when there are competitions, then the people are in the stands, the fighter is on the mat, the dust is on the track. Once the competitions are over, the gathering disperses, each one either victorious in grace, or defeated in disgrace: the crown elevates the victor, shame weighs down the defeated, insult torments. So if someone enters the stadium afterwards, they will see an emptiness of the crowd, and they should say to the organizer: Why is the stadium empty; why are the competitions silent; why are the ceremonies not being held? The one who presides over the contest will answer: It is necessary for the athletes to rest, for the spectators to rest. For what is the fruit of labor, if not rest after work? Likewise, the world must sometimes be dissolved, so that there may be rest for the weary.

79. We are athletes, competing in a certain spiritual stadium. Indeed, a good athlete said: We have become a spectacle to the world (1 Cor. 4:9). And elsewhere: If I run, not as uncertainly; if I fight, not as one who beats the air; but I discipline my body (1 Cor. 9:26). And elsewhere: Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal (Phil. 3:13). Therefore, we are athletes, and we must compete lawfully. There are many struggles: and he who is conquered today, repairs himself tomorrow. Before the contest, the prize is fought for, afterward the crown. Does an athlete have leisure when once he has given his name to the contest? He is exercised daily, anointed daily. He himself is given the food of an athlete, discipline is required, chastity is guarded. And you have given your name to the contest of Christ, you have subscribed to the competition for the crown: meditate, exercise, anoint yourself with the oil of joy, with the emptied ointment. May your food be the food of moderation, having nothing of excess or luxury. Let your drink be restrained, so as not to fall into drunkenness: maintain self-control over your body, so that you may be fit for the crown, lest your reputation offend the feelings of the observer,

lest your supporters see you as negligent and abandon you. The Archangels, Powers, and Dominions are watching you, along with the ten thousand times ten thousand Angels. Reflect on how shameful it would be to blush in front of such spectators. Entering the stadium, stir up the dust of your soul, shake off your weariness. Advancing onto the platform, it is necessary for you to embrace the dust, endure the scorching heat of the summer sun. It is a heavy heat, but a sweet victory: the annoying haze of dust, but a beautiful tolerance. No one enters the dusty stadium, but the competitions make it dusty. There the dust accumulates, where the palm is held forth. No one is crowned shiny again, victory befits the dusty.

80. Come therefore, Lord Jesus, let your crown go forth, admit the victors to rest, the defeated to repentance. And if you scatter the world, there are more invisible works of yours than what we have seen. He who has a narrower mind does not perceive those things, he grieves that you scatter the world: but he who knows how to look at what is invisible, rejoices that you come, and free all. The athletes rejoice who can say: Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matth. VI, 10). The creature of the world will rejoice, in order to be liberated from the vanity of this world which now groans and labors; for that creature is also subject to vanity, until the adoption of the sons is multiplied and the redemption of the whole body is completed. Therefore, it will destroy the earth in goodness. For there will be a new heaven, and there will no longer be night. Finally, it says, His face will be revealed, so that with His face revealed we may behold the glory of Christ.

Chapter XXII.

Feasts must be avoided so that Moses does not separate himself from us with the Levites, and how he still comes. Likewise, whom does the Apostle command to be abolished? After this, those who have not yet been baptized are invited to this great grace, with the excuses of some being finally rejected.

81. Therefore, let us consider in the stadium how much pleasure or pain we will be, who are now our supporters, so that they do not begin to be ashamed of us. For as there will be joy in heaven over one sinner doing penance (Luke 15:10), so there will be sadness over the one who, not having obtained forgiveness, completes the course of this life. Let us discipline our bodies with fasting, let us avoid indecent feasting. Let us beware lest it is said to us: Howl from wine. May Moses not come, and may the Levites summon: and whoever is prepared to bear the armed right hand of the Lord, may he separate himself from those who have contracted serious sins by eating and drinking. And today Moses came, when the Law is recounted: Moses calls, when the Law commands.

82. The Apostle teaches (II Thess. III, 6) that we should separate ourselves from every brother who is acting in a disorderly manner. Let us strike with the spiritual sword, which is the word of God. (Ephes. VI, 17). Let us not show favoritism towards brother or relative, but let us separate every unclean one from the altars of Christ, so that he may cleanse and correct his own faults in order to be worthy to return to the sacraments of Christ.

83. But if anyone is not baptized, let him convert with more security, receiving the remission of sins. Indeed, baptism, like a certain fire, consumes sins; for Christ baptizes in fire and spirit. Finally, this type is seen in the books of the Kings (3 Kings 18:34), where Elijah placed wood on

the altar and said to pour water upon it from jars. And he said: Do it again, and they did it again. And he said: Do it a third time, and they did it a third time. And when the water flowed, Elijah prayed, and fire descended from heaven. You are a man standing over the altar, who is cleansed by water, whose guilt is burned away, so that life may be renewed. For fire consumes wood and straw. Do not fear the fire by which you are illuminated. Therefore, it is said to you: Approach him, and be illuminated (Psalm 33:6). Take up the yoke of Christ. Do not fear because it is a yoke: hasten, because it is light. It does not crush the neck, but honors it. Why do you hesitate; why do you delay? It does not bind the neck with chains, but unites the mind with grace: it does not constrain by necessity, but directs the will towards good works.

84. Why do you deny that there is still time? Every moment is opportune for repentance. If I offer you gold, you do not say to me: I will come tomorrow, but you demand it immediately. No one delays in accepting gold, no one makes excuses: the redemption of the soul is promised, and no one hurries. John was baptizing for repentance, and all Judea was coming: Christ baptizes in the Spirit: Christ dispenses grace, and he is approached with disdain. Elijah demonstrated the symbol of baptism, and he opened the heavens that had been closed for three years and six months (1 Kings 18:43ff). How great are the gifts of truth! Indeed, grace opened the heavens not with descending rain, but with ascending favor. For no one except the Spirit and water ascends into the kingdom of heaven. Perfidy had closed the heavens to mankind, but faith opened them.

85. The sky was open to humans before this. Finally, Enoch was taken up to heaven. It was closed again, but Elijah, who was taken up in a fiery chariot, opened it (2 Kings 2). And you can ascend too, if you obtain the grace of the sacraments. How long will you indulge in pleasures; how long will you be engrossed in excesses? The day of judgment is imminent: as you delay grace, death approaches. Who will say: Now is not the time for me, I am busy, do not show me the light, I do not want you to redeem me so quickly, I still need the kingdom of heaven? Doesn't he who excuses himself from baptism say this? And how great is the grace by which you are renewed, O man! You are purified, and not consumed; you are healed, and do not suffer; you are reformed, and not dissolved; you do not receive the blow of death, and you rise again. And still you delay; you still wait to live in the world, and then you reserve yourself for God. You do not know that Cain displeased God with his sacrifice because he did not offer first fruits, but he himself was consumed by the first fruits, and he attempted to offer to God from the following offerings. But Abel, by the offering of his first fruits, was preferred and deserved to be praised by the oracle of remarkable piety.

On Isaac and the Soul

Saint Ambrose of Milan, Bishop. On Isaac and the Soul, Book One.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.

Chapter I.

The holy Isaac is commended both for his paternal origin and grace, as well as for his prefiguration of the Lord's descent and passion, and the mystery represented between Christ and Isaac, and the soul represented by Rebecca is opened.

1. In our father Isaac or the origin is sufficiently expressed, either by grace or by glory: to whom all glory redounds, that he was born to Abraham, a reward for such a worthy and admirable man. Nor is it surprising, since he preceded in the figure of the Lord's generation and passion. For even a barren old woman gave birth to him according to God's promise, so that we may believe that God is able to make a virgin conceive and that the only begotten one offered as a sacrifice would not perish for the father and would fulfill the sacrifice. Therefore, by its very name, it signifies both form and grace. For Isaac, in Latin, means laughter, and laughter is a notable sign of joy. And who is ignorant that he is the joy of all, who, with dreadful death or fear suppressed or sorrow removed, becomes the remission of sins for all? Therefore, he was named, and he was designated: he was expressed, and he was announced. He is the one whom the maidservant already pursued: he is the one for whom it was already said: Cast out the maidservant, for the son of the maidservant will not be heir with my son, Isaac (Gen. XXI, 10). He is the one to whom his father acquired a foreign bride. He is gentle, humble, and meek, who, with the arrival of Rebecca, that is, patience, went out into the field to be alienated. For it is the mark of a wise man to separate oneself from the pleasures of the flesh, to elevate the soul, and to withdraw from the body; for this is truly to

recognize oneself as a human being. He who is called Enos in the Chaldean language is called, in Latin, homo. But Enos, who assumed and hoped to invoke God; and therefore, it is believed that he was translated. Therefore, it does not seem that a man exists unless he hopes in God. But whoever hopes in God does not live on earth, but rather, as if carried away, clings to God, signifying a clear interpretation of truth.

Therefore, Isaac is a true blessing, full of grace, and a source of joy. To this source, Rebecca came to fill her water jug. For the Scripture says that as she went down to the spring, she filled her jug and went up again (Gen. XXIV, 16). So she went down to the fountain of wisdom, whether the Church or the soul, to fill her entire vessel and to draw from the pure disciplines of wisdom that the Jews refused to draw from the flowing fountain. Who is this fountain, listen to the one saying: They have abandoned me, the fountain of living water (Jeremiah II, 13). To this fountain ran the thirsting soul of the prophets, as David also says: My soul thirsts for the living God (Psalm XLI, 3); so that it could quench its thirst with the richness of divine knowledge and wash away the blood of foolishness with the flow of spiritual waters. For this is the flow of blood, as the law signifies (Leviticus XX, 18), which is covered, when a man lying with a woman during her days of menstruation. Woman is a delight of the body and a temptation. Therefore, beware that the strength of your mind is not weakened by a certain union of bodily pleasure, and that everything dissolves into its embrace, and it opens the fountain, which ought to be closed and sealed by the study of intention and the consideration of reason. For a garden is closed, a fountain is sealed (Canticles 4:12). For when the strength of the mind is dissolved, the senses pour forth a bodily pleasure excessively pernicious, and rush into a desire full of serious danger; which, if it had remained under the vigilant custody of a vivid mind, it would have restrained.

Chapter II. What is man, and in what part does he chiefly consist; and what kind of soul does he have, both in terms of its nature and through its irrational part, which is subject to corruption. So consider, O man, who you are and how you protect your well-being and life. What, then, is a man? Is he a soul, or flesh, or the union of both? For we are one thing, and our body is another: one that is clothed, and another that is clothing. We read in the Old Testament: 'All the souls who came to Egypt' (Gen. 46:26), speaking of humans. And elsewhere it is said: 'My spirit will not remain in these humans, for they are flesh' (Gen. 6:3). Therefore it is read in both senses, because man is said both of the soul and of the flesh. But there is this distinction, that where the soul is put for man, it signifies adhering to God, not to the body, as in this passage: The blessed soul is every man's friend (Prov. XI, 20). But where the flesh is called man, the sinner is expressed, as in this passage: But I am carnal, sold under sin; what I am working, I do not understand. For what I am willing, that I am not doing: but what I am hating, that I do (Rom. VII, 14 and 15). This is now later and about both. For one person wants, another person hates, another person does. Ultimately, he added: If therefore I do what I hate, I consent to the law, because it is good. But now I do not do that, but what sin dwells in me (Ibid., 16 and 17). That also more explicitly: I see the law of my flesh opposing the law of my mind, and taking me captive in the law of sin (Ibid., 23). And yet, when he declared both struggling within himself, that is, the inner and outer, he preferred to establish himself more in the part of the soul than the body, so that his captive soul would be drawn to sin, in which he would rather be, and affirms saying: Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? As if from a foreign enemy, so he desires to be freed from the flesh.

4. Therefore blood is not the soul, because the blood is of the flesh; nor is harmony the soul, because harmony of this kind belongs to the flesh; nor is air the soul, because breath is one thing, soul is another; nor is fire the soul, nor is it actuality; but the soul is a living soul, because Adam was made into a living soul (Gen. II, 7); because the soul gives life to and governs the insensible and lifeless body. And man is superior, of whom it is said: But the spiritual man judges all things; himself he is judged by no one (I Cor. II, 15). Here is the most excellent among the others. From where David also says: What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you visit him (Psalm 8:5)?... Man has become like vanity (Psalm 143:4). He is not a man of vanity according to the image of God, but he who has lost that image and fallen into sin, and has been dissolved into these material things, he is a man of vanity.

5. Therefore, the soul, according to its nature, is the best thing: but often it is corrupted by its own irrationality, so that it inclines towards bodily pleasures and impudence, while it does not hold the measure of things, or is deceived by opinion, and leaning towards matter, it adheres to the body. Thus its invisibility is hindered and filled with wickedness; because while it directs itself towards wickedness, it is filled with its vices, and becomes more intemperate by the lack of goodness.

Chapter III.

With a perfect soul having renounced earthly things and tamed vices, it desires to kiss the Word: to whom God the Word pours Himself entirely. Delighted by this, it seeks to be drawn closer to Him; which the holy man, even the Church, also provides.

However, the perfect soul despises matter: it avoids and rejects everything excessive, mobile, and evil; it neither sees nor comes close to the corruption of any earthly stain: it directs itself towards divine things and flees earthly matter. But flight is not to leave the earth, but to be on earth, to hold onto justice and sobriety, to renounce vices, not to the uses of elements. It fled (On Penitence, Distinction 2, Chapter When they came to know, § It fled). David, holy in the sight of Saul, not so much to abandon the land, but to avoid the contagiousness of cruelty, ingratitude, and faithlessness. He fled while adhering to God, as he himself says: My soul clings to you (Ps. LXII, 9). He withdrew himself and cleansed himself from the vices of this world, elevating his soul like Isaac in the field, or (as others have it) walking freely. For he also shows that he is familiar with virtues, so that each person may walk in the innocence of their heart, not mingling with earthly vices, and may tread an irreproachable path with an untainted mind, and may not open any place within themselves to corruption.

Such was Isaac, as he awaited the arrival of Rebecca, preparing himself for spiritual union. For she came now endowed with heavenly mysteries: she came bringing with her great adornments of ear and hand; because she excels in hearing and works, the beauty of the Church, to which we rightly apply the verse: 'Be thou multiplied as the sand of the sea, and thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies.' Therefore, O Church, adorned with this holy offspring, which thou hast gained from the enemy nations. But this can also be attributed to the soul, which governs the passions of the body and directs them to the duties of virtue, making conflicting movements obedient to itself. Therefore, just as the soul of the Patriarch saw the mystery of Christ and saw Rebecca coming with vessels of gold and silver, like the Church with the people of the nations, marveling at the beauty of the Word and His sacraments, it says: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth (Song of Solomon 1:1). And Rebecca, seeing the true Isaac, that true joy, that true

happiness, desires to kiss him.

8. The first step of the soul. So what is this: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth? Consider either the Church, long waited for by the promise of the coming of the Lord through the prophets, suspended for many ages, or the soul, which, lifting itself up from the body, having cast off luxury and pleasures and carnal desires, and also freed from the cares of worldly vanities, longs for the divine infusion of his presence and the grace of his saving word, to be tortured because he comes late and to be afflicted; and therefore, as if wounded by his love, since she cannot bear his delays, she turns to the Father and asks him to send her the Word of God; and she declares the cause for which she is so impatient, saying: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. She seeks not just one kiss, but many kisses; so that she may be able to fulfill her desire. For what she loves, is not content with the scarcity of one kiss, but demands many, claims many; and thus she is accustomed to commend herself more to her beloved. Finally, she was proven in the Gospel in this way: because she did not cease, she said, to kiss my feet...and therefore her many sins were forgiven, because she loved much (Luke 7:45 and 47). Therefore, this soul also desires many kisses from the Word, in order to be illuminated by the light of divine knowledge. For this is indeed the kiss of the Word, namely, the light of sacred knowledge. For God the Word kisses us when he illuminates our heart, the very core of our spiritual being, with the light of divine knowledge, by which the soul, endowed with the pledge of marital charity, joyfully and exultantly declares: I have opened my mouth and breathed (Ps. 118:131). For the kiss is the means by which lovers cling to each other and enjoy the sweetness of inner grace. Through this kiss the soul is united to God the Word, by which the spirit of the one who kisses is poured into himself: just as those who kiss each other are not satisfied with a mere touching of lips, but seem to pour their own spirit into each other.

Therefore, showing not only the appearance of the Word and a certain countenance, but also loving all its inner depths, he adds to the grace of kisses: For your breasts are better than wine, and the scent of your ointments is above all aromatic spices (Song of Songs 1:2). She asked for a kiss: God the Word poured himself out to her entirely, and revealed his breasts to her, that is, his doctrines, and the teachings of his inner wisdom, and he filled the air with the sweet fragrance of his ointments. He says that, once captured, there is a more abundant delight in divine knowledge than in the joy of all bodily pleasure. Indeed, he desires in the Word the fragrance of grace and the forgiveness of sins, which, poured out throughout the whole world, has filled everything like an emptied ointment. For through all, the heavy flood of vices has been washed away.

10. Therefore, he says, the young girls loved you. Draw us, so that we may run after the fragrance of your ointments (Ibid., 2 and 3). Indeed, there is good wisdom, but sweet mercy. Few attain the former, while the latter reaches everyone. Because of this, he says, souls renewed by the spirit love you. Hence, it is also said to the soul: Your youth will be renewed like the eagle's (Ps. 103:5). For he was speaking to the soul, saying: Bless the Lord, O my soul (Ibid., 1). And therefore it hurries to the Word, and asks to be drawn, lest it be left behind; for the Word of God runs and is not hindered. Finally, it leaps like a giant to run the way. And because its going forth is from the highest heaven, and its course is to the highest heaven, seeing itself unequal to such speed, it says: Draw us. O good soul, which prays not only for itself, but for all. Draw us, it says. For we have the desire to follow, which the grace of your ointments inspires us with: but since we cannot equal your course, draw us, so that supported by your help, we may be able to follow in your

footsteps. For if you draw near, we will also run and we will capture the breaths of spiritual swiftness. For the burden is laid down by which your hand is supported, and your oil is poured out, by which he who was wounded by thieves is healed. And lest it seem impudent to you that he says: Draw us, listen to him saying: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you (Matthew 11:28). You see that he gladly draws us, so that we do not remain behind. But whoever wants to be drawn, let him run to comprehend; and let him run forgetting the things that are behind, and desiring those things that are before; for in this way he will be able to comprehend Christ. Therefore, the Apostle also says: Run in such a way that you may all comprehend (1 Corinthians 9:24). He wants to attain those rewards that he desires to comprehend. Therefore, he prudently asks to be drawn, because not everyone can follow. Finally, when Peter said, 'Where are you going?' the Word of God answered, 'You cannot follow me now, but you will follow later' (John 13:36). He entrusted the keys of the kingdom of heaven to her and considered her equal by following him. However, he did not delay this soul; because she did not presume, but she asked.

Chapter IV.

A perfect soul is introduced into the King's chamber. When it complains of being stained by the contamination of the body and desires to know itself, Christ commands it to leave, etc. The same thing is compared to Solomon's horses. What do the wells dug by Isaac signify? And how does Christ, once recalled from the soul and returning by leaping, also appease it?

11. The second process of the soul.—Finally he says: The king brought me into his chamber (Song of Songs 1:3). Blessed is the soul that enters the innermost sanctuary of the Word. Rising up from the body, it becomes more distant from all things and searches and seeks that divine reality within itself, by which it may in some way attain. And when it is able to comprehend that, having surpassed what is intelligible, it is confirmed in that and nourished by it. Such was Paul, who knew that he was caught up to paradise, but whether caught up outside the body or in the body, he did not know. For his soul had risen from the body, and had drawn itself away from the entrails and bonds of flesh, and had lifted itself up; and having become estranged from itself, it held within itself unspeakable words which it had heard, and it could not express them in common speech; for it realized that it was not permitted for a man to speak of those things. Therefore, the good soul despises visible and tangible things, and does not dwell or abide in them, nor does it stay and reside in despising these things, but it ascends to those eternal and invisible things, full of miracles, uplifting itself with the pure sense of a pious mind. For indeed, desiring perfection, he aims only at that good of Divinity, and does not think that anything else should be sought; because he holds that it is the highest. Therefore, a man of this kind, in whom beauty of the soul exists, is sufficient for himself alone, because he is sufficient for himself. Nor is he ever alone, to whom the Lord is present as a guide.

Finally, let us enter into that divine secret: Let us exult and rejoice in you, and let us love your breasts more than wine (Song of Songs 1:3). For the just person does not exult in riches, or treasures of gold and silver, or the fruits of possessions, or in powers, or in banquets, but only in God alone.

However, the same soul, aware that it is obscured by the association with the body, says to other souls, or to those celestial powers that are assigned to sacred ministry: 'Do not look at me

because I am obscured; for there is no sight of the sun in me. The sons of my mother have fought against me' (cf. Psalms 68:9); that is, the passions of the body have attacked me, the allurements of the flesh have discolored me, therefore the sun of justice did not shine on me. Deprived of its protection, I was unable to maintain my devotion and full observance; for in truth, 'I have not kept my vineyard' (cf. Song of Solomon 1:6), because I have brought forth thorns instead of grapes, that is, I have committed sins instead of producing good works.

14. And when he speaks of the Word, turned to it by the shining splendor of the Word, he says: Where do you graze? Where do you remain at midday? He rightly says: Where do you graze? because the Word of God is regal; Where do you remain, because it is moral; At midday, because it is mystical. Indeed, at midday, Joseph, when he was seated with his brothers at the banquet, revealed the mysteries of future times. But David also says: Reveal your way to the Lord, and trust in him, and he himself will do it: and he will bring forth your justice like the light, and your judgment like midday. And Paul himself declared that a light shone around him at midday (Acts 9:3), when he was converted from persecution to grace. Therefore, it is questioned why she has been abandoned, why the poor has been deserted by the rich. For she was abounding in the gift of grace, but she began to be in need when the abundance of divine presence was denied to her; and therefore, she demands to be possessed as if for payment, which she previously claimed as a more precious bond of grace.

15. To whom the Word of God responds: Unless you know yourself, beautiful among women (Song of Songs 1:7); why do you complain about being abandoned unless you know yourself, unless you repent of your fall, unless you approve of the intention of your devotion, unless your faith and sincerity increase, your complaint will be of no avail. Or thus: Unless you know yourself to be beautiful, unless you preserve the beauty of your nature, and do not immerse yourself in the allurements of the body, nor be detained by hindrances, the nobility of a more excellent creature will be of no benefit to you.

Therefore, know yourself and the beauty of your nature, and go forth as if your foot were freed from chains and your naked foot exposed, so that you may not feel the trappings of the flesh; let the bonds of the body not entangle the mark of your mind, so that your foot may appear graceful. For such are those who are chosen by the Lord to proclaim the kingdom of heaven, of whom it is said: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach peace (Isaiah 52:7)! Such was Moses, of whom it is said: Take off the sandals from your feet (Exodus 3:5), so that he, in calling the people to the kingdom of God, might first lay aside the trappings of the flesh and walk with a naked spirit and the mark of the mind. This is therefore what it says: Go, you on the heels of kings, and feed your goats in the tents of shepherds (Song of Songs 1:7); for by flocks we understand the kingdom, because it is able to preside over flocks. And each person presides over themselves with a certain royal power, if they restrain the luxury of the body in themselves, and bring their flesh into servitude. Therefore it is said: The kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21). Hence it beautifully advises the soul: Go, that is, go out from servitude, go out from the authority and dominion of the flesh, and go out not in the flesh, but in the spirit: go out to the governance of power. Therefore, he added. Feed your young goats. Rule over those things on your left hand; for if they are not ruled, they easily slip away. Restrain the impudence, the sensuality of your body, and irrational luxury: tame the light movements, feed them not in bodily dwellings, but in the dwellings of shepherds, who know how to rule the flock. For the dwellings of Israel are lovely like shady groves by the river,

in which the soul, like one prepared for war, exercises good military service, explores hostile attacks, seeks victory through the toil of virtue; so that she may be compared to the horse that belongs to Solomon, swift in running, capable of bringing forth (Cant. I, 8); for the fruitfulness of the soul is desired and sought after.

17. Therefore, this precious horse and the swift chariots of Pharaoh, which some refer to the Church and the people. But we have spoken often elsewhere about this mystery, especially in Psalm 118 verse 10 (Sermon 2 on Psalm 118). However, in this place we have undertaken to speak about the soul. This horse is considered similar to that soul, that is, of prophetic or apostolic virtue, which is numbered among those in their flock who brought the entire world under the influence of their preaching; and although they were in the body, they did not experience any spiritual setbacks in their course. Therefore, it is praised that she, with the heavenly commandment illuminating her, is now beautiful and lovely, and she presents the adornment of chastity in her face, and raises the ribbons of her neck, in which the insignia of patience and humility are found. Isaac truly loved such a soul's beauty, humility, and patience; and that is why he eagerly sought her offspring.

18. And Rebecca conceived, and by her patience she untied the knot of sterility. But let us consider what the prophetic and apostolic soul gives birth to and how it gives birth. She went, it says, to inquire of the Lord (Gen. XXV, 22), because the infants in her womb were rejoicing. And she received this answer: Two nations are in your womb (Ibid., 23); for she presumes nothing of her own accord, but in all things she seeks the highest God as the ruler of her plans. In fullness of peace and piety, she joins together two peoples by her faith and preaching, and she encloses them as in her own womb.

She is rightly called sister more than wife, because she adopts the name of a gentle and peaceful soul of shared piety rather than a special bond; and because she considers herself more bound to all than to one. But Isaac dug wells; and indeed, he redug many of the wells that his father had dug, and the Philistines had filled them after Abraham's death. However, he dug these wells in particular, one in the valley of Gerar, and he found there a well of living water. And the shepherds of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's shepherds because they claimed the water of his well as their own, so he called its name Injustice. And he dug another well, which caused a dispute, and he named it Hostility. And he dug a third [well], in which there was no quarrel among the shepherds, and he called it Rehoboth. And he dug another well, and he did not find water in it; and he called it Sitnah.

21. Whoever, while reading this, thinks that these works are more earthly than spiritual, because either Abraham dug wells or Isaac, such a great patriarch, or even Jacob, as we find in the Gospel (John 4:12), are like certain sources of the human race, and particularly of devotion and faith. For what is a well of living water, if not the deep depth of doctrine? Hence, Hagar saw the angel at the well, and Jacob found Rachel as a wife for himself at the well: Moses also put the future well in a safe place as the first merits of marriage.

22. Therefore, Isaac opened the wells, and in good order: so that the first reasonable water of his well might wash and nourish his soul, and make his sight clearer. He also dug several other wells. Hence it is written: 'Drink water out of thine own cisterns, and out of the wells of thy own fountains' (Prov. 5:15). The more there are, the more abundant is the overflow of blessings. However, he dug the well that his father Abraham had dug, which the shepherds of Gerar, that is, argue over the

wall. For where there is a wall, there is a division between those who oppose each other, and there is injustice; and therefore it is called Injustice. It also undermines another, and from the resulting dissension, it is called Enmity. In these things, the moral doctrine seems to shine forth; because with the wall of division removed, the enmities in human flesh are dissolved, and both have become one in form through Isaac, and in truth through Christ; and rightly afterwards, pure water has been found in that well, as if a useful moral doctrine to be drawn from. The well of Latitude implies nothing else but the discipline of natural things. For this reason it is called Latitude, because one who has surpassed these worldly and sensible things is already calm and secure, without contention or dispute. Having overcome the opposing and foreign thoughts (for what could be more foreign than all secular things, which cannot be eternal), a wise person can say: The Lord has enlarged us and increased us upon the earth (Gen. XXVI, 22), because he surpasses earthly things. The last is the well of the Oath, in which God appeared to him, and said to him: 'Do not be afraid, for I am with you' (Genesis, 26). And he blessed him. This doctrine is already mystical.

You have these in Solomon; because his Proverbs are moral; Ecclesiastes is natural, in which he despises the vanities of this world; his Songs of Songs are mystical. You also have in the prophet: Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of life, enlighten yourselves with the light of knowledge (Hos. 10:12). For this is the light of knowledge, to have the perfection of charity. Therefore it is said: Do not be afraid; for charity drives fear away. But in order for us to understand that, Solomon also interpreted these wells as referring to moral doctrine, natural doctrine, and mystical doctrine, and placed these wells in each of his books that he wrote on moral, natural, or mystical topics.

24. For in Proverbs, when it speaks of the appearance to be avoided, it says: Drink water from your own vessels, and from the fountains of your own wells, and let there be an abundance of water for you from your own fountain (Prov. 5:15). And further: Let your fountain be for yourself alone, and rejoice with the wife of your youth (Ibid., 18); for true wisdom is our remedy against the temptations of the world. Moral doctrine also washes away with its flowing stream the image of worldly pleasure, stained with certain cosmetics of a harlot, and cleanses with the current of its own fountain.

25. You also have in Ecclesiastes the saying about natural things: I made for myself pools of water to irrigate a flourishing grove (Eccles. II, 6). Do not be surprised that he used the word 'pools' instead of 'well'; for even Moses called it a well of width, because it is freed from all worries and narrowness when one transcends this world with a devout mind. Therefore, Ecclesiastes rightly has pools, since he saw that there is no abundance under the sun: but if anyone wants to abound, let them abound in Christ.

26. And about mystical wells it remains for us, which we also find in the Song of Songs, as Scripture says: A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and flowing down from Lebanon (Song of Songs 4:15). For if you pursue the depth of mysteries, the well appears to you as if the mystical wisdom is located in the profound: but if you desire to draw from the abundance of charity, which is greater and richer than faith and hope, then the fountain is for you. For charity is overflowing, so that you can both draw it near and water your garden with its abundant spiritual fruits. And because the person who possesses charity is beyond measure, it is said that where

charity is, there descends a great force from Lebanon. But let the fact that he uses both the term 'well' and 'spring' teach you, as the Gospel instructs you, where it is written: 'So Jesus came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there.' And, tired, he sat thus upon a well (John 4:5-6). Hence, in the mystical doctrine, we understand that this well is also referred to there, because there the Samaritan woman, that is, the guardian (the guardian, however, of heavenly precepts), drew divine mysteries from that well, knowing that God is spirit, and is not worshipped in a place but in spirit (ibid, and following, 24); and because he is the Messiah, Christ. And therefore, he who is still expected by the Jews has already come. Having heard these things, that woman who appears to be of the Church, recognized the sacraments of the law, and believed.

27. In the Book of Songs, Solomon also clearly expressed this triple wisdom; although he said in Proverbs (Prov. XXII, 20) that anyone who wishes to hear his wisdom should write it down three times. Therefore, in the Song of Songs, the bride speaks of the bridegroom: 'Behold, you are my cousin and indeed handsome: our resting place is shady, the beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters are cypress' (Cant. I, 15 and 16). We can understand this morally. For where does Christ and the Church find rest, if not in the works of His people? Finally, where there was impurity, where there was pride, where there was injustice, there the Lord Jesus said: But the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head (Matthew 8:20).

28. But what do we understand about natural things? 'In its shade,' it says, 'I desired and sat, and its fruit was sweet to my mouth.' (Song of Solomon 2:3) For whoever surpasses earthly things and to whom worldly things die (for the world is crucified to him, and he to the world), he flees and despises all things that are under the sun.

29. He also says about the mystics: Lead me into the house of wine, establish charity in me (Song of Songs 2:4). For just as the vine embraces its own vineyard with branches of eternal charity, so the Lord Jesus embraces his people with certain arms of charity.

Consider each thing individually. In moral matters, it is a flower, and among thorns, a lily, as he himself says: I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys (Ibid., I). Therefore, in moral matters, it is a flower. In natural matters, it is the sun of justice, which rising and shining illuminates, setting and overshadowing. Beware lest it set on you, for it is written: Let not the sun go down upon your anger (Ephes. IV, 26). In mystical matters, it is charity, for Christ is the fulfillment of the law. And therefore the Church, which loves Christ, is wounded by love.

Therefore this charity raises and revives until it receives his voice and calls forth his presence; because the one sought not only came, but also came leaping: Leaping over the mountains and bounding over the hills (Song of Songs 2:8). He leaps over the souls of greater grace, he bounds over those of lesser grace. Or thus: how does he come leaping? He comes with a leap into this world. He was with the Father, he came into the Virgin, and he leaped from the Virgin into the manger. He was in a manger, and shone in the sky. He descended into the Jordan, ascended the cross, descended into the tomb, rose from the tomb, and sits at the right hand of the Father. Then, like a young deer longing for the springs of water, he descended to Paul, and enveloped him, and leaped upon the holy Church, which is Bethel, also known as the house of God. For the calling of Paul is the strength of the Church.

Therefore, he comes, and first after the wall is removed, which seemed to be an obstacle to harmony, in order to dissolve the enmities between soul and body. Then he looks through the windows. About what the windows are, hear the prophet saying: The windows are opened from heaven (Isaiah XXIV, 18). Certainly, the prophet signifies those through whom the Lord looked upon the human race before he himself descended to the earth.

33. And today, if any soul earnestly seeks him, it will receive much mercy; for the one who seeks much is owed the most. Therefore, if any soul seeks him diligently, it hears his voice from far away: and even though it may seek from others, it hears his voice before those from whom it seeks. It sees him coming towards it, that is, hastening and running, and surpassing those who are unable to grasp his power with a weak heart; finally, it sees him looking through the riddles of the prophets, reading them and understanding their words. It sees him looking, but as through a window, not yet as present. He sees something prominent above the nets. What is this, unless perhaps because those nets are ours, not his. The nets are, because that soul is still within the sensible and worldly things, which it is accustomed to captivate the mind of man, and wrap in its own embrace. Therefore, still placed in secular things, but nevertheless to one who seeks him, he reveals himself through the nets.

34. Finally, He says to that soul: Arise, come to me, my love (Song of Songs 2:10). That is, rise from worldly pleasures, rise from earthly things, and come to me, who are still laboring and burdened, because you are anxious for the things of the world. Come above the world, come to me, for I have conquered the world. Come near to me now, beautiful with the beauty of eternal life, now a dove, that is, gentle and meek, now completely full of spiritual grace. Therefore, by law, it should not fear the nets any longer, since it calls to itself the soul that could not be captured by the temptations and snares of the world. For when we humans walk in the midst of traps, we are subject to both the nets and the snares because of our desire for food. He who was placed in the body did not fear the nets, but rose above them, that is, above the temptations of the world and the passions of the body; indeed, he made others rise as well. Therefore, desiring to establish this soul, he said: Rise up, come near to me, do not fear the nets.

35. Now winter has passed, that is, Easter has come, indulgence has come, remission of sins has come, temptation has ceased, the rain has gone, the storm has gone, and the shaking. Before the coming of Christ, there is winter, after His coming there are flowers. Hence it says: Flowers are seen on the earth. Where there were thorns before, there are now flowers. It is said that the time for cutting has come. Where there was a desert before, there is now a harvest. The voice of the turtle-dove has been heard in our land. The prophet added well, Our Lady, as if marveling that where there was once impurity, there is now chastity. The fig tree produced its large fruits (Ibid., 13). What was previously commanded to be cut down as if it were unfruitful, now began to bear fruit. But why do you hesitate because he said 'large'? It rejects the earlier ones in order to bring forth better ones later. Just as the unripe fruit is cast aside by the Synagogue, so too is the Church renewed.

37. And although full tranquility exists, and mysteries have grown, nevertheless he says again: Rise securely under the covering of the rock (Ibid., 14), that is, safe under the protection of my passion, and the safeguard of faith. For they have drawn honey from the rock, and oil from the firmest rock. By being clothed with this covering, the souls of the righteous are no longer naked,

and this is their defense. Therefore, he also says to this soul: And you, my dove, come under the covering of the rock near the defense, show me your face, and let me hear your voice. He encourages to confidence, so that one does not be ashamed of the cross of Christ, nor his seal. He encourages to confession, wanting all snares to be removed; so that the good odor of faith may breathe, so that the day may shine, so that the shadow may not harm those who have encountered it; for the one who is close to Christ says: The night has gone, but the day has approached (Rom. XXIII, 12). There is also the shadow of secular things which has passed, and the day of the heavenly Christ who shines upon his saints. This good soul accepts these tokens of love.

Chapter V.

The bridegroom, once again fallen from his soul in his bed at night, etc., is sought in vain; and why? Yet the same is afterwards found; how should he be held? Then, as he ascends from the wilderness with his bride, the daughters of Jerusalem admire him, and escort him to the bridal chamber with a wedding song. He also beautifies the soul itself, which is called closer with various praises.

38. The third process of the soul. But because we must always be anxious, always attentive; and because the Word of God leaps forth like a young goat, or like a fawn, the soul must always be vigilant and strive for what it seeks and desires to hold. Therefore, as if having slipped, the soul says, 'In my bed, I sought the one whom my soul loves during the nights.' Whoever seeks well, let them seek in their bed, let them seek during the nights, neither on holidays nor on nights of rest. Let no time be vacant from the duty of piety; and if it does not find it at first, let it continue in seeking. Therefore, it says: 'I will rise, therefore, and seek in the city, in the forum, in the streets' (Song of Solomon 3:2). And perhaps it has not yet found it, because it sought in the forum, where there are legal disputes; in the streets, where there are markets for the sale of goods. For Christ is not purchased with any money.

39. We can understand it in this way. In the bed, she seeks Christ, and she seeks him with tranquility, with peace. In the nights, she seeks, for he spoke in parables. For he has set darkness as his hiding place; and night reveals knowledge to night. Then, what we say in our hearts, we should be mindful of in our beds. But even so, she does not find, and therefore she says: I will rise up, that is, I will raise up, and I will lift up my intention, so that I may seek diligently, I may seek earnestly: I will enter the city. And it is the soul that says: I am a fortified city, I am a besieged city (Isaiah 27:3). It is a city fortified by Christ, it is the city of Jerusalem in heaven where the interpreters of divine law abound, and the learned in discipline: through them the Word of God is sought. Let me seek, he says, in the marketplace of that city, in that marketplace where the legal experts handle the law, where the oil is sold, which the virgins of the Gospel buy (Matthew 25:9) so that their lamps may always shine, and the smoke of iniquity may not extinguish them. I shall look, he said, in the streets where the waters overflow from those fountains, of which Solomon says they are to be drunk (Prov. V, 15).

While therefore she seeks Christ, she finds the guards who are in the ministry; from them she seeks, Song of Songs 3:3. But the soul that seeks God, even passes the guards. For there are mysteries which even the angels desire to see. Hence Peter says: They have been announced to you, he says, by those through whom they evangelized. The Holy Spirit being sent from heaven, in

whom the angels desire to see, 1 Peter 1:12. Therefore, whoever passes the guards, finds the Word. John passed by, who found the Word with the Father (John 1:1).

41. There are also many who seek Christ in leisure and do not find Him, but find Him in persecutions, and quickly find Him. And therefore, as if after temptations, because He is present in the dangers of His faithful ones: 'As soon as I got away from them, it says, I found Him, I held Him, and I did not let Him go' (Song of Songs 3:4). For everyone who seeks, finds; and whoever finds, must cling, so as not to lose Him. And since we see heavenly mysteries prefigured in the Gospel on earth, let us come to that Mary, let us come also to Magdalene. Let us consider how they sought Christ in the bed of his body, in which he lay dead, on the nights when the angel said to them: You seek Jesus who was crucified; he is not here, for he has risen. Why, therefore, do you seek the living among the dead? (Matthew 28:5 et seq.)? What do you seek in the tomb of one who is already in heaven? What do you seek in the chains of universal imprisonment, who breaks the chains? This is not a tomb, but a dwelling place. Therefore, one of them said: I sought him, but did not find him (Song of Songs 3:1).

43. However, while they were going to the apostles to announce, Jesus, having compassion on them, met them saying: Hail. But they approached and held his feet, and worshipped him (Matthew XXVIII, 9). Therefore, Jesus is held, but he delights to be held in this way, because he is held by faith. Finally, he delighted in that woman who touched him and was healed of a flow of blood, of whom he said: Someone touched me; for I perceive power going out from me (Luke VIII, 46). Touch therefore, and hold him by faith, and faithfully bind his feet; so that power may go out of him, and heal your soul. And if he says: Do not touch me (John 20:17): you hold him; For I have not yet ascended to my Father, he said once. He said: Do not touch me, when he rose again: or perhaps he said to her what she thought was taken by theft, and not raised by his own power. Lastly, in another book you have, that to those who held his feet and adored, he said: Do not be afraid (Matthew 28:10). Therefore, hold on to your soul, just as Mary held on, and say: I held him, and I will not let him go (Song of Solomon 3:4), just as they both said: Let us hold on to you. Go to the Father, but do not abandon Eve, lest she fall again. Lead her with you, no longer wandering, but holding on to the tree of life. Take her clinging to your feet, so that she may ascend with you: do not let me go, lest the serpent once again release its venom, lest it seek again to bite the trace of the woman, so as to overthrow Adam. Say, therefore, to your soul: I hold you, and I will lead you into the house of my mother, and into her secret place, who conceived me; that I may know your mysteries, that I may draw from your sacraments. Receive, therefore, Eve, now no longer covered with fig leaves, but clothed with the holy Spirit, and adorned with new grace; for now she is not hidden as if naked, but shines forth as if surrounded by the splendor of a shining garment, because grace clothes her. But neither was Adam naked at first when innocence clothed him (On Penance, Distinction 2, Chapter But neither was Adam).

Seeing therefore the daughters of Jerusalem cleaving to Christ and still ascending with Him (for He deigns frequently to meet with them who seek Him, and to descend to raise them), they say: Who is this that ascendeth from the desert? (Cant. III, 6) For this desert place of the earth appears rough and uncultivated, covered with the thistles and thorns of our sins. They marvel, indeed, how a soul which was formerly abandoned in hell, can cleave to the Word of God and ascend like a shoot of the vine, raising itself above, as it were smoke that rises up from the fire, and reaching high, and moreover being inflamed with good works. But that smell of pious prayer gives off a

pleasant fragrance, which rises up like incense in the sight of God. And in the Apocalypse we read that: Smoke from the incense rises up from the prayers of the saints (Apoc. VIII, 4), which are offered up by an angel, namely the prayers of the saints, on that golden altar which is before the throne of God, and like the sweet fragrance of pious prayer, it burns as an ointment; because it is composed not of requests for temporal and visible things, but especially of myrrh and incense, because it is dead to sins and alive to God.

So, seeing her ascend and not resist, and delighted with the fragrance of her merits, recognizing her as the peaceful bride of that Solomon, they also diligently accompany her to the bed of Solomon; for true rest is owed to her in Christ. The bed of the saints is Christ, in which the weary hearts of all rest from worldly battles. It is on this bed that Isaac rested and blessed his younger son, saying: 'The older shall serve the younger.' Reclining on this bed, Jacob blessed the twelve Patriarchs. Reclining on this bed, the daughter of the chief synagogue rose from death. Lying on this bed, the deceased widow, called by the voice of Christ, dissolved the bonds of death.

46. Therefore, when the bride reaches the rest of the bridegroom, they sing a wedding song, saying to the daughters of Jerusalem: Go forth and see King Solomon, in the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding (Cant. III, 11). They sing the wedding hymn and invite the other powers of heaven, or souls, to see the love that Christ has for the daughters of Jerusalem. Hence, he merited to be crowned by his mother as the son of charity, as Paul shows, saying: For he has delivered us from the power of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son (Coloss. I, 13). The Son of Charity is himself Charity, not having charity from accidents but always having it in his substance as a kingdom, of which he says: 'I was born for this' (John 18:37). And so they say: 'Go forth,' that is, go out from the worries and thoughts of the world, go out from bodily afflictions, go out from the vanities of the world, and see how the peaceful king has charity on the day of his wedding; how glorious he is, because he has given resurrection to bodies and has united souls to himself. This is the great crown of the contest, this is the glorious gift of the espousals of Christ, his blood and passion. For what could he have given more, who did not even spare himself, and offered his own life for us in death?

47. The Lord Jesus himself, also delighted by the faith of this soul, her confession, grace, and praised merits, calls her closer, saying: Come here from Lebanon, my bride, come here from Lebanon: you will pass through and cross over from the beginning of faith from the head of Sanyr and Hermon, from the lion's dens, from the mountains of leopards (Songs 4:8) - that is, leave the body and shed it entirely. For you cannot be with me unless you first journey away from the body; for those who are in the flesh are journeying away from the kingdom of God. Come, he says, come. He has reviewed well, because whether present or absent, you must be present and please your Lord God. Be present, be absent, even though you are still in the body. For to me, all who are present are, whose faith is with me. He is present to me, who came out of the world. He is present to me, who thinks of me, looks at me, hopes for me, for whom I am a part. He is present to me, who has been absent to himself. He is present to me, who has denied himself. He is with me, who is not within himself; because he who is in the flesh is not in the spirit. He is with me, who comes forth from himself. He is beside me, who has gone beyond himself. He is whole to me, who has lost his soul for my sake. And so, come, bride, come, you will pass from the beginning of faith. She passes and passes through lands, and passes through what reaches Christ. She passes rightly by faith, and by the clarity of deeds, which shine like Sanyr and Hermon, that is, the way of the lamp

passes by the conquered temptations of the world, and the spiritual wickednesses overcome, seeking the rightful crown of the contest; and so she deserved to be praised by Christ the judge.

48. My sister, my spouse, is a closed garden, a closed garden, a sealed fountain. Your springs are a paradise of pomegranates with fruits from Cyprus (Song of Solomon 4:12). The bride is praised because she is a garden, filled with the fragrance of that field, of which Isaac says: The smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed (Genesis 27:27). Therefore, a virtuous soul exudes the odor of righteousness. And perhaps the field is the Patriarch; the garden is the soul of someone lower, like a portion of the field; and the closed garden, so as not to be invaded by beasts; and the sealed fountain, which, by the integrity of the seal and the perseverance of faith, washes away its own sins. What the Church receives, it has to refer to the grace of virginity, because in the paradise of delight it receives spiritual fruits without labor, so that the souls of the patriarchs, through a kind of rural labor, may contribute their fruits to it, enabling it to enjoy perpetual sweetness. It is rightly called a sealed fountain because the invisible image of God is expressed in it. They also praise the gifts of the soul that were sent by the bridegroom, with which she came endowed. But the souls of the pious are good odors, myrrh, aloes, saffron, by which the grace of gardens breathes, and the stench of sins is abolished. And so, after the dry proclamation, it seeks the heavy north wind, so that it may not scatter the flowers, the breeze blows gently, that is, it wants to pass through winter, and to enjoy the milder breezes of spring. It invites the groom into its garden. The groom descends, and delighted by the diversity of its fruits, he rejoices that he has found a stronger food, he has also found a sweeter one. For it is like a certain bread of the word, and honey: one speech is more forceful, another more persuasive. And there is another faith, more ardent, like wine: another, more clear, like the juice of milk. Christ feasts on this food within us, drinks this cup, and by the intoxication of his drink, he incites us to surpass lower things and strive for better and best things.

Chapter VI.

He discusses the more perfect processes of the soul, which have been strictly repeated in the previous three movements, more extensively in the fourth. In this, the soul, while sleeping, is awakened by the groom. But while it delays in rising, the Word passes by. However, when it goes out, it finally finds, through the wounds of love, that which it has been seeking and holds on to it in such a way that it no longer loses it.

50. The soul, having drunk the intoxication of heavenly mysteries, and as if intoxicated with wine, and placed in a state of excess or stupor, says: I sleep, and my heart is awake (Song of Songs, 5:2). Then, struck by the light of the present word, with her eyes resting and bent, she is awakened by the Word. This is the fourth process of the soul. For at first, impatient of love and unable to bear the delays of the Word, she prays to be worthy of kisses, and she deserved to see the desired. Secondly, when she was also introduced into the king's chambers and engaged in mutual conversation, she rested in his shadow, and suddenly the Word departed from the midst of their conversation; however, it was not absent for long, but came forth leaping over the mountains and bounding over the hills. And not long after, like a young deer or a fawn, while addressing his beloved, he leaped forth and departed. After searching for him in her chamber, during the night, in the city, in the marketplace, and in the streets and not finding him, she finally called him back through her prayers and her charm, so that she was even called closer by her spouse. In the

fourth watch of the night, she herself is awakened by him while she is sleeping, even though she was awake in her heart, so that she could constantly hear the voice of the one knocking. But after enduring a delay while she rises, because she could not comprehend the swiftness of the Word, while she opens the door, the Word passes through, and she herself goes out in his word, and through the wounds sought, but the wounds of love, she finally finds and holds onto, so that she would not later lose it. In summary, these things have been explained briefly in this discourse. (Sup. cap. 3, 4 and 5). Now let's discuss each item individually.

51. And if you sleep, if only Christ knows the devotion of your soul, he comes and knocks on its door and says: Open to me, my sister (Song of Songs V, 2). Well, sister, because the spiritual marriage is between the Word and the soul. For the soul does not know the bonds of earthly marriage and the use of physical union, but it is like the angels in heaven. Open to me, he says, but close to strangers: close to the world, close to the material things, and do not go out to those worldly matters, nor leave your light behind to seek for something foreign; for earthly light casts a dark shadow and the light of true glory cannot be seen. Therefore, open to me, do not open to the adversary, nor give place to the devil. Open yourself to me, do not be constricted, but expand, and I will fill you. And because, as I have journeyed through the world, I have found more troubles and offenses, and I have not easily found where I could rest: therefore, you open yourself, so that the Son of Man may recline his head in you, to whom there is no rest except on the humble and meek.

52. Hearing this, my soul says: Open to me . . . that head full of dew (cf. Song of Songs 5:2), that is, that soul troubled suddenly by worldly temptations, and as if about to rise, as it was commanded to rise, says, while it gives off the smell of aloes and myrrh, the symbols of burial: I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on again (cf. Song of Songs 5:3)? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them (cf. Song of Songs 5:3)? For it fears lest it rise again into temptations, lest it return into guilt again and sin, and begin to defile its goings forth and the process of its virtues with earthly footsteps. Certainly, in this way, she indicates the perfection of her virtue, which has deserved such great love of Christ; that she may come to it, and knock at his door, and come with the Father, and dine with the same soul, and she with him, as John said in the Apocalypse (Rev. III, 20). For when she had heard in the previous verses: Come here from Lebanon, O bride, come here from Lebanon (Song of Solomon IV, 8); and when she realized that she could not be present to Christ in the flesh, but would be present then, if she were present in the spirit; conforming herself to his will, so that she may be conformed to the image of Christ, she no longer feels the burden of the flesh; she as if sheds the bond of the body; as if forgetful, and if she wishes, she cannot remember that union, she says: I have taken off my tunic, how shall I put it on again? For he took off that tunica, of flesh, which Adam and Eve received after the Fall, a tunica of corruption, a tunica of passions. How shall I put it on? It does not require putting on; but it signifies being cast off, so that it could no longer be a garment for oneself. I washed my feet, how shall I defile them? This means, I washed my footsteps, as I was going out, and as I lifted myself from the intimate bodily association, from that connection and familiarity of carnal embrace, how shall I defile them, so that they may return to the closed chamber of the body, and that gloomy prison of its passions?

53. While she was saying these things, the Word sent his operation like through a cavern, not yet face to face, sent as it were a hand: And my belly, she says, was troubled over it. And I rose up to open to my brother. My hands dropped with myrrh, my fingers with the choicest myrrh upon the handles of the lock. (Songs of Solomon 5:4-5). Let us consider what this signifies. First it seems,

as I said, that God sent the Word like through a cavern, not fully and perfectly: then love is stirred up, and conception grows, and from the seeds which the soul has received in a certain intelligible womb it desires to see the whole fulness of his divinity dwelling bodily in him, as we read. He rose so that he might see that Word of God more closely. And in this very act of his, it is signified that he rose by strength and power. For the presence of the Word derived strength for the soul, just as the presence of Mary, when she was burdened with her womb, instructed John, who was situated in the womb, so much so that he leapt in the womb and rejoiced, recognizing the presence of the Lord. He rose to reveal both his works and his accomplishments, which brought death to the world. For the soul that is going to receive the Word should be such that it dies to the world and is united with Christ. For in this way Christ is found and seeks a dwelling for Himself. Then the very ministries of operations, that is, the hands and fingers with which Christ is apprehended, are mortified, which fingers, as it were, the prominence of our deeds we can estimate as works. Therefore, just as from His embrace when He extended His intelligible hands and fingers to apprehend the Word passing through Himself, the pious soul says that it had not yet passed through. And this process takes place when the Word of God passes through and penetrates the soul; for it is written: 'And a sword will pierce your own soul too, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.' (Luke 2:35) Here it is still being passed through, not yet fully penetrated: as Mary is perhaps penetrated in her later years, when the Lord Jesus is placed as a seal in her midst.

54. Finally, another departure of the Word happened immediately; because the soul left in his word, that is, his word followed and left the body, raising itself from its dwelling, and making itself a stranger to it, so that it might be present with God and be a citizen of the saints. For we cannot be both of the flesh and of God. Therefore, in this place, the departure of the soul is signified, as I have said, when it withdraws from the pleasures of the body. Finally, it is written: 'Come out of Babylon, fleeing from the Chaldeans' (Isaiah 48:20). The Hebrew does not flee from the region of Babylon, but is admonished by prophetic discourse to flee from its customs; for there are Hebrews who are in Babylon, and they teach that they have left Babylonian customs. For those of whom the Prophet says that they sat beside the rivers of Babylon, they did indeed sit in the region of Babylon, but they were not partakers of its vices and confusion. For how could they be in that confusion of vices, who wept and repented for having fallen away from the ark of devotion, faith, and the merits of their paternal virtue? But what the soul goes out upon in its search, the Word requires.

55. And when she sought for it, she encountered the guards who were going around the city. They struck me, she said, and wounded me; the guards of the walls took my cloak from me (Song of Solomon 5:7). Indeed, she came like a bride with a cloak to cover her head when the bridegroom would come. Like Rebecca, who, upon learning that Isaac was coming towards her, descended from the camel and covered herself with a cloak (Genesis 24:65): so too this bridal soul anticipated the marriage insignia, lest she be rejected as not having the bridal garment; or lest she veil her head because of the angels. But they struck her so that she might be tested even more. For souls are exercised by temptations. They took away her cloak, seeking to see if she brought true beauty of naked virtue: either because no one should enter that heavenly city without a covering, carrying no deceitful coverings with them. There are also those who ask that no soul carry with them the remains of carnal allurements and bodily desires. The cloak is stripped away when her conscience

is revealed. But there is also that which is stripped bare, to whom it is allowed to imitate the one saying: 'The prince of this world is coming, and in me he will find nothing' (John 14:30); for surely in him alone is found nothing, who has not committed sin. Blessed is she in whom he does not find heavy or numerous things, but finds in her the garment of faith and the discipline of wisdom.

56. Therefore, without any loss of himself (because even if someone wants to, they cannot take away true wisdom: even if an adversary objects, there the integrity of a true and harmless conversation shines forth), without any loss therefore, he passed by the guardians, and the Word mixed with the daughters of that heavenly city seeks, and by seeking it arouses love in himself, and where it seeks the Word, it recognizes. It knows what waits among the prayers of the saints, and what clings to them, and understands how it feeds his Church, or the souls of his righteous ones among the lilies. The Lord demonstrated this mystery to you in the Gospel (Luke 6:1) when he led his disciples through the fields on the Sabbath. Moses led the people of Judea through the desert (Deuteronomy 29:5): Christ leads through the fields, Christ leads through the lilies; for through his passion the desert blooms like a lily. Let us therefore follow, so that on the Sabbath day, that great Sabbath, in which there is great rest, we may gather the fruits. Do not fear that the Pharisees will accuse those who gather in the fields. Even if they accuse him, but Christ excuses, and he makes similar those souls who follow him, David his, who above the law ate the bread of offering, already foreseeing the sacraments of the new grace prophetically (1 Samuel 21:6).

Chapter VII.

The soul is praised by the groom because he has sought her so well and steadfastly: because she is faithful, because she is powerful in word, because she is gentle as a dove; finally, because she is fruitful in virtues and free from vices.

Therefore, she is praised by the bridegroom because she has sought him so well and steadfastly (Cant. VI, 3); and therefore, she is not only called sister, but also named well-pleasing, as if she is pleasing to the one who pleased the Father; and beautiful like Jerusalem, like an ordered admiration, because she has all the mysteries of the city, and she is an admiration to all who see her; because she is full of equity and perfection, and she borrows radiance from the light of the Word, always fixing her gaze on it; and she also becomes terrible in a certain order, elevated to the highest level of virtues. And therefore, as if perfect, he says: Turn your eyes away from me, do not look at me with hostility (Ibid., 4), with excessive devotion and faith surpassing the possibility of nature and its own condition, because it is difficult to behold an inaccessible light from the region. Turn your eyes away, he says, from me; because it cannot endure the fullness of his divinity and the splendor of true light. However, we can also understand it in this way: Turn your eyes away from me. You are indeed perfect, but there are still other souls that need to be redeemed and supported. You lift me up by seeing me: however, I have descended so that I may lift everyone up. And even though I have risen and have a seat with the Father, I will not leave you, like orphans abandoned without paternal support, but with my presence I will strengthen you. In the Gospel it is written: Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20). Therefore, turn your eyes away from me, because you lift me up. For as much as someone directs their intention towards the Lord, they elevate the Lord even more, and they themselves are elevated. Hence, he says: I will exalt you, O Lord, for you have lifted me up (Psalm 29:1). For the holy person exalts the Lord, while the sinner humbles Him. Therefore, He wishes to avert her gaze, so

that by not contemplating what she can now follow towards higher things, she may be elevated and not abandon other souls. Hence, in the Gospel, He showed His glory not to all the disciples, but to the more perfect ones (Matthew 17:1). Now, appoint a certain teacher who is willing to explain a difficult matter to the listeners: how, even though he may be powerful in speech and knowledge, he will condescend to the ignorance of those who do not understand and use a simple, clearer, and more familiar speech so that it can be understood. Therefore, whoever among the listeners is more lively in understanding, who can easily follow, he elevates and excites him. Seeing this, the teacher calls him back so that he may allow the teacher to dwell more with the humble and simpler, so that others may also be able to follow.

58. As the Eagle says: When sounding, it refers to the one who has been revealed, attributing his sounding to something worthy of admiration, as if it has great and sonorous works. Revealed, referring to the clarity of his works; or because his works shine before the Father who is in heaven. Hence, you understand that his cloak was not taken away in vain, so that it may shine openly, stripped of merits and naked.

Furthermore, it is praised because it is faithful, powerful in word, fruitful in various fruits, and like a dove with a unity of spirit in which there is peace, which made both one. And it is not composed of diverse elements of conflicting and opposing nature. For what is more different than fire and water, air and earth, from which the creature of our body is composed? But every blessed soul that imitates the one who said: 'That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.' For this is the consummation and perfection. Hence he added: That they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one (John, 17:23). Therefore, this soul is one and perfect like a dove, which is simple and spiritual, and is not troubled by the passions of this body, where external battles rage and fears abound within. Finally, Scripture teaches us that this word of unity signifies harmony and peace, saying: And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own (Acts, 4:32).

60. The soul is praised for its fruitful nature, not only because it is fruitful in virtues, but also because it has no evil within itself. For that is honorable and beautiful in which there is no evil. For what is honorable is good, and what is dishonorable is evil. Fruitfulness is the beauty of good works, so sterility is contrary to beauty, since one who is deprived of beauty or attractiveness has evil within them. And what is evil is barren and unfruitful. What evidence could be more clear than nature? For the Earth, which is good, is fertile and abundant, while what is bad is barren and sterile. And what is fertile, that is also beautiful. For what is more beautiful than a full field, with crops swaying, fruit ripening, and vines laden with grapes, or olive trees bending under the weight of their fruit, or the lowly hills and valleys adorned with green grass? And let us use the testimony of Scripture (Gen. XXVII, 27): Jacob was handsome, and therefore the fragrance of a full field was upon him; while Esau was hairy and unattractive (Ibid., 11), and therefore he was rural, unable to bear any fruits. And of the Lord Himself, after He made the Church fruitful, it is beautifully said: The Lord has reigned, He has put on beauty (Ps. 92:1). And elsewhere: You have put on confession and beauty (Ps. 103:2). Therefore, it is clear that beauty is what is fruitful; ugliness, what is unfruitful. The same is the case with the soul alone; because that soul is beautiful which is fruitful in merits, fruitful in counsels: that soul is ugly which is sterile. For the weaknesses of the soul are sterility and matter; for sterility deprives it of its fruits, brings about poverty, instills fear, feeds

desires, and empty opinions: thus the soul falls. What then is wickedness, if not a lack of goodness? It is deprived of its own, and relies on others, it is emptied and filled without any measure or limit. However, material vices overshadow the grace of the soul. Ignorance and desire of the soul are diseases: but they pertain more to appearance than to matter. Matter is the flesh, appearance is ignorance and desire. Why then is the flesh accused, when there are such great blemishes in appearance? Because appearance cannot exist without matter. Finally, appearance alone does not make a hatchet. For what would desire be, if the flesh did not inflame it? It is cold in the old, in children as well, because their body is weak: it burns in the youth in whom the force of the body is boiling. Therefore, evil arises from good things; for evil is not actually evil unless it lacks good things (see St. Augustine, *Ibid.*). However, it is through evil that good things become prominent. Therefore, the absence of good is the source of evil, and the definition of good includes evil, since evil is found through the discipline of good. Good, however, lacks nothing, abounds in itself, provides measure and perfection, and also gives a purpose to everything, upon which everything depends. This is the nature of good, which fills the mind.

61. The pure soul revolves around this, contemplates it, and sees God, and abounds in all good things. Therefore, it says: The throat sweetens, and the whole desire (Songs of Solomon 5, 16). For God is the author of all good things, and whatever exists, all of it indeed belongs to Him. There is no evil there; and if our mind remains in Him, it knows no evil. Therefore, the soul that does not remain in God is the author of evil for itself; thus, it sins: but the soul that sins, it itself will die. For when virtuous bonds are released, one is carried headlong and falls to lower things. But the blessed soul, which no adversities of the body can conquer, is free. This soul, like a sparrow with a broken snare, flies away. For the pleasures of the body are the bait of evils. Whoever seeks these, ensnares his own soul. But whoever restrains himself from her vices and comes out of her darkness, his soul shines like the dawn, of which it is said: 'Who is she that looks as the dawn, fair as the moon?' (Song of Solomon 6:9) For she looks forth as from a free house. She does not say: 'Darkness covers me, and walls surround me, and who knows if the Most High sees me?' (Ecclesiasticus 23:26) But she rather seeks the light as if from the higher parts of her house, that is, her own body, and, being placed above the world, she contemplates the divine and elevates herself to eternal things, so that she may be present with God, already carrying the light of her works like the moon, carrying her orbit throughout the whole world. But what the Eagle says: Resounding like the sun, it seems to express the rotation of the celestial axis, the courses of the sun, moon, and stars, and the harmony of the spheres: it seems so to some of our own people as well; since they do not find faith, at least they do not seem to be estranged on account of the sweetness of it.

Chapter VIII.

The same soul, fleeing from being praised, says that it descended into the garden of the nut, etc., by which bitternesses and temptations are designated. In these, it does not know itself, but is known and governed by Christ, until it reaches the palm. The leaning of this soul towards the palm signifies three things: instruction, progress, perfection. The following exhortation is to charity.

While being praised by the bridegroom, blushing modestly when praised, and then called back by the love of the bridegroom, she said: 'I went down to the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley' (Cant. VI, 10). For where is the Church, if not where the rod and the grace of the priesthood

flourish? There it is often tested, as in bitterness and temptations. By the nut, we understand bitterness; by the torrent, temptations, but nevertheless tolerable, for it is written: 'Our soul has crossed the torrent' (Ps. CXXIII, 5). And so he descended into a place of bitterness, where the vine flourishes, and the various and manifold fruits of evil abound, which are guarded by the unity of the entire body with faith and charity. In that bitterness, the soul did not recognize itself; for the corruptible body weighs down the soul, and the earthly dwelling is quickly inclined. However, it must always recognize itself. But Peter was tempted and did not know himself, and Peter; for if he had known himself, he would not have denied the Author. But Christ recognized him: finally he recognized, who also looked at him (for the Lord knows those who are his) and like a good ruler, he called him back from his fall as if with the reins of his mercy. Therefore, our ruler is Christ.

Therefore, the soul says: Aminadab has placed me in the chariot (Song of Solomon VI, 11). Therefore, the soul is the chariot that sustains a good charioteer. If the chariot is the soul, it has horses, either good or bad. Good horses are the virtues of the soul, while bad horses are the passions of the body (see St. Augustine, Against Julian, Book II, Chapter 5, and Book III, Chapter 14). Therefore, a good charioteer restrains and recalls the bad horses, while inciting the good ones. The good horses are four: prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice. Bad horses have anger, desire, fear, and injustice. Sometimes the horses themselves disagree with each other, and either anger prevails or fear, and they hinder each other and slow down their pace. But good horses fly, and they rise from the ground to higher things, and uplift their soul: especially if they have a pleasant yoke and a light burden, as the one saying: Take my yoke upon you; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew, XI, 29). He himself is the charioteer who knows how to govern his own horses, so that the race is equal for all. If prudence is faster, justice slower, he urges with his own whip the slower one; if temperance is more mild, fortitude harder, he knows how to yoke the discordant ones, lest they may scatter their own chariot. Therefore, it is allowed to see with an intelligible spectacle each soul being lifted up to heaven with the greatest struggle, the hastening horses that they may be the first to reach the reward of Christ, to which the palm may be placed on their necks first. These are horses subjected to the yoke of faith, bound by the bond of charity, restrained by the reins of justice, and held back by the restraints of sobriety. Beautifully, therefore, it says: Aminadab has set me in his chariot, that is, the father of the people: but he himself who is the father of the people, is also the father of Naasson, that is, of serpents. Now recall who, like a serpent, suffered on the cross for the salvation of all, and you will understand that soul to be peaceful, to whom God the Father is a guardian, and Christ is the guide; for it is written, and this name is ours: Father, father, the guide of Israel (2 Kings 2:12).

66. So the charioteer says: Turn, Shulamite, turn (Song of Solomon 6:12). Well, he speaks both as a charioteer and as if to a chariot: Turn, Shulamite, that is, make peace. For a soul that is at peace quickly turns and corrects itself, even if it has sinned before, and Christ ascends to it more fully and deigns to rule it, to which it is said: Mount your horses, your chariot of health (Habakkuk 3:8). And elsewhere: I have sent forth your horses to Tharsis (Ibid., 15). Behold the horses of Christ. Thus, Christ ascends his horses, the Word of God ascends to holy souls.

67. So how do you know that she ascended and brought her to the palm grove, when he says to her, 'How beautiful and sweet you have become, my love, in your delights?' Your stature has become like the palm tree (Song of Solomon 7:6 and following). And she herself says, 'I said, I will climb up the palm tree.' But love itself is also a palm tree; for love is the fullness of victory. Love is

indeed the fulfillment of the law. Therefore, let us run in order to grasp it; and let us run in order to conquer. He who prevails, ascends to the palm tree and eats its fruits. He who prevails no longer runs, but sits as it is written: He who prevails, I will give him to sit with me on my throne, as I also prevailed and sit with my Father on his throne (Apoc. III, 21). Hence the philosophers expressed in their books those contests of souls for the curule chair, yet they were unable to reach the palm tree; because they did not know the height of the Word and the greatness of those souls, which this soul knew, in which there was a turning of the Word. For thus he says: I to my brother, and his desire is towards me (Song of Songs 7:10). He repeats this meaning in a different way three times in the Song of Songs. In the beginning, he says: My brother to me, and I to him, who grazes among the lilies, until the day breathes and the shadows flee away (Song of Songs 2:16-17). Then he says: I to my brother, and my brother to me, who grazes among the lilies (Song of Songs 6:2). In the end, he says: I to my brother, and his desire is towards me. First, as a foundational instruction for the soul, he said: My brother to me. For with him as my teacher, my soul also took on an attachment to God: which follows, according to progress: thirdly, according to perfection. In the first, the soul still sees shadows as in an instruction, not yet moved by the revelation of the approaching Word, but for this reason the days of the Gospel did not yet shine on it: in the second, it gathers the sweet scents without the confusion of shadows: in the third, it now provides perfect rest in itself with the Word; that it may turn over on it, bend its head, and rest, holding the merit which it could not previously find in its search, it invites to its own field, saying:

69. Come, my brother, let us go out into the field, let us rest in the castles (Song of Songs VII, 11). Above to the garden he invited, here to the field having not only the grace of flowers, but also wheat and barley, that is, the firm foundations of virtues, so that one may behold its fruits. Let us rest, he said, in the castles to which Adam, when he was expelled from paradise, had been banished: in them he rested, but he worked the land. By what reason he wants him to go out into the field, the understanding is clear; so that he may feed his flock like a good shepherd, revive the weary, and recall the wanderers. For although this new and old soul has preserved these things for herself, yet they are still like lambs who are in need of the juice of milk for nourishment. Therefore, as if perfect, she intervenes not for herself, but for others, so that she may leave the Father's bosom and go out, as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and run the way to heal the weak, not remaining in that secret throne of the Father, and dwelling in that light where the weak are unable to follow; but rather, so that she may be taken up and led into the house of the bride and into the secret. Let him sit outside for himself, while we sit inside. Let him be in the middle of us, even if he is not visible to us.

70. Therefore he says: Who will give you, brother, to suck the breasts of my mother? Finding you outside, I will kiss you (Cant. VIII, 1). A good soul is outside, so that the Word may be inside: that is, the soul is outside the body, so that the Word may dwell within us.

Assume yourself, he says, and I will lead you in (Ibid., 2). The Word of God is rightly assumed and led in; for it knocks on the soul, that the door may be opened to it. And unless it finds the door open to itself, it does not enter. But if anyone opens the door, it enters and dines. Thus, the bride assumes the Word, so that by assuming it, she may be taught; hence, not undeservedly, she ascends even to higher dwellings, and always receives progress.

72. What virtues do they signify, those that are called or of the soul: What is this that ascends, white and leaning upon her brother? (Ibid., 5) ? Above, they have said: Who is she that looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, elect as the sun? (Song of Solomon 6:9) ? Here, more is added, because she ascends relying on the Word of God. For the more perfect ones recline above Christ, just as John also reclined on Christ's breast. So either she would lean on Christ or recline above him, or certainly, since we are speaking of a wedding, she was already being led into the bridal chamber by the bridegroom, as it were, given over to Christ's right hand.

73. And because now there is a bond of love, the bridegroom caresses her and says: 'Under the apple tree I raised you up; there was your mother in labor; there she gave birth to you.' (Song of Songs 8:5). A good soul rests under a fruitful tree, and especially one of good fragrance. For if Nathanael, who was good and in whom there was no deceit, was seen under the fig tree, surely the good soul that is raised up under the apple tree by her bridegroom. For it is greater to be raised up than to be seen, and even greater to be raised up by one's bridegroom. For although Nathanael seemed to be under a tree, his soul was not the bride who secretly came to Christ, because he feared the Jews. She was not beautiful like the moon, chosen like the sun, which was in shadow, because the bride sleeps during the day, publicly confesses. Therefore, this one under the apple tree, that one under the fig tree; because this one spread the scent of her confession further: that one had the sweetness of purity and innocence, but did not have the passion of the spirit.

74. There, he says, your mother gave birth to you; there, she who gave birth to you gave birth to you; for it is there we are born, where we are reborn. For they give birth in whom the image of Christ is formed. Hence he also says: My little children, for whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you (Galatians 4:19). For he gives birth who receives the spirit of salvation in the womb and pours it out on others.

75. Therefore, since Christ was already formed in this [Church], He says, 'Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm' (Song of Songs 8:6). Christ is a seal on the forehead, a seal on the heart. On the forehead, so that we may always confess [our faith]; on the heart, so that we may always love; a seal on the arm, so that we may always work. Therefore, let His image shine forth in our confession, shine forth in our love, shine forth in our deeds and actions; so that, if possible, His whole appearance may be expressed in us. He himself is our head, because the head of man is Christ: he himself is our eye, so that through him we may see the Father: he himself is our voice, through whom we speak to the Father: he himself is our right hand, through whom we offer our sacrifice to God the Father: he himself is also our seal, which is a sign of perfection and charity, because the loving Father has sealed the Son, as we read: Whom the Father has sealed, God (John VI, 27). Therefore, Christ is our charity. Good love, when it offered itself for our sins: good love, which forgave sins. And therefore let our soul put on charity, and such charity as may be strong as death; for as death is the end of sins, so is charity the end also. For he that loveth the Lord, ceaseth from sin; for charity thinketh no evil, nor rejoiceth in iniquity, but beareth all things. For he that seeketh not the things that are his own, how shall he seek the things that are another's? And there is a mortal sin, which is washed away by baptism, by which all sin is buried, and the guilt is taken away. Such was the charity which that Gospel woman displayed, of whom the Lord said: Her many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much (Luke 7:47). And such is that powerful death of the holy martyrs, which wipes away previous guilt; and therefore

powerful, since it is matched by a charity which equals the martyr's sufferings, so as to remove the guilt of transgressions.

77. *Zelus quoque ut inferi* (Cant. VIII, 6) ; *quoniam qui zelum Dei habet, pro Christo nec suis parcat*. Itaque et mortem habet *charitas*, et *zelum* habet *charitas*, et alas *ignis* habet *charitas*. Denique *Christus diligens Moysen*, insigne ei apparuit. Et *Hieremias habens in se donum divinae charitatis*, dicebat: Et erat *ignis inflammans in ossibus meis*: et dissolutus sum undique, et ferre non possum (Jer. XX, 9). Therefore, good charity having the wings of a burning fire, which flies through the chests and hearts of the saints, and consumes whatever is material and earthly: it tests whatever is sincere, and improves whatever it touches with its fire. This fire the Lord Jesus sent upon the earth, and faith shone forth, devotion was kindled, charity was illuminated, justice shone brightly. With this fire, he inflamed the hearts of his apostles, as Cleophas testifies, saying: Was not our heart burning within us, while he opened the Scriptures (Luke 24:32)? Therefore, the flames of the scriptures are divine. Indeed, the Scriptures were opening up, and the fire was coming forth, and it was penetrating the hearts of the listeners. And truly, they were the wings of fire; for the words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined by fire. When Paul was also assumed by Christ, he saw a light shining around him and around those who were with him, he fell from fear, and he rose again as a more righteous man. Finally, he became an apostle, though he had come as a persecutor. The Holy Spirit also descended and filled the whole house where they were sitting, and tongues as of fire appeared to them, distributed and resting on each one. Good wings of charity, true wings that flew through the mouths of the apostles, and wings of fire that spoke in a purified speech. With these wings, Enoch flew up to heaven when he was taken up. With these wings, Elijah flew up in a chariot of fire, drawn by fiery horses, to the heights above. With these wings, the Lord God led the people of the Fathers through a pillar of fire. Seraphim had wings, when he took a coal from the altar and touched the prophet's mouth, and took away his iniquities, and cleansed his sins. By the fire of these wings the sons of Levi were cleansed, and the peoples of the nations are baptized, as John testifies, saying of the Lord Jesus: He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matt. III, 11). Therefore David wanted to burn his reins and his heart, because he knew that the fiery wings of charity are not to be feared. The Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace did not feel the burning flames; because the flame of charity cooled them. And so that we may know more fully that perfect charity had wings, you heard the Lord say: How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings (Matthew 23:37)!

78. Let us therefore take these wings, which, like flames, direct us towards higher things. Let each one divest their soul from filthy coverings, and as if by fire, test it, cleansed from the mire. For thus the soul is purified, like the finest gold. But the true beauty of the soul is pure virtue, and the honor is a truer knowledge of heavenly things; so that it may see that good from which all things depend, and which depends on nothing. Therefore, it lives and receives understanding. For the fountain of life is that highest good, whose love and desire are enkindled in us, to which it is a pleasure to draw near and be mingled: what one does not see, is desired by him, and what one sees, is present in him; and therefore he despises all other things, he is soothed and delighted with this one alone. This is what supplies substance to all things: but remaining in itself, it gives to others, and receives nothing from others. Concerning which the Prophet says: I have said to the Lord: Thou art my God, because thou dost not need my good things (Ps. XV, 2). This is the only thing he

desired, as he himself says elsewhere: One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, and behold the delight of the Lord, and contemplate his temple (Psalm 26:4). Therefore, if anyone deserves to see that pure and incorporeal highest thing, what else does he have to desire? Indeed, Peter saw the glory of the resurrection of Christ on the mountain, and did not want to come down, saying: Lord, it is good for us to be here (Matthew 17:4). And how incomparable is that glory of divinity, and that inaccessible light, which if anyone sees, what else would they desire? Not kingdoms, not riches, honors, glory, powers. For there is no happiness in using them, but in using this there is happiness; so that despising those things, the person remains turned toward this. Therefore, seeing this beautiful image, let the person enter inside, leaving behind the appearance of the body. For the one who contemplates bodies should not contemplate inwardly; lest they be drawn and swallowed up by the manner of someone being pulled into a whirlpool and nowhere appear as if submerged in the depth. Therefore, let us flee to our true homeland. There our homeland is, and there is the Father from whom we are created, where Jerusalem is, the city which is the mother of all. But what is flight? Not of course of the feet, which are part of the body. For those who run, they run on the ground, and they move from one place to another. Let us not flee by ships, chariots, or horses that are bound and fall, but let us flee with our mind, our eyes, or our inner feet. Let us accustom our eyes to see what is clear and bright, let us look upon the face of self-control and temperance, and all the virtues in which there is nothing rough, nothing obscure and twisted. And let each person look at himself and his conscience: let him cleanse that eye, so that it does not have any filth. For what seems to be, should not be discordant with the one who sees, since God wanted us to be in conformity with the image of His Son. Therefore, that good is known to us, and it is not far from each one of us: For in Him we live and move and have our being. For we are also His offspring, as the Apostle has taught the Gentiles to understand. It is the good that we seek, and the only good. For no one is good, except God alone. This is the eye that beholds that great and true beauty. An unhealthy or weak eye cannot see the sun; nor can it see that which is good unless the soul is good. Therefore, let the one who desires to see the Lord and what is good become good. Let us be like this goodness, and let us perform deeds that are good according to it. This is the good that surpasses all action, surpasses all thought and understanding: it is what always remains, everything turns toward it, in which the fullness of divinity dwells, and through it, all things are reconciled to it. And to define more fully what good is: Life is good, because it always remains, giving life and existence to all; because Christ is the source of all life, about whom the prophet says: In his shadow we shall live (Lamentations 4:20). Now our life is hidden in Christ; but when Christ, our life, appears, then we too will appear with him in glory. Therefore, let us not fear death; for it is the rest of the body, and either freedom or release for the soul. Let us not fear him who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul, for we do not fear him who can take away our clothing, nor do we fear him who can steal our possessions, but we are not able to. Therefore, we are souls, if we want to be Hebrews, the companions of Jacob, that is, his imitators. We are souls, but our bodies are clothing: clothing must certainly be preserved, so that they are not torn or worn out, but he who uses them should be more concerned to preserve and guard himself.

On Jacob and the Blessed Life

Two Books of Saint Ambrose of Milan, Bishop, On Jacob and the Blessed Life.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Book One
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Book Two
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.
- Chapter XII.

Book One

Chapter I.

To the discipline of virtues and the necessary restraint of passions, it is necessary to have prudent speech and a mind focused on reason; and although reason cannot completely eliminate desire, it can still moderate even the strongest impulses.

1. Necessary for good discipline is a speech filled with wisdom and prudence; and the mind, focused on reason, precedes virtues and restrains passions. For virtue is teachable. Indeed, it is acquired through study and learning, and it is lost through dissimulation. Otherwise, if a necessary good speech were not for correction, the Law would never say: 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' (Exod. XX, 14). But because naked speech is useful for warning, it is weak for persuading, therefore the consideration of right reason must be applied; so that what a good speech prescribes, reasoned discussion may fully persuade. For we are not bound to obedience by a slavish necessity, but by voluntary choice, whether we lean towards virtue or incline towards fault. And therefore either a free inclination leads us into error, or the will calls us back, following reason. However, the most serious passion of fault is concupiscence, which reason softens and suppresses. It can soften, but it cannot eradicate; because the mind, which is capable of reason, is not the master of its own passions, but their suppressor. For it is impossible for one who is easily provoked not to become angry; but it is possible for one to restrain oneself with reason, to control one's anger, and to refrain from seeking revenge; just as the Prophet teaches us, saying: Be angry, and do not sin (Psalm 4:5). He allows what is natural; he condemns what is sinful.

Therefore, all temperance derives its origin from others, not from itself, and therefore it is secondary. For it is either acquired from natural things or from useful things. Therefore, it either regulates natural things or advocates for usefulness. Ultimately, it does not suppress desire; instead, it prevents us from being slaves to desire. For who is so great that they can remove bodily movement, unless it is only he who was able to say about the unfruitful fig tree, that is, the wickedness of the Jews: Behold, three years have passed since I came seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I do not find any; cut it down then. To which the servant replied: 'Leave it for this year also, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.' (Luke 13:7-9). He rightly referred the matter to the Lord, for he could not claim for himself the power to remove the temporary decline, but he reserved it for the Lord.

Finally, whom among men shall we consider better and stronger than the holy David, who could not take for himself the water he desired from the Bethlehem lake, which was cut off by the enemy army, but could he mitigate it? For we cannot find that it was lacking for others. That is, with so great a number of soldiers, when he certainly could have had much less water shortage than the king from other sources; having endured a certain irrational desire, he desired that water which was surrounded by the enemy's fortification, from which it could not easily be brought without great danger. Therefore he said, 'Who will give me a drink from the well that is in Bethlehem at the gate?' And when the three men were found who had cut through the enemy's camp and brought the water that he had desired so eagerly, knowing that the same water had been obtained at the risk of others' lives, he poured it out to the Lord, so that it would not seem that he was drinking the blood of those who had brought it. This incident shows that desire indeed comes before reason, but reason resists desire. Therefore, David underwent suffering so that he might desire irrationally.

But that is praiseworthy, which he wisely thwarted with a rational remedy. While I praise men who blushed at the desire for their king and preferred to bring an end to their own modesty or the danger to their own safety, I praise him even more who blushed at his own desire and purchased the blood of a dubious fate with a worthy price, as if he poured out water to the Lord with his victorious desire restrained, so as to show that he could restrain his desire with the comforting word.

Therefore, the sober mind can restrain and suppress impressions of even the most severe emotions, and cool down the fervor of intense desires, redirecting its motions and spurning passions through the guidance of right reason. For when God created man and implanted in him customs and senses, He then imposed on his motions the kingly rule of the mind, so that all the senses and motions of man would be governed by its strength and power. He added as a favor to his creation, that he would inform their mind with divine teachings and instruct them in wisdom, by which they could recognize what should be avoided and choose what should be embraced. Therefore, the mind, holding true to the discipline of wisdom, is instructed in the Law through which it learns which passions it should subject itself to.

Chapter II. Saints show that temperance moderates the passions of the soul and the body, as demonstrated by the examples of the patriarchs, and then, having been commended for its dignity by reason, the same temperance is fortified by divine precept. But the passions, like leaders, are natural pleasure and pain, which the others follow. For these encompass all, of which both are passions not only of the body, but also according to the soul. And because we have said that other passions are subordinate to these, before pleasure is desire, after pleasure is rejoicing: before pain, however, is fear, after pain is sadness. But agitation of the soul is a common passion, both of pleasure and of pain. I will pass over other things, that is, pride, greed, ambition, strife, envy, which are passions of the soul: I will also pass over the insatiable desire to devour, and the indulgence in luxury and sensuality, which vices are closely tied to the body and operate according to it. And rightly does temperance, which first moderates the mind with sobriety and self-control, inform the soul; then also the abstinence from pleasures restrains the reins of bodily passion. Therefore, the Law restricts the permission of foods (Leviticus 11:4ff), the abundance of feasts, not only to cut off luxury, but also to open the way of handling reasoning by contemplating the commandment that cuts off the enticements of gluttony and other desires, and restrains bodily passions and impulses. Therefore, temperance is a prior correction, the teacher of discipline.

6. Having set out from here, the holy Jacob received the birthright that his brother did not have (Gen. XXV, 33); and having been preferred with his brother's consent, he taught by his own judgment that the intemperate should be considered worthless for the rest. Having set out from here, Joseph tamed the heat of youth, and having been tempted by adulterous allurements, he strengthened his mind through the induction of right reason. Finally, although he was strong and vigorous, he preferred to support himself through the use of reason, saying to the wife of his master: If my master does not know anything in his house except me, and he has given into my hands all that he has, nothing except you, who are his wife, has been taken away from me; and how can I do this evil deed and sin before God (Gen. XXIX, 8 and 9)? This is therefore the treatment of right reason which the Greeks call 'logismus,' by which the mind intent on wisdom is strengthened. For reason is beautiful, because it should neither be ungrateful for the kindness of its master, nor can sin be hidden. For it commits sin, as God bears witness, against Him who

cannot be hidden.

Therefore, reason is good, which often removes hostile emotions and separates the pain of injury. Finally, it often softens the victor in battle, delays the sword aimed at the enemy, and saves the one who begs for death; because just reason persuades sparing the defeated. For who is a better teacher about excluding or mitigating the pain of injury than the patriarch Jacob, who, reproaching his own sons Simeon and Levi, says: 'You have made me odious, so that I seem cruel' (Genesis 34:30). And indeed, they had taken revenge for the wrong done to their sister, who had been violated in a shameful manner against the laws of their country; and Jacob, the teacher of discipline and guardian of modesty, could not approve of the committed crime: but he preferred to restrain them with reason, knowing that reason could temper their indignation.

8. Temperance, therefore, is what cuts off desires. God commanded that this be held by the first humans, saying: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of paradise, you shall not eat; and you shall not touch it, lest you die (Gen., II, 17). And because it was not retained, therefore the transgressors of excellent virtue became exiles from paradise, and devoid of immortality. This Law teaches it, and infuses it into the affections of all (Exod. XX, 4, and elsewhere).

Chapter III.

To be taught moderation, wisdom, and discipline by the Lord; that following this is an exhortation to study; also, that our faults should be attributed solely to our own will, by which we either serve sin or righteousness; and finally, which servitude should be preferred over the other.

However, the Lord Himself teaches her, and Scripture testifies to wisdom and discipline. Concerning temperance, it is mentioned in the Law (Exodus XX, 4, and elsewhere): and regarding other matters, it is written in the book of Job: Is not the Lord the one who teaches understanding and discipline (Job XXXIII, 16)? And in the Gospel, the Lord Himself says: Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart (Matthew XI, 29). And elsewhere, He says to His disciples: Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew XXVIII, 19). But where were the disciples called? Or what else did they learn from Christ except to practice the precepts of virtue? Lastly, David says: Come, children, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord (Psalm 111:10). Surely the fear of God is among the virtues; for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, through which one acquires the proper form of doctrine, of which Paul says: But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness (Romans 6:17-18). Therefore, teaching enables us to attain righteousness. Therefore, righteousness can be acquired through learning. Let us therefore strive to conform to the teachings of the Gospel. The smallest amount of study is often considered the greatest. For in study, everything is present, through which obedience is employed, which either leads to sin or adds to grace. This drew us to death in the first Adam, and called us to life in the second Adam.

10. There is no reason why we should attribute our troubles to anyone else but our own will. No one is subject to blame unless they have deviated from their own will. Those who resist do not commit a crime: only voluntary acts follow the envy of crimes, since we attribute them to others. Christ has chosen a voluntary soldier for himself, while the devil auctions a voluntary servant for

himself. No one possesses anyone bound by the yoke of servitude, unless they have first sold themselves to the debt of sins. Why do we accuse flesh as if it were weak? Our limbs are weapons of injustice, and weapons of justice. You have seen a poor man receiving injustice, you have protected him; your limbs are weapons of compassion, by which you have avenged the poor man from injustice. You have seen a needy man, you have bestowed gifts upon him, your right hand has pushed death away from your chest. You have seen him who is led to death, you have rescued him, for it is written: Rescue those who are being led to death (Prov. 24:11): your limbs are weapons of justice, if you have not allowed a man to perish unjustly. You saw a woman, chastised your body, mortified desires, turned away from the seductive eyes of a prostitute, deserted her, your limbs are the weapons of chastity. On the other hand, if your eye saw a woman to desire her, you opened a wound, impressed a weapon on your body, your limbs are the weapons of sin. You saw the possessions of orphans, and you expelled them from their paternal seats, you moved the boundaries that your fathers had set, your limbs are the weapons of injustice. Therefore, the mind is the author of sin, but the body is the servant of the will. Therefore, let not our will sell us. The Apostle proclaims: Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves as servants for obedience, you are servants of the one whom you obey, whether of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness (Rom. 6:16)? Therefore, if we serve either sin or righteousness, let us consider in which part servitude is more tolerable, and which part brings forth more fruit. But what fruit can there be in death? For the wages of sin is death; and therefore, there is no fruit in it, but rather a loss of dignity; for the things we have done, we are ashamed of. But to serve justice is freedom. For he who is called a servant in the Lord is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise, he who is called free is a servant of Christ (1 Corinthians 7:22). Both conditions are excellent, to be under Christ, under whom there is precious servitude and glorious freedom. Precious servitude, as if compared to the price of so great blood: but glorious freedom, which no servitude of guilt, no bonds of sins, no burdens of crimes, no dealings of degenerate vices, add to the yoke of slavery.

12. Learn humility, O man, and recognize the power of apostolic authority. If you call yourself a slave, you are free; if you boast of being free, you are a slave. For even he who is redeemed as a slave has freedom, and he who is called as a free man should recognize it as a good thing to be a servant of Christ, under whom slavery is safe and freedom is secure. Who, as it were, asserts that Paul is a fool in this matter? For he knew how to distinguish between a freedman and a free man, and therefore he did not merely skim over it, but he stated specifically: For he who is called as a slave in the Lord is a freedman of the Lord; likewise, he who is called as a free man is a servant of Christ. Indeed, we are all Christ's freedmen, no one is free. For all are born in servitude. Why do you assume the arrogance of freedom in a slave-like condition? Why do you claim noble titles, a servile inheritance? Do you not know that the fault of Adam and Eve has enslaved you? Do you not know that Christ has redeemed you, not bought you? You have not been redeemed with gold or silver from your empty way of life inherited from your fathers, but with the precious blood of the Lamb (1 Pet. 1, 18 and 19). The Apostle Peter exclaims. Therefore, you are redeemed by the Lord. You are a servant who was created, you are a servant who was redeemed, and you owe servitude to the Lord and to the Redeemer. Do not consider the freedom under Christ as inferior to freedom. It is equal in dignity, superior in protection, equal in favor, more cautious against falling, more safeguarded against pride. In this way, you have received freedom so that you should remember your emancipator and know that proper obedience must be given to your patron, lest your freedom

be revoked by an ungrateful person. What could be happier for you, who reign under the Lord and serve under a patron?

Chapter IV.

When God gave man the Law and added grace, two questions arise: How is the Law good if it brings about death? And how is it that death, which the Law brings about, does not affect us?

13. But what is it that the Lord has not bestowed upon you? He gave the law, he revealed sin, he added grace. For the law denounced sin, but it could not completely restrain it on a slippery slope. For I knew sin that I did not know. I knew that concupiscence is sin, and with this occasion of knowledge, the air of sin was accumulated; for the sin that seemed dead to me before because of my ignorance, revived in me: but I am dead with the wound of sin; for the knowledge of guilt which seemed advantageous to me, this harmed me, so that I would know that I could not avoid it. For sin betrayed, and through the good of its own denunciation, it embittered envy. Therefore, sin has become excessive for me; because it is compounded by the denunciation of the command. Indeed, guilt increases when it is exposed and not avoided. So how can a good command, which is death to me? Or how can it not be death to me, that by demonstrating the good of its own meaning, it has worked death in me? For it is certain that death has come to me, while I recognize the sin that I commit, as the Lord himself says: If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin (John 15:22).

14. So why are you amazed, then, if the Law is death to certain people, since the coming of the Savior Lord is also death, through whom we have been redeemed? For the unbeliever seeks death from grace, but the grace of the commandment remains. Indeed, just as the knowledge of poisonous drinks is completed in the discipline of medicine, so the divine commandment leads to eternal life. However, just as for someone who misuses harmful potions, the knowledge of them turns into harm and danger, and the more he knows the poisons, the more he realizes he is in danger, so the form of the commandment is the author of death for those who interpret the Law wrongly and cannot avoid the sins that have been made known and prohibited. Just as a remedy, even if not good for an imprudent or intemperate person, is still good, so too a good command, even if not good for an intemperate person. Therefore, a good command can be deadly for someone. Therefore, let us respond to the first proposition: because there can be a good command that brings death to me; good by nature as a saving precept; death by intemperance of the flesh.

15. And because we have said that the commandment is good, which to me is death, let us now discuss how it is not death to me, which though it is good, has nevertheless caused death to me. For the Apostle said: Therefore what is good, to me is death. God forbid. But sin, in order that it may appear sin, has caused death to me through what is good (Rom. VII, 13). So let us consider each point. Surely the commandment is of the Law: But the Law is spiritual, the grace of which I see, the beauty I praise, the form I proclaim, the precept I admire: but because I am sold under sin, being carnal, I am drawn unwillingly to fault. For indeed, as if I were a slave, guilt dominates. Therefore, I hate the crime, and I commit it. The mind hates, the flesh desires; yet I, in both, who agree with the Law in my mind and do not want in the flesh, do this. Therefore, I consent to the good commandment; and the good mind, which chooses what is good, agrees. It is good for judgment, but weak for resistance; because it contradicts the appetite of the body, and drags it

captive to the enticements of error.

16. In which danger there is one remedy, that which the Law was not able to free, may be freed by the grace of God. For it is thus written: Wretched man that I am, who will free me from this body of death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord (ibid. 4 and 25). And so, it happens that although the sin which lay hidden, that is, my concupiscence which I did not think was a sin, has brought about death to me, while it is exposed and has become the sin itself beyond measure (for it was sin even though it was not known, but it was accumulated by knowledge, and took on the form of a commandment as an increase in error, and passed into the nature of an offense), nevertheless, it is not death to me, to whom it is ready to flee to Christ, through whom we are freed from every danger of death. Therefore, the second proposition is also absolute, because the command of the Lawgiver is not given to me, even though it brings about death. For what disturbs us is our own weakness, but what we escape is through Christ.

Chapter V.

By what reason does the law not suffice, but grace through the gift of Christ's death is necessary; with whom we also must die, rise, and live?

So, to return to the beginning of this speech, a good mind is one that engages in rational thought and pursues wisdom; however, it struggles greatly with the flesh of death, and often the allure of the flesh overpowers the reason of the mind. And so, the Lord first gave the Law, to which the mind of man submitted and began to serve, in order to be subjugated: but the flesh was not subject; for the wisdom of the flesh is not subjected to the Law and opposes its precepts. For it was not able to follow virtue, being given over to desires and entangled in carnal allurements. Therefore, we must strive to hold on to the grace of God. The mind, therefore, is good if it attends to reason; but it is incomplete unless it has the guidance of Christ. For the Lord Jesus came, who nailed our passions to the cross of his suffering, forgave sins; in his death we have been justified, so that the whole world may be cleansed by his blood. Finally, we have been baptized in his death.

18. Therefore, if in his death our sins are forgiven, then also, the passions of sin in us should die in his death and be held captive by the nails of his cross. If we are dead in his death, why are we again called back to the things of the world as if we are alive? What do we have to do with the elements of this world? What do we have to do with desires? What do we have to do with indulgence and debauchery, to which we have died with Christ? But if we are dead in Christ, we have also risen with Christ; therefore, let us live with Christ; let us seek the things that are above, not the things that are corruptible and earthly. Christ rising from the dead left the old man affixed to the cross, he resurrected the new man. Christ died therefore, so that we might die to sin, and rise to God. Our flesh is dead, why does it revive again to sin? Why does it obey sin again? Why does sin reign again in the dead, when the end of sin is death? We are dead in the flesh, we are renewed in the spirit. Let us walk in the spirit, for we have received the spirit of Christ. But if the Spirit of Christ is in us, then the flesh is dead to us because of sin: but the spirit is alive because of justification.

19. Thus what was impossible to the Law has been fulfilled, if we walk in the spirit, if we bury the passions, if we do not dissolve the cross of this body, if we do not rewrite the certificate of sin that was erased on the cross of Christ, if we do not put on the old garment of the old man that we have

taken off. For it is written in the Song of Songs: I have taken off my tunic, how will I put it on? I have washed my feet, how will I defile them? (Song of Songs 5:3) Therefore, if our bodily members have been mortified, why do its vices sprout? Therefore, the Law did not prevail because it did not mortify the flesh; it passed away like a shadow because it did not give color; it also overshadowed us from the sun of righteousness because it accumulated sins. Therefore, it also hindered.

Chapter VI. The fruits of a promulgated law are the confession of sin, humility, and indeed grace itself, and a pledge of charity: to which is added an exhortation to gratitude, along with a enumeration of the benefits granted to man. So what was the need for the Law to be promulgated if it was not going to benefit? We already had the law of nature; for each person had the law written in their heart. We did not keep that law: why was another added, in whose works the flesh cannot be justified? A bond was added, not a solution; the recognition of sins was added, not the remission. We all sinned, who could claim an excuse through ignorance: the mouth was stopped for everyone.

However, it was beneficial for me; I began to confess what I was denying: I started to recognize my sin and not cover up my injustice. I began to proclaim my injustice to the Lord, and you forgave the wickedness of my heart. But also this benefits me, that we are not justified by works of the Law. Therefore, I have no basis for boasting in my works, I have no reason to boast; and so I will boast in Christ. I will not boast because I am righteous, but I will boast because I am redeemed. I will boast, not because I am free from sins, but because my sins have been forgiven. I will not boast because I have profited, nor because anyone has profited me, but because Christ is my advocate before the Father; because Christ's blood has been shed for me. My guilt has become the reward of my redemption, through which Christ has come to me. Christ tasted death for me. Guilt is more fruitful than innocence. Innocence made me arrogant, guilt made me humble. So you have the means by which the Law has been beneficial to you. But you say that sin has abounded through the Law. But where sin abounded, grace also abounded. You died to sin, therefore the Law no longer hinders. You rise through grace, therefore the Law has been beneficial, for it has acquired grace. You have also received the pledge of Christ's love, for he who died for you is your advocate and preserves the reward of his own blood, and he who reconciled the sinner to the Father much more commends the innocent and protects the subject who has united with the guilty.

So, will you not repay the kindness with obedience? He made you an heir, he made you a co-heir; an heir of God, a co-heir of Christ: he poured the spirit of adoption into you. Count these things, and join them not so much to the bond of debt, as to the preservation of the gift received. You are a co-heir of Christ, if you suffer with him, if you die with him, if you are buried with him. Take on his sufferings, so that you may truly deserve to be above sufferings with the same. See how he has forgiven your past sins, so that nothing you do will harm you, since you have sinned. See how he encourages you not to lose what you have received. The goal of this short labor is a crown of eternal fruit: tolerable suffering, immeasurable reward. What troubles you? The rejection of lowly status? But in the future, you will have a glorious nobility of devotion and faith. Is your income meager, your sustenance meager? But you will have riches of eternal recompense, of which you will never be in need. Does not the loss of children affect you? You will receive perpetual ones, whom you have taken on temporarily, and it will be said of you: Blessed is he who has offspring in Zion and domestics in Jerusalem (Isaiah 31:9). The sufferings of this present time are unworthy, it

says, of the future glory (Romans 8:18). Scripture tells you.

24. Add to this, that the blessed life is not diminished by these adversities of worldly troubles or bodily sufferings, but rather is proven. Add that it either does not feel the loss of possessions or hides the expenses of obligations with a strong mind, absorbing the pain. Add that one who is always in the harbor of tranquility does not experience shipwrecks. What about the fact that labor is common to you with every creature; because the world itself endures the bondage of corruption for your sake; because there is a shared fellowship with the saints in this toil and expectation? The Sun recognizes its setting, the Moon its waning, the stars their course, while the redemption of our whole body is awaited. But you fear the uncertain twists of life and the snares of your adversaries, even though you have the help of God, and you have such great favor from Him that He did not spare His own Son for you (Rom. VIII, 32). Scripture uses beautiful words to declare the loving purpose of God the Father towards you, who offered up His Son to death. And the Son could not bear the bitter agony of death. What was in the Father, He did not keep for Himself: He offered up everything for you. What was in the fullness of divinity, He did not lose Himself, and He redeemed you. Consider the love of a father. He, out of his love and as if dying, took on the danger, and as if orphaned, bore the grief; lest the fruit of redemption would perish for you. Such was the zeal of the Lord for your salvation, that he nearly endangered himself in order to gain you. He took on our losses for your sake; in order to insert you into divine things and consecrate you to heavenly things. He even added marvelously: For all of us he handed over his beloved Son; in order to show that he loves everyone so much, that for each, he would give up his Beloved Son. For whom, therefore, he has given what is above all things, can it be possible that he has not given everything in him? For he has received nothing, who has granted the author of all things.

26. Therefore, there is nothing that we should truly fear being denied; there is nothing in which we should doubt the perseverance of divine generosity, which has been so long-lasting and unceasing; that it first predestined, then called; and those whom it called, it also justified; and those whom it justified, it also glorified. Will it be able to abandon those whom it has supported with such great benefits up to rewards? Among so many benefits of God, should we fear any accusations or traps from an accuser? But who would dare to accuse those chosen by divine judgment? Surely God the Father, who granted them, can revoke his gifts; and those whom he has adopted, can he cast them aside from the grace of paternal affection? But there is fear that the judge may be more severe. Consider who the judge is. Indeed, the Father has given all judgment to Christ. Therefore, can that very one condemn you, whom he redeemed from death, for whom he offered himself, and whose life he knows to be the reward of his own death? Will he not say: What is the benefit in my blood (Psalm 29:10) if I harm the one whom I myself saved? Then you consider the judge, but do not consider the advocate. Can he not pronounce a harsher sentence, who does not cease to intercede so that the grace of paternal reconciliation may be bestowed upon us?

Chapter VII.

We ought to have this charity in ourselves, so that we may not be separated from Christ by any adversity, since blessed life is not diminished with them: for blessed life is found in those in whom life is perfect; and in what it consists. Finally, a perfect man is placed above all falls and hardships.

27. But even if heavy trials threatened us, we should by no means be separated from Christ. Why do we not also endure hard and bitter things for Him, who undertook such unworthy things for us? And so charity ought to be in us, that we may not be called back from Christ by any dangers. For it is written: 'Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it' (Song of Songs 8:7); because love passes over the torrent. No storm, no deep peril, no fear of death or punishment can diminish the power of charity. In these things we are tested, in these things a happy life is found, even if it is overwhelmed by many dangers.

28. For a wise person is not broken by bodily pains, nor is he disturbed by discomforts; but he remains happy even in hardships. For the adversities of bodily life do not diminish the gift of a happy life, nor do they detract from its sweetness; because happiness in life does not consist in bodily pleasure, but in a pure conscience free from any stain of sin, and in the mind of one who knows that what is good, even if it is harsh, delights him; but what is indecent, even if it is pleasant, does not soothe him. Therefore, the cause of living well is not bodily pleasure, but the prudence of the mind: not the flesh which is subject to passion, but the mind which judges that nothing pleases better than the honesty of advice and the beauty of works. Therefore, it is the interpreter of a blessed life. For prudence or reason is better than the judgement of passion, and what judges is more excellent than what is subject to judgement. For it is not possible for what is unreasonable to be better by reason. Therefore, he who follows Jesus has his own reward in himself, and in his affection, reward and grace; even if he endures hardships, he is blessed in his character, blessed in the very dangers, as the Lord declared, saying: Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (Matt. 5:10).

29. Therefore, the blessed life is in humans, but specifically in those in whom life has been perfected. However, this perfected life is not sensory, but rather rational according to the activity of reason and the vivacity of the mind. In this, there is not a mere portion of man, but rather a perfection that is not so much in the condition of man as in the operation. For it is this that makes one blessed. Therefore, what is good for this man, if not himself, what he has, and this good is present to him and will be the cause of future goods? Regarding this good, Solomon said: Drink water from your vessels, and from the fountains of your wells. Let the water overflow from your own fountain; let it run through your streets. Let them be for you alone, and let no outsider be a partner with you. Let your own fountain of water be for your exclusive use (Prov. V, 17 and 18). Therefore, make use of your internal good.

Moreover, the greatest testimony of this good is that one who possesses it requires nothing else. For what does one who despises lower things require? Let it cling to the most excellent, as it is written: 'Be a friend of nobility, and may a thankful child converse with you.' (Dionysius Cato, Distichs 19) Let friendship go before you, and may it be with you at all times. For friendship is the good of virtues, and love of the highest good. Therefore, that perfect person seeks nothing else but the alone and excellent good. And he says: One thing I have asked of the Lord, this I will seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, and contemplate the delight of the Lord (Psalm 27:4). And indeed, do not despise him as narrow and needy, because he is content with the companionship of one good thing. For, being surrounded by the friendship of this person, there will be abundant joy. Indeed, this person abounds towards happiness and the possession of good things; and therefore desires nothing else. For he who has everything expects nothing as if it were new. For nothing is good that he does not possess: he does not delight in excess, but in

necessary things, and that which is necessary to him is not for himself, but for the flesh that cleaves to him: and he indulges in what does not deviate from the purpose of the inner man, and he makes both one, and he reconciles the inner man with God in accordance with the outer man, so that in both there is one spirit.

31. Therefore, this man of purpose is neither diminished by his expenses, nor broken by adversity, nor hindered by obstacles, nor saddened by the loss of his loved ones. For the Apostle says to inform you: But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope (I Thess. IV, 12). For he comforts himself with the faith in the resurrection and the grace of future reward, and does not receive with a saddened mind that which he clings to God and takes joy in the divine excellence. But whoever is saddened by these things is not saddened according to God. And what is not according to God, this is full of foolishness. Therefore, the sadness of this world is far from perfection, which is not according to God, and all bodily anxieties. For this kind of mental and substantial induction is not counted as a bodily habit, and some exterior use of nature, while at the same time opposing the pleasures of the body, the very fragility of nature, the hardships, the expenses, the insults, an invincible mind should maintain unwavering constancy; so that it may tear apart the body itself, and strip off the senses of the flesh, which desires to hold the palm of blessedness, whose fruit is not in the portion of one, but in the participation of many, and if possible, in the participation of all virtues.

Therefore, a perfect person is unaware of the troubles of this body or the adversities of the world, and does not feel afraid that others may kill them. For a more perfect life is not defined by lacking these things, but by despising them. For if it were defined in such a way that a happy life could be found without these events, free and empty, surely no one could be defined as happy when faced with these events. Therefore, these things are separate, and the only requirement in evaluating a happy life is that its definition should be based not on external things, but on the possession of true good; since one who possesses it despises other things and does not seek them.

Chapter VIII.

The wise person is delighted in such a way by the health of the body or by children, that if they were to lose them, they would still consider themselves happy; since they desire nothing besides the highest good. Therefore, they do not fear their own or their loved ones' captivity, bodily ailments, and other adversities, because neither is anything taken away from their happiness nor added to their favorable circumstances.

33. I now inquire whether a wise person delights in bodily health. We cannot deny that they delight according to nature, and they prefer not to feel any pain rather than to feel pain; unless perhaps for the sake of Christ, for whom, if the situation demands it, they readily accept bodily weakness and offer their whole body to death. However, even apart from the cause of faith and justice, if health is lacking, their mind is not affected, nor is their body broken by pain, which can be solaced by the perfection of virtues.

34. I also ask whether he takes pleasure in his children? Who would deny that? For it is not a hard and unfeeling person that is sought, but a perfected one. Yet even if he were to lose his children, he would not be any less happy, nor any less perfected. For what is perfected is happy. Moreover, if he endures adversity rather than enjoying success, he is often considered more perfected in this

regard: although neither the absence nor the presence of external comforts or bodily pleasures tends to diminish or add anything to virtue. But for most, it was more praiseworthy to endure adversity bravely than to have not encountered it. However, these things are valued by appearance, not by weight.

35. That profound thing, a just man desiring nothing, except that one and splendid good, directing himself towards this alone, considering this one thing as the ultimate good: not desiring any other thing with it, but always desiring solely itself, finding delight in this; if something else, such as the sweetness of children, is added to it and delights him, that is not lost, but is joined to it. For the things that accompany happiness do not diminish it, since they cannot increase it; because that full and inviolable thing remains, into which the soul has entered and inserted itself, etc. Virtue always remains steadfast amidst adversity and pleasant things; neither adversity diminishes its perfection, nor do pleasant things add to its perfection. For what does someone who reaches the summit feel about the loss of trivial things or gains? And indeed, what is considered most serious by most people, he will not think himself miserable if he himself or his son were to fall into captivity. For he will bear with tolerable patience what nature has given him or what seems to be the will of God. In fact, the righteous man said: 'The word which the Lord has spoken is good' (2 Kings 20:19). And he said: 'Let peace and faith be in my days' (Ibid). Indeed, this righteous Ezechias did not rejoice in the affliction of captivity for his children, but he could not oppose the will of the Lord, and therefore he accepted his commandments with equanimity as a servant.' It should be added that which could be considered as deserving of distinction in captivity by virtue. For the blessed Jeremiah in captivity was no less blessed, nor was Daniel, nor Ezra, nor the blessed Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, than if they had not fallen into captivity; for they were led into captivity in order to bring comfort to the people in their present circumstances, and to bring hope of escaping captivity. For it is the perfection of a virtuous man to sustain the fellowship of human nature with the courage of the mind, and to lead others to better things. They do not succumb to those things which seem terrible and fearful to most people, but rather, like a brave soldier, they endure the attacks of the gravest misfortunes and undergo conflicts, and like a wise helmsman, they steer the ship in the storm, avoiding shipwreck by plowing through the waves rather than by avoiding them. He is not fearful in persecution, nor softer in tortures, lest he provoke the one tormenting him: but rather like a strong athlete, who repels the one striking him, if not with slaughter, certainly with the whip of speech; who despises the tortures feared by many, saying: Their arrows have become the wounds of infants (Ps. 63:8); who, even when wrestling with the gravest of pains, does not present himself as pitiable; but rather shows himself like a light in a lantern, shining even amidst harsh storms and the most violent winds, and the strength of his soul cannot be extinguished. He is not soft in the face of injuries to his own, nor anxious about the tomb of his body, to which he knows heaven is owed; he is not more degraded in the captivity of the civic commoners; but like a strict judge, condemning the faithlessness and errors of the infidels, like Daniel who exposed the thefts of the priests and refuted their superstitions, showing that they were not based on any truth, but were overshadowed by deceit. Such a man is truly perfect, who desires to do good to all and for nothing bad to happen to anyone; and if anything happens against his will, he himself does not lose anything of his own happiness.

37. But perhaps someone might think that sickness and physical weakness are obstacles to fulfilling one's duty, because they cannot proceed with any manual labor or accomplishments.

However, they will not see these as just obstacles: on the contrary, they will rebuke and accuse someone who mourns them pitifully, as if they were lazy, because they prioritize physical well-being over virtue of the soul, and they desire things that serve them, even though they possess the ability to command others to a greater extent. They groan in poverty, even though they have the power to surpass the wealth of the world; for the faithful, the entire world is a source of riches. They lament their lowly status, even though they should despise royal powers and command the rich and powerful. For this is the life of the righteous, who should also estimate their common possessions; indeed, even divide to the poor, dispense to the needy, restrain their own pleasures, reduce expenses, apply frugality, maintain moderation in prosperity, patience in adversity, tolerance in sorrow, magnanimity in danger, be ignorant of constant health, not be shaken by the fear of imminent death, nor consider him more excellent to whom according to nature children, relatives, health, happiness, and abundance have overflowed, than one to whom they have been lacking, nor weigh the merits of the world's external things, but the merits of virtue within the household.

Moreover, who denies that this form is just; so that one fears nothing, dreads nothing, except for the losses of virtue, and compresses the empty fears of others, which they have from anxiety over dangers, fear of death, weakness of the body; so that it teaches to be dissolved from the body, and that it is much better to be with Christ; so that it shows that the works are not hindered by the weaknesses of the body, but are increased; and they are not commended by the splendor of noble birth, or the support of relatives, or wealth, but by good love. For neither was Elijah less blessed than Moses; while the former was in need of food, a meagre diet, without children, without expense, without companions; the latter was the leader of the people, joyful with offspring, clothed with power, and they both founded a equal worth of diverse lineage, as it is declared in the Gospel (Matthew 17:3), when they shone forth with the Lord Jesus in the glory of the resurrection. For it seems that he gave equal reward to his witnesses of glory as if they were equal to these things. Eliseus was no less blessed than David, for one was subject to kings while the other was endowed with royal power, and both attained a similar grace of prophetic sanctification.

What is lacking to the one who possesses that good, and always has as a companion and partner, virtue? In what state is he not powerful? In what poverty is he not wealthy? In what low birth is he not illustrious? In what leisure is he not industrious? In what weakness is he not vigorous? In what illness is he not strong? In what peaceful sleep is he not embraced, which virtue does not abandon even when he is resting? In what solitude is he not surrounded, which blessed life embraces, which grace clothes, which the garment of glory illuminates? He is no less happy when he is idle than when he is working, and no less glorious when he is asleep than when he is awake; for he is just as safe and healthy when he is asleep as when he is awake. When, however, can someone appear to be on holiday, whose mind is always active? When, however, can someone be alone, who is always in the company of that good thing, of which the Prophet says: 'We shall be filled with the good things of your house' (Psalm 64:5)? When can someone be desolate, whose conversation is in heaven? When one does not conform to his own beauty and the sole good, even if he is free in body, let him still elevate his mind. And just as one accustomed to playing the lyre would abandon it if he were to see it in disarray, with strings loosened and broken, and its use interrupted, and he himself would not seek its melodies but would soothe himself with his own voice: so too will this person allow his idle body to lie down, while delighting his heart, soothing

himself with the remembrance of a good conscience, alleviating himself with divine oracular pronouncements and prophetic scriptures, embracing that sweet and pleasant soul, embracing it with his mind; to whom nothing sad can happen, since he always aspires to divine presence, and he himself is present to himself, suffused with the highest tranquility of mind.

Book Two

Chapter I.

Having transitioned from the previous book to this one, it shows that the holy Jacob was also blessed in exile: and it demonstrates that the definition of blessedness is most fitting for him.

1. In the previous book, we discussed the precepts of virtue. Now let us utilize the examples of illustrious men who, placed in the highest dangers, did not lose the blessedness of life, but rather acquired it. Was not Jacob also blessed when he left his homeland? Indeed, he was truly blessed, as he undertook the hardships of exile in order to mitigate his brother's anger. For if he is blessed who avoids sin, certainly he cannot be denied blessedness who alleviates another's fault, turns away from crime. So he avoided the prepared parricide by voluntary exile, and by doing this he sought safety for himself and pardoned his innocent brother. Therefore, divine grace accompanied him everywhere, so that even when he slept, he acquired the gift of a blessed life. For he saw the mysteries of the future and heard divine oracles (Gen. XXVIII, 5, 12 and following). He was a good worker in his sleep, and rich in poverty, who obtained both inheritance and marriage through the same task of a hired life (Gen. XXIX, 22, 29 and following). The same brotherly affection, an excellent reconciler, competed with gifts and services (Gen. XXXII, 13 et seq.); in order to exclude all indignation, to avert the pain of offense, showing that he was not less in exile, who could give what he had not received. But I hurry too much towards lower things and skip over more useful things, when first it must be defined what it means to be blessed. For it is written: Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful (Psalm 1:1). With this Scripture signifying that he is blessed who separates himself from the company of the faithless (for it is impiety not to recognize as the author of life and a certain parent of salvation, if one either remains in sin or persists in luxury and lust), it also indicates that he who meditates in the law of the Lord day and night will be like a tree that will bear fruit in its season (Ibid., 2 and 3). The highest merits are the rewards, this is the reward of merits.

What of these things that pertain to the merit of beatitude was lacking to the holy Jacob, who was so far from the company of the wicked that from him the faithful people received their name, being called Israel (Gen. XXXII, 28) : because he beheld God with the eyes of his inner mind, abstaining from sin, sober from all lustful indulgence, to the extent that he absorbed himself in hard work and neglected the security of leisure? Is it not beautifully and truly said concerning him that he will also bear fruit in his own time, of which it is written: Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a full field (Gen. XXVII, 27) . For he was perfect in every flower of virtues, and exuded the grace of sacred blessing and heavenly bliss. He is indeed the field blessed by the Lord: not this earthly one, or rough with woods, or rocky with torrents, or marshy with stagnant waters, or barren of crops, or useless for vines, or infertile with stony gravel, or gaping and dry from drought, or soaked with blood, or uncultivated with thorns and brambles: but that field, of which the Church says in the Canticles: I have adjured you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and fortitude of the field (Song of Solomon 2:7). For this is the field of which the Lord says: 'And the appearance of the field

is with me' (Psalm 49:11). In this field is found that grape which, when pressed, shed blood and cleansed the world. In this field is that fig tree under which the saints will rest, refreshed by the sweetness of spiritual grace. In this field is that fruitful olive tree, flowing with the ointment of the Lord's peace. In this field flourish pomegranates, which cover many fruits under the protection of one foundation of faith and nourish them with the embrace of charity.

Therefore, Jacob enjoyed these fruits, who followed God through dangers and believed himself to be safe in His guidance everywhere. For although the smell of the field is sweet and pleasant, because it is the smell of nature, nevertheless it exhaled the grace of virtues in the holy Patriarch. How restrained was his moderation, who did not seek food prepared for himself, but immediately granted it to his brother who asked for it, from whom he received the primacy of blessings (Gen. 25:30 et seq.)! How pious he was toward his parents, so that he deserved to be preferred over his older maternal brother with affection, and be consecrated by the gift of paternal blessing (Gen. XXVII, 8 et seq.)! How religious, so as to refuse to harm his brother! How respectful, so as to fear disobeying his father! How honorable, so as not to deny his mother what was commanded!

Chapter II.

Jacob excuses his parents, and through their example, teaches how other parents should behave towards their children. Then he reveals why Jacob has also succeeded, and what mysteries his blessing contains.

5. However, even parents should not be excused for abandoning us, because they have preferred a younger son to an older one. At the same time, care must be taken that no one, while following their example, has an unfair judgment between their children; so that they think one should be loved, the other should be disregarded. For from this fraternal hatred is aroused, and a crime of parricide is made from the despicable gain of money. The same measure of piety should nourish offspring. Nevertheless, let it be that one may seize something more for himself in regard to a more charming or similar affection, an equal form of justice should be around all. It is more advantageous to the beloved one to whom the love of brothers is sought; but it is more taken away from the one who is burdened by unjust preeminence with envy. Esau was threatening to kill his brother, not being called back by brotherly kinship or the reverence of his parents from his murderous intent; and he was grieved that the blessing had been snatched away from him, which he must certainly prove himself worthy of by gentleness, not by wickedness.

6. But Rebecca, too, did not prefer the child to the child as if he were a just man, but as if he were an unjust man. For indeed, before her pious mother, she esteemed the mystery of the pledge: she did not so much prefer him to her brother as offer him to the Lord, whom she knew could preserve the gift bestowed upon her; in this she also consulted the other, whom she was protecting from divine offense; lest she be involved in a more serious guilt, if she were to lose the favor of the blessing received.

7. However, let there be a good competition between parents. Let the mother bring affection, let the father bring judgment. Let the mother lean towards the younger one with tender piety: let the father preserve the honor of the elder according to nature. Let him honor more, let her love more: as long as each supports the other, let both not conspire against one, and deceive the other. Let there be equality in different competitions, and let equal love and gratitude be given to both

parents through different efforts: let one compensate for what the other diminishes. Thus the pious patriarch Isaac and holy Rebecca competed with one another, not to make either of them inferior, but to make both equal (Gen. XXV, 28).

However, the one who was preferred by the oracle emerged victorious: diligence defeated slowness, gentleness overcame harshness. While one seeks a wild prey in rough hunting, the other presented the gentle food of character, the domestic grace, the tender meekness, and the sweet feasts of piety to his pious father. Whatever may happen pleases more in our souls than whatever you may think should be sought after. Jacob approached the sheep and brought the offspring of innocence and the gifts of sacred prophecy, for he believed that no food was sweeter than Christ, who was led as a sheep to slaughter and as a lamb to sacrifice. He considered this food useful either for the common parent or for the people, whose image he bore, because it was a future remission of sins.

9. Therefore he received the robe of his brother because he surpassed him in old-age wisdom; therefore the younger brother stripped the older brother because he surpassed him in the dignity of faith. This robe Rebecca brought forth as a figure of the Church and gave it to her younger son, the robe of the Old Testament, the prophetic and priestly robe, the royal robe of David, the robe of Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah, kings; and she gave it to the Christian people, who knew how to use it having received it; for the Jewish people had it without use, and did not know their own ornaments. This robe was lying in the shadow, cast aside and neglected. It was obscured by the dark haze of impiety and could not be fully explained in the narrow heart of the Jewish people. The Christian people put it on and it shone brightly: illuminating with the brilliance of their faith and the light of their righteous deeds. Isaac recognized the familiar scent of his kind, he recognized the robe of the Old Scripture, but he did not recognize the voice of the old people; and therefore he knew it had been changed. For she remains today with the same robe, but the confession of the more devout people has started to be sung; and rightfully it is said: 'The voice indeed is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.' And he smelled the smell of her garments (Genesis, 27:22 & 27). And perhaps this is because we are justified not by works, but by faith; because the weakness of the flesh is an impediment to works, but the brightness of faith obscures the error of actions, which deserves the forgiveness of sins.

Chapter III.

After the blessing of the younger brother, why did the older brother arrive; and when he pressed and obtained to be blessed himself, was he condemned to serve the brother? Where the discussion is about servitude and true freedom.

10. After the blessed celebration, the elder brother arrived (Ibid., 30). This declares that the kingdom of the Church was given in predestination before the Synagogue, but the Synagogue entered in order to abound in sin; and when sin abounded, grace abounded even more, so that it may be clear that the diligent soldier of the heavenly kingdom ought to be a candidate; to anticipate the blessing, and to claim the prerogative of his commendation. Where the younger son is not marked by the father but praised, as Isaac says: Your brother came with deceit and took your blessing (Ibid., 35). For cunning is good, where the theft is blameless; but blameless theft is piety, because the kingdom of heaven is forcibly taken, and those who force it plunder it. The fathers celebrated the Passover in haste, those who ate the lamb in haste without delay; and holy

Joseph, with the intention of a pious deceit, summoned and kept his brother Benjamin (Gen. XLII, 20, and XLIV, 1 et seq).

11. And yet, he himself, in order to be blessed, coerced and obtained it (Gen. XXVII, 38, 39); but he obtained that blessing which was consistent and suitable with the previous one, so that he would serve his brother. For indeed, he who could not command and rule another, ought to serve, so that he may be ruled by the more prudent. For it was not becoming for the holy Patriarch to subject his son to a condition of servitude: but as a good father, when he had two sons, one intemperate, the other prudent and sober, he appointed the sober one to have authority over the intemperate, and he established that the foolish one should obey the prudent one; for the foolish cannot willingly be a disciple of virtue, nor endure in diligence, because the foolish one changes like the moon: and rightfully he denied him the freedom of his own will, lest he would float like a ship in waves without a pilot: but he subjected him to his brother, as it is written: A fool serves a prudent man (Prov. XI, 29). Therefore, he rightly submitted himself to him, in order to improve his attitude towards ruling. Therefore, he said: 'By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother.' (Gen. XXVII, 34). For indeed, kindness is the mistress of cruelty, and gentleness surpasses harsh actions.

Everyone serves who does not have the authority of a pure conscience: anyone who is either broken by fear, ensnared by pleasure, led astray by desires, provoked by anger, or cast down by sorrow. For every passion is servile; for he who commits sin is a slave to sin, and what is worse, a slave to many: whoever is subject to vices has bound himself to many masters, so that it is hardly possible for him to escape servitude. But he who is the arbiter of his own will, the judge of his own counsel, the interpreter of his own decision, who restrains the desire of the flesh, who does what he does well, and he who does well acts rightly, and he who acts rightly acts blamelessly and without reproach, having power over his own actions; he is truly free. For he who does everything wisely, and lives as he wishes, he alone is free. It is not fortune that makes a slave, but disgraceful folly. (Proverbs VII, 2). Finally, the wise servant rules over foolish masters, and skilled servants will lend to their masters. What will they lend? Not money, but wisdom, as the Law also says: You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. (Deut. 15:6). For the Jew lent the oracles of the divine law to the proselyte. But since he himself could not see the mysteries of the Law, and did not know the oracles he had, who lent the letter to the nations, he now borrows the grace of spiritual doctrine from them: and rightly is he subject to servitude; for he who borrows is a servant, as if he were bound by the interest of the lender: but he who imparts the interest of pious doctrine is the prince, as the Law says: You shall be the prince of many nations: and princes shall not be of them. (Ibid.) For a prince is he who rules, who also possesses the principality of wisdom, which the people of the Jews had. But because he could not save what he taught, he must learn what he did not know how to teach. This is therefore what the patriarch Isaac said: You will serve your brother. But when you have removed and freed yourself from his yoke on your neck (Gen. XXVII, 40), he is signifying two future peoples, one the son of a handmaid, the other of a free woman (for the letter is a servant, but grace is free), and that people who adheres to the letter will be a servant as long as they follow the interpreter of spiritual doctrine. Then also what the Apostle said will come to pass: That the remnants may be saved according to the choice of grace (Rom. IX, 27). Serve your brother, therefore: but then you will feel the benefit of servitude when you begin to obey your brother willingly, rather than forcibly.

Chapter IV. Esau threatens his brother's death, for which reason the instructions for appeasing envy are proposed. Jacob, setting out to Laban, is refreshed on his journey by an appearance of angels and afterwards is enriched with possessions. From here arose envy, and Esau threatened that after their father's death he would kill his brother. But if that were to happen, let us learn from Rebecca how to provide, so that envy does not incite anger, and anger does not lead to parricide. Let Rebecca come forth, that is, let patience be introduced, a good guardian of innocence, let her persuade us to give way to anger. Let us retreat for a while, until with time indignation softens, and forgetfulness sneaks in to cover the offense. Therefore, she endures patiently without fearing exile, but rather accepts it eagerly: not so much to avoid the danger of her safety, as to turn away the incentive for wrongdoing. The loving mother also tolerates her most beloved son being absent, providing him with more than she harmed him: however, she takes care of both, so that she may protect one from danger and the other from guilt.

15. We have heard what intemperance has said about bodily drunken desires; let us consider what true virtue does. It requires nothing but God's grace: it follows only that highest good, it is content only with it, from which we have received everything; but we contribute nothing to it, for it needs nothing, as David says: I said to the Lord: You are my God; for you do not need my goods (Psal. XV, 2). For what does he need, who abounds in all things, and who bestows all things on us, and supplies everything without any lack?

16. And Jacob went on, and slept, which is a sign of a peaceful soul: and he saw the angels of God ascending and descending (Gen. XXVIII, 11), that is, he foresaw Christ on earth, to whom a host of angels descended and ascended, offering service to their own pious Lord (Matth. IV, 11).

17. And he came to a well, to drink from his vessels, and from the fountains of his wells, and the water overflowed from his fountain (Gen. XXIX, 2). For the fountain of life is in the hands of the righteous.

18. And he came to Laban, and fed his sheep. Unaccompanied wickedness resides: wisdom does not neglect the duty of governing (Gen. XXIX, 19, et XXX, 28 et seq.) : she does not know how to be empty-handed in the affairs of others, she does not know how to be an exile among foreigners. For how can she be an exile who everywhere maintains her own rights, and possesses in herself what she owns?

19. The just man enters as if a hired servant; and he is the ruler, who, with the brilliance of many and excellent virtues, gathers a flock shining with the ministry of Evangelical preaching; in order to present to the thirsting sheep the rod of storax, and the nut, and the plane, found, by which, desiring the prefigured mysteries of the most blessed Trinity, they would not form colorless offspring by the conception of a pious mind. Good sheep, which have produced offspring of good works not unworthy of the sacred faith. By the staff is meant the evening offering and sacrifice, which is offered to God the Father in the psalm. By the rod of the priest, the gift of Christ is bestowed (Psalm 139:2). For this rod of Aaron, which blossomed when it was stored away, shone forth with the priestly grace of sanctification (Numbers 17:8). By the plane tree, the spiritual fruitfulness is signified; for to this tree the vine is joined, so that in its joyful companionship it may bring forth abundant fruit. Indeed, the gifts of the passion of the Lord, along with the grace of the Spirit, are accustomed to grant the forgiveness of all sins.

Chapter V.

Jacob returns to his homeland by divine command because of the envy of Laban and his sons. If this were to arise, how should it be avoided: and by what means can a wise man never be empty. After this, the mystery is explained to Laban, who investigates the good fortune of his daughter's husband Jacob and his wives.

20. And so, as Scripture says, he became rich, nourishing a very good flock for Christ, whom he adorned with the title of faith and the glory of his virtuous variety. Thus, he did not consider himself to be limited, as he was wealthy in faith, and he was called the most opulent of Laban's sons to provoke envy, as he had augmented his own flock with the addition of another flock. And God said to him: Return to the land of your father and to your people; and I will be with you (Gen. XXXI, 3), showing that nothing was lacking to him in whom there was the fullness of all things: this alone to abound perfectly, to consist in all things, and to refer all things back to Him. Nothing is superfluous that is necessary, to whom faithful peace supplies, by which it reconciles what was first contradictory. It is not surprising if he has peace, who has established the pillar and anointed to God, which is the Church (Gen. XXXV, 20). For the pillar has been called the firmament of truth (I Tim. III, 15). It is anointed by those who pour the ointment of faith in Christ and mercy in the poor.

21. Now let us consider what kind of man a just person should be if envy arises. First, he should avoid it; for it is better to leave without a quarrel than to stay with discord. Secondly, he should possess those things that he can take with him; so that he cannot be held captive by an adversary, but rather say: 'See if anything of yours is with me' (Gen. XXXI, 32 et seq.). And Laban searched, but found nothing of his own with Jacob. A great and truly blessed man is he who could not lose anything of his own, who has nothing belonging to others, that is, he has nothing less, nothing superfluous. So he is perfect, to whom nothing is lacking: just, to whom nothing is excessive. For this is the essence of justice, to maintain a balance. How great is the virtue of whose association brings profit, not loss? This is to be perfect, to give the greatest benefit to those attached to oneself, and to bring no harm.

22. Finally, the one who desired to harm him could not dismiss him empty. For a wise man is never empty, always having the garb of prudence, who can say: I clothed myself with justice and put on judgement, as Job said. For these are the internal coverings of the mind, which no one else can take away, unless they strip someone of their own fault. Finally, Adam, thus stripped, was found naked: but Joseph, even with his outer garment discarded, was not naked, for he had preserved the garments of virtue. Therefore, never empty is the wise person. For how can one be empty, who receives from the fullness of Christ, and preserves what has been received? How can one be empty, whose soul is filled, who keeps the garments of received grace? It is to be feared that anyone may lose the covering of innocence, lest the impious and sacrilegious persecution, having gone beyond the bounds of justice under the impression of wickedness, snatch away the garment of the soul and mind. And this does not easily happen, unless one first puts off the voice of their own iniquity. Wherefore David also saith: If there be iniquity in my hands... let me deservedly fall out of the reach of my enemies: let the enemy persecute my soul, and take hold of it (Psalm 7:4-5).

23. Therefore, no enemy can capture your soul unless it has first become empty. Therefore, do not fear those who can accumulate treasures of gold and silver. They take nothing from you. They take away what you did not have: they take away what you could not possess: they take away

what did not adorn your soul, but weighed it down: they take away what did not enrich your heart, but rather oppressed it. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matthew 6:21), as you heard in today's reading. Many people include their gold in their series of doors, but they do not trust their ships and locks: they employ many guards, but they themselves are often more afraid of the guards than anyone else: many people lie with buried gold; their gold is underground, and their heart is underground. Therefore, be careful not to bury your heart in the earth while you are still alive. Therefore, thieves are not to be feared for this gold. The pawnbroker is the one you must beware of, who searches the substance of your soul, if you have contracted any weighty debts of sin, who encloses your heart in the ground, who buries your soul in that mound of earth where you have hidden your gold, who bends your mind under heavy interest charges, and buries it in a grave from which no one rises. Follow the holy Jacob, who had neither any vices of others, nor was he empty and void of his own virtues, who was filled with the fruit of righteousness. But these are moral lessons.

24. That mystical thing, which came to him as Laban, that is, whitened, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, and he began to demand his [Jacob's] own [goods] from him. Jacob answered him: Recognize if there is anything of yours with me (Gen. 31:32), that is, I have nothing of yours. Search if you recognize anything of your vices and sins. I have taken nothing from you, I have no association with your deceitful tricks, I reject everything of yours like a contagion. And Laban searched, and found nothing of his own. Blessed is the man, in whom the enemy finds nothing that he can claim as his own: in whom the devil offends nothing that he can recognize as his own! This seemed impossible in a man, but it was a type of him who says in the Gospel: The prince of this world comes, and finds nothing in me (John 14:30). For whatever is of the devil is nothing, and cannot have any perpetuity or substance.

However, He is the one who was prefigured in Jacob, the Lord Jesus, of the two married men, that is, a certain companion of Law and grace, who loved the virgin Rachel before, and loved her as a predestined spouse with pious affection. But since Leah, like the Law, entered secretly and crept in as the Synagogue, which, due to the blindness of the mind, could not see Christ, the grace of the holy Rachel abounded above her, who before anything else sought after this marriage, which already then with the interpretation of her name indicated the future primacy of the Church. (Gen. XXIX et seq.) Blessed Rachel, who removed the reproach from her childbirth: blessed Rachel, who concealed the worship and errors of the pagans, who declared that their idols were full of uncleanness. Let no one believe that reverence for the father's piety was violated because she sat while her father stood; for it is written: 'He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me' (Mt. 10:37). Where the cause of religion was at stake, faith should have the seat of judgment, and perfidy should stand as the defendant.

Chapter VI.

The angels see Saint James on the journey. The same angel, meeting his brother, bows down seven times. Finally, he sleeps in the camp, to seek harmony from him. The meaning of all these things is revealed.

26. These things have been proven to the extent that the holy Jacob encountered the angels of God as he set out. Finally, he saw the camps of God approaching and said: These are the camps of God (Gen. XXXII, 1-2). For when divine help is sought, it is usually given to those who are

faithful and perfect. And so Jacob, aiming for reconciliation with his brother, humbled himself, acquired favor through acts of service, and even thought that he should buy his brother's favor with gifts. He met his brother with gifts, wives, and children, so that even if his brother were to be offended, he might be moved by the obligations of kinship.

27. And he worshiped seven times on the ground (Gen. XXXIII, 3). What does this mean? The law says: You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve only Him (Deut. VI, 13); the ethics worship the intemperate, the angry, the threatening, the murderous crime. Did he worship the ground, the one made of human blood, infused with serpent venom, or the unfortunate sand, or the one abhorred by hard and rough rocks? What does it also mean that he worshiped seven times? The solution would be in doubt, if it were not for what Peter asked in the Gospel: 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him: 'Not only seven times, but seventy-seven times' (Matthew 18:21-22). By the prophetic inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the holy Patriarch signifies that in the coming times, not only up to seven times, but even up to seventy-seven times, forgiveness should be granted to a brother. Through this contemplation, Esau forgave the injury he believed he had received from his brother, and even though he had been wounded, he returned to grace. For this reason, the Lord Jesus took on flesh and came to earth, in order to bestow upon us multiplied forgiveness of sins.

Finally, seeking reconciliation from his brother, he slept in the camp. Perfect virtue has the tranquility and stability of rest; therefore, the Lord reserved His gift for the more perfect, saying: I leave you peace; I give you My peace (John 14:27). For it belongs to the perfect not to be easily moved by worldly matters, not to be disturbed by fear, not to be agitated by suspicion, not to be shaken by terror, not to be harassed by sorrow: but rather, to calm the unchanging mind, like a safe seashore against the rising waves of worldly storms, with steadfast faith and unwavering devotion. This firmament, Christ introduced into the minds of Christians, bringing internal peace to the souls of the righteous; so that our heart is not troubled, nor our mind disturbed. The Apostle, the teacher, affirmed that this peace is above every mind, saying: And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7). Therefore, the fruit of peace is not to be disturbed in one's heart. In conclusion, the life of the just is calm, while the unjust is full of unrest and disturbance. Therefore, the wicked is afflicted more by his own suspicions than by the blows of others; and the wounds in his mind are greater than those on the body of one who is beaten by others.

It is great to have inner peace and be in harmony with oneself. Outward peace is sought either by the anxious providence of the emperor, or by the hand of the soldiers, or it comes as a result of successful wars, or through the annihilation of some barbarians if they turn their weapons against themselves in hostile motion. In this peace, our virtue counts for nothing, only the outcome matters. Certainly, the glory of that peace is attributed to the emperor; the fruits of this peace are in us, which are in the minds of individuals, which are held by their emotions. The greatest fruit of this peace is that it repels the temptations of spiritual wickedness more than it repels hostile weapons. This peace is loftier, as it excludes the allurements of bodily passions and mitigates disturbances, more than that which calms barbaric attacks. For it is better to resist an enemy within you who is closed off than one who is removed.

Chapter VII.

Jacob wrestles with God and limps from a touched thigh nerve. His brothers avenge the violence done to Dinah, which Jacob disapproves of. He is commanded to dwell in Bethel, which foreshadows the Holy Church.

30. So Jacob, who had cleansed his heart from all envy and harbored a peaceful disposition, after he had rejected all his possessions, remained alone and wrestled with God (Gen. XXXII, 24 and 25). For whoever neglects worldly things comes closer to the image and likeness of God. For what is it to wrestle with God, if not to engage in the struggle of virtue, to contend with the superior, and to become a better imitator of God than others. And because his faith and devotion were invincible, the Lord revealed to him secret mysteries, touching the width of his thigh (Gen. 32:25); because from his seed the Lord Jesus was to descend from the Virgin, who was neither unequal nor unequal to God; the width of the thigh signified the cross of him who astoundedly died, because the forgiveness of sin, spread throughout the whole world, would be beneficial to all who, astonished by their own body and given sleep, would grant resurrection to the dead. Hence not undeservedly rose the sun of holy Jacob, upon whose race the saving cross of the Lord shone brightly; for he is the sun of justice, who beholds God; for he is the eternal light. But Jacob limped from his hip: For this reason, the sons of Israel do not eat the tendon to this day (Gen. XXXII, 32). Oh, if they had eaten and believed! But because they were not going to do the will of God, they did not eat. There are also those who take it this way, that Jacob limped from one hip because, with two peoples flowing from his generation, the wonder of one was already declaring himself to be about to become about the grace of faith. He is therefore the people who limped in the astonishment of treachery.

32. Finally, not long after the revelation of this kind, when Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, had been violated and her virginity defiled by the son of an alien, her brothers, who did not understand the mystery, killed the aliens who were offering a partnership of faith through the union of their families out of a desire for revenge. However, Jacob, who loved compassion with moral gentleness, foresaw by a mystical spirit the sacrament of gathering from the nations for the Church and reluctantly and sorrowfully accepted that scene of completed vengeance. To the one prophesying the coming of the Lord Jesus, a divine response was given: Arise, go up to the place Bethel (Gen. XXXV, 1), which means 'house of bread,' where Christ was born, as the prophet Micah testified, saying: And you, Bethlehem, house of Ephrathah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. From you shall come forth a ruler, who will be the shepherd of my people Israel, whose origins are from ancient times (Mic. V, 2). Truly, the house of bread is the house of Christ, who has come to us as the bread of salvation from heaven, so that no one may hunger while seeking the food of immortality. There the Patriarch is commanded to dwell, there to make an altar to the God who appeared to him. There he received foreign gods and hid them under the terebinth tree. There also Rachel was buried on the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. There Jacob also set up a pillar on his monument (Gen. XXXV, 1 et seq.).

How many mysteries there are, because of the Church of God that exists for you, in which God appears and speaks with His servants. There the idols of the nations are taken away and hidden. For the faith of the Church has abolished all observance of paganism. But why has it hidden under the lentisk tree, I wonder? Certainly, that kind is unfruitful. There, therefore, are the gods of the nations, where there is no fruit. There the earrings of the pagans are buried, which were given by Jacob, so that they may become accustomed to hearing a new language; let them not know the

sound of ancient treachery, let their ears become deaf to sacrilege, and let them be cleansed for grace. Daniel rightly discovered there the false testimony against Susanna. There he wanted to still place his roots of deceitfulness, but he could not hide, for he was exposed by a prophetic spirit. The error of the priest, however, is fitting for the true confession, for he declared the defiled chastity there, where the idols of the Gentiles are buried. But the truth of the Church did not cover up deceitfulness, but concealed it, and shut the ears of the Gentiles.

Conveniently, holy Rachel is also buried there; because all those who are baptized in Christ are buried with Christ. For thus are we taught by the Apostle, saying: For we are buried with him by baptism into death; that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Rom. VI, 4). Therefore, every error of the Gentiles is truly hidden when one is washed from vices; for the old man, nailed to the cross, no longer knows how to serve the old sin. Moreover, a column is also placed above Rachel's monument; because the Church is the pillar and foundation of truth.

Chapter VIII.

Concerning the praiseworthy old age of Saint James, in which he foresees future uncertain events and the end of his life; and he also arranges his affairs.

Jacob grew old, although he had already grown old in character. But the vigor of youth and the tranquility of old age contended in him. For old age is also green with grace, and youth is gray with wisdom, of which Scripture says: Old age is honored. And, the age of old age is an immaculate life. This was the life of Jacob, who surpassed the time of long-lasting old age with good works, so that he could enjoy the fruit of his labor ahead of time and not fear the later years. Indeed, blessed is the young person who lives well, but blessed is also the old person who has lived well. For what the young person hopes for, the old person has attained: what the old person has been, the young person wishes to be. Certainly, here in the restless sea, as its course continues for a longer time, it is tossed by waves: but the old person is like in a harbor, so in the station of old age. Jacob was therefore of this kind, who held, with the intact and secure key of grace, the scarcely hoped for blessings for the young people, already closed and sealed. But what you actually possess is more valuable than what you still hope for. There was, therefore, the old man Jacob, to whom young people, struck by the adversities of a certain time, would seek refuge like a harbor: he himself, however, placed as if on the lookout of this life, presented with anxious affection, and far in advance foresaw remedies for uncertain things.

36. Finally, there was famine in the whole land (Gen. XLII, 1 et seq.), and the old man, who the eager young men did not know, first listened to whether he had heard. He was the first to advise his sons to go to Egypt and buy the necessary goods (Gen. XLIII, 11). He was also willingly accepting the advice of the young men to send his younger son along. And when they reported to him that his son Joseph was alive, though his body was broken, but his spirit was vivid, he did not wait for his son to come to him, but he himself went to his son (Gen. XLV, 28). For the measure of order does not outweigh piety. Therefore, she felt no obstacles of weary old age as she proceeded. Piety indeed alleviated the labor. But when her sons, having obtained the fruit, after a somewhat long period, namely seventeen years, which is a short time compared to the longevity of that Patriarch, knew that the end of her life was approaching. She called her son Joseph and bound him to be the heir of his generation, so that he would not be buried in Egypt. And having

received faith, when he was soon after weakened and his son Joseph came to him, he sat on the bed, as if having regained strength, and blessed the twelve patriarchs and prophesied.

Chapter IX.

Jacob, being very close to death and blind, is still shown to be happy: his commendation is manifold, but it is especially highlighted due to the blessings of the Patriarchs; and finally, it is concluded that he, nor any other saint, should be considered less happy because of their sufferings.

Let some now say that Jacob was not blessed, when in the days of his death he had almost more conversations with God than with men: not blessed when his eyes were burdened with old age, and he could not see. For to some, blindness seems to be a heavy affliction. But even then Jacob was blessed, because he discerned with his spirit what he could not discern with his eyes and sight. He saw the future, though he was thought not to see the present. Finally, Joseph himself also erred, when he applied his right hand to his older son and his left hand to Jacob, his younger son, in order to maintain the order of the blessing according to the order of age: he extended his right hand over the younger grandson and his left hand over the older grandson, and when his son wanted to switch his right hand to the older Manasseh, he responded: I know, my son, I know, and he will also become a great nation, and he will also be exalted, but his younger brother will be greater than him. And he added the reason for the preference, saying: 'His seed will be a multitude of nations' (Gen. 48:18ff). Even though his physical sight was impaired, he saw better in order to teach those who could see. For who sees better than one who sees Christ? Or who can say that his eyes were impaired when he saw the shining Church in Christ? Is it not clear, then, that weakness cannot hinder blessedness? He, hindered in the gift of sight, and weary in strength of body, leaving his body on his bed as in a tomb, rose up within himself, far from others, gathering himself within himself, and withdrew from present things, mingling himself with future ages of the last days. For it is written: 'I will announce to you what will happen to you in the last days' (Gen. XLIX, 1).

What, then, was lacking to him to whom God was present, who had said to him going to set out: I will go down with thee into Egypt: and I will bring thee back again at last (Gen. XLVI, 3 et 4)? Nor was He wanting, when the Holy Ghost spoke in him. Who is so mighty in his own home as that man in a foreign land? Who so abundant in plenty as he in famine? Who so strong in his youth as he in his old age? Who so active in business as he in leisure? Who is as swift on the race course as he is in bed? Who is as joyful in the bloom of youth as he is on the verge of death? Who is as wealthy in his kingdom as he is in a foreign place? In short, he blessed the kings. And rightfully so, for he was not poor who desired nothing. He was not poor who did not consider himself poor. And who would call him poor, whose conduct was worthy of the whole world? And therefore, his conduct was in heaven. But truly rich in the riches of simplicity and sincerity, adorned more with the beauty of the soul than of the body, which does not know decay, vigorous in age, to whom it was permitted, when he wished, to depart from this earthly prison and penetrate with the vigor of his heavenly mind, exulting in spirit, when he entrusted the final resting place of the tomb. For he presumed not to be closed in an earthly tomb, but to be received in a heavenly dwelling; and therefore, he entrusted the tomb as if it were for another: yet he considered that death secure as immortality for himself. He seemed to be bound by a physical impediment and, while awake, he

anticipated future events with emotion, speaking of the persecutors of the Lord, who were the authors of wickedness from the tribe of Simeon and Levi: 'Let not my soul enter into their council; let not my heart join their assembly' (Gen. 49:6). But who is as strong in virtue as this one is in weakness, who said: 'Cursed be their anger, for it is proud and reckless; and their fury, for it is unyielding'? I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel (Ibid. 7).

39. But who is as melodious in songs as he is in words, who is heard throughout the whole world, who is listened to by all ages? Who has spoken such sweet harmony of the seven different voices as he has by the grace of the sevenfold Holy Spirit? Though he may be weak in his physical body, he raises himself up in spirit, and uplifting his spirit, he does not seek the harmony of his body, which is like the broken strings of a lyre, but allows it to lie idle on the ground. But he was delighted by an internal song, and he delighted in singing prophetically, saying: Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hands will be on the backs of your enemies; the sons of your father will bow down to you. Judah, you are a lion's cub; you climbed up from the prey, my son; you lay down to rest as a lion, and as a lion's cub. Who will rouse him (Gen. XLIX, 8 et seq.)? And below: He will wash his robe in wine, and his tunic in the blood of grapes. His joyful eyes from wine, and teeth whiter than milk. What sweeter melody, what more delightful sound, than the remission of sins and the resurrection of the dead? This song holy David, that divine instrument of voice, and interpreter of the Lord's words, sang with a spiritual harp. With these melodies, he soothed his exalted soul and mind. With this song, he softened the harshness of this worldly life, with this sound, he mollified the hardness of the age, with this psalter, he broke the terror of death, with the sweetness of these strings, he trampled on hell.

40. But let us also hear other things which the holy patriarch Jacob, with that wonderful organ of his mind, exclaimed: Naphthali is a spreading vine, producing beauty in its shoots. Joseph, my son, has been enlarged; my son has been enlarged with desire; my son has been enlarged with zealous appetite; my son has become younger; return to me. (Ibid. 21 et seq.). And further: He prevailed over the blessings of the everlasting hills, and the desires of the eternal hills. (Ibid., 26). What is sweeter than a blessing? What is more precious than eternity? And the words themselves are a song, and in the words are great rewards of prayers, the heights of merits.

What is sweeter than Saint Joseph, who freed us from the disgrace of the sacrament of the Lord's cross? For just as Christ became a curse in order to remove the curse of the Law; and became sin in order to remove the sin of the world: so he became a disgrace in order to remove the disgrace of the Gentiles; but that disgrace of Christ was valued more precious than the treasures of Egypt. And therefore Moses left the court of Pharaoh the King, and chose the disgrace of faith, to which the seas divided themselves in disgrace. Therefore, Jesus, the vine of the Nephilim, sent his spirit throughout the world, in order to infuse the abundance of the spiritual cup into all peoples. He himself was exalted, having a name above every name, because he offered himself for all to death, therefore he heard from the Father: Return to me. Jacob spoke, and God was heard. He blessed, and God spoke, saying to the Son: Return to me, that is, return after the passion. Return to your throne, return with triumph, return to me, so that the dead may follow you as you rise, and with your power and example, may also rise, so that you become the firstborn from the dead, and sit at the right hand of the Father. And the Son said: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power of God (Matthew 26:64). Would anyone deny that Jacob was blessed at the very moment of his death, when he was pouring forth divine prophecies? Would

anyone deny that Joseph was blessed in prison, where he interpreted dreams by the spirit of wisdom, revealing the truth and the sequence of future events? Would anyone deny that Isaiah was blessed when he was sawn in half? Jeremiah, when he was thrown into a pit? Daniel, when he stood unharmed among the lions, with the prophet's meal brought to him by an angel? Certainly, they were blessed not because they ate a meal that did not belong to them, but because they closed the mouths of the lions with their merits. But who would not declare the mother of the Maccabees blessed, who added an eighth martyrdom to the funeral of her seven sons for the glory of heavenly triumph?

Chapter X.

How much praise is deserved by the priest Eleazar for enduring punishments steadfastly, for which he should truly be considered blessed.

43. Nor will I pass over you, Eleazar, the high priest, but you must be prayed for, since you are a priest's priest; both an elder skilled in the law and a teacher who lived a long life. When you were offered to the prosecutor Antiochus, you were not captured by his temptations, nor were you swayed by his rewards, nor were you broken by the severity of his punishments. Finally, he resorted to flattery, thinking that his torments could overcome you. 'I blush,' he said, 'at your gray hair, I revere your old age, I admire your prudence. Why do you think you should abstain from the good foods that nature provides?' Relax this stubbornness of yours, wake up at some point, while you still prefer to persuade than to force; lest, defeated, you make yourself subject to punishments that you refute with reason. To this, the old man responded: We, Antiochus, are not led by intention, but by reverence for the Law, which commands abstaining from pork. You consider it a most beautiful creature; nevertheless, you cannot deny that temperance is more powerful than pleasure, that obedience to the law is superior to transgression. But if you think this is a trivial matter, to eat pork: he who disregards the law in small things, how will he hold to it in great things? Or if this creature is precious; you will be avenged, when we are deprived of that which is most beautiful. But our abstinence is a discipline of chastity. For we learn to cut off luxury, to conquer desires, to exclude lusts, to resist the pleasures of the body. It is also an exercise of fortitude, not to yield to punishments for the Law. Justice and prudence also require that we reserve what we have chosen to follow with fear of God, even in the face of death. Who will demand food for the free? But who will make himself a laughingstock in order to serve this, and not be laughed at? I am not so old that the strength of my spirit does not rejuvenate.

Suspensus itaque cum hinc atque inde graviter verberaretur, nec jam ferrent senilia membra verberum poenas, lassatis carnificibus atque extensoribus, in terram deflexus inflexibilem mentem gerebat. Et quidam seu longaevam miseratus aetatem, seu tentamentis circumvenire desiderans: Responde, inquit, tantummodo te manducaturum: nos te escae ejus immunem praestabimus. At ille clamans: Nequaquam, inquit, contingat mihi, ut fiam senex incentivum juvenilis erroris, qui huc usque eram forma salutaris instituti. Am I going to deceive myself with illusions, so I can profit from a short-lived life and devote all the labors of my existence as a small provision for old age? Old age should be a haven, not the shipwreck of a previous life. I will not deny you, O sacred laws of the fatherland; I will not renounce you, venerable institutions of our forefathers; I will not tarnish you, priestly robes; I will not openly defile you with the dust of treachery, O gray hair! In short, through enduring torment, he has become the master of perseverance for others, having been

chosen as an example of weakness. Therefore, blessed is he in whom torments could not overcome reason. Is he not blessed, who could be a conqueror of punishments by the strength of his soul, and preserve his passion unscathed in such great waves of suffering through the remedy of piety?

Chapter XI.

The remarkable patience and fortitude of the seven brothers of the Maccabees, to whom an eighth mother was added, who obtained the reward of a blessed life through their sufferings.

45. After this, seven boys were compelled, along with their mother, to endure torture (2 Maccabees 7:1ff). It is permissible to insult a tyrant, who, while cunningly thinking that it must begin with an old man, chooses a teacher through whom he might make his disciples stronger, and provokes them, like children, with rewards to commit wrongs, and pressurizes them with terrors to fear. But those boys, not unworthy of such a leader, respond: Why do you despise or deceive us like children? But faith is mature, and discipline is strong. Certainly try, subject those whose favors you wish to the punishment of childhood viscera, you will not find childish hearts: nor will the machines of torture be more powerful than the legitimate guards of observation. Whom old age conquers, youthfulness of old age will surpass. We follow the father of the son, the disciples follow the teacher. Gather the offered instruments of punishment: they bring meditation of patience, not the terror of infancy, while they are seen.

46. He ordered the eldest to be chosen. But he, laughing, said: rightly, you preserve the order of nature. But why do you think that God's law should be violated? And indeed, we are all the greatest in piety: but nevertheless, I am glad that I have begun it. What are you looking for, tyrant? I confess that we serve the Supreme God, and you teach us what we should do. If you want to extract the truth with such stubbornness, why can't we think that we should hold it with all our virtue? What more? Various kinds of punishments are employed. But piety conquered the fury of cruelty: the soul was excluded, not religion.

47. Second came forward, and he did not fail in fulfilling the duties of his pious confession, not unworthy of his brother (Ibid., 7 et seq). And when the membrane of his head was being removed, he responded: Indeed, you may remove the membrane, but I have a spiritual helmet which you cannot remove. And truly, no one can remove this helmet, as the Apostle later taught in the Church of the Lord: For the head of a man is Christ (I Cor., XI, 3). And we are members of Him (Ephes., V, 30). The boy rightly foresaw that apostolic doctrine with divine inspiration. Fierce beasts tore off the skin of his head and raged with panther-like fury. But he, fainting, said: How sweet it is to die for religion, how pleasant is all the bitterness of death for piety; for the reward of these labors remains! Yours are, O king, more severe torments: you are more fiercely tormented by your own punishments; for you see yourself being conquered in power.

48. And after this, when he had passed away, he ordered a third to be brought forward (2 Maccabees VII, 1, 10 et seq.). And when some tried to deceive him, while others sought to frighten him, he responded to him: I will not do your will, I will not succumb to your command. By the blessed suffering and nobility of my brothers, I will not deny my loyal brotherhood. Apply any tortures you wish, by which you may accomplish this more forcefully, in harshness of punishments, that you may receive greater evidence of our loyalty. Therefore, he ordered his tongue to be cut

off. But he, shouting, said: You are defeated, Antiochus, who order the instrument of speech to be cut off. You confess that you cannot respond to reason, and you prove that the lashes of our tongue are greater than your blows. For we do not fear your blows, you cannot endure the lashes of our voice; but these are the lashes of piety, your lashes are the lashes of treachery; but even with the tongue removed, it will lash you more severely, falling upon you with its weighty murmur. Do you think, Antiochus, that you will escape if you take away my voice? God hears even those who are silent, and He hears even more. Behold, I have opened my mouth, I have loosened my tongue, cut off my tongue; but you will not cut off my steadfastness, you will not take away my courage, you will not obliterate my reason, you will not snatch away the testimony of truth, you will not silence the cry of my heart. If my tongue is cut off, the blood will cry out, and it will be said to you: The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me (Genesis 4:10). For He hears the voice of blood, He who hears the inner thoughts, even though darkness may cover and walls may surround. Let the wicked say, because no witness stands by him: God explores everything, sees everything; nor is there any crime that can hide from the judge of all, who knows everything before they happen. What words do we give? Wounds are more talkative: even if wounds are covered, even if a scar is hidden, faith is not hidden. And yet you do not applaud when you take away someone's tongue, you snatch away the confession of praise. We have already praised God enough with words, now let us praise Him with suffering.

49. And with him killed, he ordered the fourth to be bound to the wheel, so that by its turning all his limbs would be loosened (Ibid. 13). But when he was being tormented cruelly, he said: You dissolve the limbs of the body; but you join grace to suffering and do not take away solace from death. For the voice of thunder is in the wheel, because in the good and unhindered course of this life a heavenly oracle resounds, just as it resounded in the sons of thunder, John and James. And so, I recognize more clearly what I read: For the wheel runs within the wheel and is not hindered (Ezek. 1:16-17). For he passes his life without any offense in any passion, and even within these things the wheel runs. The Law runs within grace, and obedience to the Law is within the course of divine mercy: for the more it turns, the more it is proven. It is better here to endure adversity from the impious, so that there we may find consolation from the Lord. And he, completing his course, broke off his spirit and poured forth his victorious soul. When Quintus was being burned, having first cut himself, he ordered fires to be brought close to him, and flames to be placed beneath him. Blood flowed from his wounds, and with his ulcerated flesh exposed, the blood extinguished the flames themselves. Meanwhile, amidst the crackling of the fire, he could be heard saying: 'Thanks be to You, Lord, for allowing us to say: We have passed through fire.' And as your same Prophet says elsewhere: 'You have tested us with fire, just as silver is tested by fire.' I will stand for you like gold purified by fire; and if there was any fault, the fire has burnt it away. Therefore, also he, transformed from corruption to incorruption, breathed life.

Moreover, six catapults were brought forward (2 Maccabees 7:18-19). But he said, 'Do not err in vain and attribute this to your power, that you exercise these things against us. The punishment for our sins is such that we sinners are punished. And thanks be to the Lord, that here we are required to pay for our double sins, so that consolation may be given to us there. But thanks also to you, for being so harsh and merciless, that through such punishments the Lord, against whom we have sinned, may show mercy to our people.' We also endured hardship while being delighted by the sufferings of faith. And he, torn by harsh and rough punishments, was brought to his brothers.

52. The younger one out of the brothers surpassed them, and now he was ashamed that Antiochus had been a mockery to his immature age. Therefore, desiring to deceive him with tricks, he promised him honors, riches, his friendship, and a share in his secret plans. But his pious mother advised her son, saying to him and to the others: 'I do not know how you entered into my womb, nor did I give you breath, nor did I form your limbs: but these are the gifts of the almighty God. Antiochus, seeing his mother worried because she feared for his safety, also began to persuade him to withdraw from his plan. But she, in her native tongue, said to her son: You alone remain, my son, the greatest of my hopes; you were the last to close my deliveries, you will be the last to close my joys. Have mercy on me, who carried you in my womb for so many months; do not ruin my old age in an instant, do not dim the triumphs of your brothers, do not leave their holy companionship, do not abandon our partnership. They still await those triumphs. Look up to the heavens, from where you drew your spirit, to the Father of all; look down to the earth, which provided you with nourishment; look to your brothers, who seek a companion; look to your mother, who gave you milk; repay the reward for your pious blood; do not be separated from your brothers, do not be separated from your mother. The wealth and honors that Antiochus promises are temporary; the everlasting crown is bestowed by Almighty God. The Lord gave me seven days of light, and on the sixth day I closed, with very good works of all. You owe me, son, that which I labored in those six, to find rest in you on the seventh, as if already resting from the works of the world. Therefore, the young man hurriedly said: 'Why do you endure?' (cf. Ibid., 30 and following). And shouting many things, because he could not at all be separated from the companionship of his brothers, whose funerals were much more blessed than the commands of the king, when he was pressing the king with insults, and he himself, tormented by bitter types of tortures, completed the task of this life.

53. The most recent mother was offered to death. Who would deny her blessedness, who, as if fortified by seven gifts, feels no invasion of death among the bodies of her children? Who, I say, would doubt her blessedness, who, surrounded by seven towers, raised her head to the seat of paradise; who, encircled by seven sons, not only led the most sacred choir to God with melodious voices, but also brought forth their passions to sing praises to the Lord on heavenly altars? How good is this faithful birth, how safe is this harbor of piety, how splendid is this lamp shining with the seven-fold light of the Church, and supplying oil to all the lights from the eighth womb! Concerning these, it is beautifully said, 'Give a part to seven, and even to eight' (Eccles. 11:2), because they obtain a share in grace in both numbers, nourished in the Law, crowned by grace, seven as in the Sabbath, eight as in the Gospel, with the pious mother added as a supplement to the passion, who in such sons both conceived and gave birth to the complete form of piety.

Chapter XII.

A commendation of the most elegant blessed parent of those seven sons who were martyrs.

54. The words of the holy woman who said to her sons come to mind: I gave birth to you, I poured the milk of life into you, do not lose your nobility. Other mothers use martyrdom to call their sons back, not to call. But she placed maternal affection in this, if she would advise her sons not temporal life, but eternal life. Therefore, the pious mother witnessed the struggles of her sons; and although she was shaken by the compassion of a mother's heart, she still suppressed her sorrow with a desire for piety. And when Antiochus was offering, although he could choose the salvation

of his sons, he preferred danger: and, suppressing the groans of nature, he wished the punishments to be increased for his sons, so that death might approach more quickly. We see the mother's prayers turned towards her sons; lest she leave any of them as survivors, but acquire all of them as dutiful heirs of death. But not even the younger sons had such a parent, who encouraged each other, who said with one zeal and a certain sharpness of mind: We will overcome the attack of adverse death. For we will truly live when we are dead. Let no one abandon the order of compassion, let no one withdraw from the triumphant battle. We have dedicated our souls not to man, but to the Almighty God. We fight not for man, but for the author of all things. This battle is such that he who is more gloriously defeated will be victorious. Therefore, no one was afraid, no one trembled, and none of the brothers were more sluggish towards death: but all ran to death through bitter tortures as if on the path to immortality; and the mother, seeing the ranks of her sons united, offered herself as a devoted soul offering her own body's members in her sons, and seemed to undergo torments wished for herself through her own limbs. The sons, wounded by the torture devices, were falling, dead, one on top of the other. Bodies were rolling over bodies, heads were being severed from heads. The place was filled with the corpses of the sons, but the mother did not weep, she did not lament; she did not close the eyes or the mouths of the dying. She did not wash their wounds, knowing that they would be more glorious if they were seen disemboweled and covered in a mixture of dust and blood, like the victorious warriors who return from war, who bring back trophies from their enemies. She did not mourn the dead or attend the funeral, unless she considered it a part of her own death. What sweeter songs did she produce on her lyre than the dying children sang in such dire circumstances? For the lamentations of nature burst forth, even against their will. You would see the bodies of the dead laid out in order like the strings of a harp, and you would hear the seven-stringed psaltery resound with triumphant groans. Those enticing songs of the Sirens did not attract the listener in the same way: for they dragged towards shipwreck, while these drew towards the victory of sacrifice. Nor did the swan songs soothe the ears and souls in that way, for swans by the order of nature die, but these were dying out of love for piety. Nor do the hoarse murmurs of doves in a hidden grove resonate like the last words of the dying, which resounded with the greatest sweetness. Nor does the moon shine among the stars in that way, as a mother shines among her children, and when she led them to martyrdom, she shone, and when she embraced the victors among her children.

O true mother, stronger than diamond, sweeter than honey, more fragrant than a flower! O unbreakable bond of love! O truly powerful charity, like harsh death, like the jealousy of hell for devotion and faith! No floods of passion could exclude your charity, no rivers of bitterness could drown it. Just as the ark in that flood of the whole world was carried unharmed through the vast spaces of the earth: so too you, immovable in your piety against the waves of such great passions, have withstood them, and when you could have chosen the salvation of your children, you did not want to.

58. With what affection shall I honor you, holy mother, devoted pledges? With what pen of my speech shall I describe your form and likeness of souls? You stood among the royal armies, by whom the whole world was subdued, whom even India, fleeing to the secret depths of the farthest sea, did not avoid; and you alone, without any military conflict, achieved victory over the proud king. The only weapons of piety prevailed in you: the tyrant received his punishment, both because he could not conquer you and because he was slain by a cruel death.

On Joseph the Patriarch

Book One of Saint Ambrose of Milan, Bishop, On Joseph the Patriarch

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.
- Chapter XII.
- Chapter XIII.
- Chapter XIV.

Chapter I. A treatise on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, explaining why the story of Saint Joseph follows them. He is presented as the epitome of chastity; the text also briefly discusses the love of his parents, the envy of his brothers towards him, and the forgetting of the wrongs he suffered. The lives of the saints are a guide for others to live by. And so we more fully grasp the orderly sequence of the Scriptures; so that as we read about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the other righteous ones, we may follow in their footsteps, like a path of innocence that has been opened to us by their virtue. And as I have often reflected on them, today the story of Saint Joseph comes to mind. In him, many virtues were present, but especially notable was his chastity. It is therefore just that when you learn from Abraham the fervent devotion of faith, from Isaac the sincere purity of mind, from Jacob the singular patience of the soul and labor; from that generalization of virtues, you direct your mind to the very types of disciplines. For although those virtues are more diffuse,

these are more explicit and more readily penetrate the mind in proportion as they are more circumscribed and determined.

2. Therefore, let Saint Joseph be proposed to us as a mirror of chastity. For in his manners, in his actions, purity shines forth, and a certain radiance of grace accompanies his chastity. Hence he was loved more by his parents than the other children. But this matter was a cause for envy, because it could not be passed over in silence.

3. Therefore, from here the argument of the whole history proceeded; at the same time, so that we may know that a perfect man does not move to seek revenge for the injury of pain, nor does he repay evil for evil. Hence David says: If I have repaid those who do evil to me (Psalm 7:5). But what would be the reason that Joseph deserved to be preferred over the others, if he either harmed those who harmed him or loved those who loved him? For many people do this. But that is remarkable, if you love your enemy, which the Savior teaches (Matthew 5:44). Therefore, by right, he is to be admired, who did this before the Gospel; that when injured, he would pardon, when tempted, he would forgive, when betrayed, he would not retaliate, but instead repay with kindness for insult; which all of us have learned after the Gospel, but cannot preserve.

4. Let us therefore learn from the envy of the saints; so that we may imitate their patience: and let us understand that they were not superior by nature, but by observation; not ignorant of vices, but corrected them. And if envy has even affected the saints, how much more careful should we be not to inflame sinners?

Chapter II.

Parents' affection and children's gratitude should be equal. However, Jacob is excused because he preferred Joseph, who was adorned with many virtues, over others. Moreover, he was already endowed with the grace of prophecy, as his dreams, which are related here, demonstrate.

5. Therefore, we are taught what kind of affection parents should have, for the sake of their children. To love one's children is sweet, and to love them more intensely is even sweeter. But often, the very fatherly love, unless it maintains moderation, harms the children. If excessive indulgence loosens the bond of love, or if preference for one child turns others away from the affection of kinship. One gains more for the son when love is gained from his siblings. This is the greater generosity of parents, this is the wealthier inheritance of children. Equal grace binds children whom equal nature has joined. Piety knows not the profit of money, in which lies the expense of piety. Why are you surprised if disputes arise among brothers over land or a house, when envy arose among the holy sons of Jacob over a tunic? So what then? Should Jacob be criticized because he preferred one over the others? But we cannot take away freedom from parents; let them love those more whom they believe deserve more: nor should we cut off the desire to please from our children. Finally, Jacob loved him more, in whom he foresaw greater signs of virtues; so that the father seems to have preferred not so much a son, as the mystery of a prophet: and he made for him with good reason a varied coat, by which he signified that he should be preferred to his brothers in the dress of diverse virtues.

Finally, the divine grace shone forth in the boy while he was still alive. For he dreamed that while he was binding sheaves, as it seemed to him in a vision, his sheaf stood up and remained upright; then his brothers' sheaves turned toward his sheaf and bowed down to it (Genesis 37:6-7). In this,

the future resurrection of the Lord Jesus was revealed, whom the eleven disciples also adored when they saw Him in Jerusalem, and all the saints will adore Him when they are resurrected, offering the fruits of good works, as it is written: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Psalm 126:6). Wherefore, brethren, though they diminished the faith of his dream by envy, still expressing the interpretation thereof in their own words, they answered him: Shalt thou indeed reign over us, or shalt thou have dominion over us? (Gen. XXXVII, 8) For by his visions it was signified that a king should come, whom all the flesh of mankind should adore, bending the knee. But he saw another dream, and he told it to his father and his brothers, because the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to him. So his father rebuked him, saying: What is this dream that you have dreamt? Shall I, your mother, and your brothers come and bow down to you upon the earth? Who is this whom parents and brothers worshiped upon the earth, if not Christ Jesus, when Joseph and his mother, along with the disciples, worshiped him, confessing him as the true God in that body, of whom alone it was said: Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all stars and light? But the rebuke of the father signifies the hardness of the people of Israel, from whom Christ according to the flesh, whom they do not believe to be God even today, nor do they want to worship him as the Lord, because they recognize him as born of themselves. Therefore, they hear his responses, but they do not understand; they read that the sun and the moon praise him, and they do not want to believe that it has been said about Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jacob is deceived by a foreign figure, but he is not deceived by his own love. Filial piety in him does not err: but the desires of the people are expressed as being in error.

Chapter III.

When above it is said that Jacob sent Joseph to rebuke, this was not done out of disbelief: when he, being aware of the future Incarnation, sent the same to his brothers. Joseph, after he wandered in the field, came to Dothan. His brothers, seeing him from afar, thought to kill him: but they changed their plan and sold him to the Ishmaelites. And these things, along with the staining of the tunic and the drying up of the well, are adapted to the mystery of the Passion.

Therefore, the Patriarch did not doubt these visions, as he prophesied both the role of the righteous and the people, that the Son of God would come to earth, who would be loved by the righteous and rejected by the faithless. He foresaw the mysteries of the future Incarnation, as he sent his son to his brothers, to see if the sheep were well. These sheep were the ones that God was already seeking in the Patriarch's zeal, the ones about whom the Lord Jesus said in the Gospel: I have come only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And he sent, he said, to Shechem (Gen. XXXVII, 13), which in interpretation is said to be shoulder, or back, that is, to those who would not convert to the Lord, but would turn away from His presence, which is properly the sinner's. Cain went out from the presence of God. And the Prophet says: You will put them to flight (Ps. XX, 13). But the righteous man does not turn away from the Lord, but approaches, saying: My eyes are always on the Lord (Ps. XXIV, 15). And Isaiah said to the Lord: Whom shall I send? (Isaiah 6:8) And he offered himself willingly, saying: Here am I. And Simeon waited to see the Christ of the Lord, and after he saw, because he had seen the redeemer of sinners and of the whole world, as if relieved from sin, he desired to be freed from the use of this flesh, saying: Now, Lord, dismiss your servant in peace; for my eyes have seen your salvation (Luke 2:30-31). And Zacchaeus first found the advantage of his commendation, that he climbed into a tree to see Christ. Therefore, Joseph was sent by his father to his brothers, by that Father who did not spare

his own Son but handed him over for us all: by that Father of whom it is written, 'God, sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.' (Rom. 8:3). And Joseph wandered, because he could not find his brothers (Gen. XXXVII, 15). He wandered rightfully, for he sought the wandering ones; for the Lord recognizes those who are his own. And indeed Jesus, weary from the journey, sat by the well. He was weary because he did not find the people of God whom he sought; for they had departed from the face of the Lord. For whoever follows sin, departs from Christ. The sinner departs, the righteous enters. Indeed, Adam, as a sinner, hides himself; but the righteous one says: Let my prayer enter into your presence (Psal. LXXXVII, 3).

11. But Joseph found his brothers in Dothan, which signifies defection. For where else is one except in defection who forsakes God? It is not surprising if they were failing, who did not hear Him saying: Come to me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you (Matthew XI, 28). Therefore, Joseph came to Dothan: And they saw him from afar, before he approached them, and they raged, wanting to kill him (Genesis XXXVII, 18). Indeed, those who were in defection were far from deserving, and therefore they raged because Christ did not come near to them. For if the likeness of Christ had approached them, they would certainly have loved their brother; but they could not be close, for they were contemplating murder. Behold, they say, that dreamer is coming: now therefore let us come, and let us kill him (Ibid., 19). Did not these words come from those who were contemplating a murderous sacrilege? As Solomon says of them: Let us condemn him to a shameful death; for according to his own words, he shall be respected (Wisdom 2, 20).

12. And they added in Genesis: And we shall see what profit his dreams shall bring him. This is written about Joseph, but completed about Christ, when the Jews said during his passion: If he is the king of Israel, let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusts in God, let Him now deliver him, if He wants (Matthew 27:42). Could his brothers also be so wicked as to kill their brother? And why did the patriarchs merit so much that the Law designated one tribe with the names of all their people? How do the names of piety and the emblems of crime agree? So also these people, not by the fault of their own mind, were suffering. Hence all envy, hence the contemplation of parricide: envy by appearance, piety by feeling.

13. Finally, Ruben and Judah, keeping the dutiful rights of brotherhood, desired to free him from the hands of the others, and rightfully Judah is preferred with his paternal blessing, as it is said to him: Thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah, the lion's whelp, shall rise up as a leader of the nations (Gen. XLIX, 8 and 9). And this certainly applies to Christ alone, to whom it was entrusted to be adored by his brothers, and awaited by the nations, and who washed his garment in wine, symbolizing his own body's suffering, because his flesh was not stained by any blemish of sin. The donkey also believed that he was not necessarily compatible with himself. The donkey ate his own fattened bread, and the donkey himself ate with princes. But what about Joseph himself, to whom it was said: "My son Joseph, my son to be made great: my zealous son, my younger son, return to me" (Genesis, 22) ? Those who considered this plan cursed him, but the blessing prevailed over the blessings of the everlasting mountains and the desires of the everlasting hills. They understood themselves to signify the one who, surpassing the merits of all, held the infinite summit of power above the desires of all the saints, whom no one could equal in vow. Therefore, envy is compensated in the patriarchs by grace, who are both excused from fault and consecrated by the gift of revelation. For it is not as blameworthy to say what belongs to the common people as it is blessed to see what belongs to Christ. They took on the role of sinners of

the people, in order to receive the grace of the Lord the Redeemer. Certainly grace abolishes guilt, but guilt does not diminish grace.

14. And so that we may understand that all this concerning the people and the mystery of the Lord Jesus: Come, he says, let us sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites (Gen. XXXVII, 27). What is the interpretation of the name Joseph, except that it signifies divine grace and the expression of the highest God? Who, therefore, is sold, except he who, while being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal to God: but he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant (Philip. II, 6 and 7)? For we would not have sent him, if they had not sold him. Those who sold him did a bad job, those who bought him did even worse. They sold a good odor to merchants, they bought a traitor. Judas sold him, the Ishmaelites bought him, who are called in Latin interpretation, hating their God. Therefore, in one place we find him bought for twenty, in another place for twenty-five gold coins, in another place for thirty; because Christ is not valued by everyone at the same price. To some less, to others more. Faith is the increase of goods: to the religious, God is more precious, to the sinner, the redeemer is more precious. He is also more worth to whom more grace has been given; but even to whom many things have been given, he is more worth; because to whom more has been forgiven, he loves more, as the Lord himself pronounced in the Gospel concerning that woman who poured ointment on his feet, and washed them with her tears, and wiped them with her hair, and dried them with kisses, of whom he said to Simon: For which reason I say to you: Her many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, less He loves (Luke 7:47). Sometimes differences in value have not only a quantitative, but also a numerical expression; as you have about the ointment that the Lord mentioned was poured out for His burial, as it is written by Judas saying: This could have been sold for three hundred denarii (Mark 14:5). In this number, the sign of the cross seems to be expressed, not of quantity, but of significance. In the same way, here the difference of twenty or thirty aurei or silver coins has the indication of doubled or tripled perfection. Twenty-five gold coins, the number of Jubilee which is the remission, signify a most precious portion. Also, to signify the figure of the Lord's Passion, Judah the patriarch says: Let us sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites: but let not our hands be upon him (Gen. XXXVII, 27). And earlier he had said well: But let not our hands be upon him (Ibid., 22). What the Jews said in the Lord's Passion: It is not lawful for us to put any man to death (John XVIII, 32). This is to fulfill Jesus' words, signifying by what death He would die.

15. Now then, the sign of the future cross was prefigured; at the same time, what he put off was the tunic (Gen. XXXVII, 23), that is, the flesh which he assumed, he put off, adorned with a diversity of virtues. Therefore, his tunic, that is, his flesh, was not stained with divinity: and the garment of his flesh could not take away the immortality of life. This tunic was stained by the Jewish beasts, those of which it is said: 'Behold, I send you as lambs among wolves' (Luc. X, 3).

16. But what is remarkable if the Jews have no water in the lake, since it was dry (Gen. XXXVII, 24), when they abandoned the fountain of living water and made for themselves broken cisterns? And to know that this is a true mystery, the Lord himself says of himself: They put me in the lower lake, in darkness, and in the shadow of death (Psal. LXXXVII, 7).

Therefore, those who offer good odors purchase Christ, for they offer incense as a pious offering to the altars of the mind. Hence, David also says in Greek: 'Let my prayer be directed as incense before you' (Ps. 140:2). The resin through which broken marbles are joined is also a spiritual resin

that strengthens the fractures of your soul and connects what is divided, binds what is dissolved. For this spiritual resin strengthens and repairs certain broken parts of the soul so that they may be united without offense. Finally, Jeremiah seeks this resin, in order to heal Babylon, if possible, saying: 'Take the resin for her corruption, if by any means she may be healed.' We healed Babylon, but she was not healed (Jer. 51:8-9). The Synagogue was not healed, for this resin has migrated to the Church. Therefore, merchants came from Gilead, that is, from the possession or habitation of the testimony, transferring their merchandise to the Church, so that this resin might heal the sins of the Gentiles. Of which it is said: 'Strengthen, drooping hands, and weak knees' (Isaiah 35:3). True faith is a healing resin. Peter used it when he said to the lame man: 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk' (Acts 3:6); and rightfully he rose up and walked. He used it when he said to the paralyzed man: 'Aeneas, the Lord Jesus Christ heals you: rise up and make your bed.' And he rose up and made his bed (Acts 9:34). He also used it when he said to the dead woman: 'Arise in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And the dead rise (Ibid., 4). By the power of this resin, the stones from which the Lord is able to raise the sons of Abraham are joined together. By the remedy of this resin, the lame are healed, the paralyzed are reformed, the dead are resurrected.

18. Also, the fact that they sprinkled his tunic with the blood of a goat (Gen. XXXVII, 32) seems to signify that by seeking false testimonies, they brought him into disrepute, who forgives the sins of all. The lamb is for us, the goat is for them. The lamb of God was slain for us, by whom he took away the sin of the world: the goat is for them, whose errors he piled up, whose sins he accumulated. Therefore he says: Fill up the measure of your fathers (Matth. XXIII, 32). And Jacob, bemoaning the losses of his posterity, wept as a father mourns a lost son, as a prophet mourns the destruction of the Jews. Finally, he tore his own garments, which we read was done during the Passion of the Lord (Matthew 26:65) by the high priest, representing not a private individual, but the official duty of the public office. And the veil of the temple was torn (Matthew 27:51); thus, with the sacred mysteries profaned, the people were stripped of their saving vestments, and the kingdom was divided, represented by such signs of destruction, for every divided kingdom is easily destroyed. And truly it was divided, when what was Christ's began also to belong to the devil. For they could not remain undivided, who separated the Son from the Father.

Chapter IV.

Joseph is led into Egypt, and is bought by the overseer of the cooks, in which he is a figure of Christ liberating us by his own service. In the same, it is shown that freedom can be retained within captivity, and also that captivity can be found within freedom. Finally, Joseph is set forth as an example for all.

Therefore Joseph was sold, being led into Egypt, bought by the chief of the cooks. He was not a useless person who would cook raw foods, so that the spirits may feast on the sweetness of faith. For no food is sweeter than knowledge and doctrine. There was before in Egypt raw deceit, before the ardor of divine knowledge, and the desire for true science had softened nothing, the fiery words of the Lord had not boiled. But Joseph was sold into Egypt, because Christ was going to come to those to whom it was said: For your sins you have been sold (Isaiah 50:1). And therefore, He redeemed them with His own blood, who had sold themselves by their own sins. But Christ, who was sold, is held by the assumption of the condition, not by the price of guilt, because He

Himself did not commit sin. Therefore, He contracted our debt, not His own money; He took away the handwriting, removed the lender, stripped off the debtor: He alone paid what was owed by all. It was not lawful for us to escape from servitude. He undertook this for us, to repel the servitude of the world, restore the freedom of paradise, and bestow a new grace of His fellowship in honor. Hoc de mysterio.

20. Moreover, with regard to the moral aspect, because our Lord God wants everyone to be saved, He gave through Joseph even to those who are in servitude solace: He attributed mastery; so that they might learn that even in the most desperate condition it is possible for morals to be superior, and that no state is immune to virtue, if the mind recognizes itself as belonging to everyone; that the flesh is subjected to servitude, not the mind; and that many slaves are freer than their masters, if, placed in servitude, they believe that they should abstain from slave-like works. Every sin is servile, but innocence is free. Hence the Lord says: Whoever commits sin is the slave of sin (Rom. VI, 16). For how can every greedy person not be a slave, who auctions himself off for a tiny gain of money? He fears losing everything he hoards, who hoards things that he does not use, and he will be preserved in greater danger as he seeks greater things. How can a beggar not be poor, since he possesses only small things? For even if he seems wealthy to me, he is poverty-stricken himself: he does not console himself with his own desires, as he does not know how to believe what he wishes. But how can that servant, who is subject to desire, not also himself burn with his own fires and be consumed by the torches of his own heart? Of them the prophet rightly says: "Walk in the light of your own fire, and in the flame you have kindled." (Isaiah 50:11) He fears all things, plots against the sleep of others, so that he may satisfy the desire of one person and become the servant of all. Therefore, he who makes himself his own master and desires to have those he fears, serves this wretched servitude. For there is nothing so peculiar to slavery as always living in fear. But he is truly free in whatever condition of slavery, who is not captivated by the love of the world, is not bound by the chains of greed, is not tied down by the fear of crime, who looks at the present without worry and is not afraid of the future. Doesn't it seem to you that the former is ruling in servitude: but the latter is serving in freedom? Joseph was a servant, Pharaoh was a ruler: the servitude of the former is happier than the kingdom of the latter. Finally, the whole of Egypt would have collapsed from famine if its ruler hadn't subjected his kingdom to the advice of his slaves.

So, slaves have something to boast about in their origin, Joseph also served. They have something to console themselves with, those who have come from freedom into servitude by some necessity. They have something to imitate, so that they may learn that they can change their condition, not their character: to have both freedom in their native language and constancy in servitude. Even masters have something to hope for through good slaves. Abraham found a wife for his son among his own people. The Lord blessed the house of the Egyptian because of Joseph, and the blessing of the Lord was in all his possessions, both in the house and the fields. And he, said he, converteth into his hands all things whatsoever they had (Gen. XXXIX, 4). We observe that those things which the masters could not govern, the servants governed.

Chapter V.

Joseph was admired not for his beauty, but more for his modesty. He was enamored by his master's wife through no fault of his own, and when she tried to seduce him and accused him of

assault, he rejected her advances and fled, leaving his clothes behind and making himself more presentable. However, even though she retained his clothes and falsely accused him, it was she who exposed her own shame. Nevertheless, Joseph was thrown into prison, but there he was not abandoned by divine protection.

22. But what should I say about the arrangement of his private house, which he governed? However, he accomplished more by ruling himself before others. And even though he was attractive in appearance and very handsome, he did not use the beauty of his face to cause harm to others, but preserved it for his own grace. He believed himself to be more beautiful if he could prove himself more attractive through modesty and the cultivation of chastity rather than through the loss of his virtue. He considered true beauty to be one that didn't attract the eyes of others or harm fragile minds, but gained the admiration and judgment of everyone, being of no deceit and deserving praise. Now, if anyone with impudent eyes looked, the fault is of the one who saw improperly, not of the one who did not want to be seen improperly; and there is no fault in what was seen. It was not in the power of the servant not to be seen: the husband should have guarded the eyes of his wife. If he had no fear about his wife, this man believed it to be a testimony of modesty, not a laxity of behavior. However, men should learn to even guard the eyes of women. For even those who do not want to be loved are attracted. Finally, Joseph was tempted by a woman who scorned his love. And Scripture defended him well, saying: 'And his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph' (Gen. XXXIX, 7); that is, he did not display himself, nor did he take advantage. But she cast her own snares and was caught in her own trap. She spread her own nets and became entangled in her own chains.

23. However, he said to her: Sleep with me (Ibid.). The first weapons of the adulteress are her eyes, the second, her words. But he who is not captured by her eyes can resist her words. There is a defense available where the affection is still free. Therefore it is written that he did not want to (Ibid., 8). Therefore, he first conquered in the battle of the mind, repelling the attacking enemy like a shield of the soul: then he brandished his speech like a spear, to call her back. And he said to the wife of his master (Ibid.). Indeed, the wife of the master is not called the mistress herself who could not extract what she wanted to command. For how can she be the mistress, who did not have the effect of dominating, who did not maintain the discipline of the mistress, who provided incentives of lust to the slaves? That master who did not receive the torches of the lover, who did not feel the chains of the seducer, whom no fear of death terrified, who preferred to die free from crime rather than choose the partnership of criminal power. That book, which considers it shameful not to repay a favor. Finally, he does not excuse himself as fearful, nor does he guard against danger as a timid person would; but he flees from the crime of ingratitude and shrinks from the stain of sin and the contamination of guilt, as if just. The third spear was being wielded by the adulteress with persistent interruption, but Joseph did not listen to her. You have what to beware of after the first words. Lust is not only slippery, but also shameless, impudent, and insolent, and the adulteress has no reason to fear. She who did not grieve for the first damages of modesty, plots in order to capture.

Finally, for the sake of his duties and the task entrusted to him, Joseph, removing all witnesses and household members, approaches him, saying: 'Sleep with me.' Joseph is excused by the testimony of Scripture, because he was unable to abandon the service entrusted to him by the Lord. It is not enough that he, secure in himself, entered the interior of the house as if he could not

be caught. The righteous man should have taken care not to give occasion to the furious one, lest his wife should perish because of that sin. But Joseph, who saw that his master's wife was an adversary to him, should have also guarded against the offense of neglecting his duty from the Lord. At the same time, he thought that her audacity was not comprehension but mere conversation.

25. It is excused that he entered; it is preached that he slipped away, and he did not value the clothing of the body more than the chastity of the soul. He left behind as if not his own what the adulteress detained with her own hands, and he judged as belonging to others what could be grasped by the touch of impure hands. Yet he was a great man, who did not know the mindset of a sold slave, did not love the one who loved him, did not agree when asked, and escaped when captured. When he happened to meet with the wife of his master, he could be restrained by his garments, but not by his mind. And he did not even tolerate her words for a long time, for he feared that the infection would be deemed to last longer; so that the incentives of adulterous lust would not pass through the hands. And so he took off his garment, cast off his guilt, and leaving behind the things that held him, he fled stripped, indeed, but not naked, he who was covered with the garment of modesty. For no one is naked unless guilt has stripped him. Indeed, in the example of Adam, after he deserted the commandments of God through transgression and contracted the heavy atmosphere of sin, he was naked. Hence he himself says: I heard your voice in Paradise, and I was afraid because I am naked, and I hid myself (Gen. III, 10). For he came to realize that he was naked, having lost the garments of divine protection. And therefore he hid himself, because he did not have the garment of faith, which he certainly laid aside by transgressing. You see a great thing here. He who did not lose his tunic was naked: this one was not naked, who stripped himself of the clothes which he left in the hands of the adulterous woman. The same Scripture declares him naked, but denies this one. And therefore this one rather stripped himself than was made naked, who preserved the incorruptible garments of virtues, stripping himself of the old man with his actions; so that he might put on the new man, who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of the Creator. However, he remained naked, unable to dress himself again, stripped of his singular virtue. Thus, he received a cloak made of fur; because a sinner could not possess a spiritual one. Therefore, Joseph left behind his clothes and exposed the shamelessness of the adulteress, who could no longer hide afterwards.

26. Finally, she went out and publicly declared the temptations of her adultery, raising her voice; because, having abandoned her clothes, the Hebrew had fled. Therefore, what she should have kept hidden, she revealed; in order to harm the innocent with her fabricated accusation. But the just man did not know how to accuse; and therefore she shamelessly committed this act with impunity. So, her true nature can be said to have been revealed, even as she wore someone else's clothes, having lost all the veils of chastity: him, well-adorned enough, well-defended enough, whose voice was not heard, but innocence spoke. Thus, Susanna, afterwards, while she remains silent in court, speaks better through the oracle; and therefore she deserved the defense of the prophets, which she did not seek as help from her own voice. Therefore, I would say that she was more blessed when she was thrown into prison; because she was undergoing martyrdom for chastity. For chastity is indeed a good gift, but it has less merit when it does not face danger; but where it is also defended by the danger of salvation, there it is more fully rewarded.

27. In a heard case, with the faith of the truth unexplored, Joseph is sent to prison as if guilty of the crime; but the Lord did not abandon him even in prison. The innocent should not be disturbed when they are sought after with false accusations; when oppressed justice is thrust into prison. God visits his own even in prison; and therefore, there is more help where there is more danger. But why would it be surprising if Christ visits those in prison, since he himself mentioned being imprisoned in his own words, as it is written: 'I was in prison, and you did not visit me' (Matthew 25:43)? Where does divine mercy not penetrate? Joseph found such favor that he, who had been locked in prison, would keep the doors of the prison himself, granted the duty of jailer, and entrusted all the prisoners to his authority. Therefore, Joseph not only did not feel the prison, but also alleviated the suffering of the other prisoners.

Chapter VI.

After a short invective against women, he also passes to the eunuchs who are the authors of this wrong; and showing how fragile their status is, he tells the dream of one of them and its interpretation. From this he shows that the power of this world is similar to a dream. Then, in a mystical way, he praises the Hebrew interpreter and attacks the ungrateful eunuch. Finally, he indirectly criticizes Calligonus and adds a few remarks about the status and fragility of the ministers of the court.

28. Therefore, the author of this injustice is a woman and eunuchs; but the woman, who is Egyptian, accustomed to mixing impudent conversations with men, teasing the modest ones, pursuing the ones who try to escape, shamelessly slandering the innocent, when she couldn't defend her own vices, accused the innocent, mixing treachery with treachery, holding onto others' faults while condemning them herself, not setting any limit to her madness. For what reason is there cruelty, except that she saw her desires being hindered and her forbidden wishes being thwarted? Because of this, the prison is opened to receive the innocent: the chains of the guilty are loosened to be placed on the faithful: the adulterers of truth are released, to imprison those who rejected the adultery of faith.

29. But what shall I say about these eunuchs? who should be an example to the other eunuchs, because their status is fragile and delicate, and all their hope lies in the king's will, for whom a slight offense would be a great danger: but their secondary matters are lowly service. One boasted that he was in charge of the wine, the other that he was in charge of the bakers. Both offended, and were sent to prison, and were entrusted to the holy Joseph by the keeper of the prison, and after being there for several days, they had a dream; and when Joseph visited them, he noticed that their spirits were troubled and sad, because they were disturbed by the dream, for which they could not find an interpreter. Is not the interpretation of dreams from God, he said? So narrate to me. And the chief cupbearer narrated his dream to me. There was a vine before me: and on the vine were three branches; and it was budding and flowering, and ripe grapes were produced. And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand. And I took it, and pressed it into the cup, and gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said to him: This is its interpretation: The three branches are three days. In three more days, Pharaoh will remember your position, and restore you to your former office, and you will give the cup into Pharaoh's hand. But remember me when you are well, and show me mercy, and remember me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of this prison; for I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing wrong, yet I am put in this

dungeon.

30. I do not wish to speak of someone else's dream. You certainly remember my words, that even then I refused to interpret it because I fear its outcome, the death that I dread. Let us first speak of the man who, when he was in charge of wine, seemed to be happy and believed that this was the pinnacle of power because he gave the cup to the king. This was his glory, this was his magnificence in this world, and he grieved being deprived of it; he rejoiced when it was restored to him. But this is a dream, and all worldly power is a dream, not truth. Finally, through the dream, he saw his authority restored to him. And Isaiah says that such are the people who delight in the things of this world, just as one who eats and drinks in dreams seems to himself to be filled with food or drink, while he sleeps; but when he wakes up, he begins to hunger even more; and then he understands how empty that food and drink of the dreamer were: so does one who sleeps in this world, not opening his eyes to the divine mysteries, as long as he is burdened by the sleep of the body, think that this worldly power is of some importance, as if he sees it in dreams; but when he wakes up, he realizes how empty this worldly pleasure is (Isaiah 29:8).

Consider now that true Hebrew, not of a dream but of truth and splendid vision, interpreter, who has come from the fullness of divinity, from the freedom of heavenly grace into this earthly prison, whom the allurements of this world could not change, no worldly corruption could overthrow, who, though tempted, did not fall, did not desire forbidden things, finally seized by the deceitful hand of the Synagogue in a deceptive garment of the body, shed the flesh, ascended free from death. The prostitute has been falsely accused. She was unable to hold the man whom prison did not frighten, whom even the underworld did not hold. Moreover, where he had descended as if to be punished, from there he freed others. Where the chains of death were binding them, there he himself loosened the chains of the dead.

32. Therefore, consider that Hebrew saying to the eunuch, who had incurred the wrath of the king, whom he had restored to his position: Remember yourself, when you are doing well, and show mercy towards me, and remember me. He repeated it a second time, because he knew that he would not recall what had happened once he regained his power. He reminded him a second time, because he had saved him a second time; so that if he did not remember the first favor, or if he betrayed the second favor, he would not despise the one who saved him, and violate his trust with treacherous disobedience. But what is worse, the quickly creeping forgetfulness of a favor comes with good fortunes. He who has returned to his own duty has not become mindful of the interpreter, but has forgotten him. But although he was forgetting, Christ was not forgetting: but he was speaking to him, and he was speaking through a servant saying to him: Remember through yourself, that is, remember what you have heard through the contemplation of your duty. But even if you have now forgotten, you will remember me; so that you may escape danger, you who have forgotten the favor. However, elevated in power, he did not remember. And what power it was, when it came to the service of wine! Behold, from where all the boasting; for he was in charge of the eunuchs, who served wine in the royal goblets. And it came to pass, he said, after two years (Gen. XLI, 1). I would be lying about this during our lord's time, unless the day also agrees; because he received the office after two years, and he did not remember, but was reminded. For he knew that even the kingdom itself in this world was a dream, which he did not believe in his dream: he also learned that the kingdom is a dream, and that the powers themselves are not eternal. But let's quickly pass over this painful passage, lest it become more painful by mentioning

it: not even the memory of my own speech pleases me, which at that time was either poured out by pain or extorted by the insult of the Church.

34. Therefore, being warned in a dream by the king, he said: I remember my sin (Ibid., 9). Indeed, it is late, but I wish it were a true confession! After the sin, you confess what you should have guarded against before the sin. How quickly you had forgotten: Remember me. You certainly know that at that time this was the discourse: but you had deaf ears due to the pride of power, and being drunk with wine, you did not hear the words of sobriety. Even now, remember me, as you confess your sin late. Why do you ask the servant of Christ, why do you deny the Lord? Be intoxicated not with wine, but with the Holy Spirit. Remember what he suffered, with whom you slept your sleep, and dreamed your dream. And he himself was in charge, and in charge of the king's banquets, which pertained to the work of the bakers. He believed himself to be exalted because he had the power over the king's bread: he did not know the many twists and turns of this power. He threatened others, soon to be handed over to the extreme punishment himself; and he did not listen to him, who, although a servant of the Lord, still spoke as an oracle: that by the king's command, the very king he flattered the most, he would lose his head and become food for birds. And you should have recalled this example in order not to believe in treachery.

35. There are also other examples of the pride and fragility of royal ministers, which the history of later times has. And Doeck was a prefect, and the prefect of the king of animals for the discipline of mules, that is, of gelded animals. This one also accused a priest of the Lord, and by deceit he stirred up the king's anger against the priest, and he was a Syrian. Am I lying, when both my homeland and the facts agree? Aman also, as the king's chamberlain and himself a prefect, wickedly dared to invade the churches of the Lord, and he spared no effort in plundering and persecuting the faithful people, expending serious sacrilegious punishments.

Chapter VII.

Joseph's dream is presented and explained, in which he is taken out of the king's prison. Ambrose applies this not only to the events of his own time but also to the present and future age. Afterwards, he interprets mystically the rewards, marriage, children, and distribution of grain for Joseph as referring to Christ; and finally, he urges us to buy spiritual food.

36. But let us return to that superintendent of the wine, who, as if very drunken with the wine, forgot the author of his benefit for a long time: sometimes, however, in order to provide an interpreter for the king, he informed him of the sequence of events, not as if grateful, but as if cunning. When this was known, the king also ordered him to be summoned, and having been brought out of prison, he asked him if he could interpret a dream for him. Delighted with his explanation, he removed the punishment and bestowed honor upon him. Therefore, see if these things do not agree with the present. The offense was committed before it was known by the king; gratitude was expressed when it was known to the king. Thus the king is free from blame; because both what the holy man suffered as an injury was not his own, and what he received as gratitude belongs to the king.

37. However, the dream and its interpretation is as follows: Whatever God does, He shows to Pharaoh. The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears of grain are seven years. The dream of Pharaoh is one. And the seven lean, ugly cows that came up after them are

seven years, as are the seven empty ears of grain blighted by the east wind. There will be seven years of famine. Now the matter was firmly established by God, and God will quickly bring it to pass. Behold, seven years of great abundance are coming to the whole land of Egypt. But there will come seven years of famine after these, and the abundance in all of Egypt will be forgotten; and the famine will consume the whole land, and the abundance of the land will not be recognized because of the famine that will come after. It is indeed severe. What Pharaoh's dream reiterated twice, because the word from God will be true, and God will hasten to make it happen. (Gen. XLI, 25 et seq.)

38. An old dream, recent things. The later have consumed the earlier: and where there was previous abundance, there has become a need for all things. But if anyone had given such advice to this king, that he should preserve something of the previous abundance for his later reign, the overflowing generosity would also have overflowed to the remaining time. But the excessive expenditure of the previous age has also left the later generations destitute, and people who are pillaging everything were unwilling to have a Joseph. Even though I, Joseph (for who else would it be), was not crying out loud, those fat cows not only signify lust but also negligence of divine reverence (for it is said of the unfaithful: Fat bulls have surrounded me (Psalm 22:13); and it is written of the Jewish people (Deuteronomy 32:15): He became fat, he became thick and gross, and he forsook the God who made him). Therefore, that dream cannot be interpreted as a mere secular abundance, but rather as a time when severe famine would follow.

However, I do not think that this dream is demonstrated to one or two, but to all; because the seven fat years of this world, rich with secular abundance, are absorbed by those ages which are yet to come, in which there will be perpetual rest and observance of the spiritual law, which Ephraem holds dear to God and fruitful for the three patriarchs. A good cow, not one with a distended body but abundant in spiritual milk and grace, on whose beauty God says He will sit, as it is written: Ephraem, the learned cow, loves victory. But I passed over the beauty of her neck (Hos. X, 11). Therefore, our head should not be fattened by the oil of sinners, nor should false fruits delight us, lest it be said of us: You have sown wickedness and harvested iniquity (Ibid., 13). I am not moved by her thin and rotten ears of grain, for even David was better when he wasted away like a spider's web; and a contrite spirit is a sacrifice to God; and those who have been oppressed by the spirit of evil in this world will be saved by a more excellent one.

40. Therefore, I believe that Joseph deserved the more mystical rewards because he spoke of mysteries. For what does the ring inserted on his finger mean, if not that the priesthood of faith was bestowed upon him, so that he might mark others himself? What does the stole, which is the garment of wisdom, mean, if not the tribute given to him by the heavenly king, the principality of prudence? The golden torque also seems to express good understanding. The chariot, likewise, signifies the lofty peak of merits. But who is there that took a wife from among the nations, except those who gathered the Church for themselves from the nations, and took from her the son Manasseh, through whom he forgot all his sorrows that he had because of the sacrileges of the Jews? He also took another son, Ephraim, through whose progress it became clear that the humility assumed in the flesh did not diminish the divinity, but rather enhanced the glory.

41. Finally, whoever was suffering from hunger, was sent to Joseph. Who are these people, if not those of whom it is said: They will turn back at evening, and suffer hunger like dogs (Psalm 59:7)?

However, the hunger was not limited to one place, but was all over the land; because there was no one who would do good. Therefore, the Lord Jesus, having mercy on earthly fasts, opened His storehouses and revealed the hidden treasures of celestial mysteries and knowledge, so that no one would lack sustenance. For Wisdom says: Come, eat my bread (Prov. 9:5). And therefore it is said of Him alone: The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want (Psalm 23:1), who is satisfied by Christ. Therefore, Christ opened His storehouses and sold, not for the price of money, but for the price of faith, and seeking the reward of devotion. But He sold not to a few in Judea, but He sold to all, so that He might be believed by all nations. And all the regions came into Egypt to Joseph to buy (Gen. XLI, 5 and 7); for famine had obtained. For all hunger, whom Christ did not feed. Therefore, let us buy food, with which we can repel hunger. Let no one be discouraged by contemplating his poverty, let no one be afraid who does not have money. Christ does not seek silver, but faith, which is more precious than silver. Finally, Peter bought it, who did not have money. Silver and gold, I do not have, but what I have, I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk (Acts 3:6). And the prophet Isaiah says: You who thirst, go to the water; and you who do not have silver, go, buy, and drink, and eat: buy wine and fat without silver and price (Isaiah 55:1). For he did not seek a price from us, who paid the price of his own blood for us; for he redeemed us not with gold and silver, but with precious blood. Therefore, you must pay the price for what you have bought; and even if he does not always demand it, you still must. Therefore, buy Christ for yourself not because few have him, but because everyone has him. Everyone has him by nature, few offer themselves out of fear. What Christ requires from you is what is rightfully his. He himself gave life to everyone, he himself offered his death for everyone. Pay for the author what you are obligated to pay by law. This contract is not insignificant. Not everyone easily sees him. Finally, those virgins in the Gospel (Matt. 25:9ff) whom the coming bridegroom excluded were left outside because they did not buy the available oil. Therefore, it is said to them: 'Rather, go to the sellers and buy for yourselves.' And the merchant is rightly praised, who sold all his possessions and bought a pearl (Matt. 13:46).

Chapter VIII.

Exhortation of Jacob to his sons to go to Egypt to buy food, what it means; and also the departure of ten of them, leaving Benjamin at home?

43. And Jacob said to his sons: Why are you lazy? Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt: go down there, and buy food for us (Gen. XLII, 1 and 2) : Jacob said this not once, but daily he says it to all his sons who come too late to the grace of Christ: Why are you lazy? Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. From this grain comes the seed that rises. Therefore, whoever suffers from hunger must attribute it to their own laziness. Behold, I heard, he says, that there is grain in Egypt. Certainly, the young are quicker to hear something than the old, as they are placed outside and go around many things. But this negotiation the old man hears first, but that old man in whom is the long-standing faith. The former old man understands, but that old man in whom is venerable old age, and the age of old age is an immaculate life.

44. Not all undertake this business, except the sons of Jacob, and they themselves of a more advanced age. Therefore, ten proceed, the younger does not proceed. The father did not send him: 'Lest,' he said, 'sickness befall him'. Benjamin the younger was still subject to sickness. Indeed, Benjamin is read as the patriarch, but he was prefigured by Paul from the tribe of

Benjamin. It was deservedly doubted by Jacob about his sickness. Finally, he was made sick in order to be healed: he suffered blindness, but this sickness led to salvation. Finally, that blindness brought light.

45. We have received the history, let us understand the mystery. Without Benjamin, the patriarchs went forth; without Paul, the apostles. Neither of them came first, but being summoned by the first, they made greater profit from the arrival of those who came before. There is, he says, grain in Egypt, that is, where there is greater hunger, there is greater plenty. There is much grain in Egypt. Finally, even God the Father says: Out of Egypt I have called my Son (Hosea, XI, 1). From this seed comes that abundance. For there could not have been a harvest unless the Egyptians had sown the seed beforehand. Therefore, there is grain that no one believed existed before. The patriarchs trade in this grain. And indeed, they brought silver, but the good Joseph gave grain and returned the silver. For Christ is not bought with money, but with grace. Your price is faith. These divine mysteries are bought. However, that unclean donkey carried this grain in the law, but now it is clean in grace.

Chapter IX.

As hunger grows, the sons of Jacob return to Egypt, bringing Benjamin with them and presenting gifts. Joseph kindly speaks to his brothers, who are invited to a feast but suspect a plot against them. They are reassured by the master of the house. All these things are explained regarding the calling and preaching of Paul, as well as the unbelief of the Jews.

However, Benjamin, the youngest, was still held captive by his paternal affection. He was bound by the chains of the law, the paternal custom. Hunger grew stronger because it came late. Two intervene for him, Reuben and Judah (Gen., XLIII, 1 et seq.), that is, humility and confession. The father uses these sureties, he entrusts himself to them, one of which is the primitive, the other the resurrected. The law of the primitive, the Gospel of the resurrected. Benjamin, the youngest, is brought forward with these, and he arrives accompanied by sweet aromas, carrying with him the resin with which marble stones are connected; because by his preaching, like spiritual resin, he also connects living stones themselves: carrying also honey, by which harmful internal wounds are healed without any bitterness of cutting. For such is the preaching of Paul, that he might eliminate the rotten affection, and evacuate the corrupted humor of his discussion with the sting of his preaching, desiring to burn the sick entrails of the mind rather than cutting them. He taught that the incense of prayer, and cinnamon, and the drop of burial are symbols of the prophets David, saying: Myrrh and cinnamon and the drop of burial are from your clothes (Ps. 44:9). For Paul came to preach the cross of the Lord, always green like the holly oak, and the nuts, which have a harder shell and a tender fruit, and rightly so, for the priestly rod of Aaron was a nut tree, and the staff of Jeremiah was of the same kind. Who would doubt that silver is also a dual-purpose, not idle gift; when both the life of the Patriarchs and the discourse of the Apostles always flourish in the hearts of individuals; and the speech of the saints, like silver tested by fire, shines with the bright light of salutary instruction? And not without reason do they refer to dual-purpose silver in which the coming of Paul was prefigured, who bestowed double honor on the laboring elders in word and doctrine. But Joseph saw them, and Benjamin his brother from the same mother (Gen. XLIII, 29). Now the Hebrews seem to see, and they seem to be seen by Christ who is the true Joseph, when they come with Paul as a type: and He speaks to them gently and meekly, so that they may take

food together. However, because they came without Benjamin, He recognized them for sure: but He turned away from them, as it is written: And He spoke harshly to them (Gen. XLII, 7), because they did not recognize Him, by whom they were recognized. Therefore, Paul rightly made progress, whom the Lord Jesus loved more than the other brothers as a younger brother born from the same mother. Let the Jews take note of the Lord whom they denied, who even though crucified, still loves them as if born from the same parent, if they come to know the author of their salvation even late. But being conscious of their own sins, they do not believe that the mercy of Christ is so great as to forgive sin and pardon injury. And so they were prefigured in the patriarchs what they would be in the future. They were invited to grace, they were called to the banquet of the saving table; and they suspected that calumny was being prepared against them, that plots were being made against them.

48. And they began to argue with the man who was above the house in the doorway of the house, wanting to present their case. They still hesitate to enter and prefer to justify themselves by their works, who want to build their case rather than accept grace; and therefore they are reproved at the gates. But he who expects the fruit of the virgin's womb and the inheritance of the Lord, trades the sons of his business for merchandise, will not be ashamed at the gate; but at the end of this life he repels the enemy, lest he hinder the one hastening to higher things, being conscious of a more serious fault.

49. Then the steward responded to them mystically. And know who he is, when you read that Moses was faithful in all his house. For the stewards, Moses, Peter, Paul, and the other saints are; but Christ alone is the Lord. It is written: Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken (Hebrews III, 5); but Christ as a son in his own house, which house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope (Ibid., 6).

50. Therefore, the master of the house responded to them: May God be propitious to you, do not be afraid; for your God, and the God of your fathers, has given you treasures in your bags: but I have received your genuine silver. (Gen. XLIII, 23). For they had said: We found each one's silver in our bags, we have brought back our silver by weight. (Ibid., 21). Oh great mysteries, and clearly expressed! This is to say: Why are you inflamed? Do you have your money in your wallets often? For what do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? Now you are satisfied, you have become rich, because you believe you have money. But God of your fathers has given you that money. He is your God, the God of your fathers, whom you denied. But He forgives, He indulges, He receives if you return. He is the one who does not seek your money, he gives his own. He himself gave you money in your purses. Now your purses have money, who used to have clay; and therefore he is yours who says: You have cut off my sackcloth, and have clothed me with joy (Ps. XXIX, 12). Christ is the gift of joy, he is your money, he is your price. The Lord Jesus does not demand the price of his grain from you, he does not seek the weight of your silver. Your silver is bad, the silver of the purse is not good.

I acknowledge your good silver, which you have given with faithful devotion, like the sons of Jacob (Gen. 43:23). This is not your material silver, but your spiritual silver, that is, good silver, which is given without loss and without any expense. By such a price, the detriment of death is excluded, and the gain of life is acquired.

Chapter X.

After a few noon-time preparations, the bringing in of the gifts, the restoration of the banquet, and the most kindly meeting of Joseph with his brothers are recounted. When he sees his brother Benjamin and inquires about him, he blesses him and, having withdrawn to hide his tears, soon returns with a washed face. To these events is added a moral and mystical interpretation.

52. However, they delayed the gifts until Joseph entered at noon (ibid., 25). Paul's faith hastened at noon. Before he was blind, afterwards he began to see the light of righteousness; for whoever reveals his way to the Lord and hopes in him, the Lord will also bring forth his righteousness like the noonday, and his judgment like the midday. And when God appeared to Abraham at the oak of Mamre, it was noon, and from the presence of the Lord eternal light shone. Midday is when Joseph truly enters his home to have lunch. For then the day shines more, when we celebrate the sacraments.

53. And they brought him gifts, he said, (Ibid., 26 et seq.). We bring gifts, he prepares a banquet. He says: Bring the bread, which only the Jews eat, the Egyptians cannot eat. But before the banquet, what dignity! What a mastery of moral diligence and grace! Despite the suspicion that the brothers thought Joseph had against them, he invited them to dine, their feelings wavered: his grace continued: he called the first, he asked the first: How are you? And again he said: Is it right that your father is older? It is the duty of the younger to initiate conversation, to give confidence in speaking, to inquire not only about themselves, but also about their parents. The respondent said to him: Your son is right, our father. That elder said, so that he would be honored: they named him as the boy, so that they would give the service of humility; which seems that old age is of honored dignity, but boyhood seems to be subject, and closer to modesty than pride.

56. But looking with his eyes, he saw Benjamin his brother from the same mother (Genesis 29). It is a moral principle that we see those whom we love above others, and that our gaze is drawn to those who occupy our thoughts. For often, preoccupied with other matters, we do not see those who are before our eyes; thus, our gaze is guided by our mind. Therefore, holy Joseph saw his brother Benjamin, whom he held in his thoughts and sought with his eyes. In his absence, he had almost not seen his brothers, for seeing was of no use; and he was not satisfied with merely seeing, but as if unaware, he asked, 'Is this your younger brother?' Custom and the grace of charity require that we hold dear not only with our eyes, but also with our words. Joseph recognized his beloved: he sat and asked, so that his soul, which he held, would be heard.

57. Finally, he did not wait for a response, but immediately blessed him, and he was troubled by the fruit of his desire. His heart was tormented because the freedom to embrace the one he desired was delayed. Finally, he entered the storehouse, wept, and washed his face, and restrained himself. The sharp spurs of great love quickly pierce the hearts, unless the reins of desire are loosened. Joseph was overcome by affection, his plan was delayed: reason was at odds with love. He wept, so that the heat of devout love might temper with tears. This is moral.

58. However, mystically. The Lord Jesus saw Paul, for the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and He said: 'This is your younger brother' (ibid., 29)? He is called younger still, who had not yet reached the mature age of the white-haired faith, who had not yet grown into a perfect man, into that full measure of the age of the fullness of Christ (Eph. IV, 13). Finally, he is only called young there (Acts VII, 57), where he was keeping the garments of those stoning Stephen. And for this reason, he desired Philemon to be like him not in his youth but in his old age, as he

wrote: I beg you even more, now that I am old like Paul (Philem. 9). Therefore, he advises that younger widows should be avoided (I Tim. V, 11), not because of their age but because of a certain lasciviousness of youthful transgressions and immaturity of virtue. However, there is greater praise for chastity in a young person than in an old person. But I think it is not unrelated to the truth that, if we understand that when Paul had this experience and was struck with horror because blindness had befallen him, he nevertheless began to draw near by saying: Lord, what do you want me to do (Act. IX, 6); therefore, he was called younger by Christ, so that he who was called by grace would be excused from guilt, because he had been subjected to the slipperiness of youth. Finally, Christ saw him when a light shone around him. And because young people are more often drawn away from vice by fear than reason, he used a stimulus and, taking pity, warned him not to resist the stimulus.

However, he was troubled, as you have in the Gospel (John 11:33), because he was troubled in spirit when he raised Lazarus; and there he wept, so that he might wash away with his tears the sins of the dead. But he wept inwardly, and he washed his face. The blindness of Paul is the tears of Christ: he washes his face, where his lost light is restored. Christ washes his face, where Paul was baptized, through whom the Lord Jesus seemed to be seen by many. And therefore in the banquet, her part became five times greater, because she surpassed the others not only in mental prudence but also in bodily strength and grace of chastity.

Chapter XI.

All the brothers are intoxicated with St. Joseph; but only Benjamin's cup is placed in the sack. The bags are inspected in order of all the sacks, and finally that vessel is found, and the mysteries of these are revealed; where especially the divine gifts and the calling of Paul are discussed.

60. But they drank and became intoxicated with him (Genesis, XLIII, 34). In the beginning, a greater pre-eminence of faith is given to Paul, about whom it was said to Ananias: Go, for he is a chosen vessel for me, to bear my name before the Gentiles (Acts, IX, 15). In the beginning, she is intoxicated with sobriety, but sober; so that he himself would say with the saints: And your cup is drunk, how excellent it is (Psalm, XXII, 5)!

61. And a silver cup is placed in his sack alone (Gen. XLIV, 2). Benjamin did not know this: Paul was deceived, but he was called. He is sent after him in the morning. For the night had passed, the day of faith was approaching.

62. The bags are inspected first in order (Ibid. 12 et seq.). Divine Scripture teaches you morality. In order, they reclined at the banquet against him, the first according to age (Gen. XLIII, 33). You see that that place is to be given to the elder. In order, the bags of each one are examined again, so that you may know that Paul was chosen by heavenly judgment. He disproved the others, and preferred this one. In no one else's bag was a silver cup found, except this one. What does it mean that he is inside a bag? Indeed, Joseph made himself drunk in order to deceive: he sent a cup to bring back the brother whom he loved, in a pious deception: but divine mysteries shine forth.

63. Christ found in us silver, which he himself has given. We have the silver of nature, we also have the silver of grace. Nature is the work of the Creator: grace is the gift of the Redeemer. And if we cannot see the gifts of Christ; yet he gives, and operates secretly, and gives to all: but to preserve is the work of a few, and not to lose. However, he does not give everything to everyone.

Wheat is given to many, the cup to one, who is given the gift of prophecy and priesthood. For not all, but the Prophet says: I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord (Psalm 115:13).

64. Therefore, in the body of Paul, the splendor of heavenly doctrine already shone forth, since he was learned in the law. But because he was not yet subject to the righteousness of God, he was within a sack, doctrine within the law, a lamp within a bushel. However, Ananias was sent to offer a blessing, lay hands on him, and loosen the sack: with the sack loosened, silver shone forth, and as if certain bonds of the sack had fallen away, scales immediately fell from his eyes (Acts 9:17). His bond was perfidy: his release was faith. And therefore, like one unbound from a sack, that is, from the veil of the law which is placed over the heart of the Jews, he turned to the Lord, freed from the bondage, and obtained the grace of freedom, saying: So, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of God, we are being transformed into the same image (2 Corinthians 3:18). For with the loosing of the shoe of the law, he preached the Gospel with the naked footstep of free speech. The Jews held him and wanted to hinder him, but when the silver shone in his sack, they tore their clothes and turned back. For the preaching of Christ by Paul has exposed the people of the Jews and has cut off all their favor.

Therefore, they returned backward who could not see before them (Gen. XLIV, 13). They go back who lose Christ. Finally, in the Gospel (John XVIII, 6) when they seized the Lord Jesus to lead Him to His death, they fell backward to the ground. They rightly returned backward who fell from heavenly grace into earthly depravity. Therefore, they did not want to return morally without a brother, mystically without Paul: with him gone, they claimed that the sorrowful old age of the parent people should be led. And so Judas wanted to remain with Joseph (Gen. XLIV, 18 et seq.), so that he would not see the bad things that they would find about his father, that is, he foresaw and wanted to guard against the bad things that were going to happen to the Jewish people. But since these same things were not yet in that type of free preaching of the leaders of the Jewish people, Joseph wept, that is, Jesus wept.

Chapter XII.

Joseph, revealing himself to his brothers, invites them to come forward and even makes excuses, thereby expressing the manner in which Christ was going to act against the Jews. There, an elegant comparison between the words of both is presented; and after that, Joseph's embrace of Benjamin is briefly explained by Paul.

67. And he commanded all to depart, so that it could be known by the brothers. For he had not come, as he himself said, except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And speaking with weeping, he said, 'I am Joseph; is my father still alive?' (Gen. XLV, 2 and 3). That is, he extended his hands to a people who did not believe and contradicted: not seeking an ambassador or messenger, but desiring to save his own people, the Lord himself: 'I, who spoke, behold I am here,' he said (Isaiah LII, 6). And so, openly, I appear to those who do not seek me, and I am visible to those who do not ask me (Isaiah 65:1). What else did he then shout, if not: I am Jesus (John 18:5), when the leaders of the Jews asked: Are you the son of God? he responded: You say that I am; when Pilate said: Are you saying that I am a king? I was born for this, to bear witness to the truth (Ibid., 37); when the high priest said: I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the son of God, he replied: You have said it. Truly I say to you, from now on you will see the

Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power of God and coming with the clouds of heaven (Matthew 26:63-64). So this is what he says: I am Joseph, I am of divine power. Is my father still alive? That is, I do not deny my father, I recognize my brothers, if either you recognize your brother or your father recognizes his son. Therefore, my people are still alive, from which people's family have I chosen my brother?

Draw near to me (Gen. XLV, 4); for I have approached you, and I have approached to the extent of assuming flesh in order to become a partaker of your nature. Do not, therefore, flee from or reject your communion, if you do not recognize the author of salvation.

69. And they came to him, and he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that you sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years has the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to make sure of the preservation of your race in the land, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. What else does our Lord Jesus Christ, who surpassed all his brothers in piety, have: intercession for the people, saying on the cross, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing' (Luke 23:34)? What else does that expression of holiness in the midst of the disciples, saying, 'Peace be with you; I am he, do not be afraid' (Luke 24:36)? And when they were troubled and frightened, thinking they saw a spirit, he said to them again, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your hearts?' See, behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have (Ibid., 38 and 39). Therefore, these mysteries that will happen in future times were already revealed then.

70. Finally, these things are expressed in their own words, so that we understand it to be Joseph himself, both before and after speaking in his own body, since he did not change his words. For he said at that time: Do not be sad. And later: Go up to my father, and say to him: Thus says your son Joseph: God has made me lord of all the land of Egypt. And in the Gospel he says: Do not be afraid. Go, tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me (Matthew 28:10). And below he says: All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me (Ibid., 18), that is to say: this was of divine arrangement that I received power, not of human bitterness. He does not accuse a crime, who enumerates the reward. But what is said in Genesis: 'For God sent me ahead of you to preserve life' (Genesis 45:5), is repeated in the Gospel, saying: 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit' (Matthew 28:19). For this is the reward and life of the saints, which has also redeemed others.

Moreover, pay attention to this, not written in Genesis in vain: 'And you shall be near me, you and your sons, and the sons of your sons' (Gen. XLV, 10). For this is what he said in the Gospel: 'Behold, I am with you all days until the end of the world' (Matthew XXVIII, 20).

73. How evident also is that mystery, which, as if having completed every commandment, Joseph embraces his brother Benjamin, and falls upon his neck (Gen. XLV, 14), just as Christ embraces Paul, having completed the Gospel, with the arms of his mercy (Act. IX, 4 et seq.), so that, being bent in internal opinion, he may raise him from the neck to heaven. Therefore, being raised by Christ, he says: But our conversation is in heaven (Philip. III, 20).

Chapter XIII.

Joseph rejoices in his brothers' inventions, which show his kindness towards them. What do the gifts that Joseph gives to his brothers, especially Benjamin, and sends to his father mean? What does his exhortation to peace when they leave signify? The wonder of their return to the land of Canaan and the news that their father hears that Joseph is alive follows.

74. And Pharaoh was glad that Joseph recognized his brothers (Gen. XLV, 16 et seq.). Hence the word was spread in Pharaoh's house. And Joseph urged his holy brothers to come and invite their father, and he commanded that their sacks be filled with wheat and that wagons be given to them. Whence this kindness to the barbarians, if not to show that great mystery, which the Church no longer envies, when the Jews are redeemed, and the Christian people rejoice in this union, and to whom she is able to provide aid, and sends those who proclaim the kingdom of God, that they may be called forth more quickly? To whom two stoles are given (Genesis, XLV, 22).

75. And he cites Paul, when he sets forth his statements, to whom three hundred gold coins, and five multicolored robes (Ibid., 23) are given by Christ. He who proclaims the cross of Christ possesses three hundred gold coins. Therefore, he says: For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (I Cor. II, 2). And he rightly receives the gold coins, because he preached not in persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit. However, he receives the five robes, either the diverse disciplines of wisdom, or because he was not captured by the allurements of bodily senses, where others may find danger, he held victory; he conquered all pleasures of the flesh by singular self-restraint and virtue, his intellect and study not dulled by any weakness of the body, to the point that even though he is in the body, he does not know that he has a body. Finally, caught up in paradise, whether in the body or outside the body, not knowing, he heard unspeakable words, which it is not allowed to speak to a human being: in the end, he smelled nothing earthly on earth, as he himself teaches, saying: For we are the good fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved (2 Corinthians 2:15).

76. Therefore, Paul excels, and his portion is abundant: but nevertheless, other preachers have their grace. They receive two tunics. Which ones? Surely, those about which you should not doubt, because you have read the saying from Wisdom: She has made for her husband two garments (Prov. XXXI, 22). One is mystical, the other moral. But not all apostles, not all prophets, not all pastors, not all virtues, not all have the grace of healings, not all speak in tongues. Where the merits are different, the rewards are different.

77. And they send gifts ahead to their father (Gen. XLV, 23) . The son honors the father. Christ invites his people with promises, invites them with gifts. These gifts were carried by that useless and burdensome donkey before, now they are useful: they carry in type the gifts of Christ, who will be carried in the Gospel as the giver of gifts. But he released his brothers, and they went away. And Joseph said to them: Do not be angry on the way. How well he teaches that we must beware of anger, because it can even separate loving brothers: and especially on a journey, discord must be avoided, where he himself, the one who accompanies us, must have the unbreakable bond of grace. And what else does our Lord Jesus, about to depart from this body, say when he dismisses his disciples, except that they should not be angry on the way, saying: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you? For where there is peace, anger has no place, discord is removed, dissension is driven away. This is therefore what he says: My peace I give unto you; that is, Do not be angry

on the way. And see that on this way he does not say, that is, in this course of the whole of life, indignation must be avoided, which anger often (XI., quaest. 3, Anger often) even leads the innocent into crime: because while we are more angry with the just, and wish to restrain the sin of others, we commit graver sins. Therefore, the Apostle says: Do not avenge yourselves, my dearest ones, but give place to wrath (Rom. XII, 19), that is, let us decline it, so that it does not seize us. Hence, when the Lord Jesus sent his disciples to preach, he sent them without gold, without silver, without money, without a bag, without a staff, that is, so that he would take away both the incentives of strife and the instruments of revenge. And they went up, he says, from Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan to their father Jacob; and they told him, saying: Joseph, thy son, is alive, and he is ruler in all the land of Egypt. (Gen. XLV, 25). What is the land of Canaan? It was shaking. Therefore, what is more evident than the times of the apostles being designated? They entered into the shaking synagogues of the Jews, proclaiming the power of the Lord Jesus, as we have in the Acts of the Apostles, with Peter saying: This Jesus therefore God has raised up, of whom we are witnesses. Therefore, being exalted by the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he poured out this gift that you now see (Acts 2:32-33). Certainly, we observe how he both gives life and governs the entire earth, who, opening his treasures, grants the abundance of spiritual grace to all. The apostles were saying these things (Acts 5:18), but the Jews did not believe. Instead, they laid hands on them and put the preachers of salvation in custody.

80. Therefore, it is also written about Jacob: 'His mind was numb with fear' (Gen. 45:26); for he did not believe them. He was struck with emotion by the unfaithful people, but after he learned about the acts of Christ, he, being overwhelmed by such great blessings and works, regained his spirit, saying: 'It is a great thing for me that my son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die' (Ibid., 45:28). To believe in the resurrection of Christ is the first and greatest foundation of faith. For whoever believes in the resurrection, he seeks eagerly, approaches with devotion, and worships God with the innermost mind. For he believes that he himself will not die, if he believes in the author of resurrection.

Chapter XIV.

Israel, having elevated himself, comes to the well of the oath, where he also sacrifices. God comforts him with promises and assures him that Joseph's eyes will be closed by his hand. Seventy-five souls enter Egypt, and finally Israel gathers his sons to him. And what are the mysteries of all these things?

81. And Israel, raising himself up, came to the well of the oath, and offered a sacrifice to the God of his father Isaac (Gen. 46:1). He is rightly elevated who hurries to Christ. Faith goes before devotion. He elevated himself first and then offered sacrifice. For he sacrifices well who has sought knowledge of divinity. But God spoke to Israel in a vision at night, saying: Jacob, Jacob. And he said: What is it? And the Lord said: I am the God of your fathers, do not be afraid, go down to Egypt; for I will make you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will bring you up again forever (Gen., XLVI, 2 et seq.). Just as they read, they do not understand; and they reject Moses whom they praise, when they refuse to believe his writings. What is more evident than the fact that in this place they are invited to pass into the holy Church of God, and those who were previously confined within the narrow boundaries of Judea migrate to the people of God,

who, gathered from the whole world, from all nations and peoples, has become a great nation? Finally, their sound has gone out into all the earth. Therefore, the people of the Jews are called by their sons, Jacob, that is, by Peter, Paul, John, and are invited to grace.

83. Our very own God Himself also encourages him with His own oracle, promising him the profitable fruit of his faith, saying to him: Joseph will lay his hand upon your eyes (Gen. XLVI, 4) . The holy Patriarch was not anxious about who would close his eyes; though even with simple understanding, moral feelings can be expressed. For if we often desire to embrace those whom we love, how much more are we delighted by the touch of our dear ones, when we are about to depart from this body, and how comforted are we by this provision for the journey? However, it is allowed for us to understand mystically that the Jewish people will come to know God afterwards. For this is a mystery, that the true Joseph will place his hands over his eyes, so that he who did not see before, may now see. Come to the Gospel (John 9:6), read how that blind man was healed, to whom Jesus laid his hands and took away his blindness. For Christ does not lay hands on those who are dying, but on those who will live; or if on those who are dying, then rightly so; because we die first, in order to come alive again. For we cannot live to God unless we die to sin first.

84. So seventy-five souls descend into Egypt, as it is written, and this is the mystical number of forgiveness; for after so much hardness, after so many sins, they would be deemed unworthy unless forgiveness of sins were granted to them. Judah, that is, the confession of error, meets him. The Jewish people send him as a forerunner. Therefore, Joseph, that is, the true arbiter and interpreter of divinity, meets him; for confession now precedes those whom perfidy formerly possessed. For Christ is the interpreter of divinity, because no one has ever seen God; except the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has explained Him. In the last times, He will receive the Jewish people of old age, weary, not according to their deserts, but according to the choice of grace: and he will place his hands over their eyes, to remove their blindness. He has delayed their healing, so that the one who did not think he should be believed might believe in the end, and lose the prerogative of the earlier choice. And so the Apostle says: 'A blindness in part has happened in Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved' (Rom. XI, 25). The actions of the patriarchs are therefore mysteries of the future. Finally, Jacob himself says to his sons: Gather together, that I may tell you what will happen to you in the last days. Gather together and listen, O sons of Israel (Gen. 49:1-2).

On Naboth the Jezreelite

One Book of Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, On Naboth the Jezreelite.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.
- Chapter XII.
- Chapter XIII.
- Chapter XIV.
- Chapter XV.
- Chapter XVI.
- Chapter XVII.

Chapter I.

How Naboth and Ahab, though poor, are oppressed daily by the rich; even though nature has produced everyone as equals, and the grave receives equals: Ambrose criticizes the arrogance and foolishness of the wealthy on this matter.

1. The story of Naboth is ancient, happening every day. For who among the wealthy does not desire another's possessions daily? Who among the very rich does not strive to evict the poor from

their small plot of land and drive the destitute off their ancestral estate? Who is content with what they have? Whose heart is not inflamed by their neighbor's wealth? Therefore, it is not just one Achab who is born, but, what is worse, an Achab is born every day and never dies in this age. If one is killed, many rise up: more who take than who lose. Not only one Nabuthe the poor is killed: every day Nabuthe is struck down, every day the poor are killed. This human race, struck with fear, now yields its own lands, and with their little ones, the poor laden with their pledge, migrate. The weeping wife follows, as if she were accompanying her husband to the grave. She grieves less, however, who mourns the deaths of her own; because even though she has lost the protection of her husband, she possesses his tomb; and if she does not have children, nevertheless she does not lament the exiles, she does not sigh with heavier grief for the funeral rites of her tender offspring.

How far will you extend, rich people, your insane desires? Will you alone inhabit the earth? Why do you cast out your companion nature? And claim for yourselves the possession of nature? The earth is founded for the common use of all, both rich and poor. Why do you, rich people, arrogate to yourselves exclusive rights to the land? Nature knows not the rich, for it begets all the poor. For we are not born with clothes, nor are we born with gold and silver. He sheds naked men into the light, needy of food, clothing, and drink: the earth receives naked those whom it has given birth to, not knowing how to enclose the boundaries of possessions in a tomb. A narrow plot of land is equally abundant to the poor and the wealthy: and the earth, which did not take into its care the emotions of the living, now encompasses the entire rich man. Therefore, nature does not know how to discern when we are born, nor does it know when we are overcome. It creates all alike, it closes all alike in the embrace of the tomb. Who can distinguish the appearance of the dead? Plow the land again, and if you can, discover wealth. Dig up a little later a mound, and if you recognize someone in need, argue; unless of course it is only with the wealthy that more is lost.

Silk robes, and cloaks woven with gold, with which the wealthy adorn their bodies, are the losses of the living, not the aids of the dead. You receive perfume when you are rich, and yet you stink: you lose the favor of others, and do not gain your own. You leave behind heirs who will fight amongst themselves. You leave a deposit to your heirs, rather than a voluntary gift, which they fear will diminish and violate what has been left. If your heirs are frugal, they will preserve it: if they are extravagant, they will exhaust it. Therefore, either you constantly condemn good heirs with worry, or you let go of the bad ones, so that your actions condemn you.

Chapter II. The richer they are in wealth, the poorer they are in affection. This is made evident by the contention between Ahab and Naboth. Soon, with the proposed text of Scripture, that request, 'Give me, how base it is,' is understood. But what do you suppose that while you live, you abound in everything? O rich man, you do not know how poor you are, how destitute you appear to yourself, who call yourself rich! The more you have, the more you seek: and whatever you acquire, still you are in need. Greed is inflamed by gain, it is not satisfied. Desire has certain steps: the more it climbs, the more it hastens to higher things, from where the ruin for the falling one will be heavier. However, this one was more tolerable when he had less: he sought moderate wealth through reflection on his wealth; with the increase of his estate, an increase in desire also occurred. He does not want to be unworthy of his desires, poor in his wishes. In this way, he combines two intolerable things together, so that he increases the ambitious hope of the rich and does not give up the mindset of being in poverty. Finally, divine Scripture teaches us how

wretched he is, begging despicably.

5. King Ahab was in Israel, and Naboth was poor. The king was wealthy in the resources of his kingdom, but Naboth possessed only a small piece of land. The poor man desired nothing from the possessions of the rich man: the king seemed to himself to be in need because the poor man had a vineyard nearby. Therefore, who seems poor to you; the one who is content with his own, or the one who desires what belongs to others? Certainly, the one who is poor in wealth seems rich in affection. The affectionate person does not know how to be in need: an abundant wealth cannot fill a greedy heart. And so, the rich person is eager in the envy of possessions, and the complaint of poverty. But now let us consider the words of Scripture.

6. And it came to pass, he said, after these words, there was a vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite in Israel, near the house of Ahab the king of Samaria. And Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying: Give me your vineyard, and it will be a vegetable garden for me, because it is near my house; and I will give you another vineyard for it. But if it pleases you, I will give you money for this vineyard, and it will be a vegetable garden for me. And Naboth said to Ahab: May it not be done by God, to give you the inheritance of my fathers. And his spirit was troubled, and he slept in his bed, and he covered his face, and he did not eat bread.

7. The divine Scripture had stated above (3 Kings 19:21) that Elisha, being poor, left his oxen and ran to Elijah, and killed them, and gave the meat to the people, and followed the prophet. Therefore, as a condemnation, the story of the rich man is presented, who is described in this king, because having received the blessings of God, like this Ahab, to whom the Lord gave both a kingdom and rain through the prayer of the prophet Elijah, he violated the divine commandments.

8. Therefore let us hear what he says: Give me, he says. What other voice does a needy person have? What other voice does one demanding public assistance have, if not Give me, that is, give me, because I am in need: give me, because I cannot have any other means of living: give me, because I do not have bread for sustenance, money for drink, resources for food, substance for clothing: give me, because the Lord has given you what you should give, but has not given to me: give me, because unless you give, I will not be able to have: give me, because it is written: Give alms (Luke 11:41). How low, how base is this! They do not have the sentiment of humility, but the fire of greed. And in this very abjection, what impudence! 'Give me,' he says, 'your vineyard.' He confesses the desire to obtain what is undeserved.

9. And I will give you another vineyard in return for it, he said. The rich man despises what is his own as if it is worthless; but he desires what belongs to others as if it is extremely valuable.

10. But if it pleases you, I will give you money. He swiftly corrects his error by offering money for the vineyard. For he who desires to occupy all his possessions, does not want another to possess anything.

Chapter III.

Not so much because of the usefulness, do the rich desire the possessions of others, but rather to exclude other people. How empty that desire is, which convinces them that they are inferior even to animals: how disgraceful it is to sell paternal property for the sake of luxury: finally, how impatiently the rich bear rejection!

11. And he said to me, 'And I will have a vegetable garden.' This, therefore, was all madness, this was all madness, that the space should be sought for cheap vegetables. Therefore, you do not desire to possess it as something useful, but you want to exclude others. Your concern for the spoils of the poor is greater than for your own profits. You consider it an injury to you if a poor person has anything that can be valued as worthy of a wealthy possession. You consider it a loss to you, whatever is someone else's. What delights you in the expenses of nature? The world was created for all, yet few rich individuals attempt to defend it for themselves. For it is not only earthly possessions that are claimed, but even the heavens, the air, the sea, are claimed for the use of a few wealthy individuals. This air, which you enclose with your widespread possessions, how many peoples can it nourish? Do the Angels have divided spaces of the sky, so that you can delineate the earth with fixed boundaries? The Prophet cries out: Woe to those who join house to house, and field to field! (Isaiah 5:8) And he accuses them of ineffective greed. They flee from living with other people, and therefore exclude their neighbors: but they cannot flee, because when they exclude these ones, they find others again; and when they push away those, it is necessary for them to come into the neighborhood of others. For they cannot live alone on the earth. Birds associate with birds, finally the sky is covered mostly by the flight of a large flock: cattle are joined with cattle, fish with fish: they do not consider it a loss, but a trade of living, when they undertake the company of many, and seek a certain protection for the solace of more frequent society. Alone you, man, exclude a companion: you include wild beasts; you build habitats for animals, you destroy humans. You bring the sea into your estates, so that wild animals do not lack: you extend the boundaries of the land, so that you cannot have a neighbor.

We heard the voice of a wealthy man seeking what belongs to others, let us listen to the voice of a poor man claiming what is rightfully his: 'This shall not be, he says, from God, that I give you the inheritance of my fathers. He thinks that his wealth is like a contagious disease, as if to say: Your money shall bring you to ruin (Acts 8:20); but I cannot sell the inheritance of my fathers. You have something to follow, O wealthy man, if you are wise; do not sell your field for the pleasure of a night with a prostitute: do not waste your rights on excessive feasting and luxuries; do not gamble away your house, lest you lose the rights of ancestral piety.'

14. Having heard these things, the spirit of the greedy king was disturbed: And he slept in his bed, and he covered his face, and he did not eat his bread. The rich mourn, if they are unable to plunder others: if the poor does not yield to their wealth, they cannot hide the force of their sorrow. They long for lordship, they cover their faces; so that they may not see anything foreign in the world, so that they may not know that there is anything in this world that is not theirs, so that they may not hear their neighbor possessing something, so that they may not hear the poor contradicting them. These are the souls, of whom the prophet says: Rich women, arise (Isaiah 32:9).

Chapter IV. Why was Achab said to have not eaten his bread? An elegant comparison of the abstinence of the rich and the poor. How foolish it is to anxiously accumulate wealth for heirs; and concerning the filth of a certain rich man. And he did not eat his bread, he said, for he sought another's. Indeed, the rich eat another's bread more than their own, who live by plunder and exercise their own by robbery. Or surely he did not eat his bread willingly to punish himself with death because something was denied to him.

16. Now compare the condition of the poor. He has nothing, and voluntary fasting he does not know unless it is for God; fasting out of necessity he does not understand. You, the rich, take away everything from the poor, you strip them of everything, you leave nothing behind: yet it is you, the rich, who endure the punishment of the poor. They fast if they do not have; you, when you have. Therefore, you demand punishment from yourselves before inflicting it on the poor. Therefore, you pay for the miseries of miserable poverty with your own condition: and the poor indeed have nothing to use; but neither do you use it yourselves, nor do you allow others to use it. You extracted gold from the veins of metal, but then you hid it again. How many lives you bury in that gold!

17. To whom are those things kept, when you read about the greedy rich man: He hides treasures, and does not know for whom he gathers them (Ps. XXXVIII, 7)? The idle heir waits, the fastidious heir scolds, because you die late. He hates the increase of his inheritance, he hastens towards losses. What then is more pitiable, when you abandon gratitude even among those for whom you work? Because of him, you endure hunger all day long, fearing the daily losses of your meals: because of him, you observe daily fasts.

18. I knew a rich man who, when setting out for his country estate, would have the loaves of bread brought to the city and counted, so that it could be estimated how many days' worth of bread would be needed in the country. He did not want to open the sealed granary, lest anything be diminished from what had been stored. One loaf of bread was assigned for each day, which could hardly satisfy a hungry person. I also found out from a reliable source that if he ever received an egg, he would complain that a chicken had been killed. I am writing this in order for you to know that God's justice is avenged by the tears of the poor through your fasting.

Chapter V.

The tables of the rich are sustained by the blood and life of many poor people; and therein, a most beautiful description is given of the pain and turmoil of a certain father, whose son was forced by a rich man to be sold; likewise, the immense hardness of the rich is shown, which the women themselves also increase with their own expenses and luxury.

19. How religious it would be if you considered the food of your banquet to be for the poor! That rich man would already be more tolerable, from whose table Lazarus desired to gather what fell, wishing to be satisfied: but even the table of that rich man consisted of the blood of many poor people; and his cups dripped with the discharge of many whom he had forced into the noose.

20. How many are killed so that what pleases you is obtained? Your deadly hunger, your deadly excess. He falls from the highest peaks in order to prepare ample storehouses for your grain. He falls from the lofty summit of a tall tree while exploring the different varieties of grapes to bring back, worthy of being poured at your feast. He is submerged in the sea, fearing that there will be no fish or oysters for your table. He freezes in the winter cold while searching for hares or trying to catch birds with snares. If anything displeased him, he would be beaten to death before your eyes and drench the very banquet with his spilt blood. Finally, there was a rich man who ordered the head of the poor prophet to be brought to his table, and he found no other way to reward a dancer than to command the poor man to be killed.

21. I saw a poor man being led, while he was being forced to pay what he did not have, being dragged to prison, because there was a lack of wine on the table of a powerful person; he had his children taken to an auction, so that he could postpone the punishment for a while. By chance, he found someone who would help him in that necessity, he returned to his dwelling with his poor ones, looking at everything that had been plundered, nothing left for himself to eat, groaning over the hunger of his children, regretting that he had not sold them to someone who could feed them. He returns to his plan, he takes the decision to sell. However, the injustice of poverty and the kindness of paternal duty clashed: hunger pushed towards profit, nature towards duty. Prepared to die for his children rather than be separated from them, he often advanced and often retracted this step. Nevertheless, necessity prevailed over will, and even kindness yielded to necessity.

22. Now let us consider the storms of the troubled homeland of the mind, which of the children shall I deliver first? Whom, he says, shall I sell first? For I know that the price of one is not enough for the sustenance of the others. This alone is the wealthy fecundity leading to hardship. Whom shall I offer? Whom will the auctioneer of grain gladly gaze upon? Shall I offer the firstborn? But he called me father first. This one is the eldest among the sons, whom I appropriately honor as the elder. But shall I give the younger one? I embrace him with a tenderer love. I blush for him, I pity him; for him I sigh, for him I am concerned; he already feels the pain, this one is ignorant; his pain moves me, his ignorance frustrates me. Should I turn to others? He flatters me more, he is more bashful; he is more like a parent, he is more useful; in him I sell my image, in him I reveal my hope. Woe is me! I do not find what I should do, I have nothing to choose. Faces of calamities surround me, a chorus of hardships.

23. This is a savage madness, to choose whom to deliver. The very wild animals, when they sense dangers approaching for their offspring and themselves, are accustomed to choose whom to free, not whom to offer. Therefore, how can I distinguish the attitude of nature? How can I forget, how can I shed my father's mind? How can I establish an auction for the sons? In what language shall I negotiate the price? In whose hands shall I entrust the servitude of my son? With what eyes shall I behold him as a servant? With what kisses shall I bid farewell as he departs? By what means can I excuse my actions? Son, I sold you in exchange for my own food. Therefore, the table of the poor is now more mournful than that of the rich. He enslaves others, I sell myself: he imposes necessity, I bring forth willingness. To make the cause more excusable, I will add: Son, you will serve for the sake of your brothers, so that food may be sought for them. And Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, afterwards he provided for them as well as his father. And he will answer: But it was not our father who sold him, rather he wept over the loss: but later he himself also came into the power of the rich man, and could barely be set free. Later, his son served under the riches of Egypt for a long time. Finally, father, sell me on this condition, that wealthy people do not buy.

24. Oh, I confess, what should I do? Should I sell nothing? But while I consider one thing, I see all perishing with hunger. If I give one away, with what eyes will I see the rest suspecting me of impiety, that I may not also sell others? With what shame shall I return home? How will I enter? With what feeling shall I dwell, when I have denied myself a son, whom neither sickness wasted away, nor death took away? With what conscience shall I consider my table, which, like young olives surrounding, used to clothe so many sons?

25. In your presence, this poor person laments and your greed blocks your ear, and your mind is not softened by the horror of your actions. The whole population groans, and you alone, rich person, are not moved, and you do not hear the Scripture saying: Lose money for the sake of your brother and friend, and do not hide it under a stone for your death (Sirach 29:13). And because you do not hear, therefore Ecclesiastes cries out saying: There is an evil disease that I have seen under the sun: riches being kept for the harm of their owner (Ecclesiastes 5:12). But perhaps you return home and consult with your wife: she will urge you to redeem what has been sold. Indeed, she will encourage you even more to engage in the women's world, from where you can rescue the poor even with a small amount. She will impose on you the necessity of expenses; that she may drink from a gem cup, sleep on a purple bed, recline on a silver couch, burden her hands with gold, and adorn her neck with necklaces.

Women are delighted by chains as long as they are made of gold. They do not consider them burdensome if they are precious; they do not think of them as chains if they sparkle with treasures. They are also delighted by wounds; so that gold can be inserted into their ears, and pearls can hang. They also have their own weights, and their own cooling garments. They sweat in gemstones, and freeze in silks; yet prices please them: and greed advocates what nature abhors. They eagerly seek emeralds, hyacinths, beryls, agates, topaz, amethysts, jasper, sardonyx with the utmost frenzy: even if half of their inheritance is sought, they do not spare the expense, as long as they indulge their desire. I do not deny that a certain splendor belongs to these stones, but they are still stones. And they themselves remind us that, contrary to nature, they are polished, so that they rid the stones of their roughness, rather than polishing the rigidity of the mind.

Chapter VI.

How ineffective wealth is! And why are they called riches! It is more miserable to be rich than to be in the bondage of slaves. This is the place for the Gospel, What shall I do... I will tear down my barns, etc., is explained piously and eloquently.

27. Which artist could add one day to a person's life? Who redeemed his wealth from the underworld? Whose sorrow did money alleviate? Not in the abundance of riches, he said, is his life (Luke XII, 15). And elsewhere: Treasures are of no use to the unjust, but justice frees from death (Proverbs X, 2). The Prophet rightly cries out: If riches increase, do not set your heart on them (Psalm LXI, 11). For what use are they to me if they cannot save me from death? What use are they to me if they cannot be with me after death? They are acquired here, they are left here. Therefore, we are talking about a dream, not an inheritance. Hence the same Prophet rightly said about the rich: They have slept their sleep, and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands (Psalm 75:6); that is to say, the rich have found nothing in their works, as they have not given anything to the poor: they have not helped anyone in need, they have not been able to find anything that benefits them.

28. Consider the name itself. The pagans call him the ruler of the underworld, the arbiter of death and the wealthy one, because unless he knows how to bring death, he is not able to bring wealth to the dead, nor have control over the realm of the dead or the underworld. For what is wealth, if not an insatiable abyss of riches, an insatiable hunger and thirst for gold? The more one drinks from it, the more it burns within. Thus the prophet admonishes: 'Those who love money will never be satisfied with money' (Ecclesiastes 5:9); and further: 'And indeed this is the worst disease.' For

as he was, so he also went away, and his abundance labors in the wind. And indeed all his days are in darkness, and sorrow, and much anger, and weakness, and wrath (Ibid., 15 et seq.); so that the condition of slaves is more tolerable. For they serve men, he serves sin. Thus the Apostle says (Rom. VI, 16): For he who commits sin is the servant of sin. Always in snares, always in chains he is: never free from fetters, because he is always in crimes. How wretched is servitude, to serve sins!

29. Nature itself does not know its duties, nor does it understand the changes of its own sleep, nor does it perform the function of food with its sweetness, for which there is no immunity from servitude. For sweet sleep serves as a slave, whether it consumes little or much; but for one who is satisfied with wealth, there is no one who allows him to sleep. Desire excites him, worry harasses him about stealing others' vigils, envy torments him, delay vexes him, barrenness of income disturbs him, abundance troubles him. Hence, for that wealthy person whose possession has brought forth abundant fruits, who contemplated within himself, saying: What should I do, since I lack the means by which I may gather my fruits? And he said: 'I will do this, I will tear down my barns and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' (Luke 12:17-20) Even God does not allow him to sleep. He interrupts him while he is thinking and wakes him up while he is sleeping. But even he himself does not allow himself to be at peace, who is troubled by the abundance of his wealth, and in the abundance of his produce he utters the voice of a beggar. What shall I do, he says? Is this not the voice of a poor man, not having the means to live? Needy of everything, he looks here and there, searches for shelter, finds nothing for sustenance. He considers nothing more miserable than being consumed by hunger, and dying from lack of food. He seeks shortcuts to death, and searches for more tolerable ways to endure punishments. He seizes the sword, hangs the noose, kindles the fire, explores poison; and amidst all this he hesitates on what to choose, and says: What shall I do? Then, tempted by the sweetness of this life, he desires to reconsider his decision if he can find the means of subsistence. He sees everything bare, everything empty, and says: What shall I do? Where will I find food, where will I find clothing? I want to live, if I have a way to sustain this life: but with what foods, with what resources?

31. 'What should I do,' he says, 'since I don't have what I need? He shouts that he is rich yet has nothing. This is a discourse of poverty: he complains of being lacking while abundant in fruits. 'I don't have,' he says, 'where I can gather my fruits. You would think he is saying: 'I don't have fruits from which I can live.' Blessed is he who risks from abundance; indeed, more wretched is he with his own abundance than the poor person, for whom the danger is destitution. He has a reason to excuse his hardship; he certainly has injury, but he doesn't have fault: that person doesn't have anyone else to accuse besides himself.'

32. And he said: This I will do, I will destroy my barns. Do you think he still says: I will open my barns, let those who cannot bear hunger enter, let the needy come, let the poor enter, let them fill their pockets, let me destroy the walls that exclude the hungry one. Why should I hide, to whom God makes abound what I give? Why should I close the doors with bolts to the grain, with which God fills the entire circumference of the fields, which grow and abound without a guard?

Chapter VII.

The blessed teacher continues in the same place and shows that the greedy should do good with their possessions, but they prefer to spend their money on building; and they delight more in the high price of goods than in the abundance of profits: nevertheless, he teaches them where they can safely hide their fruits.

33. The hope of the greedy has been defeated. The old granaries are bursting with new crops. 'I had less,' he says, 'and I saved in vain: more has been born, and to whom shall I gather it?' While I pursue the gains of prices, I have lost the use of benefits. How many souls of the poor could I have saved with the grain of the previous year? These prices, which are not valued by money but by thanks, delighted me more, and I will imitate the holy Joseph in preaching of humanity: with a loud voice I will cry out: 'Come, poor ones, eat my bread, spread out your lap, receive the grain.' Fertility should be the abundance of the rich, the abundance of the whole world, the fertility of all. But you do not say this, rather you say: I will destroy my storehouses. You destroy them rightly, from which no poor person burdened comes back. Storehouses are receptacles of injustice, not aids of compassion. He destroys rightly who does not know how to build wisely. The rich person destroys his own, who does not know eternal things: he destroys storehouses, who does not know how to divide his own grain, but to close them.

34. And I will do greater things, he says. Unfortunate, either that you distribute it to the poor, or that you spend it for the expense of building. While you avoid the grace of generosity, you incur the losses of construction.

35. And he added: I will gather all that is born to me, and I will say to my soul: Soul, you have many goods. The miser is always satisfied with the abundance of his profits, while he calculates the cheapness of his nourishment. For the fertility of all things is profitable to him, but the barrenness of the land is profitable to the greedy. He delights more in the exorbitance of prices than in the abundance of possessions; and he prefers to have what he alone possesses, rather than what he sells with others. See him fearing that the heap of grain will overflow, that the overflowing barns will pour into the poor, and that the opportunity of some good will be acquired by the needy. The rich man claims the lands for himself alone, not because he wants to use them, but to deny them to others.

36. 'You have many good things,' he says. The greedy person does not know how to speak of good things, unless they are profitable. But I agree with him, that things which are monetary are called good. So why do you make evil out of good things, when you should make good out of evil things? For it is written: Make friends for yourselves with the dishonest wealth (Luke 16:9). Therefore, to those who know how to use it, things are good; to those who do not know how to use it, they are rightly evil. He scattered, he gave to the poor, his justice remains forever (Psalm 112:9). What is better than this? It is good if you are generous to the poor, in which you establish yourself as a debtor to God through a certain devotion of piety. It is good if you open the storehouses of your justice, so that you may be the bread of the poor, the life of the needy, the eyes of the blind, the father of orphaned children.

37. You have the means to do it, what do you fear? I address you in your own voice. You have many good things stored up for many years, you can abound both for yourself and for others. You

have public abundance, why do you destroy your own granaries? I show you where you can better preserve your grain, where you can protect it well, so that thieves cannot take it from you. Include it in the hearts of the poor, where no throat can consume it, no old age corrupt it. You have storehouses, the bosoms of the destitute: you have storehouses, the houses of widows: you have storehouses, the mouths of infants, so that it can be said to you: 'Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have perfected praise' (Psalm 8:2). These are the storehouses that will last forever; those granaries that future fertility will not destroy. For what will you do again if you are born more in the following year? So you will destroy again those things that you now prepare, and you will make greater ones. For God gives you fertility, so that he may either overcome or condemn your greed; therefore, you cannot have an excuse: on the contrary, you keep for yourself what he wanted to be born to many through you, indeed you even take it away from yourself; for you would keep it more for yourself if you distributed it to others. For indeed, the fruits of gifts return to those who have given them, and the grace of generosity comes back to the giver. Finally, it is written: Sow for yourselves in righteousness (Hosea X, 12). Be a spiritual farmer, sow what is beneficial to you. A good sowing in the hearts of widows. If the earth yields to you more abundant fruits than what you have received, how much more will the reward of mercy multiply the things you have given!

Chapter VIII.

It is mentioned in the Gospel that the miserly person who is indifferent to the needs of others and prioritizes accumulating wealth is considered foolish and is despised. How much better it would be if money was distributed rather than hoarded, and how foolish it is for the wealthy to make excuses for not giving to the poor!

Then, O man, do you not know that the day of death comes before the birth of the earth, but mercy excludes the attack of death? Those who await your soul are already present, and you still delay the fruits of your works. Are you still measuring out long periods of life for yourself? Foolish one, tonight they will take your soul from you (Luke XII, 20). He rightly says 'tonight'; for the soul of the greedy is reclaimed at night: it begins in darkness and perseveres in darkness. For the greedy, night is always present; for the righteous, day, to whom it is said: 'Amen, amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise' (Luke XXIII, 43). But a fool is like the moon that changes (Eccli. XXVII, 12): but the just will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matth. XIII, 43). It is rightly argued against foolishness, that he has placed his hope in eating and drinking. And therefore the time of death presses upon him, as it is said by those who serve their gluttony: Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die (Esai. XXII, 13). He is rightly called a fool, because he provides for his soul earthly things; because he hides what he should keep, he does not know. And therefore it is said to him: What things soever thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? (Luke XII, 20) Why dost thou measure, and number, and seal up daily? Why dost thou sift gold, weigh silver? How much better is it to be a liberal dispenser, than a solicitous keeper! How much more profitable would it be for thee to be called the father of many orphans, than to have in thy purse numberless weights sealed up! For money indeed is here left behind: but the grace of good works is carried with us unto the judge of merit.

40. But perhaps you may say, as people often do, that we must not give to someone whom God has cursed, because he wants to be in need. But the poor are not cursed, for it is written: "Blessed

are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). It is not about the poor, but about the rich that Scripture says: "He who withholds grain, the people will curse him" (Prov. 11:26). Furthermore, do not ask what each person deserves. Mercy is not accustomed to judge based on merits, but to help based on needs: to assist the poor, not to examine justice. For it is written: Blessed is he who understands the needs of the poor (Psalm 41:1). Who is the one who understands? The one who has compassion for those in need, who recognizes that both the rich and the poor are made by the Lord, who knows that he sanctifies his own fruits if he shares them with the poor. Therefore, when you have the means to do good, do not delay by saying: Tomorrow I will give; lest you lose the opportunity to be generous. Delaying the well-being of others is dangerous. It is possible that while you hesitate, they may die. It is better to preempt before death, lest greed hinder you today and promises be deceived tomorrow.

Chapter IX.

How Jezebel, who is greed, promises to rich people the possession that they desire against justice.

41. But what shall I say, lest you delay generosity? Would that you would not hasten to plunder: would that you would not extort what you desire: would that you would not seek what belongs to others, neglect what is denied, bear patiently what is excused, and not listen to that Jezebel, which is greed, saying with a flood of vanity: I will give you the possession you desire (III Kings 21:7). You are sad, because you want to consider the measure of justice; so as not to snatch away what belongs to others: I have my rights, I have my laws; I will resort to slander so as to plunder; and so that the possession of the poor may be taken away, life will be disturbed.

42. For what else is described in that story, if not the greed of the rich, which is a vain flood that carries away everything like a river and leads to no benefit? This is not one Jezabel, but many: not of one time, but of many times: she speaks to all, just as she spoke to her husband Achab. Rise, eat bread, and return to yourself: I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezraelite.

43. And he wrote a book named Achab, and signed it with his ring, and sent the book to the elders, and to the children who lived with Nabuthe. And it was written in the book: Fast a fast, and set up Nabuthe as the leader of the people, and appoint two men, sons of wickedness from among his people, to bear false witness against him, saying: He blessed God and the king; and bring him forth, and stone him (Ibid., 8 et seq.).

Chapter X.

The wealthy, since they cannot steal from others, do not have the capacity to take food due to sadness: and there they should observe fasting or offer prayers to God: then they should do what God commands, even if it is contrary to their own desires.

How clearly is the custom of the wealthy expressed! They are upset if they do not seize other people's property: they renounce food, they fast, not to reduce sin, but to commit a crime. You would see them then going to church, attentive, humble, diligent, so that they may deserve the accomplishment of their wickedness. But God says to them: I did not choose this fasting, nor if you bow your neck like a circle, nor if you spread ashes and sackcloth, will you call it an acceptable fast. I have not chosen such a fast, says the Lord. But loosen every chain of injustice, dissolve the

obligations of violent exchanges, forgive the broken for remission, and break every unjust conscription: break your bread to the hungry, bring those who have no shelter into your house; if you see someone naked, clothe them; and do not despise those who are of your own kin. Then your morning light shall arise, and your healing shall come quickly; your righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of God shall surround you; then you shall call, and God will answer you, while you are still speaking, God will say: Here I am (Isaiah 58:5 and following).

45. Do you hear, rich man, what the Lord God says? And you come to the Church, not to give something to the poor, but to take away: you fast, not so that the expenses of your banquet may benefit the needy, but so that you may obtain spoils from the needy. What do you want with books and paper, and seals, and legal documents, and bonds? Have you not heard: Undo every bond of injustice, dissolve the obligations of violent exchanges, forgive those who are broken into remission; and tear apart every unjust document. You offer me tablets, I recite to you the law of God: you write with ink, I recall to you the inscribed oracles of the prophets with the Spirit of God: you compose false testimonies, I demand the testimony of your conscience, which you will not be able to escape or evade as judge, whose testimony you cannot refuse on the day when the Lord reveals the hidden things of men. You say: I will destroy my barns; and the Lord says: Let whatever is in the barns be given to the poor, let these storehouses be of use to the needy. You say: I will do greater things, and with that I will gather all that I have been born with; The Lord says: Break your bread to the hungry. You say: I will take away the house from the poor; But the Lord says, to bring those who have no shelter into your house. How do you expect, oh wealthy one, that God would hear you when you do not think that God should be listened to? If the will of the wealthy is not satisfied, the stage is set: it is considered an offense to God if the request of the wealthy is refused.

Chapter XI.

Naboth is stoned to death based on false testimony from two witnesses; Ahab initially pretends to be sad, but then takes possession of his land. God pronounces judgment against Ahab, especially for the blood of Naboth, and also mentions punishment for Jezebel.

46. He blessed God, he said, and the king (3 Kings 21:10), namely an equal person, so that he would be equal in insult. He blessed, he said, God and the king. May the name of the rich not offend, and may it be harmed by the very sound of speech, blessing is called instead of curse. Two witnesses of injustice are sought. With two witnesses, Susanna is desired: two witnesses, and the Synagogue finds them, who would throw false accusations against Christ: with two witnesses, the poor man is killed. So they brought Naboth outside the city and stoned him. (Ibid., 13). I wish he could have died on his own land! The rich man envies the poor man's burial.

47. And it happened, he said, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he tore his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth. And it happened after these things, that Ahab went down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to possess it (Ibid., 16). The rich become angry and slander in order to harm, if they do not obtain what they desire. However, when they have harmed through slander, they pretend to be sorry: yet they go forth sad and mournful, not in their hearts but in their appearance, and they seize the place of the property they have seized by their unfairness.

48. Divine justice is moved by this and condemns the greedy with worthy severity, saying: 'You have killed and taken possession of the inheritance? For this reason, in the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, they will lick up your blood; and the prostitutes will wash themselves in your blood' (Ibid., 19). How just, how severe is this sentence, that the bitterness of death that he inflicted on another should be dissolved by the horror of his own death! God looks upon the unburied poor and therefore decrees that the rich should lie unburied; and so that the dead may suffer the torment of their own wickedness, he who did not think to spare the dead. Thus, the body soaked in the blood of his own wound revealed the cruelty of his life. When the poor endured these things, the rich were accused; when the rich received them, the poor were justified.

49. But what does it mean that the prostitutes washed themselves in his blood? Unless, perhaps, it is to reveal that there was a kind of prostitution in that ferociousness of the king's treachery, or a bloody luxury, who was so indulgent that he desired a vegetable dish; so bloodthirsty that he would kill a man over a vegetable dish? Worthy punishment consumes the greedy, worthy punishment consumes greed. Finally, even Jezebel herself was eaten by dogs and the birds of the air, in order to show that the spiritual wickedness becomes the prey of the rich burial. Therefore, flee, rich man, from such an end. But you will flee from such an end if you flee from such a disgrace. Do not be like Ahab, desiring a neighboring possession. Do not let that fatal greed of Jezebel dwell in you, which persuades you with bloodshed. It does not recall your desires, but impels them; it makes you even sadder when you possess what you desired; it makes you naked when you have riches.

Chapter XII. To be greedy, poor, and a fugitive. How abject was King Ahab in the presence of Elijah; and how the sinner is always caught? In the end, the rich are encouraged to use their wealth lawfully. For every abundant person considers themselves poorer; because they believe they lack whatever others possess. The whole world is lacking, whose desires the world cannot satisfy: but to the faithful person, the whole world is a treasure. The one who considers their conscience fears being caught and therefore flees from the whole world. Therefore, according to the story, Ahab said to Elijah, but according to the riddle the rich person said to the poor person: 'You have found me, my enemy.' (Ibid., 20). What a wretched conscience, which has mourned its own betrayal!

51. And Elijah said to him: I have found, because you have done evil in the sight of the Lord. That king was Achab, and the king of Samaria; Elijah was poor and in need of bread, lacking sustenance for his meal unless ravens provided nourishment. So dejected was the conscience of the sinner that he was not lifted up with the pride of royal power. Therefore, like one of little worth and of low estate, he said: You have found me, my enemy; you have discovered in me what I thought was hidden; nothing of my mind escapes your knowledge; you have found me, my wounds are exposed to you, captivity is at hand. The sinner is found when his wickedness is revealed, but the righteous says: You have tested me with fire, and no wickedness has been found in me (Psalm 16:3). Adam was found when he was hiding, but no burial was found for Moses. Ahab was found, but Elijah was not found. And the wisdom of God said: The evildoers will seek me and will not find me (Proverbs 1:28). Therefore, in the Gospel (John 8:21), our Lord Jesus was sought but not found. Therefore, fault betrays its own author. Hence, Thesbytes said: I have found that you have done evil in the sight of the Lord; for the Lord delivers the guilty into the power of their enemies, but does not deliver the innocent into the power of their enemies. Finally, Saul was seeking the

holy David, and could not find him; but David, who was holy, found King Saul, whom he was not seeking, because the Lord delivered him into his power. Therefore, wealth is captive, poverty is free.

52. You serve, O rich men, a truly wretched servitude, when you serve error, when you serve greed, when you serve avarice, which cannot be satisfied. There is a certain insatiable abyss, swifter when it plunges: just as when it overflows like a well, it is polluted with mud, it ploughs up the earth, which will be of no benefit to it. It is fitting for you to be admonished by this example as well. For if a well is not drawn from, it easily corrupts with idle rest and a degenerate condition: but an army shines with appearance, it is sweet for drinking: so also a heap of riches, sandy with a pile, is beautiful in use, but is held as useless in idleness. Therefore, something is derived from this well. Water extinguishes a burning fire, and almsgiving resists sins; however, stagnant water quickly produces worms. Your treasure will not stand, nor will your fire; it will stand against you unless you turn it away with the works of your mercy. Consider how much you are enriched, rich man, by fires. Yours is the voice of the one saying: 'Father Abraham, tell Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue' (Luke 16:24).

Therefore, whatever you contribute to the needy benefits you; whatever you diminish increases you; by feeding the poor with that food which you give to him, you yourself are fed; for he who has mercy on a poor person himself is fed, and the fruit already is in these things. Mercy is sown on earth, it germinates in heaven; it is planted in the poor, it blossoms with God. Do not say, says God, 'I will give tomorrow' (Prov. III, 28). For how does one who does not allow you to say 'I will give tomorrow' permit you to say 'I will not give'? You do not give to the poor from your own, but you return from theirs. For what is common given for everyone's use, you alone take for yourself. The earth belongs to everyone, not just the rich, but there are fewer who do not use their own than those who do. Therefore, you are repaying a debt, not giving an undeserved gift. And so Scripture says to you: Decline your soul to the poor, and return your debt, and respond peacefully with gentleness (Sirach 4:8).

Chapter XIII.

The rich in their lineage foolishly boast, when they themselves are often a disgrace to their ancestors: gold is a stumbling block. How great is the cruelty ingrained in the rich towards the poor; and what kind of recommendation befits the rich?

54. What then, you arrogant rich man? What do you say to the poor man: Do not touch me? Are you not, like me, conceived and born from a womb, just as the poor man is born? Why do you boast of the ancestry of nobility? You are accustomed to recount the origins of your dogs, just as the rich do: you are accustomed to proclaim the nobility of your horses, just as you do of consuls. He is begotten from that father, and born of that mother: he delights in that grandfather: he exalts himself from those ancestors. But that does not benefit the running; the prize is not given to nobility, but to speed. The ugliest life, in which even the nobility of birth is in danger. Therefore, beware, wealthy person, lest the merits of your ancestors be embarrassed by you, lest it be said of them: Why did you establish such a person, why did you choose a stunted heir? The merit of the heir is not in gilded ceilings, nor in purple orbs. That praise is not for humans, but for metals, in which humans are punished. Gold is sought by those in need, and denied to the needy. They toil to seek, they toil to find, what they do not know how to have.

55. Nevertheless, I wonder why you, the wealthy, think that you should boast, why gold is more a cause for offense than for commendation. For both wood and gold are causes for offense, and woe to those who pursue it! Indeed, blessed is the wealthy person who is found without blemish and who does not depart after gold, nor hope in the treasures of money (Sirach 31:8). But as if he cannot be known, he desires to be shown to himself: Who is this, he says, and we will praise him; for he has done something that we should recognize more as something new rather than something common. Therefore, he who can be content with riches is truly perfect and worthy of glory. He who can, it is said, transgress and yet does not transgress, and do evil and yet does not do it. Therefore, gold is commended to you not so much by its own charm as by the punishment of men, in which there is such allure of error.

56. Do the grand halls extol you? They should rather pierce your hearts, because while they captivate the people, they exclude the voice of the poor. Although it is of no use for her to be heard, for even when heard, she accomplishes nothing. Then it is not the very hall of shame that admonishes you, who want to surpass your riches by building, yet you do not conquer. You clothe the walls and leave people naked. A naked man cries out in front of your house, and you ignore him; a naked man cries out, and you worry about what marble to adorn your floors with. The poor man seeks money, and does not have it: the man asks for bread, and your horse devours gold with its teeth. But you delight in precious ornaments, while others do not have grain. How much, oh rich one, you take for yourself! The people are hungry, and you close your storehouses: the people lament, and you turn your gem. Unfortunate is he, who has the power to defend so many souls from death, and yet does not have the will. Your gem could have saved the entire life of the people.

Listen closely to what kind of preaching befits a wealthy person: I delivered the poor from the hand of the powerful, and I helped the orphan who had no helper. The blessing of the dying came upon me; the widows also blessed my mouth. I wore justice; I was the eye of the blind and the feet of the lame; and I was the father of the weak (Job 29:12 et seq.). And further: No guest ever lodged in my doorway; my door was open to all who came. But if I have sinned unintentionally, I have not concealed my guilt, nor have I feared the multitude of the people, so as not to declare my presence to them. If I have allowed a needy person to leave my door empty-handed, or if I have denied justice to my debtors and returned their collateral without repayment, then what can I answer to those accusations? She claims that she wept over every person who was suffering and mourned when she saw a man in need, while she herself had plenty. But then he had more bad days when he saw himself having, and others needing. If he says this, he who never made a widow's eye waste away, who never ate his bread alone, and did not abandon the orphan, whom he nurtured, fed, and raised with the affection of a parent; who never despised the naked, who covered the dying, who warmed the shoulders of the weak with the wool of his own sheep, who did not oppress the orphan, who was never delighted by riches, who never rejoiced in the downfall of his enemies; if anyone did these things, he began to be in need of great wealth, if he garnered nothing from such a large estate except the fruit of mercy alone: what will become of you, who do not know how to use your own inheritance, who in the midst of great wealth endure days of mendicancy; because you give to no one, you help no one?

Chapter XIV.

He explains various reasons by which gold may bring the wealthy to freedom and salvation; he teaches what true wealth is; and he also reveals how God is made known and where his place is in peace.

Therefore, you are the guardian of your belongings, not the master, who dig up the gold of the earth, serving it as a minister, not as a judge. But where your treasure is, there also is your heart. Therefore, in that gold, you buried your heart in the earth. Instead, sell the gold and buy salvation; sell the stone and buy the kingdom of God; sell the field and redeem eternal life for yourself. I affirm the truth because I build with the word of truth: 'If you want to be perfect,' he says, 'sell everything you have; give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven' (Matthew 19:21). And do not be saddened when you hear these things; lest it be said to you, as it was said to that rich young man: How difficult it is for those who have money to enter the kingdom of God (Ibid., 23); rather, when you read these things, consider that death can take away from you these things, the power of the higher authority can remove them. Finally, because you seek small things instead of great things, temporary things instead of eternal things, treasures of money instead of treasures of grace. The former are corrupted, the latter endure.

Consider that you do not possess these alone, for you are possessed by moth and rust, which consume money. Greed has given you these companions. But look at those to whom gratitude has made you a debtor: The lips of the righteous bless a feast, and their testimony becomes proof of their goodness (Sirach 31:28). The Father God makes you a debtor, for He pays interest on the gift with which the poor person is helped, as if a good debtor pays the creditor. You make yourself a debtor to the Son of God, who says: I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you welcomed me; I was naked, and you clothed me. (Matthew 25:35-36) Truly, whatever was done to the least of these, it was done to Him.

60. You do not know, O man, how to build up riches. If you want to be rich, be poor in the world, so that you may be rich in God. Rich in faith, rich in God; rich in mercy, rich in God; rich in simplicity, rich in God; rich in wisdom, rich in knowledge, riches in God. There are those who abound in poverty and those who lack in riches. The poor abound, whose deep poverty has abounded in the riches of their simplicity; but the rich have lacked and hungered. For it is not written in vain: The poor shall rule over the rich, and the servants shall lend to their masters (Prov. XVII, 2); because the rich and the masters sow useless and evil things, from which they will not gather fruit, but instead gather thorns. And therefore the rich will be subject to the poor, and the servants will lend spiritual things to their masters; just as the rich man asked, so that the poor Lazarus would lend him a drop of water. You too, rich man, can fulfill this sentence: give generously to the poor and you have lent to the Lord; for whoever gives to the poor, lends to the Lord.

However, the holy David beautifully singing a hymn to God in Psalm 75, written against the spiritual wickedness of Assyria, the empty and vain ruler of this world, began as follows: God is known in Judah (Psalm 75:1-2); that is, not in the rich, not in the noble and powerful, but in the soul that confesses. And he says, His name is great in Israel; not in princes and governors, but in the one who sees God. For he is Israel, in whom deep faith could reach the knowledge of God. And there is, he says, a place for him in peace; where calm emotions are not stirred up by the waves of various desires, where he is not disturbed by the storms of greed, where he does not

burn with the fires of seeking riches. He is the one who contemplates eternal things, and he dwells in Zion, shattering all the spiritual instruments of war, breaking the bows with which the devil, aiming fiery darts, is accustomed to burn the heavy passions in the hearts of men. But those darts cannot harm the just, for whom God is light, and so far away from the horror of dark shadows that the adversary cannot find a place in him, who even used to infuse himself into princes; just as he infused himself into the betrayer Judas, cutting down the doors of faith like trees in a forest, so that he could enter his heart and possess the tabernacle of the eternal name, dedicated by the gift of the apostolate. Therefore, that wicked usurper cuts down the doors as if a violent man is entering; but the Lord, like a compassionate one, illuminates his servants, and with the brightness of their merits and the brilliance of their virtues, he illuminates the darkness of this world. These have the grace of God, being peaceful and meek, founded on the tranquility of their sober mind; but the foolish are troubled in heart, and they themselves are the authors of their own agitation; for they are tossed by the waves of their own desires, and fluctuate like the sea.

Chapter XV.

Those who do not know how to use wealth become slaves to it and sleep their own sleep. When the soul is called the charioteer and the flesh the horse to be driven by the strength of the mind: where there is any difference between the driver, the rider, and the one who mounts, it is evaluated.

63. But who are these, the Prophet expressly indicated by saying: All men of wealth (Psalm XXIV., 6); he said 'all,' not exempting any. And he correctly called them 'men of wealth,' not 'wealth of men,' so as to show that they are not possessors of wealth, but possessed by their own wealth. For the possession should belong to the possessor, not the possessor to the possession. Therefore, whoever does not use his inheritance as a possession, who does not know how to bestow on the poor and distribute, he is a servant of his own, not a master of his resources, who keeps the belongings of others as a servant, not as a master who uses his own. Therefore, we say that a man is rich in this kind of disposition, not that the man's wealth is rich. For intellect is good for those who make use of it; but the one who does not understand cannot claim the favor of intellect for himself; and therefore, he falls asleep in the sleep of drunkenness. Therefore, men of this kind sleep their own sleep, that is, their own sleep, not Christ's. And those who do not sleep the sleep of Christ do not have Christ's rest, do not rise through Christ's resurrection; as he says: I have slept and have rested and have risen; because the Lord will bear me up. In this age, those who sleep are considered worthy of heavenly rebuke, who have mounted horses they could not control. We read elsewhere the Church or the soul saying: Aminadab has set me as a chariot (Song of Songs 6:11). Therefore, if the soul is the chariot, be careful that the body is not the horse: rather, the driver is the strength of the mind, which governs the flesh, and restrains its movements like certain well-trained horses with prudence. Those who have indulged in bodily pleasures have indeed fallen asleep, not governing them with any restraint. And so they chose to call them ascensores, whether they were knights or charioteers. For the charioteer, with discipline and skill, guides his horses according to his own judgment, either urging them on if they are running, or turning them back if they are unmanageable, or recalling them if they are tired, or making them gentle according to his own will. Hence, when Elijah was taken up and carried to heaven in a chariot, Elisha cried out to him: Father, father, charioteer of Israel and his horseman (2 Kings 2:12), that is, you who ruled the people of the Lord with good leadership, rightly received these

chariots and these horses running to the divine, because the Lord has shown you to be the guide of human minds; and therefore, as a good charioteer, you are crowned as the victor of the contest with an eternal reward. In the book of the prophet Habakkuk, it is written: You will ascend upon your horses, and your chariot will be salvation (Habakkuk 3:8). For he moved his apostles, whom he directed in different directions, to preach the Gospel throughout the world. He says, You will ascend, as a ruler of horses, not as a rider. For even a horse ascends, but it does so to govern, not just to sit: because it is lazy and unable to bear the movement of an idle mind.

65. But concerning the knight it is written: There is a knight who falls backward, waiting for the salvation of the Lord (Gen. XLIX, 17). Because no one is without a fall, even if a knight falls and is swayed by some earthly vices, if he does not abandon hope of rising again and relies on divine mercy, he reaches salvation. But concerning the horseman, it is evident that he is considered reprehensible, as Moses himself says in the song of Exodus: He cast horse and horseman into the sea (Exod. XV, 21). And the Lord spoke in Zechariah, saying: I will strike every horse with madness, and its rider with foolishness (Zech. XII, 4). He did not say only the horse, but also the rider, as you have in Exodus: Horse and rider. For where is the rider who cannot control his own horse, and the horse is carried headlong, if it is seized by untamed fury into precipitous and perilous places. Therefore, what do you trust in, you rich ones, regarding horses? The deceitful horse brings salvation (Psalm 32:17). Why do you applaud in chariots? Some in chariots, and some on horses, but we will magnify the name of the Lord. They are bound and have fallen, but we have risen and stand upright (Psalm 20:8). Do not love those who cling to vanity; do not, O rich ones, be provoked by the roaring of lust. The Lord is terrible, and no one can resist the mighty and wealthy; He hurls heavenly judgment (Psalm 75:9).

Chapter XVI.

It impels the rich to rest from vices and confess to the Lord. How they are to be told: Pray and give; what prayer and gifts to commend to God? Finally, it is shown that these words are also applicable to the poor, and who should not turn away from God.

66. It is good that you now rest and refrain from committing wicked acts, and that you respect the power of the Lord. That is why it was said to the murderer Cain: 'You have sinned, rest' (Genesis 4:7), so that he would put an end to his sin. Let your thoughts confess to the Lord. Do not say: 'We have not sinned.' Paul said: 'Even though I am not aware of anything against myself' (1 Corinthians 4:4), yet he added: 'But that does not make me innocent.' And even if you are not aware of anything, confess it to the Lord, so that nothing escapes you. Indeed, whoever confesses the Lord and employs the remnants of thought in confession, will celebrate a festive day of the mind in secret (Psalm 75, 11) and will feast not on the leaven of malice and wickedness, but on the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Therefore, in conclusion, the Prophet turns to you and says: Pray, and render to the Lord your God (ibid., 12), that is: Do not hide, rich ones, the day is here, pray for your sins, render for the benefits that you have received gifts. You have received from Him what you offer: it is His that you pay. Gifts, he says (I Chron. XXIX, 14), are mine, and my gifts, that is, the gifts that you offer to me, have been given to me: I have given and bestowed them upon you. Finally, the Prophet says: I do not lack in my blessings (Ps. XV, 2), therefore I offer yours to you, because I have nothing that you have not given. It is faith that obtains gifts, and humility that recommends offerings. By faith, Abel

offered a great sacrifice to God: Abel's gift pleased God more than Cain's, because he conquered by faith. For why does the offering of a poor person please more than that of a rich person? Because a poor person is richer in faith, and wealthier in sobriety; and though they are poor, they are among those of whom it is said: Kings shall offer you gifts (Ps. LXVII, 30). For the Lord Jesus is not pleased by those who offer in purple garments, but by those who govern their own movements, who have dominion over the physical indulgence of the mind. Therefore, pray, you rich ones! You do not have in your works that which pleases. Pray for your sins and vices and offer gifts to your Lord God. Give to the poor, pay off the needy, support the helpless, whom you can only please due to your vices in no other way. Whoever you fear as an avenger, make him your debtor. 'I will not accept calves from your house, nor goats from your herds; for all the beasts of the forest are mine' (Psalms 49:10-11). 'Whatever you offer is mine, for the whole world is mine. I do not demand what is already mine. You can only offer me what is yours, the devotion and faith of your heart. I do not desire sacrifices out of ambition, but only offer to God the sacrifice of praise and fulfill your vows to the Most High.' (Ibid., 14).

68. However, if you please, we will accept it thus: since he said that his rich ones had fallen asleep, he preceded the Lord's chastisements to them, he instilled terror, he proclaimed power, to which even the rich do not resist; turning to everyone, he said: Let the rich ones sleep, let the rich ones be reproached: you, poor ones, pray and return all to the Lord your God, you who bring offerings around Him (Ps. XXV, 12), that is, give thanks, poor ones, because God is not a respecter of persons. Let them build riches, accumulate money, amass treasures of gold and silver: you pray, who have nothing else: you pray, because you have only this, which is more precious than gold and silver. You who do not depart from the Lord, who are around him; for those who were far away have become near. But those who seem close to themselves because of wealth and power have become far away because of greed. For no one is outside unless they have been excluded by fault, as Adam was expelled from paradise, and Eve was excluded. No one is far away, except those whom their own vices have exiled.

Therefore, you who are positioned nearby, pray and offer gifts to the terrifying one, the one who takes away the spirit of princes, terrifying among the kings of the earth. For he is not redeemed with the reward of a rich man, nor is he swayed by the frown of the powerful, who assesses the price of guilt, who demands more from someone the more he has given. Saul granted the kingdom to himself, but because he did not keep the commandment, he lost the kingdom and the spirit. He made many kings of the nations become captives because of their treachery towards the people of their ancestors. And let us now speak about the aforementioned story (III Kings XIX), where Ahab, an ungrateful king of the heavens, ordered to be killed in such a way that his wounds were licked by his own dogs. Indeed, because he coveted the vineyard of a poor man, he was reduced to extreme poverty by the Lord, not being satisfied with such great wealth of his reign. No one was found to wash his wounds, nor to cover his body. Human kindness failed around him, and the fierceness of dogs took its place. Surely the miser finds worthy ministers of his funeral.

Chapter XVII. The reason why Ahab, to whom God had promised forgiveness for his repentance, was still defeated and killed, is twofold: from this it is concluded that God keeps His promises even to the unworthy. In this place arises the question, how do we understand the Lord's words to Elijah: 'Have you seen how Ahab has been moved before me?' I will not bring evil upon his days, but upon the days of his son (3 Kings 21:29). Or how do we say that repentance is powerful before

the Lord? Behold, the king was moved before the face of the Lord, and he went weeping, and tore his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and was clothed in mourning from the day he killed Naboth the Jezreelite (ibid., 27); so that he would move God with mercy, and change his sentence. Therefore, either repentance did not have power, or it did not turn the merciful Lord, or the oracle is false. For Ahab was defeated and killed (III Kings 22:35).

71. But consider that Jezebel had a wife (3 Kings 20, 25), whose will she was inflamed by, who turned his heart, and made him detestable with excessive sacrileges; and therefore she revoked this affection of his penance. However, the Lord cannot be considered changeable, but he did not consider it necessary to keep the promise he had made to the one confessing, forgetting the confession.

72. Take another example: and the Lord preserved the tenor of his sentence even for the unworthy, but he himself did not retain divine benefits around him. The king of Syria had brought war: he was defeated, and saved for mercy: he was also given freedom as a captive, and restored to his kingdom. What was the divine sentence, Ahab not only escaped, but also triumphed: because of his own cowardice, he armed the enemy whom he would be defeated by. And he had certainly been warned by the prophet saying: Know and see what you are doing (III Kings XXI, 22). I say that he was warned because the grace of Heaven was due to the sons of the king of Syria, since he had said, 'The God of the mountains, the God of Israel, and not the God of Baal.' Therefore, he said, they obtained [victory] for us. And therefore, he said, if we do not fully obtain them, let us appoint satraps in place of the king of Syria, so that he may take away their power and the power of the king. Finally, in the first encounter, he won in order to rout the enemy; he won a second time when he restored him to his command after having captured him. The cause of his evident defeat resulted in an oracle, with one of the sons of the prophets saying to his neighbor: Kill me. But the man refused to kill him. And he said: Because you did not obey the word of the Lord, behold, you will depart from me and a lion will kill you. And he departed from him, and a lion found him and killed him (cf. 2 Kings 20:35 et seq.). And after this, another prophet stood before the king of Israel and said to him: Thus says the Lord, Because you have let a man of destruction escape from your hand, behold, your life shall be for his life, and your people for his people.

Therefore, it is clear from these oracles that the Lord also keeps His promises even for the unworthy; but the wicked are either oppressed by their own foolishness or condemned by other transgressions, even if they have escaped the snares of the first transgression. But we must act in such a way that we deserve to receive the promises of the Almighty God, being worthy of good works.

On Noah and the Ark

One Book of Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, On Noah and the Ark.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.
- Chapter XII.
- Chapter XIII.
- Chapter XIV.
- Chapter XV.
- Chapter XVI.
- Chapter XVII.
- Chapter XVIII.
- Chapter XIX.
- Chapter XX.
- Chapter XXI.
- Chapter XXII.

- Chapter XXIII.
- Chapter XXIV.
- Chapter XXV.
- Chapter XXVI.
- Chapter XXVII.
- Chapter XXVIII.
- Chapter XXIX.
- Chapter XXX.
- Chapter XXXI.
- Chapter XXXII.
- Chapter XXXIII.
- Chapter XXXIV.

Chapter I.

Noah, a just man who was left to renew the seed of mankind, should be held up as an example for everyone to imitate, so that we may also find rest from all the anxieties of this world and the works of iniquity.

We try to explain the life, character, actions, and even the depth of his mind. For when the prophet himself (Jer. 17:9) says that nothing is more difficult than understanding the interior of a man, how much more difficult is it to know the mind of a just man? Indeed, he whom the Lord God has reserved to renew the seed of men, so that he might be the source of justice; it is fitting that we also describe him for the imitation of all, and rest in him from all the anxieties of this world, which we endure daily through various disturbances. It is shameful to survive for our children, it is wearying when we hear of so many adversities, to seize this light of the most dear ones: to undergo or to accept in our spirit the various waves and storms of the Churches themselves, who is so strong that they can bear it patiently? And therefore, this rest was also something that we must strive for; so that while we consider the holy Noah with greater attention, we may ourselves be refreshed, just as all kinds found rest from their works and sorrows in him.

2. Therefore, Noah is said to mean 'just' or 'rest' in Latin. Moreover, his parents said, 'Because he will make us rest from our work, and from sadness, and from the land that the Lord God cursed' (Gen. V, 29). Surely, if you think about what happened, when the flood occurred under him, it seems not to be rest for mankind, but rather destruction; not a relief from evils, but rather an accumulation of miseries. But if you consider the mindset of a just man, you will observe that justice is born to benefit others rather than oneself; it seeks not what is advantageous to itself, but what is advantageous to all. This is what allows us to find rest from wicked deeds, and it calls us back from sadness. For while we engage in what is just, we have no fear due to the security of a pure conscience, and we do not feel the burden of heavy sorrow. For there is nothing that causes

greater pain than the guilt of wrongdoing. Let us also rest from all the cares of earthly life, which constantly harass our body and soul with pains, and wear down our life.

Chapter II.

What the names of Noah's sons signify; and what is the order in which they are mentioned? This is explained by the example of a well-arranged army and the order established by nature itself. Finally, why the order is reversed in declaring their generations is extensively explained.

3. To him were born three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. These names signify good, evil, and indifferent, so that it seems that he had goodness as a gift of nature, and that he was not lacking in the trials of evil, and that he abounded in indifferent things, like the furniture of virtues. And the clear reason why he placed evil in the middle is evident because goodness is inherent in all things of nature: he does not cast them out like shipwrecks into the light, but he supports them with strength; so that they are not oppressed by the trials of evil, nor do they succumb as if weak, but he fortifies and clothes them like some indifferent coverings, which are health, good health, beauty, vigor, wealth, glory, and noble birth; so that fortified with these gifts, they may protect the goodness of nature, and enclose that evil so that it cannot harm or suffocate them.

4. Do we not see, as it were, a certain order of virtues arranged for battle? So that the weaker ones are in the middle, the stronger ones on the right and left like wings, through whom the whole battle line receives strength? Hence also a certain Greek poet says: κακοί δ' ἐν μέσσοις ἔλασσεν (Homer, Iliad. Δ), that is, he placed the bad ones in the middle. Thus it is that nature, like a good leader under the command of God, which knows how to generate us for the battles of this world, arranges those things which are good in the first order, those that hinder in the second, and those that assist in the third. So that the enemy, enclosed in the middle, may be overwhelmed by double forces wherever he turns; so that none of them may become exhausted by equal battles, and so that it may have the opportunity to escape from natural limitations and to spread out more widely.

5. But because when they are generated, this is the order: where they generate, Japheth is written in the first place, Cham in the third; therefore, lest anyone think that we have said the opposite in the later parts, the reason for this place must also be explained. Indeed, good, which is as it were in a certain nobility of nature, comes first: but evil follows; for there are contrary thoughts of the mind, which certainly arise afterwards. As long as these are, as it were, closed inwardly, and do not sprout like herbs, they are nourished by a certain recess of the good mind, lest they come forth. As long as evil remains in the will and not in complete realization, that is, in action and effect, the goodness of the mind's governor holds back or restrains wickedness from bursting forth, as a charioteer controls or curbs a horse trying to break loose. But when it boils over and breaks out into a sore, so that it cannot spread further and contaminate the surrounding areas, then just providence steps in, so that what is commonly called good, as if in place of evil, may not yield, since it cannot resist the raging evil. Therefore, in order not to spread the harmful virus too widely and infect many by generating corruptions, that first good which is good by nature, while changing its position, changes the order; as if it were providing help to a struggling horn, and taking on the part of the blade that works harder; for the virtue of a warrior is necessary in more difficult places; just as the presence of a good guardian is more frequent where the walls are more fragile. And so that no part is without a defender, while supporting that leaning good, then that indifferent thing

takes on the higher position, as if it were assigning to itself the more perfect part of that good; for nothing is more perfect than virtue. However, indifference does not possess the strength of true virtue, but it increases and spreads its favor. Hence, Japheth is called so because it signifies latitude in Latin.

Chapter III.

After the universal flood, the entire human race began to multiply so that we may attribute the increase in children to the goodness granted by divine benevolence, and acknowledge the punishments imposed on us due to our wickedness.

6. Not only did the holy Noah abound in the generation of his sons, but the whole generation poured forth itself as much as possible at that time. This does not seem to be useless. For, considering the coming flood, the grace of fertility should not be regarded as lacking in that generation, which the floods absorbed: so that the abundance of the human race may be attributed to divine grace; what followed the flood may be attributed to our iniquities, by which we turn away the mercy of the Lord due to our sins. And in the following passages, you will find that the fertility of the following years preceded the sterility of Egypt. (Gen. XLI, 26 and 27). For it is the principal of virtue to begin with acts of kindness and to sow the seeds of gratitude. Thus, David said: I will sing of mercy and judgment to you, O Lord. (Ps. c, 1). The grace of kindness precedes, and the sober discipline of correction follows. Therefore, what is good is divine, and what is changing is human.

7. God himself declares this, saying: My spirit shall not remain in men, because they are flesh (Gen. VI, 3). The Holy Spirit is the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of knowledge. Therefore, he has wisdom, he also has discipline, as seen in Bezalel who was commanded by divine oracle to make the sacred tabernacle, as Scripture says: Because he is filled with the spirit of wisdom and discipline (Exod. XXXI, 3). This spirit is given to men, but does not remain. But by what reasoning it does not endure, the cause is evident, because they are fleshly. For the nature of the flesh is contrary to discipline, because it obeys pleasure. Finally, it is written about the Lord Jesus himself: Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, he it is who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (John 1:33). In him indeed it remained, whom no corruptible impediments of the flesh called back, so that he might hold the order of discipline incorrupt and unmixed, whose flesh did not see corruption.

Chapter IV. The giants who lived in the time of Noah, similar to humans, were devoted to the indulgence of their flesh. They were called the sons of God, and it is said that God became angry or moved: hence, even though the irrational creatures were destroyed because of human sin, Noah found favor with God. But there were giants in the earth in those days (Gen. VI. 4). The author of divine Scripture does not want those giants to be regarded as the children of the earth in the manner of poets, but asserts that they were generated from angels and women, whom he calls with this name, desiring to express their bodily magnitude. And let us consider, lest perhaps the giants are like humans who devote themselves to the worship of their flesh, but have no care for their souls: just like those who, according to poetic fable, are said to have had contempt for the gods because of the size of their bodies. Those who despise being valued differently, since they consist of both soul and body, and reject the strength of the mind which the soul holds as more precious, and present themselves as imitators of this flesh as heirs of maternal stupidity?

Therefore, they labour in vain, arrogantly claiming heaven through their proud desires, and devoting themselves to earthly works, who, by choosing the lower and despising the higher communion, are condemned by a more severe punishment, as if they willingly subject themselves to more serious sins.

Usually the Scriptures call the angels the sons of God; because souls are not generated from any man. Therefore, God has not rejected faithful men from calling them his sons. Just as men who lead a good life are called sons of God (Job 1:6), so we call those whose works are of the flesh sons of the flesh by the authority of the Scriptures (Psalm 81:6). For the Evangelist John says: To those who received Him, He gave the power to become sons of God, to those who believe in His name, who were not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but were born of God (John 1:12-13). Therefore, afterwards you have this because the Lord is angry, for although He thought, that is, knew, that a man placed in the region of the earth, carrying flesh, cannot be without sin (for the earth is like a certain place of temptations, and the lure of the flesh), nevertheless, even though they had a mind capable of reason and the virtue of the soul infused in the body, they fell into a downfall without any consideration, from which they did not want to be recalled. For God does not think like humans, so that any new opinion might occur to Him; nor does He get angry as one who is changeable: but these things are read in order to express the bitterness of our sins, which merited divine offense; as if the guilt has grown to such an extent that even God, who is naturally not moved by anger, hatred, or any passion, seems to be provoked to anger.

Moreover, there was a reason that humanity should be destroyed: 'I will wipe from the face of the Earth,' He said, 'man, beasts, crawling creatures, and birds of the sky' (Gen. VI, 7). What harm had the irrational creatures done? But because these things had been done for the sake of humanity, once humanity was destroyed, the logical consequence was that these things should also be destroyed, since there was no one to make use of them. However, on a deeper level, this is revealed as the mind of man, which is capable of reason; for man is defined as a living, mortal, rational animal. Therefore, with the principal extinguished, all senses are extinguished as well; because nothing remains for salvation when the foundation of virtue has failed. But it is said that Noah found grace with God for the condemnation of others and for the expression of divine piety. At the same time, it is shown that the offense of others does not overshadow the righteous person, when he himself is preserved as the seed of the whole race, who is praised not for the nobility of birth, but for the merit of righteousness and perfection. For indeed the tested man's kind is of virtue's lineage; because just as the kind of men is men, so the kind of souls is virtues. Indeed, families of men are ennobled by the splendor of their lineage; but the grace of virtue is made glorious by the splendor of souls.

Chapter V.

The earth was corrupted by the iniquity of men; likewise, all time before the Lord is understood in two ways: and finally, the flesh of every human is taken, by the allurements of which our soul is corrupted.

11. But the earth was corrupted before God, and it was filled, it says, with wickedness (Gen. VI, 11). The cause of the earthly corruption is evident, because the wickedness of men corrupted the earth. Therefore, the Lord God says: The time of every man has come before me, because the

earth is filled with its wickedness (Ibid., 13). Indeed, the time of all men is in the sight of God and in his will. For it is not, as people commonly say, bound by a fatal decree: but I think this statement is particularly applicable here; because in the Gospel the Lord, who will redeem mankind by the suffering of his body and cleanse them with his blood and the sacrament of baptism, says: Father, the hour has come, glorify your Son, so that your Son may glorify you (John XVII, 1). Therefore, because in the flood the remnants of the human race were saved through Noah's ark for the future seed of restoration and renewal, He therefore says here: The time of every man has come, because the earth was filled with its own iniquities. This is in a figure; but in truth he says: The remnants were saved through the beloved grace. (Rom. XI, 5). And so the Apostle exclaims saying: Sin abounded, so that grace might also abound. (Rom. V, 20).

12. He corrupted, he says, all flesh in its way. He placed the flesh here for the earthly man, in whom the allurements of the flesh corrupted his way. If he had understood what gift he had received from God, he would not have allowed the flesh to obstruct the virtues of the soul. Therefore, the flesh was the cause of corrupting even the soul, which is like the origin and place of a certain pleasure, from which flow the rivers of evil desires and passions, and they overflow widely. By whom the soul is submerged, with the helmsman driven away, when the mind itself, overcome by certain tempests and storms, yields its place. But beautifully it is said, because man corrupted the path of his nature. For his path was in paradise, in that pathway of beatitudes, in that flower of virtues, and in that incorruptible grace, which he polluted with earthly footprints. Others have: The way of Himself, that is, of God. This is usually declared by the word of the Lord.

Chapter VI.

On the construction of an ark, in which the shape of the human body is described; and how its various parts represent the compartments of the same human body. How those compartments are to be lined with pitch, so that they adhere firmly to each other.

13. But now we must speak about Noah's ark itself, which if anyone is willing to consider more carefully, he will find the shape of the human body described in its construction. For what does God say: 'Make for yourself an ark of square woods' (Gen. VI, 14)? Surely we call this square because it is well composed of all its parts and suits itself. Therefore, both God, the creator of our body, and the builder of nature are portrayed, and it is signified that the work itself is complete in those words. But the square shape of a person's limbs is evident reasoning, if you consider the chest of a person, consider the abdomen with an equal measure of length and width, unless the natural measure is exceeded when the abdomen is distended by pleasures and feasts. Now, who does not notice with their own eyes that the feet, hands, arms, thighs, and legs are divided into four parts? And most of them, even if they are not of the same length or width, still maintain such an analogy that a fitting measure and ratio converge in them: length is longer than width, width is longer than height. And just as the wooden ark has three different dimensions: a length of three hundred cubits, a width of fifty cubits, and a height of thirty cubits, so it is with our body. There is a greatest distance according to length, a medium distance according to width, and a smallest distance according to height. However, the whole body, when put together from individual parts, appears square. For in use it is thus, that we call square those whom we esteem neither enormous in height nor strong in the quality of their body.

14. What also does he mean when he says: 'You will make nests in the ark' (Ibid.), it seems by no means to be ignored. For I consider it to be naturally said, because our whole body is woven together like a nest; so that the vital spirit penetrates all the parts of the viscera, and establishes itself in each of our limbs. Some nests are our eyes, in which sight is inserted. Nests are the hollows of our ears, through which hearing pours itself in, and as if into a deep pit. The nest is the nostrils, which attract the scent to itself. The nest is the fourth largest of all the openings of the mouth, in which it is nourished until the taste develops; and from where the voice emerges. In it lies the tongue, which, like an organ of voice, modulates its sounds with the skill of art; and although it is itself without reason, it expresses a rational voice. The nest is the half of the head. The nest is the membrane that protects the brain and contains it. The nests are the viscera of the lungs and heart. The spirit of our body, that is, the one that we breathe and by which we are nourished in this life, is the lung; but the heart is the nest of blood and spirit. There are two wombs of the heart: one in which it receives and pours out the blood as if in a kind of bosom, and transfers it into the veins: the other in which it is moistened by the higher one and carries it down into the arteries with a continuous flow. The bones also have nests but stronger. For they are hollow inside, in which there is a marrow through openings. In the very depths of the softest parts, there are nests of desire or pain. And if one were to consider further, they would also find many nests in this structure of the human body. Therefore, I believe that the psalmist spoke not only mystically but also naturally: For the sparrow has found a home for itself, and the turtledove a nest where she may lay her young (Ps. 84:3). For indeed, there is already in this body a nest of purity, in which there once was a nest of irrational desire. But where previously desire nourished misshapen births, now the inheritance of graceful chastity grows.

15. He says that the ark is made of pitch (Gen. VI, 14). The human body is composed of many bones, nerves, and other parts. It is connected to itself both externally and internally by a suitable structure, and it is held together by its proper structure, which the Greeks call $\sigma\phi\alpha\lambda\tau\omega$. Just as a spirit enclosed within does not escape, or a spiritual substance which operates within is restrained by double bonds, but is restrained by a fitting and containing unity, and by a strong connection. Therefore, the ark is commanded to be bound with bitumen; for bitumen is powerful for binding in nature. Hence, it is called ' $\sigma\phi\alpha\lambda\tau\omega$ ' (asphalt) in Greek, derived from ' $\sigma\upsilon\nu\pi\tau\omega$ ' (to join), because it connects things that are separated and binds them with an indissoluble bond, so that you believe they have come together by their natural unity. For this reason, the ark is bound both inside and outside with bitumen, so that the connection may not easily break.

Chapter VII.

The ark of Noah is compared to the ark of the covenant, by which it is shown that each part of the human body is composed for some use and beauty.

16. But, moreover, in Exodus the ark, which is a visible imitation of the world of intelligible purity, is also gilded both inside and outside (Exod. XXV, 11). For just as gold is made more precious by pitch, so is the ark, which is within the Holy of Holies, more excellent than this. For here he simply mentions wood; but there he includes wood that does not decay, signifying the merits of the saints. He also adds that there the supports are immovable, indicating that the station of the saints is stable and firm, since they followed the sure path of virtue, avoiding the fellowship of corruption. But this ark, as it were in the flood, was being impelled here and there with uncertain movement;

because the state of sinners is unstable, and the lives of those who abound in various passions are subject to corruption by the flood of error and are carried about with inconstant wandering.

17. Nor should we overlook the fact that when God said, 'You shall make an ark three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high' (Gen. 6:15), He added, 'You shall make it with a roof finished to a cubit from the top,' so that it would have a shape suitable for the body of a man, pleasing in its attractiveness, and with a royal ornament attached to the ark, since all the senses would be transferred from the other parts of the body to the head. Above all, the eyes, like attentive and constant guards assigned by Providence, would look down from above upon the entire state of our world. And the mind itself, placed there according to the opinion of many, and especially of Solomon, who says: The eyes of the wise are in their head (Eccles. II, 14): as if it should gather to itself a council of virtues in the imperial court, with which it is crowded and fortified, and as if it should exercise the government of the whole body from some lofty place, and should give forth answers, by which we may not only look back upon ourselves, nor only see what is before our feet, but also behold with deep insight the secrets of the heavens themselves, of wisdom. There, therefore, is the highest of our salvation, there is grace. From there comes protection, and also beauty is acquired for the whole body, which first blooms in the face. It is indeed fitting for a royal court to have a more excellent brightness, in which, just as the sight is greater, so is the splendor. For if you consider each individual thing that seems to have been composed in the human form for some use, such as the eyes for seeing, the ears for hearing, the nose for smelling, the mouth for speaking, they serve their purpose in order to provide beauty. How deformed are the faces of the blind! And why is it surprising if the face of a man without eyes is deformed, when the sky itself does not have its beauty without the sun? We lead sad days without the sun, nights without the moon are not pleasing; for they themselves are the eyes of the world. Remove the light of the stars, and there is a certain deformity of blindness in the very sky itself. The very hairs themselves form a covering over the globe of the eyes, and they seem to extend a certain sharpness, lest the pupil be injured by any dirt or dust cloud; and they themselves catch anything that might be brought in to harm the eye. If they should have a defect in their hue, how unbecoming! If the eyelid is too contracted, if the eyebrows are shaved, which shine with the appearance of precious necklaces, as if woven with gems!

19. Gold, too, has both a necessary use and a beautiful appearance: if someone cuts it, they bring deformity to the entire face. In gold, nature has worked in such a way that the curves of caves, with wonderful foresight, bring a great deal of utility so that the sound does not suddenly strike the secret of the head. Finally, we often see many people startled by a sudden clash and being terrified by the sound of someone's voice or the noise of a commotion. The very filth that is produced among them binds the hearing as if with a certain glue. At the same time, if the pulse of a sound has been more intense, it is broken and delayed, so that it soothes rather than suddenly shakes the internal [ear]. Even tiny worms, if they attempt to penetrate the ear, are held in place by a certain sticky substance of filth.

20. The nostrils of a monkey seem to be against nature: now, if they were cut, how can life continue, with the removal of the breath process; in what way is the face of a beast esteemed more, than the countenance of a man?

21. The hair of the head is clothed with a pleasing covering, like certain attendants of a royal court; lest the breeze harm the brain, or the rain strike it, or the sun scorch it. They are thus given by nature, so that, depending on their sex, they may either please by being longer or cut short; and depending on their age, mostly depending on the quality of the time and the year. In old men, gray hair is pleasing, in boys, it is remarkable: it is delightful to be shorn more closely in the summer, more indulgently in the winter: for women, the hair is an ornament, for men, it is a disgrace. Finally, the Apostle expressed this more explicitly, saying: For nature itself teaches you that indeed if a man nourishes long hair, it is a disgrace to him; but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory (1 Corinthians XI, 14,15).

22. What about the palace itself, from which courtly conversations arise, as certain indicators of our minds and messengers of our souls? What about the very order of the teeth, which not only provide strength to the whole body with their work, but also serve as modulators of its voice? If any of them fall, the voice falters.

23. We have spoken at length about the head, because it was necessary for all the senses to be located in the highest place, from which all the other parts would be divided. To the back of our head is the neck, and on the right and left are the arms, which protect the imperial citadel like faithful guards. Ultimately, those things in us that are closer to the head are stronger, and those that are closer are superior. The chest is also like a sacred shrine of wisdom, and the stomach is like a witness, as doctors say, and the conscious partner of the secrets of the head, and a sharer in compassion, to which it pours out all its own things, either beneficial or adverse. The sides, buttocks, thighs, and shins themselves indicate the width of the measure; and the strides of the feet, although they appear to be smaller, actually become wider as we walk.

Chapter VIII.

Through a side door, placed diagonally in a chest, the less noble part of the body is decently expressed; to this part we give a more abundant honor according to the Apostle. This applies to both the members of the Church and to the Church itself and the Synagogue.

Moreover, he beautifully added: 'You shall make a door on the side' (Gen. VI, 16), indicating the part of the body through which we are accustomed to expel food; so that he would surround with greater honor those parts of the body which we consider less noble. Scripture expressed this much more graciously than Socrates is said to have said in Plato's book. For whether Socrates himself or Plato, who was in Egypt, could have read or learned it from others who had read it in Moses' writings; moved by a fitting inspiration, he thought that a door had been opened to him, so that he might proclaim the plan of our Maker: praising that which was most fittingly agreeable, that he diverted certain ducts or exits of our tunnels from behind; so that our digestive system would not be offended by the sight of its own purgation. But the Apostle says: Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are necessary. And he goes beyond the simple description of philosophy with one word; and we honor those parts of the body that we think are less honorable with greater honor, and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty (1 Corinthians 12:22-23). For the sign of our self-restraint and temperance is especially known there. For often people are either stretched to the point of danger due to an excess of crudeness, or they are generally dissolved with their emptied organs.

25. Moreover, the Apostle beautifully related to the members of the Church (Ibid., 27 et seq). For what is dishonorable and superfluous, if not lust, if not excessive indulgence? If someone, entangled in youth, comes to baptism when they have reached a more mature age, renouncing their former ways, shedding their previous habits, casting off sins, and being buried with the Lord Jesus Christ, crucifying the world, and the world itself; is not that person endowed with the forgiveness of sins and esteemed to possess a greater honesty than that catechumen, whose life is considered more innocent? And let us follow the example of the Apostle himself: he was a Jew, he was a persecutor, but called to the grace of Christ, he began to be an Apostle. And because more was forgiven to him, he began to love more, to work more abundantly than the other apostles, becoming a chosen vessel and a teacher of the Gentiles. Did he not also attain a more abundant and honorable glory than the other apostles themselves, who was previously dishonorable and inglorious when he persecuted the Church of God? That poor person, weak in the Church, redeemed you by his own vows.

26. And to open up greater mysteries, what could be more ignoble than the Gentile people? Poor, as one who had no command of God's words, disabled and lame in both feet, who had not believed in either the law or the Gospel, yet when called, believed in him, was baptized, and received grace. Therefore, because more was forgiven to him, he loves more. The Jewish people remained, though lame in one foot: even in the law itself they stumble. Therefore, he who was once considered most glorious has lost everything, the wonderful counselor, the wise architect, and the wise listener. This one, who was ignoble, obtained all the titles of faith, the trophy of martyrs, and boasts of the company of angels. Therefore Plato, as much as he could, used the beauty of speech: but the Apostle, who had the spirit of God, revealed the mystery. Enough has been said about the gate; for those who were behind have become first.

Chapter IX.

In the lower part of the abdomen we are taught that the receptacles of food should be made small; and on this occasion, the conformation and use of the intestines are discussed. The origin of a flood arising from intemperance, and the remedy to be applied to it, are shown.

Now let us inquire what the Lord means when He says: You shall make the lower compartments of the ark two and three contraries (Gen. VI, 16). By saying 'lower,' He wishes us to understand that the receptacles for food are to be properly regarded as lower vessels, that is, those organs which digest the food that has been consumed. For food is perishable, and what is perishable should be compared not with things that are higher but with things that are lower. Moreover, since food descends, only a small portion of it nourishes the body and provides sustenance, while the rest is cleansed through the intestines, for they are the organs through which the excess of food descends.

Thus our Creator has designed our organs, so that they are not extended from the stomach to the bottom, but curved and bent; in order to prolong the use of our lives. For if the intestines of a human were to be extended, which receive and process food, it would immediately pass through without delay; and it would be necessary for us to constantly be hungry, constantly feast, or quickly run out of nourishment. But now, in that bending and curving of the intestines, food adheres and gradually provides nourishment by descending, it imparts juices to the body, maintains satiety, and delays the craving to eat: it is neither a sudden outpouring, nor a sudden evacuation, nor an

insatiable craving, nor an insatiable desire to feast. First therefore there is need and hunger: then from these would follow the continuation of eating without interruption. But what is more ugly than always tending to the stomach, which when it is filled, must be emptied; when it is emptied, must be refilled? What surpasses the third, except death mixed among the very foods and banquets? For how could they continue life any longer, while eating and hungry, and drinking and thirsty, and emptying everything they had taken before they were filled, and immediately hungry again? But now, as the food gradually descends, the natural providence moderates hunger and the natural craving. For first, in the stomach, which most people call the upper belly, the food is digested; then it is cooked in the liver, and there it is digested by heat. Its juice is divided into certain portions of the viscera, from which the whole body gains strength. This testifies to the growth of the youth, and the perseverance of the old. The remaining food flows into the belly. Whom we all call the belly without addition, many people say the lower belly; from which it is necessary for someone who had already descended full of corruption to be discharged through that sideways door.

29. When these things, composed by nature's skillful arrangement, appear to be designed for the instruction of God; nevertheless, if the manner of eating and acting is not observed by us, like a flood generated by excessive passions, and a certain corruption of the whole body occurs. For intemperance kindles desire, generates crudeness, creates corruption. Therefore, either the internal hardness is strained and shaken by pains, or a certain covering of the intestines is rubbed by the moisture of uncooked food and the roughness of indigestion; because, like a folded sheet, a twofold covering of them is asserted: one exterior, which the learned call continuous, or those who have examined it more diligently, directed from top to bottom; another interior, as if woven on the sides; hence they say it is not completely dissolved when it is rubbed. For if its interior were continuous, its rupture would be incurable, there the remains of food adhere through the delay of adjunctions. And if these adjunctions are dissolved, half-digested food and flowing drinks pass, which is the deluge of the human body.

30. Therefore, it seems to me that God wanted to teach us through the story of this ark how we may be safe from this particular flood. For the corruption caused by the flood is the reason: once it creeps in, the waters burst forth, and all the fountains of desires bubble up, so that the whole body may be submerged in such a great and deep flood of vices. For there is nothing that subjects a person to such wretched servitude as lust and such desires that weigh down the wretched conscience with a heavy yoke of crimes, to the extent that it cannot raise itself up, since it has lost the freedom of innocence. Therefore, the maximum remedy in this flood is to prioritize righteousness and choose it as the executor of divine command. Who is righteous within us, if not the intellectual power which includes all species of living beings above the earth within this ark? Restrain your rage and subdue all your irrational passions, subject all your senses to the mind, and accustom yourself to the commands of the soul. Do not allow your desires to escape and indulge in the common vices; and through rational thinking, you will be able to free even your irrational tendencies and impure sins from all danger of the flood.

Chapter X.

Of the three reasons why inanimate things are subjected to punishment through a flood, and how our senses die because of sin; and how God established his covenant with the righteous.

31. Whatever, he says, is on the earth, will die (Gen. VI, 17). Why indeed did dumb animals sin? For what reason are they subject to punishment when they do not have the sense of sinning? But just as in war when the general is killed by the enemy, his army dies, and all military strength is destroyed: so it seemed fitting with justice, when a man in whom the Lord God had given a certain royal power over all kinds of living beings, so that he would have imperial authority over all birds, wild animals, and beasts, that even domestic animals and all irrational animals would die. Finally, if ever there is a pestilence, with the region of the sky being corrupted, it first infects those things that are irrational, most especially dogs, horses, and cattle; and it contaminates also those things that seem to associate with humans: thus the force of diseases involves the human species as well. Therefore, this is, as I believe, the first cause of a just assertion. The second reason is that no one blames nature for why the other parts of our body die when only the head is removed, since we see many survive with their hands and feet amputated. But the other members do not have the same prerogative as the head; therefore, when it is cut off from where our senses come forth into the rest of the body, all the members also die: neither is the providence of the operator abandoned in this, nor is the fragility of the human substance reproved. Similarly, therefore, no one can now argue that man is the head and principal of all other animals, so it should not be surprising if other animals die when he dies. The third reason is that animals, being devoid of reason, were created for the sake of man; for they exist for the benefit of man's condition through their subjection. Finally, the Prophet attributes to the grace of man, saying: Thou hast subjected all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, moreover also the beasts of the fields, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea (Ps. VIII, 8); for all those things exist for man: some for usefulness, some for the sake of delight, others for pleasure. Therefore, it followed that when man was erased from the face of the earth, on account of whom everything was made, even the very things themselves would be erased by a similar downfall. This is according to a simple explanation of the reading.

34. However, a deeper and more profound interpretation attaches to this, that when the soul is weighed down by the burden of passions and engulfed in the turmoil of diverse desires, all earthly thoughts and desires rush headlong into abyss; for each sinner becomes more insolent the more grievous crimes he commits. For wickedness is increased by practice and exercise, and audacity is nourished by impunity. Therefore, it withdraws from all regard for honor, and in it all earthly things perish in the bitterness of deadly sin, which truly and perpetually destroys the sinner. For no one dies more painfully than he who lives in sin. In him every passion dies: the sight dies when it proclaims sin, when it deceives a woman, when it is captivated by the beauty of another's face, when it is ensnared by the eyes of a harlot, when it is enticed by the appearance of a prostitute. Does it not seem to die, he who aims the weapon of lust at himself, who willingly falls into the pit of death? The hearing also dies when it recounts crimes, when it proclaims the words of a tempting adulterer, when it inserts into the minds the words of a seductive harlot, who deceives a youth with much flattery of speech; and he is bound by the snares of her lips. The voice dies in silence if it does not confess to God. It dies with excessive speech, for it is written: From excessive speech you will not escape sin (Prov. X, 19). It dies through anger, when it exceeds the measure of vengeance. Indeed, every sense ultimately dies if it serves iniquity. And therefore, since all earthly things perish in the flood, but the just alone remains forever, it is said to him: I will establish my covenant with thee (Gen. VI, 18); for he is the heir of divine grace, he is the heavenly possessor of the inheritance, the sharer in the most blessed goods. And indeed, when men die, they usually transfer their patrimony by will; nor does the inheritance pass until the testator is alive: but God,

since He is eternal, pours out to the just the inheritance of divine substance; and He, being in need of nothing, bestows His own without any expense of donation, which does not burden the sharers in His goods, and enjoys more what we use. Finally, the Lord Jesus became poor, even though He was rich, so that we might be enriched by His poverty. He sealed both Testaments with His own blood, making us heirs of His life and heirs of His death, so that we may share in His life and receive the benefits of His death. He gave much to the righteous, saying: 'I will establish my covenant with you'; because He is a reasonable and faithful man, the covenant of God. For He Himself is the inheritance, He Himself is the possession, in whom the power of the divine covenant resides, in whom the fruit of judgment is found, in whom the inheritance of promise resides, of whom David says: 'Behold, the inheritance of the Lord.' The children are a reward, the fruit of the womb (Ps. 126:3). But now, with the salvation of a deeper mystery, let us proceed to the rest.

Chapter XI.

To be a just man is to be for the benefit of oneself and one's own salvation; although sometimes the desire to relax can lead to error. It is not always enough to be just in the eyes of God if one is not just in the eyes of men. Ultimately, the mind must fulfill its duty, like the head of a household, amidst passions.

36. 'Go in,' he says, 'you and all your household, into the ark; for I have seen you righteous before me in this generation' (Gen. VI, 18). Clearly, the truth of the prophetic statement is also confirmed in this instance, that a fool is a fool to himself alone, but a wise man benefits himself and many others (Prov. IX, 12). Therefore, Noah, being righteous, deservedly also saved his household in the flood. Similarly, those sailing on the sea and those in the army, if they do not lack the skill of a helmsman, or the foresight of a commander, they are safe from danger with the help of others. But because a good emperor has a good army, we understand that praise of a just man is not overlooked even in it, who established his household in such a way that it shone with the company of virtue, and deservedly found safety in kinship. Nor does it contradict the fact that later either his son or his wife offended. The just man was sleeping when his son erred (Gen. 9:22ff). Also, a woman, being of a weaker sex, troubled by the burden of danger, who believed that the whole world was about to perish in divine fire, why are you surprised if she could not follow the man, when the just man himself, warned by angels, scarcely escaped? But what is surprising if an error overcomes a person, or if attention is relaxed? Argue therefore that even a just person becomes intoxicated. But I think these things should be reserved for their proper place (Below, ch. 29).

Now let us consider what remains. For he rightly said: 'Because I have seen you righteous before me in this generation.' Many people appear righteous to men, but few to God: differently to men, differently to God. To men according to the appearance of life; to God according to the purity of the soul, the truth of virtue; men approve what is external: God examines what is internal. However, he wisely added: 'In this generation'; so that he would not condemn the previous ones, nor exclude the later ones, and rightly attribute the flood to the destruction of that generation which had no share in equity. This according to the letter.

38. However, a higher understanding leads us to think that the strength of the mind is in the soul, and the soul is in the body, just as the head of the household is in his own home. For what the mind is in the soul, that is the soul in the body. If the mind is safe, the house is safe, the soul is safe; if the soul is unharmed, the flesh is unharmed. For the sober mind controls all passions,

governs the senses, and regulates speech. Therefore, the Lord rightly says: 'Enter within yourself,' that is, enter into your own mind, into the ruler of your soul; there is salvation, there is guidance; outside is the flood, outside is danger. But if you are virtuous within, you are also safe outside; for where the mind is its own master, there are good thoughts, good actions. For if no vice clouds the mind, there are sincere thoughts. If there is chastity in one's pursuits, let temperance be in one's heart, and no flame of desire will ignite, no wounds of sorrow will emerge. For sobriety of the mind is the medicine of the body.

Chapter XII.

Seven clean animals of both sexes and two unclean animals are to be brought into the ark, because the number seven is sacred and complete, whereas the second is not. In us, there is a certain feminine sevenfold nature, but it is elevated to a masculine condition by an educated man. Finally, human nature is said to be capable of both opposites.

Now let us consider by what means Noah commanded the clean animals to enter the ark, seven and seven, male and female (Gen. VII, 2): but of the unclean animals, two and two, so that the seed may be nourished in all the earth. And as I think, he asserts that the clean week begins; because the world and the sacred seventh number are clean. For it is not mixed with any other, nor is it generated from another. Therefore it is called virgin, because it does not generate anything from itself; and rightly it is without maternal and immune birth, and although it may be called by a feminine name, it has the grace of masculine sanctification: For every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord (Exod. XXXIV, 19). And in the prophet you have: She has poured out and given birth to a male (Isaiah 66:7), that is, holy. But the second number is not complete, because it is divided. And that which is not complete is considered empty. But the seventh number is complete, because it is a week, like ten; and it is similar to the first, because it is made in the likeness of the One who is eternal, from whom all virtues flow and all things in every kind are moved. These are natural things.

Regarding morals, it is without a doubt that the irrational part of our soul is divided into five senses, including hearing and smell, which seem to be feminine by nature; because our senses are quickly drawn to material and worldly things. Hence, it is clear that they have a more delicate substance. However, for a learned and industrious man, everything is clean; because wisdom and virtue, through their masculine judgment, serve as a foundation. Therefore, the qualities of a weaker sex are transferred into a stronger substance by a wise and purposeful ruler. For the judgment of a wise person is strong and fixed; not mutable, like that of foolish and ignorant individuals who waver with uncertain counsel, or like that of wicked people who do not choose what is true and just, but rather what is convenient for themselves, breaking away from what is true and separating from what is just. Justice is indeed a unique good, and is valued highly for its own sake. But iniquity, like a divisive force, brings forth both hatred and greed, and confuses those things which should be divided. For the fool, like the moon, changes and, being variable, stains his soul with the ugly contagion of a leprous body, often mixing healthy thoughts with harmful ones. But perhaps because you see that clean and unclean animals are commanded to be brought into the ark, it may rightly move you that I said that they should not be mixed with honest debates. Nor do I deny that there are indeed seeds and, as it were, principles of irrational movements, in our soul and in those who are not of this world. For the nature of man is capable of opposing things, so that both

the power of evil and the entrance of virtue may be in it; and deservedly at the beginning of this book, which is Genesis, you read through the image of the tree in the middle of paradise the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. II, 9). Regarding the tree of knowledge of good and evil, it was commanded not to be tasted because our mind, in which there is knowledge and discipline, receives the concept of good and evil. Therefore, just as the creator of nature reserved the propagation and also the preservation of the genus of animals, so that the entire earth would be filled with the seed of living creatures, he also did not consider empty earthly substance of our bodies to be abandoned to such impure animals, which, with pleasures and luxury, are swallowed up like a flood, and fluctuate with the aforementioned passions. But when each person has rid themselves of the flood of passions through sobriety and self-control, and has woven a certain dryness of the soul, they begin to give life to their own body, and wisdom is the guiding principle of the purity of the soul.

Chapter XIII.

Why did Noah enter the ark? Was it after seven days the flood happened? Also, why did Moses say that it lasted forty days and forty nights; and how did it endure for forty days? In what way does divine mercy shine forth in the very threat of punishment? After that, Noah's generous obedience is considered.

42. It is also a matter of inquiry why, after Noah entered the ark and brought in the animals, the flood occurred seven days later. For it does not seem idle that the number of days that passed was neither more nor fewer, but exactly the same number that there were in the creation of the world. For the world was made in six days (Gen. II, 2), and on the seventh day God rested from His works. By this He declared Himself to be the author of the world and of the flood. God created the world because of its goodness, and He brought about the flood as a punishment for our sins. Therefore, people were reminded, even from the beginning of the creation of the world, that they should reconcile with their Creator not only with tears and prayers, but also with a correction of their behavior. So the Lord gave them time for repentance, being more willing to forgive than to punish; by the fear of the impending flood, He forced them to seek forgiveness, and while they trembled at the danger of future death, they turned away from impiety and injustice. It is also proper that we gather from here the boundless mercy and compassion of the Lord, because the offense of many years since the creation of the world, until the end, contracted in a few days, if they had repented, He was willing to forgive. For God is forgetful of sin, and a rewarder of virtue, as He Himself says in the prophet: I am, I am He who blots out your iniquities, and I will not be mindful: but you be mindful. And let us be judged: declare your iniquities, that you may be justified (Isaiah 43:25). For when he observes that true virtue is rejected by the soul, he bestows upon it so much honor that not only does he pardon the sins of the guilty, but he also bestows grace and justification. Therefore, he waited until the seventh day, the day on which he rested from his work, so that if forgiveness were sought, correction would follow, and wrath would be appeased.

It was also a concern not to omit this, because it said that the flood lasted forty days and added forty nights (Gen. VII, 12). For we know that the day is called the time when the sun illuminates the earth; the night is the time when darkness surrounds us and separates us from the light. And often we use the term 'day' to mean only the time of daylight, and sometimes we include the night. For when we mention a month of thirty days, we are also indicating the nights. It is asked why, when

Moses had already said that the flood lasted forty days, he added, 'and forty nights'. And some, who came before us, have understood it in this way: as if the destruction caused by the flood was demonstrated by both men and women being destroyed; the day refers to the man, who is referred to as purer, like light, the night refers to the woman, who is created while the man is asleep (Gen. 2:21): at the same time, because the man is mentioned first, as the author who moves the power of the woman and arouses it for giving birth, the man is brighter in action and in public; the woman is darker, as if confined within the walls of the home and closer to night, born in second place, and given her form from the rib of man, she owes thanks to the man she was created from, and is subject to the privilege of the superior, and is to be compared with material things in the use of giving birth. However, danger exists in both consonance, because sins also exist in consonance. And deservedly, the spaces of time do not differ, because the merits of offenses do not differ.

44. Moreover, many people also inquire diligently by what means the deluge continued for forty days. And we can say that this number was assigned to the sadder events, that is, the destruction of creation, while seven days were assigned to the constitution of the entire world, that is, happier events. But perhaps it is worth considering that the law was also given for forty days (Exod. XXIV, 18), and Moses observed these days on Mount Sinai, spending time receiving the precepts of the Law. Therefore, the precepts of the same number of sins to be confessed are attributed, by which the penalty of guilt is paid; so that we may know that praise should be compared to the same time of life, by which a punishable fault can be committed. Hence, now the days of forty are no longer prescribed for punishment, but for life; so that with this number of fasts and more frequent prayers, we may alleviate the punishments of our sins, and, being attentive to the precepts of the law, may correct our error with devotion and faith. Therefore, through the resurrection of the Lord, the fortieth day is no longer considered the last, but the first; and from there life is counted, where before the number of death was counted towards the end of the world and the destruction of the human race.

45. And the Lord says, I will destroy all the resurrection of the flesh from the face of the earth. O beauty of celestial words, if anyone examines themselves with a devout mind! God is indignant at our sins, but does not forget his mercy. He threatens punishment, but does not allow destruction. He moderates vengeance, recalls severity. He says that he will blot out all flesh not from the earth, but from the face of the earth. He cuts off the flower, but keeps the root: he allows the power of human nature to remain in the depth of substance, which labors on the surface, persevering impassible within, and untouched by harm, reserved for the substitution of those who are not guilty, and immune to their punishment. But beautifully I have set forth, I will destroy, like the tips of letters which are erased without deceit of books, and without diminution of tablets. Ink is erased, but the wood remains. Elements are erased, so that usually better ones may be written. Ink is removed, substance is not exterminated. I will destroy, he says, the corruption of the flesh, so that I may write incorruption. I will destroy the resurrection of the flesh from the face of the earth, so that I may write about those rising in heaven. I will erase from the book of the earth, so that I may write in the book of life. Let them be erased, my Lord, let them be quickly erased, the elements of iron, so that the elements of Christ may be written. May the earthly resurrection be abolished, so that heavenly grace may abound. Come, Moses, prepare your lap, receive the law, take the tablets that divine mercy no longer erases. Receive the tablets that the Lord may establish forever. I wish you yourself do not break them. And my own fault would have taken them away from me, if the

Lord had not restored them. Indeed, Moses was indignant that they were not granted divine privileges unless they offered obedience. But I believe that you have not broken them for me, but for the Jews. You broke them for the Jews and deceived me. The former ones were broken so that the latter ones could remain. You broke them in the hearts of the Jews. For what use was it for them to possess the tablets whose teachings they could not keep? Behold, they claim to possess the second tablets, but they do not hold them. They claim to read the divine elements, but they do not read them (Deut. IX, 10). Moses says that the finger of God has written the tablets: they do not read the finger of God, but they read iron. They see ink, but they do not see the spirit of God. But the Church does not know ink, it knows the spirit. Therefore, Paul knows how to write not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God (2 Cor. III, 2-3). Oh sacrilegious and foolish people of the Jews! A man writes with the spirit of God, and a man who is nourished by the law believes that God has written with ink, not with the spirit.

46. Therefore, to return to the previous topic, God deleted the resurrection of the flesh, like the erasure of bees: whereby it is declared that he wiped out the excessive birth of humans due to their impiety, in a semblance of letters; but he preserved the substance and nature of the human race, like the perpetuity of tablets, so that from it the remaining seed would sprout. This statement also seems to agree with what he says: I will destroy, he says, every resurrection of the flesh. But purification seems to be contrary to the common use of nature in resurrection; because by purification one falls back and suppresses the luxury of resurrection. However, everything that is purified loses its appearance, preserves its substance, and improves it. Therefore, the Lord restrained by purification the bodily use, and conversation of generation, which had degenerated from the beauty of nature and the gift received. This is according to the letter. But as for what pertains to a deeper meaning, the sight of the flood is a type of the purging of our soul. Therefore, when our mind cleanses itself from the earthly allurements by which it was previously delighted, it will also wipe away the filth of old desires with good thoughts, just as it absorbs the bitterness of the turbulent waters with purer waters first.

47. And he did, he said, everything that the Lord God commanded him. Noah received the commandments, a servant received the orders. The one who does whatever tasks he has undertaken is considered a friend: the one who hesitates in his obedience is burdened with the duty of servitude. Lastly, even the Lord Jesus says in the Gospel: You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I will not call you servants anymore. Therefore, it is commanded as to a friend, it is commanded to him who, with strong love and wise counsel, carries out those things which are commanded. The judgment of the Lord did not fail, the righteous fulfilled all things, not part, but all things that were commanded to him; and therefore he received testimony from the divine Scriptures. And do not think it is superfluous because he has placed both Lord and God at the same time; for God is in the Lord, and the Lord is in God: but understand it as a common commandment of the Father and the Son. However, some have interpreted it before us, because by saying Lord and God in this place, he expressed both the power to avenge and the power to forgive: and he who avenges here speaks first to sinners, therefore he spoke before the Lord; but because afterwards, in order to spread the seed of the righteous, he indulged, he mentioned God afterwards. Finally, it is said that God, about to create the world, said: In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. And God said, let there be light.

Chapter XIV.

It happened during the spring time that the Flood occurred, so that people were more tormented by it; and in the six hundredth year of Noah, in order to coincide with the creation of humanity, the destruction of humanity occurred. Likewise, the Flood signifies the disruption of the mind and body through the bursting forth of the fountains of the deep and the cataracts of the sky.

48. There is also that thorough consideration, that in the six hundredth year of Noah, in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the flood occurs. It is not doubted that this time is in the second month of spring, when births increase, the fields give birth, and the offspring of both the earth and animals pour forth. Therefore, the flood happened when the pain of those who were being punished in their abundance was greater, then vengeance was more terrible, as if speaking the words of God: Behold, all things have been generated richly according to the grace of divine providence, everything has germinated on the earth more fertile for the use of humans, crops are seen, the fields are filled with wheat and barley, the branches of trees are adorned with future fruits through flowers: the earth does not lack in its duties, the animals do not lack in their gifts, which are paid regularly in births, so that nothing is lacking for humans. Only humans lack in their duties, they do not know their creator from whom all things are provided for them, they neglect their maker. The man despises his reward, when God has not despised his work. Let all things perish with man, on account of whom all things were born. Let the man be consumed in his own riches, when he dies with his wealth. The earth had committed no crime before man, it erred in no fruits: it recognizes in man alone that it has degenerated, bearing thorns and thistles instead of fruits. The only admirable gift, the chief of the mind has perished. Therefore, why are all those things preserved? Therefore, water is not poured over the gathered crops, so that the land does not feel more of a benefit than a flood. Finally, in the springtime among the Egyptians, but in a different month, the Nile overflows so that the earth may soften for sowing seeds, and the seeds that are cast may be received in a gentler lap, in a more gracious embrace. But the fact that the flood occurs in the six hundredth year of Noah seems to show that Adam was created on the sixth day. The same number, that is, the one that is called 'pair', is maintained both in the creator and in the restorer, because the source of the sixtieth and the six hundredth is the number of the sixth. However, it is said that it is both the first and the seventh month. But we must pay more attention to the first; because after the flood, in the springtime, the care of cultivating the fields is restored, and the fertility of the peaceful and fertile soil begins to progress. By this it is signified that God would never have brought destruction upon mankind in that number or time in which He made the beginning, unless He had been offended by monstrous crimes. At the same time, the reason for the forgiveness of time and number is promised; because, even when He is angry, He is reminded by the preceding causes of His benefits, not to completely destroy the substance of those whom He Himself has given.

49. And all the fountains of the deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened (Gen. VII, 11). The force of the deluge is appropriately expressed in the Scriptures, which say that both the sky and the earth were moved, from which elements this world's entire beginning consists. Therefore, the human race, enclosed on all sides by the rushing masses of water, is overwhelmed. This is according to the literal sense. But as for the deeper meaning, the symbol of the sky represents the human mind, and the designation of the earth represents the body and senses. Great therefore are the shipwrecks, when the whirlwind and storm of both the mind and the body and all the senses are mixed together. Let us carefully consider what has been said. The

deceit of the mind and its cunning often exercise their own poison, but nevertheless the sobriety of the body and self-control overshadow the wickedness of the mind. Often the slippery mind is uncertain of its faith and opinion, but nevertheless the flesh is free from delights and luxury, so that frugality may excuse the error of the mind, just as there are many heretics who claim to have the self-control of the body in order to acquire the testimony of their sober flesh for the faith of their assertion: although they are slippery in perception, they are considered somewhat more excusable insofar as they are less shameful. But when the poisons of the mind and the corrupting contagions of bodily obscenity confuse every sense and power, and the soul, slippery with uncertain motion, reeks with the foul ink of malice, inflamed with the fury of cruelty, it is also incited to bodily vices. Even the greedy longing for wealth, impatient of moderate means, is precipitated into the desire for the destruction of another's well-being; then there is a great flood of passions overflowing all alike. Then folly, injustice, recklessness, depravity, and treachery seem to pour forth from the higher part of the mind like a cascade. From there burst forth from the earthly source of the body desire, drunkenness, lust, and finally the downfall of various crimes, which thoroughly weaken both the strength of the body and the vigor of the mind.

Chapter XV. Through the closed and floating ark, the body of a man covered in leather and moved by various motions: through fifteen cubits of water by which the mountains were surpassed, human senses: finally, through death of all flesh, the destruction of souls corrupted by passions is foreshadowed: but especially the proud are to be destroyed, while the just remains as if incorporeal in the body, with wicked affections extinguished in the meantime. And the Lord closed the ark from outside (Gen. VII, 16). The meaning is clear according to the literal interpretation. The ark had to be closed and securely covered so that the wandering streams of the flood would not penetrate. A higher sense can also be interpreted without inconsistency, if we consider that the human body, to which this ark that is described is compared, is enclosed in skin in order to be protected from cold and heat, which the divine craftsman clothed with natural coverings for the protection of all the limbs, and covered with a covering that was spread over it, so that it neither freezes from the cold nor dissolves from the summer heat.

51. So the water overflowed and lifted up the ark, and it was carried on top of the waters. It is not without reason that the water overflowed, when the floodgates of heaven were opened and the fountains of the deep were broken, and the rivers. This has been said with great emphasis. For where there is an eruption, there must necessarily be an irreversible outpouring; it is not easy to contain the immense overflow of flowing waters. Therefore, it is evident what has been written. But if you think it should be examined more deeply, our flesh is moved in various ways and is tossed about by passions, by which it is tossed here and there, like on the waves of its own troubles, now with hunger, now with thirst, now with desire, now with joy, now with sorrow.

Furthermore, I believe that this should not be overlooked, because Scripture did not overlook it, how many cubits the water was above the earth; for it said that the water was fifteen cubits above the high mountains. Therefore, the simple understanding is clear. However, the allegory encompasses five senses, which are like high mountains in our body, which overshadow this flesh of passions, and are often attacked by beasts, and are agitated by their dense and opaque nature. And so the Lord, coming through the faith of the believing nations, came to His Church, coming from Lebanon as the prophet Habakkuk says: The Lord will come from Lebanon, from the shady and dark mountain (Hab. III, 3). The Church also comes from Lebanon, as the Song of Songs has:

Come from Lebanon, my bride, come from Lebanon. You will pass through and cross over from the beginning of faith, from the dens of lions, and the mountains of leopards (Song of Songs IV, 8), where the pagan peoples, who suffered heavy attacks of bestial passions, now rise with the height of faith and the loftiness of devotion. Therefore, through these mountains Christ came, combating with the fierce movements of this body in Gospel disputations, and destroying that elevation of the heart and the self-exalting pride by obedience and humility, and they began to bear the deserved fruits of gentleness, which were previously overthrown by the heavy floods of passions. But some have estimated the number of cubits in this way, that the five senses have a triple collection; because sight sees the visible, and hearing hears the audible, and smelling smells the odoriferous, and taste tastes the tasteful, and touch touches the substance subject to be touched. Therefore, the five senses are valued in three ways, according to the saying: Write it in three ways (Prov. 22:20). However, I think it is more beneficial to consider the senses of the earthly, animal, and spiritual man, which have surpassed those flowing floods of the deluge.

53. Justly dead is every flesh that was moved. This is clear both according to the letter, and specifically and naturally expresses the corruption of the flesh by the evidence of a violent disturbance. For a corrupt disturbance only occurs through the corruption of the affections. Flesh moves by pleasures, and it is itself moved by pleasures. Such a disturbance creates corruption. Therefore, the cause of corruption is the disturbance of this world, through which the soul of each degenerates. For when corrupt passions move the mind, corruption is generated; when they excite the pursuit of virtues, progress is made in discipline. Therefore, everyone who was in the dry land is dead: for those whom the wave of such a great flood had submerged could not but die. This is according to the order and series of words in the scripture. But if you seek an allegory, there is no doubt that just as a fire consumes a drier piece of wood that it begins to lick, so the soul, unless it is moistened by the dew of various virtues, watered by a certain cup of wisdom, and by the fountain of justice, and by the irrigating stream of chastity, will burn up, with its vital root dried out, in the fire of desires, or be washed away, being weakened by the flood of the flesh. Therefore, the soul should always feast on the thoughts of good deeds, so that the mind, intoxicated with the juice of prudence, may thrive; thereby it will not easily succumb to the bodily deluge of harm and perish in the arid state of negligence. Therefore, the Lord reminds us not to depart from the fountain of wisdom, but to drink from the cups of virtue; lest anyone wither under the scorching heat of injustice and be unable to withstand the storm of persecution (Baruch 3:20 et seq.). For it is written: 'If they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?' (Luke 23:31)

54. God destroyed, he says, everything that was above the face of the earth (Gen. VII, 23). The clear explanation of the text. However, the allegory reveals to us the pride that exalts itself in this earthly and fragile substance, and forgetful of divine things, despises human things, deforming the appearance and gait of an arrogant man: such as Isaiah describes the daughters of Judea, shining their eyes with glances and boasting with their head held high (Isa. III, 16). For there are those who raise their eyebrows, with an inflated heart, a lifted chest, and a backward-leaning neck: who indeed only strike the ground with the soles of their feet, but freely suspend their whole body, and hang down in an empty examination: they proceed in their steps to what is in front of them, but lean the crown of their head towards what is behind them: they look at the sky, but despise the earth, as if they were attached by the pain of their neck, so that they cannot incline it. Therefore, God has erased these from the book of life, saying: Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled

(Luke 14:11): and he does not allow them to adhere to heavenly rewards through the merits of the saints.

55. Therefore, all those who were outside the ark, having been killed, Noah was left alone in the ark with those who were with him (Gen. VII, 23). The speech does not need interpretation; it is simpler. The understanding coincides with the letter. However, a deeper and inner meaning indicates the just man, a lover of wisdom, like a fruitful tree, having the branches of those things that used to devour its food cut off, overshadowing its hair, constraining the processes of the branches, as if only the ground of irrational passions remained with his own. But the debates of the mind, which adhere to virtue, are its own. And he added well that he remained in the ark, as if it were hardly believable that, with bodily passions cut off, he was still seen to be dwelling in the body: although he was now free from earthly contagions, he still preserved the substance of the body that was incorruptible: and as if incorporeal in the body, he was carried through the flood, not swallowed up; indeed, he carried the body as if placed in the ark within, but he, impassable by bodily passions, as if incorporeal, governed in the midst of such great movements.

Chapter XVI.

Why was it said: 'No mention was made of Noah's wife and his sons'? Why were the animals named before the livestock, and what kind of spirit was brought upon the earth to make the waters recede?

56. The Lord remembered Noah, and the beasts, and the cattle (Gen. VIII, 1). Many are moved by the fact that the Author did not say the reason, that the Lord also remembered Noah's wife and sons, when he remembered the beasts and cattle. But when he said that Noah was remembered, he includes in the author and head of the household his other relationships. At the same time, a certain consensus of the remaining relationships seems to be expressed. Indeed, when they all love each other, they are one household: but when they disagree, they are separated and split into multiple households. Where charity is, there the name of the elder by whom the others hang signifies the whole house: just as if someone were to mention a tree, they also include the branches; if someone were to name a branch, they also encompass the fruits that are on it, in the same way and in the same discourse. And it is not without purpose that he first mentioned that the Lord remembered Noah, then the beasts, then the cattle; that is, why he did not name those animals that are milder after man, but rather the more ferocious. In this, it seems that the reason is that those animals which were more ferocious would be tamed by the proximity of both sides. This also seems to be declared in that poetic verse: κακοὶ δὲ μέσσον λασσεν (Homer, Iliad Δ). For from this, the poet also used it to arrange the disposition of the fighting army; to place the weaker ones in the middle, so that they would be supported more from both sides by the stronger ones, and they would engage in battle with both sides. In his writings it is evident. However, in a deeper sense, it is certain that the just person has his thoughts in the middle, not in a part of his mind: and as long as he lives this life, it is necessary for him to have them in his body, like heavy beasts in that ark. For there is no mind, no soul, that does not receive even the rough movements of evil thoughts. Therefore, the soul of a fool sharpens wild movements and inhales the poisons of serpents; but the strength of a wise person moderates and restrains them. And the Lord brought a spirit upon the earth, and the water ceased (Genesis VIII, 1). I do not think this is said in such a way that we should understand the spirit as the name for wind. For the wind could not have dried

up the flood. Otherwise, since the sea is stirred up daily by winds, it would certainly be emptied. For how could the sea, which had spread out over the whole earth in the flood, not be emptied by the force of the winds, if it had receded even to the pillars of Hercules, as they say, and the Great Sea was boiling up against the roofs of high mountains? Therefore, it is not doubtful that by the power of the invisible divine spirit, that flood was repressed, not by a gust of wind, but by celestial operation. Hence it is written: All wait for you to give them food in due season. When you open your hand, all things will be filled with goodness. You take away their breath, and they die, and return to their dust. You send forth your spirit, and they are created, and you renew the face of the earth (Psalm 104:27 and following). Therefore, the Spirit whose operations everything seems to follow, in whom is the power of the heavens themselves, as it is written: By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and by the breath of his mouth all their power (Ps. 32:6); this Spirit is the creator of all things, as Job also says: The divine Spirit who made me (Job 33:4).

Chapter XVII.

To point to the closed sources of water and the causes of the waterfall as the reasons for the error, they must be cut off for the health of the soul: the enumeration of the time in which the ark settled, at the beginning of the year, that is, in the spring season it began and stopped the flood; and it grew and decreased in the same numbers: the opening of the ark, by contemplating through the senses of nature, to reach the knowledge of God; finally, the release of the raven, the expulsion of guilt from the soul to which it does not return after passions have been extinguished.

Now let us consider what the divine Scripture says: 'The fountains of the deep were also stopped, and the windows of heaven were stopped' (Gen. VIII, 2). I do not think it is obscure. For by these causes the flood was diminished, by which it had increased. The fountains of the deep had burst forth, the windows of heaven had been opened, so that the earth might be inundated with water flowing in from all sides. Those from which the origin of the flood had flowed should have been closed, so that its increase might begin to cease. This is the meaning of the letter. However, a more subtle interpretation expresses that a flood of the soul had entered through the vice of the mind and the luxury of the body, so that malice mingled with passion, and passion with malice: when the divine word, the Doctor of the soul that was suffering from long-lasting illness, came to visitation, the causes of the illness needed to be removed first due to the wickedness of debates and the bitterness of passions. For the beginning of medicine is to identify the causes of the illness; so that those things which harm may not be further supplied for the increase of the illness. The law also teaches us (Leviticus 13:5-6); for when leprosy has stopped spreading, it declares the leper's dwelling to be clean. Whatever moves contrary to nature is unclean. Therefore, this is the health of the soul, this is the soundness of the mind: that the flow of error ceases, that guilt is stopped before it creeps in. With the stimulus of guilt and wrongdoing gone, safety is assured, and the unharmed strength of the soul is restored.

60. And he said, 'The ark sat in the seventh month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month' (Gen. VIII, 4). Unless you carefully consider it, even according to the literal interpretation, the understanding of this passage is difficult. And first of all, we must be cautious, so that the repetition of the seventh month does not cause confusion. For it is written that in the six hundredth year, according to Hebrew truth, on the first month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the flood began: there were one hundred and fifty days of water infusion, the ark sat on the mountain in the

seventh month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month: afterwards, the waters began to recede by the mercy of God, and for one hundred and fifty days the waters diminished, and then the tops of the mountains appeared: then after forty days, Noah opened the holy door of the ark, he sent out the raven and it did not return, he sent out the dove and it returned empty, then after seven days he sent out the dove again and it returned with an olive branch, and then after another seven days he sent out the dove again and it did not return, and that was when Noah realized that all the water had receded.' Thus, the year is shown to be the 601st year of Noah, in the 27th month of the second year. Therefore, to explain clearly, in the same month and on the same day, the earth's equilibrium is restored after the flood, which had been corrupted by the beginning of the floodwaters. For during the time of spring, every field turns green, and the earth produces fruits. Then, the trees begin to bud, and the fruits to sprout. Therefore, the Lord restored and returned the richness and quality. Therefore, in the second month, that is April (for the first month is March, in which the birthday of Justice is celebrated, when the equinox of day and night is considered, that is, on the eighth day, as the Romans believe, or as others, on the fifth day before the kalends of April); in the second month, I say, that is April, on the twenty-seventh day, the flood began. Therefore, the beginning of the year is estimated not according to the use of time, but according to the prerogative of nature; so that because then the hope of the year begins, and the fruits begin to show themselves, then it seems to be the beginning of the year. However, the seventh month according to the number, which is called September, is calculated; because although the year seems to begin from the month of September, as the use of the present Indictions shows (for then the casting of seeds takes place), truly, however, from which the fuller grace begins to show itself, from that the origin of the year is subtracted; and therefore, the one who is thought to be first by another reason is considered the seventh by a different estimation. Therefore, the ark rested in the seventh month, that is, in September, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. From that time the flood began to decrease. At the same time, consider that the same numbers by which things begin are also resolved; so the flood began in the second month of the year, on the twenty-seventh day of the month: the flood lasted for 150 days, and then receded for another 150 days: for forty days excessive rain and the eruption of fountains from the heavens flooded the earth, and for another forty days after the mountain tops were visible, on the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, Noah sent forth a raven: thus it is clear that the flood was diminished by the same number by which it was increased. The Scripture teaches us that order must be observed.

61. But as for the door of the ark that the righteous man opened, it has been explained according to the sense of the body. However, according to a higher interpretation, it seems to be said that the senses of the body are like doors. Through them, as it were, a certain comprehension of sensible things enters into our mind. Therefore, our mind seems to perceive through these senses, especially through vision, which is considered superior to all the senses of the body; for it is the light of our dwelling, and through it, as we look at the sky, the earth, the seas, the sun, the moon, and the stars with which the axis is adorned, we understand that God is the maker and ruler of the world, and we believe that these things could not have been made or could not subsist without God, the author, and the creator of so great works.

62. Therefore, through this window the just man releases the raven first. The reason must be sought, and yet it is not hidden as far as the letter is concerned; because most people consider the

raven as a harbinger of the future and they observe its voices and investigate its flight. However, a deeper meaning signifies that when the mind of the just man begins to cleanse itself, it first repels those things which are dark, unclean, and reckless. For indeed, all impudence and guilt are dark and feed on the dead, like the raven; but near the light is the virtue which shines through the purity and simplicity of the mind. And so, guilt is released and expelled, and separated from innocence, so that nothing dark remains in the mind of the righteous man. Finally, the raven does not return to the just; because fleeing all guilt is contrary to fairness, nor does it seem to fit with honesty and justice. Finally, the unjust believes that he has escaped from his chains, when the just has separated himself from his company, from a certain flood and familiar corruption, like the raven who, when he could find no dry land anywhere, did not return, but remained.

63. It should also be considered why the crow did not return until the water had dried up from the earth (Gen. 8:7), as if it had indeed returned afterwards. But this is a familiar expression in divine Scripture. For you also have it written in the Gospel about Saint Mary, that Joseph did not know her until she gave birth to a son, and certainly did not know her afterwards (Matt. 1:25). Furthermore, what is the meaning of this expression, that it says, until the water had dried up from the earth, not the earth from the water? And indeed, the use of speech has also been accustomed to have this: but some before us have esteemed it, because it seems that an immoderate force of passions is expressed by this way of speaking; because the soul is perfected by turbulent and stormy passions, but it regains virtue when they diminish and as it were dry up. Therefore, the appearance of blame does not return to the soul of the righteous, as if leaving it dry and dead, and unable to harm it anymore.

Chapter XVIII.

Just as the raven represents wickedness, so the dove expresses virtue. Noah shows himself always ready to receive it; and by keeping the dove for seven other days, he teaches the patience necessary for correction.

64. Nor is that empty space, which afterwards is sent forth by the dove. For simplicity resolves malice, and virtue dissolves guilt. Therefore, malice loves the flood, and shuns the company of a just mind, and, as if deserted and without any abode, it remains, having no communion with virtue. But virtue returns, loving the company of the just, and, more familiar with usefulness to be bestowed, cautions against things hurtful, instructs in things salutary, just as the dove, being sent forth, when it saw that the water had ceased, returned as if full of righteousness, that it might notify to Him by whom it had been sent, what it should yet beware of, and, by expecting a better fruit, afterwards might possess it. But when the dove does not find its rest, it returns to him, clearly indicating through such birds how great a difference there is between malice and virtue. For when the raven was released, it seemed to be overflowing the flood for some time, but then it was seen to have found a place to settle. And certainly, this raven is not like other birds that are accustomed to dwelling in water. Therefore, when the raven appears to have found where to stay, but the dove has not found it, it is evident that a higher interpretation is being signified, because malice is accustomed to mixing itself with restless passions and desires by which the soul is corrupted, and it delights in them as if they were relatives and household members, and it places its residence there. But virtue, on the other hand, immediately upon being offended by the appearance of the vision, hastened to retreat to the mind and soul of the just, because there is located the safest

lodging for it; since, like the dove, it cannot find such a safe station elsewhere. For simplicity often finds refuge late among the cunning of this world, and the waves of worldly desires.

Therefore, just as justice, for the sake of seeing, advances a little while, it hastens to return to the best state of mind and does not depart far from what is right; so too, the just person who is eager for virtue, when they realize that virtue is approaching, opens the embrace of their mind. For what does it mean when a man, desiring virtue, extends his hand and receives it, and brings it into himself? Although this seems clear according to the literal meaning, you will not easily grasp it unless you are familiar with the customary practice of a wise person, who uses wisdom as if it were a lookout and seems to entrust to it the prerogative of investigating and carrying out tasks. Therefore, virtue applies itself to natures in such a way that if it perceives any of them to have potential, it can join with them. For there is a certain common goodness of wisdom, which is both generous and abundant in usefulness; so that it associates itself with those it deems obedient. But when it sees some resist its purpose, it quickly returns to its familiar abode as if to a hospitable home, which the wise and industrious person hastens to embrace as if with a hand of the mind, opening their heart completely to it even when it is absent. For a wise person can never be devoid of their own virtue.

What else does he want for himself who kept a dove for seven days and then let it go, unless it is in order to show that the wise person's greatest desire and purpose is always to associate with others, to correct the wandering, to correct the straying? If he sees someone at the beginning making a mistake, he should not despair of being able to change and correct him. Just as a good doctor, even if it is not the time for medicine, still sends ahead the lookout of a visit; then he does not neglect the watch of rightful expectation, and yielding for a little while to the passions, he waits for the opportunity to heal, which, when it presents itself, he does not neglect his duty: so therefore the wise person, with words and arguments, desires to cure contrary passions, like a doctor wishes to cure diseases. And because in all things the remedy of divine favor must be used; therefore, he waited for seven days in which the whole world is described as finished (Gen. II, 2), and the rest was ministered to the worker; so that from that author the discipline of human operation could be taken.

Chapter XIX.

Why is it said that the dove returned in the evening with an olive branch in its beak? Also, how did Noah know that the waters had subsided? Finally, why did the same dove, when released on the seventh day, not return?

67. Therefore, the dove returned in the evening, holding a leaf of olive, and a branch in her mouth (Gen. VIII, 11). It is not without purpose that it mentions the evening, the return, the holding of the olive leaf, and the branch in her mouth, so that you may not think that she set out on a future journey without any power if she could acquire any; nor again, that you may understand her to have been hidden in some darkness, but rather that she waited shining in the light of day until the setting of the sun, and thus returned to Him with whom she could not even have darkness in the evening. He also brought with him a small leaf, although it may seem insignificant to have brought that leaf, it still indicated some hope for those whose mistake he regretted, albeit not great. For a leaf cannot exist without its stem. Therefore, like a sign of growing correction, although not a great one, he carried a distinguishing feature and a leaf of an olive tree, in which the olive is produced,

from which oil is made, by which this light is supported, and the darkness is driven away. But what is more familiar to virtue than light? Therefore, a leaf and a branch are emblematic of correction; and correction, like its root, has repentance as its counterpart, which repentance cannot germinate in turbulent souls, but in those who have already received the spiritual word. Also, a branch of an olive tree seems to be brought in vain to the mouth, because virtue and wisdom have their brightness in their words, and the light of them immediately shines forth, especially when speaking peacefully; for those seeking peace have been accustomed to prefer this branch as well. He took a branch, because simplicity infuses into our ears certain seeds of usefulness with purity and sincerity: and it both incites to the practice of good doctrine and urges toward the reward of good discipline, or imposes the desire to engage in repentance and pursue a virtuous life on the sinner.

68. Therefore, it seems worthy of consideration how the holy Noah could have known, as it is written, that water would be lacking from the earth. First of all, according to the literal sense, he could have understood whether a dry or wet leaf were brought. Then, because a dove is not of such a nature as to be able to extract hidden fruits from underwater. However, whether that leaf sprouted before the flood or during the flood is for you to consider. If, before the flood, a righteous man rejoiced in the fruit of an ancient seed preserved, and from it gathered a remarkable sign of divine mercy, which the flood had already removed, showing that it could not harm the fruit. If, during the time of the flood, a leaf was born, the righteous man surely observed that new seeds of heavenly mercy had borne fruit, so that the roots of the trees would live, and the offspring would bear their old forms, and return to their usual births, as indicated by the preceding leaves.

69. But this he gathered from a deeper interpretation, because our Lord God, although offended by the bitter errors of our wickedness, nevertheless preserved for us some small seed of our ancient lineage and the virtue of our homeland, so that his work and creation would not be completely destroyed around the human race. Therefore, Isaiah also says: 'Unless the Lord Almighty had left us some seed, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah' (Isaiah 1:9), expressing the sign of blindness in the name of one city and the barrenness of another. For in the native language of the Chaldeans, they called Sodom and Gomorrah, signifying blindness and sterility. And rightly so, the Lord cut off in the form of these cities, not judging them as men to be punished, but as human vices to be removed.

70. On the third day the dove is released, and it does not return. Therefore, let us consider that what we have said above may not be found to be contrary. If indeed in word the dove, but in deed virtue does not return to the just one; therefore, is the just one abandoned and deprived of his gift? By no means. For such a man is never separated from virtue, nor does he, when he breathes out justice from his mouth, introduce a discussion of another virtue, strip himself of virtue, and strip others of equality to be imitated; but, instead, he illuminates others with the light of his own radiance. Fire indeed warms those who approach it, so that it possesses the heat of its own nature. Does the light of day fail, when it illuminates the whole world with its brightness? It has its harmless course, and its untouched nature. Thus also in the species of a dove, the virtue, while the flood still raged, turned back to justice according to the bird, according to the virtue of inhuman passions; because virtue could not cling in the hearts of the unjust, it was unable to find them. And therefore, returning to that second inn, he lingers and rests. But when the floods of passions have subsided, and many have been eager to become companions of the heard word and the established teaching, the discipline of virtue begins to be not the inheritance of one person, but the

common good, and it is drunk like a cup of wisdom by many who before did not wish to drink as though thirsty, just as now the floods burn in the hearts of the Jews; and when the water of heavenly teaching overflows, and the drink flows abundantly, they do not think it is something to drink. The Gospel is read, power comes forth from the heavenly word, the Priest discusses in the Church. But lest perhaps, shut up within the ark, he alone may not be able to be heard, sometimes he goes outside the Church, where a Jew may encounter him, he warns, he offers an example from the heavenly Scriptures. They close their ears, lest an unwilling person may be washed away by the fountain, and lest the rough liquid of the Lord's word may sprinkle. But if anyone believes, they run to the fountain, they seek out teaching, they desire to have the Gospel insinuated to themselves, and they are not satisfied with the constant drinking. They eagerly desire to be filled with the source of wisdom, which they were previously trying to escape. Which source? Listen to the one who says: 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture says, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' (John 7:37-38).

Chapter XX. To indicate that Noah was the first in two generations to be righteous, it is mentioned that on one day the water receded and on another the earth dried up. The uncovering of the ark represents the renunciation of physical pleasure. This is why the first or second month of the spring season is called the 'day of spring'. Finally, the difficulty of finding a leaf is resolved. In the 601st year of Noah's life, on the first day of the month, it is said that the water began to decrease on the earth; but in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, it is recorded that the earth was completely dry. What does this addition of the decrease in water signify, when the previous calculation seems to have concluded the year, which begins in the second month and continues until the second month of the following year? Unless, of course, we wish to understand the stated form literally; that the first year was the year in which the flood began, after six hundred years, namely the first year; the first year again and the first month after six hundred years, when the water was decreased from the face of the earth. This is because Noah was righteous in the generation of sinners which was destroyed because of their sins, and he was the first in the second generation, which began after the flood, and he surpassed all others in order, because he was the first of the second generation and the first in merit. For indeed much honor is given to him who was both the first of the first generation and the beginning of the later one; who deserved to both escape from that and to be propagated to this field. For when others had perished, he alone, by the merit of an outstanding life and the prerogative of virtue, did not experience the corruption of wickedness, through whom it was made so that the whole body of the human race would not seem to be either abolished on earth or left behind by God's grace.

72. And he uncovered, he said, the roof of the ark (Gen. VIII, 13). When we interpreted the ark as mentioned above (above, c. VI), we understood it as the appearance of the body, so what does it mean for the body to be uncovered according to a higher sense? However, it is clear how the ark could be opened literally. So, what is the roof of the human body that was closed in the flood, unless we perhaps take it as pleasure, which covered this body of ours and, as it were, covered it through the error of Adam? And it is rightly considered to be most like a roof; because all the senses are in the head, from there all pleasure was subject to the body. But when the mind of a just man, sober and untouched by the corruption of the flood, desired to spring forth and fly to the higher things, inflamed by the desire of divine knowledge, it uncovered all that was hindering it, and it thoroughly uncovered and opened again the appearance of pleasure, which was covering

the other parts of the body like a veil; so that it would not only free the body from the servitude of a base mistress, but also comprehend those things which were incorporeal; for those things which are not seen are eternal. And therefore the just man, who did not see the Lord, sought after Him, incorruptible and desiring eternity.

73. Moreover, what he says about the first or second month, and that it is the day of springtime, you have also said elsewhere: This month will be the first for you in the days of the year (Exod. XII, 2). For he who, first in grace after peril, rightly received the prerogative of the first month.

74. And let it not bother you that we said above that a leaf found on a branch could have been generated after the flood (Above, Chapter XIX): although grasses usually sprout under water, so that any doubt can be removed completely, what is the big deal if, by God's command, on the day when the waters were diminished, the earth immediately sprouted, since He is both the restorer and the creator of fruits, and did not forget the use of His work? Finally, you also have in Genesis immediately what He commanded, that the earth would sprout grass for pasture, and a fruit-bearing tree with its fruit, and immediately the earth produced grass for pasture, having seed according to its kind, and a fruit-bearing tree; and that day was one on which God commanded or did these things (Gen. I, 11). Therefore, God, not forgetful of His own kindness, yet forgetful of our iniquity, restored His work with the same measure of time as when He began.

Chapter XXI. Why did Noah wait for the command to come out of the ark? How is the order in which he entered and exited with his family described, indicating abstinence from procreation and the use of the same? Finally, what does that order teach us in terms of spiritual understanding? And the Lord God said to Noah: Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons (Gen. VIII, 16). So when the water receded and the earth dried, Noah was able to leave the ark. But the righteous does not arrogate anything to himself, but entrusts himself entirely to divine command. And especially one who has received the heavenly oracle should have awaited a heavenly response to go out. For modesty is truly just; for immodest wickedness unjustly seizes what is not due and does not respect its author.

76. Now let us inquire by what order they entered into the ark, how long they remained there, and in what order they went out; how in the first instance Noah entered, and after him his sons; then his wife, and the wives of his sons; and when they went out, in what order they went forth. For it is written: 'Noah went forth, and his wife, and his sons, and the wives of his sons' (Genesis 8:18). And the letter indeed signifies, in the entrance, the abstinence from generation, and in the going out, the use of generation. For at that time the father entered first with his sons, and the sons with their parent, and afterwards his wife, and the wives of his sons; that is, the sexes were not mixed in entering, but were mixed in leaving. Therefore, as if in the very order of entering, he emits a certain voice, declaring that that time is not for intercourse or pleasures, which would bring destruction upon all. Moreover, in the Gospel, the Lord says (Luke 17:26-27), reproving that in the times of Noah they ate and drank, married wives, and they gave in marriage their daughters; and because of their intemperance, the flood came upon them. Therefore, that time was of mourning, not of joy. And hence, the righteous did not take delight in the companionship of their wife, nor did righteous sons desire the bond of marriage. For how indecent it would be for those who were about to die in the same time as those who were about to be born! But later, the proper practice and care for marriage followed after the flood subsided. So it was not men with men, but women

with men who came forth; so that the mixing of masculine with masculine was forbidden, but the lawful union of masculine and feminine seemed permitted.

77. However, this higher sense has the characteristic that, when there is danger, certain masculine and stronger arguments cling to the mind, and the mind protects itself like a guardian of its offspring, so that in storms and more serious passions there is a certain masculine keenness. But once the danger is past, it is not a disadvantage if softer thoughts are connected with stronger ones; not so that the stronger are weakened by the softer, but so that the softer senses are fortified, as it were, by certain masculine qualities, since all our plans are directed towards virtue, justice, integrity, and fortitude, and stronger plans can be created and nurtured by a certain use and training ground of virtues. Therefore, it is not useful, when there is any confusion of vices that occupies the mind, to sow any thoughts, and to generate and give birth to the mind. But when the desires have been restrained, and the mind has rested, then, receiving a certain seedbed of discussion, virtues can sprout and good deeds can be done.

Chapter XXII.

For this reason, Noah built an altar to God, not to the Lord, without being commanded; and he offered burnt offerings from clean animals and birds; and what does the Lord mean when he says, 'I will not curse the ground, etc.'

78. And Noah built, he said, an altar to God (Gen. VIII, 20). By what reason did the Lord above admonish what to do, and Noah did all: but this, what he did not admonished, perhaps there may be required. But certainly the Lord ought not to demand a reward of gratitude like a greedy person, and the righteous understood that true gratitude is an action which is not commanded, but offered. Therefore, he did not tolerate delay. For certainly, the virtuous feeling of gratitude excludes the passion of doubt: but a person who expects that gratitude be demanded of him is ungrateful. But what he built, he said, was for God, and not for the Lord, but for God; according to the interpretation of the name, this action does not seem forced, as if giving thanks to the Lord, but rather it seems the virtue of a just person being modest and grateful, as if to God. What is imperial, he set apart; what he named as a benefit.

79. And he took from the clean animals and from the clean birds, and offered, he says, burnt offerings (Ibid.). The plain meaning is clear that we should offer those things that are undefiled, in which the emotions of the offerer may shine forth. However, a deeper interpretation is that the clean animals seem to represent the senses of a wise person; and the clean birds represent the intellect, which is much more subtle and lighter.

Now let us consider more carefully what He says: And the Lord God said: Considering, I will not add to curse the earth on account of the works of men; because the heart of man remains diligently upon evil from his youth (Genesis, 21). Therefore, He would not strike the whole earth again, as He did, all the days of the earth. Although He had sought revenge on the human race, yet He knew that the revenge of the law profits for fear, and the knowledge of doctrine, more than for a change in nature, which can be corrected in some, but cannot be changed in all. Therefore, the Lord took vengeance so that we might fear; He spared us so that we might be saved. And He took vengeance once as an example of fear, but spared us for the rest so that the bitterness of sin may not always rule over us, and also because if anyone desires to avenge sins more frequently,

they are considered harsher rather than more lenient. Therefore, the Lord says: I will no longer add to curse the earth because of the works of men, that is, because He wanted to declare His mercy towards all mankind, and yet He should not have brought a certain security and negligence to human minds; He takes vengeance on a few, but reserves more. Then when He says, 'I will not add,' He shows that He alleviates the hardships of men more than He burdens them, knowing that the sins of men cannot be completely taken away. Like in the proverb: If someone desires to draw water with a fine net, so too does He who strives to remove malice from the hearts of men.

81. 'I will not add,' he says, 'to speak ill of the earth because of the sins of men; for the understanding of man diligently remains on evil from his youth. See how carefully God indicates that we are prone to sin, by saying that the understanding of man diligently remains on evil: by this statement he seems to indicate that the heart of man inclines diligently towards sin, and that the main cause of our slipping into sin is within us, and what is worse, our inclination towards it does not lack earnestness.' Therefore, he says, let us be diligent, as if we were anxious, so that immunity from fault cannot creep upon us. Then he did not speak of just one evil, but of many evils. And, from youth, he added; for from that age wickedness grows, although elsewhere we have read that even an infant is not without sin for even a single day (Job 14:5). But even if infancy is not without sin due to the weakness of the body, the diligence and desire to sin begins from youth; so that a child sins as if weak, a young person as if wicked, who eagerly desires to commit sins, and boasts in their crimes. For many people, innocence is considered laziness, and fault is considered praise. Thus, young people have become accustomed to boast in luxury, pleasures, and adulterous desires. Therefore, fault grows with age. Therefore, it declares that every kind of human is no longer worthy of consumption, when it says: I will not add any more to strike all flesh: but vengeance is kept to a certain part.

Chapter XXIII.

What the Lord says: Seed and harvest, cold and heat will not cease, literally and morally explained.

82. Moreover, he says: Seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not rest (Gen. VIII, 22). According to the literal meaning, it signifies that for those who remain according to the institution of the Lord, animals or all things in the woods will remain in their state without corruption in future times. For when times are corrupted, those things also which are produced in their times are corrupted. But if there is confusion of times, how can those things which are being produced also remain with confusion made? Therefore, there are times that either corrupt or preserve, depending on the quality they themselves have. And so, the year is led by opposites, spring, autumn, summer, winter, just as harmony of a song seems to consist of a mix of grave and acute tones. Likewise, this world is also composed of opposites, air and earth, fire and water. Our bodies also follow a certain order of nature, with cold and heat, moisture and dryness. For if the natural order and measure are confused, then destruction must necessarily follow. Therefore, the Lord promises a certain order of times for the perseverance of the world, once the confusion of the flood is removed.

83. However, this higher sense is such that by seed we understand the beginning, by harvest we understand the end. In both, the cause of salvation is present. One is incomplete without the other; for where there is a beginning, the end is sought, and there cannot be a beginning without the end,

and the end returns to the beginning. Therefore, the human race always remembers, as long as it is in this world, that it will come back to the same thing: when the year begins, it ends; when it ends, it begins, so that the world is not dissolved in the middle of time. And so the mind, when it sees something begin, should strive to continue until the end, and seek the completion of its work. When a work is finished, it should not be satisfied as if the work is complete: but should turn to another work, and always exercise the growth of virtue; for the mind sees that the earth always returns to its fruits, which are born in different seasons, either in spring and summer, as in the Eastern parts, or in summer and autumn, as in the Western parts. At another time, the lands produce their offspring: at another time, we gather the fruits of the trees. Therefore, the fruits can be divided into necessary and pleasurable: the necessary ones come from the seeds of the land; but truly the pleasurable ones come from the fruits of the trees. Thus, our body is nourished by air, which is truly, that is, in Latin terms, called 'aer', and by natural food. However, the Scriptures took the example from the parts of the East, especially from Egypt, which the Hebrews passed through, or from the parts of Phoenicia. However, the soul is nourished by the fruits of pleasures, which are the fruits of wisdom. But just as cold and heat are opposed to our bodies, so too fear and anger seem contrary. But because it is in the body, it is necessary for it to have anger and fear, and it cannot exist without this bodily necessity. And therefore, the mind of the wise person dispenses just moderation; not mixing anger and fear, and not causing a kind of confusion and flood in their soul.

85. Also, by day you understand the illuminating power, by night you recognize the dark foolishness, as he says. Therefore, even in fear, virtue can be illuminating, just as temperance can restrain anger. So that some may not completely dissolve in fear, but instead direct fear towards virtuous actions. For example, if a persecutor insists that you fear God more and that eternal punishments are more to be avoided than present ones, while you fear these things, you are kindled to glory, angry at betrayal and wickedness. Again, being inflamed by anger, you shall moderate the divine disturbance with fear.

Chapter XXIV.

The prerogative of power over other animals, through the blessing with which Noah and his family were endowed, has been divinely bestowed upon mankind. And concerning the understanding of the Lord having given all reptiles as food to these same humans, even though some of them are hunted.

86. And the Lord blessed Noah and his sons, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it: and let the fear and dread of you be upon all the beasts of the earth, and upon all the fowls of the air, and all that move upon the earth. And upon all the fishes of the sea. But in that place where it is said that God made man, it is said: He made them male and female, and blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth (Gen. I, 28). I have mentioned this so that you understand the twofold generation of man: one according to the image of God, the other according to the likeness made from the clay of the earth. Finally, the creation of man from the clay of the earth seems to have been made after the world, after God rested from his works. In a way, the formation of the earthly statue is late. There was no rain on the earth, nor did man work the earth. Then God fashioned man from the clay of the earth and

breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul (Gen. II, 5 and 7). But on the sixth day, as the perfect number by which all of God's works were concluded, man was made according to the image of God, and he is also compared to the righteous one who was found in the flood. And therefore God created him above all earthly things, just as He made him in the image of God, because both were tempered from earthly vices. That one who was generated in such a way that he owed nothing to earthly contamination: this one, who had also been tested in dangers, and examined in sufferings, and found not to have been subject to confusion in suffering.

87. But the higher sense is that justice is increased by the magnitude and multitude of virtue, and by learning; and it fills the earth, like a heart in which there is a receptacle of intelligible things. Thus, wisdom allows no void, which foolishness can invade. Therefore, having conquered not only all earthly passions, but also bodily senses, it subjects even beasts to itself with a certain terror and fear, in which the appearance of malice and ferocity seems to reside. For all wickedness is cruel and savage, and swells with a certain swelling. Nor is it obscure that certain reptiles have a kind of lethal species of passions, from which a certain venom seems to be infused into the mind. Therefore, the righteous man commands these things to whom he does not mix: but he restrains them, if his mind is not led by pleasure, not by desire, not broken by sadness and fear; nor does he even take the slippery and fleeting course of this life in luxury and delights, but wisdom drives away from itself such passions through self-control and moderation.

88. But since he immediately added, 'All reptiles that are alive shall be food for you' (Gen. IX, 3); lest it may disturb you because we previously spoke about venomous reptiles, know that there are other reptiles that are venomous, and others that are gentle. Therefore, take from the gentle reptiles, which although they do not crawl on their belly and chest like snakes, they have such small feet that they seem to crawl rather than walk. Therefore, receive the unclean passions similar to venomous reptiles in the body, but the clean ones from the gentle ones. For every emotion that is beyond the allure of ugly pleasure is indeed a passion, but a good passion. Desire, anger, and fear, these are harmful passions of the soul; but harmless emotions are good passions. And through these, a certain usefulness and cause is provided for us to live: we use them as food for the grace of life, we delight in their banquets.

Chapter XXV.

The Lord commanded us to eat from vegetables rather than from horns; and Moses fortified us against the opinions of philosophers about the soul, whose various beliefs are reported: likewise, in what manner the rational and sensitive parts of the soul must be distinguished; and what is meant by the term 'blood' in reference to the soul.

89. What is also that which he says, 'I have given you all herbs that are for food' (Gen. 9:3)? In this matter, even those who understand simply, so as not to weigh the examination of words, do not appear to us to be opposed. For there are those who think that herbs seem to be attributed to us for food by the will of God, so that we should use them more than carnal feasts: but I would gladly acquiesce in this, so that the use of herbs would grow in the human race, more for frugality and moderation; unless I saw that it can be objected to me by those who do not willingly accept it, because not all herbs are found suitable for the food of humans. Then because not every kind of men is led by the love of wisdom and self-restraint, so that it can follow self-restraint. And therefore, because it is a general precept, we cannot derive it to the portion of a few men, for this

precept is given to all men.

Therefore, let us consider what he has said: 'Just as I have given you all vegetables for food, I have not given you all vegetables for eating.' So let those who consume meat use it as they would vegetables, not for the purpose of gluttony or to satisfy the desires of the flesh. However, just as not all vegetables are suitable for consumption, not every living creature is fit for the enjoyment of feasting. Indeed, we must abstain from all poisonous substances, even though luxury has also extended to this point, seeking more to please than to protect against danger, and in many cases, after removing what is naturally poisonous, claiming the remaining part for food. Although it is not entirely dangerous, it is still close to danger, and some corruption is bound to seep into the essence of the whole meat. Many people also hunt deer and such swift animals with poisoned arrows, and afterward, having cut off a certain part of the limbs, they use the remaining body for food. But as for what pertains to the higher sense, that is, why it is more fitting that irrational passions should be subject to the mind of the wise, like vegetables to a farmer; and that we should use these thoughts like reptiles, as a farmer uses vegetables, which, although they cannot do harm, still do not have the value of stronger food. For the general and common precept does not prescribe higher kinds of virtues, which are certainly the virtues of only a few. But even if someone cannot exhibit stronger feasts of virtues for themselves, let them have passions of this sort that do not harm, but delight.

Therefore, in the beginning, holy Moses informed and instructed us about the inspiration of the soul, so that we would not fall into the various opinions of philosophers, who cannot agree with themselves. For many have held different views, such as Critias and his disciples, who say that blood is the soul, referring to that soul by which we live, which is sensible, not that soul which is considered rational and intelligible within man. Although Hippocrates did not disapprove of Critias' abilities, nor did he refute his arguments; nevertheless, he did not agree with his opinions. Aristotle, in Book I of *De Anima*, chapters 29 and 30, spoke of actuality (ἐντελέχεια). Others wanted it to be fire. Therefore, let us maintain this kind of distinction; let us separate what is rational of the soul, whose substance is divine spirit, as Scripture says: 'For he breathed into his face the breath of life' (Gen. II, 7). However, in it there is a certain vital nourishment by which this body is animated, and it is also delightful. Therefore, the substance of these souls, both vital and delightful, is called blood by some; although Scripture also says: The life of the flesh is in the blood (Lev. XVII, 11 et seq.). Therefore, He properly called blood the life of the flesh. For in the flesh there is pleasure and passion, not the mind and reasoning. However, if you pay close attention, this passage explains it. For when he says that the soul is blood in this place, he surely indicated that the soul is something else, distinct from blood, so that it is the vital spirit of the soul. But the vital spirit itself not only brings the ability to live by itself and without blood, but also mixes with the blood; for there are what are called arteries, like receptacles of spirit, which not only embrace pure air, but also blood, albeit a much smaller portion of blood. For although blood vessels are twins, one is the vein which is called φλέψ in Greek, and the other is the artery. The vein has more blood than spirit, that is, φλέψ; the artery has less blood, but much more spirit. Now, the temperament varies according to the nature of each individual.

However, a higher sense should delight you, which signifies blood and soul, thus called because blood is warm and fiery, just like virtue. Therefore, whoever is inflamed with the pursuit of virtue and has taken on the vapor of praise, excludes all the pleasures of the belly. Therefore, you will

reject those thoughts which are carnal and earthly, as being unfit for spiritual nourishment, placed in the ardor of virtue, as if they were incapable of spiritual food. For He did not eat flesh, that is, He did not think of anything earthly, who said, My food is to do the will of My Father who is in Heaven (John. 4:34), inspiring the pursuits of virtue in men and infusing the desire for divine contemplation. Therefore, earthly thoughts and weak ones, like castrated and bloodless, are considered useless. And that person is called castrated, who has lost the most blood, for he grows cold with the loss of blood. Therefore, whoever is diligent in virtues, rejects and casts aside bodily pleasures, except as much as is necessary for nature. But whoever is more negligent, as if following the slippery and watery course of this life, falls into the womb and the belly, as if losing his tracks. Therefore, it desires earthly things that are foreign to heavenly food. And he who cannot say: Our conversation is in heaven (Philippians 3: 20). Therefore, in order to provoke to secrecy, he also said: Do not touch, do not handle, do not taste what is for corruption in its very use, according to the precepts and doctrines of men that have the appearance of wisdom, in the observance of religion and humility of heart, not in indulgence of the body, not in any honor for the sake of satiety and the indulgence of the flesh (Colossians 2: 21 et seq.).

Chapter XXVI.

It is worse to be one who kills his brother, that is, a companion of the same nature as oneself; however, a greater danger must be feared from one's own brothers who are born of the same parents, and the name of brotherhood should not be abolished for them, so that their impiety might be more burdened. Hence the moral doctrine, which warns each person to be cautious of their own thoughts and words. Like a threat to the author of spilled blood: the one who said about man, 'He made him in the image of God,' teaches us the reason for added retribution.

Finally, they approve this sense to be later; for thus it says: Indeed, I will require your blood, and the blood of your souls from all beasts, and from the hand of man (Gen. IX, 5). He compared it to bestial malice, or rather even accumulated the wickedness of man beyond the ferocity of beasts, by saying: From the hand of the brother of man. Indeed, beasts have nothing in common with us in nature, and they are not bound by any brotherly right. If they harm humans, they harm them as strangers. They do not violate the laws of nature; they do not forget the bond of kinship. Therefore, a person sins more gravely if they plot against their brother. And the Lord promised that He would seek the blood of a man from the hand of his brother, saying: 'I will require the blood of a man from the hand of his brother.' Is not a brother someone whom a rational nature has brought forth from a certain womb, and the same mother's generation has joined us together? For the same nature is the mother of all humans, and therefore we are all brothers, generated from the same mother, and bound by the same right of kinship.

Therefore the Lord also called him brother, and called him brother from whom the brother's blood is sought, signifying that danger should be more feared from those who are bound to one another by brotherly right. For from this, indeed, ambushes and more frequent dangers are compared to men, and to specify, because hatred often grows more among brothers in the division of inheritance. Then if more has been bestowed upon one brother by the parents, the other brothers are more indignant, and they attempt to take away the favor conferred by the parents by means of parricide. These wars are more suspicious, wars not only of the citizens, but of individual houses. Therefore, the Lord seizes those whom He has known to be more inclined to plot against Him, for

the judgment of vengeance.

96. The third point is that he called him a brother, not that he is worthy of the name of parricide: but so that he may be burdened more heavily by the title of piety, and from there the increase of crime may occur, by which the punishment of the wicked may be even more just. Therefore, our Lord God promises revenge, so that even if he may be broken by fear, who has forgotten piety, and he may know that even if he may escape from men as a murderer, he cannot escape the judgment of God, but is reserved for greater and eternal punishment.

97. But by a higher sense we understand not only being on guard against the plots of strangers, but also against our own, that is, domestic thoughts. Furthermore, we must be careful not only of the wickedness of our mind, but also of our very words. And so it is said: You cannot escape sin by much speaking (Prov. 10:19). Therefore, it seems that this signifies that we must give an account to the Lord not only of our actions but also of our more intimate conversations. And for this reason, we must carefully consider, so that we do not provoke offense either in speech or in action; for just as confession is made with the mouth for salvation, so too is a slip made with the mouth for death.

98. Whoever sheds the blood of a man, by man shall his blood be shed (Gen. IX, 6). The statement is not a mistake, but an emphasis, that is, an exaggeration of words made, because whoever sheds the blood of a man, his own blood shall be shed as if to take away from him the hope of posterity; for just as spilled blood is scattered here and there on the ground, so may the soul of the wicked be released from the body's frailty like a dissolution (Job. XXXIII, 28); because it is also said of the soul that its death is corruption, because it is deprived of the gift of heavenly grace, and as if crushed by the rocks of wickedness, it diminishes its own healthiness.

99. It also moves most people what He said: God made man in His own image (Gen. IX, 6): and He did not say: In My own image, since He Himself is God. But understand that He is both Father and Son. And although through the Son all things were made, nevertheless we read that the Father made all things, and made them through the Son, as it is written: In wisdom You have made all things (Ps. CIII, 24). Therefore, whether the Father says, He made man in the image of the Word: or the Son says, He made man in the image of God the Father. And for this reason, it demonstrates that the nature of humans is familiar and domestic to God, that is, rational beings created in the image of God; and for that reason, it is not in vain before God that He sees cruel and impious acts committed against domestic animals.

100. Therefore, the added reason for vengeance is that we first exclude the opinions of certain philosophers who deny that God has care over humans: then, knowing that the prerogative of our vengeance remains with God, we do not commit what should be avenged by divine judgment to others; nor do we fear death itself more vehemently, when we know that the death of an innocent man is not despised by God.

Chapter XXVII.

It is promised that a flood of that kind will never happen again, one that corrupts the entire Earth; and this is understood as referring to the emotions of the mind. In the rainbow, which is said to be placed in the clouds, it is not merely a sign of an incomprehensible rainbow, but of the intensity and relaxation of divine power.

101. 'There will not be,' he says, 'a flood to destroy all the earth' (Gen. IX, 11). It seems doubtful whether it should be understood that there will not be a flood to destroy the earth; for floods are accustomed to do this. Or rather, whether there will not be such a flood by which the whole earth may be destroyed, which is implied by the subsequent words, 'all the earth shall not be destroyed.' For it is clear that there will indeed be floods, but not such as to be able to destroy the whole earth.'

However, this sense has a deeper meaning, namely that the future is already seen by the providence of the Lord, so that the flood of bodily passions is not so great that every soul perishes. And indeed, I dare not say that the Lord has decreed that no soul can completely perish. What do we say about the murderer? What about the murderer? What about the adulterer? What about the prevaricator? For what parts of the soul do we reserve forgiveness for him? Hence, I think that it is more likely that the Lord God provokes, so that even if someone has other lesser passions, they do not completely despair of divine grace, nor do they doubt in every way that they will live. But even if someone is luxurious and cannot avoid the pursuit of luxury, let them strive to restrain themselves from adultery; let there be enjoyment of feasting, but not of debauchery. Even if someone is known to be greedy, who plundered the belongings of others, ill-treated orphans, and exploited widows, let them repent and restore what they have taken. In the end, Zacchaeus deserved forgiveness because he not only promised to restore what he took, but also to give four times as much to those from whom he had taken something, and to donate half of his estate to the poor.

103. Let us also consider more carefully what he says: I will set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the everlasting covenant between me and the earth: and when I shall cover the sky with clouds, my bow shall appear in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant (Gen. IX, 13 et seq.). For it is not, as many think, the bow which they say is made by men, by which certain signs of rain are declared, in which different colors are represented, shining with the brightness of the sun's rays, sometimes glowing red, sometimes shining with a brighter light: hence the future rain is signified, because a certain inconstancy of clearness is shown by a variegated appearance. Some people call this a rainbow: but far be it from us to say that this rainbow is of God. For this rainbow, which is called the iris, is usually seen during the day and does not appear at night. Even during the day itself, if the air is covered with dark clouds, it is not seen, unless perhaps when the heavier clouds begin to dissipate.

104. Therefore, let us see that the fact that the bow with which the arrows are shot is sometimes drawn tight and sometimes relaxed, signifies a certain extension and relaxation, by which the whole is not completely broken by excessive extension; but there is a certain measure and a certain test of divine power. Therefore, the invisible power of God, which moderates the appearance of extending and relaxing this bow according to divine will, mercy, and power, does not allow everything to be confused by excessive loosening or to be broken by excessive bursting. Therefore, He says that He places the bow in the clouds, because Divine Providence's assistance is most necessary when the clouds gather into storms and tempests. And thus He says, 'I will set My bow in the clouds, I will not set the arrow.' For the bow is the instrument of shooting the arrow. Therefore, it is not the bow itself that wounds, but the arrow. And for this reason, the Lord places the bow in the cloud rather than the arrow, that is, not something that wounds, but something that signifies terror and is not accustomed to have the effect of a wound.

Chapter XXVIII.

Having enumerated the three sons of Noah, he mentions the generation of Ham first so that his sin may be amplified, and also to demonstrate that the impious generation originated from him. This should be understood morally as the wicked source of a wicked passion.

However, how is it that when he counted the three sons of Noah above, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen. IX, 18), he included here the generation of only one middle son? This is what he says: But Ham was the father of Canaan: these three were the sons of Noah (Ibid., 19). And especially since those two were righteous, while this middle one was unjust. Therefore, the generation of the unjust comes before that of the righteous. For we cannot deny what is written: but to heap up his guilt, his generation was added; because although he had a son and was a father, he alone did not acknowledge his father, whom he should have known better. And therefore the son deserved to be considered wicked, because he had been wicked to his father. It also signifies that from him the Canaanites arose, who after many generations were subdued by the righteous people and gave up their possession to them. Therefore, it is clear that Canaan was the originator of the Canaanites, and he was the son of this Ham, who was impious towards his father.

106. Moreover, a deeper meaning is signified by the interpretation of the names. For Cham is heat, Chanaan is their disturbance. For he who is hot is continuously moved and disturbed; and thus it is most clearly shown that he was not so much the father of men, but rather the generator of a wicked passion, which was foreign to the character of the father, that is, foreign to the practice of virtue.

Chapter XXIX.

How was Noah made a farmer; and what is the difference between a farmer and a tiller of the land: and how one tills the earth and the other works? Why did Noah plant a vineyard first, that is, something unnecessary, when there are springs sufficient for drinking: why also is it written of him, And he drank of the wine: where the double intoxication is discussed; and finally the double exposure of the soul.

107. And Noah began to be a farmer of the land (Gen. IX, 20). Indeed, at first glance, Noah, the just man, seems to be compared to Adam, who was made from the earth, because it is also written about Adam that he began to work the land after being expelled from paradise (Gen. III, 23): the same can be said of Noah, who became a farmer after exiting the ark. And in both cases, there was a certain form of the flood that preceded, since Noah lived after the flood, just as Adam lived after the formation of the world according to the bodily representation. For just as the world was being formed, the water was gathered into one gathering, so that the earth could be seen, which could not be seen before due to the confusion of the waters. Therefore, just as that first master seemed to have worked on the earth, so also, the one who came out of Noah's ark became the author of sowing and cultivation. These things are thought to be similar: but if you consider the words that now express the force of a deeper meaning, it is one thing to be the operator of the earth, and another to be the farmer. For one person functions like a hired worker, and another like the head of a household. In fact, Cain, who killed his brother, was a worker of the land. And so that you may know that working the land is more servile than free, his fratricidal act is included in the curse of his labor. Indeed, it is written: Because you will work the land, and it will not give its

strength to you: you will be groaning and trembling upon the earth (Gen. IV, 12). But our flesh is like the earth that the wicked man tills, but the good man cultivates. The former seeks reward from the earth; the latter seeks to gather good fruit and the grace of discipline, so that he may make his field more fruitful and may be able to respond to the cultivation of the Lord, and may show the indulgence of the cultivator. But the wicked man seeks nothing else but food for his body alone, being more concerned with the use of his belly, and content to explain only what can be beneficial to him for sustenance. Another person is nourished by the benefit of fruits. You recognize what fruits the righteous have. The fruits, however, are the spirit, charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness. Therefore, a good farmer has self-control, chastity, so that if any trees bend quickly to the ground and grow more abundantly, he may cut them as if with the sickle of his temperance, so that they may cast off what is weak and grow what is beautiful.

109. What is it that the righteous person first plants, and not either wheat or barley? And from where does the vine come after the flood and corruption of the earth? But we have already spoken about this (Chapters 19 and 20); for in the springtime even the roots of corrupt things can sprout. Hence, I think that this should be resolved with greater concern, because the righteous person seeks first those things that are for pleasure rather than those that are necessary. For the fruits of wheat and barley are necessary, without which we cannot live; but wine is for pleasure, given for the sake of enjoyment. Because it is just, therefore it claimed for itself more what was secondary than what was first. For it offered to God the necessary sustenance for life, which was second. But wine is unnecessary for humans, and not necessary.

110. But perhaps you may say that it is not possible for humans to live without drink, just as it is without food. Drink is necessary, therefore, just like food: I do not deny. Drink is certainly necessary, established by the Lord: I do not refuse. And so it is fitting to derive necessary drink from springs and rivers, which were not made by the hand of man, but flowed by the command and operation of our Lord God. But do not twist what we have said about the operation of the Lord to refer to what Cain's operation seems to have had curses; consider that it is not the operation that receives the name of the cursed, but rather what is written, to till the land. For the one who works the land is a hired man. But He is not a hired man, but the Lord, who said: My Father is working until now, and I am working (John 5:17). What does this worker do? Listen: My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work (John 4:34).

111. And he drank, he says, from the wine, and he became intoxicated (Gen. IX, 21). He did not say, he drinks wine; nor does the just man excessively drink wine; but from the wine, that is, he tasted its portion. It is the habit of the drunken to consume all the wine and to empty what he has taken like an intemperate person; but self-control should be used in a proper measure. Therefore, there are two kinds of drunkenness: one that brings staggering to the body and causes it to stumble, and disturbs the senses; the other that inflames the mind with the grace of virtue and seems to ward off all weakness. Where the Apostle says: Use a little wine for the sake of your frequent infirmities (I Tim. V, 23). For, just as with that moderate use of drinking, wine is not for weakness but for health, and it alleviates all bodily infirmity, so also that intoxication excludes all infirmity of the flesh, about which it is written: And how glorious is the cup that intoxicates (Ps. XXII, 5)! What is this intoxication? Be intoxicated, he says, not with wine in which is luxury, but be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephes. V, 18), as the Apostle said. Therefore, according to the literal sense, it is caution, and according to the higher sense of wise people, it is praise. The cautious

person is one who, even though undressed, is undressed in their own home, where there is no lack of coverings, and certain disguises of drunkenness, so that they can hide their vices.

112. Therefore, the physical body covers the naked body, like walls and roofs: but let us see what the coverings of the soul are. But then we find coverings, if we dispel its nudity. Indeed, the nudity of the sage is twofold. Therefore, our mind is clothed in a twofold garment, if it has committed a foolish sin; for this is the nudity of a drunken mind, so that it does not know that it is sinning, like someone who, led astray by a certain intoxication of ignorance, slips into vice: or, on the other hand, buried in the sleep of negligence and ignorance, it does not know its own error. And when we stumble, or rather when we stumble upon many sins even with knowledge (for there is a certain natural drunkenness of our weakness, so that we are carried away by the force of pleasure into vice, just as many are inflamed by the heat of youth, or are ignited by lust and pleasure, or are snatched away by the desire for greed), certainly in all these cases a remedy should be sought, so that someone may cover up their weakness of this kind, first with a certain modesty and shame; so that even if they are still in a precarious situation of wrongdoing, they may nevertheless give a sign of change for the better. For it makes a great difference whether one desires to boast about their sins. In one case, there is shameful impudence, while in the other, there is tolerable modesty which shows hope for future correction.

113. Another stripping is that of the soul, because it casts off and removes, as it were, a certain burden of the body, as if fleeing from a kind of tomb of flesh. For the throat of such people is an open tomb, in which the soul, burdened with the pleasures and desires of various passions, is as if heaped up in a tomb. It therefore removes itself from earthly congestion, and, like a certain enclosing net, it escapes and flees from whatever snare of passions it has stripped itself of and turns away from all that unsightly appearance of earthly filth, so that it may see the light of eternal beauty.

Chapter XXX.

Why was Cham then called the father of Canaan, when he had not yet been born; and in what way should we understand that all wicked men, if it happens that good men fall into fault, rejoice in the person of Cham deriding their father.

I now ask why did he not simply say: 'He saw the nakedness of his father,' but rather 'He saw the nakedness of his father, and told his brothers' (Gen. 9:22)? Surely Canaan was not born yet, so why did he add the name of the son, unless the inheritance of the author was marred by the fault of the heir, and the wickedness of the son burdened the reputation of the father? Thus, both the father in the son, and the son in the father are rebuked, having a common participation in foolishness, wickedness, and impiety. It could not happen that he would produce a good son, who himself was wicked towards his good father, and the son would degenerate from both his nature and his upbringing. This is according to the letter.

Moreover, when it comes to higher meaning, all the worst morals are delighted by the errors of others; not only by errors, but also by things that seem bad to them, even if they are not. For Noah did not feel himself naked, who was clothed with wisdom. Indeed, Adam, placed in paradise, did not consider himself naked until he committed the error of transgression. And when he was covered again with the clothing of wisdom and justice, being stripped by the transgression of

heavenly commands, he saw himself naked and thought he should be covered with leaves. Therefore, Cham laughs at his naked father. For every wicked person, since he himself is deviant from discipline, not only takes pleasure in the mistakes of others as a consolation for his own error, because he has found companions in guilt, but he also rejoices with a wicked emotion, as if he himself had corrected his own faults. Therefore, an evil mind rejoices when something happens contrary to its intention; even if a physical mistake is considered, it should not be a fault, unless the mind is also inclined to guilt. Finally, judgments should be made about such errors, not pursued with hatred, not made a mockery. But the wicked mind, as I said, when it believes that a wise man has erred, thinks it appropriate to insult him whose character it considers to be contrary to its own, because its own sin is argued against by a kind of silent testimony of the wise; and it takes pleasure in this, that neither the wisdom of the wise man has benefitted him, nor has justice supported him, nor have the things that are according to the body had prosperous outcomes. For these things, indeed, are valued among the wicked as the highest goods, placed in wealth or honor, which nevertheless confer no benefit to the praise of virtue. Therefore, they seem to be defenders of folly, who consider the lover of virtue to be deprived of the reward of prosperity, and who think that every good should be valued more for temporal rather than eternal things.

Chapter XXXI.

The piety of Shem and Japheth is commended, and an explanation is given for why they are said to have walked backwards. Then it is explained how Noah became sober. Finally, it is questioned why the Scripture, after initially placing Ham in the middle, now calls him the youngest.

116. What is it that Shem and Japheth put a garment on their shoulders and went backwards, and covered their naked father, and did not see his nakedness (Gen. IX, 23)? The letter expressed the evident affection of piety, that the good sons took care not to see their father naked, lest the reverence for the father be diminished by the sight itself. Indeed, even with a silent expression, piety is often offended. Hence it is also said to have been an old custom in Rome, that children, especially those of age, would not enter the bathhouse with their parents.

117. However, the higher sense has this, that the foolish person only sees what is present in front of their eyes, and does not consider the future or think of the past. But the wise person both remembers the past and considers the future. Therefore, every wise mind walks backward, that is, it looks at the past; nor is it hindered by a certain use of nature: it allows nothing to be empty, nothing to be naked of its own actions. It covers what has been done differently with a certain garment and the grace either of present work or of the future, so that nothing indecent passes by, nothing unfinished is left behind. And so the Apostle forgot the higher things and sought the lower things; but he forgot in order to hide the errors of persecution, to cover up previous sins, and to overshadow them with good deeds. Blessed are those also whose sins are covered (Psalm 32:1); that is, if they are covered by good deeds and concealed by the disciplines of following virtues. And Noah, he said, became sober from wine (Gen. IX, 24). It is evident from drunkenness that men become sober through sleep. However, the mind is sober when it knows both the past and the future. Therefore, the mind of the righteous was sober even when it was thought to be drunk. For it is a remarkable cup that sobers the righteous. But he was truly drunk who laughed at his father. For he did not consider the past grace of his birth, the present reverence for his father, or the future punishment for his father's injury. He was truly drunk; and what he thought he saw, he

did not see. There was in him a deep blindness, who was not able to see his father. For if he had seen his father, he would not have certainly laughed. For the father is not to be laughed at, but to be revered. Moreover, the mind of the just fool could not see much more. For how could he see, who believed in the error of drunkenness in himself, where there was the perfect vapor of wisdom and other virtues? As it is written: For the vapor of the power of God is wisdom (Wisdom 7:25). For when the mind is more sober, then it considers the nature of all things, of present and future times, such that no temporal stumbling of drunkenness appears in it.

119. I also inquire by what reasoning, after previously stating it was in the middle among the sons of Ham, he now designates him as the youngest. For it is written thus: Noah knew all that his youngest son had done (Gen. IX, 24). Surely, the Scripture did not err in the order of generations beforehand. Not at all. So what then? Are the writings now contradictory? I do not think so. Therefore, how is it resolved, unless you understand 'youngest' not in terms of age or time, but as someone who is inexperienced in understanding and placed in a certain infancy of intellect, who has not acquired the knowledge of older age or discerned the wisdom of the elderly? For dogs have certain human senses. And therefore it says: 'When you go to the council of the elders, close your mouth' (Sirach 32:13). And elsewhere it has the saying: 'You must learn before you speak' (Ibid., 18, 19). Therefore, have your ears ready, so that you may obtain something from the advice of the wise. The tongue must be restrained, the hearing must be prepared.

Chapter XXXII.

Why was it said in the blessing of Shem: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; and why is not the curse of slavery assigned to Ham who sinned, but to his son? Finally, the blessing of Japheth is explained.

120. Blessing his son Sem, Noah said: Blessed be the Lord God of Sem; and Chanaan shall be his servant. And he called him both Lord and God, specifically the God of his son whose name is Sem; because God is the God of the righteous, that is, the God of the mountains, not valleys, who grants grace to those who possess great virtue. Then, why did he subject not the son himself but his son's son to servitude when his son Cham sinned? And perhaps this is because a father is more affected by the wrongdoings of his own son, especially when he himself is guilty and the instigator, and he is deeply saddened by the damnation of his own sin, which is paid for by his son, who would be punished not so much for his own sake, but for the sake of the father's merit. Then, because the son was a student of his father's teachings and an imitator of the worst thoughts, they both used the same body and mind, and the same wickedness. Therefore, the son pays the price indiscriminately for either his father's or his own wickedness, since it is a common partnership in wrongdoing. So, whatever he pays for his father's wickedness, without a doubt he also pays for his own, being guilty of his own faults. Or certainly, the punishment is prolonged for a longer time, since it extends even to the son and extends the affliction of the successor into many times. According to the letter.

Moreover, here it is not so much individuals that are understood, but rather their customs, of which in both there is one nature. For Cham is heat, Canaan agitation and restlessness: but he who is hot is certainly restless and more agitated. Therefore, in both there was one passion and one affect. So when one is condemned, both are condemned.

122. When therefore the holy Noah, blessing his son Japheth, said: May the Lord enlarge Japheth, may he dwell in the tents of Sem, and let Chanaan be his servant (Ibid., 27); we have said above that Japheth is used to signify a kind of indifference to good (Sup., chap. 2). However, this indifference has a breadth, which is found in health, strength, beauty, courage, wealth, grace, nobility, friends, power, and other things. But although these indifferent things may be good, they have harmed many who have possessed them without wisdom and justice. For wealth has made many men drunk, nobility and power have made them arrogant, beauty has made them luxurious, and by its influence they have corrupted the chastity of others. Therefore, for those who are affected by these things that we have mentioned, they are indifferent, whose use is either governed by virtues, or certainly, without the guidance of virtues, they begin to be harmful, which can be beneficial.

Chapter XXXIII.

About the 350 years that are reported to have been lived by Noah after the flood; then about the descendants of Japheth both literally and morally.

123. Now, since it is said that after the flood Noah lived for three hundred and fifty years, we consider it not to be passed over lightly. For in three hundred is certainly signified the cross of Christ, by whose type the righteous man was delivered from the flood. And in fifty is the number of Jubilee, by which the Holy Spirit was sent from heaven, pouring forth grace into human hearts. Therefore, having completed the number of remission and grace, the righteous man fulfilled the course of his life.

124. Concerning the descendants of Japheth, it is said: 'From these the maritime nations spread out into their respective territories, each with their own language' (Gen. X, 5). It is not without reason that it is called 'broadness', for the generation of Japheth extended not only on land, as nature had ordained for the use of humans, but also went beyond to the sea and reached the islands. This is in accordance with the literal meaning.

125. According to a higher sense, things that are external and are called goods, riches, powers, honors, are spread widely; and not only are the rich content with those things that are in their hands and in their sight, but they spread their desires far and wide, either seeking profit from beyond, or seeking more honor, or seeking broader power, or seeking desire.

Chapter XXXIV.

What kind of man Cham, that wicked son, was: and about the son of Chus, the giant and hunter, whose name is explained, and from whom the kingdom of Babylon is said to have begun.

Now I ask by what means did the Scriptura mention the son of Cham, that wicked man, being older? There are two kinds of earth, one sandy and dusty, or rather, powder-like: the other kind of earth is fruitful and fertile, that is, firmer and deeper earth. Therefore, what does the wicked man generate if not dust, from which generation cannot arise? And so the Prophet compared the wicked to dust, saying: Not so the wicked, not so, but like the dust which the wind drives away from the face of the earth (Psalm 1, 4). For this reason, even according to a higher sense, the barren soul of the wicked is unfruitful and cannot produce useful fruits.

127. By what means, then, did Cush also beget Nimrod, who was a hunter before God? Hence it is said: Even as Nimrod, the giant hunter before God (Gen. X, 9). What else, therefore, could dust and sand generate but an earthly man, since the wicked prefer earthly things to heavenly ones? For fables introduce the giants as having desired to fight against heaven, and they thought that by climbing up earthly heights, they could reach the heavens.

128. However, a higher meaning is signified by this, that those who love earthly pleasures, follow them, and think that by them they can attain the grace of God, and that the heavenly kingdom should be conferred upon such errors, he fights against heavenly things with a stubborn affection. Therefore, there is also a proverb about one who has sinned: Like the giant hunter Nembroth before God. Nembroth, however, is said to mean Aethiops in interpretation. The color of Aethiops signifies the darkness and filth of the soul, which is opposed to light, devoid of brightness, enveloped in darkness, more similar to night than to day. The hunter also has use in the forests, his conversation among wild animals and beasts. Therefore, the irrational is mixed with irrational passions; and the hunter is accustomed to exploring things that are of rustic and fierce malice, and to possess and delight in them. In the end, Nimrod is the beginning of this kingdom of Babylon, that is, confusion; because malice and power are not in simplicity and purity, not in the distinction of virtue, but in the confusion of vices.

On Paradise

The Book of Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, On Paradise.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.
- Chapter XII.
- Chapter XIII.
- Chapter XIV.
- Chapter XV.

Chapter I. How difficult it is to discourse on paradise. However, its author, nature, location, and inhabitants are indicated; and the matter is translated into a sense of mystery. And God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed (Gen. II, 8). The mention of paradise seems to arouse great interest in us, wanting to investigate and explain what paradise is, where it is, and what it is like, especially since the Apostle, whether in the body or out of the body, does not know, yet he says that he was caught up to the third heaven. And again, he says: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- was caught up to paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. For this I will boast, but for myself I will not boast, except in my weaknesses: for if I should want to boast, I would not be foolish: for I speak the truth. (2

Corinthians 12:5 and 6). Therefore, if this is such a paradise, that only Paul himself, or someone similar to Paul, while living in this life, could see it; nevertheless, whether in the body or out of the body, he cannot remember it; but he did hear words by which he was commanded not to disclose what he had heard: in what way then can we determine the location of this paradise, which we were not able to see: and even if we could see it, we would still be prohibited from revealing it to others? While Paul himself was afraid to boast about the lofty heights of his revelations, how much more diligently should we fear to investigate that which is even subject to danger? Therefore, we should not consider this paradise to be Hyle, and thus let it remain Paul's secret.

However, since here in Genesis we read that paradise was planted by God in the East, and there the man whom God formed was placed; we can now find the author of this paradise. For who else could have created paradise but the all-powerful God, who spoke and things came into being, never needing those things which he desired to be generated? Therefore, he himself planted the paradise of which Wisdom says: Every planting that my Father has not planted will be rooted up (Matthew 15:13). Good planting of angels, good saints. For saints are called under the fig tree and vine in that future time of peace, in which there is a type of angels (Micah IV, 4).

Therefore, paradise is a place with many trees, but these trees are fruitful trees, full of sap and virtue, as it is written: 'All the trees of the woods shall rejoice.' (Psalm 95:13) They are always blooming with the verdure of merits, like that tree which is planted near running waters, whose leaf never withers; because all its fruit is abundant in it. This, therefore, is paradise. But the place in which it is planted is called pleasure. Hence also the holy David says: You will drink them from the torrent of your pleasure (Ps. XXXV, 9). For you have read: For a fountain rises out of Eden, which waters the garden (Gen., II, 10). These, then, are the holy trees, which are planted in paradise, and are watered by a kind of overflow of the torrent of the spirit. Of which he also says elsewhere: The impetuosity of a river makes the city of God joyful (Ps. XLV, 5). But that city which is above, Jerusalem, is free, in which various merits of the saints have flourished.

5. Therefore, in this paradise, God placed man, whom he formed. Understand also that he did not place the man who is according to the image of God, but rather the man who is according to the body. For the incorporeal is not in a place. However, he placed him in paradise like the sun in the sky, awaiting the kingdom of heaven, just as a creature awaits the revelation of the children of God.

Therefore, if paradise is where the shoots sprouted, it seems that paradise is the soul which multiplies the received seed, in which each virtue is planted, in which there was also the tree of life, that is, wisdom, as Solomon said (Wisdom 7:25): For wisdom is not born from the earth, but from the Father. For she is the radiance of eternal light, and a spotless mirror of the activity of God's power.

Chapter II.

That the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was in paradise, and that the serpent was there, is not to be condemned. And what some understand by the serpent, Adam and Eve.

7. However, there was also the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden. For you have this: God brought forth a beautiful tree for sight, and good for food, and the tree of life in the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. II, 9) Afterwards, we will see whether

this beautiful tree for sight, and good for food, was like the rest. For in that place it will be more opportune to discuss this, where we find that man was deceived by tasting from this tree. In the meantime, we have nothing to criticize, although we may not understand the reason. For we should not rashly condemn the creature of the world, if anything seems difficult to us to understand and incomprehensible to our intellect, like the creature of serpents or some venomous animal; indeed, we are still unable to understand and know by what means each individual thing has been made. Therefore, in divine Scriptures, let us not easily criticize something that we cannot understand. For there are many things that are not to be measured by our own intellect, but are to be valued from the depth of divine arrangement and the word. For put, without prejudice to the assertion to come, therefore you dislike this tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because after men tasted of it, they understood that they were naked; however, I will tell you concerning the fulfillment of the divine operation and this tree sprouted in paradise, and therefore it was permitted by God, so that we may know the excellence of good. For how, indeed, if there were no knowledge of good and evil, would we discern any distinction between good and evil? For we would not judge something to be evil unless there was knowledge of good; but knowledge of good could not exist unless there was good. And likewise, we would not know something to be good unless there was knowledge of evil. Take an example from the very condition of the human body. Indeed, it has a certain bitterness of bile, which if considered in common, is found to be useful for the health of man. Therefore, what we think is evil is often not entirely evil, but useful in common. For just as a good thing is in part of the body, and yet is beneficial to the utility of the whole body: so God, knowing the knowledge of good and evil, established it in part, so that it would be beneficial to the common good.

9. Finally, you find the serpent in paradise, surely not begotten without the will of God. However, the devil is in the form of the serpent. For even the prophet Ezekiel teaches that there was a devil in paradise, when he says about the prince of Tyre: 'You were in Eden, the garden of God' (Ezek. 28:13). And we understand the prince of Tyre in the figure of the devil. Shall we then accuse God, because we cannot comprehend the hidden treasures of His height and knowledge in Christ, unless He deems it worthy to reveal them to us? Nevertheless, it is revealed that we may know that the malice of the devil can also be beneficial to the salvation of men. Not because the devil wishes to benefit, but because the Lord turns his malice, even while resisting, to our salvation. Indeed, by virtue of this malice, Job, the holy man, became more illustrious in his virtue and patience. By means of this malice, his righteousness was tested, so that he might strive and conquer, and that a crown might follow victory. For no one is crowned except the one who has legitimately striven. Joseph's chastity would never have come to our attention if his master's wife, incited by the burning arrows of the devil, had not tried to seduce him, and ultimately caused his death, in order to highlight the purity of a man who would choose death over compromising his virtue. Do you want to know God's plan? It seems that, with the devil as author, death is prepared for just men and even the murder of their children; yet the Lord also tested Abraham in this way, by asking him to sacrifice his own son to Him. By the temptation, Abraham was proven faithful to the Lord, in that he was not recalled from the duty of devotion nor from mercy for his beloved son. Likewise, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in paradise; which was beautiful to look at, and appeared good for food. Yet it was not good for food, for its food seemed to obstruct humans. Therefore, it harms individuals but benefits the community, just as the devil harmed the Jews, but he crowned all the apostles except him, who overcame his temptations.

Therefore, it is neither to be doubted nor to be criticized that the devil was in paradise; since he could not block the way for the saints, so that no one could ascend. For he did not snatch away the dwelling of the righteous as a possessor. For even if he may have turned away some lazy and wicked ones from the possession of the heavenly dwelling, that which will be excluded by the prayers of the saints is much more august and much more beautiful, when this is fulfilled: I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven (Luke 10:18). Therefore, let us not fear him, who is so weak that he himself is about to fall to the ground. He has indeed received permission to tempt: but he has not received the opportunity to overthrow, unless the weak affection, which does not know how to seek assistance for itself, falls of its own accord. And therefore, by what deceit he tempted the first man, and what he thought was to be tempted in man, in what order, by what art we must know, so that we can beware.

However, most of those who wish to assert that the devil was not in Paradise, although we have read in the Scriptures that he stands in heaven with the angels, interpret this passage according to their own understanding so as not to seem to be contradicting our language. For before us, there was Philo in his book *On the Creation of the World*, who declared that a transgression had been committed by man through pleasure and sensation, taking the form of a serpent for delight and constituting the sensation of the soul and mind in the form of a woman, which the Greeks call ἀσθησις. But with a deceived sensation, he asserted that the mind followed the transgression, which the Greeks call νοΐς. Therefore, in Greek, the νοΐς of the man received a form, the ἀσθησις of the woman. Hence, some have interpreted Adam as the earthly νοΐς. However, the Lord placed those virgins in the Gospel (Matthew, XXV, 1 et seq.) waiting for the bridegroom's arrival with their lamps lit or extinguished, representing either the intact senses of the wise or the corrupted senses of the unwise. For if Eve had possessed these lit lamps, that is, the senses of the first woman, she would never have ensnared us in the tangles of her transgression, nor would she have fallen from the immortality of virtue.

Chapter III.

Through the fountain of paradise, Christ; through the four rivers that flow from there, the cardinal virtues, and the four ages of the world are represented.

12. Therefore, there is a certain fertile land, that is, a fruitful soul, planted in Eden, that is, exercised in a certain pleasure or exercise of the earth, in which there is delight for the souls. There is also the νοΐς, like Adam: and there is the sense, like Eve. And so that you would not have anything to turn back to the weak nature, or to the condition that is subject to endure dangers, consider what supports this soul has.

13. There was a fountain that irrigated the paradise. What fountain, if not the Lord Jesus Christ! He is the fountain of eternal life, just like the Father; for it is written: 'For with you is the fountain of life' (Ps. XXXV, 10). Moreover, rivers of living water will flow from his belly (John VII, 38). And the fountain is read, and the river is read, which irrigates the fruitful tree of paradise, which bears fruit unto eternal life. Therefore, this fountain, as you have read, for the fountain says, proceeds from Eden, that is, in your soul there is a fountain. Where Solomon says: Drink water from your own vessels, and from the fountains of your wells (Prov. V, 15). This is the fountain that springs forth from a soul exercised as full of pleasure: this is the fountain that irrigates paradise, that is, the virtues of a soul flourishing with the highest merit. And it is divided, he says, this fountain into four

sources. The name of one is Phison: this is the one that encircles all the land of Evilath, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good, where there is carbuncle and green stone. And the name of the second is Geon: this is the one that encircles all Ethiopia. And the third river is Tigris: this is the one that goes against the Assyrians. And the fourth river is Euphrates (Gen. II, 10 et seq.). These, therefore, are the four rivers, that is, according to the Hebrews. But the Ganges, according to the Greeks, flows against India. The Nile, however, encircles the land of Egypt or Ethiopia. Mesopotamia is so called because it is enclosed by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers; it is situated between these two rivers, which is also expressed by its name and common opinion even to those far away. But as the fountain is called the Wisdom of God. For the fountain is according to the Gospel, saying: If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink (John 7:37); the fountain is also according to the prophet who says: Come and eat from my bread and drink the wine which I have mixed for you (Proverbs 9:5). Just as wisdom is the fountain of life, the source of spiritual grace, so it is the fountain of the other virtues that guide us toward eternal life. Therefore, this fountain does not proceed from a soul that is uncultivated, but from one that is cultivated, in order to irrigate the paradise, that is, the various orchards of virtues. Among these virtues, there are four beginnings into which this wisdom is divided. What are these four beginnings of virtues if not one of prudence, another of temperance, a third of fortitude, and a fourth of justice (Plato, Book IV, Republic)? Even the wise of this world, taken from our own, translated into the writings of their books. Therefore, just as the source of wisdom, so also these four rivers flowing from that source are the streams of virtues.

15. Therefore, prudence is like Phison, and therefore has good gold, a splendid carbuncle, and a green stone. For we often receive gold as a reward for prudent discoveries. Hence, the Lord says through the Prophet: I have given her gold and silver (Hosea II, 8). And David speaks of the prudent ones: If you sleep among my clergy, their wings shining like silver, and their backs appearing like gold (Psalm LXVII, 14): because whoever adheres to the old and new Testament can proceed abundantly in the secret wisdom of God's disputation. Therefore it calls this good gold, not that corruptible and earthly coin. It also has a splendid carbuncle, in which a certain spark of our soul lives, he says. It also has a green gem, which seems to show a green and lively thing by the beauty of its color. For living trees are green, while those that die wither; the earth is green when it blooms, and seeds are also green when they sprout. And in the first place, this river is called Phison, which according to the Hebrews is called Pison, that is, a change of appearance; because it does not flow around one nation only, but also flows through Lydia. For it is not a narrow-mindedness, but a wealthy prudence that is useful, which benefits many. Therefore, as a first step, if someone has exited from paradise, let him be received like a river of prudence, so that he may not quickly dry up, but easily return to paradise through it. This river is frequented by many people and is said to have great beauty and fertility. And therefore, prudence is understood in the sense of this river, which has brought many benefits in the Lord's coming. And it flows to the ends of the earth, for through Wisdom all men are redeemed. Hence it is said: Their message has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world (Psalms 19:5).

16. The second river is the Geon, beside which the Israelites were settled when they were in Egypt, to go forth from which and to gird their loins and to eat a lamb, which is a sign of temperance. For it is necessary to celebrate the Lord's Passover with chaste and sanctified ones. And therefore, next to this river, the first legitimate observance was established, because it

signifies a certain gaping of this earth. Therefore, just as the yawning abyss absorbs the earth and whatever refuse or foliage is in it, so too chastity is accustomed to abolish all the passions of the body. And rightly there the first establishment of observance, because through law carnal sin is absorbed. Well therefore does Geon, in which there is the figure of chastity, is said to go around the land of Ethiopia; so that it may wash away the cast-off body, and extinguish the fire of the most vile flesh. For Ethiopia is marked by the interpretation of being cast-off and vile. But what is more cast-off than our body? What is so similar to Ethiopia, which is also black with certain shadows of sins? The third is the river Tigris, which flows against the Assyrians, to whom the rebellious Israel was led captive. This river is said to be swifter than all those inhabited by the Assyrians, that is, those directing, for this is what the interpretation signifies. Therefore, whoever, by the strength of his soul, captures the rebellious vices of the body and directs them towards heavenly things, is considered similar to this river. And for this reason, strength also emanates from him who is in paradise, as from a source. But strength, with a certain rapid course, pierces through every resistance, and does not get stuck with any obstacles of its course.

18. The fourth is the river Euphrates, which in Latin is called fertility and abundance of fruits, offering a certain emblem of justice, which nourishes every soul. For no virtue seems to have more abundant fruits than fairness and justice, which benefits others more than itself, neglecting its own interests for the common good. Many believe that Euphrates is derived from the Greek word **■π■** **το■** **ε■φρα■** **νεσθαι**, meaning 'to rejoice', because humanity rejoices in nothing more than justice and fairness. However, the reason why the other regions through which rivers flow are described, but not the regions through which the Euphrates flows, we have understood because its water is said to be life-giving and nourishing. Hence the wise men of the Hebrews and Assyrians called it Auxen. On the other hand, it is said that the water of other rivers is different. Furthermore, because where there is wisdom, there is also cunning; where there is strength, there is also anger; where there is moderation, there is often lack of moderation, or other faults; but where there is justice, there is harmony of the other virtues. Therefore, it is not known from the regions through which it flows, that is, not from the region itself. For justice is not a part, but it is like the mother of all. In these four rivers, the four principal virtues are expressed, which, as it were, encompassed the ages of this world.

First, therefore, the time from the beginning of the world until the flood was a time of wisdom, during which the just were counted: Abel, who was called just by God (Matthew 23:35); and Enos, which means man made in the image of God, who hoped to invoke the name of the Lord God; and Enoch, who is called in Latin 'by the grace of God', taken up to heaven; and Noah, who himself was just and a guide to some rest.

20. According to time, there is Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and the number of other patriarchs, in whom a certain chaste and pure moderation of religion shone forth. For indeed, Isaac, being immaculate, was given as a son through the promise of Abraham, not so much as a physical birth, but rather as a gift of divine indulgence, in which the true figure of the immaculate went before, as the Apostle teaches, saying: Because the promises were made to Abraham and his seed. He does not say 'and to seeds,' as referring to many, but as referring to one, 'and to your seed,' who is Christ. (Gal. III, 16).

21. The third time is in the law of Moses and the other prophets. For time will fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, David, Solomon, and Samuel, and the other prophets, Hananiah, Azariah, Mishaël, and Daniel, Elijah, and Elisha who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, captured the strongholds of foreigners (Hebrews 11:32-34). Therefore, they do not undeservedly possess this form of courage. For they were cut up, as you have below, tested, dead in the slaughtering of the sword. They were surrounded in goat skins, needy, afflicted, and distressed with pain, of whom the world was not worthy of their merits. Wandering in solitude, in mountains, in caves, and in the holes of the earth (Ibid. XVII, 38). Therefore, we rightly place this form of courage among them.

22. According to the Gospel, the likeness of justice is worthy because it is the power to bring salvation to all who believe. Finally, the Lord Himself says: Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all justice (Matth. III, 15): and this is the parent of the remaining virtues. In which, although some of the virtues we have mentioned are of greater importance, justice is preeminent; the others are also present in it, for they are connected and united virtues. For certainly Abel was just, and Abraham was both the strongest and most patient, and the prophets were most prudent. But Moses, educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, considered the treasures of Egypt as an insult to Christ. And who is wiser than Daniel? Solomon also sought wisdom, and deserved it. Therefore, it has been said about the four rivers of virtues, that their waters are beneficial. And because it was said that the Phison had good gold of the land, and the carbuncle, and the green stone, let us also consider what kind of these things are.

23. Indeed, Enos seems to us like a good gold, who wisely desired to know the name of God. But Enoch, who was translated and did not see death, is a certain carbuncle, a good-smelling stone, which the holy Enoch presented to God with his works, breathing forth grace in his deeds and character. But Noah, like a green stone, surpassed them all in vital color. For during the time of the flood, he alone, like vital seed for the future order, was preserved in that ark. Therefore, the paradise that is irrigated by many rivers is towards the East, not against the East, that is, according to that East which is called the Orient, that is, according to Christ, who has shed a certain radiance of eternal light, and is in Eden, that is, in delight.

Chapter IV.

Man was not made in paradise, but placed there. But in it, woman was made, through whom he was deceived. Now what is it to work and to keep?

24. And God took the man whom He had made and placed him in paradise to work and guard it. You see that he who was made is taken. He was indeed on the earth of his formation. Therefore, the power of God, inspiring his process and advancing his virtue, took hold of him and placed him in paradise, so that you may know that the one taken is as if breathed upon by divine power. Pay attention to this passage, (Dist. 40, c. Illud autem) because outside of paradise the man was made, and inside paradise the woman, so that you may realize that it is not by place or by the nobility of birth, but by virtue, that each person obtains grace for themselves. Finally, outside of paradise, that is, in a lower place, a better man is found; and she who is in a better place, that is, in paradise, is found to be inferior. For the woman was deceived first, and she herself deceived the

man. Hence, the apostle Peter reminds holy women to be subject to their husbands as to their masters (1 Peter 3:1). And Paul says: For Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor (1 Timothy 2:14). And hence it is to be considered, because no one should easily presume upon themselves. For behold, that which has been made for the assistance of man, requires the support of a man, because the man is the head of the woman. But he who thought he would have the assistance of a wife, fell through the wife. Therefore, no one should easily trust another, unless he has proven his virtue, nor should he assume for himself that he has been chosen as a helper. Instead, if he finds someone stronger whom he thought would be his support, let him borrow favor from him, just as the apostle Peter instructs to give honor to women as to weaker vessels, as coheirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

Therefore, a man was placed in paradise, and a woman was made in paradise. But even then, before the woman was deceived by the serpent, she had the grace of the man, for she was taken from him: although this sacrament is great, as the Apostle said (Ephesians 5:32). And therefore, she drew her life from the man. And that is why Scripture speaks only of the man, because he was set in paradise to work and keep it. It is not the same thing to work and to keep. For in works there is a certain process of virtue, and in custody a certain completion of the work is discovered; because it guards as if it were already completed. These two things are required of man, that he may seek new things in works, and may guard what he has obtained, which is a general rule. Philo, since he did not receive spiritual things with a Jewish affection, kept himself within the moral realm, as it were, and sought these two things: works in the field, and the guardianship of the house. And although paradise did not need rural works, he says, nevertheless, because the first man was going to be the law of posterity, therefore even in paradise he took on the appearance of labor, so that he might bind us to the performance and guardianship of the duty that is owed, and to the office of hereditary succession. These two things, therefore, are required of you, whether morally or spiritually. This is also taught by the prophetic psalm, for it is written: Unless the Lord builds a house; they labor in vain who build it. Unless the Lord guards a city, they watch in vain who guard it. (Ps. 126:1) You see those who are laboring in the process of construction; but these are the ones who are watching who have already received the completed work. Hence, the Lord said to the Apostles, as if they were already more perfect: Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation (Matt. XXVI, 41); teaching that the duty of perfect nature and the grace of full virtue must be preserved, and that no one should consider themselves more perfect unless they have been watchful.

Chapter V.

The commandment of not eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil is examined, and the difficulties that arise regarding it are resolved.

26. And the Lord God commanded Adam, saying: Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat: But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death. (Genesis, II, 16 and 17). In what manner, where he commanded to eat of every tree, he singularly said, Thou shalt eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in the plural number, Ye shall not eat, he said, is not an idle question. But if you pay close attention, it can be concluded by the authority of the Scriptures. For whatever is good, that is to be done; and

whatever is good and to be done, it is in harmony and consistent. But whatever is evil, that is discordant, disordered, and separate. And therefore, the Lord, always seeking unity, commanded according to unity. Finally, he who made both makes unity. Not only both, but also all are made one. For he commanded us to be one body and one spirit. But the only-begotten, since He is in unity with the Father, is very closely joined to the Father: because the Word was with God. Furthermore, He says: I and the Father are one (John 10:30); to show that He has unity of majesty and divinity with the Father. But He also commanded us to be one, and transferred the likeness of His own nature and unity onto us through the adoption of grace, saying: As the Father and I are one, so may they also be one with us (John 17:22). Therefore, when it commands what is good, it commands it as if to one person, saying, 'Eat.' For unity cannot transgress. But when it speaks about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it says that it should not be eaten, as if speaking to many, 'You shall not eat.' For what is prohibitive is commanded to many. However, I think differently, and I find in the very word of God what will happen. He commanded Adam alone to eat from every tree, knowing that he would obey. But regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he says not singularly, but plurally, that it should not be eaten. For he knew that the woman had been deceitful, and therefore he showed through plurality that they would not keep their promise, because there is a diverse opinion among many.

27. And as far as the opinion of the Seventy men is concerned, that which was troublesome has been resolved. But because Symmachus singularly said both, we understand that he followed this because God also speaks to the people in the law singularly, as you have it: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one (Deut. VI, 4); and, You shall love the Lord your God (Ibid. 6). Symmachus's interpretation does not prejudice me, who was unable to see the unity of the Father and the Son, although both Aquila and he have confessed it occasionally in their discourse. And let no one think that he addresses our superior with respect to the people of God, who is about to transgress the divine commandments individually; for even the people of the Jews violated the prescribed laws individually. For the law is spiritual, and therefore God addressed the divine people with one message in speech and another in predestination. Finally, he said: 'You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk' (Exodus 34:26).

28. The series of celestial teachings would seem easy, unless the question raised by many, to which we must respond; so that simple minds are not led astray by malicious interpretation. Indeed, many, whose authority is Apelles, as you have in the thirty-eighth volume of his work, pose these questions: How does the tree of life seem to contribute more to life than the breath of God? Then if God did not make man perfect; but each person acquires their own perfection of virtue through their own diligence: does it not seem that a person gains more for themselves than God bestowed upon them? The third objection is raised: And if man had not tasted death, certainly he could not know what he had not tasted. Therefore, if he had not tasted, he did not know; if he did not know, he could not fear. Therefore, God in vain presented death as a terror, which men did not fear.

29. Let us therefore learn that there in the garden, where God also produced the tree of life, he produced the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For you have that he produced the tree of life in the midst of paradise, that is, in the middle of the garden. For among us, 'in the midst' is understood to mean that he produced it in the middle. Therefore, both life and the cause of death were in the middle of paradise. Understand that it was not man who made life, but either by

working or by keeping the commandments of God he was able to find it. Now, life, as the Apostle said, was hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). Therefore, man, whether in the shadow of life for the future life, because this shadow is our life on earth now, or whether in a certain pledge of life, because he had the breath of God. Therefore, he had the pledge of immortality: but being placed in the shadow of life, he could not see and grasp the hidden life with Christ in God by some common touch and sight. And if not yet a sinner, certainly not of an incorruptible and inviolable nature; for he who has fallen into sin is not yet a sinner. Indeed, he was in the shadow of life; but those who are sinners are in the shadow of death. For the people of sinners, as Isaiah teaches (Isaiah 9:2), sat in the shadow of death, until the light arose through the grace of God, not through their own merit. Therefore, there is no distinction between the breath of God and the food of the tree of life. No man can claim to possess more than what has been bestowed upon him by divine generosity. Would that we could hold onto what has been received. Indeed, our efforts serve to regain what has been entrusted to us. The third point, as was proposed, is that those who have not tasted death cannot fear it, and therefore easily find absolution through the common experience of nature. For it is inherent in the nature of all living beings to instinctively recoil from harmful things, even if they have not yet experienced harm themselves. For indeed, from the very moment of its birth, a dove experiences the terror of a hawk. From where do wolves, formidable to sheep, receive their fear, and from where do birds of prey, their young? For if in those animals that are irrational, there is a natural fear of the opposite species of animals, so much so that they even perceive the sense of avoiding death, how much more should there have been a certain natural opinion of fearing death in the first human being, who is certainly the most full of reason.

Chapter VI.

It resolves several doubts about the command given to Adam and the temptation stirred up by Eve.

30. Again, they make other questions in this way: It is not always wrong to disobey a precept. For if the precept is good, obedience is honorable: but if the precept is evil, it is useful not to obey. Therefore, it is not always wrong to not obey a precept: but to not obey a good precept is evil. But it is good to operate the knowledge of good and evil; since God knows both good and evil. Finally, he says: Behold, Adam has become like one of us (Gen. III, 22). Therefore, if it is good to have knowledge of good and evil, and goodness is something that even God possesses, it seems that those who forbid it to human beings are not doing so rightly; and they propose this argument. But if they understand what it means to know, what power this word has: if they understand it correctly, the Lord has known those who belong to him (II Tim. II, 19); he surely knows those who have been made one out of many, in whom he dwells and through whom he moves. To know is certainly not only in mere and superficial knowledge, but in the actions that need to be done. It was necessary for man to obey the command, but by not obeying, he transgressed. Therefore, whoever did not obey, erred, because transgression is a sin. However, even if they want to diminish the power of knowledge, considering it as a mere and forbidden knowledge of good and evil, even in this there is the fault of transgression for not having obeyed the command; because the Lord God also considered the turbulent knowledge of good and evil to be forbidden.

31. Another question: Someone who does not know good and evil is no different from a child. However, with a just judge, there is no fault in children. Indeed, a just creator of the world would

never hold a child responsible for not knowing good and evil, because a child is without the sin of transgression and fault. But when we say in the previous statements that there are two understandings of the knowledge of good and evil, if we consider a superficial knowledge, it is certainly false that there is no difference from a child who does not know good and evil. But if it is false that nothing differs from a child; therefore Adam is not a child. If he is not a child, then sin is attributed to him as if he were not a child. If sin is attributed, then the punishment of sin follows; for punishment is found to be worthy, who did not try to avoid sin. It can also happen that even one who does not have knowledge of good and evil is not a child; for before the boy knew good and evil, he did not believe in wickedness. And again you have: Because before a child knows how to call his father and mother, he will receive the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria (Isaiah, VIII, 4). Therefore, the one who performs good deeds, even if they have not acquired knowledge of good and evil, are themselves their own law, just as many are their own law before they know the law. The Apostle, before he said, 'You shall not covet' (Rom. II, 14), did not know that covetousness is evil. In fact, he himself says: I did not know sin except through the law. For I would not have known desire, unless the law had said: You shall not covet (Rom. VII, 7). To that extent, a child can also be perfect according to the law of nature, before he knows that desire is a sin or commits the sin of desire. Therefore, according to a cursory knowledge, God did not want man to know what is evil, so that he, as if imperfect, could not avoid it. But by not obeying the commandment, we incur blame: therefore, we confess blame. But again, if by deep and profound knowledge we mean the knowledge of good and evil, which indeed perfects the soul; yet the little child who cannot attain to such deep and profound knowledge is not immediately condemned, just as a little child is not condemned.

Again they raise the question: He who does not know good and evil, they say, does not even know that it is evil not to keep the commandment, nor does he know what is good, which is to obey the commandment. And therefore, because he did not know, they say that he deserved pardon for not obeying, not condemnation. This question indeed has to do with those absolved, which we have mentioned before. For man could have considered from those things which God had granted to him before, that he received the breath of God, that he was placed in the paradise of pleasure, that he owed the highest obedience to the Author. And therefore, even if he did not know the power of good and evil, nevertheless because the author had said that the tree of knowledge of good and evil should not be tasted, he should have obeyed the command. For it was not skill, but faith that was required of him. He certainly understood that God surpassed all, and therefore he should have respected the person who commanded. And even if he did not understand the force and nature of the command, he still knew that reverence should be shown to the command giver. He had this opinion in his nature; although he did not have a sense of good and evil. Finally, the woman said to the serpent: We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said: You shall not eat of it (Gen. III, 3). Thus he knew that obedience to the command was necessary, so he said: We may eat of every fruit, as the Lord had commanded; but of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has commanded that it should not be tasted, lest they die. Therefore, because he knew that it must be carried out by order, he certainly knew that it was wrong to prevaricate, and for this reason, he is rightly condemned for prevarication.

33. Take another thing: If the assumption of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was so operative that good and evil were recognized; which seems to be indicated by the Scripture, when it says: Because when they both ate, their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked (Genesis 3:6-7); that is, the eyes of their heart were opened, and they knew that it was shameful to live naked: undoubtedly when the woman tasted from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she sinned and knew that she had sinned. Therefore, she who knew that she had sinned should not have invited her husband to share in the sin. By enticing her husband and giving him what she herself had tasted, she did not avoid, but rather repeated the sin. For surely, if one considers reason truly, she should have not dragged the one she loved into a partnership of punishment, but rather called him back from what she herself knew was sin, even if this woman seemed to fear being cast out of paradise alone, knowing that she could not be in paradise after the fall. Finally, both of them hid themselves after the fault. Therefore, knowing that she should be excluded, she did not want to be deprived of the companionship of the man she loved.

34. Take it again: Knowledge of evil is not evil; but when action fills it with malice. For it is not immediately the case that one who knows what evil is does what is evil, but rather one who knows that it is evil, does it. However, the incentive to do what is evil is usually either anger or desire. It is not necessary that one who has knowledge of evil does what is wrong, unless they are overcome by either anger or desire. Hence, what we have said is that the incentive to sin is either anger or desire, or often fear, although desire may arise from fear, as each person wants to avoid what they fear. And therefore we rightly placed anger and desire as the incentives of the remaining two vices. Let us consider, therefore, whether Eve was incited to vice by these stimuli. But she was neither angry with her husband, nor overcome by desire: she only erred in the second instance, by giving the fruit to her husband to eat, which she herself had already tasted. At first, desire was the author of the error, so that she herself would eat it, and the cause of sin followed. For what she had already tasted, she could not desire: and by tasting it, she had gained knowledge of evil. Therefore, she should not have directed the evil she had recognized towards her husband, nor should she have made her own husband a transgressor of divine command. Therefore, being aware and prudent, she sinned, and being aware, she led her husband into her own mistake. Otherwise, the speech about the tree of knowledge of good and evil will be found to be false if, even after she had eaten from that tree, she could not have the knowledge of evil. If this speech is true, then it could not have had the cause of desire: although many people may think it can be excused in this way, that she feared being separated from her diligent husband, and they may present this cause of desire because she wanted to be with her husband.

Chapter VII.

It is asked whether death comes to man from God, or from wood, or finally from elsewhere; and the objection is dissolved by a multiplicity of responses.

Again, another question arises about where the death of Adam came from, whether from the nature of that tree or from God. If we attribute it to the nature of the tree, it seems that the fruit of this tree would owe its power to give life to God's breath; for it was the breath that gave life that drew the fruit of this tree to death. Or if we remember that God is the author of death, they say that in this case we would accuse Him with a double charge: either He was so cruel that He did not want to forgive, even though He could; or if He could not forgive, He seems weak. Let us now see

how it must be avoided. Unless I am mistaken, disobedience was the cause of death; and therefore, man himself is the cause of his own death, not having God as the author of his death. For even if a physician prescribed certain things to be avoided by a sick person and the sick person did not think it necessary to abstain from them, the physician is not the cause of his death: on the contrary, he himself is guilty of his own death. Therefore, God, like a good physician, forbade Adam from tasting what would harm him.

Once again, take heed: It is better to know what is good than to not know; and for the one who knows what is good, it is noble to know what is evil, so that they can beware of what is evil, and so that the wise may submit to the caution of guardianship. However, it is not enough to only know what is evil; lest when you know evil, you begin to be deprived of knowledge of what is good. Therefore, it is more beautiful that we know both; so that both because we know what is good, we may avoid what is evil; and from what we recognize as evil, we may show gratitude for what is good. But you must know both in such a way that you deeply understand and execute what you know, and that your actions align with your knowledge. Otherwise, Scripture indicates that it is more tolerable for someone who does not know both than for someone who superficially knows both. For it burdens one to know what one cannot either execute or avoid: it burdens one to know without the use and practice of deep understanding. Ultimately, it is detrimental to a doctor's reputation to know what benefits and what harms a patient unless one uses that knowledge correctly; and therefore, knowledge is not good unless one uses it as one should.

Item, take note: Not in vain was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil produced in the middle of paradise, and if it had been produced for any other human being, the prohibition would have been superfluous. But it was made not in vain, nor for anyone else except for the human who received the command, so that he may not only use it, but use it in conjunction with others. For if you examine many things, you will discover many and truly countless things that can harm someone who does not know how to use them. And you will not find riches themselves to be fruitful if, being rich in the means of generosity, one denies sustenance to the poor, excludes the needy who are devoid of assistance, extorts from others what one can, simply because one prevails in power. Beauty itself and a more pleasing form of the body often lead to vice, while deformity does not. Therefore, does anyone desire to have children more ugly than beautiful, and to have their children be poor rather than rich? There are many such things that are not to be attributed to the thoughtlessness of the giver, but to the error of the one who uses them badly. And therefore, it is the user who should be accused rather than the giver.

Chapter VIII.

The questions regarding God's foreknowledge concerning the transgressions of Adam, and the belief in good and evil imprinted by divinity on human minds, are being resolved.

Again the question is: Did God know that Adam would transgress his commandments, or did He not know? If He did not know, then this is not an assertion of divine power. But if He did know, and nevertheless commanded something that He knew would be neglected, then God is not commanding anything superfluous. But He did command something superfluous to that first man Adam, which He knew would not be observed. But God does not do anything superfluous. Therefore, this is not Scripture from God. This objection is raised by those who do not accept the Old Testament and insert these questions. But these people must be overcome by their own

judgment and opinion. For even though they do not refute the faith of the New Testament, they are used as examples to argue that they should believe the Old Testament: because when divine commands and deeds correspond to themselves, it is clear that both Testaments of one author should be believed. Therefore, let them learn that the commandment, which they will transgress with injustice, is not superfluous. For even the Lord Jesus himself chose Judas, whom he knew to be a traitor. But those who think that he was chosen by imprudence, detract from divine authority. But they cannot estimate this, since Scripture says: For Jesus knew who would betray him (John VI, 65). Therefore, let these opponents of the Old Testament be silenced.

39. But since even the Gentiles, if perhaps they object to this, seem to require an explanation; let them also accept by what reason the Son of God either commanded a transgressor or chose a betrayer. The Lord Jesus had come to save all sinners, and he should also have shown his will even with regard to the impious. And therefore he should not have passed over the matter of betrayal; so that everyone would take note that in his choice of even his betrayer he displayed a remarkable symbol of those to be saved, and neither Adam was harmed because he received a command, nor Judas because he was chosen. For God did not impose necessity either on those in prevarication or on this betrayal, because if each had guarded what they had received, they could have abstained from sin. Indeed, he did not know that all the Jews would believe, and yet he said, 'I have come only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matthew 15:24). Therefore, the fault is not in the one giving the command, but in the one who prevaricates. And what was in God, he showed to all that he wanted to set everyone free. Nevertheless, I do not say that he did not know that prevarication would happen, but rather because he knew it was going to happen, I assert: but it is not proper for him to deflect the blame of the perishing traitor onto himself, so that it could be attributed to God, since both of them fell. But now both are being reprovved and convicted; because he received the commandment not to fall, and this one was also admitted into the office of apostleship, so that he could be called back from the desire of treason through God's grace; at the same time, so that while others are being convicted, it would benefit everyone. For sin would not exist if there were no prohibition. But if sin did not exist, perhaps not only wickedness but even virtue would not exist: for unless there were some seeds of wickedness, it could not subsist or flourish. For what is sin but the transgression of divine law and the disobedience of heavenly commandments? For we do not judge the heavenly commands by the ears of the body, but since it is the word of God, certain notions of good and evil have sprung up in us; while that which is evil, we naturally understand should be avoided, and that which is good, we naturally understand should be commanded. Therefore, in this, we seem to hear the voice of the Lord, which prohibits some things and commands others. And so, if anyone does not obey those things which we believe have once been commanded by God, he is considered subject to punishment. However, the commandment of God is not written with ink on stone tablets, but is impressed in our hearts by the spirit of the living God. Therefore, our own opinion becomes its own law. For if the Gentiles, who do not have the law, naturally do what the law requires, they themselves are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written on their hearts. Therefore, human opinion is to itself as the law of God.

Again, they raise another question from here, that they accuse this very opinion impressed by God on us, as if it were a prescription of divine law. They say, did He not know that man would sin, he who created him and impressed these opinions of good and evil? If you say that He did not know,

you would think Him unworthy of the majesty of God; but if you say that God, being aware that man would sin, nevertheless impressed on him common opinions of good and evil, so that he could not preserve the perpetuity of life because of the mixture of evils, then you seem to indicate that God is not good, just as in the former case you did not represent God as knowing the future. And from here they argue that the human creature is not made by God. For as we have shown above that they say there is no command of God, so they say here: Therefore the human creature is not made by God, because God did not create evil. However, man has received the opinion of evil, when he is commanded to abstain from evil. But with this kind of argument, they try to assert that there is another good God, and another operator of man. To these, it must be answered immediately according to their opinion. For if they do not want man to be made by God, because man is a sinner, and they refuse this, so that God may not seem to have made a sinner, because they do not think of him as good who made a sinner; let them say whether they think the operator of man, made by God. For if that one, as they say, is made by God, the operator of man, how did the good God make the operator of evil? Surely not good, for the one who makes a sinner is not good; let it be avoided that it is worse to have made the operator of a sinner. For a good God ought to have prohibited the birth of him who had the substance of sin to enter. But if they say that the operator of evil was not begotten, it must be asked whether a good God could have prevented in any way the beginning of malice or not. For if He could not, He is weak; if He could and did not, He is not good. Therefore, if these things do not agree with themselves, neither do the opinions of heretics agree with themselves. Let us inquire, then, lest perhaps there be a reason why God, whether the operator be begotten or not begotten, allowed malice to enter into this world, when He could have prevented it.

Therefore, serving one and the same good God and Creator, if we can, let us assert that it is fitting for both of them to have grace, and let us not avoid the accusation of those who say: How can a good God, who not only allowed evil to enter this world, but also permitted such great confusion? But this accusation would only hold if it infected the power of the soul and the inner secrets of the mind in such a way that it could not be eradicated, and if the poison of incurable wounds were to infiltrate the mind and soul of our being; for then it would be more suitable to complain that although God is capable of all things, He allowed man to perish. But when our merciful God has reserved the remedies for repelling errors, and has not abolished the power to abolish all contagion; how irrational or unjust is it, if He allows our material to be tested with a certain tremor of human frailty; so that afterward, the more gracious grace may return the feeling of sins in man, and being conscious of his own frailty, that he has trembled so easily in deviating from the series of divine commandments, as if he feared losing the nail of his fluctuating soul, celestial mandates; attributing more to divine mercy, because He receives what was lost, and taking something for Himself from grace, that it may return.

Chapter IX.

God gave a command to man concerning food; and why, when pronouncing the punishment, was it not said 'you will die', but 'you will surely die'?

Now let us consider what that reason is, why He, when He gave the command to man, directing him in that marvelous and blessed life, that he should not die by violating the commandment about eating and not eating, thought it necessary to command. For there are some who think that this

command does not in any way befit the heaven and the earth and the Creator of all; it is not worthy of the inhabitants of paradise, since that life is similar to that of the angels. And therefore we cannot consider this food to be earthly and corruptible; for those who do not eat or drink will be like angels in heaven. Therefore, since there is neither reward in food because our nourishment does not commend us to God, nor great danger because what enters the mouth does not defile a person, but what comes out of the mouth, it seems without a doubt that this commandment is not from such a great author, unless you refer this food to that prophetic one, because the Lord promises a great reward to His holy ones: 'Behold, those who serve me shall eat, but you shall be hungry.' (Isaiah 65:13). For this is the food by which eternal life is defined, and whoever is deprived of it will die in death. Since he himself, the Lord, is the living and heavenly bread, who gives life to this world. Hence he himself says: Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have eternal life. Therefore, there was some bread that the inhabitants of paradise were commanded to eat. Who is that? Listen to whom he says: Man ate the bread of angels. For bread is good, if you do the will of God. Do you want to know how good this bread is? The Son Himself eats this bread, of which He says: My food is to do the will of My Father who is in heaven (John 4:34).

Again let us see by what reasoning the Lord God said to Adam, 'you will die by death': what difference does it make whether someone says 'you will die' or adds 'by death you will die'? For we must show that there is nothing superfluous in God's command. Therefore, I think this. Since death and life are two contrary things, according to simple speech we say that we live from life and die from death. But if you want to emphasize both, because life makes life, it is said, 'life lives', as you have it in the law. And because death causes death, it is said that he shall die by death. However, this duplication is not superfluous: there is life unto death, and there is death unto life; for someone both dies while living, and lives while dying. Therefore, there are four distinctions: life to live, death to die, death to live, life to die. Since these things are so, we must exclude the prejudice of usage and custom; for usage has it that one is commonly said to live, both he who lives for life and he who lives for death, and that one is commonly said to die, either he who dies for death or he who dies for life. So out of those four, two have a meaning, that is, to say that the living person lives, and does not distinguish between better and worse, and to say that the dying person dies, and does not seem to have a distinction between a bad and a good death. For a certain indiscriminate life is signified, such as that of irrational beings or even of children, and an indiscriminate death as well.

Therefore, with the common use being set aside, let us consider what it means to live life, what it means to die death, what it means for life to die, and what it means for death to live. For I believe, according to the Scriptures, that life signifies a certain admirable and blessed life, and that this use of living and breathing, as if joined with the grace of a blessed life and mixed with a certain participation, seems to demonstrate. For this is to live life, to live by virtue, to have the acts of a blessed life in this life of the body. But what else is it to die against death, if not to signify the deformity of the dying body with death, whose flesh is also deprived of the common function of living, and whose soul cannot have the use of eternal life? There are also those who die while alive, just as those who live in the body, but they die in actuality: such are those of whom the Prophet says: 'They descend into hell alive' (Ps. 54:16). And that of which the Apostle says: 'For she who lives is dead' (1 Tim. 5:6). There remains a fourth category, those who even in death are

alive, like the holy martyrs, who certainly die in order to live. The flesh dies, but the grace of the dead lives. Therefore, let it be far from us to live as participants in death, but instead let us die as participants in life. For the holy one does not want to be a participant in this life, who says: I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ; for it is much better. And another says, Woe is me, that my sojourn is prolonged! Certainly, one may grieve when they hope for the fellowship of eternal life, which is contained within the fragility of this life. And for this reason, I can say the opposite, because although it is good to live life; it is uncertain to live life, for one can say that to live life is to wage the eternal battle of the body. It can also be said that to live life is to desire the physical aspects of this life, be it anyone or be it the holy ones; for example, if one believes that it is noble to live in order to attain longevity through good deeds, which is what many weaker individuals find pleasing in this life.

45. Therefore, just as we have learned what it means to live the life, let us also learn what it means to die to death, or rather to live to death. For there can be those who die to death and those who live to life. For one who does not live in such a way that they live according to the death of their soul, they die to death, because they are not subject to death, that is, they have lost the connection to the agonizing death and are not bound by the chains of eternal death. They have died to death, that is, they have died to sin, they have died to punishment. The opposite of punishment is to live, that is, when someone lives in punishment, they live in death. But whoever dies to punishment, dies to death. There is also one who in this life dies to life, as He Himself says: 'But I now live, not I, but Christ lives in me' (Galatians 2:20). For he who is dead to sin, lives to God; that is, death is dead in him, but life lives, who is the Lord Jesus. Therefore, the life of those who live to God is good, and the life of those who live in sin is bad. There is also a middle life, like that of other living creatures, as you have written: 'Let the earth bring forth the living soul according to its kind' (Genesis 1:24). There is also a life of the dead, like the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. There are also those in whom there is a connection between death and life, about whom the Apostle says: If we have died with Him, we shall also live with Him. For if we have been united with the likeness of His death, we shall also be united with the likeness of His resurrection: knowing that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin. For whoever has died has been justified from sin (Rom. VI, 5). Just as we have spoken of many figures of life, so also we will find figures of death. Death is said to be evil, according to this: The soul that sins shall die (Ezek. XVIII, 20). Death is also commonly spoken of, as you have for example: Because Adam lived so many years, and he died, and he was joined to his fathers. Death is also said through the sacrament of baptism, as you have: We were buried with him through baptism into death (Rom. VI, 4). And elsewhere: But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him (Romans 6:8). You see that death indeed may be called by name, but this life is ours.

Chapter X.

Why did God not approve of man until after the creation of woman, and why especially did he sin through her deception? Also, why was she created not from the earth like Adam, but from his rib?

46. Another question arises here because the Lord said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone' (Gen. II, 18). First of all, understand that in the earlier passage, when God created man from the

dust of the earth, He did not add, 'And God saw that it was good' (Gen. I, 11 et seq.), as He did in each of His other works. For if He had said there that it was good because man was made, it would be contrary to say here that it was not good, since He had said earlier that it was good. But understand this, that it was only there that Adam was created. However, where he includes both man and woman together, although he does not specifically mention them there; nevertheless, because later you have: And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good (Genesis 1:31), it is clearly declared that it is good that both man and woman were created. But from this question another question arises again. For how is it that when Adam was alone, it was not said that he was good, but when the woman was made from him, then everything was deemed good? Although there he praised every creature, and the creation of the universe was approved, since in man there is that predicted community of nature, it nevertheless does not seem idle, to explain how, when Adam was alone, not only was there no preaching of good added to the pleasing work; but it was also said that man alone was not good: since we know that before the woman was made, Adam did not go astray; but after the woman was made, she tempted her husband, transgressed God's command, and became an incentive to him. If, therefore, a woman is truly the author of sin, how does it seem right that she is added for a good purpose? But if you consider that God has care for the universe, you will find that it pleased the Lord more that in that which was the cause of the universe, it should be necessary, than that in that which was the cause of sin, it should be condemned. And therefore, because the propagation of the human race could not take place solely from the man, the Lord declared that it was not good for man to be alone. For God preferred that there should be many whom He could make safe, and to whom He could give sin, rather than that there should be only one Adam, who would be free from sin. Finally, because the same author of both works came into this world to save sinners. Finally, Cain, guilty of murder, did not suffer before he generated children. Therefore, due to the human succession, a woman must be added to a man. (See St. Augustine, Book II against Julian of Eclanum, chapter 7, number 20). Finally, these are the very words of God, saying that it is not good for man to be alone. For although the woman was the first to sin, she should not have been excluded from the use of divine operation in order to obtain redemption. Although Adam was not deceived, but woman, having been deceived, was in the transgression, yet she shall be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with modesty. (1 Timothy 2:14-15). And not without reason is it recorded that God made woman from the rib of man, rather than from the earth as He made Adam, for this was done to signify the unity of the human race in both man and woman. Therefore, from the beginning, it was not two men or two women, but first a man and then a woman. For God, desiring to establish the unity of mankind, began with one creature and took away the ability for many different and disparate natures to exist. Let us make, he says, a helper similar to himself (Gen. II, 18). By helper, we understand assistance for the generation of human constitution. And truly, it is a good helper. For if you take the assistance for the better, a certain greater operation in the cause of generation is found in the woman; just as this earth, by first receiving seeds and gradually nurturing them with its own support, makes them grow and produces them in the field. Therefore, the assistance of the woman is good, although she is also called a helper of lesser rank; as we also find in human experience, because those who are usually more powerful in dignity choose a helper of lesser merit.

Chapter XI.

How animals were brought to Adam; what the sleep of Adam and the building of his rib teaches us; what the mentioned animals brought into paradise signify; and how the righteous are translated into paradise?

49. Now consider why God, after fashioning all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the sky, brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. By what reasoning was this done, when God only brought the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky to Adam? For there were cattle according to their kind. Finally, you have below: Because Adam gave names to all the cattle and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam, a helper like him was not found (Gen. II, 20). Therefore, what is absolution, if not that untamed beasts and birds of the sky are brought to man by divine power? However, man had the power to gather tamed livestock. Therefore, that was the work of divinity, this of human diligence. At the same time, consider for what reason everything was derived from Adam, so that in all things he might see that the substance of nature consists of both sexes, that is, male and female, and he himself might recognize by use and example that the companionship of woman was necessary for him. And God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. Who is this sleep, except that for a little while we direct our attention and our thoughts to the joining together in marriage, as if we seem to have turned our gaze intently to the kingdom of God, and to be inclined and bent toward a certain sleep of this world, and to sleep for a little while in divine things, while we rest in earthly and worldly matters? After God caused the sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept, then the Lord God built up the rib which he had taken from Adam into a woman. Well done, he said, when he was speaking about the creation of woman, because in man and woman a certain perfection of the household seems to be complete. He who is without a wife is like someone without a home, so it is considered. Just as a man is esteemed more capable for public duties, so a woman is esteemed more capable for domestic duties. Consider that he took a rib from the body, not a portion from the soul; that is, not soul from soul, but bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh, she shall be called woman.

Therefore, we have recognized the cause of human generation. But because it moves many people who look more closely, whether it was a great gift of God at first to place humans in paradise or later a reward for great merits, that each just person is snatched up to paradise, it is also said that there were animals and wild animals, and birds of the sky, in paradise. Hence, many have wanted paradise to be the soul of humans, in which certain seeds of virtues have sprouted: but man is placed both to work and to guard paradise, that is, the mind of man, whose virtue seems to cultivate the soul, not only to cultivate it, but also to guard it once it has been cultivated. But the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky that are brought to Adam are our irrational movements, because the passions of beasts or livestock are diverse, either more turbulent or even weaker. But what else do we consider the birds of the sky to be, if not empty thoughts that, like birds, fly around our soul and often transfer it here and there with various movements? Therefore, no helper similar to our mind has been found, except for sensation, that is, perception. Our mind alone could find a similar one to itself.

52. But perhaps you may argue that God also placed these things in the intimate paradise, that is, the passions of the body, and a certain emptiness of fluctuating or empty thoughts, because He Himself was the author of our error. Consider what He says: Have dominion, He says, over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the sky, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth (Gen. I, 28). You see that He has granted you dominion, so that you should judge about all things, to discern

the varieties of judgment with a sober definition. God called to you, so that above all you would know your own mind. Why did you not find things similar to yourself, and desire to join and unite yourself? Surely He gave you a sense by which you would know all things, and by knowing, judge them. And rightly were you cast out from that fruitful field of paradise, because you were unable to keep the commandment. For God knew that you were weak, He knew that you could not judge; therefore, He said, as to the weaker ones: Judge not, that you may not be judged (Matthew VII, 1). Therefore, because he knew that you were weak in judgment, he wanted you to be obedient to his command; therefore, he gave the command. But if you had not transgressed, you would not have been subject to the danger of uncertain judgment. Therefore, since you wished to judge, he added: 'Behold, Adam has become like one of us, knowing good and evil' (Gen. III, 22). You desired to arrogate judgment to yourself, therefore you should not reject the punishment of unjust judgment. However, he placed you against Paradise, so that you cannot abolish its memory.

53. Finally, the righteous are often snatched into paradise, just as Paul was snatched into paradise and heard unspeakable words. And if you, by the power of your mind, are snatched from the first heaven to the second, from the second to the third, this means that first each person is bodily, secondly animalistic, thirdly spiritual. If you are so snatched to the third heaven, to see the radiance of spiritual grace (for the animalistic human does not know the things of the spirit of God), and therefore the ascent to the third heaven is necessary for you, so that you may be snatched into paradise: you are now snatched without danger, so that you may judge all things, because the spiritual person judges all things, but is judged by no one. And perhaps, as if still fragile, you will hear ineffable words that it is not permissible for a man to speak: and then what you have received, keep to yourself, and what you have heard, guard. The apostle Paul kept watch lest he should fall, or at least cause others to err. Or perhaps Paul says this because it is not permissible for a man to speak (II Cor. XII, 6 and 7) ; because he was still in the body, that is, he saw the sufferings of this body, he saw the law of his flesh resisting the law of his mind (Vid. S. Aug. I. II contra Julian. Pel., c. 5, n. 13). For in this evil do we wish to be understood, lest we appear to be throwing about a certain terror of future danger. For if it is on account of this life's security, so that we fear no snares of prevarication after this, then whoever shall be in paradise by the ascent of virtue will hear those secret and hidden mysteries of God: he will hear the Lord saying to that thief who turned from his wickedness to confession, and from robbery to faith: Today you shall be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43).

Chapter XII. The wisdom of the serpent: how he approached the woman; and what her response was, followed by a lengthy digression on a certain doubt concerning the matter. But the serpent was wiser than all the beasts of the field that the Lord God had made, and the serpent said to the woman: What did God indeed say, that you shall not eat from any tree of paradise? When it says that the serpent was wiser, you understand of whom it speaks, that is, our adversary who possesses only the wisdom of this world. But pleasure and delight are also said to be wise, because wisdom is also called wisdom of the flesh, as you have: For the wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God (Rom. VIII, 7). And they are clever in seeking the kinds of pleasures, because they are desirous of pleasures. Therefore, if you understand delight, it is opposed to the divine commandment, and it is inimical to our senses. Hence, Saint Paul says: I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin (Rom. VII, 23). But if you refer to the devil, he is the true enemy of the human race. And what is the cause of

enmities if not envy? As Solomon says: Because the envy of the devil death entered into the world (Wisdom 2:24). But the cause of envy is the blessedness of man placed in paradise, and therefore, because the devil himself could not hold onto the grace he had received, he envied man, since he was formed from clay to be a dweller in paradise, and man was chosen. For the devil considered that he, who had been of superior nature, had fallen into these worldly and mundane things; while man, of inferior nature, hoped for eternal things. Therefore, he envied, saying: Does this inferior one achieve what I could not preserve? Will this one who is of the earth migrate to heaven, while I, who have fallen from heaven, am on earth? I have many ways by which I can deceive man. He was made from clay, earth is his mother, he is enveloped in corruption. And if the soul of a higher nature can still be subject to lapses, while being confined in the prison of the body; when I myself could not avoid falling. Therefore, the first way is to deceive it, while it desires greater things according to its condition. For here someone has striven for industry. Then there is the flesh, which it desires but does not possess. Finally, in what way do I seem to be wiser than others, unless I limit myself and strive with cunning and deceit? Therefore, he planned that Adam would not first approach, but that Adam would try to deceive through the woman. He did not approach the one who had received the heavenly command in person, but he approached the one who had learned from the man, not from God, what she should observe. For indeed, you do not have that God said to the woman, but that he said to Adam; and therefore, the woman should be considered to have learned through Adam.

Therefore, understanding this type of temptation in this place, you will also find many other types of temptation in other places. Some are through the prince of this world, who has vomited certain poisons of wisdom into this world, so that people would believe that what is false is true, and their affections would be captivated by a certain appearance of humanity. For he does not always enter as an obvious enemy, but there are certain powers that feign love and pretend grace, gradually infusing the poison of their iniquity into our thoughts, from which arise those sins that are born either from pleasure or from a certain ease of the mind. There are also other powers that struggle against us. Hence the Apostle says: For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12). They want to break us with this kind of contention, and as if to destroy the body of our soul. And so Paul, like a good athlete, not only knew how to avoid the blows of opposing powers, but also how to strike back. Therefore he says: I beat my body and make it my slave, so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize (1 Corinthians 9:27). And so, like a good athlete, he deserved to reach the crown. Therefore, the temptations of the devil are manifold. And therefore, the serpent is considered to be both double-tongued and deadly, because the devil's servant speaks one thing with his tongue and meditates on another in his heart. There are also other ministers who, with the poison of their words, boast about the corruption of their hearts and voices, as if they were throwing arrows, to which the Lord says: Generation of vipers, how can you speak good things, when you are evil? (Matthew 12, 34).

56. And the serpent said to the woman: What did God indeed say, that you may not eat from every tree of paradise? And the woman said to the serpent: Of every tree of paradise we will eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat; and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die (Genesis 3:2-3). When you hear that the

serpent is wiser than all other animals, search here for its cunning. It pretends to speak the words of God and weaves its own tricks. For when God had said: Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death (Genesis II, 16 and 17); the serpent, as if questioning the woman, when God had said: Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat, put in a lie, so as to say: Of every tree ye shall not eat: whereas God had only commanded concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil, that they should not taste of it. However, it is not surprising that he deceived her, because it is the custom of those who try to deceive someone. Therefore, the serpent's question is not useless. But so that you may know that there could be no fault in the command, the woman answered as follows, as you have it: 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You shall not eat it, nor touch it, lest you die.' Indeed, there is no fault in the command itself, but in the interpretation of the command. For as the present reading teaches, we learn that we should not add anything or join ourselves to the command out of caution. For if you add or subtract anything, it seems to be a violation of the command. The pure and simple form of the command must be observed, or the series of testimony must be indicated. Often, when a witness adds something to the series of events from his own, it stains the entire credibility of the testimony with the falsehood of a part. Therefore, nothing should be added just because it seems good. For here, it has the appearance of an offense that the woman added: 'Neither shall you touch it?' For God had not said, 'You shall not touch it,' but 'You shall not eat it.' But nevertheless, the slip begins to be the beginning. For what she added, she added redundantly, or by adding, she understood that what God commanded was only half-full from her own perspective. Therefore, the present series of readings teaches us that we should neither detract anything from divine commandments nor add to them. For if John judged this of his writings: If anyone adds to this, God will add the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the book of life (Rev. XXII, 18 and 19): how much more should nothing be taken away from divine commands! Hence, the first transgression of the commandment began. Moreover, some think that this vice was not of the woman, but of Adam: thus Adam said to the woman, when he wanted to make her more cautious, that God had commanded: You shall not touch it. For we have it that Adam, not Eve, received the commandment from God. For the woman had not yet been formed. Indeed, the words of Adam, by which he spoke to the woman regarding the form and series of the commandment, are not recorded, but we understand that the commandment passed from the man to the woman. However, let others see what they think; to me, it seems that the fault began with the woman, and falsehood started with her. For even though it may seem uncertain regarding the two, the gender reveals which one could have erred first. Note that the woman is condemned because of the prejudice that was found before her first mistake. For the man is the author of the error, not the woman. Therefore, Paul says: Adam, he says, was not deceived, but the woman was deceived in the transgression.

57. Now let us see whether, apart from the addition that has been applied by command, what has been added seems to have been an obstruction. For in truth, if it is good: You will neither touch it, and it will be for your benefit, why did God not forbid this, but rather seems to have allowed it by not forbidding? Therefore, both must be investigated, by what reasoning He neither allowed nor forbade. For there are those who say, By what reasoning does what He has made seem, He not

command and touch? But when you hear that there was knowledge of good and evil in that tree, it can be estimated that he did not want evil to touch you. For it is enough for us to see Satan falling like lightning from heaven, according to the voice of the Lord (Luke 10:18), and giving food not of light, but of darkness and sons of darkness; because it is written: He has given him as food to the peoples of Ethiopia (Psalm 74:14). Therefore, this is said of him, that he did not give command to be touched. But what it does not prohibit, understand what I mean. There are many things that can harm us if we choose to indulge in them before knowing what they are. For often it is through the experience of food and drink that harm comes. Indeed, if you know beforehand what is bitter, you can endure it; and if you understand that those things that are bitter are beneficial, you can tolerate them, so that sudden bitterness does not offend you, and you do not begin to reject what is beneficial. Therefore, it is advantageous to know beforehand; so that from what you know, it will be beneficial, and you will not despise bitterness. But these things can cause less harm: be attentive to that which, unless precautions are taken, could cause more harm. A certain person is a Gentile, he tends towards faith: he is a catechumen, he desires to receive the fullness of doctrine and faith; let him beware that while he wants to learn, he may learn wrongly, and learn from Photinus, learn from Arius, learn from Sabellius: let him entrust himself to such teachers of whom some authority holds him; and led by a certain presumption of the teachers, he may not know how to judge with his tender senses. Therefore, let him first understand with the eyes of his mind what follows: let him see where life is: finally, let him touch the vital parts of divine readings, so that he may not be offended by any false interpreter. They indeed read Sabellius: 'I am in the Father, and the Father is in me' (John 14:10), and he says there is one person. They also read Photinus: 'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (1 Timothy 2:5). And elsewhere: 'Why do you want to kill me, a man?' (John 8:40). They also read Arius because he said: 'The Father is greater than I' (John 14:28). It is indeed read plainly, but in what sense it is said, one must carefully consider, so that one can understand the meaning of the words. He is led by a certain authority of the teachers, and it would have benefited him not to seek, but to find such a teacher. But even if someone who is a Gentile accepts the Scriptures, he reads: An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth (Lev. 24:20). He also reads: If your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off (Matt. 5:30); he does not understand the meaning, he does not consider the mysteries of the divine word, he slips worse than if he had not read it. And therefore he taught how they should investigate the Word of God, not superficially, not inattentively, but diligently and carefully: That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have touched, concerning the Word of life; and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you (1 John 1:1-2). You see that he, as it were, examined the word of God with certain hands, and afterwards he announced: and therefore the word of Adam and Eve would perhaps not have harmed anything, if those hands of certain minds had touched it diligently before. For by examining and seeking diligently, the weak, who do not understand the nature of each thing, can investigate. Certainly those weak ones should have examined that tree in which they had learned that the knowledge of evil was, before they touched it, in what manner they should. For even knowledge of evil can often be beneficial to us. And therefore we read in this lesson or in the prophecy (Ezek. XXVIII, 18) about the tricks of the devil, in order to learn how to guard against his arts. For his temptations must be known, not so that we may follow them, but so that, being learned and instructed, we may beware of them.

There are those in this place who have doubt, whether God said that all wood should be tasted in the same way, as when all wood is tasted, so also the wood of knowledge of good and evil should be tasted; or rather, whether God said that all wood should be tasted, but not the wood of knowledge of good and evil. They do not think that this is an unreasonable argument, because although the food of this wood may be harmful, it cannot be harmful if it is eaten with other foods: since it is said that the antidote, theriac, is made from the body of a snake, which is harmful when taken alone but is beneficial for health when mixed with other substances. Knowledge of good and evil, if it has any wisdom, if someone always strives for life, if someone achieves the other kinds of virtues, is by no means considered useless. Therefore, many have thought that it can also be understood in this way: that God appears to have forbidden that only the tree of knowledge of good and evil be tasted without the other things, not forbidding it with the others. And they think this is the reason why it is said, because God said to Adam: 'Who told you that you are naked, unless [it was] from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat, [and] you ate from this alone' (Gen. III, 11)? Because it seemed to give someone the opportunity to interpret, unless the woman in higher places, with the serpent speaking: What indeed did God say, do not eat from every tree in the garden: she would have responded: What is in the middle of the garden, God said: You shall not eat from it. In which, although the faith of the woman's transgression seems weaker, yet I will not strip Adam of all his virtues, so that it seems he achieved no virtue in paradise, having tasted nothing from the other trees, and having incurred guilt before obtaining any fruits. Therefore, I will not rob Adam, nor will I dispossess the entire human race, which is innocent before it receives the knowledge of good and evil. For it is not said in vain: Unless you turn and become like this child, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3). For a child, when cursed, does not curse back; when struck, does not strike back; it is not familiar with the temptations of ambition and plunder.

60. Therefore, I believe, more truthfully, that he has forbidden the eating of wood even with other fruits. For although good knowledge is perfect, it is nevertheless useless when imperfect. I dare to say that every man is imperfect, since even Paul himself says as if imperfect: Not because I have received, or because I am already perfect: but I follow if I may apprehend (Philippians 3:12). And therefore, the Lord says to the imperfect: Judge not, that you may not be judged (Matthew 7:1). Therefore, with an incomplete knowledge, it is useless. In fact, I would not have known sin if the law had not said: You shall not covet (Rom. 7:7). And further: Without the law, sin is dead (ibid., 8). For what benefit is it to me to know what I cannot avoid? What benefit is it to me to know that the law of my flesh opposes me? Paul is opposed, and he sees the law of his flesh resisting the law of his mind, and he is held captive under the law of sin (Rom. 7:23), and does not presume of his own conscience (see St. Augustine, Book 2 Against Julian, Chapter 5, number 13); but by the grace of Christ, he trusts that he will be liberated from the body of death: and do you think that anyone who knows cannot sin? Paul says: For I do not do the good that I want, but the evil that I do not want, that I do (Rom. VII, 19): and do you think that knowledge benefits man, which increases envy of sin? Nevertheless, let it be that a perfect man cannot sin. In Adam, God foresaw all men, and therefore it was not fitting for the human race to possess knowledge of good and evil, which it could not exercise except through the vices of the flesh, as was necessary.

Chapter XIII.

How the temptations of the devil are full of lies; and about the deception of the woman, and the fall of Adam. Also, how they realized they were naked, and made themselves loincloths, and what that signifies.

61. Let us therefore learn that the temptations of the devil are full of lies; for hardly one true thing seems to be among those which he promised, the rest he has composed as falsehoods. For you have it thus: And the serpent said to the woman: "You will not die by death" (Gen. III, 4). Behold, one falsehood; for the man, who followed the serpent's promises, died by death. Then he added: God knows that on whatever day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened (Ibid., 5). This is the only truth, because you have it below: because they both ate, and their eyes were opened. But this is the truth that harmed. Finally, it is not useful to open the eyes to everyone, because it is written: They will see and not see. But immediately a deceitful lie is attached, because it adds: And you will be like gods, knowing good and evil. In this, it is allowed to notice that the serpent is the author of idolatry, because it seems that the cunning of the serpent led to the error of introducing multiple gods into humans. And this deceived them, because man wanted to be like gods. For not only did men cease to be as gods, but even those who were like gods, to whom it was said: I said, you are gods, lost their grace (Ps. LXXXI, 6).

62. And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasing to the eyes, and a desirable tree to look at (Gen. III, 6). A weak judge who judged on something she had not tasted. And therefore, it does not seem easy, unless we have examined it more diligently, unless we have approved it with inner affection, to be taken for any work. Taking, he said, of its fruit, she ate and also gave it to her husband, and they both ate. It is well known that Adam was deceived; for it was not his fault, but the fault of his wife's fall.

63. And their eyes were opened, he says, and they knew that they were naked (Ibid., 7). And before, indeed, they were naked, but not without the coverings of virtues (De Poenit. dist. 2, c. Ut cognoverunt). They were naked because of the simplicity of their manners, and because the nature of fraud did not know clothing. But now, human understanding is veiled with many disguises of simulations. Therefore, after they saw themselves stripped of that sincerity and simplicity, they began to search for worldly and manufactured things with which to cover the nakedness of their minds: pleasures assuaging pleasures, and the shadowy delights of this world like leaves clinging to leaves, with which they might overshadow their genital secret. For how did Adam, who saw all living beings in such a way that he could even give them names, have closed eyes of the body? How did they know, that is, with an inner and higher knowledge, not that a covering of virtues was lacking, but a covering of a tunic?

64. And they fastened, he says, fig leaves, and made for themselves belts. In this place we should understand figs in terms of their symbolic interpretation, as the series of readings teaches us: since Scripture has noted that those who rest under the vine and fig tree are holy (Mic. 4:4), and Solomon has said: Who plants a fig tree and does not eat its fruit? (Prov. 27:18), and the Lord came to the fig tree; but he was offended because he did not find fruit, but only leaves. Therefore, Adam teaches me what leaves are, who, after he sinned, made a loincloth for himself out of fig leaves, who should have tasted more of its fruits. The righteous chooses fruit, the sinner leaves. What is the fruit? The fruit, he says, is the spirit: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22). He who did not have joy did not have fruit.

He who violated God's commandment did not have faith. He did not have self-control, who had tasted the forbidden fruit.

Therefore, whoever transgresses God's commandment is stripped and laid bare; and he himself becomes filthy: he desires to cover himself with certain fig leaves, perhaps with empty or shadowy discourses, skillfully weaving falsehoods and constructing word upon word, in order to cover the conscience of his mind and to cloak the shame of his actions, so that he may hide his shameful deeds. For he throws leaves upon himself, desiring to conceal either the devil as the author of his guilt, or the allurements of the flesh, or some other persuader of error. And he frequently produces examples from the divine Scriptures, by which he alleges that the just have fallen into sin, saying, for example, if perhaps he is caught in adultery: And Abraham slept with his concubine (Gen. XVI, 4), and David loved another man's wife and took her to be his own (II Sam. XI, 4 and 27). For he weaves together certain passages, certain examples from the series of prophetic writings, and he does not consider the fruit of these passages to be worth seeking.

66. Do not the Jews also seem to you to be sewing the leaves together, while they interpret the spiritual words in a bodily way? Their interpretation loses all the fruit of freshness, being condemned by the curse of eternal dryness. Therefore, a good interpretation, that is, a spiritual fig tree, is fruitful, under which the righteous and the holy find rest. Whoever plants it in the minds of individuals, as Paul says: I planted, Apollo watered (I Cor. III, 6), will eat fruit from it. But a bad interpretation will not be able to bear fruit, nor preserve vitality.

Therefore, Adam clothed himself with this interpretation more heavily in that place where he should have clothed himself more with the fruit of chastity. For in the loins with which we are girded, certain seeds of generation are said to exist; and therefore Adam clothed himself wrongly there with useless leaves, where he was signifying not the future fruit of future generation, but rather certain sins, which remained until the coming of the Lord and Savior. Moreover, after the Lord came, He found a fig tree uncultivated: when asked if He should order it to be cut down, He allowed it to be cultivated. And therefore now, we are girded not with leaves, but with divine speech; because the Lord Himself says: Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning (Luke 12:35). Hence, He also prohibits us from carrying money in our belts (Matthew 10:9); for our belt should guard not earthly but eternal things.

Chapter XIV.

On the voice of the Lord walking in the evening, and the reproof of Adam, Where are you? Why is Adam rebuked first, when the woman tasted first: and on the woman's excuse, and the mysteries designated through her.

68. And they heard, he said, the voice of the Lord God walking in the paradise in the evening (Gen. III, 8). What is the walking of God who is always everywhere? But I think it is a certain walking of God through the series of divine Scriptures, in which a certain presence of God is present; when we hear that he sees all things, and the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous: when we read that Jesus knew their thoughts (Luke VI, 8): when we read: Why do you think evil things in your hearts (Matth. IX, 4)? Therefore, while we recount these things, we recognize God as though walking. Hence, the sinner had fled, not in order to escape the sight of God, but rather, he desired to remain hidden within his conscience and did not want his deeds to shine. For it is the

privilege of the just to see face to face; because the mind of the just person is not only present with God but also engages in discussion with God, as it is written: 'Judge the orphan, and do justice to the widow; come and let us reason together, says the Lord' (Isaiah 1:17-18). So when a sinner reads these divine Scriptures, he hears the voice of God as if walking in the evening. What does it mean to walk in the evening, except that he late recognizes his guilt and a certain shame of past error follows, which should have prevented the error? For while guilt boils in the body and the soul is tormented by the passions of the body, the senses of the wandering mind do not think of God, that is, they do not hear God walking in the divine Scriptures, walking in the minds of individuals. For God says, 'I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God' (Leviticus 26:12). So when the fear of divine power returns to the perception of the soul, then we blush, then we desire to hide, then being placed in the thoughts of our sins, we are found in the midst of the tree of paradise where we sinned, desiring to hide, and thinking that God does not seek the hidden things. But the searcher of hearts and thoughts, penetrating even to the division of the soul, says, 'Adam, where are you?' (Genesis 3:9).

69. How does God speak? Does He have a physical voice? Not at all, but He pours forth oracles with a certain superior power than a physical voice could have. The prophets heard this voice; the faithful hear this voice, but the wicked do not understand. Finally, in the Gospel you have, because the evangelist heard Him saying: 'And I have glorified, and will glorify again' (John 12:28); but the Jews did not hear. For they said: 'It thundered' (Ibid., 29). So there, just as you have above, because God, who was perceived as walking, did not walk, so God, who did not speak, was heard speaking.

70. But let us consider what he is saying: Adam, where are you? The remedy of health is still in those who hear the word of God. Indeed, the Jews who closed their ears so as not to hear, even today do not deserve to hear. Furthermore, those who have hidden themselves have a remedy. For whoever hides, is ashamed; whoever is ashamed, converts; as it is written: Let them be confounded and converted quickly (Ps. 6:11). Furthermore, the fact that he calls is a sign of healing, because the Lord has mercy on whom He has mercy, and He calls. But when He said, 'Where are you?' He is not seeking the place which knew His secret, for God does not have closed eyes so as not to see what is hidden. Finally, for this reason, He said, 'Adam has become like one of us' (Gen. 3:22); because He opened his eyes. And indeed, He opened his eyes so that he could see his own guilt, which he could not avoid. For after we have sinned, somehow we recognize our own faults: and then we understand that it is a sin, which before we sinned, we did not consider to be a sin. Certainly, we did not think that sin itself should be condemned; for if we were to condemn it, we would not commit it. But God sees the faults of all and knows the offenses of all: he has eyes over every soul, over all hidden things. So, where are you, Adam? That is, not in what place, but in what state are you. Therefore, it is not an inquiry, but a rebuke. About what goods, he says, about what happiness, about what grace did you fall into such misery? You have abandoned eternal life, and you are buried in death, entangled in error. Where is that self-assured confidence of yours? This fear confesses guilt, this disguise prevarication. So where are you? This is not about where I seek you, but in what state. To what extent have your transgressions led you, that you flee from your God whom you previously sought? Perhaps it moves you why Adam is rebuked first, when the woman tasted before him? But the weaker sex began with prevarication, the stronger with modesty and excuse; so the woman became the cause of error, the man of shame. And the

woman said: The serpent deceived me, and I ate (Gen. III, 13; De Poenit. dist I, c. Serpens). Commendable is the fault that follows the confession of sins. Therefore, the woman, not despairing, did not keep silent before God, but rather confessed her sin, which was followed by a curable sentence. It is good to be condemned in sin and to be scourged in wrongdoing, so that we may be scourged by men. Finally, Cain, because he wanted to deny his crime, was judged unworthy and was to be punished in sin: but he was forgiven without a prescribed punishment, perhaps not for a greater crime of parricide (for he committed that against his brother) but for sacrilege, for he believed it necessary to lie to God, saying: I do not know: am I my brother's keeper? (Gen. IV, 9) ? And for this reason, the accusation of the devil against her was reserved; so that he, who refused to be whipped with men, would be whipped with his angels. Finally, concerning such beings, it is said: There is no death for them . . . and they will not be whipped with men (Ps. LXXII, 4 and 5). Therefore, there is another reason for the woman, who, although she had fallen into the fault of prevarication, still had the fruit of virtue from the trees of paradise; and for this reason, she confessed her sin, and it was accounted to her for forgiveness. For a just accuser is himself at the beginning of his speech. For no one can be justified from sin, unless they have confessed it before. Hence the Lord says: Declare your iniquities, that you may be justified.

Therefore, because Eve herself confessed the crime, a sentence followed that would be both profitable and just, condemning the error but not denying forgiveness, so that she would turn to her husband and serve him. First, so that she would not easily take pleasure in wandering astray, and then so that, placed in a stronger vessel, she would not belittle her husband but rather be guided by his counsel. Indeed, in this mystery I clearly recognize Christ and the Church. For the conversion of the Church to Christ is signified, and the religious servitude subjected to the Word of God, which is much better than the freedom of this world. Finally it is written: You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him alone (Deut. VI, 13). Therefore, this service to God is a gift. Furthermore, the observance of this servitude is counted among the blessings; for Isaac also gave it to his son Esau in the place of the blessing, so that he would serve his brother. Finally, he asked for a blessing; although he knew that one had been taken from him, he still asked for another saying: Have you only one blessing, Father? (Gen. XXVII, 38). Therefore, the one who had previously sold his first fruits through his throat and had lost the grace of the blessing due to his love for hunting, believed that he would become better himself if he revered the image of Christ in his brother. For the Christian people thrives in this servitude, just as the Lord says to his disciples: 'Whoever wants to be first among you, let him be the servant of all' (Matthew 20:27). In conclusion, charity operates this servitude, which is both greater in hope and faith. Where it is written: Serve one another through charity (Gal. V, 13). This is therefore the mystery that the Apostle says is in Christ and in the Church (Ephes. V, 32). For this truly was in transgression before, but it will be saved through the generation of children in faith, and charity, and sanctification, with chastity. Certainly, the generation of men was saved through children in transgression in the fathers, so that what had offended in the Jews, would be corrected in the Christian posterity.

Chapter XV.

Why is the sin of the woman deserving of forgiveness; and what does it signify through the serpent, the woman, and the man? What is the nature of the serpent's condemnation; and in what ways does it differ from Adam's condemnation?

73. The serpent, he says, convinced me; and this seemed acceptable to God; because it knew that the serpent has many ways to deceive (because it transforms into an angel of light, and its ministers are like ministers of righteousness) by falsely assigning names to each thing, so that it may call recklessness a virtue, and assign the name of diligence to greed. For the serpent deceived the woman, and the woman led the man into transgression from the truth. The pleasure of the serpent takes the form of bodily delight: woman is the symbol of our senses, man of our mind. Pleasure therefore moves the senses, and the senses transfer to the mind whatever passion they have received. Pleasure is therefore the first origin of sin, and therefore it is not surprising that the serpent is condemned by the judgment of God before the woman, and the woman before the man. In accordance with the order of error, the order of condemnation is also observed. For pleasure tends to captivate the senses, and the senses in turn tend to enslave the mind. So that you may know, however, that the serpent is a type of delight, be aware of its damnation.

74. Above your chest, He says, you will walk in your womb (Gen. III, 14). Who are those who walk in their womb, except those who live for their belly and throat, whose god is their belly, and glory in their private parts, who are set on earthly things and are weighed down by food? Therefore, he rightly says of the delight that seems intent on devouring the earth with its food: Above your chest, you will walk, and in your womb you will eat the earth all the days of your life. Every excuse of the devil must be eliminated; lest he may be able to make some excuse for his wickedness, saying that his injustice comes from condemnation; and therefore he persistently strives to harm men, because he was condemned to harm them: which seems to be closest to the opinion, if we take this sentence as a condemnation. For God did not condemn the serpent for the purpose of harm; but he showed what would happen. And indeed, we have shown above (ch. 2, n. 9) that that temptation is more beneficial to men: but nevertheless, when we read what is written, with God saying: Those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed (1 Samuel 2:30), we can still infer something from these words. For God works what is good, not what is evil. Therefore, divine words teach us that God works for glory and leaves punishment. He says, 'Those who honor me, I will honor,' indicating that honor is the result of their good work. And he says, 'Those who despise me,' he does not say that he will deprive them of honor, but rather, they will deprive themselves of honor; he does not attribute their wrongdoing to his own work, but he shows what will happen. Therefore, he did not say, 'I will make you walk on your chest, and you will eat the earth all the days of your life,' but rather, he says, 'You will walk and eat,' as if he were foretelling what would happen with the serpent, rather than prescribing what to do. For the earth, he says, will be your food, not the soul: for even this benefits sinners. Therefore the Apostle handed down this, that the flesh may be destroyed, so that the spirit may be saved on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. And he says that the serpent crawls in the chest and belly, not so much because of the form of the body, but because he has fallen into earthly thoughts about heavenly blessedness. For the chest is often taken as a metaphor for wisdom. And therefore the Apostle reclines his head on the breast of Christ, he does not cast it down to the ground. Therefore, if the wisdom of the devil is compared to the most savage wild beasts, for whom the chest is within their feet: and also men who are wise in earthly matters are not raised up with inner devotion towards heaven, but seem to crawl on the ground; certainly, we should not fill the belly of our soul with the corruptible things of this world, but rather satisfy it with the word of God. Therefore, David, taking on the role of Adam, well says: My soul has been humbled in the dust, my belly has clung to the earth (Ps. 44:25). For he adhered while being transformed into a serpent, who feeds on earthly

wickedness. And therefore the Apostle says that it is necessary for us to be transformed into Christ (Rom. 6:5), so that the power of Christ may be manifested in us. This statement is not considered severe towards the serpent, since even Adam, who sinned more lightly, is condemned by such a sentence. For it is written: Cursed is the ground in thy work; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life (Gen. III, 17). There appears certainly to be a certain resemblance in the sentence, but yet there is great difference in the very resemblance itself. For it makes a difference whether anyone eats the earth, as it was said to the serpent, because thou shalt eat the earth; or whether, as it was said to man, thou shalt eat it in sorrow. For this addition, In sorrow, makes the difference. Consider how powerful discretion is. It is good for me to eat earth in sadness more than in pleasure, that is, to seem to be saddened in some act and sensation of the body, rather than be delighted in sin. For many, because of their excessive impieties, do not undertake the consciousness of sin. But truly he who says, 'I chastise my body and reduce it to servitude' (1 Cor. IX, 27), is saddened in our repentance for sins; because he did not have such great offenses that he should be saddened in them. Finally, he also persuades us that this sadness is useful, which is according to God, not according to the world. 'It is necessary,' he says, 'for you to be saddened unto repentance according to God (2 Corinthians 7:9-10); for according to God, sadness produces salvation, but sadness according to the world produces death. But also consider from the Old Testament that those who were saddened by bodily works found favor, but those who delighted in the works of this world remained in punishment.' Finally, the Hebrews who groaned in the labors of Egypt obtained the grace of the righteous (Exodus 2:24). And because they ate bread in sorrow, they were given spiritual food (Exodus 16:13 et seq.). But the Egyptians, who celebrated such works with exultation, serving a detestable king, did not obtain any forgiveness. But there is also that distinction, that the serpent is said to eat the earth; but to Adam he said: 'In sorrow you shall eat, and in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread from the earth' (Gen. 3:18-19); so that we may understand that there is a certain process in these things and when we eat the earth, we seem to be in a certain evil: when hay, in a certain process; but when bread, when strength is complete. Therefore, let us also have a process of this life, just as Paul had, who says: 'But I live now, not I' (Gal. 2:20), that is, not I who used to eat the earth before; not I who ate hay, for all flesh is hay: But Christ lives in me, that is, that living bread which comes from heaven lives, wisdom lives, grace lives, justice lives, resurrection lives.

77. Then consider that man is not cursed, but the serpent is cursed: neither is the earth cursed in itself; but Cursed, it says, in your works, which was said to Adam. So the earth is cursed, if you have earthly works, that is, secular works. And it is not cursed in entirety; but that it may generate thorns and thistles, unless it is cultivated by human effort. And if we cultivate it, we will indeed eat bread in toil and sweat, but nonetheless we will eat. For the law of the flesh is at odds with the law of the mind. And we must labor and strive to discipline the body, and bring it into servitude, and sow what is spiritual. For if we sow what is carnal, we shall reap what is carnal; but if we sow what is spiritual, we shall reap what is spiritual. (St. Augustine, Book II against Julian of Eclanum, Chapter 5)

On Tobit

The Book of Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, on Tobit.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Caput I.
- Caput II.
- Caput III.
- Caput IV.
- Caput V.
- Caput VI.
- Caput VII.
- Caput VIII.
- Caput IX.
- Caput X.
- Caput XI.
- Caput XII.
- Caput XIII.
- Caput XIV.
- Caput XV.
- Caput XVI.
- Caput XVII.
- Caput XVIII.
- Caput XIX.
- Caput XX.
- Caput XXI.
- Caput XXII.

- Caput XXIII.

- Caput XXIV.

Caput I. He proposes to speak briefly about the virtues of Tobias, which are recounted in the historical Scripture: first, it narrates about how he endured captivity and exile, and even buried the dead in those circumstances. Then it explains how he did not cease from this duty upon returning, where even the task of burying the dead is preached. In reading the prophetic book entitled Tobias, although the Holy Scripture has fully indicated to you the virtues of the holy prophet, I believe it is appropriate to briefly recount his merits and works in a concise manner so that we may grasp more comprehensively what Scripture has arranged in a historical manner. We will gather the various types of his virtues as if in a compendium.

He was a just man, merciful, hospitable, and endowed with these virtues, he underwent the hardship of captivity, which he bore humbly and patiently, grieving more for the common injustice than for his own private sorrow (Tob. 1:2 et seq.); and he did not lament that the support of virtues had been of no use to him, but rather considered that insult to be less significant than the punishment for his sins (Tob. 3:1 et seq.).

3. He deserved the decree that no one from among the sons of captivity would give burial to the dead (Tob. I, 22). But he was not revoked by the decree any more than he was incited, lest he should seem to abandon the duty of piety out of fear of death; for it was the price of mercy, the punishment of death. Such a guilty defendant, when caught in the act of the crime, could scarcely, at last, by the help of a friend, be restored to his destitute and exiled state with his plundered inheritance.

4. Once again he was engaged in these duties; and if there was any food, he would seek out a stranger with whom to share a meal. Therefore, when he returned tired from the task of burying the dead, he would set aside provisions for himself to eat and send his son to find a companion for the feast (Tob. II, 1 et seq.). While the guest was being summoned, news arrived of the unburied remains of a body, and he abandoned the feast: he did not think it pious to partake of food himself while a lifeless body lay exposed in public.

5. This is a daily work for him, and a great work, and indeed a great one. For if the Law commands us to cover the naked while they are alive, how much more should we cover the deceased? If we are accustomed to escorting the living to long distances, how much more should we accompany those who have departed to that eternal home from which they will not return? As Job says, I have wept over every weak person (Job. XXX, 25). Who is weaker than the deceased, of whom Scripture says elsewhere: Weep over the dead (Eccli. XXII, 10)? But Ecclesiastes says: The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. (Ecclesiastes 7:5) There is nothing more noble than this duty, to give to one who can no longer give to you, to vindicate from the birds, to vindicate from the beasts a partner in nature. It is said that animals have displayed this humanity towards the dead bodies, humans will deny it!

Caput II.

By what method Tobias endured blindness, took precautions to avoid any theft, and did not ask for the borrowed money back from Gabelus, except when worn out by old age: finally, how much he

detested evil usury, with a strong condemnation and praise for good.

6. So exhausted from his holy duty, the Prophet rests in his chamber, and when a sparrow's nest falls, he is struck with blinding whiteness (Tob. 2:6,10, etc.). Yet he did not complain or lament, nor did he say: This is the reward for my labors. He was more grieved to be deprived of his service than of his sight: he considered the blindness not as a punishment, but as an obstacle. And when he relieved his wife's burden by earning a wage, he took care that nothing stolen entered his home: his wife had received a kid as payment; but he, being more concerned with honor than with pity, provided for the one to whom he owed his sustenance. He had entrusted a certain amount of money to his neighbor, which he had not asked for during his entire lifetime of such great need. Barely when he saw himself tired and burdened by old age, he hinted to his son, not so much desiring to demand back what he had entrusted, but anxious not to defraud the heir.

Therefore, whoever entrusted money and did not charge interest, fulfilled the duty of justice. For usury is an evil thing by which interest is sought, but not that usury which is evil as written: You shall not lend to your neighbor with interest in the time of his necessity (Eccl. XXIX, 2). For even David says: The just man shows mercy and lends (Ps. XXXVI, 21). That other usury is by right execrable, to give money in usury, which the Law prohibits (Deut. XXIII, 19). But Tobias avoided this, admonishing his son not to disregard the commandment of the Lord, to make alms from his substance, not to lend money at interest, not to turn his face away from any poor person (Tobit 4:6-7). Those who give this advice condemn the sin of usury, from which many have made profit, and for many, lending money has been a business. Indeed, the saints have prohibited it. The greater the evil of usury, the more praiseworthy is the one who avoids it. Give money if you have it, let others benefit from what is idle to you. Give as if you will not receive it back, so that it may yield profit if it is returned. The one who does not return money, repays with gratitude: if you defraud with money, you gain justice; for it is just to have mercy and to lend. If money is lost, mercy is obtained. For it is written: He that sheweth mercy lendeth to his neighbour. (Ecclesiasticus 29:1)

Caput III.

Ambrose exposes the inhumanity of moneylenders towards the poor, and the tactics they use to make them beholden to them; and finally he denounces them.

9. Many do not profit from fear of loss while they deceive others. And this is what they are accustomed to say to those who seek: 'Lose your money for the sake of your brother and friend, and do not hide it under a stone for destruction. Set your treasure in the commandments of the Most High, and it will benefit you more than gold' (Ibid., 13 and 14). But the ears of people have become deaf to such beneficial teachings, and especially the rich keep their ears closed to that clamor of their own money. While they count their money, they do not hear pleas. At the same time, when someone, either constrained by necessity or anxious for the redemption of their own, begins to ask for help, for those whom the barbarian sells as captives, immediately the rich person turns their face away, does not recognize their nature, does not have mercy on the suppliants' humility, does not alleviate their necessity, does not consider their common fragility, stands inflexible, reclining, is not inclined by prayers, is not moved by tears, is not broken by wails, swearing that they do not have [money], or rather they themselves seek a moneylender, in order to help their own necessities. What do you add to the oath of your harshness and greed? You are not absolved by perjury, but rather bound.

10. But when the mention of interest or collateral is made; then the moneylender, with a lowered eyebrow, smiles, and, remembering someone he had previously denied knowing, he receives that same person as if in a fatherly friendship, with a kiss, calling it an heirloom pledge of charity, and forbidding tears. 'We shall inquire,' he says, 'if there is any money for us at home, I will sell for your sake the paternal silverware that was expertly crafted, there will be great loss: what interest will compensate for the prices of the emblems?' But for the expense of a friend, I will not hesitate, when you have returned, I will replenish. Therefore, before he gives, he hastens to receive: and he who claims to assist in the greatest amount, demands interest. On the Kalends, he says, you will give interest: in the meantime, if you do not have what to repay with, I do not ask. In this way, he pays once and harasses frequently, and always convinces himself that he owes something. He deals with men using this art. Therefore, he binds him first with written obligations and ties him with the bonds of his voice. Money is counted, freedom is added, the unfortunate is acquitted of a smaller debt, and bound by a greater.

These are your benefits, the wealthy. You give less and demand more. Such is your humanity, that you plunder even when you provide assistance. The poor are profitable to you. The usurer is poor, you force him to have something to give back: what he spends, he does not have. You are truly merciful men, whom others free, you enslave. He who needs sustenance pays interest. Is there anything more severe? He seeks a remedy, you offer him poison: he begs for bread, you extend a sword: he pleads for freedom, you impose servitude: he prays for absolution, you tighten the knot of an ugly noose.

Caput IV.

By what reasoning are moneylenders compared to the Jews and the devil; and what is the significance of the names creditor, interest, fate, and debtor?

12. Saint David especially deplores this injustice, saying: I saw iniquity and contradiction in the city; and usury and deceit did not fail from its streets (Ps. 54:11-12). Therefore, when he subjected Judas to betrayal, he prefaced it with this, either because the crime of usury in addition to the envy of sacrilege occurred in the conspiracy of the Lord's killing, or because such sacrilege would adequately and abundantly avenge usury. The wicked lenders gave money to kill the author of salvation: these are also wicked, who give to kill the innocent. And he too, who accepted money, like the traitor Judas, hanged himself with a noose. Even Judas himself thought that he was deserving of damnation, so that his usurer's wealth could be searched (Ps. XVIII, 11); because that which the oppression of tyrants or the hand of thieves usually does, only the wickedness of the usurer is known to do. Moreover, the more learned consider the usurer to be compared to the devil, who overturns the goods of the soul and the precious inheritance of the mind with a certain interest of unfairness, spending it, coveting it with gold, involving it in guilt, and returning it with interest to the treasure.

What is more unfair for you, who are not satisfied with the release of your heads in this way? What is more unfair for you, who give money and bind life and patrimony? You receive gold and silver as a pledge, and yet you say that he is the debtor who trusted you more than he received from you? You claim to be creditors, who owe more: you, I say, claim to be creditors, who have not trusted a man, but a pledge. Well, what you give is rightly called interest, so cheap and contemptible is it.

You speak of the fate that is due. Indeed, like a wretched lot cast into a funeral urn, the doomed debtor's punishment is paid. Pale are the defendants as they await the outcome of the lot. Not so do they tremble for those whose condemnation is decided by the lot: not so dejected and suspended do they fear for those whose captivity awaits the outcome of the lot. For there, the captivity of one is imposed, here it is imposed on many. And perhaps it is for this reason that fate, because in the outcome are the inheritances that are cast in this lot. A great and memorable benefit of God. This is specifically proclaimed by the prophetic mouth, that he bestowed upon the fathers, because he freed them from usury and injustice (Ps. LXXI, 14). And he specifically says: he freed them from usury, because usury inflicts servitude. It is as if he were saying, he restored those freed from the bondage of servitude to liberty.

15. The grave term of debtors. Sins are called debts. Debtors are also called criminals; for they decide on matters of life and death, just as those do. However, they have the guilt of their names, just as they have the diversity of their actions. Debts, although of different amounts, have one name, one burden, one danger. Therefore, the unfortunate person who seeks a loan does not know what he begs for: he is ignorant of what he will receive.

Caput V.

Money is compared to the sea for moneylenders: when someone receives it, they immediately attract a crowd of scoundrels; and of lots from both testaments. When that money is spent through intemperance, the wretched moneylender is forced to sell his furniture or grant a delay, but they are even sadder for the warriors themselves: finally, there follows a very late repentance for their foolishness.

16. Money does not know how to stay in one place for long, it is accustomed to passing through many hands. It does not know how to be held in a bag, it seeks to be turned over and counted: it requires use in order to gain interest. It is like the waves of the sea, not a source of fruit. Money never rests. It slips away, like a rock struck, it hits the lap of the debtor, and immediately flows back to where it came from. It comes with murmurs, and returns with groans. However, the sea often stands calm to the winds, but is always tossed by the waves of interest. She swallows the shipwrecked, spits out the naked, strips off the clothed, and leaves the unburied. So you ask for a coin, and you take on shipwreck. Hence Charybdis roars around, hence the Sirens, who, in the guise of pleasure and the sweetness of their enchanting song, deceived those led by fate into the blind tides, lured them to their homes, as the legends say, with hope and desire. (Homer, Odyssey)

Immediately the sellers of perfume and various spices rush in, like dogs attracted by the scent of cunning prey, hunters, fishermen, birdcatchers, and even innkeepers mixing water with wine, who celebrate the nobility of the ancient race and of their country, and the birthday of wine: surrounding suddenly the parasites whom they used to scorn before, they greet, lead, provoke to joy, incite to expense, saying: Come, and let us enjoy the good things that exist, and let us use the creature as quickly as in youth: let us fill ourselves with precious wine and perfumes, and let the flower of time not pass us by. Let us crown ourselves with roses before they wither, let there be no field that our luxury does not cross, let us leave signs of joy everywhere, for this is our portion and this is our lot (Wisdom 2:6 and following). And truly, fortune has become the portion of all of them, but you remain without share in good things.

18. The Scripture did not show you such kinds of fortunes. David the holy one does not mention such kinds of fortunes when he says one must sleep amidst fortunes (Psalm 67:14). For if you had slept amidst those fortunes, that is, the Old and New Testament, the desire for money would not have dragged you into the whirlpool of the worst usury, the grace of spiritual faith would have given you silver, and divine wisdom's instruction would have molded it into the appearance of gold. Indeed, if we have set one testimony of divine Scripture and have turned away from that lavish banquet, surely he could have been saved if he had clung to the heavenly oracles.

19. However, let us return to the banquet, not to taste its delicacies, but to show caution to others. The table is laden with foreign and exquisite foods; shining attendants are employed at great expense to provide lavish feasts; drinking continues into the night, and the day is concluded with the banquet, leaving no room for sobriety. He rises full of wine, empty of wealth, sleeping until morning and thinking his dreams are reality. For just as a poor person suddenly becomes rich in dreams, so too does a rich person become destitute. While money is flowing away, interest is overflowing: time is diminished, usury is increased: the treasure is emptied, fortune is accumulated: one by one the guests withdraw, the guarantors convene: in the morning the moneylender knocks at the doors, complaining that the appointed days for payment have passed, he attacks the vigilant with insults, he wakes up the sleeping in their dreams. There are no peaceful nights, no pleasant days, no sunny weather. Golden and silk clothes are gradually taken away, and they disappear at half the price. The wife, now sadder, places the possessions with tears, bought at a dearer price, to be sold at a cheaper price. At the auction, the boys are placed as servers at the tables, and, being poorly trained, they turn away the buyer. Money is offered to the creditor: 'Barely,' he says, 'does this pay the interest; you owe the principal.'

20. The defendant returns with his exhausted wealth; and with interest reduced, he accepts gloomier truces to war, as if he would fight after two days. In war, victory is uncertain, here, there is certain lack: there he covers himself with a shield, here he meets naked; there a breastplate encloses his chest, here he is enclosed in a prison; there he loads his hands with weapons, he arms himself with arrows, here he offers empty fetters to be bound. Both are often led as captives: the former has someone he can accuse against the outcome of war, the latter, besides himself, does not have anyone to accuse. Nothing is more intolerable than this misery, which cannot be excused. Conscience exacerbates the burden of wrongdoing.

Then he reflects within himself, then he recalls the Scriptures, then he says: Is it not written to me: Drink water from your own vessels, and from the springs of your own wells (Prov. V, 15). What do I have to do with the well of a moneylender, where water is also contained (Prov. XV, 17). Vegetables were sweeter with security than feasts of others eaten with anxiety. It was not necessary to seek what belongs to others. Then I had fallen into debts, it was necessary for me to seek a solution from my own sources. There were finer dishes at home: it was better to lack service than food: it was better to offer a garment for sale than to offer liberty. What good did it do me to be ashamed of my poverty? Look, someone else has published it. I did not want to sell my nurturers, look, someone else is selling them. This should be a thoughtful consideration. Then it was fitting to fear for your own when you received the property of others: then it was fitting to help when the initial wounds were healing. It would have been better at the beginning to reduce expenses and alleviate the necessity of debt in family matters, rather than becoming enriched by borrowing from others for a short time, and later being stripped of your own possessions.

Caput VI.

How many loan sharks are plotting; to prey on unsuspecting teenagers.

23. We accuse the debtor for behaving imprudently, but nonetheless nothing is more wicked than the moneylenders, who consider others' losses as their own gains, and attribute to themselves whatever is possessed by others. They target new heirs, they explore wealthy young men through their own contacts, they attach themselves, pretending to have the same friendship as their fathers and grandfathers, they want to know their domestic needs. If they find any cause, they accuse their modesty, they argue their shame, because it was not expected or assumed earlier about themselves. But if they do not encounter any traps of necessity, they weave illusions, saying that a noble estate is for sale, a spacious house: they pile up the proceeds of fruits, they exaggerate annual income, they encourage people to buy. They do the same with precious clothes, and boasting about noble jewels. When someone denies having money, they insert their own, saying: Use it as your own: with the fruits of the purchased possession you will multiply the price, you will repay the debt.

24. They pretend to offer the young man someone else's properties, so that they may strip him of his own: they set up nets, so that once he has entered the spaces surrounded by the snare, they force him into the nets of obligations and the snares of usury: they demand that he be bound by surety for them, his honor and his father's tomb: a day is stipulated for repayment, but the agreement is concealed, whenever the repayment can be delayed; once they have made him feel secure enough, they suddenly attack and press him harder, accusing him and saying: You possess your own estates, but we do not have our own money: we gave gold, but we hold on to wood: you enjoy the benefits of the fruits, but nothing is added to our money. Idle causation, at least let the document be renewed.

Caput VII.

How anxiously the debtor may flee from the moneylender, and what manner of encounter occurs between them: how, with the receipt of this delay, he becomes more entangled and compelled to sell his property: and finally, abandoned by all and prepared for chains, he falls into despair.

25. Therefore, while still a young man, he thinks nothing of selling his clothes or even his possessions in order to accomplish these things. Interest is added to the principal, accumulating to a hundredth part. Now he begins to sigh, now he recognizes his misfortune. Day and night he thinks of interest: whatever comes up, he considers it a usurer; whatever makes a noise, he hears the voice of the moneylender. If you have it, why don't you pay? If you don't have it, why do you join one evil to another and seek a remedy for your wound? Why do you endure the daily siege of a usurer, yet fear his defeat? The ancient saying is this: The Lord watches over both the usurer and the debtor who oppose each other. One is like a dog seeking its prey, the other like a wild beast avoiding the predator. The usurer, like a lion, seeks whom to devour, while the debtor, like a young ox, fears the attack of the predator. The usurer, like a hawk with its talons, seeks to seize its prey, while the debtor, like a goose or coot, prefers to throw themselves off a cliff or sink into deep waters rather than endure the usurer, the predator of the human body. What do you flee from every day? And if a moneylender does not meet you, then poverty meets you like a good runner. Therefore, the Lord sees both the moneylender and the debtor: he looks at both of them as they

meet, a witness to one's wickedness, the other's injustice: he condemns the greed of the one, the foolishness of the other. The moneylender counts each step of the debtor, taking a detour: the debtor immediately after the columns obscures his head. For the debtor has no authority. Both calculation is repeated more often in the fingers of interest. Equal concern, but different emotions. One rejoices in the increase of interest, the other is afflicted with a pile of debt. The former counts profits, the latter counts hardships.

26. Why do you flee the man whom you could and should not fear? Why do you flee, and how long will you flee? If someone knocks at night, you think it's the moneylender and hide under the bed immediately; if you sense someone entering suddenly, you leap outside. The dog barks, and your heart beats, sweat pours, panting shakes your limbs; you wonder what excuse to use to postpone the moneylender, and when you have obtained a delay, you rejoice. The moneylender pretends to be reluctant to extend the loan, but he willingly grants it, like a hunter who has trapped his prey, he is safe. You kiss the head, embrace the knees, and like a deer struck by a poisoned arrow, you proceed a little, then, defeated by the venom, you fall. Or like a fish that has been pierced by a spear, wherever it flees, it carries the wound. And truly that fish devours death as its food, it swallows the hook while seeking food; but still it does not see the hook, which the prey covers: you see the hook, and you swallow it. Your hook is the interest of the creditor: you swallow the hook, but the worm always gnaws at you. It is the bait that deceives. Therefore both for you is the snare and no food is of use, and the hook is for injury. Do you not know that once entangled in a knot, one binds oneself more if they flee; and when placed within nets, they only throw the nets upon themselves more by fleeing? You flee into the streets, when you cannot be safe within the walls. The moneylender will find you when he pleases. Finally, when the time is fulfilled, like a wolf at night, he does not allow you to sleep, he drags you out to the public on the awaited day, or he forces you to subscribe to the contract of sale. In order to steal away from modesty, you subscribe immediately to sell an ancestral tomb, certainly so that something of modesty is feigned: a barren field is bought, and it is boasted that she has sold something unfruitful, burdened the debtor with expenses, and losses of previous times are attributed to present expenses. Soon even praised things are sold and not only instruments, but also chains are brought in.

27. However, they still seek guarantors. Truces are granted not so that liberty may find its prey, but so that it may join a partner in servitude, who will share in its hardships. But how can the addition of another's calamity bring relief? Now even friends flee, guests do not recognize; even his own presence is shunned by everyone, and just as a boxer avoids the various blows of his opponents, so he avoids encounters with honorable men, anxious that, if he happens to encounter someone, he will depart quickly from their gaze. He returns prepared for chains, he returns desiring death, thinking that if he were to die, he would bring himself rest. He returns wretchedly, condemning himself for not refusing other people's money and for binding himself with the moneylender's debt.

28. Oh how many wretched people have been made destitute by the goods of others! Why, Jeremiah says, do you drink the water of Geon? Why, I ask, do you drink from the cup of the moneylender? Many, he says, borrowed for a time, and looked after their own needs, and repaid the money. And how many of them strangled themselves because of interest! You consider those, but you do not count these: you remember those who escaped, but you do not remember those who perished: you count the money returned, but you do not count the traps set, which most people, more modestly preferring insult to ugly submission, more fragiley preferring injury to

destruction, embraced as a desired end, fearing the disgrace of life more than the punishment of death.

Caput VIII.

To sell children as slaves to pay off paternal debts is the utmost indignity: but no one can help in this evil, since the greed of the moneylender cannot be satisfied; for Scripture explains this matter and at the same time shows that usury is the occasion of sin.

29. I have seen a pitiful spectacle, children being led to auction for their father's debt, and the heirs of a misfortune being held who were not participants in the inheritance; and this immense shame does not make the creditor blush. He insists, he presses, he adds. Let my money, he says, feed the children, let them recognize servitude as sustenance, let them undergo bidding for expenses. Let the spear be wielded for the prices of each individual. The spear is wielded not undeservedly when the head is sought: not undeservedly is the auction reached when fate demands it. This is the inhumanity of the moneylender, this is the foolishness of the debtor, that he takes away freedom from the children to whom he does not leave money, that he exchanges a handwritten will for a written obligation for the inheritance. What does the curse of the father on his children mean, where there is no offense of impious sin? Can there be any curse more harsh, any slavery more severe? And often the deceased enjoys benefits after death that do not concern the miseries of his children.

30. The father often sells his children by the authority of his lineage, but not by the voice of compassion. With a shameful face, he drags the wretched to the auction, saying: Pay the price, O sons of gluttony, pay the price of the paternal table. Vomit what you have not devoured, return what you have not received; in this way, you redeem your father with your own price, and you acquire paternal freedom through your servitude.

Let someone come forward who can help. Who can fill such a great Charybdis? Who can understand the reasoning of a moneylender? Who can satisfy greed? Which person does not exaggerate prices, when they see the buyers? For he is not nourished so much by his own profit as by the detriment of others. Truly, it is true, as it is a divine saying, of God, who when he was angry because of the impiety of the Jewish people, because they were turning away to foreign gods: To whom, he says, have I sold you as a debtor (Isaiah 50:1)? For one who is bound to a lender is sold, and is sold not for a single price, but for a daily one: it is sold not with a specification, but with continuous addition. A new auction of interest for each month, a new sale under daily bidding. Whoever offers the most always wins, he is assigned as for sale, never is he estimated as if sold. Therefore, the power of the heavenly sentence is great. The Lord did not judge it sufficient to say: To whom did I sell you; but he added: to the lender? Offended, he could not find anything more serious to avenge against the treacherous ones. Abandoned, he demands why they have fled from the author of their own salvation, as if the Lord had sold them to someone like a loan shark deserving of punishment. Those who have abandoned the Lord have servants who fear more than the punishments and chains of prison: they have children who fear the carelessness of their own freedom.

Moreover, take note that the subject of usury has been judged as a matter of prevarication; that one easily strays from the Lord, who could bind himself to a usurer. For usury is the root of

falsehood, the cause of treachery. 'I did not sell you,' he says, 'but you were sold by your own sins.' Therefore, he who binds himself to a usurer sells himself; and what is worse, he sells himself not for money, but for guilt.

Caput IX.

It is a sin for a moneylender to be a devil, who even shows off his riches to the Savior; he is not unlike a moneylender; and there he speaks of the hundredth of interest, and a hundredth of a sheep; and of the true collector who imposes on himself the name of creditor.

33. Who is this lender of sin, if not the devil, from whom Eve borrowed the sin of a guilty succession and with interest brought all of humanity into ruin? As if a wicked lender, he held the handwriting which the Lord later destroyed with his own blood. For what was written with the pen of death should have been dissolved by death. Therefore, the devil is the lender. Moreover, he showed his riches to the Savior, saying: 'All these things I will give you if you fall down and worship me.' (Matthew 4:9). But the Lord, the liberator of the air, owed nothing to anyone who could say, 'Behold, the ruler of this world is coming, and he finds nothing of his own in me' (John 14:30). He owed nothing, but he paid for everyone, as he himself testifies, saying, 'What I did not seize, then I paid for' (Psalm 69:5).

34. What is the difference of the malice of this world's prince? The moneylender binds the head, holds the hand, takes by lot. O sad name from sweet! The Lord has freed the one hundredth sheep; that hundredth is of salvation, this of death; and the good land yields a hundredfold fruit. Woe to those who say that bitter is sweet, and sweet is bitter! What is more bitter than usury, what is sweeter than grace? Should they not, by this very word by which they call it the hundredth, call to mind the Redeemer who came to save the hundredth sheep, not to lose it?

35. Who is the more severe tax collector? And what a sad name. Finally the Lord says: My people, your tax collectors oppress you (Isaiah 3:14). And in the Gospel you have: While you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make an effort to be delivered from him; lest he bring you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the tax collector, and the tax collector put you in prison (Luke 12:58). Recognize this tax collector, who even demands the last penny, and calls himself a creditor, and in this name also commits fraud: like one who smears poison cups with honey, so that death may lie hidden under a pleasing smell, and the lips of the cup hide the power of deceit. The creditor is concealed as if faithful; and as if incredulous, to whom the faithful person pledges.

Caput X.

The story of the debtor's executor preventing the debtor's body from being carried to burial.

How often have I seen the deceased held by usurers as collateral, and denied a burial, while interest is demanded? To this I willingly agreed, so that they could coerce their debtor, so that with him chosen, the surety could be released; for these are the laws of a usurer. Therefore, I said: Hold onto your defendant; and so that he cannot escape from you, lead him home, confine him in your chamber, harsher than executioners; for the prison does not receive the one you hold, the collector absolves; after death, the prison releases the guilty of their sins, but you confine them; by the severity of the law, the deceased is acquitted, but held by you. Certainly here he mentions having fulfilled his fate; however, I do not envy, keep your pledge. There is no difference between

a funeral and usury, no difference between death and fate: the usury echoes the funeral wail. Now truly he is a diminished head whom you convene; yet bind him with stronger bonds, lest your chains go unnoticed: the debtor is tough and rigid, and no longer knows how to blush. There is indeed one thing you cannot fear, because he does not know how to ask for sustenance.

37. Therefore, the body of Jussi was lifted and led to the house of the moneylender to carry out the order of the funeral rites. But even from there, the closed doors resounded with such mournful groans. You would also believe that there was a funeral, that the dead were being mourned: the sentiment was not wrong, except that it was clear that more people were destined to die there. The moneylender, driven by the custom of his religion (for elsewhere even such things are said to be accepted as collateral), asked that the remains be taken to the place of the tomb; it was only then that I saw the moneylenders burdened with humanity; nevertheless, I mentioned their humanity to foresee that they would not later complain of being deceived, until they bent their necks to the bier and themselves led the deceased to the graves, mourning their money's funeral with a heavier sorrow.

Caput XI.

Interest is also demanded from gamblers, whose fortune varies in play, but the profit goes to the moneylender. How great is the tyranny of these people over the gamblers, and what laws govern them. Lastly, the madness of certain barbarians is described in relation to gambling.

Take another thing of no lesser bitterness. These people observe gatherings of gamblers and consider it advantageous for the loser: they bet on each individual. Luck plays a role at first, victory often transfers to different people, and their rewards and hardships are constantly changing: they all both win and are defeated, only the moneylender profits. The empty name of victory belongs to others, but the moneylender alone receives the benefits, not yearly, but momentary; they alone gain profit at the expense of all, they alone have the interest of victory. You see the others suddenly needy, suddenly wealthy, and then naked, changing their state with every throw. For their life revolves like a dice; the census rolls on the board, danger becomes a game, and from the game comes danger: as many proposals, so many proscriptions. The applause of the applauders, the weeping of the plundered, the groans of the mourners. Among them sits the creditor like a tyrant, condemning each one with a capital sentence, waving his spear, establishing a funeral auction from the spoils of each individual: some are added to the proscription, others to slavery: those killed under tyrants are not worth so much. Therefore, this game of life is more properly called a gamble than a monetary transaction; it is carried on in an instant, yet its effects may last forever. Drunkenness makes decisions, and no one disputes them. The game of chance also has its own rules, which are not subject to the laws of the courtroom. It is noteworthy, if it can be believed, that infamy awaits those who think resistance is futile, and the judgment of infamy inflicts a greater disgrace than a judicial condemnation; for those who are condemned by them are esteemed glorious by the judge, while those who are condemned by the judge are considered criminals by them. Moses, the elder, established the judgment of the elders (Exodus XVIII): yet they judged of lighter matters; the weighty matter, that is, the more important affairs, they were accustomed to reserve for Moses' judgment. It is said here: You have judged the counsel of lions, and their power is more feared than lions. Among these wild beasts, you live and move. You take food from these animals, you are considered more terrifying than them, you are feared more

cruelly than them.

39. They say that the peoples of the Chuni wage war against everyone for reasons, but are subject to moneylenders; and although they live without laws, they obey only the laws of gambling, playing dice and carrying them in their equipment, and dying more often from their own throws than from those of the enemy: in their victory they become captive, and suffer the spoils of their own people, which they do not know how to suffer from the enemy: therefore they never give up their desire for war; because when defeated in gambling, having lost the entire prize of the plunder, they require the support of gambling in danger of war: but they are often carried away with such ardor, that when defeated in the things which they alone value highly, they surrender their weapons to a single throw of dice and surrender their own life to the power either of the victor or of the moneylender. Finally, it was decided that one of them, known to the Roman emperor for his loyalty, would pay the price of servitude that he had brought upon himself through such unfortunate circumstances, by enduring the tortures of an ordered death. Therefore, the moneylender also crushes the necks of the Chuni people, and he presses them onto the iron, oppressing the barbarians with the terror of his cruelty.

Caput XII.

On the collection of interest by moneylenders, and the various terms they use. Their money is compared to an echidna and other serpents; where the Greeks have said τικους, it is explained.

40. For what is more foul than he who lends money today and demands it back tomorrow? And (Eccles. 20:16) he says, such a man is hateful. The offering may be pleasant, but the exaction is monstrous. Yet it is the very kindness of the offering that causes the cruelty of the exaction: he lends money, demands security, and hides it away in his storehouses. One sum of money is given by the lenders, but how many are demanded from the borrowers? How many terms have they made for themselves? A coin is given, it's called interest; a lot is spoken of, it's called principal; a debt is recorded, it's called borrowed money. This enormous curiosity of many principal sums effects a numerous exaction: it is called a bond, it is called an IOU, it demands securities, it takes pledges, it calls itself trust, it asserts an obligation, it proclaims interest, it praises the hundredth part.

41. Echidna is a certain moneylender's money, which produces such great evils. However, Echidna, fertile in suffering, tears apart her own bowels in childbirth. And in her maternal death, she teaches her offspring not to be degenerate towards their mother. Therefore, they begin to be serpents, they tear her apart with their bites. There, where the venom is born, it is first tested. But the money of the moneylender conceives, bears, nurtures all its evils, and itself grows more in its own offspring, more numerous in sad brood. Not less winding than a serpent, and gathering itself into a circle, in order to preserve its head: with the rest of its body, it lashes out, it only extends its head for wounds: with its huge coils it binds those it has seized, it kills with its head alone: its head remaining safe, even if the rest of its body has been torn apart, it revives.

42. There are also different times for snakes to come together and give birth: money, from the day the agreement is entered into, creeps with increasing interest, which does not know how to give birth; because it transfers more of its own pain to others. There the pains are like those of a woman in labor; hence the Greeks also called interest "τικοι", because they seem to stimulate

the pains of the debtor's soul giving birth. The first of the month comes, fate gives birth to the hundredth part: each month comes, interest is generated, the offspring of evil parents' evils. This is the generation of vipers. The hundredth grows, it seeks and is not released, it is applied to chance. It becomes a prophetic curse (Ps. 54:12), deceit with deceit, the offspring of the wicked seed worsens through usury. Therefore, it is no longer the beginning of the hundredth, but the sum, that is, not the hundredth of interest, but the interest of the hundredth.

Caput XIII.

Following the etymology of usury, it shows that usury itself is more fruitful than the very hares and any plants, and surpasses all other things with the greed of the moneylender: then it returns to the established comparison of usury with animals and plants.

43. I also believe that interest is derived from use, just as clothing is derived from use, and so patrimonies are divided by interest. The mournful wax represents the first letter. It gives birth to the voice of suffering: what good can come to you that begins with pain and obligation? They say that hares both generate and raise offspring, and they give birth continuously: interest is also generated and over-generated by these anaglyphic figures of usury, it is nourished and born, and having been born, it gives birth. The roots of trees are first planted in order to take hold: once they have taken hold, they begin to grow green, and then to sprout. But money planted with usury barely sprouts. Seeds burst forth in due season, animals give birth in due season: there is a time to give birth, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal (Ecclesiastes 3:2-3). And further: a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away (Ibid., 6), as the Preacher says: money planted with usury is sown today, it fructifies tomorrow: it always bears fruit, and never perishes: it is always planted, and is hardly uprooted. He wants always to acquire, never to lose: never to keep his money, always to spend: never to heal, always to kill. And because the book of Ecclesiastes by Solomon is a good teacher for all things, let us linger on it for a moment: The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor is the ear satisfied with hearing (Eccl. 1:8); neither is the lender satisfied with receiving, nor is his desire for counting money satisfied with hearing (Eccl. 1:8). And again: What has been is what will be (Ibid., 1:9); money always increases, greed knows no leisure, usury knows no holidays. All, he says, the torrents go into the sea, and the sea is not filled (cf. Ecclesiastes 1:7). That sea is a lender; it absorbs everyone's patrimony like waves, and itself does not know how to be satisfied. Yet many people use the sea for profit, but no one uses a lender except for expense: there is benefit for many there, but here there is shipwreck for all.

There are many living things that begin to reproduce quickly, but also quickly cease to reproduce: fate quickly generates and never ceases; indeed, when it receives the beginning of growth, it extends the increase infinitely. Then, everything that grows, when it reaches its own nature, form, measure, and magnitude, is free from further growth: but the money of lenders is always increasing with time, and it does not hold to the limit beyond the extent of maternal fate. Moreover, most animals, when they begin to generate offspring from what has arisen from them, as if their powers had become exhausted, lose the ability to reproduce: but the interest-bearing capital, when it has been equalized with the growing hundreds, renews its old age and multiplies its usual yields by addition.

Caput XIV.

Interest is prohibited by divine law, from which the saying of Cato comes, lending money at interest is to kill a man. Clothing accepted as a pledge must be returned before nightfall; and by the term interest, it is understood anything demanded beyond the principal: after which follows the condemnation of the rich for their extortion from their dependents.

46. This is not a new or perfunctory evil, which is prohibited by the prescription of the old and divine law. The people who plundered Egypt, who crossed the sea on foot, are warned to beware of the money of usury. And when it has once or with much repetition prescribed other sins, it has often warned about usury. You have it in Exodus: And if you lend money to a beggar, an orphan, a poor person, you shall not suffocate him, you shall not impose interest on him (Exod. XXII, 25). He shows what it is to suffocate, that is, to impose interest; for he strangles and, what is worse, the soul of the creditor with a noose: in this way he expresses both the violence of a robber and the ugly knot of death. But if you have taken as a pledge the garment of your neighbor, you shall return it before sunset; for that is his covering only, that is his garment of shame in which he will sleep. But if he cries out to me, I will hear him. Have you heard, money-lenders, what the Law says, of which the Lord said: I have not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17)? What the Lord did not abolish, do you abolish? To seek interest, he says, is suffocation. This too was said late abroad by some of their wise men: What is money-lending? To kill a man, he says (Cicero, book II of Offices, at the end). But certainly not Cato before Moses, who received the law. He came much later.

47. If you shall receive as a pledge the garment of your neighbor, you shall restore it before sunset, lest his shame appear when he is naked (Exod. XXII, 26 and 27). But you strip and leave naked, and do not restore. See that the sun does not set upon your greed, lest the sun of justice set upon you; for you do not hold justice, or the sun of iniquity may be hidden upon your crimes. The day also perishes unwillingly, the night rushes in like the Jews, who when the devil had sent himself into their hearts, rose up to betrayal, and night came; for the sun of justice had set upon them, and had set upon them. He who entered his heart, made darkness for him, so that he did not see the author of light. There the wretched man perished in that banquet in which others are saved. Therefore, return the debtor's clothing, in which he may sleep and be at peace. If you are unwilling to return it, I will hear him, for I am merciful. If you do not hear him, I will hear him, I will have mercy, I will not despise the prayer of the needy.

48. In Deuteronomy it is also written: You shall not exact interest from your brother on money, interest on food, or interest on anything that is lent. You may exact interest from a foreigner, but not from your brother (Deut. XXIII, 19 and 20). You see how significant these words are. Do not, it says, exact interest from your brother, that is, from someone with whom you should have everything in common, you exact interest from him? Your brother, partner of nature and heir of grace, do not demand more from him whom it is difficult to retrieve what you have given, unless he has the means to repay.

49. And because many people, when they lend money to merchants, do not demand interest on the money, but receive benefits from their goods as if they were interest (Commentary on the Sentences, dist. 14, q. 3, c. Plerique), let them hear what the Law says: You shall not take interest from your brother on food or on anything that may be lent at interest. For this deceit and circumvention of the Law, not observance, is it. And do you think you are acting piously because

you receive a gift from a merchant? Therefore, he commits fraud in the price of goods, from which he pays you interest. You are the author of that fraud, you are a participant, whatever he cheats benefits you. And food is interest, and clothing is interest, and whatever comes to chance is interest: whatever name you wish to give it, it is interest. If it is lawful, why do you refuse the term, why do you hide under a cover? If it is unlawful, why do you seek profit?

50. What is worse, this is a vice of many people, and especially the wealthy, who fill their cellars for this purpose. If someone thinks of organizing a feast, they send a message to the merchant to bring them the cup of absinthe free of charge: they direct themselves to the innkeeper to inquire about Picenum wine or Tyrian wine: they go to the butcher to procure meat: they go to someone else to adorn themselves with fruit. And so they consider these acts as acts of kindness, which are sustained by the danger of others. You drink, and another person is dissolved in tears: you feast, and you choke others with your food: you delight in music, and another person laments with miserable howls: you taste fruit, and another person devours thorns. Do they gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? A thorn is for use, a hundredth thorn is interest, a thistle is interest, it burns badly. So how can you bear fruit from thorns? If this fruit does not grow from thorns, that eternal one will be born. You enrich yourself from hardships, you seek profit from tears, you feed on another's hunger, you forge silver from the spoils of stripped men: and you judge yourself rich, when you demand alms from a poor person? But listen to what the Savior says: Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. (Luke VI, 24).

Caput XV.

It is only permitted to demand interest from a stranger, that is, someone who may be killed: a brother, however, who is a partner in faith or in law, is never permitted to be charged interest. Any interest is prohibited, and blessings are given to those who refrain from it, with an exhortation to mercy and truth.

51. But perhaps you will say that it is written: You shall charge interest to foreigners (Deut. XXIII, 20); and you do not consider what the Gospel says, which is more complete. But for now let us consider the words of the Law itself: You shall not charge interest to your brother, it says, but you may charge interest to a foreigner. Who were the foreigners at that time, if not the Amalekites, if not the Amorites, if not the enemies? Charge interest there, it says. To whom you wish to harm rightly, to whom weapons are properly directed, to him interest is legitimately imposed. Whom you cannot easily defeat in war, from this one you can quickly take revenge. Demand interest from one who it is not a crime to kill. He who demands interest fights without a sword; he who was an exacting usurious enemy avenges himself without a sword. Therefore, where there is the right of war, there is also the right of interest. But your brother is the entirety, first of faith, then of Roman law: I will proclaim your name to my brothers, I will praise you in the midst of the Church (Ps. XXI, 23).

52. Finally, even in Leviticus, the Law prescribes that interest should not be demanded from a brother. For you have it thus: And your brother shall live with you, you shall not give him your money at interest, nor shall you give him your food to be received back in abundance (Lev. 25:36). Generally, this divine sentiment excluded every kind of increase. Hence, David also considered it blessed and worthy of heavenly habitation, who did not give money at interest (Ps. 14:5). If therefore he who has not given, is blessed; without a doubt he who has given for interest is

cursed. Why therefore do you choose curse rather than blessing? You can be blessed if you want, you can be just. For a just man, according to Ezekiel (Ezek. XVIII, 7), is one who returns a pledge to the debtor, and does not give his money for interest, and does not receive surplus, and turns away his hand from injustice: This man is just, he will live by life, says the Lord (Ibid., 9). Whoever does not give back the pledge, and sets his eyes on idols, commits iniquity, gives with usury, and accepts excess, this one shall not live. All these iniquities he has committed, he shall die in death: his blood shall be upon him. See how he has joined the moneylender with the idolater, as if he were equating the crime. Therefore, choose what is sweet.

Why are you always sad, why are you always most bitter, why are you always anxious? Let mercy sometimes proceed from you, let truth proceed: let lying be condemned, let fraud be hated. You have taught perjury: a loan is called a sacrament, where perjury is prepared. You often prepare it when the money has been returned, so that the contract does not appear: afterwards you swear that you did not receive the money. Therefore, do not always be miserable, always greedy, always mournful. The lions are, and they change their fierceness: 'Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness' (Judges 14:14); 'It is Greek to me, and it is sad; thus we find.' However, this is understood in reference to the strong; because a lion is strong in fierceness, and he who is wild is sad. And may mercy come forth from you who devour money and greed; for this is the food of the needy: and may sweetness come forth from sadness, so that you may pardon him who has nothing with which to pay. Why do you drag out sins like a long rope and the yoke of calves unceasingly? This happens, of course, when you extend interest. You hold on to a poor debtor, either out of some favor or where there is no hope of profit. And I say this according to your greed.

Caput XVI.

From an evangelical precept, we must lend to those from whom nothing is expected, even to enemies: the most fruitful interest is that which is lent to the Lord: and one must not doubt his poverty, which bestows true wealth.

54. Moreover, the Lord in the Gospel thinks that lending should be done more to those from whom repayment is not expected. For he says: And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful (Luke 6:34-35). Note that you have received the name 'lender' from the Lord, and the one who is obligated to your loan also has that name. Sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back what was lent. In this transaction, both the sinner and the lender become debtors. But you, love your enemies. Do not debate what your enemies deserve, but rather, what you should do. Give to those from whom you do not expect to receive, and what is given will be returned to you. There is no loss here, but gain. Giving the minimum, you will receive much: giving on earth, and it will be repaid to you in heaven; you lose interest, but you will have great reward; by ceasing to be lenders, you will become sons of the Most High; be merciful, for you will be proven as heirs of the eternal Father.

55. But you delight in the title of moneylenders and usurers. I do not envy you for that either. I will teach you how you can be good moneylenders, how you can seek good interest. Solomon says:

He who lends to the Lord shows mercy to the poor, and his loan will be repaid to him (Prov. XIX, 17). Behold, a good profit is made from evil: behold, an irreproachable moneylender: behold, praiseworthy interest. Therefore, do not consider me envious of your benefits anymore. Do you think that I will take away a debtor from you? God provides, I substitute Christ, I show him who cannot defraud you. Therefore, generously give your money to the poor in the hand of the Lord. He is obligated and bound: he writes down whatever he has received from the needy: his caution is the Gospel: he promises for all the needy, he declares faith; why do you hesitate to give? If someone from this world's riches offers himself, promising his faith for a debtor, immediately give him the money: the Lord of heaven is poor to you, and the creator of this world; and yet you deliberate whom you seek as a wealth guarantor.

56. But he became poor, though he was rich, for our sake. Therefore, you see that his faith is rich, his faith is sufficient; he became poor, so that he could pay for us, and even poverty itself did not deceive him; for he made the rich whom you considered to be poor. For the Apostle says: He became poor, though he was rich, so that you may be enriched through his poverty (II Cor. VIII, 9). It is a good poverty, which bestows riches. Do not therefore fear poverty, so that you may be rich. Give idle money, and you will receive fruitful grace, and you will support the needs of the poor, and the burden of care will be lessened for you. What the poor receive will not perish; and what you give to the needy will be preserved without a guardian. But if you seek an increase of interest, in the Law there is a blessing, in the Gospel there is a heavenly reward: what is sweeter than a blessing; what is greater than heaven? If the use of food is desired, it is also available, as we read: For he who has compassion on the poor, he himself will be fed (Prov. 22:9).

Caput XVII.

There is an objection, in which some deny that it is generally prohibited to retain a pledge, but they restrict it to the pledges of the poor according to the Law.

Therefore, return the pledges that you hold, since you have found a suitable guarantor. But they are still murmuring, saying that even though they can hold pledges, they defend themselves with the Law. For they say: It is written in Deuteronomy: If you have any debt from your neighbor, you shall not enter his house to take a pledge, but you shall stand outside, and the man to whom you owe the debt shall bring the pledge to you outside. But if that man is poor, you shall not sleep in his pledge; rather, you shall return the pledge to him at sunset, and he shall sleep in his own garment, and he shall bless you, and there shall be mercy for you in the presence of the Lord your God (Deut. XXIV, 10 et seq.). And elsewhere, it is said: You shall not take a millstone as a pledge, nor the upper millstone of a mill; for he is using it as a pledge (Ibid., 6). And elsewhere: You shall not take a widow's garment as a pledge (Ibid., 17). From this they argue that specific pledges are prohibited, not all of them, that is, those of the poor and the widow. It is also forbidden to take a millstone and the upper millstone of a mill as a pledge. But when the Lord Himself says through the prophet Ezechiel (Ezech. XVIII, 7) that the one who returns a pledge is just, and the one who withholds it is unjust, He clearly suggests that not just some specific pledge, but every pledge should be returned. When Job says: 'I used to lay down a law against anyone who had a complaint against me, and I would wear a crown as I read it aloud. If I didn't give back what was owed to me, I took nothing from the debtor' (Job. XXXI, 26-27). Since the Lord commands us to not expect anything in return from those to whom we have given a loan (Luc. VI, 34), how can they believe

that a pledge should be retained according to the Law?

Caput XVIII.

In order to respond sufficiently to those who argue that we are prompted by divine law to engage in usury, it is asked what a just person, for example Peter, could give as interest; and it is shown that those are his words which he lends at interest.

59. But lest they should now break out again in the same manner, and should say that they are also incited to usury by the oracle of the Law, because it is written, Thou shalt lend to many nations, but thou shalt not borrow (Deut. XXVIII, 12); it is a fitting time to discuss and teach more fully and expressly what is to be lent on interest, and what regulations the Law prescribes concerning it; for the cause of interest precedes the cause of the pledge. 'The sinner,' it is said, 'shall borrow, and shall not pay: but the righteous showeth mercy, and giveth' (Ps. XXXVI, 21). Listen, debtor, to what you ought to avoid: listen, creditor, to what you ought to imitate. And below: I was young, and I grew old, and I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread. All day long he shows mercy and lends (Ibid., 25). So why does this just man lend all day long? Therefore, the just man is rich; and the richer each individual is, the more just he is: whoever has more to lend, he himself will be more just. But it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

60. So tell me, holy David, what did he lend for? He presented testimony against me, unless you come to my aid. Peter said: I have no silver or gold (Acts 3:6), was he not just? Therefore, explain to me what he lent. For you have said: Blessed is the man who has mercy and lends; he will order his words with judgment (Psalm 112:5). I found what the just man lent. Let Peter himself also teach me what he lent, who said to the poor man looking at him and John: I have no silver or gold. Therefore, will you give nothing to the poor, apostle? You do give, and you give more than others: you give to the needy, which others cannot give: you give to the needy, so that they may not be in need: you give to the needy, which even the rich desire to receive: you give to the needy, which those who possess silver and gold do not know how to bestow; because greed hinders them: you give to the needy, so that you may make them richer than those rich. You have stirred my soul, I desire this gift of yours. Tell me, I ask, what you give. Do not keep me in suspense for long, I desire to ask, if you quickly solve. But you have solved quickly: you did not delay the needy, you did not despise the prayer of the poor, you did not make him despair for longer, you did not go up to the temple empty-handed saying: I have no silver and gold. Not only do those with silver and gold go up with full hands, but also the poor one goes up not empty-handed: he goes up and he is not empty, because he does not have gold and silver. Let us hear what that poor man has to give: But what I have, he says, I give to you. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise and walk (Ibid.). O desired poverty; O richer than need! The one who limped, to whom the rich gave, the poor man gave and immediately the lame man became well. So the righteous person has what to lend, and has silver to lend, and lends his own words: this is the silver of the righteous; for the words of the Lord, pure words, are silver tested by fire, refined seven times. This he lends who accepts the Law, who meditates on the Law, who practices the Law: this Peter lent, this Paul lent, to whom it is said that they should go to the men of the nations. To Cornelius the centurion, Peter says: Rise, go without hesitation, for I have sent them; and he rose and went (Acts 10:20). And below it says: Can we forbid water that these, who have received the Holy Spirit, be baptized? And He

commanded them to be baptized. This is: You will lend to the nations, that you may forgive sins, erase debts: but you will not borrow. For the sinner borrows, and he does not pay off his sins; for he is a sinner. It is said by Paul: You will lend to the nations, who has been sent to the nations; it is said to John: You will lend to the nations; it is said to James and the others: You will lend to the nations; to whom it has been said: Go, baptize the nations.

62. It is said to the people of the fathers: If you keep the commandments of God, you will be blessed, and you will lend to the nations, and you will not borrow the word (Deut. XXVIII. 12). Finally, the following are not said about money: You will be the chief among many nations, but no one will dominate you. The Lord your God will establish you as the head, and not the tail, and then you will be above and not below, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God (Ibid., 13). And it follows: But if you do not listen, you will be cursed in the city, and cursed in the field (Ibid., 16). And below: 'Cursed is the offspring of your womb' (Ibid., 18). It is not money that makes a person blessed, but knowledge of God, preaching of the word: if we lend the grace of the Lord, if we share the words of the Lord with the needy, if we observe heavenly commandments. And on the other hand, lack of money that can be lent does not bring a curse, but lack of devotion, lack of observance of heavenly statutes. You will be cursed.

Caput XIX.

The Jews first lent money to the nations, and afterwards the nations, who believed in Christ, repaid them when they had lost their own money. The praise of this money, and an exhortation to lend it, and how the nations were preferred to the Israelites in this matter.

63. Finally, the mystery of the Church is clearly expressed. For first he said to the disciple of the Law: If you hear the Law, and keep it, you will lend to the nations (Deut. XV, 6); which was done by our fathers. Moses lent to the nations, who acquired proselytes, Joshua lent, Gideon lent, Samuel lent, David lent, Solomon lent, Elijah lent, Elisha lent; and if anyone wanted to know the word, he went to them: the queen of the South came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

64. When the people of the Jews began to not keep the Law, foreigners, that is, from the peoples who believed in the Lord Jesus, began to interpret the Scriptures for that ancient people. Timothy, who was of Greek descent by his father, lent his words to the Jews when he received the priesthood; today we priests in the Church lend our words to the Jews who have moved from the Synagogue to the Church; we also lend new and old money: indeed, what they had, they no longer have; they have eyes but do not see, they have ears but do not hear; they have money but do not have it, because they are ignorant of its use, they do not know its value, they have not recognized its appearance and form. For if they had known, they would never have denied the author of the money, saying: We do not want this man to reign over us (Luke, XIX, 14). But when he returned having received the kingdom, he commanded his servants to be called to whom he had given the money, and he preached to those who had lent the money: but to him who had kept his money idle, his master replied: You knew that I am a severe man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow: and why did you not put my money in the bank, so that when I came I could have collected it with interest? (Ibid., 22 and 23).

You have heard what money is good for a usurer, what money acquires good interest, what money does not defame the usurer, does not oppress the debtor, what money rust cannot cover, moth

cannot penetrate, what money is not from earthly treasure, but from eternal, what money makes the recipient rich, and does not diminish the lender. This money has interest: not a hundredth part of what it gives as a portion, but it yields a hundredfold fruit. Therefore, expand the depths of your mind, so that you may receive the counted quantity of this money: focus the gaze of your heart, so that you may recognize the image and inscription of this money: certainly, examine this money, set it on the table above your soul, which is stable by virtues, establish it as a square, keep it in the treasury of your chest, from which a learned scribe draws out new and old. You see what kind of money this is, how it unites the names of creditor and debtor, which are hateful to each other. I was inveighing against the moneylenders, now I challenge the debtor. Therefore, I desire that you, moneylenders of this money, may hasten to those who take a loan, willingly: through which you may acquire not only money, but also a kingdom; through which you may seek not curses, but the grace of blessings.

66. This money was lent by the people of the nations, who knew how to borrow, who knew how to lend, who knew how to collect. You refused the poor in need of spiritual support, and you began to be in need. Therefore, it is said about you by the Son of God: The sinner will borrow and not repay (Psalm XXXVI, 21). It is said to you, the stranger within you, will rise above you, but you will descend to the depths (Deuteronomy XXVIII, 43). For he does not know the highest who does not know Christ; he is always in hell who does not ascend to Christ; but the people who receive the word are at the highest, they have the entire inheritance of faith. The Law says this about him: 'He will lend to you, and you will not lend to him; he will be the head, and you will be the tail.' (Ibid., 44), that is, he will be first, and you last and despised. 'I will take away from Judah the head and the tail, the beginning and the end: the beginning is Christ, who when asked who he was, replied: The beginning, which I also speak to you.' (John 8:25): and he also says that Christ is the end: for he is the end of the Law unto righteousness to everyone that believeth. (Romans 10:4). Therefore, he who does not believe in justice has neither beginning nor end, but is the end of himself.

Caput XX.

With the security of a pledge, it demonstrates that the spiritual pledge, which is ordered to be restored by law, must also be physically restored. Whoever hears the word of God is a debtor and the pledge should not be taken from them. Concerning the evangelical garments and the tunic that we are all commanded to wear. The word of God is a good garment; it is the pledge of the Lord's lot, it is the garment of wisdom; nevertheless, the word must be narrowed down.

67. We have known a legitimate interest, let us also know the pledge which the Law commands to be returned before sunset. Listen to the Apostle saying what this is: God has given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts (II Cor. I, 22). And both pledge, and entrusted, and entrusted are said in three ways. They say pledge what is undertaken for a loan of money: entrusted, however, and entrusted what we have entrusted to someone for the sake of custody. Hence the Apostle says: I know whom I have believed, and I am sure, that he is able to guard my deposit until that day (II Tim. I, 12). He also taught about the deposit, saying: Preserve the good deposit through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us (Ibid., 14). Is the Holy Spirit the guardian of entrusted gold and silver, or is money preserved through the Holy Spirit? Therefore, the spiritual pledge is safeguarded by the Spirit, so that the birds of the sky do not come and take it away from our hearts.

Therefore, let us ask that Christ, who Himself gave this pledge, may guard it within us and preserve His entrusted treasure. For He received nothing from us but entrusted to us what was not ours. And therefore, he who violates another's entrusted treasure is harmed in his sense of honor. If we must not violate the entrusted pledge of a man with fraud, how much more fitting is it that we faithfully keep the divine and spiritual deposit, lest we suffer serious damages to our reputation and well-being.

69. This, therefore, is the pledge which the Law prohibits from being pledged, and violently taken away. For thus Scripture has it: If your neighbor owes you anything, you shall not enter his house to pledge the pledge; and the man to whom the debt is due, shall bring forth to you the pledge outside. But if that man is poor, you shall not sleep in his pledge, but you shall restore to him his pledge by sunset; and he shall sleep in his own clothing, and bless you, and it shall be mercy to you (Deuteronomy XXIV, 10 and following). So you say to me: Behold the Law prohibits the removal of a pledge, not its acceptance: but it commands that it be returned to the poor, not to everyone. But Ezra also taught us about the bodily pledges, that now, moneylenders, you are not able to come against the profession of your fathers. For when those who had lent money were commanded, and they had taken the pledges of others, to return them, they said: We return them, and we seek nothing from them (Nehemiah 5:12). Good fathers, who established that the pledges of debtors should be returned: also good moneylenders who responded that they would both return the pledges and not require the money that they had given. And the judgment of your paternal position binds you to this, as well as the statement of the creditors.

71. There is, however, another pledge which the spiritual Law forbids to be taken away; and if it is given, it commands it to be returned before sunset: which the debtor repays, and he himself produced it. But the debtor is every one who hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it: the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. Therefore, do not enter into his house, so that you may receive that pledge. Woe to him who causes one of these little ones to stumble! If he has lost his pledge by his own foolishness, you will not have any blame. But if he is poor, return the pledge before sunset: the pledge is his clothing. If he seems rich to himself, he deceives himself, if he has given his pledge: but if he is poor and does not have the riches of the spirit, return his clothing to him before sunset.

72. If it were a matter of physical pledge, certainly it should have been repaid more so on a daily basis, so that the shame of a naked body would not be revealed in the daylight; for darkness does not reveal a naked body. And if this were the reason that the poor person did not have anything to cover themselves while sleeping, certainly they would have said that a cover or garment should be repaid. But now, by saying 'clothing', it signifies more specifically a tunic with which we are clothed and dressed. Therefore, give your tunic to the poor person, so that they may sleep in it at night.

73. Does it not seem to you that he signifies a poor man, who is commanded to go with one tunic, not to seek another, sent by Christ to preach the Gospel? For he is truly poor in spirit, who is able to sleep: for when one is satisfied with riches, there is no one to allow him to sleep. The poor one sleeps the sleep of resurrection, which the rich person cannot sleep, for he is suffocated by riches and pleasures. He sleeps the rest of Christ, who says: I have slept and have rested, and have risen. This is the tunic that was woven without seam, in which Christ was clothed, which those soldiers whom you know could not tear apart. For none of them tears the garment of Christ, but

divides it, as it is written: They divided my garments among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots (Ps. 22:18). The evangelists divided his garments among themselves, and for his clothing, that is, for the preaching of the Gospel with which the Lord Jesus is clothed even today, they cast lots. Certainly that fate, which fell upon Matthias, that he would be added to the number of the apostles as the twelfth, with the name of the traitor excluded, was well said. But it was well said about the evangelists because they cast lots; for the lot hangs, as it were, on divine examination. And therefore, because they did not speak by their own power, nor did they all say the same things; but most of them said different things, which the others did not say: we know that the grace of the Holy Spirit, like a lot, gave them those things to speak individually about the works of the Lord Jesus; so that they would divide His deeds among themselves to be described according to His will.

74. And there is that tunic which the Apostle shows, saying: Put on the Lord Jesus (Rom. 1, 3, 14). This is the tunic which covers our shameful things and surrounds them with greater honor in Christ. We put on the bowels of mercy in Christ, we put on the glory of the cross, which seemed scandalous to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. Those who think it should be ashamed of it are the ones who are ashamed. But for us, it is not fitting to boast except in the cross of the Lord Jesus. These lowly things of ours have greater honor, because through the passion of the Lord, an eternal kingdom is prepared for us; for the more one has sinned, the more he is loved. Therefore, let us be buried with Lord Jesus, so that we may deserve to be participants of his resurrection: let us strip off the old man with his actions, let us put on the new, in which there is forgiveness of sins.

75. Therefore, the clothing and covering, the Word of God. With this clothing, the sons of Noah covered their father's genitals, taking a garment and going backwards, so they would not see their father's genitals, which symbolize the physical aspects that bring shame to humankind. And thus, the one who desired to see received a deserving punishment, becoming a servant; for everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. Therefore, he remained in worldly matters. Let no one take away clothing from this poor person; or if they have taken it, let the sun not set upon the stripped one: let them restore it before, so that the sin of the poor person may not be attributed to the lender; and let them not only work for their own sin, but also for the sin of another. Let this pledge be returned on this night of the world, let this clothing be put on in these dark times of the world. This is a pledge of that blessed lot, not of the contrary one. For we read in Leviticus of two lots, of which it is said: One you shall make for God, the other for the receiver. The receiver sends his lot to the moneylenders: the servants of the Lord are in the lot of Christ. Aaron, placed in this lot, excluded the trouble of the contrary lot, when, being situated between the two parts of the people, he did not allow death to overtake the dead by being drawn into the lot of the living body of the self. The good pledge of this fate is *Verbiamictus*. No debtor should take this tunic from you: no one should pawn this tunic, if you wish to never suffer shame, so that you may sleep among the clergy like Aaron, sleep among the two Testaments, so that you may sleep the sleep of resurrection, and be able to restore yourselves. This is the garment that even if you pawned it, holy Solomon advises you to take back, saying: Take off your garment: for an injurious person passes by (Prov. XXVII, 13).

77. The garment of wisdom is made from those clothes that wisdom itself made for herself from fine linen and purple: this is, the garment of faith consists in the preaching of heavenly things and the blood of the Lord's passion: the fine linen denotes heavenly things, the purple signifies the mystery of the sacred blood by which the heavenly kingdom is conferred. Finally, the garment of

wisdom indicates higher things; for he goes on to say: Be wise, my son, and let your heart be glad (Prov. XXVII, 11). And below in two verses it says: But those who come upon you unawares suffer loss (Ibid., 12). Take off your clothes. Therefore, take them off, so that you do not experience the loss of ignorance; and so that wicked common usurer, recognizing you undressed from your own clothes, may try to uncover the shame of you and persuade you to cover yourself with leaves and fear the true sight of God seeing you naked.

78. 'Give,' he says, 'to your neighbor in the earliest time, a concise word, and deal faithfully with him; and at all times you will find what is necessary for you.' (Ecclesiasticus 29:2-3) 'Innocence does not love to defend itself before many.' Susanna did not lack the power of speech: she restrained her words to the Lord and immediately deserved to obtain the testimony of her own chastity. Many priests spoke, who were laboring to obscure the truth with the deceit of words, but not the daughter of Judah. She remained silent among men, but spoke to God. The defense of the woman herself was shameful; and while modesty was being defended, impudence was being feigned. She constrained her words, saying to the Lord: You know that they have spoken falsely about me (Dan. 13:41). And the Lord stirred up the spirit of the young man Daniel, the avenger of chastity.

79. Therefore, let the word be concise, so that the repayment to the creditor may not be with words but with actions. Or mystically: Let the word be concise, that is, perfect. For the Lord, by speaking a perfect and concise word, will bring about on earth, that is, in your understanding, a summary abbreviated from many reasonings. Deduct that various expenses have been incurred so that you may have what is left over. Just as the Lord, through various dispensations to the Jews, finally perfected and abbreviated that great plan of sins, so that the remnant might be saved through the election of grace and preserved for the sake of the offspring, through whom the hope of the synagogue, which was dead, might be revived.

Caput XXI.

They are reproached who, when they are unable to pay, borrow money. The same people, when rejected, and not rendering on the agreed day, make enemies out of friends; hence it is concluded that no one should borrow money. What is meant by not binding with a millstone and a supermillstone?

How ugly it is to repay harm for a favor received! When you cheat someone to whom you owe, later in your time of need you will not find a creditor. How unworthy it is, that when you cannot support yourself, when you still owe nothing, you think that you can both sustain yourself and pay the debt! Consider first how you will repay, and then borrow. I collect the fruits of the fields, he says. But those who are not abundant in usefulness, how will they be abundant in the increase of a contracted loan? But I sell my possession. And from where will come the fruits which you will use for expenses? Interest is not paid with one's own money, but it is increased: it is accumulated and grows by counting.

81. Then do you not consider the humility and modesty of the one requesting? Until you receive, you will kiss the hands of the proud moneylender, humble your voice so as not to offend his ears with the clear sound of your voice, and prevent others from hearing you beg. Poverty is not a crime, there is no dishonor in need: but it is shameful to owe, not shameful to refuse to pay. You

will ask for a delay when it comes time to repay the prescribed amount: you will bring forth excuses for the money, you will argue about the time, you will heap up justifications; and even though you have promised the whole, so as not to be seen as defrauding completely, you will barely repay half. You will make a friend an enemy, you will return an insult for honor, a curse for a blessing. Consider how these opinions may harm: recognize how they differ from that of a good man.

82. Therefore, while you are free from chains, free yourself from the yoke and burden of servitude. Are you wealthy? Do not take on debt. Are you poor? Do not borrow. Are you wealthy? Do not allow any need for borrowing. Are you poor? Consider the difficulty of repaying. Wealth is diminished by interest, poverty is not alleviated by interest. However, evil is not corrected by evil, nor is a wound healed by a wound, but it is worsened by an ulcer.

83. See to it that while you are seeking money, you do not burden your mill or place a millstone on it. The mill is the means by which flour is made, by which one woman grinds the flour that is taken away, and another that is left behind. Perhaps the one who is taken away is the one who always grinds the word of God, so that she may have flour and make it into a spiritual bread. She removes the old leaven, so that there may be a new sprinkling. She maintains her mill, interprets the Scriptures, and keeps her millstone. But the one who pawns her mill is the one who is left behind. When something has been done perfunctorily, it is like pawning a stone that is on top of a millstone. I wonder what stone that is. It is written: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone' (Psalm 118:22). Why on top of a millstone? Because He is the one who helps those who are grinding: He is the one who says: 'Search the Scriptures, in which you think you have eternal life' (John 5:39).

84. Do not, moneylender, pawn this millstone, lest you fall upon it. For everyone who falls upon this millstone will be crushed; but upon whom it falls, it will grind him to powder. Nor should you accept a widow's pledge. Take away both the burden and the means of living from the poor, or take away the widow's pledge; but it is more serious if you hold back the word from the widow who is a widow in name only, and indicate to her the barrenness of her widowhood.

Caput XXII.

Whom we should imitate, the moneylender; and how God has given more to the Church, to whom she herself has given more without demanding; and concerning the divine dispensation of mercy and judgment.

85. And so that you may know that I advise these things out of love, I will show you whom you should imitate as a lender. There were two debtors to one lender, one owed five hundred denarii, the other fifty. Since they did not have the means to repay, he forgave both of them. So, who loves him more? Simon the Pharisee answered, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' (Luke, VII, 41 et seq.) And his opinion was praised, with the Lord saying: You have judged rightly. The Pharisee judged rightly, who had evil thoughts, thinking that the Lord knew more about the woman's sins than he granted. But his opinion is praised, so that every excuse is taken away from him.

86. Furthermore, the Church, which is gathered from the people of nations, is forgiven more, because it owed more: but it also gives more not to the demanding, but to the giver. It gave water

to the feet of Christ, for it cleansed its own sins: it kissed his feet, bearing the insignia of peace: it sent oil to his feet, conferring mercy itself by giving to the poor. These are the feet of Christ, in which Christ walks with greater innocence. And she wiped them with the hair of her head. For whoever has the disposition of humility is humbled for Christ. And therefore, it is said, many of his sins are forgiven, because he has loved much (Ibid., 47).

87. Note that the Lord bestows both mercy and judgment. He gave in advance through grace, but he knew to whom he was giving. The Jew has no excuse. He gave me, a sinner, more; he gave him, an ingrate, less. However, he knew that even the ingrate could not repay what he had received, and the Church, mindful of grace, would repay more the more she had deserved.

Caput XXIII.

When discussing the antiquity of usury, it is argued that the blame is also ancient, which Christ came to abolish, but which the devil introduced. Moneylenders are likened to the devil and also those who bind a surety, in which they create another enemy for themselves. It is necessary to be cautious not to bind oneself for another, or at least for an amount greater than one's abilities!

88. Therefore, you have the moneylender whom you follow, if you want to be praised, if you want not to be criticized by us. For we do not criticize the person, but the greed. Nor is it unknown that some have said, when our discourse had aroused their feelings two days ago: What did the Bishop intend by addressing the moneylenders, as if something new had been allowed, as if the earlier generation had not also engaged in moneylending, as if moneylending were not an ancient practice? It is true, and I do not deny it: but there is also an ancient fault. In the end, sin comes from Adam: from him comes fault, from which comes Eve: from her comes wrongdoing, from which comes the human condition. But for this reason Christ came, to abolish what had grown old and to establish something new; and by his grace he renewed what fault had made old. Therefore, he offered himself to suffering, so that he could be renewed in spirit and absolve everyone (Confessions of Augustine, Book I against Julian, Pelag. ch. 3). However, the devil deceived Eve in order to overthrow the man and bind the inheritance.

89. What do lenders do? They deceive the borrowers, they obligate the guarantors: but Tobias did not seek collateral or demand a guarantor (Tob. I, 17, and IV, 22). Therefore, you must ensure that you request a guarantor to bind him with your names. Behold, another enemy is prepared. For when you do not have the means to repay the debt, he will be held accountable for you. You will find in him a deceitful fraudster, whom you have deceived as a friend. He will be exposed, he will be led into chains for you: you will suffer a heavier collector than the creditor who alleges: urge your fellow citizen whom you have promised. It will happen that you yourself also begin to be ungrateful, and you pass over that which is written: Do not forget the promise of grace; for he has given a good soul for you (Eccli. XXIX, 20). You must say: Who sought you to say faith? For unless you had spoken faith, I would not have received money. I received money from an adulteress, she gave me bronze mixed with gold: I wish you had not offered yourself! Perhaps the creditor bribed you, or you him.

90. Therefore, be cautious not to involve yourself in someone else's debt, lest you be accused of having sold yourself. And if someone, out of the necessity of friendship, has given you something as a debtor's token of gratitude, be careful not to appear ungrateful. Or if you wish to intervene,

you will be moved when your friend beseeches and requests you; you will be ashamed to refuse. Intervene in such a way that, if the debt is not to be paid, you know it is to be paid from your own resources. Approach these matters prepared. For you have read: Do not guarantee more than you are capable of; for if you should promise, consider it as if you were restoring what you have received (Sirach 8:16). And below: Take the next according to your strength, and take care not to fall (Sirach 29:27), that is, do not obligate yourself to a greater extent than you can bear and fulfill with your available resources. For if you give away what you have, you have lost wealth, but you have not lost faith. You do not feel the losses to your reputation, for you have redeemed a friend without deceit. Elsewhere, the Proverbs of Solomon also advise you, saying: He who gives surety for a friend, as one who obligates himself for the debts of his friends (Proverbs 17:18). But if you do not have, listen to what Solomon says: Do not put yourself forward in a pledge, if you do not have the means to pay, they will take your bed from under you. (Prov. XXII, 26 and 27). Therefore, a good lender will gain favor, and an evil one will bring down a curse.

Caput XXIV.

How can we imitate Tobias in the payment of wages; and how does he teach us the same kind of lending?

91. However, not only content with these virtues, the holy Tobias knew that a wage should be paid to the hired worker, and he offered half of it (Tob. IV, 15); and deservedly for his wage, he found an Angel (Tob. XII, 5). And how do you know that you may not unjustly defraud someone justly, even worse if they are weak? Woe to those who scandalize one of these little ones! Who knows if there is an angel in them? For we should not doubt that an angel could be in a hired worker, since Christ, who is accustomed to be in the least of these, could be there as well.

Therefore, pay the worker their wages and do not defraud them of their labor's reward; for you too are a worker of Christ, and you have been hired for his vineyard, and for you a heavenly reward has been reserved. Therefore, do not harm the servant who works in truth, nor the hired worker who gives their soul; do not despise the poor who sustains their life through their labor, and by their wages. For this is to kill a person, to deny them the support owed to them for their life. And you are a mercenary in this land: give wages to the mercenary, so that you may also say to the Lord when you pray: Give wages, O Lord, to those who sustain you (Sirach 36:18).

Tobias says to you: Luxuria mater est famis (Tob. IV, 15), in which he teaches about self-control. He also says: Give the same day's wages to every man who has worked for you, and let not the wages of a man remain with you; and your wages shall not be lessened (Ibid., 15). He says to you: Do not drink wine to drunkenness (Ibid., 16). He says to you: Share your bread with the hungry (Ibid., 17). See what he desires you to lend: And from your clothes cover the naked; from all the things that have been abundantly given to you, make alms. Bless the Lord at all times (Ibid., 18 et seq.). Therefore, in these things, interest is eternal and usury perpetual.

On the Blessings of the Patriarchs

One Book of Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, On the Blessings of the Patriarchs

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.
- Chapter XII.

Chapter I.

In order to encourage children to show honor to their parents, God bestowed great power upon the blessing of parents. Joseph hastened to receive his father's blessing and also offered his sons to be blessed. And these mysteries are contained in them.

First of all, let us show great reverence to our parents, as we read in Genesis 9:25-27, that whoever was blessed by their father, was blessed, and whoever was cursed by their father, was cursed! Therefore, God has granted this grace to parents, so that the piety of their children may be provoked. Therefore, it is the duty of children to obey their parents. Honor your father, so that he may bless you. Let the dutiful honor their father out of gratitude, the ungrateful out of fear. And even if the father is poor, and does not have riches to leave to his children; he still has the inheritance of ultimate blessing, which he can bestow on his successors as the wealth of sanctification. And it is much more blessed to become rich.

Joseph was eager to receive the blessing (Gen. XLVIII, 1 et seq.). Finally, he presented his sons Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Jacob blessed. And because he had twelve sons, and the thirteenth was to be the apostle Paul, as if a later chosen one, the thirteenth Tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim were sanctified in both, so that Paul would not be found outside the number of the paternal Tribes, who was an outstanding preacher of the Old and New Testament and could easily prove his inheritance of the paternal blessing.

Although these mysteries are glorious in this, that Joseph, taking his sons whom he had adopted in Egypt, Ephraim, he placed at his right hand, but Manasseh at his left, so that Israel, their father, was on their right side. But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it upon the head of Ephraim, who was the younger and stood at his left side; and his left hand he laid upon Manasseh, who was at his right side. And thus, changing his hands, he blessed them. In this, Joseph also preserved the order of nature by giving more deference to his elder son, just as Isaac also desired to give the blessing to his firstborn son, Esau. But he believed that the younger son should be preferred in the role of the younger people, just as he himself was preferred by his mother.

Finally, Manasses is designated by the Latin interpretation as coming from oblivion (Gen. XLI, 51), because the people of Judah forgot their God who made them. And whoever from that people believes, is called back from oblivion. Ephraem, however, promises the abundance of faith by the interpretation of his name, who increased his father, as Joseph himself says: Because God increased me in the land of my humility (Ibid., 52). This is the characteristic of the younger people, who is the body of Christ, increasing the Father and not abandoning their own God.

Finally, the Lord, speaking in a spiritual manner about the people, declared this to be a mystery. For when the son thought his father had made a mistake due to his dull appearance, he wanted to turn his hands around, saying, 'Not so, Father, for this one is the firstborn; place your right hand on his head.' But his father refused and said, 'I know, my son, I know. He will also become a people, and he will be exalted. However, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a multitude of nations.' (Genesis 48:18-19). Finally, he preferred the elder Ephraem, even prophesying in a series of blessings, saying: 'In you Israel shall be blessed, saying: May God make you like Ephraem and Manasseh' (Ibid., 20). And therefore, since they were grandsons, they were adopted in place of sons, so that they would not be deprived of the ancestral blessing.

Chapter II.

On the blessing of Reuben the firstborn, which is not so much a blessing as a prophecy: on the error of the Jews concerning it; and on the mysteries signified by the same.

After this blessing was celebrated, he also called his sons (Gen. XLIX, 1). And the one who had preferred the younger to the elder began with the first, so that he might bestow favor upon him in that mystery, and observe the order of age in this. At the same time, he who had previously blessed them both, along with all their posterity and future offspring, lest the repeated blessing of the people should appear superfluous, or the former be considered weak, rightly declares that he is repeating more of an announcement of things that would happen in later times, rather than conferring a blessing.

Finally, he began like this: Ruben, my firstborn, you are my strength, and the beginning of my children, you are stubborn and reckless. You have insulted me, as if water does not boil. For you

went up to your father's bed, you defiled the marriage bed when you went up (Ibid., 3 et seq.). Doesn't it seem to be more of a rebuke than a blessing? And therefore, prophecy is more than a blessing. For prophecy is the announcement of future events, but blessing is the sanctification and offering of thanks. And the Jews think that the reason this old man speaks to Reuben, the son, is because he slept with Bala, his father's concubine, and defiled his father's bed. But this is easily refuted; for this happened before: Jacob, however, promises to speak of things that will happen in the last days, not things that have already happened. Therefore, it is appropriate and clear in the judgment of the Patriarchs, who, seeing the future passion of the Lord and the Jewish persecutors, curse the audacity of the first-born people, which, being incredulous and not subject to God's law, and not knowing how to bear the yoke of Christ on their necks, afflicts the author of life not only with the wickedness of death, but also with the insult of sacrilege.

'Do not bubble up,' he says, 'like water; may it not burst forth into greater madness, and may the fervor of rage and insanity not allow sinners to repent: but let them repent of their sins; for the people lie hard in the bed of the Father, and defile the holy marriage bed, which is the flesh of the Lord Jesus, our Creator, affixing it to the gallows of the cross, in which, like in a certain bed and ancestral marriage bed, may they rest in the salvific refreshment of his holy. ' Who, therefore, would deny what is said about the people, when all these things apply to the people as a whole? For he himself is called the firstborn of Israel, he himself is said to be stubborn. Moses himself said about him: 'But you are a people of stubborn neck' (Exod. XXXIII, 3, and elsewhere). And truly, who is as stubborn, reckless, and insolent as the Jewish people, who whipped and crucified the Lord Jesus, through whom they had seen the dead raised, the blind cured, while they couldn't deny his divine works? And therefore, the holy Prophet fled from such a great crime of usurping the principality, lest the patriarchs dare to claim the same privilege through the succession of their lineage.

Chapter III. They predict what would happen to the sons of Simeon and Levi, whose names designate the tribes; and also the opinion of the Jews regarding the mystical interpretation of this blessing is refuted. The righteous man protests, and disowns his posterity, which did not preserve the fatherly affection; and because he foresaw wickedness, he shudders at the influence of their advice: Let not my soul enter their council, nor let my inward parts join their assembly; for in their anger they killed a man, and by their greediness they undermined an ox (Gen. XLIX, 6). He speaks of Simeon and Levi indeed; but he signifies the tribes by their name, which were called by a similar appellation. The Jews derive a most beautiful interpretation, believing that it confirms that the sons of Jacob condemned the two brothers more than the others because of the rape of their sister Dinah. They pretended to want to enter into an agreement with them and persuaded them to be circumcised, so that peace and a bond of kinship could be established between them. However, on the third day after their circumcision, when they were still weak and in pain, they attacked and killed them. Therefore, perhaps these two are the most avenging of all, because they are the authors of the scribes and priests. For none should defend their honor more than the wise and the priests. But in this also the Jews are mistaken. For they had provided reasons for their own grief, asserting that they had been defenders of injured piety and avengers of violated chastity in that age of youth, even though they were adversaries to their father. Certainly the holy man could not condemn this, because his own sister had not been allowed to remain unpunished and had lost her virginity, and she did not have the consolation of vengeance; especially since he

himself had approved of it, as he possessed Shechem and gave her as a gift in death to his most beloved son Joseph, saying to him: I give you Shechem, above all your brothers, which I took from the hands of the Amorites with my sword and bow (Genesis 48:22). What has been done cannot be denied. However, we can interpret it as meaning that through the shoulders of Sichemhumeros, through his works. Therefore, Joseph, the chosen heir of good works, whom his brothers could not equal in his works, was sanctified above all others. For who could equal the deeds of Christ?

Then, moreover, he, being untainted and pure, brought offerings from this earthly inn, the abode of impurity, to the residence of the saints with heavenly words and wielding the spiritual sword; so that where the inhabitants had previously indulged in lasciviousness and the princes of luxury had dwelt, where there had been incentives to lust and fuel for wickedness, now holy priests teach the lessons of chastity and many examples of virginity's integrity shine forth with a certain brightness of heavenly light.

Therefore, there are three tribes designated by the names of the Patriarchs: for from the tribe of Simeon are the scribes, from the tribe of Levi are the chief priests who completed their wickedness in the passion of the Lord, fulfilling all the measure of their father's impiety. They themselves devised a plan against the Lord Jesus to kill him, as Isaiah says: Woe to their souls, for they devised an evil plan against themselves, saying: Let us bind the Just One, for he is useless to us (Isaiah 3:9-10). They themselves killed the prophets, and the apostles who proclaimed the coming of the Lord Savior, his passion, and the glory of his resurrection. Afterwards, driven by their own selfish desires and worldly vices, they rejected divine fellowship, the chastity of the body, the sobriety of the mind, the contempt of money, and the gain of grace. They undermined the bull, namely, the one who produces horns and hoofs, whom the poor see and rejoice in; for by the word of God, he has exalted the horn of his people, by which he has repelled his enemies and earned the reward of the heavenly crown. Here is the bull by which the Church is symbolized in the moon, then fuller when supported, as it were, by bull-like horns, including the space of the whole world.

However, this prophecy seems to also include the grace of blessing. For in addressing the firstborn, it states: Do not be arrogant like water, for it establishes sin; for water cleanses sins more, and is accustomed to recall our minds from every fervor of vices. And again, in speaking to Simeon and Levi: I will divide you in Jacob, and scatter you in Israel, it shows that they are to be redeemed by the gathering of the nations. For when the shepherd is struck, that flock is dispersed, which had been previously gathered; so that someone who was not there may enter, and thus all of Israel may be saved. And especially because of the tribe of Levi we must believe this; because from that tribe the Lord Jesus seems to derive his lineage according to the assumption of the body. From this tribe are the priests Levi and Nathan, whom Saint Luke in the book of the Gospel, which he himself wrote, counted among the ancestors of the Lord (Luke 3:29 and 31). For the priest of the Father and the leader of all priests, as it is written: 'You are a priest forever' (Psalm 110:4), had to claim the succession of priestly origin.

Therefore Moses also blessed this tribe, saying: Give Levi the suffrage of his vote, and his truth to the holy (Deut. XXXIII, 8). Moses also blessed the tribe of Reuben, as it is written: Let Reuben live, and not die, and be multiplied in number (Ibid., 6). For he would not have blessed them if he had known them to be unworthy according to the judgment of the Patriarch. Certainly, what he passed over loosely, he fulfilled assiduously.

Chapter IV. On the blessing of Judah, which pertains to Christ and his incarnation, passion, resurrection, and other mysteries. And because through the mixture of the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Levi, the Twelve Tribes were joined together, therefore Matthew describes his family from the tribe of Judah (Matt. 1:3). And the Apostle says: For it is evident that our Lord has sprung out of Judah (Heb. 7:14). So that from the tribe of Levi the inheritance may be considered as priestly and full of holiness, and from the tribe of Judah, from which David and Solomon and the other kings were, the splendor of royal succession may shine forth, so that the same person may be shown by the testimony of the Scriptures to be both king and priest. And by this merit, Jacob poured forth a holy grace saying: Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hands shall be on the neck of your enemies; the sons of your father shall worship you. Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down, he crouched as a lion, and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples, binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine. He washed his garment in wine, and his cloak in the blood of grapes. His eyes are brighter than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.

Indeed, the speech seems to be directed towards Judah the patriarch, but that later Judas is depicted as the true confessor, who was born from that Tribe, who alone praises his brothers, of whom he says: I will tell your name to my brothers (Ps. 22:23). The Lord by nature, a brother by grace, whose hands he spread out to the unbelieving people, on the backs of his enemies. For with the same hands and the same passion he covered his own, and he subdued the opposing powers, and made all those devoid of faith and piety subject to him. From which the Father says to the Son: And you will rule in the midst of your enemies (Ps. 109:2): those enemies were made by their own malice, not by the will of Christ. In this is the great grace of the Lord. For indeed, the spiritual wickednesses which used to bend before our neck under the yoke of captivity, so that David himself somewhat felt the hands of the triumphant over him and wrote, saying: Sinners have built upon my back (Ps. 128:3), are now subjected to the triumph of Christ and to certain hands of his, that is, to his actions and works, and they undergo the perpetual hardship of captivity. Indeed, he himself who is worshiped by the sons of his father, when he is worshiped by us, to whom he has allowed us to call him Father, whose servant it is to be of virtue. The Lion's Whelp of Judah. Did he not clearly express the Father and declare the Son? What evidence is there that the Son of God is of the same nature as the Father? That lion, this lion whelp. By a simple comparison, the unity of the same nature and power is understood. A king came forth from a king, strong from strong. Because he foresaw those who would assert that the Son was of younger age, he added this in response: From the offspring, my son, you have ascended. You were lying down as a lion and as a young cub. And elsewhere you have, because the young cub is the lion from the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5). Therefore, because he had said young cub, he immediately added lion, that is to say: Do not let your ears be deceived, because they heard young cub, I have expressed the Son, I have not said lesser. And he himself is a lion like the father. Let them hear that he has called him both lion and young cub: lion as if of perfect and full strength, young cub as if the Son; so that no one, when hearing an equal to the Father, should not consider him the Son. The Son is not praised in such a way as to be separated from the Father. He who confesses the Son approves the equal.

Moreover, he wonderfully expressed his incarnation, saying: From the shoot, my son, you have ascended; in that he sprouted as a plant of the earth in the womb of the Virgin, and as a flower of sweet fragrance, he ascended for the redemption of the whole world, emitted by the maternal womb with the splendor of new light, just as Isaiah says: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots (Isaiah 11:1). The root of the family of the Jews is Mary, the branch is Mary, Christ is the flower of Mary. The rod, which is of royal lineage, rightly comes from the house and homeland of David, whose flower is Christ, who has abolished the stench of the worldly filth and has poured out the fragrance of eternal life.

Therefore, you have the incarnation, accept the passion: 'He slept as a lion,' he said, 'When he lay in the sepulcher, like a restful sleep of his own body, as he himself said: I slept, and took rest, and rose again; for the Lord has received me' (Ps. III, 6). Hence Jacob also said: Who will raise him up? that is, whom the Lord will receive. Who else will resurrect him, if not he himself by his own power and that of the Father? I see Him born of His own authority, I see Him dead of His own will, I see Him sleeping by His own power. He who has done all things by His own choice: by whose power will He need assistance to rise again? Therefore He is the author of His own resurrection, He who is the arbiter of death, He who is awaited by the nations. And therefore, until he comes, there will not lack a leader from Judah, so that the faithful and uncorrupted succession of the royal line is maintained until his birth. Afterward, as we have taught in a treatise on the Gospel (Book III, on Luke), through Herod, the adulterated succession lost the prerogative of dignity. Indeed, because they denied the true king, they began to have false ones. Therefore, what the Patriarch says will be preserved in the judges or kings of the Jews, the uncorrupted inheritance derived through kings: until he comes to whom it is entrusted; so that he may gather the Church of God from the assembly of all nations, and with the devotion of the Gentiles and the piety of the peoples, that is, he remains, the duty is reserved for him, the prerogative of such great grace is conferred upon him. And he himself is the expectation of the nations. He said more than if he had said, the nations are waiting for him, because all the hope of the Church rests in him. Therefore, it is said to Moses, 'Take off your sandals from your feet' (Exod. III, 5), so that it would not be believed that he himself is the spouse of the Church, who was chosen as the leader of the people. Therefore, Joshua also took off his sandals, (Joshua V, 16) so that he may also keep the grace of such a great gift for the one who was to come. Therefore, John said: 'After me comes a man who is preferred before me, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to unloose' (John I, 27). Therefore he says: 'He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly.' (John 3:29) That is, he alone is the husband of the Church, he is the expectation of the nations, offering to him the bond of nuptial grace, the prophets have loosed their sandals in his presence. He is the bridegroom, I am the friend of the bridegroom: I rejoice because he has come, because I hear the bridal voice, because no longer do we endure the harsh punishments of sins, the severe torments of the Law, but rather the forgiveness of sins, the voice of joy, the sound of gladness, we have heard the exultation of the festive nuptials. This is that one binding the donkey to the vine and the foal of the donkey to her halter, so that the congregation of nations may have the fervor of the Holy Spirit before forgiven and neglectful, but now devoted through Christ, and be bound to that everlasting vine, which is the Lord Jesus, who says: I am the vine, and my Father is the vinedresser (John 15:1), as fruitful branches that we may be bound by the unbreakable chains of faith. This is that mystery, which the donkey's foal was commanded to be loosed in the Gospel, and the Lord Jesus himself sat upon it, so that bound to

the everlasting vine, it may rest in the sweetness of the saints.

He says that he washed his robe in wine. The good robe is the flesh of Christ, which covers the sins of all, accepts the faults of all, and covers the errors of all. The good robe, which clothes all with the garment of joy. He washed this robe in wine, when he was baptized in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended on him like a dove, and remained upon him. By this it is signified that the fullness of the Holy Spirit was individually in him and did not depart. And the evangelist also says (Mark I, 10): For the Lord Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan. Therefore, Jesus washed his robe, not his own, which he did not have; but ours, which he had, in order to wash away the dirt. And he added: And in the blood of the grape, his garment: that is, in the suffering of his body, he washed the nations with his blood. For indeed, the nations are the garment of the Word, as it is written: As I live, says the Lord, unless I clothe them all as a garment (Isaiah XLIX, 18). And elsewhere: You will change them as a garment, and they will be changed (Ps. C, 27). Therefore, he has cleansed not with his own blood, their sins which they did not have, but with our sins which we have committed. And he spoke well of the grape, because as the grape hung on the wood. He is the vine, he is the grape. The vine clinging to the wood: the grape, because the soldier's spear pierced the open side and released water and blood. For this reason, John said: because water and blood came out of him (John XIX, 34). Water for washing, blood for redemption. Water cleanses us, blood redeems us. And therefore the prophet says: His eyes are bright from wine, and his teeth whiter than milk, signifying the prophets and apostles. For some, like the eyes of Christ, foresaw and proclaimed his coming, of whom he himself says: Abraham saw my day and rejoiced (John 8:56). And one of the prophets says: I saw the Lord of hosts (Isaiah 6:5), whom seeing, they were filled with spiritual joy. But others, that is, the apostles, whom the Lord cleansed from every stain of sin, became whiter than milk, with no spot later marring them. For milk is temporal; but the grace of the apostles remains perpetual, who, by preparing for us those spiritual and heavenly nourishments, have fed the inner depths of the mind. There are also those who consider the clear commands of the Lord, which have been spoken by divine mouth, as milk for us, by which, being nourished, we reach the sustenance of heavenly bread. Therefore, Paul also says: I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able (1 Corinthians 3:2). In the beginning of faith, the Corinthians were given milk to drink. And those saints, whose faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world, are strengthened like weaned infants with solid food.

Chapter V.

Zabulon's blessing is to designate the Church and its leaders.

Zebulun shall dwell by the seashore; And he shall become a haven for ships, And his border shall extend to Sidon (Gen. XLIX, 13). The interpretation of the name itself promises good things; because the Latin expression signifies deliverance from the night, which is certainly good, and of him who hopes in the wings of the Lord, whom his truth surrounds, so that he may not fear the nocturnal terror, and the business that walks in darkness. So here, Zebulun, he says, will dwell by the sea. He will see the shipwrecks of others, himself immune to danger, and watch others tossed by the waves in the strait of this world, who are carried about by every wind of doctrine, himself persevering immovable with the root of faith, just as the holy Church is rooted and founded in faith, watching the storms of heretics and the shipwrecks of the Jews, since they denied the governor

whom they had. Therefore, it dwells amidst the waves, not disturbed by the waves, and is more prepared to provide assistance than subject to danger, just as if those who are driven by severe storms to seek refuge in a harbor, the Church is present as a harbor of salvation, which with open arms calls the endangered into the embrace of its tranquility, showing them a place of trustworthy refuge. Therefore, in this age, the Church, like a harbor along the spreading shores, comes to the aid of those who are struggling, declaring that it is a prepared refuge for the believers, where weather-beaten ships can seek shelter. In the churches there are princes of Zebulun and princes of Naphtali, as the 67th psalm teaches, some of whom are liberators from the night storm, crying out: Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light (Rom. 13:12): others are of apostolic latitude, who can say: Our mouth is open to you, O Corinthians, our heart is enlarged (2 Cor. 6:11). They are the ones who, when they were in darkness, saw a great light, as the prophet testifies, saying: The region of Zebulun and the region of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan: the people who sat in darkness saw a great light: those who sat in the region of the shadow of death, light has arisen for them (Isa. 9:1-2).

Therefore, the Lord our God, who is the patriarch of this inheritance, placed explorers along the approaches of the ships, whose care extends even to Sidon, that is, to the Gentiles, so that by the mercy of the Lord, the sins of the nations may be washed away. For Sidon is the firstborn son of Ham, the same one who, due to his irreverence towards his father's piety, was condemned by his father's curse. Therefore, this nocturnal liberation, like a sentry of the spiritual rampart, extends even to the most serious sinners, and even to the Sidonians themselves, who were previously known as fervent hunters of wickedness due to superstition, and, as the interpretation teaches, it absolves them from the cursed inheritance and bestows upon them the blessed inheritance; so that where there was great guilt, there may now be abundant grace.

Chapter VI.

On the blessing of Issachar, which is mystically explained about Christ the Lord.

Issachar desired the good, resting among the lots, and seeing that rest is good and the land is fertile, he laid his shoulder to work and became a farmer (Gen. XLIX, 14 et seq.). Issachar is called wages, and therefore he is related to Christ, who is our reward; because we obtain him as our hope of eternal salvation not with gold or silver, but with faith and devotion. Therefore David also speaks of him, saying: Behold the inheritance of the Lord, children are a reward, the fruit of the womb (Ps. CXXVI, 3). And Moses says of this: A reward for those who dwell by the sea (Deut. XXXIII, 19). This is the one who desired what is good from the beginning, and did not know how to desire what is evil. Of whom Isaiah also says: Before a child knows how to call his father or mother, he did not believe in evil, choosing what is good (Isa. VIII, 4). He rested between the lots of the old and new Testaments, or in the midst of the prophets. Therefore, he appeared as a mediator between Moses and Elijah, to show us that he finds rest in their words, through whom many who renounce their sins believe in the living God; or that they themselves are witnesses of his resurrection and blessed rest.

Therefore, in order to call the Gentiles to the grace of his resurrection (for it is indeed a rich and fertile land that produces eternal fruits, fruits a hundred and sixty times over), he subjected his shoulder to work, subjecting himself to the cross, in order to carry our sins. And so the Prophet says: His authority is on his shoulder (Isaiah 9:6), that is, the power of divinity over the bodily

passion, or the cross surpassing the body. Therefore, he placed his shoulder on the plow, enduring all insults, subjected to labor in such a way that he was wounded because of our iniquities, and weakened because of our sins. And he became a farmer, knowing how to sow his land with good wheat, and plant fruitful trees with deep roots.

Chapter VII. On the blessing of Dan, which prophesies the future coming of the Antichrist from that tribe. An exhortation is added to shake off the sleep of vices; after the same tribe is predicted to come to the faith. And he shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a serpent by the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I wait for thy salvation, O LORD (Gen. XLIX, 16 et seq.). The simple meaning of this is that Dan also gave a judge to Israel. For after Joshua, judges were appointed for the people from the various tribes. Indeed, Samson was also from the tribe of Dan, and he judged Israel for twenty years. But this prophecy does not signify him, but the Antichrist who will come from the tribe of Dan, a fierce judge, and a monstrous tyrant, will judge his people. Like a serpent on the road, sitting in the path, he will try to overthrow those who walk in the way of truth, desiring to supplant the truth. This is indeed biting the horse's heel, so that the horse, wounded and poisoned by the serpent's bite, may lift its heel; just as Judas the betrayer, tempted by the devil, lifted his heel against the Lord Jesus, in order to overthrow the horseman, who threw himself down to lift everyone. Therefore, he fell not prostrate on his face as if sleeping, but backward, stretching himself from what is higher to what is lower, awaiting salvation from the Lord. For he knew that he would be raised up, and therefore he expected to lift up the fallen Adam.

Therefore, when we are going well on the road, let us beware that a snake does not hide in the path and overthrow the footprint of the horse, that is, of our body, and suddenly cast down the sleeping rider. For if we are watchful, we ought to be somewhat cautious and to avoid the bites of the serpent. Therefore, let not the sleep of negligence oppress us, the sleep of the world, let not the sleep of riches oppress us; lest it also be said of us: They have slept their sleep, and all the men of riches have found nothing (Psalm 75:6). But there are also sleeping knights, of whom it is written: Those who mounted the horses fell asleep (Ibid, 7). If greed wounds your heart, if lust inflames it, you sleep, knight, and therefore you cannot control your body, that is, your horse. Therefore, stay awake, so that even if you fall, that is, if you die, you do not fall asleep. For those who fall asleep in their sleep, find nothing. But you, wait for salvation from the Lord, look to the coming, so that you may find the grace of resurrection. Judas was sleeping: finally, he did not hear the words of Christ. Judas was sleeping, and indeed the sleep of riches, seeking a reward for his betrayal. The devil saw him sleeping, and oppressed by the heavy sleep of greed: he entered into his heart, wounded the horse, threw off the rider, whom he separated from Christ.

Moses blessed this tribe, saying: Dan is a lion's cub that shall leap forth from Bashan (Deut. XXXII, 22), that is, from confusion. Hence, according to the Greek translation, we should understand that Dan himself became a serpent sitting on the way. Dan means judgement. And therefore, this tribe underwent a grave risk of judgement, as the serpent, Antichrist, slipped in and wounded it with his venoms. But nevertheless, the Tribe itself will be freed from confusion, when it has confessed the rising Knight, who says: Whoever confesses me before men, I will confess him before my Father who is in heaven: but whoever denies me before men, I will deny him before my Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32-33).

Chapter VIII. By the blessing of Gad, the Lord will test the Jews and in turn they will be tested by Him, to foreshadow. When temptation arose, it tempted him, and he tempted them by deceiving them (Gen. XLIX, 19). Temptation is the gathering and cunning of the scribes and priests who were tempting the Lord Jesus about the tribute to Caesar, and about John's baptism, as the Scripture teaches (Matth. XXII, 17), to whom the Lord Jesus, in his righteousness, turned the temptation back (Ibid., 21, 23). By deceiving, that is, constantly and without any deliberation, with the intention of deceiving the tempters even more. For they said: In what authority do you do these things? He did not answer about what was asked, but he also proposed saying: I will also ask you one question: if you tell me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things (Ibid., 24). Again they said: Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not (Matth. XXII, 17)? He said: Why are you testing me, hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax. And they brought him a coin, then he asked them: Whose image and inscription is this (Ibid., 19)? They said to him: Caesar's. Therefore, he bound them with their own words, with their own obligation. Then he said to them: Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's (Ibid., 21), so that they could not come against their own words. Finally, they marveled and went away from him. But it is not surprising if he answered differently than what they expected, since he could see what was before his feet.

Moses clearly explained that this prophecy of Jacob was about Christ. For he said: Blessed be he that enlarges Gad. As a lion, he rested, breaking the arms and the heads of the rulers, and saw from the beginning that the land was divided with the princes of the people. The Lord has executed justice, and judgment with Israel (Deut. XXXIII, 21).

Therefore, we recognize who has rested like a lion, who has broken the arms of the mighty, who has seen the divisions of those who tempt from the beginning. Therefore, there is a chasm in the earth, which swallows the slanderers, where the temptation of the treacherous is.

Chapter IX. On the blessing of Asher, in which the riches of Christ the poor and the manifold gifts are expressed in men. His bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties. (Gen. XLIX, 20). The Latin interpretation of Aser signifies riches. Who then is rich, unless where the height of riches is wisdom and knowledge of God? Who is rich but the Lord Jesus, who always abounds, and never fails? The poor came into this world, and has abounded to all, and has filled all. How great is he in riches, who by his poverty has made all rich! But he became poor for our sake, being rich with the Father. He became poor so that he might deliver us from poverty; as the Apostle teaches, saying: For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. His poverty enriches, heals wounds, satisfies hunger, gives life to the dead, and raises the buried. Therefore, he is a treasure, and his is the abundant bread. And whoever eats this rich bread will never hunger. He gave this bread to the apostles, so that they would distribute it to the people who believed; and today he gives us the same bread, which the priest consecrates daily with his words. Therefore, this bread has become the food of the saints.

We are able to receive the Lord Himself, who gave His flesh for us, as He Himself says: I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert, and they died: but this is the bread which comes down from heaven, that if any man eat of it, he may not die (John 6:48-49). And so that no one may think that He is speaking of the death which comes through the separation of soul and

body, and may doubt with reason, since he knows that the holy apostles died this death, He added: I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this, he will live forever (Ibid., 51 and 52): that is, I did not speak about temporal life above, nor about the death of this life, in which even if anyone dies, nevertheless if he receives my bread, he will live forever. For he who receives, proves himself: but he who receives will not die the death of a sinner, because this bread is the forgiveness of sins.

Moses also prophesied most beautifully in his blessings, saying: Blessed from the sons of Asher, and he will be accepted by his brothers; and he shall dip his foot in oil, and his shoe shall be iron and brass. And as your days are, so shall your strength be. There is none like your God, who is in heaven, your helper, and the great Lord of the firmament: and God, protecting you from the beginning, and by the strength of the mighty arms, has cast out your enemy from before your face, saying: Perish. And Israel shall dwell in confidence alone upon the land: Jacob shall have abundance of grain and wine; and the heavens shall be dewy with mist for you. (Deut. XXXIII, 24 et seq.).

Chapter X. The blessing of Nephthali, faithful to Christ, is like the branches of a vine, clinging and releasing the bonds of death. The vine of Nephthalim is sent forth, stretching out its beauty in its branches. Another branch of the vine is pruned, which appears useless, so that the vine does not boast in vain in the exuberance of its branches; and another is cut back for a short time and then allowed to grow again, so that it may bear fruit, whose beauty is extended in its generation; for as it rises up to the heavens, it embraces the vine, and ascending to the summit, it adorns the precious stem of the vine with a perpetual collar. And he is a glory in his generation, because he overflows with many fruits from full palms. This is beautiful, but much more beautiful is the vine branch that signifies the spiritual, of which we are the branch, and we can bear fruit if we abide in the vine; but if not, we are cut off. The holy patriarch Nephthalim was an abundant vine. Hence Moses says: Nephthalim will receive satisfaction, and will be filled with the blessing of the Lord, possessing the sea and the south wind (Deut. 33:23). Moses explains this what Jacob had said, what it means to have a lax vine, that is, freed from the bonds of death through the grace of faith: in which the people of God are signified as being called to the freedom of faith, and the abundance of grace spread throughout the whole world, who may willingly bear the yoke of Christ with good fruit, and surround themselves with the true branches of that vine, that is, the mysteries of the Lord's cross, and not fear the danger of confessing it, but rather even glory in the name of Christ even in persecutions. This is truly a release from chains, which is bound by no bond of fear. Hence the prophet says: They shall go forth, and shall leap as calves of the stall (Malachi 4:2). And therefore it extends its beauty in its germ, because it is placed in the place of pasture, and is raised above the water of refreshment, and through the sacraments of its regeneration it brings forth the good beauty of the word, and is assumed into that most beautiful grace of Christ, who can increase the loveliness of your beauty.

Finally, above all, he adorns with what he has; for no one can give what he does not have. And so it is said: The Lord reigns, he is clothed with beauty (Psalm 92:1). For the grace of God clothes the Church with beauty, by depositing in that baptism the filthiness of all sins and shining forth with the splendor of heavenly grace. Therefore the bridegroom says of her: Who is this that looks forth as the dawn, fair as the sun, beautiful as the moon, a miracle as adorned (Song of Solomon 6:9).

Chapter XI.

In blessing Joseph, Jacob saw the prefigured mysteries of Christ and considered him to be blessed for a longer time. Furthermore, the individual parts of this blessing are applied to each of them.

Now, in order to conclude the story like a kind of epilogue, just as Scripture concludes, let us arrange the prophecy of Saint Jacob concerning Saint Joseph by name: My son Joseph, my son to be enlarged, my zealous and younger son return to me. Those who were consulting this plan cursed and aimed the Lord's bow against him, and their bowstrings were crushed with the power of their bows, and the sinews of their arms were loosened by the hand of powerful Jacob; and thus Israel prevailed by the God of your father. And my God has helped you, and he has blessed you with the blessings of heaven above, with the blessings of the deep that crouches beneath, with the blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father are mighty beyond the blessings of the eternal mountains, the bounties of the everlasting hills. May they be on the head of Joseph, and on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers.

What was the reason that, above all his sons, the father pursued Joseph more abundantly as his son, if not because he already saw in him the mysteries of Christ prefigured? Therefore, blessing him more who was expected than him who was seen, he said: Joseph, my son, is to be multiplied. Who is to be multiplied, if not Christ, whose grace is always increased, and whose glory has no end? Concerning whom also John says: He must increase, but I must decrease (John 3:30); for through his name, which is salvation and perfection, grace has been multiplied and abounded in this world. My son is to be enlarged; and therefore, because his brothers saw him growing, they began to envy. But Joseph understood and zeal entered into those whom he favored the most. Finally, he said: I came not but for the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24). And they said: We do not know where he is from (John 9:29). He cared for them, and they denied him. My son, he said, is younger. Indeed, he is the youngest, who was almost the last born. Finally, Scripture also says: Jacob loved him, because he was the son of his old age (Gen. XXXVII, 3). This also refers to Christ. For the Son of God, shining forth to the aged and already setting world, came late through the birth of the Virgin Mary, as if receiving a body as the son of old age according to the mystery, who always was with the Father before the ages. And the Father says to him: Return to me, calling him from the earth to heaven, whom he had sent for our salvation. Therefore, raising up his only-begotten Son, he frustrated the plan of the slanderers. Hence, Isaiah also says: The futile plan of your spirit (Isaiah 19:11). And the one who had been accusing and directing arrows like a hunter, has disarmed everything: he has crushed the power of those who relied on their own strength and not on God. Then, he said, Israel prevailed from the God of your father, and my God helped you. Who is it that strengthened Israel and helped his son, if not the only Father God, who said: Jacob, my servant, I will uphold him; Israel, my chosen one, my soul will uphold him (Isaiah 42:1). And he blessed him with the blessing of heaven above, and the blessing of the earth that has all things. For he subjected all things, heavenly things as the blessing of heaven, and earthly things as the blessing of the earth, so that he might rule over both men and angels.

Therefore, in that seemingly contemptible body, you have prevailed, he said, because of the blessings of breasts and womb, the blessings of your father and mother. He called them either

breasts or two Testaments, of which one was announced and the other was shown. And breasts are good, because they have nourished us with spiritual milk, and the Son offered himself to God: or he speaks of Mary's breasts, which were truly blessed, by which the holy Virgin gave the people of the Lord the drink of milk. And that woman in the Gospel said: Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you nursed (Luke 11:27)! But why did she say: Blessed is the womb of your father and mother, if we want to understand the womb alone of Mary, the reason will be hidden. For she could have said it concerning the womb of the mother alone. But I think it is more beautiful to understand both the generation of the Lord Jesus according to the spiritual mystery, and according to divinity, and according to the flesh, because he was begotten from the Father before the ages. And the Father says: My heart has uttered a word (Psalm 44:2); because it proceeded from that most intimate and incomprehensible substance of the Father, and it is always in Him. Therefore the evangelist also says: No one has ever seen God, except the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him (John 1:18). Just as the spiritual bosom of the Father is understood as a certain inner secret of paternal love and nature, in which the Son is always present, so also the spiritual bosom of the Father is the womb, the secret of the innermost mystery, from which the Son has proceeded as though from a generative womb. Finally, we read in diverse ways, sometimes the womb of the Father, sometimes his heart from which he uttered a word, sometimes his mouth from which justice proceeded, from which wisdom came forth, as he himself says: 'From the mouth of the Most High, I came forth.' (Sirach 24:5) Thus, just as we understand that generation from the Father, let us also understand the generation of Mary, the mother, when the womb of the mother is blessed, certainly the virginal womb of Mary, who gave birth to the Lord Jesus for us. Concerning which the Father says through the prophet Jeremiah: Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; and before you came forth from the womb, I sanctified you (Jer. I, 5). Therefore, the prophet declared the dual substance in Christ, of divinity and flesh: one from the Father, the other from the Virgin; in such a way, however, that he did not lack his divinity when he was born of the Virgin and was in the body. And so he surpassed all mountains, and the desires of the eternal hills. For he excelled not only all those sublime men of merit, the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, but even the sun, the moon, and the archangels, shining like the light of heaven, as he himself says: A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord (Matt. 10:24). For who among them was there to whom all things were subject, to whom he gave what they were? In which all his saints are blessed, because he is the head of all heads. For the head of a woman is the man, and the head of a man is Christ. And he is exalted above the peaks of the mountains, for he is the highest pinnacle of all: but the highest pinnacle belongs to the righteous. He calls them brothers, acquired through grace, and partakers in a certain regeneration. Therefore, we understand Joseph to be more of a brother to them, of whom it is said in the psalm: I will declare your name to my brothers, I will sing your praises in the midst of the Church (Psalm 22:23).

Finally, when Moses was about to complete the course of his life and bless the tribe of Joseph, he was not blessing the already deceased Joseph, but Christ, as you have it written about Joseph: 'From the blessing of the Lord be his land, from the boundaries of the heavens, and from the dew, and from the depths of the springs below, and according to the hour the course of the sun was made, and from the months that come together, and from the summit of the mountains, from the beginning, and from the summit of the eternal hills, and until the hour of the earth's fullness, and from Him who was seen in the bush, let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon his

crown.' He shall be honored among his brothers. The firstborn of his bull is his glory, with horns like a wild ox; he shall gore the peoples, all of them, to the ends of the earth. They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. (Deut. XXXIII, 13 et seq.) The same blessing is that which has the fullness of both heavenly and earthly things, and the special grace of Christ: who appeared in the burning bush and said to Moses: Take off the sandals from your feet (Exod. III, 5): who is above all gods; because He Himself is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that in all things He might have the preeminence: for it pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell. And therefore only to him belongs the prerogative of this blessing, from the summit of heaven to the farthest end of the earth. He is indeed before all, in whom all things consist: who also through the blood of his cross has pacified all things, whether those that are in heaven or those that are on earth. In representing his type, Saint Joseph is beautifully blessed, so that he may be honored among his brothers. The firstborn of the bull is its glory, having horn like that of a unicorn, by which it will scatter the nations. And the good bull is like a sacrifice for sins, and a victim of the whole world, in order to reconcile all things. Its glory is holy; for every holy thing is a firstborn, as we have shown elsewhere (Book II, concerning Abel and Cain, chapter 2, number 3, 12). Therefore, even Levi, not by the order of his age, but by the prerogative of his sacred succession, deserved to be called the firstborn. And truly his holy glory, of whom it is written rising up: Beautiful in form above the sons of men (Psalm 44:3); for he is the firstborn from the dead, having horns like a unicorn. But when he says horns, why did he use unicorn? For the unicorn itself, as experts say, is not found among the generations of wild beasts. And therefore we ought to value the unique Word more, because the substantive Word of God is one, not many words. And Anna also said: The Lord will judge the ends of the earth, and will give strength to his king, and will exalt the horn of his Christ (1 Samuel 2:10). And Isaiah said: A vineyard was made in a horn in a fertile place (Isaiah 5:1); for the Church flourishes with the only begotten Son of God, holding the unique Word of God, in whom is the fullness of power and wisdom, from whose abundance the harvest of faith has sprung. The saints follow this Word.

Ten thousand, he said, Ephraim, and thousands of Manasseh (Deut. XXXIII, 17), that is, he should rule over both the Jews and the Gentiles, and acquire for himself the fullness of the Church from both peoples. Therefore, holy Jacob placed his right hand on Ephraim; because we read in the Song of Songs saying: My brother is white and ruddy, chosen from ten thousand (Cant. V, 10). Finally, even in the case of David and the young Mary, the author from whose line Christ was born through the Virgin's childbirth, they preached in ten thousand: but Saul in thousands, although they should have had more reverence for the king. Therefore, whoever exalts the horn of Christ by confessing His glory, will also receive horns. Hence, the holy ones are also called unicorns in the verse of the psalm: And the beloved is like the son of unicorns (Psalm 28:6). For just as this animal, when horns begin to grow, signifies the progress of a fuller age, so when horns begin to sprout from a certain part of our soul, they seem to signify the progress of a more perfect virtue, and they continue to grow until they are fulfilled. By this horn the Lord Jesus crushed the nations, in order to destroy superstition and bring salvation, as He Himself says: 'I will strike and I will heal' (Deut. XXXII, 39). Therefore, like an imitator of this bull, the Prophet says: 'Through you we will gore our enemies with our horn' (Psal. XLIII, 6), that is, destroying every high thing exalting itself against the knowledge of God. And therefore, according to the Law, clean animals have horns (Deut. XIV, 4 and 5): for the Law is spiritual. For those who are able to repel the allurements of this world with the word of God and the observance of virtue, they seem to be fortified with horns like

the helmets of their own heads. And rightly, the power of an astonishing speech is said to be like a horn (Psalm 97:6), which ignites the good soldiers of Christ to battle so that we may snatch the spoils from the enemy, the devil. Therefore, we are on the battlefield, and we see many of us held captive in the enemy's camp: they must be freed from the heavy yoke of slavery.

Chapter XII. The blessing of Benjamin signifies mystically the persecution of Paul against the Church, as well as his conversion and preaching. The devil has many wolves, whom he directs towards the sheep of Christ; and therefore Joseph, being intelligent, snatched the wolf Paul, the enemy who came to plunder the sheep, in order to save his own sheep, making him a teacher from a persecutor. Concerning whom Jacob says, as it is written: Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he shall devour prey, and in the evening he shall divide the spoil among the princes (Gen. XLIX, 27). The wolf was present when he scattered and devoured the sheep of the Church. But the one who was a wolf became a shepherd. The wolf was there when Saul entered houses and dragged men and women to prison. The wolf was there when he breathed threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, seeking letters from the chief priests to capture the servants of Christ. But Jesus blinded him like a wolf wandering in the darkness of the night with the outpouring of His light. Therefore, when Rachel gave birth to Benjamin, she called his name Son of my sorrow, prophesying that from her would come the tribe of Paul, who would afflict the children of the Church during his time of persecution, and cause great pain to their mother. But nevertheless, at a later time he divided the same bread among the leaders, proclaiming the word of God to the Gentiles and calling many to faith. During this discussion, as we read, the proconsul Paul and the prince Publius received the grace of the Lord (Acts 13:12; 28:8). But beautifully also, when Moses blessed the tribe of Benjamin, he said: The beloved of the Lord shall dwell securely, and God shall overshadow him all the days, and the beloved of the Lord shall rest between his shoulders (Deut. XXXIII, 12), who has also become a vessel of election. For he was converted to the Lord by the mercy and love of the Lord. Therefore, offering nothing to his own merit, but attributing everything to Christ, he says: For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain (I Cor. XV, 9 et 10). He will dwell with confidence in the house that he previously laid waste, he will dwell in the tabernacles of Christ, who previously wandered like a wolf in the woods. And God overshadowed him when Christ appeared to him. Although he saw nothing with his open eyes, he still saw Christ. And he rightly saw the present one, whom he also heard speaking. This shadow is not of blindness, but of grace. Finally, Mary is told: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you (Luke 1:35). And he will rest between the shoulders, that is, between good deeds and precious works. For above, you have what Issachar placed his shoulder to work, and he became a farmer. Whom Paul imitated, he planted new plants of faith, and therefore, like a good farmer, he said: I planted, Apollo watered (I Cor. III, 6).

On the Decease of His Brother Saytrus - Book 1

Book I.

Book I.

1. We have brought hither, dearest brethren, my sacrifice, a sacrifice undefiled, a sacrifice well pleasing to God, my lord and brother Satyrus. I did not forget that he was mortal, nor did my feelings deceive me, but grace abounded more exceedingly. And so I have nothing to complain of, but have cause for thankfulness to God, for I always desired that if any troubles should await either the Church or myself, they should rather fall on me and on my house. Thanks, therefore, be to God, that in this time of common fear, when everything is dreaded from the barbarian movements, I ended the trouble of all by my personal grief, and that I dreaded for all which was turned upon me. And may this be fully accomplished, so that my grief may be a ransom for the grief of all.

2. Nothing among things of earth, dearest brethren, was more precious to me, nothing more worthy of love, nothing more dear than such a brother, but public matters come before private. And should any one enquire what was his feeling; he would rather be slain for others than live for himself, because Christ died according to the flesh for all, that we might learn not to live for ourselves alone.

3. To this must be added that I cannot be ungrateful to God; for I must rather rejoice that I had such a brother than grieve that I had lost a brother, for the former is a gift, the latter a debt to be paid. And so, as long as I might, I enjoyed the loan entrusted to me, now He Who deposited the pledge has taken it back. There is no difference between denying that a pledge has been deposited and grieving at its being returned. In each there is untrustworthiness, and in each [eternal] life is risked. It is a fault if you refuse repayment, and piety if you refuse a sacrifice. Since, too, the lender of money can be made a fool of, but the Author of nature, the Lender of all that we need, cannot be cheated. And so the larger the amount of the loan, so much the more gratitude is due for the use of the capital.

4. Wherefore, I cannot be ungrateful concerning my brother, for he has given back that which was common to nature, and has gained what is peculiar to grace alone. For who would refuse the common lot? Who would grieve that a pledge specially entrusted to him is taken away, since the Father gave up His only Son to death for us? Who would think that he ought to be excepted from the lot of dying, who has not been excepted from the lot of being born? It is a great mystery of divine love, that not even in Christ was exception made of the death of the body; and although He was the Lord of nature, He refused not the law of the flesh which He had taken upon Him. It is necessary for me to die, for Him it was not necessary. Could not He Who said of His servant, "If I will that he tarry thus until I come, what is that to thee?"¹ not have remained as He was, if so He willed? But by continuance of my brother's life here, he would have destroyed his reward and my sacrifice. What is a greater consolation to us than that according to the flesh Christ also died? Or why should I weep too violently for my brother, knowing as I do that that divine love could not die.

5. Why should I alone weep more than others for him for whom you all weep? I have merged my personal grief in the grief of all, especially because my tears are of no use, whereas yours strengthen faith and bring consolation. You who are rich weep, and by weeping prove that riches gathered together are of no avail for safety, since death cannot be put off by a money payment, and the last day carries off alike the rich and the poor. You that are old weep, because in him you fear that you see the lot of your own children; and for this reason, since you cannot prolong the life of the body, train your children not to bodily enjoyment but to virtuous duties. And you that are young weep too, because the end of life is not the ripeness of old age. The poor too wept, and, which is of much more worth, and much more fruitful, washed away his transgressions with their tears. Those are redeeming tears, those are groanings which hide the grief of death, that grief which through the plenteousness of eternal joy covers over the feeling of former grief. And so, though the funeral be that of a private person, yet is the mourning public; and therefore cannot the weeping last long which is hallowed by the affection of all,

6. For why should I weep for thee, my most loving brother, who wast thus torn from me that thou mightest be the brother of all? For I have not lost but changed my intercourse with thee; before we were inseparable in the body, now we are undivided in affection; for thou remainest with me, and ever wilt remain. And, indeed, whilst thou wast living with me, our country never tore thee from me, nor didst thou thyself ever prefer our country to me; and now thou art become surety for that other country, for I begin to be no stranger there where the better portion of myself already is. I was never wholly engrossed in myself, but the greater part of each of us was in the other, yet we were each of us in Christ, in Whom is the whole sum of all, and the portion of each severally. This grave is more pleasing to me than thy natal soil, in which is the fruit not of nature but of grace, for in that body which now lies lifeless lies the better work of my life, since in this body, too, which I bear is the richer portion of thyself.

7. And would that, as memory and gratitude are devoted to thee, so, too, whatever time I have still to breathe this air, I could breathe it into thy life, and that half of my time might be struck off from me and be added to thine! For it had been just that for those, whose use of hereditary property was always undivided, the period of life should not have been divided, or at least that we, who always without difference shared everything in common during life, should not have a difference in our deaths.

8. But now, brother, whither shall I advance, or whither shall I turn? The ox seeks his fellow, and conceives itself incomplete, and by frequent lowing shows its tender longing. if perchance that one is wanting with whom it has been wont to draw the plough. And shall I, my brother, not long after thee? Or can I ever forget thee, with whom I always drew the plough of this life? In work I was inferior, but in love more closely bound; not so much fit through my strength, as endurable through thy patience, who with the care of anxious affection didst ever protect my side with thine, as a brother in thy love, as a father in thy care, as older in watchfulness, as younger in respect. So in the one degree of relationship thou didst expend on me the duties of many, so that I long after not one only but many lost in thee, in whom alone flattery was unknown, dutifulness was portrayed. For thou hadst nothing to which to add by pretence, inasmuch as all was comprised in thy dutifulness, so as neither to receive addition nor await a change.

9. But whither am I going, in my immoderate grief, forgetful of my duty, mindful of kindness received? The Apostle calls me back, and as it were puts a bit upon my sorrow, saying, as you heard just now: "We would not that ye should be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that sleep, that ye be not sorrowful, as the rest which have no hope."² Pardon me, dearest brethren. For we are not all able to say: "Be ye imitators of me, as I also am of Christ."³ But if you seek one to imitate, you have One Whom you may imitate. All are not fitted to teach, would that all were apt to learn.

10. But we have not incurred any grievous sin by our tears. Not all weeping proceeds from unbelief or weakness. Natural grief is one thing, distrustful sadness is another, and there is a very great difference between longing for what you have lost and lamenting that you have lost it. Not only grief has tears, joy also has tears of its own. Both piety excites weeping, and prayer waters the couch, and supplication, according to the prophet's saying, washes the bed,⁴ Their friends made a great mourning when the patriarchs were buried. Tears, then, are marks of devotion, not producers of grief.⁵ I confess, then, that I too wept, but the Lord also wept. He wept for one not related to Him, I for my brother. He wept for all in weeping for one, 'I will weep for thee in all, my brother.

11. He wept for what affected us, not Himself; for the Godhead sheds no tears; but He wept in that nature in which He was sad; He wept in that in which He was crucified, in that in which He died, in that in which He was buried. He wept in that which the prophet this day brought to our minds: "Mother Sion shall say, A man, yea, a man was made in her, and the Most High Himself established her."⁶ He wept in that nature in which He called Sion Mother, born in Judaea, conceived by the Virgin. But according to His Divine Nature He could not have a mother, for He is the Creator of His mother. So far as He was made, it was not by divine but by human generation, because He was made man, God was born.

12. But you read in another place: "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given."⁷ In the word Child is an indication of age, in that of Son the fulness of the Godhead. Made of His mother, born of the Father yet the Same Person was both born and given, you must not think of two but of one. For one is the Son of God, both born of the Father and sprung from the Virgin, differing in order, but in name agreeing in one, as, too, the lesson just heard teaches for "a man was made in her and the Most High Himself established her;"⁸ man indeed in the body, the Most High in power. And though He be God and man in diversity of nature, yet is He at the same time one in each nature. One property, then, is peculiar to His own nature, another He has in common with us, but in both is He one, and in both is He perfect.

13. Therefore it is no subject of wonder that God made Him to be both Lord and Christ. He made Him Jesus, Him, that is, Who received the name in His bodily nature; He made Him of Whom also the patriarch David writes: "Mother Sion shall say, A man, yea, a man is made in her." But being made man He is unlike the Father, not in Godhead but in His body; not separated from the Father, but differing in office, abiding united in power, but separated in the mystery of the Passion.

14. The treatment of this topic demands more arguments, by which to demonstrate the authority of the Father, the special property of the Son, and the Unity of the whole Trinity; but to-day I have undertaken the office of consolation, not of discussion, although it is customary in consoling to draw away the mind from its grief by application to discussion. But I would rather moderate the

grief than alter the affection, that the longing may rather be assuaged than lulled to sleep. For I have no wish to turn away too far from my brother, and to be led off by other thoughts, seeing that this discourse has been undertaken, as it were, for the sake of accompanying him, that I might follow in affection him departing, and embrace in mind him whom I see with my eyes. For it gives me pleasure to fix the whole gaze of my eyes on him, to encompass him with kindly endearments; whilst my mind is stupefied, and I feel as though he were not lost whom I am able still to see present; and I think him not dead, my services to whom I do not as yet perceive to be wanting, services to which I had devoted the whole of my life and the drawing of every breath.

15. What, then, can I pay back in return for such kindness and such pains? I had made thee, my brother, my heir; thou hast left me as the heir; I hoped to leave thee as survivor, and thou hast left me. I, in return for thy kindnesses, that I might repay thy benefits, gave wishes; now I have lost my wishes yet not thy benefits. What shall I, succeeding to my own heir, do? What shall I do who outlive my own life? What shall I do, no longer sharing this light which yet shines on me? What thanks, what good offices, can I repay to thee? Thou hast nothing from me but tears. And perchance, secure of thy reward, thou desirest not those tears which are all that I have left. For even when thou wast yet alive, thou didst forbid me to weep, and didst show that our grief was more pain to thee than thine own death. Tears are bidden to flow no longer, and weeping is repressed. And gratitude to thee forbids them too, lest whilst we weep for our loss we seem to despair concerning thy merits.

16. But for myself at least thou lessenest the bitterness of that grief; I have nothing to fear who used to fear for thee. I have nothing which the world can now snatch from me. Although our holy sister still survives, venerable for her blameless life, thy equal in character, and not falling short in kindly offices; yet we both used to fear more for thee, we felt that all the sweetness of this life was stored up in thee. To live for thy sake was a delight, to die for thee were no cause of sorrow, for we both used to pray that thou mightest survive, it was no pleasure that we should survive thee. When did not our very soul shudder when a dread of this kind touched us? How were our minds dismayed by the tidings of thy sickness!

17. Alas for our wretched hopes! We thought that he was restored to us whom we see carried off, and we now recognize that thy departure hence was obtained by thy vows to the holy martyr Lawrence!⁹ And indeed I would that thou hadst obtained not only a safe passage hence, but also a longer time of life! Thou couldst have obtained many years of life, since thou wast able to obtain thy departure hence. And I indeed thank Thee, Almighty Everlasting God, that Thou hast not denied us at least this last comfort, that Thou hast granted us the longed-for return of our much loved brother from the regions of Sicily and Africa; for he was snatched away so soon after his return as though his death were delayed for this alone, that he might return to his brethren.

18. Now, I clearly have my pledge which no change can any more tear from me; I have the relics which I may embrace, I have the tomb which I may cover with my body, I have the grave on which I may lie, and I shall believe that I am more acceptable to God, because I shall rest upon the bones of that holy body. Would that I had been able in like manner to place my body in the way of thy death! Hadst thou been attacked with the sword, I would have rather offered myself to be pierced for thee; had I been able to recall thy life as it was passing away, I would have rather offered my own.

19. It profited me nothing to receive thy last breath, nor to have breathed into the mouth of thee dying, for I thought that either I myself should receive thy death, or should transfer my life to thee. O that sad, yet sweet pledge of the last kiss! O the misery of that embrace, in which the lifeless body began to stiffen, the last breath vanished! I tightened my arms indeed, but had already lost him whom I was holding; I drew in thy last breath with my mouth, that I might share thy death. But in some way that breath became lifegiving to me, and even in death diffused an odour of greater love. And if I was unable to lengthen thy life by my breath, would that at least the strength of thy last breath might have been transfused into my mind, and that our affection might have inspired me with that purity and innocence of thine. Thou wouldst have left me, dearest brother, this inheritance, which would not smite the affections with tears of grief, but commend thine heir by notable grace.

20. What, then, shall I now do, since all the sweetness, all the solace, in fine, all the charms of that life are lost to me? For thou wast alone my solace at home, my charm abroad; thou, I say, my adviser in counsel, the sharer in my cares, the averter of anxiety, the driver away of sorrow; thou wast the protector of my acts and the defender of my thoughts; thou, lastly, the only one on whom rested care of home and of public matters. I call thy holy soul to witness that, in the building of the church,¹⁰ I often feared lest I might displease thee. Lastly, when thou camest back thou didst chide thy delay. So wast thou, at home and abroad, the instructor and teacher of the priest, that thou didst not suffer him to think of domestic matters, and didst take thought to care for public matters. But I may not fear to seem to speak boastingly, for this is thy meed of praise, that thou, without displeasing any, both didst manage thy brother's house and recommend his priesthood.

21. I feel, indeed, that my mind is touched by the repetition of thy services and the enumeration of thy virtues, and yet in being thus affected I find my rest, and although these memories renew my grief, they nevertheless bring pleasure. Am I able either not to think of thee, or ever to think of thee without tears? And shall I ever be able either not to remember such a brother, or to remember him without tearful gratitude? For what has ever been pleasant to me that has not had its source in thee? What, I say, has ever been a pleasure to me without thee, or to thee without me? Had we not every practice in common, almost to our very eyesight and our sleep? Were our wills ever at variance? And what step did we not take in common? So that we almost seemed in raising our feet to move each others body.

22. But if ever either had to go forth without the other, one would think that his side was unprotected, one could see his countenance troubled, one would suppose that his soul was sad, the accustomed grace, the usual vigour did not shine forth, the loneliness was a subject of dread to all, and made them fearful of some sickness. Such a strange thing it seemed to all that we were separated. I certainly, impatient at my brother's absence, and having it constantly in mind, kept on turning my head seeking him, as it were, present, and seemed to myself then to see him and speak to him. But if I was disappointed in my hope, I seemed to myself, as it were, to be dragging a yoke on my bowed down neck, to advance with difficulty, to meet others with diffidence, and to return home hurriedly, since it gave me no pleasure to go farther without thee.

23. But when we both had to go forth, there were not more steps on the way than words, nor was our pace quicker than our talk, and it was less for the sake of walking than for the pleasure of conversing, for each of us hung on the lips of the other. We thought not of gazing intently on the

view as we passed along, but listened to each other's anxious talk, drank in the kindly expression of the eyes, and inhaled the delight of the brother's appearance. How I used silently to admire within myself thy virtues, how I congratulated myself that God had given me such a brother, so modest, so capable, so innocent, so simple, so that when I thought of thy innocence I began to doubt thy capability, when I saw thy capability I could hardly imagine thy innocence! But thou didst combine both with wonderful perfection.

24. Lastly, what we both had been unable to effect, thou didst accomplish alone. Prosper, as I hear, congratulated himself because he thought that on account of my priesthood he need not restore what he had purloined, but he found thy power alone to be greater than that of us both together. And so he paid all, and was not ungrateful for thy moderation, and did not scoff at thy modesty. But for whom, brother, didst thou seek to gain that? We wished that should be the reward of thy labours which was the proof of them. Thou didst accomplish everything, and when having done all thou didst return, thou alone, who art to be preferred to all, art torn from us; as if thou hadst put off death for this end, that thou mightest fulfil the office of affection, and then carry off the palm for capability.

25. How little, dearest brother, did the honours of this world delight us, because they separated us from one another! And we accepted them, not because the acquisition of them was to be desired, but that there might be no appearance of paltry dissimulation. Or perhaps they were therefore granted to us, that, inasmuch as by thy early death thou wast about to shatter our pleasure, we might learn to live without each other.

26. And indeed I recognize the foreboding dread of my mind, when I often go again through what I have written. I endeavoured to restrain thee, brother, from visiting Africa thyself, and wished thee rather to send some one. I was afraid to let thee go that journey, to trust thee to the waves, and a greater fear than usual came over my mind; but thou didst arrange the journey, and order the business, and, as I hear, didst entrust thyself again to the waves in an old and leaky vessel. For since thou wast aiming at speed, thou didst set caution aside; eager to do me a kindness, thou madest nothing of thy danger.

27. O deceitful joy! O the uncertain course of earthly affairs! We thought that he who was returned from Africa, restored from the sea, preserved after shipwreck, could not now be snatched from us; but, though on land, we suffered a more grievous shipwreck, for the death of him whom shipwreck at sea owing to strong swimming could not kill is shipwreck to us. For what enjoyment remains to us, from whom so sweet an ornament has been taken, so bright a light in this world's darkness has been extinguished? For in him an ornament not only of our family but of the whole fatherland has perished.

28. I feel, indeed, the deepest gratitude to you, dearest brethren, holy people, that you esteem my grief as no other than your own, that you feel this bereavement as having happened to yourselves, that you offer me the tears of the whole city, of every age, and the good wishes of every rank, with unusual affection. For this is not the grief of private sympathy, but as it were a service and offering of public good-will. And should any sympathy with me because of the loss of such a brother touch you, I have abundant fruit from it, I have the pledge of your affection. I might prefer that my brother were living, but yet public kindness is in prosperity very pleasant, and in adversity very grateful.

29. And, indeed, so great kindness seems to me to merit no ordinary gratitude. For not without a purpose are the widows in the Acts of the Apostles described as weeping when Tabitha was dead,¹¹ or the crowd in the Gospel, moved by the widow's tears and accompanying the funeral of the young man who was to be raised again.¹² There is, then, no doubt that by your tears the protection of the apostles is obtained; no doubt, I say, that Christ is moved to mercy, seeing you weeping. Though He has not now touched the bier, yet He has received the spirit commended to Him, and if He have not called the dead by the bodily voice, yet He has by the authority of His divine power delivered my brother's soul from the pains of death and from the attacks of wicked spirits. And though he that was dead has not sat up on the bier, yet he has found rest in Christ; and if he have not spoken to us, yet he sees those things which are above us, and rejoices in that he now sees higher things than we. For by the things which we read in the Gospels we understand what shall be, and what we see at present is a sign of what is to be.

30. He had no need of being raised again for time, for whom the raising again for eternity is waiting. For why should he fall back into this wretched and miserable state of corruption, and return to this mournful life, for whose rescue from such imminent evils and threatening dangers we ought rather to rejoice? For if no one mourns for Enoch, who was translated¹³ when the world was at peace and wars were not raging, but the people rather congratulated him, as Scripture says concerning him: "He was taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding,"¹⁴ with how much greater justice must this now be said, when to the dangers of the world is added the uncertainty of life. He was taken away that he might not fall into the hands of the barbarians; he was taken away that he might not see the ruin of the whole earth, the end of the world, the burial of his relatives, the death of fellow-citizens; lest, lastly, which is more bitter than any death, he should see the pollution of the holy virgins and widows.

31. So then, brother, I esteem thee happy both in the beauty of thy life and in the opportuneness of thy death. For thou wast snatched away not from us but from dangers; thou didst not lose life but didst escape the fear of threatening troubles. For with the pity of thy holy mind for those near to thee, if thou knewest that Italy was now oppressed by the nearness of the enemy, how wouldst thou groan, how wouldst thou grieve that our safety wholly depended on the barrier of the Alps, and that the protection of purity consisted in barricades of trees! With what sorrow wouldst thou mourn that thy friends were separated from the enemy by so slight a division, from an enemy, too, both impure and cruel, who spares neither chastity nor life.

32. How, I say, couldst thou bear these things which we are compelled to endure, and perchance (which is more grievous) to behold virgins ravished, little children torn from the embrace of their parents and tossed on javelins, the bodies consecrated to God defiled, and even aged widows polluted? How, I say, couldst thou endure these things, who even with thy last breath, forgetful of thyself, yet not without thought for us, didst warn us concerning the invasion of the barbarians, saying that not in vain hadst thou said that we ought to flee. Perchance was it because thou didst see that we were left destitute by thy death, and thou didst it, not out of weakness of spirit, but from affection, and wast weak with respect to us, but strong with respect to thyself. For when thou wast summoned home by the noble man Symmachus thy parent,¹⁵ because Italy was said to be blazing with war, because thou wast going into danger, because thou wast likely to fall amongst enemies, thou didst answer that this was the cause of thy coming, that thou mightest not fail us in danger, that thou mightest show thyself a sharer in thy brother's peril.

33. Happy, then, was he in so opportune a death, because he has not been preserved for this sorrow. Certainly thou art happier than thy holy sister, deprived of thy comfort, anxious for her own modesty, lately blessed with two brothers, now wretched because of both, being able neither to follow the one nor to leave the other; for whom thy tomb is a lodging, and the burying-place of thy body a home. And would that even this resting-place were safe! Our food is mingled with weeping and our drink with tears, for thou hast given us the bread of tears as food, and tears to drink in large measure,¹⁶ nay, even beyond measure.

34. What now shall I say of myself, who may not die lest I leave my sister, and desire not to live lest I be separated from thee? For what can ever be pleasant to me without thee, in whom was always my whole pleasure? or what satisfaction is it to remain longer in this life, and to linger on the earth where we lived with pleasure so long as we lived together? If there were anything which could delight us here, it could not delight without thee; and if ever we had earnestly desired to prolong our life, now at any rate we would not exist without thee.

35. This is indeed unendurable. For what can be endured without thee, such a companion of my life, such a sharer of my toil and partaker of my duties? And I could not even make his loss more endurable by dwelling on it beforehand, so much did my mind fear to think of any such thing concerning him! Not that I was ignorant of his condition, but a certain kind of prayers and vows had so clouded the sense of common frailty, that I knew not how to think anything concerning him except entire prosperity.

36. And then lately, when I was oppressed by a severe attack (would that it had been fatal), I grieved only that thou wast not sitting by my couch, and sharing the kindly duty with my holy sister mightest with thy fingers close my eyes when dead. What had I wished? What am I now pondering? What vows are wanting? What services are to succeed? I was preparing one thing, I am compelled to set forth another; not being the subject of the funeral rites but the minister. O hard eyes, which could behold my brother dying! O cruel and unkind hands, which closed those eyes in which I used to see so much! O still harder neck, which could bear so sad a burden, though it were in a service full of consolation.

37. Thou, my brother, hadst more justly done these things for me. I used to expect these services at thy hands, I used to long for them. But now, having survived my own life, what comfort can I find without thee, who alone usedst to comfort me when mourning, to excite my happiness and drive away my sorrow? How do I now behold thee, my brother, who now addressest no words to me, offerest me no kiss? Though, indeed, our mutual love was so deeply seated in each of us, that it was cherished rather by inward affection than made public by open caresses, for we who professed such mutual trust and love did not seek the testimony of others. The strong spirit of our brotherhood had so infused itself into each of us, that there was no need to prove our love by caresses; but our minds being conscious of our affection, we, satisfied with our inward love, did not seem to require the show of caresses, whom the very appearance of each other fashioned for mutual love; for we seemed, I know not by what spiritual stamp or bodily likeness, to be the one in the other.

38. Who saw thee, and did not think that he had seen me? How often have I saluted those who, because they had previously saluted thee, said that they had been already saluted by me? How many said something to thee, and related that they had said it to me? What pleasure, what

amusement often was given me by this, because I saw that they were mistaken in us? What an agreeable mistake, what a pleasant slip, how innocent a deceit, how sweet a trick! For there was nothing for me to fear in thy words or acts, and I rejoiced when they were ascribed to me.

39. But if they insisted all too vehemently that they had given me some information, I used to smile and answer with delight: Take care that it was not my brother whom you told. For since we had everything in common, one spirit and one disposition, yet the secrets of friends alone were not common property, not that we were afraid of danger in the communication, but that we might keep faith by withholding it. Yet if we had a matter to be consulted about, our counsel was always in common, though the secret was not always made common. For although our friends spoke to either of us, so that what they said might reach the other; yet I know that secrets were for the most part kept with such good faith that they were not imparted even to the other brother. For this is a convincing proof that was not betrayed without which had not been imparted to the brother.

40. I confess, then, that being raised by these so great and excellent benefits to a kind of mental ecstasy, I had ceased to fear that I might be the survivor, because I thought him more worthy to live, and therefore received the blow which I am unable to endure, for the wounds of such pain are more easily borne when dwelt upon beforehand than when unexpected. Who will now console me full of sorrows? Who will raise up him that is smitten down? With whom shall I share my cares? Who will set me free from the business of this world? For thou wast the manager of our affairs, the censor of the servants, the decider between brother and sister, the decider not in matters of strife but of affection.

41. For if at any time there was a discussion between me and my holy sister on any matter, as to which was the preferable opinion, we used to take thee as judge, who wouldst hurt no one, and anxious to satisfy each, didst keep to thy loving affection and the right measure in deciding, so as to let each depart satisfied, and gain for thyself the thanks of each. Or if thou thyself broughtest anything for discussion, how pleasantly didst thou argue! and thy very indignation, how free from bitterness it was! how was thy discipline not unpleasant to the servants themselves! since thou didst strive rather to blame thyself before thy brethren than to punish through excitement! For our profession restrained in us the zeal for correction, and, indeed, thou, my brother, didst remove from us every inclination to correct, when thou didst promise to punish and desire to alleviate.

42. That is, then, evidence of no ordinary prudence, which virtue is thus defined by the wise. The first of good things is to know God, and with a pious mind to reverence Him as true and divine, and to delight in that loveable and desirable beauty of the eternal Truth with the whole affection of the mind. And the second consists in deriving from that divine and heavenly source of nature, love towards our neighbours, since even the wise of this world have borrowed from our laws. For they never could have obtained those points for the discipline of men, except from that heavenly fount of the divine law.

43. What, then, shall I say of his reverence in regard to the worship of God? He, before being initiated in the more perfect mysteries, being in danger of shipwreck when the ship that bore him, dashed upon rocky shallows, was being broken up by the waves tossing it hither and thither, fearing not death but lest he should depart this life without the Mystery, asked of those whom he knew to be initiated the divine Sacrament of the faithful; not that he might gaze on secret things with curious eyes, but to obtain aid for his faith. For he caused it to be bound in a napkin, and the

napkin round his neck, and so cast himself into the sea, not seeking a plank loosened from the framework of the ship, by floating on which he might be rescued, for he sought the means of faith alone. And so believing that he was sufficiently protected and defended by this, he sought no other aid.

44. One may consider his courage at the same time, for he, when the vessel was breaking up, did not as a shipwrecked man seize a plank, but as a brave man found in himself the support of his courage, nor did his hope fail nor his expectation deceive him. And then, when preserved from the waves and brought safe to land in the port, he first recognized his Leader, to Whom he had committed himself, and at once after either himself rescuing the servants, or seeing that they were rescued, disregarding his goods, and not longing for what was lost, he sought the Church of God, that he might return thanks for his deliverance, and acknowledge the eternal mysteries, declaring that there was no greater duty than thanksgiving. But if not to be grateful to man has been judged like to murder, how enormous a crime is it not to be grateful to God!

45. Now it is the mark of a prudent man to know himself, and, as it has been defined by the wise, to live in accordance with nature. What, then, is so much in accordance with nature as to be grateful to the Creator? Behold this heaven, does it not render thanks to its Creator when He is seen? For "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handywork."¹⁷ The sea itself when it is quiet and at rest sets forth a representation of the Divine Quiet; when it is stirred up, it shows that the wrath on high is terrible. Do we not all rightly admire the grace of God, when we observe that senseless nature restrains its waves as it were with sense and reason, and that the waves know their own limit? And what shall I say of the earth, which in obedience to the divine command freely supplies food to all living things; and the fields restore what they have received multiplied as it were by accumulating interest, and heaped up.

46. So he who by the guidance of nature had grasped the methods of the divine work in the ardent vigour of his mind, knew that thanks should be paid first of all to the Preserver of all; but inasmuch as he could not repay, he could at least feel grateful. For the essence of this thankfulness is that when it is offered it is felt, and by being felt is offered. So he offered thanks and brought away faith. For he who had felt such protection on the part of the heavenly Mystery wrapped in a napkin, how much did he expect if he received it with his mouth and drew it to the very depth of his bosom? How much more must he have been expecting of that, when received into his breast, which had so benefited him when covered with a napkin?

47. But he was not so eager as to lay aside caution. He called the bishop to him, and esteeming that there can be no true thankfulness except it spring from true faith, he enquired whether he agreed with the Catholic bishops, that is, with the Roman Church?¹⁸ And possibly at that place the Church of the district was in schism. For at that time Lucifer had withdrawn from our communion, and although he had been an exile for the faith, and had left inheritors of his own faith,¹⁹ yet my brother did not think that there could be true faith in schism. For though schismatics kept the faith towards God, yet they kept it not towards the Church of God, certain of whose limbs they suffered as it were to be divided, and her members to be torn. For since Christ suffered for the Church, and the Church is the body of Christ, it does not seem that faith in Christ is shown by those by whom His Passion is made of none effect, and His body divided.

48. And so though he retained the deposit of faith, and feared to voyage as debtor of so vast an amount, yet he preferred to cross over to a place where he could make his payment in safety, for he was convinced that the payment of thankfulness to God consists in dispositions and faith, which payment, so soon as he had free access to the Church, he delayed not to make.²⁰ And he both received the grace of God which he longed for, and preserved it when received. Nothing, then, can be wiser than that prudence which distinguishes between divine and human matters.

49. Why should I speak of his well-known eloquence in his forensic duties? What incredible admiration did he excite in the hall of justice of the high prefecture! But I prefer to speak of those things which he esteemed, through consideration of the mysteries of God, to be preferable to human matters.

50. And should any one wish more fully to regard his fortitude, let him consider how often after his shipwreck with invincible disregard of this life he crossed the sea and travelled through widespread regions in his journeys, and at last that at this very time he did not shrink from danger, but met it. Patient under injustice, regardless of cold, would that he had been equally thoughtful in taking precautions. But exactly herein was he blessed, that he, so long as his bodily strength allowed, spent his life fulfilling the work of youth, uninterruptedly carrying out what he wished to do, and paid no attention to his weakness.

51. But in what words can I set forth his simplicity? By this I mean a certain moderation of character and soberness of mind. Pardon me, I beseech you, and attribute it to my grief, if I allow myself to speak somewhat fully about him with whom I am no longer permitted to converse. And certainly it is an advantage for you to see that you have performed this kindly office not led by weak feelings, but by sound judgment; not as impelled by pity for his death, but moved by desire to do honour to his virtues; for every simple soul is blessed. And so great was his simplicity, that, converted as it were into a child, he was conspicuous for the simplicity belonging to that guileless age, for the likeness of perfect virtue, and for reflecting as in a mirror innocence of character. Therefore he entered into the kingdom of heaven, because he believed the word of God, because he, like a child, rejected the artifices of flattery, and chose rather to accept with gentleness the pain of injustice than to avenge himself sharply; he was more ready to listen to complaints than to guile, ready for conciliation, inaccessible to ambition, holy in modesty, so that in him one would rather speak of excess of bashfulness than have to seek for such as is needful.

52. But the foundations of virtue are never in excess, for modesty does not hinder but rather commends the discharge of duty. And so was his face suffused with a certain virginal modesty, showing forth his inward feeling in his countenance, if perchance he had, coming on a sudden, met some female relative, he was as it were bowed down and sunk to the earth, though he was not different in company with men, he seldom lifted up his face, raised his eyes, or spoke; when he did one of these things, it was with a kind of bashful modesty of heart, with which, too, the chastity of his body agreed. For he preserved the gifts of holy baptism inviolate, being pure in body and still more pure in heart; fearing not less the shame of impurity in conversation than in his body; and thinking that no less regard was to be paid to modesty in purity of words than in chastity of body.

53. In fine, he so loved chastity as never to seek a wife, although in him it was not merely the desire of chastity, but also the grace of his love for us. But in a wonderful manner he concealed his feeling as to marriage, and avoided all boastfulness; and so carefully did he conceal his feeling,

that even when we pressed it on him, he appeared rather to postpone wedlock than to avoid it. So this was the one point with which he did not trust his brother and sister, not through any doubtful hesitation, but simply through virtuous modesty.

54. Who, then, could refrain from wondering that a man in age between a brother and a sister, the one a virgin, the other a priest, yet in greatness of soul not below either, should so excel in two great gifts, as to reflect the chastity of one vocation and the sanctity of the other, being bound not by profession but by the exercise of virtue. If, then, lust and anger bring forth other vices, I may rightly call chastity and gentleness as it were the parents of virtues; although, as it is the origin of all good things, so too is piety the seed-plot of other virtues.

55. What, then, shall I say of his economy, a kind of continence regarding possessions? For he who takes care of his own does not seek other men's goods, nor is he puffed up by abundance who is contented with his own. For he did not wish to recover anything except his own, and that rather that he might not be cheated than that he might be richer. For he rightly called those who seek other men's goods hawks of money. But if avarice be the root of all evils,²¹ he who does not seek for money has certainly stripped himself of vices.

56. Nor did he ever delight in more carefully prepared feasts or many dishes, except when he invited friends, wishing for what was sufficient for nature, not for superabundance for pleasure's sake. And, indeed, he was not poor in means, but was so in spirit.²² Certainly we ought by no means to doubt of his happiness, who neither as a wealthy man delighted in riches, nor as a poor man thought that what he had was scanty.

57. It remains that, to come to the end of the cardinal virtues, we should notice in him the constituents of justice. For although virtues are related to each other and connected, still as it were a more distinct sketch of each is wanted, and especially of justice. For it being somewhat niggardly towards itself is wholly devoted to what is without, and whatever it has through a certain rigour towards self, being carried away by love for all, it pours forth on its neighbours.

58. But there are many kinds of this virtue. One towards friends, another towards all men, another with respect to the worship of God or the relief of the poor. So what he was towards all, the affection of the people of the province over which he was set shows; who used to say that he was rather their parent than a judge, a kind umpire for loving clients, a steadfast awarder of just law.

59. But what he was with his brother and sister, though all men were embraced in his good-will, our undivided patrimony testifies, and the inheritance neither distributed nor diminished, but preserved. For he said that love was no reason for making a will. This, too, he signified with his last words, when commending those whom he had loved, saying that it was his choice never to marry a wife, that he might not be separated from his brother and sister, and that he would not make a will, lest our feelings should in any point be hurt. Lastly, though begged and entreated by us, he thought that nothing ought to be determined by himself, not, however, forgetting the poor, but only asking that so much should be given to them as should seem just to us.

60. By this alone he gave a sufficient proof of his fear of God, and set an example of religious feeling as regards men. For what he gave to the poor he offered to God, since "he that distributeth to the poor lendeth unto God;"²³ and by requiring what was just, he left them not a little, but the whole. For this is the total sum of justice, to sell what one has and give to the poor. For he who

"hath dispersed, and hath given to the poor, his righteousness endureth for ever."²⁴ So he left us as stewards, not heirs; for the inheritance is to the heirs a matter of question, the stewardship is a duty to the poor.

61. So that one may rightly say that the Holy Spirit has this day told us by the voice of the boy reader: "He that is innocent in his hands and of a clean heart, who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor used deceit unto his neighbour, this is the generation of them that seek the Lord."²⁵ He, then, shall both ascend into the hill of the Lord and dwell in the tabernacle of God; because "he hath walked without spot, he hath worked righteousness, he hath spoken truth, he hath not deceived his neighbour;"²⁶ nor did he lend his money for usury, who always wished [no more than] to retain that which was inherited.

62. Why should I relate that in his piety he went beyond mere justice, when he, having thought that in consideration of my office something ought to be given to the unlawful possessor of our property, declared that I was the author of the bounty, but made over the receipts of his own share to the common fund.

63. These and other matters, which were then a pleasure to me, now sharpen the remembrance of my grief. They abide, however, and always will do so, nor do they ever pass away like a shadow; for the grace of virtue dies not with the body, nor do natural life and merits come to an end at the same time, although the use of natural life does not perish for ever, but rests in a kind of exemption for a time.

64. For one, then, who has performed such good deeds, and is rescued from perils, I shall weep rather from longing for him than for the loss. For the very opportuneness of his death bids us bear in mind that we must follow him rather with grateful veneration than grieve for him, for it is written that private grief should cease in public sorrow. This is said in the prophetic language,²⁷ not only to that one woman, who is figured there, but to each, since it seems to be said to the Church.

65. To me, then, does this message come, and Holy Scripture says: "Dost thou teach this, is it thus that thou instructest the people of God? Knowest thou not that thy example is a danger to others? save that perchance thou complainest that thy prayer is not heard. First of all this is shameless arrogance, to desire to obtain for thyself what thou knowest to have been denied to many, even saints, when thou art aware that God is no respecter of persons?"²⁸ For although God is merciful, yet if He always heard all, He would appear to act no longer of His own free will, but by a kind of necessity. Then, since all ask, if He were to hear all, no one would die. For how much dost thou daily pray? Is, then, God's appointment to be made void in consideration of thee? Why, then, dost thou lament that is sometimes not obtained, which thou knowest cannot always be obtained?

66. "Thou fool," it says, "above all women, seest thou not our mourning, and what hath happened to us, how that Sion our mother is saddened with all sadness, and humbled with humbling. Mourn now also very sore, since we all mourn, and be sad since we all are sad, and thou art grieved for a brother. Ask the earth and she shall tell thee that it is she which ought to mourn, outliving so many that grow upon her. And out of her," it says, "were all born in the beginning, and out of her shall others come, and, behold, they walk almost all into destruction, and a multitude of them is utterly rooted out. Who, then, ought to make more mourning than she that hath lost so great a multitude,

and not thou, which art sorry but for one?"²⁹

67. Let, then, the common mourning swallow up ours and cut off the bitterness of our private sorrow. For we ought not to grieve for those whom we see to be set free, and we bear in mind that so many holy souls are not without a purpose at this time loosed from the chains of the body. For we see, as if by God's decree, such reverend widows dying so closely at one time, that it seems to be a sort of setting out on a journey, not a sinking in death, lest their chastity in which they have served God their full time should be exposed to peril. What groans, what mourning, does so bitter a recollection stir up in me! And if I had no leisure for mourning, yet in my own personal grief, in the loss of the very flower of so much merit, the common lot of nature consoled me; and my grief in consideration of one alone veiled the bitterness of the public funeral by the show of piety at home.

68. I seek again, then, O sacred Scripture, thy consolations, for it delights me to dwell on thy precepts and on thy sentences. How far more easy is it for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fail! But let us now listen to what is written: "Now," it says, "keep thy sorrow to thyself, and bear with a good courage the things which have befallen thee. For if thou shalt acknowledge the determination of God to be just, thou shalt both receive thy son in time, and shalt be praised among women."³⁰ If this is said to a woman, how much more to a priest! If such words are said of a son it is certainly not unfitting that they should be uttered also concerning the loss of a brother; though if he had been my son I could never have loved him more. For as in the death of children, the lost labour and the pain borne to no purpose seem to increase the sorrow; so, too, in the case of brothers the habits of intercourse and joint occupations inflame the bitterness of grief.

69. But, lo! I hear the Scripture saying: "Do not continue this discourse, but allow thyself to be persuaded. For how great are the misfortunes of Sion! Be comforted in regard of the sorrow of Jerusalem. For thou seest that our holy places are polluted and the name that was called upon us is almost profaned, they that are ours have suffered shame, our priests are burnt, our Levites gone into captivity, our wives are polluted, our virgins suffer violence, our righteous men are carried away, our little ones given up, our young men brought in bondage, and our strong men become weak. And, which is the greatest of all, the seal of Sion hath lost her glory, since now she is delivered into the hands of them that hate us. Do thou, then, shake off thy great heaviness, and put from thee the multitude of sorrows, that the Mighty may be merciful to thee again, and the Highest shall give thee rest by easing thy labours."³¹

70. So, then, my tears shall cease, for one must yield to healthful remedies, since there ought to be some difference between believers and unbelievers. Let them, therefore, weep who cannot have the hope of the resurrection, of which not the sentence of God but the strictness of the faith deprives them. Let there be this difference between the servants of Christ and the worshippers of idols, that the latter weep for their friends, whom they suppose to have perished for ever; that they should never cease from tears, and gain no rest from sorrow, who think that the dead have no rest. But from us, for whom death is the end not of our nature but of this life only, since our nature itself is restored to a better state, let the advent of death wipe away all tears.

71. And certainly if they have ever found any consolation who have thought that death is the end of sensation and the failing of our nature, how much more must we find it so to whom the consciousness of good done brings the promise of better rewards! The heathen have their

consolation, because they think that death is a cessation of all evils, and as they are without the fruit of life, so, too, they think that they have escaped all the feeling and pain of those severe and constant sufferings which we have to endure in this life. We, however, as we are better supported by our rewards, so, too, ought we to be more patient through our consolation, for they seem to be not lost but sent before, whom death is not going to swallow up, but eternity to receive.

72. My tears shall therefore cease, or if they cannot cease, I will weep for thee, my brother, in the common sorrow, and will hide my private groaning in the public grief. For how can my tears wholly cease, since they break forth at every utterance of thy name, or when my very habitual actions arouse thy memory, or when my affection pictures thy likeness, or when recollection renews my grief. For how canst thou be absent who art again made present in so many occupations? Thou art present, I say, and art always brought before me, and with my whole mind and soul do I embrace thee, gaze upon thee, address thee, kiss thee; I grasp thee whether in the gloomy night or in the clear light, when thou vouchsafest to revisit and console me sorrowing. And now the very nights which used to seem irksome in thy lifetime, because they denied us the power of looking on each other; and sleep itself, lately, the odious interrupter of our converse, have commenced to be sweet, because they restore thee to me. They, then, are not wretched but blessed whose mutual presence fails not, whose care for each other is not lessened, whose mutual esteem is increased. For sleep is a likeness and image of death.

73. But if, in the quiet of night, our souls still cleaving to the chains of the body, and as it were bound within the prison bars of the limbs, yet are able to see higher and separate things, how much more do they see these, when in their pure and heavenly senses they suffer from no hindrances of bodily weakness. And so when, as a certain evening was drawing on, I was complaining that thou didst not revisit me when at rest, thou wast wholly present always. So that, as I lay with my limbs bathed in sleep, while I was [in mind] awake for thee, thou wast alive to me, I could say, "What is death, my brother?" For certainly thou wast not separated from me for a single moment, for thou wast so present with me everywhere, that enjoyment of each other, which we were unable to have in the intercourse of this life, is now always and everywhere with us. For at that time certainly all things could not be present, for neither did our physical constitution allow it, nor could the sight of each other, nor the sweetness of our bodily embraces at all times and in all places be enjoyed. But the pictures in our souls were always present with us, even when we were not together, and these have not come to an end, but constantly come back to us, and the greater the longing the greater abundance have we of them.

74. So, then, I hold thee, my brother, and neither death nor time shall tear thee from me. Tears themselves are sweet, and weeping itself a pleasure, for by these the eagerness of the soul is assuaged, and affection being eased is quieted. For neither can I be without thee, nor ever forget thee, or think of thee without tears. O bitter days, which show that our union is broken! O nights worthy of tears, which have lost for me so good a sharer of my rest, so inseparable a companion! What sufferings would ye cause me, unless the likeness of him present offered itself to me, unless the visions of my soul represented him whom my bodily sight shows me no more!

75. Now, now, O brother, dearest to my soul, although thou art gone by too early a death, happy at least art thou, who dost not endure these sorrows, and art not compelled to mourn the loss of a brother, separation from whom thou couldst not long endure, but didst quickly return and visit him

again. But if then thou didst hasten to banish the weariness of my loneliness, to lighten the sadness of thy brother's mind, how much more often oughtest thou now to revisit my afflicted soul, and thyself lighten the sorrow which has its origin from thee!

76. But the exercise of my office now bids me rest awhile, and attention to my priestly duties draws my mind away; but what will happen to my holy sister, who though she moderates her affection by the fear of God, yet again kindles the grief itself of the affection by the zeal of her devotion? Prostrate on the ground, embracing her brother's tomb, wearied with toilsome walking, sad in spirit, day and night she renews her grief. For though she often breaks off her weeping by speech, she renews it in prayer; and although in her knowledge of her Scriptures she excels those who bring consolation, she makes up for her desire of weeping by the constancy of her prayers, renewing the abundance of her tears then chiefly, when no one can interrupt her. So thou hast that which thou mayest pity, not what thou mayest blame, for to weep in prayer is a sign of virtue. And although that be a common thing with virgins, whose softer sex and more tender affection abound in tears at the sight of the common weakness, even without the feeling of family grief, yet when there is a greater cause for sorrowing, no limit is set to that sorrow.

77. The means of consolation, then, are wanting since excuses abound. For thou canst not forbid that which thou teachest, especially when she attributes her tears to devotion, not to sorrow, and conceals the course of the common grief for fear of shame. Console her, therefore, thou who canst approach her soul, and penetrate her mind. Let her perceive that thou art present, feel that thou art not departed, that having enjoyed his consolation of whose merit she is assured, she may learn not to grieve heavily for him, who warned her that he was not to be mourned for.

78. But why should I delay thee, brother, why should I wait that my address should die and as it were be buried with thee? Although the sight and form of thy lifeless body, and its remaining comeliness and figure abiding here, comfort the eyes, I delay no longer, let us go on to the tomb. But first, before the people I utter the last farewell, declare peace to thee, and pay the last kiss. Go before us to that home, common and waiting for all, and certainly now longed for by me beyond others. Prepare a common dwelling for him with whom thou hast dwelt, and as here we have had all things in common, so there, too, let us know no divided rights.

79. Do not, I pray thee, long put off him who is desirous of thee, expect him who is hastening after thee, help him who is hurrying, and if I seem to thee to delay too long, summon me. For we have not ever been long separated from each other, but thou wast always wont to return. Nor since thou canst not return again, I will go to thee; it is just that I should repay the kindness and take my turn. Never was there much difference in the condition of our life; whether health or sickness, it was common to both, so that if one sickened the other fell ill, and when one began to recover, the other, too, was convalescent. How have we lost our rights? This time, too, we had our sickness in common, how is it that death was not ours in common?

80. And now to Thee, Almighty God, I commend this guileless soul, to Thee I offer my sacrifice; accept favourably and mercifully the gift of a brother, the offering of a priest. I offer beforehand these first libations of myself. I come to Thee with this pledge, a pledge not of money but of life, cause me not to remain too long a debtor of such an amount. It is not the ordinary interest of a brother's love, nor the common course of nature, which is increased by such an amount of virtue. I can bear it, if I shall be soon compelled to pay it.

1: S. John xxi. 22.

2: 1 Thess. iv. 14.

3: 1 Cor. iv. 16.

4: Ps. vi. 7.

5: As in many other passages, a play upon words cannot be translated. The Latin is: *Lacrymoe ergo pietatis indices, non illices sunt doloris.*

6: Ps. lxxxvii. [lxxxvi.] 5.

7: Is. ix. 6.

8: Ps. lxxxvii. [lxxxvi.] 5.

9: On the subject of vows to the martyrs, comp. Exhort. Virg. III. 15; also see, De Viduis, ix. 55.

10: Probably the Basilica built at Milan by St. Ambrose.

11: Acts ix. 39.

12: S. Luke vii. 12.

13: Gen. v. 24.

14: Wisd. iv. 11.

15: Symmachus is called *parens* of Satyrus here and elsewhere by St. Ambrose. The title does not imply blood relationship, but friendship and patronage.

16: Ps. lxxx. [lxxix.] 5.

17: Ps. xix. [xviii.] 1.

18: At this time there was no doubt concerning the faith of the Roman Church, as there would have been later under Liberius and Honorius. Consequently Satyrus instances it, as being the chief and best known see.

19: Lucifer was Bishop of Cagliari in Sardinia. At the synod of Aries, a.d. 353, he had strenuously resisted the condemnation of St. Athanasius, though it was urged by the Emperor Constantius, maintaining that the Nicene faith was opposed in the person of Athanasius. Against the synod of Milan, a.d. 355, he was equally resolute in defence of the belief of Nicaea, for which the emperor banished him to Syria. But when the synod of Alexandria, a.d. 362, determined on the restoration of certain Arians after repentance, he withdrew from Catholic Communion.

20: It is plain from various passages that Satyrus, when he undertook his voyage to Africa, was only a catechumen, i.e. not yet baptized. Many holy men postponed baptism, not out of contempt or carelessness, but through fear, in all the dangers of the period, of losing baptismal grace, sin after baptism and grace received being then estimated at its true awfulness. Satyrus having been, as he believed, saved from death by the Holy Eucharist, determined to be at once baptized, so soon as he could find a Catholic bishop. It must be noted that the Fathers condemn nothing more

severely than postponing baptism, in order to continue in sin.

21: 1 Tim. vi. 10.

22: S. Matt. v. 3.

23: Prov. xix. 17.

24: Ps. cxii. [cxi.] 9.

25: Ps. xxiv. [xxiii.] 4, Ps. xxiv. [xxiii.] 6.

26: Ps. xv. [xiv.] 2, Ps. xv. [xiv.] 3.

27: 2 [4] Esdr. x. 6. In the Vulgate, as in the older Latin Version used by St. Ambrose, there are four books of Esdras, the first and second answering respectively to the Anlican books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Esdras iii. and iv. are counted apocryphal, but are quoted as canonical by St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and the third Council of Carthage.

28: Acts x. 34.

29: 2 [4] Esdr. x. 6-11.

30: 2 [4] Esdr. x. 15, 2 [4] Esdr. x. 16.

31: 2 [4] Esdr. x. 20-24.

On the Decease of His Brother Saytrus - Book 2

Book II. On the Belief in the Resurrection.

Book II. On the Belief in the Resurrection.

1. In the former book I indulged my longing to some extent, lest too sharp remedies applied to a burning wound might rather increase than assuage the pain. And as at the same time I often addressed my brother, and had him before my eyes, it was not out of place to let natural feelings have a little play, since they are somewhat satisfied by tears, soothed by weeping, and numbed by a shock. For the outward expression of affection is of a soft and tender nature, it loves nothing extravagant, nothing stern, nothing hard; and patience is proved by enduring rather than by resisting.

2. So, since the death-day might well, lately, by the sad spectacle draw aside the mind of a brother, because it occupied him wholly, now, inasmuch as on the seventh day, the symbol of the future rest, we return to the grave, it is profitable to turn our thoughts somewhat from my brother to a general exhortation addressed to all, and to give our attention to this; so as neither to cling to my brother with all our minds, lest our feelings overcome us, nor forgetting such devotion and desert, to turn wholly away from him; and in truth we should but increase the suffering of our intense grief, if his death were again the subject of to-day's address.

3. Wherefore we propose, dearest brethren, to console ourselves with the common course of nature, and not to think anything hard which awaits all. And therefore we deem that death is not to be mourned over; firstly, because it is common and due to all; next, because it frees us from the miseries of this lie and, lastly, because when in the likeness of sleep we are at rest from the toils of this world, a more lively vigour is shed upon us. What grief is there which the grace of the Resurrection does not console? What sorrow is not excluded by the belief that nothing perishes in death? nay, indeed, that by the hastening of death it comes to pass that much is preserved from perishing. So it will happen, dearest brethren, that in our general exhortation we shall turn our affections to my brother, and shall not seem to have wandered too far from him, if through hope of the Resurrection and the sweetness of future glory even in our discourse he should live again for us.

4. Let us then begin at this point, that we show that the departure of our loved ones should not be mourned by us. For what is more absurd than to deplore as though it were a special misfortune, what one knows is appointed unto all? This were to lift up the mind above the condition of men, not to accept the common law, to reject the fellowship of nature, to be puffed up in a fleshly mind, and not to recognize the measure of the flesh itself. What is more absurd than not to recognize what one is, to pretend to be what one is not? Or what can be a sign of less forethought than to be unable to bear, when it has happened, what one knew was going to happen? Nature herself calls us back, and draws us aside froth sorrow of this sort by a kind of consolation of her own. For what so deep mourning is there, or so bitter grief, in which the mind is not at times relieved? For human

nature has this peculiarity, that although men may be in sad circumstances, yet if only they be men, they sometimes turn their thoughts a little away from sadness.

5. It is said, indeed, that there have been certain tribes who mourned at the birth of human beings, and kept festival at their deaths, and this not without reason, for they thought that those who had entered upon this ocean of life should be mourned over, but that they who had escaped from the waves and storms of this world should be accompanied by rejoicing not without good reason. And we too forget the birthdays of the departed, and commemorate with festal solemnity the day on which they died.¹

6. Therefore, in accordance with nature, excessive grief must not be yielded to, lest we should seem either to claim for ourselves either an exceptional superiority of nature, or to reject the common lot. For death is alike to all, without difference for the poor, without exception for the rich. And so although through the sin of one alone, yet it passed upon all;² that we may not refuse to acknowledge Him to be also the Author of death, Whom we do not refuse to acknowledge as the Author of our race; and that, as through one death is ours, so should be also the resurrection; and that we should not refuse the misery, that we may attain to the gift. For, as we read, Christ "is come to save that which was lost,"³ and "to be Lord both of the dead and living."⁴ In Adam I fell, in Adam I was cast out of Paradise, in Adam I died; how shall the Lord call me back, except He find me in Adam; guilty as I was in him, so now justified in Christ.⁵ If, then, death be the debt of all, we must be able to endure the payment. But this topic must be reserved for later treatment.

7. It is now our purpose to demonstrate that death ought not to cause too heavy grief, because nature itself rejects this. And so they say that there was a law among the Lycians, commanding that men who gave way to grief should be clothed in female apparel, inasmuch as they judged mourning to be soft and effeminate in a man. And it is inconsistent that those who ought to offer their breast to death for the faith, for religion, for their country, for righteous judgment, and the endeavour after virtue, should grieve too bitterly for that in the case of others which, if a fitting cause required, they would seek for themselves. For how can one help shrinking from that in ourselves which one mourns with too little patience when it has happened to others? Put aside your grief, if you can; if you cannot, keep it to yourself.

8. Is, then, all sorrow to be kept within or repressed? Why should not reason rather than time lighten one's sadness? Shall not wisdom better assuage that which the passage of time will obliterate? Further, it seems to me that it is a want of due feeling with regard to the memory of those whose loss we mourn, when we prefer to forget them rather than that our sorrow should be lessened by consolation; and to shrink from the recollection of them, rather than remember them with thankfulness; that we fear the calling to mind of those whose image in our hearts ought to be a delight; that we are rather distrustful than hopeful regarding the acceptance of the departed, and think of those we loved rather as liable to punishment than as heirs of immortality.

9. But you may say: We have lost those whom we used to love. Is not this the common lot of ourselves and the earth and elements, that we cannot keep for ever what has been entrusted to us for a time? The earth groans under the plough, is lashed by rains, struck by tempests, bound by cold, burnt by the sun, that it may bring forth its yearly fruits; and when it has clothed itself with a variety of flowers, it is stripped and spoiled of its own adornment. How many plunderers it has! And it does not complain of the loss of its fruits, to which it gave birth that it might lose them, nor

thereafter does it refuse to produce what it remembers will be taken from it.

10. The heavens themselves do not always shine with the globes of twinkling stars, wherewith as with coronets they are adorned. They are not always growing bright with the dawn of light, or ruddy with the rays of the sun; but in constant succession that most pleasing appearance of the world grows dark with the damp chill of night. What is more grateful than the light? what more pleasant than the sun? each of which daily comes to an end; yet we do not take it ill that these have passed away from us, because we expect them to return. Thou art taught in these things what patience thou oughtest to manifest with regard to those who belong to thee. If things above pass away from thee, and cause no grief, why should the passing away of man be mourned?

11. Let, then, grief be patient, let there be that moderation in adversity which is required in prosperity. If it be not seemly to rejoice immoderately, is it seemly so to mourn? For want of moderation in grief or fear of death is no small evil. How many has it driven to the halter, in how many hands has it placed the sword, that they might by that very means demonstrate their madness in not enduring death, and yet seeking it; in adopting that as a remedy which they flee from as an evil. And because they were unable to endure and to suffer what is in agreement with their nature, they fall into that which is contrary to their desire, being separated for ever from those whom they desired to follow. But this is not common, since nature herself restrains although madness drives men on.

12. But it is common with women to make public wailing, as though they feared that their misery might not be known. They affect soiled clothing, as though the feeling of sorrow consisted therein; they moisten their unkempt hair with filth; and lastly, which is done habitually in many places, with their clothing torn and their dress rent in two, they prostitute their modesty in nakedness, as if they were ready to sacrifice that modesty because they have lost that which was its reward. And so wanton eyes are excited, and lust after those naked limbs, which were they not made bare they would not desire. Would that those filthy garments covered the mind rather than the bodily form. Lasciviousness of mind is often hidden under sad clothing, and the unseemly rudeness of dress is used as a covering to hide the secrets of wanton spirits.

13. She mourns for her husband with sufficient devotion who preserves her modesty and does not give up her constancy. The best duties to discharge to the departed are that they live in our memories and continue in our affection. She has not lost her husband who manifests her chastity, nor is she widowed as regards her union who has not changed her husband's name. Nor hast thou lost the heir when thou assistest the joint-heir, but in exchange for a successor in perishable things thou hast a sharer in things eternal. Thou hast one to represent thine heir, pay to the poor what was due to the heir, that there may remain one to survive, not only the old age of father or mother, but thine own life. Thou leavest thy successor all the more, if his share conduce not to luxury in things present, but to the purchasing of things to come.

14. But we long for those whom we have lost. For two things specially pain us: either the longing for those we have lost, which I experience in my own case; or that we think them deprived of the sweetness of life, and snatched away from the fruits of their toil. For there is a tender movement of love, which suddenly kindles the affection, so as to have the effect rather of soothing than of hindering the pain; inasmuch as it seems a dutiful thing to long for what one has lost, and so under an appearance of virtue weakness increases.

15. But why dost thou think that she who has sent her beloved to foreign parts, and because of military service, or of undertaking some office, or has discovered that for the purpose of commerce he has crossed the sea, ought to be more patient than thou who art left, not because of some chance decision or desire of money, but by the law of nature? But, you say, the hope of regaining him is shut out. As though the return of any one were certain! And oftentimes doubt wearies the mind more where the fear of danger is strong; and it is more burdensome to fear lest something should happen than to bear what one already knows has happened. For the one increases the amount of fear, the other looks forward to the end of its grief.

16. But masters have the right to transfer their slaves whithersoever they determine. Has not God this right? It is not granted to us to look for their return, but it is granted us to follow those gone before. And certainly the usual shortness of life seems neither to have deprived them of much who have gone before, nor to delay very long him who remains.

17. But if one cannot mitigate one's grief, does it not seem unbecoming to wish that because of our longing the whole course of things should be upset? The longings of lovers are certainly more intense, and yet they are tempered by regard to what is necessary; and though they grieve at being forsaken they are not wont to mourn, rather being deserted they blush at loving too hastily. And so patience in regret is all the more manifested.

18. But what shall I say of those who think that the departed are deprived of the sweetness of life? There can be no real sweetness in the midst of the bitternesses and pains of this life, which are caused either by the infirmity of the body itself, or by the discomfort of things happening from without. For we are always anxious and in suspense as to our wishes for happier circumstances; we waver in uncertainty, our hope setting before us doubtful things for certain, inconvenient for satisfactory, things that will fail for what is firm, and we have neither any strength in our will nor certainty in our wishes. But if anything happens against our wish, we think we are lost, and are rather broken down by pain at adversity than cheered by the enjoyment of prosperity. What good, then, are they deprived of who are rather freed from troubles?

19. Good health, I doubt not, is more beneficial to us than bad health is hurtful. Riches bring more delights than poverty annoyance, the satisfaction in children's love is greater than the sorrow at their loss, and youth is more pleasant than old age is sad. How often is the attainment of one's wishes a weariness, and what one has longed for a regret; so that one grieves at having obtained what one was not afraid of obtaining. But what fatherland, what pleasures, can compensate for exile and the bitterness of other penalties? For even when we have these, the pleasure is weakened either by the disinclination to use or by the fear of losing them.

20. But suppose that some one remains unharmed, free from grief, in uninterrupted enjoyment of the pleasures of the whole course of man's life, what comfort can the soul attain to, enclosed in the bonds of a body of such a kind, and restrained by the narrow limits of the limbs? If our flesh shrinks from prison, if it abhors everything which denies it the power of roaming about; when it seems, indeed, to be always going forth, with its little powers of hearing or seeing what is beyond itself, how much more does our soul desire to escape from that prison-house of the body, which, being free with movement like the air, goes whither we know not, and comes whence we know not.

21. We know, however, that it survives the body, and that being set free from the bars of the body, it sees with clear gaze those things which before, dwelling in the body, it could not see. And we are able to judge of this by the instance of those who have visions of things absent and even heavenly in sleep (whose minds, when the body is as it were buried in sleep, rise to higher things and relate them to the body). So, then, if death frees us from the miseries of this world, it is certainly no evil, inasmuch as it restores liberty and excludes suffering.

22. At this point the right place occurs for arguing that death is not an evil, because it is the refuge from all miseries and all evils, a safe harbour of security, and a haven of rest. For what adversity is there which we do not experience in this life? What storms and tempests do we not suffer? by what discomforts are we not harassed? whose merits are spared?

23. The holy patriarch Israel fled from his country, was exiled from his father, relatives, and home,⁶ he mourned over the shame of his daughter⁷ and the death of his son, he endured famine, when dead he lost his own grave, for he entreated that his bones should be translated,⁸ a lest even in death he should find rest.

24. Holy Joseph experienced the hatred of his brethren,⁹ the guile of those who envied him, the service of slavery, the mastership of merchantmen, the wantonness of his mistress, the ignorance of her husband, and the misery of prison.¹⁰

25. Holy David lost two sons; the one incestuous,¹¹ the other a parricide.¹² To have had them was a disgrace, to have lost them a grief. And he lost a third, the infant whom he loved. Him he wept for while still alive, but did not long for when dead. For so we read, that, while the child was sick, David entreated the Lord for him, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and when the elders came near to raise him from the earth, he would neither rise nor eat. But when he heard that the child was dead, he changed his clothes, worshipped God, and took food. When this seemed strange to his servants, he answered that he had rightly fasted and wept while the child was alive, because he justly thought that God might have mercy, and it could not be doubted that He could preserve the life of one alive Who could give life to the departed, but now, when death had taken place, why should he fast, for he could not now bring back him that was dead, and recall him who was lifeless. "I," said he, "shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."¹³

26. O greatest consolation for him who mourns! O true judgment of a wise man! O wonderful wisdom of one who is a bond-man! that none should take it ill that anything adverse has happened to him, or complain that he is afflicted contrary to his deserts. For who art thou who beforehand proclaimest thy deserts? Why desirest thou to anticipate Him Who takes cognizance of all? Why dost thou snatch away the verdict from Him Who is going to judge? This is permitted not even to the saints, nor has it ever been done by the saints with impunity. David confesses that he was scourged for this in his psalm: "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they have obtained riches. Therefore I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands among the innocent; and I was scourged all the day long, and my accusation¹⁴ came every morning."¹⁵

27. Peter also, though full of faith and devotion, yet because, not yet conscious of our common weakness, he had presumptuously said to the Lord, "I will lay down my life for Thy sake,"¹⁶ fell into the trial of his presumption before the cock crowed thrice.¹⁷ Although, indeed, that trial was a lesson for our salvation, that we might learn not to think little of the weakness of the flesh, lest

through thus thinking little of it we should be tempted. If Peter was tempted, who can presume? who can maintain that he cannot be tempted? And without doubt for our sakes was Peter tempted, so that, the proving of the temptation did not take place in a stronger than he,¹⁸ but that in him we should learn how, resisting in temptations, although tried even by care for our lives, we might yet overcome the sting of the temptation with tears of patience.

28. But that same David, that the difference of his actions may not perhaps disturb those who cling to the words of Scripture; that same David, I say, who had not wept for the innocent infant, wept for the parricide when dead. For at the last, when he was wailing and mourning, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son Absalom! Who will grant me to die for thee!"¹⁹ But not only is Absalom the parricide wept over, Amnon is wept over; not only is the incestuous wept over, but is even avenged; the one by the scorn of the kingdom, the other by the exile of his brothers. The wicked is wept over, not the innocent. What is the cause? What is the reason? There is no little deliberation with the prudent and confirmation of results with the wise; for there is great consistency of prudence in so great a difference of actions, but the belief is one. He wept for those who were dead, but did not think that he ought to weep for the dead infant, for he thought that they were lost to him, but hoped that the latter would rise again.

29. But concerning the Resurrection more will be said later on; let us now return to our immediate subject. We have set forth that even holy men have without any consideration for their merits, suffered many and heavy things in this world, together with toil and misery. So David, entering into himself, says: "Remember; Lord, that we are dust; as for man, his days are but as grass;"²⁰ and in another place: "Man is like to vanity, his days pass away as a shadow."²¹ For what is more wretched than we, who are sent into this life as it were plundered and naked, with frail bodies, deceitful hearts, weak minds, anxious in respect of cares, slothful as to labour, prone to pleasures.

30. Not to be born is then by far the best, according to Solomon's sentence. For they also who have seemed to themselves to excel most in philosophy have followed him. For he, before these philosophers in time, but later than many of our writers, spoke thus in Ecclesiastes: "And I praised all the departed, which are already dead, more than the living, who are yet alive. And better than both they is he who hath not yet been born, and who hath not seen this evil work which hath been done under the sun. And I saw all travail, and all the good of this labour, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. And, indeed, this is vanity and vexation of spirit."²²

31. And who said this but he who asked for and obtained wisdom, to know how the world was made, and the power of the elements, the course of the year, and the dispositions of stars, to be acquainted with the natures of living creatures, the furies of wild beasts, and the violence of winds, and to understand the thoughts of man!²³ How, then, should mortal matters be hidden from him, from whom heavenly things were not hidden? He who penetrated the thoughts of the woman who was claiming the child of another, who by the inspiration of divine grace knew the natures of living creatures which he did not share; could he err or say what was untrue with regard to the circumstances of that nature, which he found in his own personal experience?

32. But Solomon was not the only person who felt this, though he alone gave expression to it. He had read the words of holy Job: "Let the day perish wherein I was born."²⁴ Job had recognized that to be born is the beginning of all woes, and therefore wished that the day on which he was born might perish, so that the origin of all troubles might be removed, and wished that the day of

his birth might perish that he might receive the day of resurrection. For Solomon had heard his father's saying: "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the number of my days, that I may know what is lacking unto me."²⁵ For David knew that what is perfect cannot be grasped here, and therefore hastened on to those things which are to come. For now we know in part, and understand in part, but then it will be possible for that which is perfect to be grasped, when not the shadow but the reality of the Divine Majesty and eternity shall begin to shine so as to be gazed upon by us with unveiled face.²⁶

33. But no one would hasten to the end, except he were fleeing from the discomfort of this life. And so David also explained why he hastened to the end, when he said: "Behold Thou hast made my days old, and my being is as nothing before Thee, surely all things are vanity, even every man that liveth."²⁷ Why, then, do we hesitate to flee from vanity? Or why does it please us to be troubled to no purpose in this world, to lay up treasures, and not know for what heir we are gathering them? Let us pray that troubles be removed from us, that we be taken out of this foolish world, that we may be free from our daily pilgrimage, and return to that country and our natural home. For on this earth we are strangers and foreigners; we have to return thither whence we have come down, we must strive and pray not perfunctorily but earnestly to be delivered from the guile and wickedness of men full of words. And he who knew the remedy groaned that his sojourn was prolonged, and that he must dwell with the unjust and sinners.²⁸ What shall I do, who both am sinful and know not the remedy?

34. Jeremiah also bewails his birth in these words: "Woe is me, my mother! Why hast thou borne me a man of contention in all the earth? I have not benefited others, nor has any one benefited me, my strength hath failed."²⁹ If, then, holy men shrink from life whose life, though profitable to us, is esteemed unprofitable to themselves; what ought we to do who am not able to profit others, and who feel that it, like money borrowed at interest, grows more heavily weighted every day with an increasing mass of sins?

35. "I die daily,"³⁰ says the Apostle. Better certainly is this saying than theirs who said that meditation on death was true philosophy, for they praised the study, he exercised the practice of death. And they acted for themselves only, but Paul, himself perfect, died not for his own weakness but for ours. But what is meditation on death but a kind of separation of body and soul, for death itself is defined as nothing else than the separation of body and soul? But this is in accordance with common opinion.

36. But according to the Scriptures we have been taught that death is threefold.³¹ One death is when we die to sin, but live to God. Blessed, then, is that death which, escaping from sin, and devoted to God, separates us from what is mortal and consecrates us to Him Who is immortal. Another death is the departure from this life, as the patriarch Abraham died, and the patriarch David, and were buried with their fathers; when the soul is set free from the bonds of the body. The third death is that of which it is said: "Leave the dead to bury their own dead."³² In that death not only the flesh but also the soul dies, for "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."³³ For it dies to the Lord, through the weakness not of nature but of guilt. But this death is not the discharge from this life, but a fall through error.

37. Spiritual death, then, is one thing, natural death another, a third the death of punishment. But that which is natural is not also penal, for the Lord did not inflict death as a penalty, but as a

remedy. And to Adam when he sinned, one thing was appointed as a penalty, another for a remedy, when it was said: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I had commanded thee that of it alone thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the ground in thy labor; in sorrow shalt thou eat its fruit all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread, till thou return to the earth from which thou wast taken."³⁴

38. Here you have the days of rest from penalties, for they contain the punishment decreed against the thorns of tiffs life, the cares of the world, and the pleasures of riches which shut out the Word. Death is given for a remedy, because it is the end of evils. For God said not, "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of the woman thou shalt return to the earth," for this would have been a penal sentence, as this one is, "The earth under curse shall bring forth thorns and thistles to thee;" but He said: "In sweat shall thou eat thy bread until thou return to the earth." You see that death is rather the goal of our penalties, by which an end is put to the course of this life.

39. So, then, death is not only not an evil, but is even a good thing. So that it is sought as a good, as it is written: "Men shall seek death and shall not find it."³⁵ They will seek it who shall say to the mountains: "Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us."³⁶ That soul, too, shall seek it which has sinned. That rich man lying in hell shall seek it, who wishes that his tongue should be cooled with the finger of Lazarus.³⁷

40. We see, then, that this death is a gain and life a penalty, so that Paul says: "To me to live is Christ and to die is gain."³⁸ What is Christ but the death of the body, the breath of life? And so let us die with Him, that we may live with Him. Let there then be in us as it were a daily practice and inclination to dying, that by this separation from bodily desires, of which we have spoken, our soul may learn to withdraw itself, and, as it were placed on high, when earthly lusts cannot approach and attach it to themselves, may take upon herself the likeness of death, that she incur not the penalty of death. For the law of the flesh wars against the law of the mind, and makes it over to the law of error, as the Apostle has made known to us, saying: "For I see a law of the flesh in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity in the law of sin."³⁹ We are all attached, we all feel this; but we are not all delivered. And so a miserable man am I, unless I seek the remedy.

41. But what remedy? "Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord."⁴⁰ We have a physician, let us use the remedy. Our remedy is the grace of Christ, and the body of death is our body. Let us therefore be as strangers to our body, lest we be strangers to Christ. Though we are in the body, let us not follow the things which are of the body, let us not reject the rightful claims of nature, but desire before all the gifts of grace: "For to be dissolved and to be with Christ is far better; yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sakes."⁴¹

42. But this need is not the case of all, Lord Jesus; it is not so with me, who am profitable to none; for to me death is a gain, that I may sin no more. To die is gain to me, who, in the very treatise in which I comfort others, am incited as it were by an intense impulse to the longing for my lost brother, since it suffers me not to forget him. Now I love him more, and long for him more intensely. I long for him when I speak, I long for him when I read again what I have written, and I think that I am more impelled to write this, that I may not ever be without the recollection of him.

And in this I am not acting contrary to Scripture, but I am of the same mind with Scripture, that I may grieve with more patience, and long with greater intensity.

43. Thou hast caused me, my brother, not to fear death, and I only would that my life might die with thine! This Balaam wished for as the greatest good for himself, when, inspired by the spirit of prophecy, he said: "Let my soul die in the souls of the righteous, and let my seed be like the seed of them."⁴² And in truth he wished this according to the spirit of prophecy, for as he saw the rising of Christ, so also he saw His triumph, he saw His death, but saw also in Him the everlasting resurrection of men, and therefore feared not to die as he was to rise again. Let not then my soul die in sin, nor admit sin into itself, but let it die in the soul of the righteous, that it may receive his righteousness. Then, too, he who dies in Christ. is made a partaker of His grace in the Font.

44. Death is not, then, an object of dread, nor bitter to those in need, nor too bitter to the rich, nor unkind to the old, nor a mark of cowardice to the brave, nor everlasting to the faithful nor unexpected to the wise. For how many have consecrated their life by the renown of their death alone, how many have been ashamed to live, and have found death a gain! We have read how often by the death of one great nations have been delivered; the armies of the enemy have been put to flight by the death of the general, who had been unable to conquer them when alive.

45. By the death of martyrs religion has been defended, faith increased, the Church strengthened; the dead have conquered, the persecutors have been overcome. And so we celebrate the death of those of whose lives we are ignorant. So, too, David rejoiced in prophecy at the departure of his own soul, saying: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."⁴³ He esteemed death better than life. The death itself of the martyrs is the prize of their life. And again, by the death of those at variance hatred is put an end to.

46. Why should more be said? By the death of One the world was redeemed. For Christ, had He Willed, need not have died, but He neither thought that death should be shunned as though there were any cowardice in it, nor could He have saved us better than by dying. And so His death is the life of all. We are signed with the sign⁴⁴ of His death, we show forth His death when we pray; when we offer the Sacrifice we declare His death, for His death is victory, His death is our mystery, His death is the yearly recurring solemnity of the world. What now should we say concerning His death, since we prove by this Divine Example that death alone found immortality, and that death itself redeemed itself. Death, then, is not to be mourned over, for it is the cause of salvation for all; death is not to be shunned, for the Son of God did not think it unworthy of Him, and did not shun it. The order of nature is not to be loosed, for what is common to all cannot admit of exception in individuals.

47. And, indeed, death was no part of man's nature, but became natural; for God did not institute death at first, but gave it as a remedy. Let us then take heed that it do not seem to be the opposite. For if death is a good, why is it written that "God made not death,⁴⁵ but by the malice of men death entered into the world"? For of a truth death was no necessary part of the divine operation, since for those who were placed in paradise a continual succession of all good things streamed forth; but because of transgression the life of man, condemned to lengthened labour, began to be wretched with intolerable groaning; so that it was fitting that an end should be set to the evils, and that death should restore what life had lost. For immortality, unless grace breathed upon it, would be rather a burden than an advantage.

48. And if one consider accurately, it is not the death of our being, but of evil, for being continues, it is evil that perishes. That which has been rises again; would that as it is now free from sinning, so it were without former guilt! But this very thing is a proof that it is not the death of being, that we shall be the same persons as we were. And so we shall either pay the penalty of our sins, or attain to the reward of our good deeds. For the same being will rise again, now more honourable for having paid the tax of death. And then "the dead who are in Christ shall rise first; then, too, we who are alive," it is said, "shall together with them be caught up in the clouds into the air to meet the Lord, and so we shall always be with the Lord."⁴⁶ They first, but those that are alive second. They with Jesus, those that are alive through Jesus. To them life will be sweeter after rest, and though the living will have a delightful gain, yet they will be without experience of the remedy.

49. There is, then, nothing for us to fear in death, nothing for us to mourn, whether life which was received from nature be rendered up to her again, or whether it be sacrificed to some duty which claims it, and this will be either an act of religion or the exercise of some virtue. And no one ever wished to remain as at present. This has been supposed to have been promised to John, but it is not the truth. We hold fast to the words, and deduce the meaning from them. He himself in his own writing⁴⁷ denies that there was a promise that he should not die, that no one from that instance might yield to an empty hope. But if to wish for this would be an extravagant hope, how much more extravagant were it to grieve without rule for what has happened according to rule!

50. The heathen mostly console themselves with the thought, either of the common misery, or of the law of nature, or of the immortality of the soul. And would that their utterances were consistent, and that they did not transmit the wretched soul into a number of ludicrous monstrosities and figures! But what ought we to do, whose reward is the resurrection, though many, not being able to deny the greatness of this gift, refuse to believe in it? And for this reason will we maintain it, not by one casual argument only, but by as many as we are able.

51. All things, indeed, are believed to be, either because of experience, or on grounds of reason, or from similar instances, or because it is fitting that they be, and each of these supports our belief. Experience teaches us that we are moved; reason, that which moves us must be considered the property of another power; similar instances show that the field has borne crops, and therefore we expect that it will continue to bear them. Fitness, because even where we do not think that there will be results, yet we believe that it is by no means fitting to give up the works of virtue.

52. Each, then, is supported by each. But belief in the resurrection is inferred most clearly on three grounds, in which all are included. These are reason, analogy from universal example, and the evidence of what has happened, since many have risen. Reason is clear. For since the whole course of our life consists in the union of body and soul, and the resurrection brings with it either the reward of good works, or the punishment of wicked ones, it is necessary that the body, whose actions are weighed, rise again. For how shall the soul be summoned to judgment without the body, when account has to be rendered of the companionship of itself and the body?

53. Rising again is the lot of all, but there is a difficulty in believing this, because it is not due to our deserts, but is the gift of God. The first argument for the resurrection is the course of the world, and the condition of all things, the series of generations, the changes in the way of succession, the setting and rising of constellations, the ending of day and night, and their daily succession coming as it were again to life. And no other reason can exist for the fertile temperament of this earth, but

that the divine order restores by the dews of night as much of that moisture from which all earthly things are produced, as the heat of the sun dries up by day. Why should I speak of the fruits of the earth? Do they not seem to die when they fall, to rise again when they grow green once more? That which is sown rises again, that which is dead rises again, and they are formed once more into the same classes and kinds as before. The earth first gave back these fruits, in these first our nature found the pattern of the resurrection.

54. Why doubt that body shall rise again from body? Grain is sown, grain comes up again: fruit is sown, fruit comes up again; but the grain is clothed with blossom and husk. "And this mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible must put on incorruption."⁴⁸ The blossom of the resurrection is immortality, the blossom of the resurrection is incorruption. For what is more fruitful than perpetual rest? what supplied with richer store than everlasting security? Here is that abundant fruit, by whose increase man's nature shoots forth more abundantly after death.

55. But you wonder how what has yielded to putrefaction can again become solid, how scattered particles can come together, those that are consumed be made good: you do not wonder how seeds broken up under the moist pressure of the earth grow green. For certainly they too, rotting under contact with the earth, are broken up, and when the fertilising moisture of the soil gives life to the dead and hidden seeds, and, by the vital warmth, as it were breathes out a kind of soul of the green herb. Then by little and little nature raises from the ground the tender stalk of the growing ear, and as a careful mother folds it in certain sheaths, lest the sharp ice should hurt it as it grows, and to protect it from too great heat of the sun; and lest after this the rain should break down the fruit itself escaping as it were from its first cradle and just grown up, or lest the wind should scatter it, or small birds destroy it, she usually hedges it around with a fence of bristling awn.

56. Why should one, then, be surprised if the earth give back those bodies of men which it has received, seeing that it gives life to, raises, clothes, protects, and defends whatsoever bodies of seeds it has received? Cease then to doubt that the trustworthy earth, which restores multiplied as it were by usury the seeds committed to it, will also restore the entrusted deposit of the race of man. And why should I speak of the kinds of trees, which spring up from seed sown, and with revived fruitfulness bear again their opening fruits, and repeat the old shape and likeness, and certain trees being renewed continue through many generations, and in their endurance overpass the very centuries? We see the grape rot, and the vine come up again: a graft is inserted and the tree is born again. Is there this divine foresight for restoring trees, and no care for men? And He Who has not suffered to perish that which He gave for man's use, shall He suffer man to perish, whom he made after His own image?

57. But it appears incredible to you that the dead rise again? "Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest, does it not first die that it may be quickened?"⁴⁹ Sow any dry seed you please, it is raised up. But, you answer, it has the life-juice in itself. And our body has its blood, has its own moisture. This is the life-juice of our body. So that I think that the objection is exploded which some allege that a dry twig does not revive, and then endeavour to argue from this to the prejudice of the flesh. For the flesh is not dry, since all flesh is of clay, clay comes from moisture-moisture from the earth. Then, again, many growing plants, though always fresh, spring from dry and sandy soil, since the earth itself supplies sufficient moisture for itself. Does the earth then, which continually

restores all things, fail with regard to man? From what has been said it is clear that we must not doubt that it is rather in accordance with than contrary to nature; for it is natural that all things living should rise again, but contrary to nature that they should perish.

58. We come now to a point which much troubles the heathen, how it can be that the earth should restore those whom the sea has swallowed up, wild beasts have torn to pieces or have devoured. So, then, at last we necessarily come to the conclusion that the doubt is not as to belief in resurrection in general, but as to a part. For, granted that the bodies of those torn in pieces do not rise again, the others do so, and the resurrection is not disproved, but a certain class is an exception. Yet I wonder why they think there is any doubt even concerning these, as though not all things which are of the earth return to the earth, and crumble again into earth. And the sea itself for the most part casts up on neighbouring shores whatever human bodies it has swallowed. And if this were not so, I suppose we are to believe that it would not be difficult for God to join together what was dispersed, to unite what was scattered; God, Whom the universe obeys, to Whom the dumb elements submit and nature serves; as though it were not a greater wonder to give life to clay than to join it together.

59. That bird in the country of Arabia, which is called the Phoenix, restored by the renovating juices of its flesh, after being dead comes to life again: shall we believe that men alone are not raised up again? Yet we know this by common report and the authority of writings,⁵⁰ namely, that the bird referred to has a fixed period of life of five hundred years, and when by some warning of nature it knows that the end of its life is at hand, it furnishes for itself a casket of frankincense and myrrh and other perfumes, and its work and the time being together ended, it enters the casket and dies. Then from its juices a worm comes forth, and grows by degrees into the fashion of the same bird, and its former habits are restored, and borne up by the oarage of its wings it commences once more the course of its renewed life, and discharges a debt of gratitude. For it conveys that casket, whether the tomb of its body or the cradle of its resurrection, in which quitting life it died, and dying it rose again, from Ethiopia to Lycaonia; and so by the resurrection of this bird the people of those regions understand that a period of five hundred years is accomplished. So to that bird the five hundredth is the year of resurrection, but to us the thousandth:⁵¹ it has its resurrection in this world, we have ours at the end of the world. Many think also that this bird kindles its own funeral pile, and comes to life again from its own ashes.

60. But perhaps nature if more deeply investigated will seem to give a deeper reason for our belief: let our thoughts turn back to the origin and commencement of the creation of man. You are men and women, you are not ignorant of the things which have to do with human nature, and if any of you have not this knowledge, you know that we are born of nothing. But how small an origin for being so great as we are! And if I do not speak more plainly, yet you understand. what I mean, or rather what I will not say. Whence, then, is this head, and that wonderful countenance, whose maker we see not? We see the work, it is fashioned for various purposes and uses. Whence is this upright figure, this lofty stature, this power of action, this quickness of perception, this capacity for walking upright? Doubtless the organs of nature are not known to us, but that which they effect is known. Thou too wast once seed, and thy body is the seed of that which shall rise again. Listen to Paul and learn that thou art this seed: "It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory; it is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power; it is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body."⁵² Thou also, then, art sown as are other things, why

wonderest thou if thou shall rise again as shall others? But thou believest as to them, because thou seest; thou believest not this, because thou seest it not: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."⁵³

61. However, before the season comes, those things also are not believed, for every season is not suited for the raising of seeds. Wheat is sown at one time, and comes up at another; at one time the vine is planted, at another the budding twigs begin to shoot, the foliage grows luxuriant, and the grape is formed; at one time the olive is planted, at another time, as though pregnant and loaded with its offspring of berries, it is bent down by the abundance of its fruit. But before its own period arrives for each, the produce is restricted, and that which bears has not the age of bearing in its own power. One may see the mother of all at one time disfigured with mould, at another bare of produce, at another green and full of flowers, at another dried up. Any spot which might wish to be always clothed and never to lay aside the golden dress of its seeds, or the green dress of the meadows, would be barren in itself and unendowed with the gain of its own produce which it would have transferred to others.

62. So, then, even if thou wilt not believe in our resurrection by faith nor by example, thou wilt believe by experience. For many products, as the vine, the olive, and different fruits, the end of the year is the fit time for ripening; and for us also the consummation of the world, as though the end of the year has set the fitting time for rising again. And fitly is the resurrection of the dead at the consummation of the world, test after the resurrection we should have to fall back into this evil age. For this cause Christ suffered that He might deliver us from this evil world; lest the temptations of this world should overthrow us again, and it should be an injury to us to come again to life, if we came to life again for sin.

63. So then we have both a reason and a time for the resurrection: a reason because nature in all its produce remains consistent with itself, and does not fail in the generation of men alone; a time because all things are produced at the end of the year. For the seasons of the world consist of one year. What wonder if the year be one since the day is one. For on one day the Lord hired the labourers to work in the vineyard, when He said, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"⁵⁴

64. The causes of the beginnings of all things are seeds. And the Apostle of the Gentiles has said that the human body is a seed.⁵⁵ And so in succession after sowing there is the substance needful for the resurrection. But even if there were no substance and no cause, who could think it difficult for God to create man anew whence He will and as He wills. Who commanded the world to come into being out of no matter and no substance? Look at the heaven, behold the earth. Whence are the fires of the stars? Whence the orb and rays of the sun? Whence the globe of the moon? Whence the mountain heights, the hard rocks, the woody groves? Whence are the air diffused around, and the waters, whether enclosed or poured abroad? But if God made all these things out of nothing (for "He spake and they were made, He commanded and they were created"⁵⁶), why should we wonder that which has been should be brought to life again, since we see produced that which had not been?

65. It is a cause for wonder that though they do not believe in the resurrection, yet in their kindly care they make provision that the human race should not perish,⁵⁷ and so say that souls pass and migrate into other bodies that the world may not pass away. But let them say which is the most difficult, for souls to migrate, or to return; come back to that which is their own, or seek for fresh

dwelling places.

66. But let those who have not been taught doubt. For us who have read the Law, the Prophets, the Apostles, and the Gospel it is not lawful to doubt. For who can doubt when he reads: "And in that time shall all thy people be saved which is written in the book; and many of them that sleep in the graves of the earth shall arise with one opening, these to everlasting life, and those to shame and everlasting confusion. And they that have understanding shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and of the just many shall be as the stars for ever."⁵⁸ Well, then, did he speak of the rest of those that sleep, that one may understand that death lasts not for ever, which like sleep is undergone for a time, and is put off at its time; and he shows that the progress of that life which shall be after death is better than that which is passed in sorrow and pain before death, inasmuch as the former is compared to the stars, the latter is assigned to trouble.

67. And why should I bring together what is written elsewhere: "Thou shalt raise me up and I will praise Thee." Or that other passage in which holy Job, after experiencing the miseries of this life, and overcoming all adversity by his virtuous patience, promised himself a recompense for present evils in the resurrection, saying: "Thou shalt raise up this body of mine which has suffered many evils."⁵⁹ Isaiah also, proclaiming the resurrection to the people, says that he is the announcer of the Lord's message, for we read thus: "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, and they shall say in that day."⁶⁰ And what the mouth of the Lord declared that the people should say is set forth later on, where it is written: "Because of Thy fear, O Lord, we have been with child and have brought forth the Spirit of Thy Salvation, which Thou hast poured forth upon the earth. They that inhabit the earth shall fall, they shall rise that are in the graves. For the dew which is from Thee is health for them but the land of the wicked shall perish. Go O my people, and enter into thy chambers; hide thyself for a little until the Lord's wrath pass by."⁶¹

68. How well did he by the chambers point out the tombs of the dead, in which for a brief space we are hidden, that we may be better able to pass to the judgment of God, which shall try us with the indignation due for our wickednesses. He, then, is alive who is hidden and at rest, as though withdrawing himself from our midst and retiring, lest the misery of this world should entangle him with closer snares, for whom the heavenly oracles affirm by the voices of the prophets that the joy of the resurrection is reserved, and the soundness of their freed bodies procured by the divine deed. And dew is well used as a sign, since by it all vital seeds of the earth are raised to growth. What wonder is it, then, if the dust and ashes also of our failing body grow vigorous by the richness of the heavenly dew, and by the reception of this vital moistening the shapes of our limbs are refashioned and connected again with each other?

69. And the holy prophet Ezekiel teaches and describes with a full exposition how vigour is restored to the dry bones, the senses return, motion is added, and the sinews coming back, the joints of the human body grow strong; how the bones which were very dry are clothed with restored flesh, and the course of the veins and the flow of the blood is covered by the veil of the skin drawn over them. As we read, the reviving multitude of human bodies seems to spring up under the very words of the prophet, and one can see on the widespread plain the new seed shoot forth.

70. But if the wise men of old believed that a crop of armed men sprang up in the district of Thebes from the sowing of the hydra's teeth, whereas it is certainly established that seeds of one kind

cannot be changed into another kind of plant, nor bring forth produce differing from its own seeds, so that men should spring from serpents and flesh from teeth; how much more, indeed, is it to be believed that whatever has been sown rises again in its own nature, and that crops do not differ from their seed, that soft things do not spring from hard, nor hard from soft, nor is poison changed into blood; but that flesh is restored from flesh, bone from bone, blood from blood, the humours of the body from humours. Can ye then, ye heathen, who are able to assert a change, deny a restoration of the nature? Can you refuse to believe the oracles of God, the Gospel, and the prophets, who believe empty fables?

71. But let us now hear the prophet himself, who speaks thus: "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and the Lord led me forth in the Spirit, and placed me in the midst of the plain, and it was full of men's bones; and He led me through them round about, and, lo, there were very many bones on the face of the plain, and they were very dry. And He said unto me: Son of man, can these bones live? And I said: Lord, Thou knowest; and He said to me: Prophecy over these bones, and thou shalt say unto them: O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord to these bones: Behold I bring upon you the Spirit of life, and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and will stretch skin over you, and will put My Spirit into you, and ye shall live, and know that I am the Lord. And I prophesied as He commanded me. And it came to pass when I was prophesying all these things, lo, there was a great earthquake."⁶²

72. Note how the prophet shows that there was hearing and movement in the bones before the Spirit of life was poured upon them. For, above, both the dry bones are bidden to hear, as if they had the sense of hearing, and that upon this each of them came to its own joint is pointed out by the words of the prophet, for we read as follows: "And the bones came together, each one to its joint. And I beheld, and, lo, sinews and flesh were forming upon them, and skin came upon them from above, and there was no Spirit in them."⁶³

73. Great is the lovingkindness of the Lord, that the prophet is taken as a witness of the future resurrection, that we, too might see it with his eyes. For all could not be taken as witnesses, but in that one all we are witnesses, for neither does lying come upon a holy man, nor error upon so great a prophet.

74. Nor ought it to appear at all improbable, that at the command of God the bones were fitted again to their joints, since we have numberless instances in which nature has obeyed the commands of heaven; as the earth was bidden to bring forth the green herb,⁶⁴ and did bring it forth; as the rock at the touch of the rod gave forth water for the thirsting people;⁶⁵ and the hard stone poured forth streams by the mercy of God for those parched with heat. What else did the rod changed into a serpent⁶⁶ signify, than that at the will of God living things can be produced from those that are without life? Do you think it more incredible that bones should come together when bidden, than that streams should be turned back or the sea flee? For thus does the prophet testify: "The sea saw it and fled, Jordan was driven back."⁶⁷ Nor can there be any doubt about this fact, which was proved by the rescue of one and the destruction of the other of two peoples, that the waves of the sea stood restrained, and at the same time surrounded one people, and poured back upon the other for their death, that they might overwhelm the one, but preserve the other.⁶⁸ And what do we find in the Gospel itself? Did not the Lord Himself prove there that the sea grew calm at a word, the clouds were driven away, the blasts of the winds yielded, and that on the quieted

shores the dumb elements obeyed God?

75. But let us go on with the other points, that we may observe how by the Spirit of life the dead are quickened, they that lie in the graves arise, and the tombs are opened: "And He said unto me: Prophecy, son of man, and say to the Spirit, Come from the four winds of heaven, O Spirit, and breathe upon these dead, that they may live. And I prophesied as He commanded me, and the Spirit of life entered into them, and they lived, and stood up on their feet, an exceeding great company. And the Lord spake unto me, saying: Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. For they say, Our bones are become dry, our hope is lost, we shall perish. Therefore, prophesy and say: Thus saith the Lord: Behold I will open your graves, and will bring you up out of your graves into the land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall open your graves, and bring forth My people out of the graves, and shall put My Spirit in you, and place you in your own land, and ye shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will perform it, saith the Lord."⁶⁹

76. We notice here how the operations of the Spirit of life are again resumed; we know after what manner the dead are raised from the opening tombs. And is it in truth a matter of wonder that the sepulchres of the dead are unclosed at the bidding of the Lord, when the whole earth from its utmost limits is shaken by one thunderclap, the sea overflows its bounds, and again checks the course of its waves? And finally, he who has believed that the dead shall rise again "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for the trumpet shall sound),"⁷⁰ "shall be caught up amongst the first in the clouds to meet Christ in the air;"⁷¹ he who has not believed shall be left, and subject himself to the sentence by his own unbelief.

77. The Lord also shows us in the Gospel, to come now to instances, after what manner we shall rise again. "For He raised not Lazarus alone, but the faith of all; and if thou believest, as thou readest, thy spirit also, which was dead, revives with Lazarus." For what does it mean, that the Lord went to the sepulchre and cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth,"⁷² except that He would give us a visible proof, would set forth an example of the future resurrection? Why did He cry with a loud voice, as though He were not wont to work in the Spirit, to command in silence, but only that He might show that which is written: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump the dead shall rise again incorruptible"?⁷³ For the raising of the voice answers to the peal of trumpets. And He cried, "Lazarus, come forth." Why is the name added, except perchance lest one might seem to be raised instead of another, or that the resurrection were rather accidental than commanded.

78. So, then, the dead man heard, and came forth from the tomb, bound hand and foot with grave cloths, and his face was bound with a napkin. Conceive, if thou canst, how he makes his way with closed eyes, directs his steps with bound feet, and moves as though free with fastened limbs.⁷⁴ The bands remained on him but did not restrain him, his eyes were covered yet they saw. So, then, he saw who was rising again, who was walking, who was leaving the sepulchre. For when the power of the divine command was working, nature did not require its own functions, and brought, as it were, into extremity, obeyed no longer its own course, but the divine will. The bands of death were burst before those of the grave. The power of moving was exercised before the means of moving were supplied.⁷⁵

79. If thou marvellest at this, consider Who gave the command, that thou mayest cease to wonder; Jesus Christ. the Power of God, the Life, the Light, the Resurrection of the dead. The Power raised up him that was lying prostrate, the Life produced his steps, the Light drove away the darkness and restored his sight, the Resurrection renewed the gift of life.

80. Perchance it may trouble thee that the Jews took away the stone and loosened the grave cloths, and thou mayest haply be anxious as to who shall move the stone from thy tomb. As though He Who could restore the Spirit could not remove the stone; or He Who made the bound to walk could not burst the bonds; or He Who had shed light upon the covered eyes could not uncover the face; or He Who could renew the course of nature could not cleave the stone! But, in order that they may believe their eyes who will not believe with their heart, they remove the stone, they see the corpse, they smell the stench, they loose the grave cloths. They cannot deny that he is dead whom they behold rising again; they see the signs of death and the proofs of life. What if, whilst they are busied, they are converted by the very toil itself? What if, while they hear, they believe their own ears? What if, while they behold, they are instructed by their own eyes? What if, while they loose the bonds, they free their own minds? What if, while Lazarus is being unbound, the people is set free, while they let Lazarus go, themselves return to the Lord? For, lastly, many who had come to Mary, seeing what had taken place, believed.

81. And this was not the only instance which our Lord Jesus Christ set forth, but He raised others also, that we might at any rate believe more numerous instances. He raised the young man again, moved by the tears of his widowed mother, when He came and touched the bier, and said: "Young man, I say unto thee, arise, and he that was dead sat up and began to speak."⁷⁶ As soon as he heard he forthwith sat up, he forthwith spake. The working of power, then, is one thing, the order of nature is another.

82. And what shall I say of the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, at whose death multitudes were weeping and the flute-players piping? For the funeral solemnities were being performed because of the conviction of death. How quickly at the word of the Lord does the spirit return, the reviving body rise up, and food is taken, that the evidence of life may be believed!⁷⁷

83. And why should we wonder that the soul is restored at the word of God, that flesh returns to the bones, when we remember the dead raised by the touch of the prophet's body?⁷⁸ Elijah prayed, and raised the dead child.⁷⁹ Peter in the name of Christ bade Tabitha rise and walk,⁸⁰ and the poor rejoicing believed for the food's sake which she ministered to them, and shall we not believe for our salvation's sake? They purchased the resurrection of another by their tears, shall we not believe in the purchase of ours by the Passion of Christ? Who when He gave up the ghost, in order to show that He died for our resurrection, worked out the course of the resurrection; for so soon as "He cried again with a loud voice and gave up the ghost, the earth did quake, and the rocks were rent, and the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and, going forth out of the tombs after His resurrection, came into the holy city and appeared unto many."⁸¹

84. If these things happened when He gave up the ghost, why should we think them incredible when He shall return to judgment? especially since this earlier resurrection is a pledge of that future resurrection, and a pattern of that reality Which is to come; indeed, it is rather itself truth than a pattern. Who, then, at the Lord's resurrection opened the graves, gave a hand to those who

were rising, showed them the road to find the holy city? If there was no one, it was certainly the Divine Power which was working in the bodies of the dead. Shall one seek for the aid of man where one sees the work of God?

85. Divine action has no need of human assistance. God commanded that the heavens should come into existence, and it was done; He determined that the earth should be created, and it was created.⁸² Who carried together the stones on his shoulders? who supplied the expenses? who furnished assistance to God as He toiled? These things were made in a moment. Would you know how quickly? "He spake and they were made."⁸³ If the elements spring up at a word. why should the dead not rise at a word? For though they be dead, yet they once lived, once had the breath of life for feeling, and strength for acting; and there is a very great difference between not having been capable of life, and having remained lifeless. The devil said: "Command this stone that it become bread."⁸⁴ He confesses that at the command of God nature can be transformed, dost thou not believe that at the command of God nature can be remade?

86. Philosophers dispute about the course of the sun and the system of the heavens, and there are those who think that these should be believed when they are ignorant of what they are talking about. For neither have they climbed up into the heavens, nor measured the sky, nor examined the universe with their eyes; for none of them was with God in the beginning, none of them has said of God: "When He was preparing the heavens I was with Him, I was with Him as a master workman, I was he in whom He delighted."⁸⁵ If, then, they are believed, is God not believed, Who says: "As the new heavens and the new earth, which I make to remain before Me, saith the Lord; so shall your name and your seed abide; and month shall be after month, and sabbath after sabbath, and all flesh shall come in My sight to worship in Jerusalem, saith the Lord God; and they shall go forth, and shall see the limbs of men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be quenched and they shall be a sight to all flesh."⁸⁶

87. If the earth and heaven are renewed, why should we doubt that man, on account of whom heaven and earth were made, can be renewed? If the transgressor be reserved for punishment, why should not the just be kept for glory? If the worm of sins does not die, how shall the flesh of the just perish? For the resurrection, as the very form of the word shows, is this, that what has fallen should rise again, that which has died should come to life again.

88. And this is the course and ground of justice, that since the action of body and soul is common to both (for what the soul has conceived the body has carried out), each should come into judgment, and each should be either given over to punishment or reserved for glory. For it would seem almost inconsistent that, since the law of the mind fights against the law of the flesh, and the mind often, when sin dwelling in man acts, does that which it hates; the mind guilty of a fault shared by another should be subjected to penalty, and the flesh, the author of the evil, should enjoy rest: and that should alone suffer which had not sinned alone, or should alone attain to glory, not having fought alone with the help of grace.

89. The reason, unless I am mistaken, is complete and just, but I do not require a reason from Christ. If I am convinced by reason I reject faith. Abraham believed God,⁸⁷ let us also believe Him, that we who are heirs of his race may also be heirs of his faith. David likewise believed, and therefore did he speak;⁸⁸ let us also believe that we may be able to speak, knowing that "He Who raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus."⁸⁹ For God, Who never lies, promised

this; the Truth promised this in His Gospel, when He said: "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that of all that which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."⁹⁰ And He thought it not sufficient to have said this once, but marked it by express repetition, for this follows: "For this is the will of My Father, Who sent Me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."⁹¹

90. Who was He that said this? He in truth Who when dead raised up many bodies of the departed. If we believe not God, shall we not believe evidence? Do we not believe what He promised, since He did even that which He did not promise? And what reason would He have had for dying, had He not also had a reason for rising again? For, seeing that God could not die, Wisdom could not die; and inasmuch as that could not rise again which had not died, flesh is assumed, which can die, that whilst that, whose nature it is, dies, that which had died should rise again. For the resurrection could not be effected except by man; since, "as by man came death, so too by man came the resurrection of the dead."⁹²

91. So, then, man rose because man died; man was raised again, but God raised him. Then it was man according to the Flesh, now God is all in all.⁹³ For now we know not Christ according to the flesh,⁹⁴ but we possess the grace of that Flesh, so that we know Him the firstfruits of them that rest,⁹⁵ the firstborn of the dead.⁹⁶ Now the first-fruits are undoubtedly of the same nature and kind as the remaining fruits, the first of which are offered to God as a petition for a richer increase, as a holy thank-offering for all gifts, and as a kind of libation of that nature which has been restored. Christ, then, is the firstfruits of them that rest. But is this of His own who are at rest, who, as it were, freed from death, are holden by a kind of sweet slumber, or of all those who are dead? "As in Christ all die, so too in Christ shall all be made alive."⁹⁷ So, then, as the firstfruits of death were in Adam, so also the firstfruits of the resurrection are in Christ.

92. All men rise again, but let no one lose heart, and let not the just grieve at the common lot of rising again, since he awaits the chief fruit of his virtue. All indeed shall rise again,⁹⁸ but, as says the Apostle, "each in his own order." The fruit of the Divine Mercy is common to all, but the order of merit differs. The day gives light to all, the sun warms all, the rain fertilises the possessions of all with genial showers.

93. We are all born, and we shall all rise again, but in each state, whether of living or of living again, grace differs and the condition differs. For, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, the dead shall rise incorruptible and we shall be changed."⁹⁹ Moreover, in death itself some rest, and some live. Rest is good, but life is better. And so the Apostle rouses him that is resting to life, saying: "Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."¹⁰⁰ Therefore he is aroused that he may live, that he may be like to Paul, that he may be able to say: "For we that are alive shall not prevent those that are asleep."¹⁰¹ He speaks not here of the common manner of life, and the breath which we all alike enjoy, but of the merit of the resurrection. For, having said, "And the dead which are in Christ shall rise first," he adds further; "And we that are alive shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet Christ in the air."¹⁰²

94. Paul certainly is dead, and by his honourable passion exchanged the life of the body for everlasting glory; did he then deceive himself when he wrote that he should be caught up alive in the clouds to meet Christ? We read the same too of Enoch¹⁰³ and of Elijah,¹⁰⁴ and thou too shalt

be caught up in the Spirit. Lo the chariot of Elijah, lo the fire, though not seen are prepared, that the just may ascend, the innocent be borne forth, and thy life may not know death. For indeed the apostles knew not death, according to that which was said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, many of those standing here shall not taste death until they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom."¹⁰⁵ For he lives, who has nothing in him which can die, who has not from Egypt any shoe or bond, but has put it off before laying aside the service of this body. And so not Enoch alone is alive, for not he alone was caught up; Paul also was caught up to meet Christ.

95. The patriarchs also live, for God could not be called the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, except the dead were living; for He is not the God of the dead but of the living.¹⁰⁶ And we, too, shall live if we be willing to copy the deeds and habits of our predecessors. We are astonished at the rewards of the patriarchs, let us copy their faithfulness; we tell of their grace, let us follow their obedience; let us not, enticed by appetite, fall into the snares of the world. Let us lay hold of the opportunity, of the commandment of the Law, the mercy of our vocation, the desire of suffering. The patriarchs went forth from their own land, let us go forth in purpose from the power of the body; let us go forth in purpose as they in exile; but they esteemed that not to be exile which the fear of God caused, necessity did not enforce. They changed their land for another soil, let us change earth for heaven; they changed in earthly habitation, let us change in spirit. To them Wisdom showed the heaven illuminated with stars,¹⁰⁷ let it enlighten the eyes of our heart. Thus does the type agree with the truth, and the truth with the type.

96. Abraham, ready to receive strangers, faithful towards God, devoted in ministering, quick in his service, saw the Trinity in a type;¹⁰⁸ he added religious duty to hospitality, when beholding Three he worshipped One, and preserving the distinction of the Persons, yet addressed one Lord, he offered to Three the honour of his gift, while acknowledging one Power. It was not learning but grace which spoke in him, and he believed better what he had not learnt than we who have learnt. No one had falsified the representation of the truth, and so he sees Three, but worships the Unity. He brings forth three measures of fine meal, and slays one victim,¹⁰⁹ considering that one sacrifice is sufficient, but a triple gift; one victim, an offering of three. And in the four kings,¹¹⁰ who does not understand that he subjected to himself the elements of the material creation, and all earthly things in a sign whereby the Lord's Passion was prefigured? Faithful in war, moderate in his triumph, in that he preferred not to become richer by the gifts of men, but by those of God.

97. He believed that he when old could beget a son,¹¹¹ and judged himself when a father able to sacrifice his son; nor did his fatherly affection tremble when duty aided the right hand of the old man,¹¹² for he knew that his son would be more acceptable to God when sacrificed than when whole. Therefore he brings his well-beloved son to be sacrificed, and offered promptly him whom he had received late; nor is he restrained by being called by the name of father, when his son called him "Father," and he replied, "My son." Dear pledges of love are these names, but the commands of God are loved still more. And so although their hearts felt for each other, their purpose remained firm. The father's hand stretched out the knife over his son, and the father's heart struck the blow that the sentence might not fail of being carried out; he feared lest the stroke should miss, lest his right hand should fail. He felt the movings of fatherly affection, but did not shrink from the work of submission, and hastened his obedience, even when he heard the voice from heaven. Let us then set God before all those whom we love, father, brother, mother, that He may preserve for us those whom we love, as in the case of Abraham we behold rather the liberal

Rewarder than the servant.

98. The father offered indeed his son, but God is appeased not by blood but by dutiful obedience. He showed the ram in the thicket¹¹³ in the stead of the lad, that He might restore the son to his father, and yet the victim not fail the priest. And so Abraham was not stained with his son's blood, nor was God deprived of the sacrifice. The prophet spoke, and neither yielded to boastfulness nor continued obstinate, but took the ram in exchange for the lad. And by this is shown the more how piously he offered him whom he now so gladly received back. And thou, if thou offer thy gift to God, dost not lose it. But we are tenacious of our own; God gave His only Son for us,¹¹⁴ we refuse ours. Abraham saw this and recognized the mystery, that salvation should be to us from the Tree, nor did it escape his notice that in one and the same sacrifice it was One that seemed to be offered, Another which could be slain.

99. Let us, then, imitate the devotion of Abraham, let us imitate the goodness of Isaac, let us imitate his purity. The man was plainly good and chaste, full of devotion towards God, chaste towards his wife. He returned not evil for evil, yielded to those who would thrust him out, received them again on their repentance, neither violent towards insolence, nor stubborn towards kindness. Fleeing from strife when he went away from others, ready to forgive when he received them again, and still more lavish of goodness when he forgave them. The fellowship of his company was sought, he gave in addition a feast of pleasure.

100. In Jacob, too, let us imitate the type of Christ, let there be some likeness of his actions in ourselves. We shall have our share with him, if we imitate him. He was obedient to his mother, he yielded to his brother, he served his father-in-law, he sought his wages from the increase, not from a division of the flocks. There was no covetous division, where his portion brought such gain. Nor was that sign without a purpose, the ladder from earth to heaven,¹¹⁵ wherein was seen the future fellowship between men and angels through the cross of Christ, whose thigh was paralyzed,¹¹⁶ that in his thigh he might recognize the Heir of his body, and foretell by the paralyzing of his thigh the Passion of his Heir.

101. We see, then, that heaven is open to virtue, and that this is the privilege not only of a few: "For many shall come from the east and from the west, and the north and the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God,"¹¹⁷ giving expression to the enjoyment of perpetual rest since the motions of their souls are stilled. Let us follow Abraham in our habits, that he may receive us into his bosom, and cherish us with loving embrace, like Lazarus the inheritor of his humility surrounded by his own special virtues. The followers of the holy patriarch, approved of God, cherish us not in a bodily bosom, but in a clothing as it were of good works. "Be not deceived," says the Apostle, "God is not mocked."¹¹⁸

102. We have seen, then, how grave an offence it is not to believe the resurrection; for if we rise not again, then Christ died in vain, then Christ rose not again.¹¹⁹ For if He rose not for us, He certainly rose not at all, for He had no need to rise for Himself. The universe rose again in Him, the heaven rose again in Him, the earth rose again in Him, for there shall be a new heaven and a new earth.¹²⁰ But where was the necessity of a resurrection for Him Whom the claims of death held not? For though He died as man, yet was He free in hell itself.

103. Wilt thou know how free? "I am become as a man that hath no help, free among the dead."¹²¹ And well is He called free, Who had power to raise Himself, according to that which is written: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."¹²² And well is He called free, Who had descended to rescue others. For He was made as a man, not, indeed, in appearance only, but so fashioned in truth, for He is man, and who shall know Him? For, "being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death,"¹²³ in order that through that obedience we might see His glory, "the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father,"¹²⁴ according to Saint John. For thus is the statement of Scripture preserved, if both the glory of the Only-begotten and the nature of perfect man are preserved in Christ.

104. And so He needed no helper. For He needed none when He made the world, so as to need none when He would redeem it. No legate, no messenger, but the Lord Himself made it whole. "He spake and it was done."¹²⁵ The Lord Himself made it whole, Himself in every part, because all things were by Him. For who should help Him in Whom all things were created and by Whom all things consist?¹²⁶ Who should help Him Who makes all things in a moment, and raises the dead at the last trump?¹²⁷ The "last," not as though He could not raise them at the first, or the second, or the third, but an order is observed, not that a difficulty may be at last overcome, but that the prescribed number be accomplished.

105. But it is now time, I think, to speak of the trumpets since my discourse is nearing its end, that the trumpet may also be the sign of the finishing of my address. We read of seven trumpets in the Revelation of John, which seven angels received.¹²⁸ And there you read that when the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, there was a great voice from heaven, saying: "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."¹²⁹ The word trumpet is also used for a voice, as you read: "Behold a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard, as of a trumpet speaking with me and saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass."¹³⁰ We read also: "Blow up the trumpet at the beginning of the month [the new moon];"¹³¹ and again elsewhere: "Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet."¹³²

106. Therefore we ought with all our power to observe what is the signification of the trumpets, lest, accepting them, like old women, as part of the story, we should be in danger if we were to think things unworthy of spiritual teaching, or not befitting the dignity of the Scriptures. For when we read that our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual hosts of wickedness, which are in high places,¹³³ we ought not to think of weapons of the flesh, but of such as are mighty before God.¹³⁴ It is not enough that one see the trumpet or hear its sound, unless one understands the signification of the sound. For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, how shall one prepare himself for war?¹³⁵ Wherefore it is important that we understand the meaning of the voice of the trumpet, lest we seem barbarians, when we either hear or utter trumpet-sounds of this sort. And therefore when we speak, let us pray that the Holy Spirit would interpret them to us.

107. Let us, then, investigate what we read in the Old Testament concerning the kinds of trumpets, considering that those festivals which were enjoined on the Jews by the Law are the shadow of joys above and of heavenly festivals. For here is the shadow, there the truth. Let us endeavour to attain to the truth by means of the shadow. Of which truth the figure is expressed in this manner,

where we read that the Lord said to Moses: "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, shall be a rest unto you, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, it shall be called holy unto you. Ye shall not do any servile work, and ye shall kindle a whole burnt-offering unto the Lord."¹³⁶ And in the Book of Numbers: "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying: Make thee two trumpets of beaten work, of silver shalt thou make them, and they shall be to thee for calling the assembly and for the journeying of the camp. And thou shalt blow with them, and all the congregation shall be gathered together at the door of the tabernacle of witness. But if thou blow with one trumpet, all the princes and leaders of Israel shall come to thee; and ye shall blow a signal with the trumpet the first time, and they shall move the camp forward, and place it on the east. And ye shall blow a signal with the trumpet the second time, and they shall move the camp forward, and place it towards Libanus. And ye shall blow a signal with the trumpet the third time, and they shall move the camp forward, which shall be placed towards the north [Boream]. And ye shall blow a signal with the trumpet the fourth time, and they shall move the camp forward, which shall be placed towards the north [Aquilonem]. They shall blow a signal with the trumpet when they move forward. And when ye shall gather together the assembly, blow with the trumpet, but not the signal. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets, and it shall be for you a statute for ever throughout your generations. But if ye shall go out to war into your own land, against the adversaries who resist you, ye shall sound a signal with the trumpets and ye shall be remembered before the Lord. and have deliverance from your dead. Also in the days of your gladness, and on your feast days, and on your new moons, ye shall blow with the trumpets, and at your whole burnt sacrifices and at your peace-offerings, and it shall be for you for your memorial before the Lord, saith the Lord."^{137 138}

108. What then? shall we esteem festival days by eating and drinking? But let no man judge us in respect of eating; "for we know that the Law is spiritual."¹³⁹ "Let no man therefore judge us in any meats or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or new moons, or a sabbath day, which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ."¹⁴⁰ Let us, then, seek the body of Christ which the voice of the Father, from heaven, as it were the last trumpet, has shown to you at the time when the Jews said that it thundered;¹⁴¹ the body of Christ, which again the last trump shall reveal; for "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven at the voice of the Archangel, and at the trump of God, and they that are dead in Christ shall rise again;"¹⁴² for "where the body is, there too are the eagles,"¹⁴³ where the body of Christ is, there is the truth.

108. The seventh trumpet, then, seems to signify the sabbath of the week, which is reckoned not only in days and years and periods (for which reason the number of the jubilee is sacred), but includes also the seventieth year, when the people returned to Jerusalem, who had remained seventy years in captivity. In hundreds also and in thousands the observation of the sacred number is by no means passed over, for not without a meaning did the Lord say: "I have left the seven thousand men, who have not bent their knees before Baal."¹⁴⁴ Therefore the shadow of the future rest is figured in time in the days, months, and years of this world, and therefore the children of Israel are commanded by Moses, that in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, a rest should be established for all at the "memorial of the trumpets;" and that no servile work should be done, but a sacrifice be offered to God, because that at the end of the week, as it were the sabbath of the world, spiritual and not bodily work is required of us. For that which is bodily is servile, for the body serves the soul, but innocence makes free, guilt reduces to slavery.

109. It was necessary, then, that spiritual things should be made known as in a mirror and in a riddle; "For now we see by means of a mirror, but then face to face."¹⁴⁵ Now we war after the flesh, then in the Spirit we shall see the divine mysteries. Let, then, the character of the true law be expressed in our manner of life, who walk in the image of God, for the shadow of the Law has now passed away. The carnal Jews had the shadow, the likeness is ours, the reality theirs who shall rise again. For we know that according to the Law there are these three, the shadow, the image or likeness, and the reality; the shadow in the Law, the image in the Gospel, the truth in the judgment. But all is Christ's, and all is in Christ, Whom now we cannot see according to the reality, but we see Him, as it were, in a kind of likeness of future things, of which we have seen the shadow in the Law. So, then, Christ is not the shadow but the likeness of God, not an empty likeness but the reality. And so the Law was by Moses, for the shadow was through man, the likeness was through the Law, the reality through Jesus. For reality cannot proceed from any other source than from reality.

110. If, then, any one desires to see this Image of God, he must love God, that he may be loved by God; and be no longer a servant but a friend, because he has kept the commandments of God, that he may enter into the cloud where God is.¹⁴⁶ Let him make to himself two reasonable trumpets of beaten work of proved silver, that is, composed of precious words and adorned, from which not a harsh shrill sound with dread-inspiring voice may be uttered, but high thanks to God may be poured forth with continuous exultation. For by the voice of such trumpets the dead are raised, not indeed by the sound of the metal, but aroused by the word of truth. And perchance it is those two trumpets by which Paul, through the Divine Spirit, spake when he said: "I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding, I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding;"¹⁴⁷ for the one without the other seems by no means to have perfect utterance.

111. Yet it is not every one's business to sound each trumpet, nor every one's business to call together the whole assembly, but that prerogative is granted to the priests alone,¹⁴⁸ and the ministers of God who sound the trumpets, so that whosoever shall hear and follow thither where the glory of the Lord is, and shall with early determination come to the tabernacle of witness, may be able also to see the divine works, and merit that appointed and eternal home for the entire succession of his posterity. For then is the war finished and the enemy put to flight, when the grace of the Spirit and the energy of the soul act together.

112. And these are salutary trumpets also, if one believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth; "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."¹⁴⁹ For with this twofold trumpet man arrives at that holy land, namely, the grace of the resurrection. Let them, then, ever sound to thee, that thou mayest ever hear the voice of God; may the utterances of the Angels and Prophets ever incite and move thee, that thou mayest hasten to things above.

113. David was thinking of this purpose in his breast when he said: "For I will pass into the place of the marvellous tabernacle, even to the house of God, with the voice of exultation and thanksgiving, the sound of one that feasts."¹⁵⁰ For not only are enemies overcome by the sound of these trumpets; but without them there could not be rejoicings, and festivals or new moons. For no one, unless he have received the promises of the Divine Word, and believes the message derived therefrom, can keep festivals or new moons, in which he desires to fill himself, freed from bodily

pleasure and secular occupation, with the light of Christ. And sacrifices themselves cannot be pleasing to Christ unless confession of the mouth accompanies them, which according to custom stirs up the people to implore the grace of God at the priestly oblation.

114. Let us therefore be preachers of the Lord, and praise Him in the sound of the trumpet,¹⁵¹ not thinking little or lightly of its power, but such things as can fill the ear of the mind, and enter into the depths of our inmost consciousness, so that we think not that what suits to the body is to be applied to the Godhead, nor measure the greatness of Divine Power by human might, so as to enquire how any one can rise again, or with what kind of body he will come, or how that which has been dissolved can again coalesce, and what is lost be restored, for all these things are accomplished as soon as they are determined by the Divine Will. And it is not a sound of a trumpet distinguishable by the bodily senses which is expected, but the invisible power of the Majesty of heaven operates; for with God to will is to do; nor need we enquire into the force required for the resurrection, but seek its fruit for ourselves. Which will be accomplished all the more easily, if freed from faults we attain to the fulness of the spiritual mystery, and the renewed flesh receives grace from the Spirit, and the soul obtains from Christ the brightness of eternal light.

115. But those mysteries pertain not to individuals only, but to the whole human race. For observe the order of grace according to the type of the Law. When the first trumpet sounds, it collects those towards the east, as the chief and elect; when the second sounds, those nearly equal in merit, who, being placed towards Libanus, have abandoned the follies of the nations; when the third, those who as it were, tossed on the sea of this world, have been driven hither and thither by the waves of this life; when the fourth, those who have by no means been able sufficiently to soften the hardness of their hearts by the commandments of spiritual utterance, and therefore are said to be towards the north-for, according to Solomon, the north is a hard wind.¹⁵²

116. And so although all are raised again in a moment, yet all are raised in the order of their merits. And therefore they rise first, who yielding early to the impulses of devotion, and as it were going forth before the rising dawn of faith, received the rays of the eternal Sun. This one may rightly say either of the patriarchs in the course of the Old Testament, or of the apostles under the Gospel. And the second are they who, forsaking the rites of the Gentiles, passed from unholy error under the training of the Church. So, then, those first were of the fathers, those second of the Gentiles, for the light of faith took its beginning from those, among these it will remain to the end of the world. In the third place and in the fourth, those are raised who are in the south and in the north. The earth is divided into these four, of these four is the year made up, in these four is the earth completed, and from these four is the Church collected. For all who are considered to be joined to holy Church, by being called by the Divine Name, shall obtain the privilege of the resurrection and the grace of eternal bliss, for "they shall come from the east and west, and from the north and south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."¹⁵³

117. For it is no small light wherewith Christ encompasses His world: since "His going forth is from the height of heaven, and His progress to the height thereof, nor is there any who can hide himself from His heat."¹⁵⁴ For with His Goodness He enlightens all, and wills not to reject but to amend the foolish, and desires not to exclude the hard-hearted from the Church, but to soften them. And so the Church in the Song of Songs and Christ in the Gospel invites them, saying: "Come unto Me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you; take My yoke upon you and learn of

Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."155

118. And you may recognize also the voice of the invitation of the Church, for she says: "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, and let my ointment flow forth. Let my brother come down into his garden and eat the fruit of his precious trees."156 For knowing even then, O holy Church, that from those also there would be fruitful works for thee, thou didst promise to thy Christ fruit from such as they, thou who didst first say that thou wast brought into the King's chamber. loving His breast above wine, since thou lovedst Him Who loved thee, soughtest Him Who fed thee, and didst despise dangers for religion's sake.

119. And then, O Bride, thou art called to come from Libanus, being in the Lord's judgment all fair and without fault. For thus it is written: "Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no fault in thee. Come hither from Libanus, my bride, come hither from Libanus."157

120. Afterwards, thou, fearing no rushing waters, no torrents coming down from Libanus, callest the north and south winds, wishing them to blow upon thy garden, that thy ointment may flow forth upon others, and that thou mayest offer to Christ in others the manifold fruits of thy productiveness.

121. And therefore "blessed is he who keepeth the words of this prophecy,"158 which has revealed the resurrection to us by clearer testimony, saying: "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and they opened the books; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and hell gave up the dead which were in it."159 We must, then, not question how they shall rise again, whom hell gives up and the sea restores.

122. Hear also when the future grace of the just is promised: "And I heard," he says, "a great voice from the throne saying: Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be their God with them: and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more."160

123. Compare now, if you will, and contrast this life with that; and choose, if you then can, unending bodily existence in toil, and in the wretched misery of such changes as we endure, in satiety when we have our wishes, in that disgust which attends our pleasures. If God were willing to let these last for ever, would you choose them? For if on its own account life is to be escaped from, that there may be an avoidance of troubles and rest from miseries, how much more is that rest to be sought for, which shall be followed by the eternal pleasure of the resurrection to come, where there is no succession of faults, no enticement to sin?

124. Who is so patient in suffering as not to pray for death? who has such endurance in weakness as not to wish rather to die than to live in debility? Who is so brave in sorrow as not to desire to escape from it even by death? But if we ourselves are dissatisfied while life lasts, although we know that a limit is fixed for it, how much more weary should we become of this life if we saw that the troubles of the body would be with us without end! For who is there who would wish to be excepted from death? Or what would be more unendurable than a miserable immortality? "If in this life only," he says, "we hope in Christ, we are more miserable than all men;"161 not because to

hope in Christ is miserable, but because Christ has prepared another life for those who hope in Him. For this life is liable to sin, that life is reserved for the reward.

124. And how much weariness do we find that the short stages of our lives bring us! The boy longs to be a young man; the youth counts the years leading to riper age; the young man, unthankful for the advantage of his vigorous time of life, desires the honour of old age. And so to all there comes naturally the desire of change, because we are dissatisfied with that which we now are. And lastly, even the things we have desired are wearisome to us; and what we have wished to obtain, when we have obtained it, we dislike.

125. Wherefore holy men have not without reason often lamented their lengthy dwelling here: David¹⁶² lamented it, Jeremiah¹⁶³ lamented it, and Elijah¹⁶⁴ lamented it. If we believe wise men, and those in whom the Divine Spirit dwelt, they were hastening to better things; and if we enquire as to the judgment of others, that we may ascertain that all agree in one opinion, what great men have preferred death to sorrow, what great men have preferred it to fear! esteeming forsooth the fear of death to be worse than death itself. So death is not feared on account of evils which belong to it, but is preferred to the miseries of life, since the departure of the dying is desired and the dread of the living is avoided.

126. So be it, then. Granted that the Resurrection is preferable to this life. What! have philosophers¹⁶⁵ themselves found anything with which we should have a greater delight to continue than to rise again? Even those indeed who say that souls are immortal do not satisfy me, seeing they only allow me a partial redemption. What grace can that be by which I am not wholly benefited? What life is that if the operation of God dies out in me? What righteousness is that which, if death is the end of natural existence. is common to the sinner and the just? What is that truth, that the soul should be considered immortal, because it moves itself and is always in motion? As regards that which in the body is common to us with beasts, it is perhaps uncertain what happens before the body exists, and the truth is not to be gathered from these differences but destroyed.

127. But is their opinion preferable, who¹⁶⁶ say that our souls, when they have passed out of these bodies, migrate into the bodies of beasts, or of various other living creatures? Philosophers, indeed, themselves are wont to argue that these are ridiculous fancies of poets, such as might be produced by draughts of the drugs of Circe;¹⁶⁷ and they say that not so much they who are represented to have undergone such things, as the senses of those who have invented such tales are changed into the forms of various beasts as it were by Circe's cup. For what is so like a marvel as to believe that men could have been changed into the forms of beasts? How much greater a marvel, however, would it be that the soul which rules man should take on itself the nature of a beast so opposed to that of man, and being capable of reason should be able to pass over to an irrational animal, than that the form of the body should have been changed? You yourselves, who teach these things, destroy what you teach. For you have given up the production of these portentous conversions by means of magic incantations.

128. Poets say these things in sport, and philosophers blame them and at the same time they imagine that those very things are true of the dead which they consider fictitious as regards the living. For they who invented such tales did not intend to assert the truth of their own fable, but to deride the errors of philosophers, who think that that same soul which was accustomed to

overcome anger by gentle and lowly purpose, can now, inflamed by the raging impulses of a lion, impatient with anger and with unbridled rage, thirst for blood and seek for slaughter. Or again, that that soul, which as it were by royal counsel used to moderate the various storms of the people, and to calm them with the voice of reason, can now endure to howl in pathless and desert places after the fashion of a wolf; or that that soul which, groaning under a heavy burden, used to low in sad complaint over the labours of the plough, now changed into the fashion of a man, seeks for horns on his smooth brow;¹⁶⁸ or that another, which used of old to be borne aloft on rapid wing to the heights of heaven, now thinks of flight¹⁶⁹ no longer in its power, and mourns that it grows sluggish in the weight of a human body.

129. Perchance you destroyed Icarus¹⁷⁰ through some such teaching, because the youth, led on by your persuasion, imagined, it may be, that he had been a bird. By such means too have many old men been deceived so as to submit to grievous pain, having unhappily believed the fables about swans, and thought that they, whilst soothing their pain with mournful strains, would be able to transmute their gray hair into downy feathers.

130. How incredible are these things! how odious! How much more fitting is it to believe in accordance with nature, in accordance with what takes place in every kind of fruit; to believe in accordance with the pattern of what has happened, in accordance with the utterances of prophets, and the heavenly promise of Christ ² For what is better than to be sure that the work of God does not perish, and that those who are made in the image and likeness of God cannot be transformed into the shapes of beasts; since in truth it is not the form of the body but of the spirit which is made after the likeness of God. For in what manner could man, to whom are subjected the other kinds of living creatures, migrate with the better part of himself into an animal subjected to himself? Nature does not suffer this, and if nature did grace would not.

131. But I have seen what you, Gentiles, think of each other, and indeed it ought not to seem strange that you who worship beasts should believe that you can be changed into beasts. But I had rather that you judged better concerning what is due to you, that you may believe that you will be not in the company of wild beasts, but in the companionship of angels.

132. The soul has to depart from the surroundings of this life, and the pollutions of the earthly body, and to press on to those heavenly companies, though it is for the saints alone, to attain to them, and to sing praise to God (as in the prophet's words we hear of those who are harping¹⁷¹ and saying: "For great are Thy marvellous works, O Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations; who shall not fear and magnify Thy Name, for Thou only art holy, for all nations shall come and worship before Thee"),¹⁷² and to see Thy marriage feast, O Lord Jesus, in which the Bride is led from earthly to heavenly things, while all rejoice in harmony, for "to Thee shall all flesh come,"¹⁷³ now no longer subject to transitory things, but joined to the Spirit, to see the chambers adorned with linen, roses, lilies, and garlands. Of whom else is the marriage so adorned? For it is adorned with the purple stripes of confessors, the blood of martyrs, the lilies of virgins, and the crowns of priests.

133. Holy David desired beyond all else for himself that he might behold and gaze upon this, for he says: "One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, and see the pleasure of the Lord."¹⁷⁴

134. It is a pleasure to believe this, a joy to hope for it; and certainly, not to have believed it is a pain, to have lived in this hope a grace. But if I am mistaken in this, that I prefer to be associated after death with angels rather than with beasts, I am gladly mistaken, and so long as I live will never suffer myself to be cheated of this hope.

135. For what comfort have I left but that I hope to come quickly to thee, my brother, and that thy departure will not cause a longseverance between us, and that it may be granted me, through thy intercessions, that thou mayest quickly call me who long for thee. For who is there who ought not to wish for himself beyond all else that "this corruptible should put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality"?¹⁷⁵ that we who succumb to death through the frailty of the body, being raised above nature, may no longer have to fear death.

1: Not only the Martyrs and Saints, but ordinary Christians, are meant here, for these used to be commemorated with special prayers and offerings of the Holy Eucharist on their behalf, especially on the anniversaries of their deaths.

2: Rom. v. 12.

3: S. Luke xix. 10.

4: Rom. xiv. 9.

5: S. Aug. De Pec. Orig. c. 41.

6: Gen. xxviii. 5.

7: Gen. xxxiv. 2.

8: Gen. xlix. 29.

9: Gen. xxxvii. 4 ff.

10: Gen. xxxix. 12 ff.

11: 2 Sam. xiii. 29.

12: 2 Sam. xviii. 14.

13: 2 Sam. xii. 18 ff.

14: St. Ambrose has index meus in matutinum ; some mss. vindex ; the Roman Psalter, judex ; the Vulgate, nearer the Hebrew, Castigatio ; LXX. elegxoj .

15: Ps. lxxiii. [lxxii.] 12ff.

16: S. John xiii. 37.

17: S. Luke xxii. 60, Luke xxii. 61.

18: " Atque haud dubie pro nobis tentatus est Petrus, ut in fortiore non esset tentamenti periculum. " A difficult passage, and the meaning of it seems to be, that had a stronger than St. Peter been tried, and had overcome, we should not have had the warning against presumption, and the help of the example of one like ourselves.

19: 2 Sam. [2 Kings] xviii. 33 [LXX].

20: Ps. ciii. [cii.] 15.

21: Ps. cxliv. [cxliii.] 4.

22: Eccles. iv. 2 ff.

23: Wisd. vii. 7, Wisd. vii. 17 ff.

24: Job iii. 3.

25: Ps. xxxix. [xl.] 4.

26: 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

27: Ps. xxxix. [xxxviii.] 5 [LXX].

28: Ps. cxx. [cxix.] 5.

29: Jer. xv. 10 [LXX].

30: 1 Cor. xv. 31.

31: Cf. S. Ambr. de Bono Mortis, c. 9, and In Luc. vii. 35.

32: S. Matt. viii. 22.

33: Ezek. xviii. 4.

34: Gen. iii. 17 ff. [LXX].

35: Rev. ix. 6.

36: S. Luke xxiii. 30.

37: S. Luke xvi. 24.

38: Phil. i. 21.

39: Rom. vii. 23.

40: Rom. vii. 24, Rom. vii. 25.

41: Phil. i. 23, Phil. i. 24.

42: Num. xxiii. 10 [LXX].

43: Ps. cxvi. [cxv.] 15.

44: The reference of course is to the sign of the Cross, which, as we know from various authorities, the early Christians constantly used, at rising, lying down, going in or out, at prayers, etc., etc.

45: Wisd. i. 13 ff.

46: 1 Thess. iv. 16, 1 Thess. iv. 17.

47: S. John xxi. 23.

48: 1 Cor. xv. 53.

49: 1 Cor. xv. 36.

50: Scripturarum. It is impossible to suppose that St. Ambrose here means Holy Scripture, but is referring to such writers as Herodotus, Tacitus, and Pliny. Other Fathers, Tertullian St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Basil, with several more, refer also to the fable of the Phoenix in speaking of the Resurrection.

51: St. Ambrose may have believed that the world would end with a.d. 1000, or possibly a thousand is simply taken as a number signifying completeness, as St. Augustine (De Civ. Dei, XX. 7) explains the thousand years of Rev. xx. 1.

52: 1 Cor. xv. 42 ff.

53: S. John xx. 29.

54: S. Matt. xx. 6.

55: 1 Cor. xv. 43.

56: Ps. cxlviii. 5.

57: The immortality of the soul may be believed by those who deny the resurrection of the body, and was taught by many philosophers amongst the heathen. The resurrection of the body is a matter of divine revelation, and the very highest and best amongst the heathen seem not to have admitted it even as a speculation.

58: Dan. xii. 1, Dan. xii. 2, Dan. xii. 3.

59: Job xix. 26. Somewhat loosely from the LXX.

60: Is. xxv. 8, Is. xxv. 9.

61: Is. xxvi. 18-21 [LXX.].

62: Ezek. xxxvii. 1-7.

63: Ezek. v. 7.

64: Gen. i. 11.

65: Num. xx. 11.

66: Ex. iv. 3.

67: Ps. cxiv. [cxiii.] 3.

68: Ex. xiv. 22 ff.

69: Ezek. xxxvii. 9-14.

70: 1 Cor. xv. 52.

71: 1 Thess. iv. 17.

72: S. John xi. 43.

73: 1 Cor. xv. 52.

74: inseparabili gressu, separabilique progressu. A literal version is impossible. His feet were bound, yet he as it were walked, the usual mode of progress when the limbs are free.

75: agebatur prius quam parabatur incessus.

76: S. Luke xiv. 7, Luke xiv. 8.

77: S. Mark v. 38-43.

78: 2 [4] Kings iv. 34; 2 [4] Kings xiii. 21.

79: 1 [3] Kings xvii. 22.

80: Acts ix. 40.

81: S. Matt. xxvii. 50-53.

82: Gen. i. 6 ff.

83: Ps. xxxiii. [xxxii.] 9.

84: S. Luke iv. 3.

85: Prov. viii. 27, Prov. viii. 30.

86: Is. lxvi. 22-24.

87: Gen. xv. 6.

88: Ps. cxvi. [cxv.] 10.

89: 2 Cor. iv. 14.

90: S. John vi. 39.

91: Ibid.

92: 1 Cor. xv. 21 93: 1 Cor. xv. 28.

94: 2 Cor. v. 16.

95: 1 Cor. xv. 23.

96: Col. i. 18.

97: 1 Cor. xv. 22.

98: 1 Cor. xv. 23.

99: 1 Cor. xv. 52.

100: Eph. v. 14.

101: 1 Thess. iv. 14.

102: 1 Thess. iv. 17.

103: Gen. v. 24.

104: 2 [4] Kings ii. 11.

105: S. Matt. xvi. 28.

106: S. Luke xx. 38.

107: Gen. xv. 5.

108: Gen. xviii. 2.

109: Gen. xv. 6 ff.

110: Gen. xiv.

111: Gen. xv. 6.

112: Gen. xxii. 11.

113: Gen. xxii. 13.

114: Rom. viii. 32.

115: Gen. xxviii. 12.

116: Gen. xxxii. 25.

117: S. Matt. viii. 11.

118: Gal. vi. 7.

119: 1 Cor. xv. 13.

120: Rev. xxi. 1.

121: Ps. lxxxviii. [lxxxvii.] 4, Ps. lxxxviii. [lxxxvii.] 5.

122: S. John ii. 19.

123: Phil. ii 7, Phil. ii. 8.

124: S. John i. 14.

125: Ps. xxxiii. [xxxii.] 9.

126: Col. i. 17.

127: 1 Cor. xv. 52.

128: Rev. viii. 2.

129: Rev. xi. 15.

130: Rev. iv. 1.

131: Ps. lxxxi. [lxxx.] 3.

132: Ps. cl. 3.

133: Eph. vi. 12.

134: 2 Cor. x. 4.

135: 1 Cor. xiv. 8.

136: Lev. xxiii. 24, Lev. xxiii. 25.

137: Num. x. 1-10.

138: St. Ambrose translates the Septuagint as usual, but there are some variations. Probably Libanus is a copyist's mistake for Liba [Liba paraqalassan]. In ch. 115, St. Ambrose in explaining the third trumpet speaks of the sea. The third and fourth trumpets are not mentioned except in the Septuagint, and it may be noticed that St. Ambrose changes the description of the positions of the camps [paremballousai 139: Rom. vii. 14.

140: Col. ii. 16.

141: S. S. John xii. 29.

142: 1 Thess. iv. 16.

143: S. Luke xvii. 37.

144: 1 [3] Kings xix. 18.

145: 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

146: Ex. xxiv. 15.

147: 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

148: Num. x. 8.

149: Rom. x. 10.

150: Ps. xlii. [xli.] 4 [LXX.].

151: Ps. cl. 3.

152: Prov. xxvii. 16 [LXX.].

153: S. Luke xiii. 26.

154: Ps. xix. [xviii.] 6.

155: S. Matt. xii. 28, Matt. xii. 29.

- 156: Cant. iv. 16.
- 157: Cant. iv. 7, Cant. iv. 8.
- 158: Rev. xxi. 7.
- 159: Rev. xx. 12, Rev. xx. 13.
- 160: Rev. xxi. 3.
- 161: 1 Cor. xv. 19.
- 162: Ps. cxx. [cxix.] 5.
- 163: Jer. xx. 18.
- 164: 1 Kings xix. 4.
- 165: Cicero, Tusc. Disp. I.; Plato, Phoeado.
- 166: From the Egyptians this opinion seems to have passed on to Pythagoras and Plato.
- 167: Ovid, Metamorph. XIV. 1.
- 168: Verg. Ecl. VI. 51.
- 169: Ovid, Metam. II. 4.
- 170: Metam. VIII. 3.
- 171: Rev. xiv. 2.
- 172: Rev. xv. 3, Rev. xv. 4.
- 173: Ps. lxxv. [lxxiv.] 3.
- 174: Ps. xxvii. [xxvi.] 4.
- 175: 1 Cor. xv. 53.

On the Harmony of Matthew and Luke in the Genealogy of Christ

On the Harmony of Matthew and Luke in the Genealogy of Christ.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents • On the Harmony of Matthew and Luke in the Genealogy of Christ. On the Harmony of Matthew and Luke in the Genealogy of Christ. In the genealogy of Christ, Matthew and Luke seem to differ, because while one, that is, Matthew, traces the lineage downwards, the other, that is, Luke, traces it upwards, forming the sequence of the same genealogy. Indeed, Matthew begins the narrative from Abraham and descends to David, then through Solomon to Joseph, tracing the line. But Luke, starting from Joseph, goes through Nathan to David, and from David to Abraham, and finally, by retracing the order of the genealogy, goes from Abraham to Adam. Hence it happens that from David downwards, when he traces the line through Nathan and this [Luke] through Solomon, the entire order of the computation is almost inconsistent. But because Holy Scripture sometimes presents different things, but never accepts what is contrary, since we are not permitted to believe inconsistency, we are compelled to seek the truth that is hidden. Therefore, Matthew computes the descent of the genealogy of Christ, showing that the Son of God became the Son of Man through the assumption of flesh; Luke weaves the same genealogy by ascending, demonstrating that the sons of men through the grace of adoption become sons of God.

Therefore, Matthew, also wanting to trace the line of generations up to the birth of Christ, did not start from the first parent Adam, but from Abraham; in order to show that the assumption of flesh in the Son of God was not the beginning of the first condition, but the fulfillment of a promise made later. However, Luke, starting from Christ being baptized, did not end in David or Abraham, nor in Adam; but passing through David, Abraham, and Adam, he ascended to God; in order to clearly demonstrate that those who are sons of men through the generation of flesh, pass through the regeneration of baptism into the adoption of divinity. Therefore, Matthew wanted to include only natural sons in the genealogy, while Luke also includes adoptive sons, to demonstrate that in the birth of Christ there was a true assumption of flesh, and in our rebirth we are adopted not by nature, but by grace. This is why Matthew placed some fathers in the series of generations and Luke placed others, because Matthew, as we have said, included only natural sons, while Luke included both natural and adoptive sons. In order to better understand, let us compare both narratives. The genealogy of Christ according to Matthew is as follows: Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob, Jacob begat Judah, Judah begat Perez, Perez begat Hezron, Hezron begat Aram, Aram begat Amminadab, Amminadab begat Nahshon, Nahshon begat Salmon, Salmon begat Boaz, Boaz begat Obed, Obed begat Jesse, Jesse begat David, David begat Solomon, Solomon begat Rehoboam, Rehoboam begat Abijah, Abijah begat Asa, Asa begat Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begat Joram, Joram begat Uzziah (Matt. 1:2 et seq.). Here the evangelist skips three generations, that is, Ahaziah or Jehoahaz, Jehoash, and Amaziah; for Joram first begot Ahaziah,

and Ahaziah begot Jehoash, and Jehoash begot Amaziah, and Amaziah finally begot Ahaz. This is to be understood, namely, that he begot through the aforementioned, because they descended from his seed. But the evangelist omitted them either so that the number of the ten decades would be equal, or because Joram joined himself to Jezebel by marriage; and it had been said by the prophet that no one from the house of Ahab would reign, except in the fourth generation: and therefore his memory is removed, even to the holy generation. Therefore Ozias, who is also called Azarias, begot Joatham, Joatham begot Achaz, Achaz begot Ezechiam, Ezechias begot Manassen, Manasses begot Amon, Amon begot Josiam, Josias begot Jechoniam, Jechonias begot Salathiel. The truth of the story is that Josias begot Eleachim, who is also called Joachim or Jechonias. Eleachim begot Joachim, who is also called Jechonias just like his father. Finally, he begot Salathiel. Therefore, we will say either one for the aforementioned reason, or for any other reason omitted: either he is not the same Jechoniah about whom it is said, 'Josiah begot Jechoniah,' and the one about whom it is said, 'After the Babylonian exile, Jechoniah begot Salathiel,' but that the former is the father and the latter is the son; however, due to the separation and disjunction of the exile, the generational connection between them is not repeated, so that it could be said, 'Jechoniah begot Jechoniah, Jechoniah therefore begot Salathiel, Salathiel begot Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel begot Abiud.' This is the order of the generations from the ancient books: Abiud begot Eliachim, Eliachim begot Azor, Azor begot Sadoc, Sadoc begot Achim, Achim begot Eliud, Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Mathan, Mathan begot Jacob, Jacob begot Joseph. This is how we believe the generation naturally descended; now let us examine the series of generations according to Luke. So Luke says: Jesus himself was beginning, as it was thought, about thirty years old, the son of Joseph, who was the son of Heli, who was the son of Matthat. (Luke III, 23). At first glance, there seems to be a contradiction. Matthew says that Joseph was the son of Jacob, and Jacob was the son of Matthan; Luke says that Joseph was the son of Heli, and Heli was not the son of Matthan, but of Matthat. But such a question is solved by the Fathers as follows: Matthan, who descended through Solomon, had a wife named Esthan; from her he begot a son, Jacob. After Jacob's death, Matthat, who descended through Nathan, married the same wife and begot a son, Heli. So, Heli and Jacob were uterine brothers, born from the same mother but not the same father. First, Heli married a wife and died without children. Then Jacob took the wife of his brother in order to raise up offspring for his brother, from whom he begot Joseph. Therefore, Joseph is the son of Jacob in terms of lineage, and the son of Heli according to the Law. Then the order of generation continues. Joseph, who was son of Heli, who was son of Matthat, who was son of Levi, who was son of Melchi, who was son of Janne, who was son of Joseph, who was son of Matthias, who was son of Amos, who was son of Nahum, who was son of Esli, who was son of Nagge, who was son of Mattathias, who was son of Semei, who was son of Joseph, who was son of Judah, who was son of Joanna, who was son of Rhesa, who was son of Zerubbabel, who was son of Shealtiel (Ibid., 23 et seq.). I do not believe that this is the same Zorobabel or Salathiel who were numbered earlier in the genealogy according to Matthew; for Salathiel was not the son of Neri, but the son of Jechoniah, and Zorobabel did not generate Resa, but Abiu and others, among whom Resa is not included. Or if they are the same, it must be said that here the first line of each computation converges into one, and then they are subsequently deduced from each other according to the method that we have marked at the beginning of this genealogy. He was the son of Neri, who was the son of Melchi, who was the son of Addi, who was the son of Cosam, who was the son of Elmodam, who was the son of Er, who was the son of

Jesus, who was the son of Eliezer, who was the son of Jorim, who was the son of Matthat, who was the son of Levi, who was the son of Simeon, who was the son of Judah, who was the son of Joseph, who was the son of Jonan, who was the son of Eliakim, who was the son of Melea, who was the son of Menan, who was the son of Mattatha, who was the son of Nathan, who was the son of David (ibid., 27 et seq.). The next ones that follow up to Abraham are the same in both. It should not be considered contradictory that there are more generations from Joseph to David according to Luke than from David to Joseph according to Matthew, since the successions of generations multiplied more in that part where, as fathers died earlier, sons succeeded in greater numbers.

On the Holy Spirit - Book 1

Book I.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Chapter XIII.

Chapter XIV.

Chapter XV.

Chapter XVI.

Book I. The choice of Gideon was a figure of our Lord's Incarnation, the sacrifice of a kid, of the satisfaction for sins in the body of Christ; that of the bullock, of the abolition of profane rites; and in the three hundred soldiers was a type of the future redemptic through the cross. The seeking of various signs by Gideon was also a mystery, for by the dryness and moistening of the fleece was signified the falling away of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, by the water received in a baSin the washing of t apostles' feet. St. Ambrose prays that his own pollution may be washed away, and praises the loving-kindness of Christ. The same water sent forth by the Son of God effects marvellous conversions; it cannot, however, be sent by any other, since it is the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit, Who is subject to no external power.

1. When Jerubbaal, as we read, was beating out wheat¹ under an oak, he received a message from God in order that he might bring the people of God from the power of strangers into liberty. Nor is it a matter of wonder if he was chosen for grace, seeing that even then, being appointed

under the shadow of the holy cross and of the adorable Wisdom in the predestined mystery of the future Incarnation, he was bringing forth the visible grains of the fruitful corn from their hiding places, and was [mystically] separating the elect of the saints from the refuse of the empty chaff. For these elect, as though trained with the rod of truth, laying aside the superfluities of the old man together with his deeds, are gathered in the Church as in a winepress. or the Church is the winepress of the eternal fountain, since from her wells forth the juice of the heavenly Vine.

2. And Gideon, moved by that message, when he heard that, though thousands of the people failed, God would deliver His own from their enemies by means of one man,² offered a kid, and according to the word of the Angel, laid its flesh and the unleavened cakes upon the rock, and poured the broth upon them. And as soon as the Angel touched them with the end of the staff which he bore, fire burst forth out of the rock, and so the sacrifice which he was offering was consumed.³ By which it seems clear that that rock was a figure of the Body of Christ, for it is written: "They drank of that rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ."⁴ Which certainly refers not to His Godhead, but to His Flesh, which watered the hearts of the thirsting people with the perpetual stream of His Blood.

3. Even at that time was it declared in a mystery that the Lord Jesus in His Flesh would, when crucified, do away the sins of the whole world, and not only the deeds of the body, but the desires of the soul. For the flesh of the kid refers to sins of deed, the broth to the enticements of desire as it is written: "For the people lusted' an evil lust, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?"⁵ That the Angel then stretched forth his staff, and touched the rock, from which fire went out,⁶ shows that the Flesh of the Lord, being filled with the Divine Spirit, would burn away all the sins of human frailty. Wherefore, also, the Lord says: "I am come to send fire upon the earth."⁷

4. Then the man, instructed and fore-knowing what was to be, observes the heavenly mysteries, and therefore, according to the warning, slew the bullock destined by his father to idols, and himself offered to God another bullock seven years old.⁸ By doing which he most plainly showed that after the coming of the Lord all Gentile sacrifices should be done away, and that only the sacrifice of the Lord's passion should be offered for the redemption of the people. For that bullock was, in a type, Christ, in Whom, as Esaias said, dwelt the fulness of the seven gifts of the Spirit.⁹ This bullock Abraham also offered when he saw the day of the Lord and was glad.¹⁰ He it is Who was offered at one time in the type of a kid, at another in that of a sheep, at another in that of a bullock. Of a kid, because He is a sacrifice for sin; of a sheep, because He is an unresisting victim; of a bullock, because He is a victim without blemish.

5. Holy Gideon then saw the mystery beforehand. Next he chose out three hundred for the battle, so as to show that the world should be freed from the incursion of worse enemies, not by the multitude of their number, but by the mystery of the cross. And yet, though he was brave and faithful, he asked of the Lord yet fuller proofs of future victory, saying: "If Thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, O Lord, as Thou hast said, behold I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing-floor, and if there shall be dew on the fleece and dryness on all the ground, I shall know that Thou wilt deliver the people by my hand according to Thy promise. And it was so."¹¹ Afterwards he asked in addition that dew should descend on all the earth and dryness be on the fleece.

6. Some one perhaps will enquire whether he does not seem to have been wanting in faith, seeing that after being instructed by many signs he asked still more. But how can he seem to have asked

as if doubting or wanting in faith, who was speaking in mysteries? He was not then doubtful, but careful that we should not doubt. For how could he be doubtful whose prayer was effectual? And how could he have begun the battle without fear, unless he had understood the message of God? for the dew on the fleece signified the faith among the Jews, because the words of God come down like the dew.

7. So when the whole world was parched with the drought of Gentile superstition, then came that dew of the heavenly visits on the fleece. But after that the lost sheep of the house of Israel¹² (whom I think that the figure of the Jewish fleece shadowed forth), after that those sheep, I say,¹³ "had refused the fountain of living water," the dew of moistening faith dried up in the breasts of the Jews, and that divine Fountain turned away its course to the hearts of the Gentiles. Whence it has come to pass that now the whole world is moistened with the dew of faith, but the Jews have lost their prophets and counsellors.

8. Nor is it strange that they should suffer the drought of unbelief, whom the Lord deprived of the fertilising of the shower of prophecy, saying: "I will command My clouds that they rain not upon that vineyard."¹⁴ For there is a health-giving shower of salutary grace, as David also said: "He came down like rain upon a fleece. and like drops that drop upon the earth."¹⁵ The divine Scriptures promised us this rain upon the whole earth, to water the world with the dew of the Divine Spirit at the coming of the Saviour. The Lord, then, has now come, and the rain has come; the Lord has come bringing the heavenly drops with Him, and so now we drink, who before were thirsty, and with an interior draught drink in that Divine Spirit.

9. Holy Gideon, then, foresaw this, that the nations of the Gentiles also would drink by the reception of faith, and therefore he enquired more diligently, for the caution of the saints is necessary. Insomuch that also Joshua the son of Nun, when he saw the captain of the heavenly host, enquired: "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?"¹⁶ lest, perchance, he might be deceived by some stratagem of the adversary.

10. Nor was it without a reason that he put the fleece neither in a field nor in a meadow, but in a threshing-floor, where is the harvest of the wheat: "For the harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few;"¹⁷ because that, through faith in the Lord, there was about to be a harvest fruitful in virtues.

11. Nor, again, was it without a reason that he dried the fleece of the Jews, and put the dew from it into a basin, so that it was filled with water, yet he did not himself wash his feet in that dew. The prerogative of so great a mystery was to be given to another. He was being waited for Who alone could wash away the filth of all. Gideon was not great enough to claim this mystery for himself, but "the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."¹⁸ Let us, then, recognize in Whom these mysteries are seen to be accomplished. Not in holy Gideon, for they were still at their commencement. Therefore the Gentiles were surpassed, for dryness was still upon the Gentiles, and therefore did Israel surpass them, for then did the dew remain on the fleece.

12. Let us come now to the Gospel of God. I find the Lord stripping Himself of His garments, and girding Himself with a towel, pouring water into a basin, and washing the disciples' feet.¹⁹ That heavenly dew was this water, this was foretold, namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ would wash the feet of His disciples in that heavenly dew. And now let the feet of our minds be stretched out. The

Lord Jesus will also wash our feet, for He says, not to Peter alone, but to each of the faithful: "If I wash not thy feet thou wilt have no part with Me."²⁰

13. Come, then, Lord Jesus, put off Thy garments, which Thou didst put on for my sake; be Thou stripped that Thou mayest clothe us with Thy mercy. Gird Thyself for our sakes with a towel, that Thou mayest gird us with Thy gift of immortality. Pour water into the basin, wash not only our feet but also the head, and not only of the body, but also the footsteps of the soul. I wish to put off all the filth of our frailty, so that I also may say: "By night I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?"²¹)

14. How great is that excellence! As a servant, Thou dost wash the feet of Thy disciples; as God, Thou sendest dew from heaven. Nor dost Thou wash the feet only, but also invitest us to sit down with Thee, and by the example of Thy dignity dost exhort us, saying: "Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye do well, for so I am. If, then, I the Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet."²²

15. I, then, wish also myself to wash the feet of my brethren, I wish to fulfil the commandment of my Lord, I will not be ashamed in myself, nor disdain what He Himself did first. Good is the mystery of humility, because while washing the pollutions of others I wash away my own. But all were not able to exhaust this mystery. Abraham was, indeed, willing to wash feet,²³ but because of a feeling of hospitality. Gideon, too, was willing to wash the feet of the Angel of the Lord who appeared to him,²⁴ but his willingness was confined to one; he was willing as one who would do a service, not as one who would confer fellowship with himself. This is a great mystery which no one knew. Lastly, the Lord said to Peter: "What I do thou knowest not now, but shalt know hereafter."²⁵ This, I say, is a divine mystery which even they who wash will enquire into. It is not, then, the simple water of the heavenly mystery whereby we attain to be found worthy of having part with Christ.

16. There is also a certain water which we put into the basin of our soul, water from the fleece and from the Book of Judges; water, too, from the Book of Psalms.²⁶ It is the water of the message from heaven. Let, then, this water, O Lord Jesus, come into my soul, into my flesh, that through the moisture of this rain²⁷ the valleys of our minds and the fields of our hearts may grow green. May the drops from Thee come upon me, shedding forth grace and immortality. Wash the steps of my mind that I may not sin again. Wash the heel²⁸ of my soul, that I may be able to efface the curse, that I feel not the serpent's bite²⁹ on the foot of my soul, but, as Thou Thyself hast bidden those who follow Thee, may tread on serpents and scorpions³⁰ with uninjured foot. Thou hast redeemed the world, redeem the soul of a single sinner.

17. This is the special excellence of Thy loving-kindness, wherewith Thou hast redeemed the whole world one by one. Elijah was sent to one widow;³¹ Elisha cleansed one;³² Thou, O Lord Jesus, hast at this day cleansed a thousand. How many in the city of Rome, how many at Alexandria, how many at Antioch, how many also at Constantinople! For even Constantinople has received the word of God, and has received evident proofs of Thy judgment. For so long as she cherished the Arians' poison in her bosom, disquieted by neighbouring wars, she echoed with hostile arms around. But so soon as she rejected those who were alien from the faith she received as a suppliant the enemy himself, the judge of kings, whom she had always been wont to fear, she buried him when dead, and retains him entombed.³³ How many, then, hast Thou cleansed at

Constantinople, how many, lastly, at this day in the whole world!

18. Damasus cleansed not, Peter cleansed not, Ambrose cleansed not, Gregory cleansed not;³⁴ for ours is the ministry, but the sacraments are Thine. For it is not in man's power to confer what is divine, but it is, O Lord, Thy gift and that of the Father, as Thou hast spoken by the prophets, saying: "I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh, and their sons and their daughters shall prophesy."³⁵ This is that typical dew from heaven, this is that gracious rain, as we read: "Agracious rain, dividing for His inheritance."³⁶ For the Holy Spirit is not subject to any foreign power or law, but is the Arbiter of this own freedom, dividing all things according to the decision of His own will, to each, as we read, severally as He wills.³⁷

Chapter I.

St. Ambrose commences his argument by complimenting the Emperor, both for his faith and for the restitution of the Basilica to the Church; then having urged that his opponents, if they affirm that the Holy Spirit is not a servant, cannot deny Him to be above all, adds that the same Spirit, when He said, "All things serve Thee," showed plainly that He was distinct from creatures; which point he also establishes by other evidence.

19. The Holy Spirit, then, is not amongst but above all things. For (since you, most merciful Emperor, are so fully instructed concerning the Son of God as to be able yourself to teach others) I will not detain you longer, as you desire and claim to be told something more exactly [concerning Him], especially since you lately showed yourself to be so pleased by an argument of this nature, as to command the Basilica to be restored to the Church without any one urging you.

20. So, then, we have received the grace of your faith and the reward of our own; for we cannot say otherwise than that it was of the grace of the Holy Spirit, that when all were unconscious of it, you suddenly restored the Basilica. This is the gift, I say, this the work of the Holy Spirit, Who indeed was at that time preached by us, but was working in you.

21 And I do not regret the losses of the previous time, since the sequestration of that Basilica resulted in the gain of a sort of usury. For you sequestered the Basilica, that you might give proof of your faith. And so your piety fulfilled its intention, which had sequestered that it might give proof, and so gave proof as to restore. I did not lose the fruit, and I have your judgment, and it has been made clear to all that, with a certain diversity of action, there was in you no diversity of opinion. It was made clear, I say, to all, that it was not of yourself that you sequestered, that it was of yourself when you restored it.

22. Now let us establish by evidence what we have said. The first point in the discussion is that all things serve. Now it is clear that all things serve, since it is written: "All things serve Thee."³⁸ This the Spirit said through the prophet. He did not say, We serve, but, "serve Thee," that you might believe that He Himself is excepted from serving. So, then, since all things serve, and the Spirit does not serve, the Holy Spirit is certainly not included amongst all things.

23. For if we say that the Holy Spirit is included amongst all things, certainly when we read that the Spirit searches the deep things of God,³⁹ we deny that God the Father is over all. For since the Spirit is of God, and is the Spirit of His mouth, how can we say that the Holy Spirit is included amongst all things, seeing that God, Whose is the Spirit, is over all, possessing certainly fulness of

perfection and perfect power.

25. But lest the objectors should think that the Apostle was in error, let them learn whom he followed as his authority for his belief. The Lord said in the Gospel: "When the Paraclete is come, Whom I will send to you from My Father, even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me."⁴⁰ So the Holy Spirit both proceeds from the Father, and bears witness of the Son. For the witness Who is both faithful and true bears witness of the Father, than which witness nothing is more full for the expression of the Divine Majesty, nothing more clear as to the Unity of the Divine Power, since the Spirit has the same knowledge as the Son, Who is the witness and inseparable sharer of the Father's secrets.

26. He excludes, then, the fellowship and number of creatures from the knowledge of God, but by not excluding the Holy Spirit, He shows that He is not of the fellowship of creatures. So that the passage which is read in the Gospel: "For no man hath seen God at any time, save the Only-begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father He hath declared Him," also pertains to the exclusion of the Holy Spirit. For how has He not seen God Who searches even the deep things of God? How has He not seen God Who knows the things which are of God? How has He not seen God Who is of God? So, since it is laid down that no one has seen God at any time, whereas the Holy Spirit has seen Him, clearly the Holy Spirit is excepted. He, then, is above all Who is excluded from all.

Chapter II. The words, "All things were made by Him," are not a proof that the Holy Spirit is included amongst all things, since He was not made. For otherwise it could be proved by other passages that the Son, and even the Father Himself, must be numbered amongst all things, which would be similar irreverence.

27. This seems, gracious Emperor, to be a full account of our right feeling, but to the impious it does not seem so. Observe what they are striving after. For the heretics are wont to say that the Holy Spirit is to be reckoned amongst all things, because it is written of God the Son: "All things were made by Him."⁴¹

28. How utterly confused is a course of argument which does not hold to the truth, and is involved in an inverted order of statements. For this argument would be of value for the statement that the Holy Spirit is amongst all things, if they proved that He was made. For Scripture says that all things which were made were made by the Son; but since we are not taught that the Holy Spirit was made, He certainly cannot be proved to be amongst all things Who was neither made as all things are, nor created. To me this testimony is of use for establishing each point; firstly, that He is proved to be above all things, because He was not made; and secondly, that because He is above all things, He is seen not to have been made, and is not to be numbered amongst those things which were made.

29. But if any one, because the Evangelist stated that all things were made by the Word, making no exception of the Holy Spirit (although the Spirit of God speaking in John said: "All things were made by Him," and said not we were all things which were made; whilst the Lord Himself distinctly showed that the Spirit of God spoke in the Evangelists, saying, "For it will not be you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you"),⁴² yet if any one, as I said, does not except the Holy Spirit in this place, but numbers Him amongst all, he consequently does not except the Son

of God in that passage where the Apostle says: "Yet to us there is one God the Father, of Whom are all things, and we by Him."⁴³ But that he may know that the Son is not amongst all things, let him read what follows, for when he says: "And one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things,"⁴⁴ he certainly excepts the Son of God from all, who also excepted the Father.

30. But it is equal irreverence to detract from the dignity of the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit. For he believes not in the Father who does not believe in the Son, nor does he believe in the Son of God who does not believe in the Spirit, nor can faith stand without the rule of truth. For he who has begun to deny the oneness of power in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit certainly cannot prove his divided faith in points where there is no division. So, then, since complete piety is to believe rightly, so complete impiety is to believe wrongly.

31. Therefore they who think that the Holy Spirit ought to be numbered amongst all things, because they read that all things were made by the Son, must needs also think that the Son is to be numbered amongst all things, because they read: "All things are of God."⁴⁵ But, consequently, they also do not separate the Father from all things, who do not separate the Son from all creatures, since, as all things are of the Father, so, too, all things are by the Son. And the Apostle, because of his foresight in the Spirit, used this very expression, lest he should seem to the impious who had heard that the Son had said, "That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all,"⁴⁶ to have included the Son amongst all.

Chapter III. The statement of the Apostle, that all things are of the Father by the Son, does not separate the Spirit from Their company, since what is referred to one Person is also attributed to each. So those baptized in the Name of Christ are held to be baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Holy Spirit, if, that is, there is belief in the Three Persons, otherwise the baptism will be null. This also applies to baptism in the Name of the Holy Spirit. If because of one passage the Holy Spirit is separated from the Father and the Son, it will necessarily follow from other passages that the Father will be subordinated to the Son. The Son is worshipped by angels, not by the Spirit, for the latter is His witness, not His servant. Where the Son is spoken of as being before all, it is to be understood of creatures. The great dignity of the Holy Spirit is proved by the absence of forgiveness for the sin against Him. How it is that such sin cannot be forgiven, and how the Spirit is one.

32. But perhaps some one may say that there was a reason why the writer said that all things were of the Father, and all things through the Son,⁴⁷ but made no mention of the Holy Spirit, and would obtain the foundation of an argument from this. But if he persists in his perverse interpretation, in how many passages will he find the power of the Holy Spirit asserted, in which Scripture has stated nothing concerning either the Father or the Son, but has left it to be understood?

40. Where, then, the grace of the Spirit is asserted, is that of God the Father or of the Only-begotten Son denied? By no means; for as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, so, too, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, Who hath been given us."⁴⁸ And as he who is blessed in Christ is blessed in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, because the Name is one and the Power one; so, too, when any divine operation, whether of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Holy Spirit, is treated of, it is not referred only to the Holy Spirit, but also to the Father and the Son, and not only to the Father, but also to the Son and the Spirit.

41. Then, too, the Ethiopian eunuch of Queen Candace, when baptized in Christ, obtained the fulness of the sacrament. And they who said that they knew not of any Holy Spirit, although they said that they had been baptized with John's baptism, were baptized afterwards, because John baptized for the remission of sins in the Name of the coming Jesus, not in his own. And so they knew not the Spirit, because in the form in which John baptized they had not received baptism in the Name of Christ. For John, though he did not baptize in the Spirit, nevertheless preached Christ and the Spirit. And then, when he was questioned whether he were perchance himself the Christ, he answered: "I baptize you with water, but a stronger than I shall come, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."⁴⁹ They therefore, because they had been baptized neither in the Name of Christ nor with faith in the Holy Spirit, could not receive the sacrament of baptism.

42. So they were baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ,⁵⁰ and baptism was not repeated in their case, but administered differently, for there is but one baptism. But where there is not the complete sacrament of baptism, there is not considered to be a commencement nor any kind of baptism. But baptism is complete if one confess the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. If you deny One you overthrow the whole. And just as if you mention in words One only, either the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit, and in your belief do not deny either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, the mystery of the faith is complete, so, too, although you name the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and lessen the power of either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, the whole mystery is made empty. And, lastly, they who had said: "We have not heard if there be any Holy Spirit, were baptized afterwards in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ."⁵¹ And this was an additional abundance of grace, for now through Paul's preaching they knew the Holy Spirit.

43. Nor ought it to seem opposed to this, that although subsequently mention is not made of the Spirit, He is yet believed in, and what had not been mentioned in words is expressed in belief. For when it is said, "In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ," the mystery is complete through the oneness of the Name, and the Spirit is not separated from the baptism of Christ, since John baptized unto repentance, Christ in the Spirit.

44. Let us now consider whether as we read that the sacrament of baptism in the Name of Christ was complete, so, too, when the Holy Spirit alone is named, anything is wanting to the completeness of the mystery. Let us follow out the argument that he who has named One has signified the Trinity. If you name Christ, you imply both God the Father by Whom the Son was anointed, and the Son Himself Who was anointed, and the Holy Spirit with Whom He was anointed. For it is written: "This Jesus of Nazareth, Whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit."⁵² And if you name the Father, you denote equally His Son and the Spirit of His mouth, if, that is, you apprehend it in your heart. And if you speak of the Spirit, you name also God the Father, from Whom the Spirit proceeds, and the Son, inasmuch as He is also the Spirit of the Son.

45. Wherefore that authority may also be joined to reason Scripture indicates that we can also be rightly baptized in the Spirit, when the Lord says: "But ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit."⁵³ And in another place the Apostle says: "For we were all baptized in the body itself into one Spirit."⁵⁴ The work is one, for the mystery is one; the baptism one, for there was one death on behalf of the world; there is, then, a oneness of working, a oneness of setting forth, which cannot be separated.

46. But if in this place the Spirit be separated from the operation of the Father and the Son, because it is said, All things are of God, and all things are through the Son,⁵⁵ then, too, when the Apostle says of Christ, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever,"⁵⁶ He set Christ not only above all creatures, but (which it is impious to say) above the Father also. But God forbid, for the Father is not amongst all things, is not amongst a kind of crowd of His own creatures. The whole creation is below, over all is the Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The former serves, the latter rules; the former is subject, the latter reigns; the former is the work, the latter the author of the work; the former, without exception, worships, the latter is worshipped by all without exception.

47. Lastly, of the Son it is written: "And let all the angels of God worship Him."⁵⁷ You do not find, Let the Holy Spirit worship. And farther on: "To which of the angels said He at any time, Sit thou on My right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet? Are they not all," says he, "ministering spirits who are sent to minister?"⁵⁸ When he says All, does he include the Holy Spirit? Certainly not, because Angels and the other Powers are destined to serve in ministering and obedience to the Son of God.

48. But in truth the Holy Spirit is not a minister but a witness of the Son, as the Son Himself said of Him: "He shall bear witness of Me."⁵⁹ The Spirit, then, is a witness of the Son. He who is a witness knows all things, as God the Father is a witness. For so you read in later passages, for our salvation was confirmed to us by God bearing witness by signs and wonders and by manifold powers and by distributions of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁰ He who divides as he will is certainly above all, not amongst all, for to divide is the gift of the worker, not an innate part of the work itself.

49. If the Son is above all, through Whom our salvation received its commencement, so that it might be preached, certainly God the Father also, Who testifies and gives confirmation concerning our salvation by signs and wonders, is excepted from all. In like manner the Spirit, Who bears witness to our salvation by His diversities of gifts, is not to be numbered with the crowd of creatures, but to be reckoned with the Father and the Son; Who, when He divides, is not Himself divided by cutting off Himself, for being indivisible He loses nothing when He gives to all, as also the Son, when the Father receives the kingdom,⁶¹ loses nothing, nor does the Father, when He gives that which is His to the Son, suffer loss. We know, then, by the testimony of the Son that there is no loss in the division of spiritual grace; for He Who breathes where He wills⁶² is everywhere free from loss. Concerning which power we shall speak more fully farther on.

50. In the meanwhile, since our intention is to prove in due order that the Spirit is not to be reckoned amongst all things, let us take the Apostle, whose words they call in question, as an authority for this position. For what "all things" would be, whether visible or invisible, he himself declared when he said: "For in Him were all things created in the heavens and in earth."⁶³ You see that "all things" is spoken of things in the heavens, and of things in earth, for in the heavens are also invisible things which were made.

51. But that no one should be ignorant of this he added those of whom he was speaking: "Whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by Him and in Him, and He is before all, and in Him all things consist."⁶⁴ Does he, then, include the Holy Spirit here amongst creatures? Or when he says that the Son of God is before all things, is he to be supposed to have said that He is before the Father? Certainly not; for as here he says that all things were created by the Son, and that all things in the heavens consist in Him, so, too, it cannot be doubted

that all things in the heavens have their strength in the Holy Spirit, since we read: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens established and all the strength of them by the Spirit of His mouth."⁶⁵ He, then, is above all, from Whom is all the strength of things in heaven and things on earth. He, then, Who is above all things certainly does not serve; He Who serves not is free; He Who is free has the prerogative of lordship.

52. If I were to say this at first it would be denied. But in the same manner as they deny the less that the greater may not be believed, so let us set forth lesser matters first that either they may show their perfidy in lesser matters, or, if they grant the lesser matters, we may infer greater from the lesser.

53. I think, most merciful Emperor, that they are most fully confuted who dare to reckon the Holy Spirit amongst all things. But that they may know that they are pressed not only by the testimony of the apostles, but also by that of our Lord; how can they dare to reckon the Holy Spirit amongst all things, since the Lord Himself said: "He who shall blaspheme against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but he who shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, either here or hereafter."⁶⁶ How, then, can any one dare to reckon the Holy Spirit amongst creatures? Or who will so blind himself as to think that if he have injured any creature he cannot be forgiven in any wise? For if the Jews because they worshipped the host of heaven were deprived of divine protection, whilst he who worships and confesses the Holy Spirit is accepted of God, but he who confesses Him not is convicted of sacrilege without forgiveness: certainly it follows from this that the Holy Spirit cannot be reckoned amongst all things, but that He is above all things, an offence against Whom is avenged by eternal punishment.

54. But observe carefully why the Lord said: "He who shall blaspheme against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him, but he who shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, either here or hereafter."⁶⁷ Is an offence against the Son different from one against the Holy Spirit? For as their dignity is one, and common to both, so too is the offence. But if any one, led astray by the visible human body, should think somewhat more remissly than is fitting concerning the Body of Christ (for it ought not to appear of little worth to us, seeing it is the palace of chastity, and the fruit of the Virgin), he incurs guilt, but he is not shut out from pardon, which he may attain to by faith. But if any one should deny the dignity, majesty, and eternal power of the Holy Spirit, and should think that devils are cast out not in the Spirit of God, but in Beelzebub, there can be no attaining of pardon there where is the fulness of sacrilege; for he who has denied the Spirit has denied also the Father and the Son, since the same is the Spirit of God Who is the Spirit of Christ.

Chapter IV. The Holy Spirit is one and the same Who spake in the prophets and apostles, Who is the Spirit of God and of Christ; Whom, further, Scripture designates the Paraclete, and the Spirit of life and truth.

55. But no one will doubt that the Spirit is one, although very many have doubted whether God be one. For many heretics have said that the God of the Old Testament is one, and the God of the New Testament is another. But as the Father is one Who both spake of old, as we read, to the fathers by the prophets, and to us in the last days by His Son;⁶⁸ "and as the Son is one, Who according to the tenour of the Old Testament was offended by Adam,⁶⁹ seen by Abraham,⁷⁰ worshipped by Jacob;⁷¹ so, too, the Holy Spirit is one, who energized in the prophets,⁷² was breathed upon the apostles,⁷³ and was joined to the Father and the Son in the sacrament of

baptism.⁷⁴ For David says of Him: "And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."⁷⁵ And in another place he said of Him: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?"⁷⁶

56. That you may know that the Spirit of God is the same as the Holy Spirit, as we read also in the Apostle: "No one speaking in the Spirit of God says Anathema to Jesus and no one can say, Lord Jesus, but in the Holy Spirit,"⁷⁷ the Apostle calls Him the Spirit of God. He called Him also the Spirit of Christ, as you read: "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."⁷⁸ And farther on: "But if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you."⁷⁹ The same is, then, the Spirit of God, Who is the Spirit of Christ.

57. The same is also the Spirit of Life, as the Apostle says: "For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath delivered me from the law of sin and death."⁸⁰

58. Him, then, Whom the Apostle called the Spirit of Life, the Lord in the Gospel named the Paraclete, and the Spirit of Truth, as you find: "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter [Paraclete], that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, Whom this world cannot receive; because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him."⁸¹ You have, then, the Paraclete Spirit, called also the Spirit of Truth, and the invisible Spirit. How, then, do some think that the Son is visible in His Divine Nature, when the world cannot see even the Spirit?

59. Receive now the saying of the Lord, that the same is the Holy Spirit Who is the Spirit of Truth, for you read in the end of this book: "Receive the Holy Spirit."⁸² And Peter teaches that the same is the Holy Spirit Who is the Spirit of the Lord, when he says: "Ananias, why has it seemed good to thee to tempt and to lie to the Holy Spirit?"⁸³ And immediately after he says again to the wife of Ananias: "Why has it seemed good to you to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?"⁸⁴ When he says "to you," he shows that he is speaking of the same Spirit of Whom he had spoken to Ananias. He Himself is, then, the Spirit of the Lord Who is the Holy Spirit.

60. And the Lord Himself made clear that the same Who is the Spirit of the Father is the Holy Spirit, when according to Matthew He said that we ought not to take thought in persecution what we should say: "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."⁸⁵ Again He says according to St. Luke: "Be not anxious how ye shall answer or speak, for the Holy Spirit of God shall teach you in that hour what ye ought to say."⁸⁶ So, although many are called spirits, as it is said: "Who maketh His Angels spirits," yet the Spirit of God is but one.

61. Both apostles and prophets received that one Spirit, as the vessel of election, the Doctor of the Gentiles, says: "For we have all drunk of one Spirit;"⁸⁷ Him, as it were, Who cannot be divided, but is poured into souls, and flows into the senses, that He may quench the burning of this world's thirst.

Chapter V. The Holy Spirit, since He sanctifies creatures, is neither a creature nor subject to change. He is always good, since He is given by the Father and the Son; neither is He to be numbered amongst such things as are said to fail. He must be acknowledged as the source of goodness. The Spirit of God's mouth, the amender of evils, and Himself good. Lastly, as He is said in Scripture to be good, and is joined to the Father and the Son in baptism, He cannot possibly be denied to be good. He is not, however, said to progress, but to be made perfect in goodness, which distinguishes Him from all creatures.

62. The Holy Spirit is not, then, of the substance of things corporeal, for He sheds incorporeal grace on corporeal things; nor, again, is He of the substance of invisible creatures, for they receive His sanctification, and through Him are superior to the other works of the universe. Whether you speak of Angels, or Dominions, or Powers, every creature waits for the grace of the Holy Spirit. For as we are children through the Spirit, because "God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, Abba, Father; so that thou art now not a servant but a son;"⁸⁸ in like manner, also, every creature is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God, whom in truth the grace of the Holy Spirit made sons of God. Therefore, also, every creature itself shall be changed by the revelation of the grace of the Spirit, "and shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."⁸⁹

63. Every creature, then, is subject to change, not only such as has been changed by some sin or condition of the outward elements, but also such as can be liable to corruption by a hull of nature, though by careful discipline it be not yet so; for, as we have shown in a former treatise,⁹⁰ the nature of Angels evidently can be changed. It is certainly fitting to judge that such as is the nature of one, such also is that of others. The nature of the rest, then, is capable of change, but the discipline is better.

64. Every creature, therefore, is capable of change, but the Holy Spirit is good and not capable of change, nor can He be changed by any fault, Who does away the faults of all and pardons their sins. How, then, is He capable of change, Who by sanctifying works in others a change to grace, but is not changed Himself.

65. How is He capable of change Who is always good? For the Holy Spirit, through Whom the things that are good are ministered to us, is never evil. Whence two evangelists in one and the same place, in words differing from each other, have made the same statement, for you read in Matthew: "If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your Father, Who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him."⁹¹ But according to Luke you will find it thus written: "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"⁹² We observe, then, that the Holy Spirit is good in the Lord's judgment by the testimony of the evangelists, since the one has put good things in the place of the Holy Spirit, the other has named the Holy Spirit in the place of good things. If, then, the Holy Spirit is that which is good, how is He not good?

66. Nor does it escape our notice that some copies have likewise, according to St. Luke: "How much more shall your heavenly Father give a good gift to them that ask Him." This good gift is the grace of the Spirit, which the Lord Jesus shed forth from heaven, after having been fixed to the gibbet of the cross, returning with the triumphal spoils of death deprived of its power, as you find it written: "Ascending up on high He led captivity captive, and gave good gifts to men."⁹³ And well does he say "gifts," for as the Son was given, of Whom it is written: "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given;"⁹⁴ so, too, is the grace of the Spirit given. But why should I hesitate to say that the Holy Spirit also is given to us, since it is written: "The love of God is shed forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, Who is given to us."⁹⁵ And since captive breasts certainly could not receive Him, the Lord Jesus first led captivity captive, that our affections being set free, He might pour forth the gift of divine grace.

67. And He said well "led captivity captive." For the victory of Christ is the victory of liberty, which won grace for all, and inflicted wrong on none. So in the setting free of all no one is captive. And because in the time of the Lord's passion wrong alone had no part, which had made captive all of whom it had gained possession, captivity itself turning back upon itself was made captive, not now attached to Belial but to Christ, to serve Whom is liberty. "For he who is called in the Lord as a servant is the Lord's freedman."⁹⁶

68. But to return to the point. "All," says He, "have gone aside, all together are become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, not even one."⁹⁷ If they except the Holy Spirit, even they themselves confess that He is not amongst all; if they do not except Him, then they, too, acknowledge that He has gone aside amongst all.

69. But let us consider whether He has goodness in Himself, since He is the Source and Principle of goodness. For as the Father and the Son have, so too the Holy Spirit also has goodness. And the Apostle also taught this when he said: "Now the fruit of the Spirit is peace, love, joy, patience, goodness."⁹⁸ For who doubts that He is good Whose fruit is goodness. For "a good tree brings forth good fruit."⁹⁹

70. And so if God be good, how shall He Who is the Spirit of His mouth not be good, Who searcheth even the deep things of God? Can the infection of evil enter into the deep things of God? And from this it is seen how foolish they are who deny that the Son of God is good, when they cannot deny that the Spirit of Christ is good, of Whom the Son of God says: "Therefore said I that He shall receive of Mine."¹⁰⁰

71. Or is the Spirit not good, Who of the worst makes good men, does away sin, destroys evil, shuts out crime, pours in good gifts, makes apostles of persecutors, and priests of sinners? "Ye were," it is said, "sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord."¹⁰¹

72. But why do we put them off? And if they ask for statements since they do not deny facts, let them hear that the Holy Spirit is good, for David said: "Let Thy good Spirit. lead me forth in the right way."¹⁰² For what is the Spirit but full of goodness? Who though because of His nature He cannot be attained to, yet because of His goodness can be received by us, filling all things His power, but only partaken of by the just, simple in substance, rich in virtues, present to each, dividing of His own to every one, and Himself whole everywhere.

73. And with good cause did the Son of God say: "Go and baptize all nations in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,"¹⁰³ not disdaining association with the Holy Spirit. Why, then, do some take it ill that He Whom the Lord disdained not in the sacrament of baptism, should be joined in our devotion with the Father and the Son?

74. Good, then, is the Spirit, but good, not as though acquiring but as imparting goodness. For the Holy Spirit does not receive from creatures but is received; as also He is not sanctified but sanctifies; for the creature is sanctified, but the Holy Spirit sanctifies. In which matter, though the word is used in common, there is a difference in the nature. For both the man who receives and God Who gives sanctity are called holy, as we read: "Be ye holy, for I am holy."¹⁰⁴ Now sanctification and corruption cannot share the same nature, and therefore the grace of the Holy Spirit and the creature cannot be of one substance.

75. Since, then, the whole invisible creation (whose substance some rightly believe to be reasonable and incorporeal), with the exception of the Trinity, does not impart but acquires the grace of the Spirit, and does not share in it but receives it, the whole commonalty of creation is to be separated from association with the Holy Spirit. Let them then believe that the Holy Spirit is not a creature; or, if they think Him a creature, why do they associate Him with the Father? If they think Him a creature, why do they join Him with the Son of God? But if they do not think that He should be separated from the Father and the Son, they do not consider Him to be a creature, for where the sanctification is one the nature is one.

Chapter VI.

Although we are baptized with water and the Spirit, the latter is much superior to the former, and is not therefore to be separated from the Father and the Son.

76. There are, however, many who, because we are baptized with water and the Spirit, think that there is no difference in the offices of water and the Spirit, and therefore think that they do not differ in nature. Nor do they observe that we are buried in the element of water that we may rise again renewed by the Spirit. For in the water is the representation of death, in the Spirit is the pledge of life, that the body of sin may die through the water, which encloses the body as it were in a kind of tomb, that we, by the power of the Spirit, may be renewed from the death of sin, being born again in God.

77. And so these three witnesses are one, as John said: "The water, the blood, and the Spirit."¹⁰⁵ One in the mystery, not in nature. The water, then, is a witness of burial, the blood is a witness of death, the Spirit is a witness of life. If, then, there be any grace in the water, it is not from the nature of water, but from the presence of the Holy Spirit.

78. Do we live in the water or in the Spirit? Are we sealed in the water or in the Spirit. For in Him we live and He Himself is the earnest of our inheritance, as the Apostle says, writing to the Ephesians I "In Whom believing ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is an earnest of our inheritance."¹⁰⁶ So we were sealed by the Holy Spirit, not by nature, but by God, for it is written: "He Who anointed us is God, Who also sealed us, and gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

79. We were then sealed with the Spirit by God. For as we die in Christ, in order to be born again, so, too, we are sealed with the Spirit, that we may possess His brightness and image and grace, which is undoubtedly our spiritual seal. For although we were visibly sealed in our bodies, we are in truth sealed in our hearts, that the Holy Spirit may portray in us the likeness of the heavenly image.

80. Who, then, can dare to say that the Holy Spirit is separated from the Father and the Son, since through Him we attain to the image and likeness of God, and through Him, as the Apostle Peter says, are partakers of the divine nature? In which there is certainly not the inheritance of carnal succession, but the spiritual connection of the grace of adoption. And in order that we may know that this seal is rather on our hearts than on our bodies, the prophet says: "The light of Thy countenance has been impressed upon us, O Lord, Thou hast put gladness in my heart."¹⁰⁷

Chapter VII. The Holy Spirit is not a creature, seeing that He is infinite, and was shed upon the apostles dispersed through all countries, and moreover sanctifies the Angers also, to whom He makes us equal. Mary was full of the same likewise, so too, Christ the Lord, and so far all things high and low. And all benediction has its origin from His operation, as was signified in the moving of the water at Bethesda.

81. Since then, every creature is confined within certain limits of its own nature, and inasmuch as those invisible operations, which cannot be circumscribed by place and bounds, yet are closed in by the property of their own substance; how can any one dare to call the Holy Spirit a creature, Who has not a limited and circumscribed power? because He is always in all things and everywhere, which assuredly is the property of Divinity and Lordship, for: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."¹⁰⁸

81. And so, when the Lord appointed His servants the apostles, that we might recognize that the creature was one thing and the grace of the Spirit another, He appointed them to different places, because all could not be everywhere at once. But He gave the Holy Spirit to all, to shed upon the apostles though separated the gift of indivisible grace. The persons, then, were different, but the accomplishment of the working was in all one, because the Holy Spirit is one of Whom it is said: "Ye shall receive power, even the Holy Spirit coming upon you, and ye shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth."¹⁰⁹

82. The Holy Spirit, then, is uncircumscribed and infinite, Who infused Himself into the minds of the disciples throughout the separate divisions of distant regions, and the remote bounds of the whole world, Whom nothing is able to escape or to deceive. And therefore holy David says: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy face."¹¹⁰ Of what Angel does the Scripture say this? of what Dominion? of what Power? of what Angel do we find the power diffused over many? For Angels were sent to few, but the Holy Spirit was poured upon whole peoples. Who, then, can doubt that that is divine which is shed upon many at once and is not seen; but that that is corporeal which is seen and held by individuals?

83. But in like manner as the Spirit sanctifying the apostles is not a partaker of human nature; so, too, He sanctifying Angels, Dominions, and Powers, has no partnership with creatures. But if any think that the holiness of the Angels is not spiritual, but some other kind of grace belonging to the property of their nature, they will forsooth judge Angels to be inferior to men. For since themselves also confess that they would not dare to compare Angels to the Holy Spirit, and they cannot deny that the Holy Spirit is shed upon men; but the sanctification of the Spirit is a divine gift and favour, men who possess a better kind of sanctification will certainly be found to be preferred to the Angels. But since Angels come down to men to assist them, it must be understood that the nature of Angels is higher as it receives more of the grace of the Spirit, and that the favour awarded to us and to them comes from the same author.

84. But how great is that grace which makes even the lower nature of the lot of men equal to the gifts received by Angels, as the Lord Himself promised, saying: "Ye shall be as the Angels in heaven." Nor is it difficult, for He Who made those Angels in the Spirit will by the same grace make men also equal to the Angels.

85. But of what creature can it be said that it fills all things, as is written of the Holy Spirit: "I will pour My Spirit upon all flesh."¹¹¹ This cannot be said of an Angel. Lastly, Gabriel himself, when sent to Mary, said: "Hail, full of grace,"¹¹² plainly declaring the grace of the Spirit which was in her, because the Holy Spirit had come upon her, and she was about to have her womb full of grace with the heavenly Word.

86. For it is of the Lord to fill all things, Who says: "I fill heaven and earth."¹¹³ If, then, it is the Lord Who fills heaven and earth, Who can judge the Holy Spirit to be without a share in the dominion and divine power, seeing that He has filled the world, and what is beyond the whole world, filled Jesus the Redeemer of the whole world? For it is written: "But Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, departed from Jordan,"¹¹⁴ Who, then, except one who possessed the same fulness could fill Him Who fills all things?

87. But test they should object that this was said according to the flesh, though He alone from Whose flesh went forth virtue to heal all, was more than all; yet, as the Lord fills all things, so, too, we read of the Spirit: "For the Spirit of the Lord filled the whole world."¹¹⁵ And you find it said of all who had consorted with the Apostles that, "filled with the Holy Spirit they spoke the word of God with boldness."¹¹⁶ You see that the Spirit gives both fulness and boldness, Whose operation the archangel announces to Mary, saying: "The Holy Spirit shall come on thee."¹¹⁷

88. You read, too, in the Gospel that the Angel descended at the appointed time into the pool and troubled the water, and he who first went down into the pool was made whole,¹¹⁸ What did the Angel declare in this type but the descent of the Holy Spirit, which was to come to pass in our day, and should consecrate the waters when invoked by the prayers of the priest? That Angel, then, was a herald of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as by means of the grace of the Spirit medicine was to be applied to our infirmities of soul and mind. The Spirit, then, has the same ministers as God the Father and Christ. He fills all things, possesses all things, works all and in all in the same manner as God the Father and the Son work.

89. What, then, is more divine than the working of the Holy Spirit, since God Himself testifies that the Holy Spirit presides over His blessings, saying: "I will put My Spirit upon thy seed and My blessings upon thy children."¹¹⁹ For no blessing can be full except through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Wherefore, too, the Apostle found nothing better to wish us than this, as He himself said: "We cease not to pray and make request for you that ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding walking worthily of God."¹²⁰ He taught, then, that this was the will of God, that rather by walking in good works and words and affections, we should be filled with the will of God, Who puts His Holy Spirit in our hearts. Therefore if he who has the Holy Spirit is filled with the will of God, there is certainly no difference of will between the Father and the Son.

Chapter VIII. The Holy Spirit is given by God alone, yet not wholly to each person, since there is no one besides Christ capable of receiving Him wholly. Charity is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, Who, prefigured by the mystical ointment, is shown to have nothing common with creatures; and He, inasmuch as He is said to proceed from the mouth of God, must not be classed with creatures, nor with things divisible, seeing He is eternal.

90. Observe at the same time that God gives the Holy Spirit. For this is no work of man, nor girl of man; but He Who is invoked by the priest is given by God, wherein is the gift of God and the ministry of the priest. For if the Apostle Paul judged that he was not able to give the Holy Spirit himself by his own authority, and considered himself so far unequal to this office that he wished us to be filled by God with the Spirit,¹²¹ who is sufficient to dare to arrogate to himself the conferring of this gift? So the Apostle uttered this wish in prayer, and did not claim a right by any authority of his own; he desired to obtain, he did not presume to command. Peter, too, says that he is not capable of compelling or restraining the Holy Spirit. For he spoke thus: "Wherefore if God has granted them the same grace as to us, who was I that I could resist God?"¹²²

91. But perchance they would not be moved by the example of apostles, and so let us use divine utterances; for it is written: "Jacob is My servant, I will uphold him; Israel is My elect, My soul hath upheld him, I put My Spirit upon him."¹²³ The Lord also said by Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me."¹²⁴

92. Who, then, can dare to say that the substance of the Holy Spirit is created, at Whose shining in our hearts we behold the beauty of divine truth, and the distance between the creature and the Godhead, that the work may be distinguished from its Author? Or of what creature has God so spoken as to say: "I will pour out of My Spirit"?¹²⁵ He said not Spirit, but "of My Spirit," for we are not able to receive the fulness of the Holy Spirit, but we receive as much as our Master divides to us of His own according to His will.¹²⁶ For as the Son of God thought it not robbery that He should be equal to God, but emptied Himself, that we might be able to receive Him in our minds; but He emptied Himself not that He was void of His own fulness, but in order that He, Whose fulness I could not endure, might infuse Himself into me according to the measure of my capacity, in like manner also the Father says that He pours out of the Spirit upon all flesh; for He did not pour Him forth wholly, but that which He poured forth abounded for all.

93. There was therefore a pouring out upon us of the Spirit, but upon the Lord Jesus, when He was in the form of man, the Spirit abode, as it is written: "Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending from heaven, and abiding upon Him, He it is Who baptizeth in the Holy Spirit."¹²⁷ Around us is the liberality of the Giver in abundant provision, in Him abides for ever the fulness of the Spirit. He shed forth then what He deemed to be sufficient for us, and what was shed forth is not separated nor divided; but He has a unity of fulness wherewith He may enlighten the sight of our hearts according to what our strength is capable of. Lastly, we receive so much as the advancing of our mind acquires, for the fulness of the grace of the Spirit is indivisible, but is Shared in by us according to the capacity of our own nature.

94. God, then, sheds forth of the Spirit, and the love of God is also shed abroad through the Spirit; in which point we ought to recognize the unity of the operation and of the grace. For as God shed forth of the Holy Spirit, so also "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit;"¹²⁸ in order that we may understand that the Holy Spirit is not a work, Who is the dispenser and plenteous Fount of the divine love.

95. In like manner that you may believe that that which is shed abroad cannot be common to the creatures but peculiar to the Godhead, the name of the Son is also poured forth, as you read: "Thy Name is as ointment poured forth."¹²⁹ Of which saying nothing can surpass the force. For as ointment closed up in a vase keeps in its perfume, so long as it is confined in the narrow space of

that vase, though it cannot reach many, it yet preserves its strength. But when the ointment has been poured out of that vase wherein it was enclosed, it spreads far and wide; so, too, the Name of Christ before His coming amongst the people of Israel was enclosed in the minds of the Jews as in some vase. For "God is known in Judah, His Name is great in Israel;"¹³⁰ that is, the Name which the vases of the Jews held confined in their narrow limits.

96. Even then that Name was indeed great, when it remained in the narrow limits of the weak and few, but it had not yet poured forth its greatness throughout the hearts of the Gentiles, and to the ends of the whole world. But after that He by His coming had shone throughout the whole world, He spread abroad that divine Name of His throughout all creatures, not filled up by any addition (for fulness admits not of increase), but filling up the empty spaces, that His Name might be wonderful in all the world. The pouring forth, then, of His Name signifies a kind of abundant exuberance of graces and copiousness of heavenly goods, for whatever is poured forth flows over from abundance.

97. So as wisdom which proceeds from the mouth of God cannot be said to be created, nor the Word Which is uttered from His heart, nor the power in which is the fulness of the eternal Majesty; so, too, the Spirit which is poured forth from the mouth of God cannot be considered to be created, since God Himself has shown their unity to be such that He speaks of His pouring forth of His Spirit. By which we understand that the grace of God the Father is the same as that of the Holy Spirit, and that without any division or loss it is divided to the hearts of each. That, then, which is shed abroad of the Holy Spirit is neither severed, nor comprehended in any corporeal parts, nor divided.

98. For how can it be credible that the Spirit should be divided. by any parcelling out? John says of God: "Hereby know we that He abides in us by the Spirit which He hath given us."¹³¹ But that which abides always is certainly not changed, therefore if it suffers no change it is eternal. And so the Holy Spirit is eternal, but the creature is liable to fault, and therefore subject to change. But that which is subject to change cannot be eternal, and there cannot therefore be anything in common between the Spirit and the creature, because the Spirit is eternal, but every creature is temporal.

99. But the Apostle also shows that the Holy Spirit is eternal, for: "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the sprinkling the ashes of an heifer sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God?"¹³² Therefore the Spirit is eternal.

Chapter IX. The Holy Spirit is rightly called the ointment of Christ, and the oil of gladness; and why. Christ Himself is not the ointment, since He was anointed with the Holy Spirit. It is not strange that the Spirit should be called Ointment, since the Father and the Son are also called Spirit. And there is no confusion between them, since Christ alone suffered death, Whose saving cross is then spoken of.

100. Now many have thought that the Holy Spirit is the ointment of Christ, And well it is said ointment, because He is called the oil of gladness, the joining together of many graces giving a sweet fragrance. But God the Almighty Father anointed Him the Prince of priests, Who was, not like others anointed in a type under the Law, but was both according to the Law anointed in the body, and in truth was full with the virtue of the Holy Spirit from the Father above the Law.

101. This is the oil of gladness, of which the prophet says: "God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."¹³³ Lastly, Peter says that Jesus was anointed with the Spirit, as you read: "Ye know that word which went through all Judea beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached, even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit."¹³⁴ The Holy Spirit is, then, the oil of gladness.

102. And well did he say oil of gladness, lest you should think Him a creature; for it is the nature of this sort of oil that it will by no means mingle with moisture of another kind. Gladness, too, does not anoint the body, but brightens the inmost heart, as the prophet said: "Thou hast put gladness in my heart."¹³⁵ So as he loses his pains who wishes to mix oil with moister matter, because since the nature of oil is lighter than others, when the others settle, it rises and is separated. How do those wretched pedlars think that the oil of gladness can by their tricks be mingled with other creatures, since of a truth corporeal things cannot be mingled with in corporeal, nor things created with uncreated?

102. And well is that called oil of gladness wherewith Christ was anointed; for neither was usual nor common oil to be sought for Him, wherewith either wounds are dressed or heat assuaged; since the salvation of the world did not seek alleviation for His wounds, nor the eternal might of His wearied Body demand refreshment.

103. Nor is it wonderful if He have the oil of gladness, Who made those about to die rejoice, put off sadness from the world, destroyed the odour of sorrowful death. And so the Apostle says: "For we are the good odour of Christ to God;"¹³⁶ certainly showing that he is speaking of spiritual things. But when the Son of God Himself says: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me,"¹³⁷ He points out the ointment of the Spirit. Therefore the Spirit is the ointment of Christ.

104. Or since the Name of Jesus is as ointment poured out, if they wish to understand Christ Himself, and not the Spirit of Christ to be expressed under the name of ointment, certainly when the Apostle Peter says that the Lord Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, it is without doubt plain that the Spirit also is called ointment.

105. But what wonder, since both the Father and the Son are said to be Spirit. Of which we shall speak more fully when we begin to speak of the Unity of the Name. Yet since most suitable place occurs here, that we may not seem to have passed on without a conclusion, let them read that both the Father is called Spirit, as the Lord said in the Gospel, "for God is Spirit;"¹³⁸ and Christ is called Spirit, for Jeremiah said: "The Spirit before our face, Christ the Lord."¹³⁹

106. So, then, both the Father is Spirit and Christ is Spirit, for that which is not a created body is spirit, but the Holy Spirit is not commingled with the Father and the Son, but is distinct from the Father and from the Son. For the Holy Spirit did not die, Who could not die because He had not taken flesh upon Him, and the eternal Godhead was incapable of dying, but Christ died according to the flesh.

107. For of a truth He died in that which He took of the Virgin, not in that which He had of the Father, for Christ died in that nature in which He was crucified. But the Holy Spirit could not be crucified, Who had not flesh and bones, but the Son of God was crucified, Who took flesh and bones, that on that cross the temptations of our flesh might die. For He took on Him that which He

was not that He might hide that which He was; He hid that which He was that He might be tempted in it, and that which He was not might be redeemed, in order that He might call us by means of that which He was not to that which He was.

108. O the divine mystery of that cross, on which weakness hangs, might is free, vices are nailed, and triumphal trophies raised. So that a certain saint said: "Pierce my flesh with nails for fear of Thee;"¹⁴⁰ he says not with nails of iron, but of fear and faith. For the bonds of virtue are stronger than those of punishment. Lastly, his faith bound Peter, when he had followed the Lord as far as the hall of the high priest, whom no one had bound, and punishment loosened not him, whom faith bound. Again, when he was bound by the Jews, prayer loosed him, punishment did not hold him, because he had not gone back from Christ.

109. Therefore do you also crucify sin, that you may die to sin; he who dies to sin lives to God; do you live to Him Who spared not His own Son, that in His body He might crucify our passions. For Christ died for us, that we might live in His revived Body. Therefore not our life but our guilt died in Him, "Who," it is said, "bare our sins in His own Body on the tree; that being set free from our sins we might live in righteousness, by the wound of Whose stripes we are healed."¹⁴¹

110. That wood of the cross is, then, as it were a kind of ship of our salvation, our passage, not a punishment, for there is no other salvation but the passage of eternal salvation. Whilst expecting death I do not feel it; whilst thinking little of punishment I do not suffer; whilst careless of fear I know it not.

111. Who, then, is He by the wound of Whose stripes we are healed but Christ the Lord? of Whom the same Isaiah prophesied His stripes were our healing,¹⁴² of Whom Paul the Apostle wrote in his epistle: "Who knew no sin, but was made sin for us."¹⁴³ This, indeed, was divine in Him, that His Flesh did no sin, nor did the creature of the body take in Him sin. For what wonder would it be if the Godhead alone sinned not, seeing It had no incentives to sin? But if God alone is free from sin, certainly every creature by its own nature can be, as we have said, liable to sin.

Chapter X. That the Spirit forgives sin is common to Him with the Father and the Son, but not with the Angels.

112. Tell me, then, whoever you are who deny the Godhead of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit could not be liable to sin, Who rather forgives sin. Does an Angel forgive? Does an Archangel? Certainly not, but the Father alone, the Son alone, and the Holy Spirit alone. Now no one is unable to avoid that which he has power to forgive.

113. But perhaps some one will say that the Seraph said to Isaiah: "Behold, this hath touched thy lips, and shall take away thine iniquities, and purge away thy sins."¹⁴⁴ Shall take away, he says, and shall purge, not I will take away, but that fire from the altar of God, that is, the grace of the Spirit. For what else can we piously understand to be on the altar of God but the grace of the Spirit? Certainly not the wood of the forests, nor the soot and coals. Or what is so in accordance with piety as to understand according to the mystery that it was revealed by the mouth of Isaiah that all men should be cleansed by the passion of Christ, Who as a coal according to the flesh burnt up our sins, as you read in Zechariah: "Is not this a brand cast forth from the fire? And that was Joshua clothed in filthy garments."¹⁴⁵

114. Lastly, that we may know that this mystery of the common redemption was most clearly revealed by the prophets, you have also in this place: "Lo, it hath taken away thy sins;"¹⁴⁶ not that Christ put aside His sins Who did no sin, but that in the flesh of Christ the whole human race should be loosed from their sins.

115. But even if the Seraph had taken away sin, it would have been as one of the ministers of God appointed to this mystery. For thus said Isaiah: "For one of the Seraphim was sent to me."¹⁴⁷

Chapter XI. The Spirit is sent to all, and passes not from place to place, for He is not limited either by time or space. He goes forth from the Son, as the Son from the Father, in Whom He ever abides: and also comes to us when we receive. He comes also after the same manner as the Father Himself, from Whom He can by no means be separated.

116. The Spirit, also, is indeed said to be sent, but the Seraph to one, the Spirit to all. The Seraph is sent to minister, the Spirit works a mystery. The Seraph performs what is commanded, the Spirit divides as He wills. The Seraph passes from place to place, for he does not fill all things, but is himself filled by the Spirit. The Seraph comes down with a certain mode of passage according to his nature, but we cannot think this of the Spirit, of Whom the Son of God says: "When the Paraclete shall come, even the Spirit of Truth, Whom I send unto you, Who proceedeth from the Father."¹⁴⁸

117. For if the Spirit proceeds from a place and passes to a place, both the Father Himself will be found in a place, and the Son likewise. If He goes forth from a place, Whom the Father or the Son sends, certainly the Spirit passing from a place, and making progress, seems to leave, according to those impious interpretations, both the Father and the Son like some material body.

118. I am saying this with reference to those who say that the Spirit comes down by movement. But neither the Father, Who is above all not only of corporeal nature, but also of the invisible creation, is circumscribed in any place; nor is the Son, Who, as the Worker of all creation, is above every creature, enclosed by the places or times of His own works; nor is the Spirit of Truth as being the Spirit of God, circumscribed by any corporeal limits, Who since He is incorporeal is far above the whole rational creation through the ineffable fulness of His Godhead, having over all things the power of breathing where He wills, and of inspiring as He wills.¹⁴⁹

119. The Spirit is not, then, sent as it were from a place, nor does He proceed as from a place, when He proceeds from the Son, as the Son Himself, when He says, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world,"¹⁵⁰ destroys all fancies, which can be reckoned as from place to place. In like manner, also, when we read that God is within or without, we certainly do not either enclose God within anybody or separate Him from anybody, but weighing these things in a deep and ineffable estimation, we comprehend the hiddenness of the divine nature.

120. Lastly, Wisdom so says that she came forth from the mouth of the Most High,¹⁵¹ as not to be external to the Father, but with the Father; for "the Word was with God;"¹⁵² and not only with God but also in God; for He says: "I am in the Father and the Father is in Me."¹⁵³ But neither when He goes forth from the Father does He retire from a place, nor is He separated as a body from a body; nor when He is in the Father is He as if a body enclosed as it were in a body. The Holy Spirit also, when He proceeds from the Father and the Son, is not separated from the Father nor separated from the Son. For how could He be separated from the Father Who is the Spirit of His mouth?

Which is certainly both a proof of His eternity, and expresses the Unity of this Godhead.

121. He exists then, and abides always, Who is the Spirit of His mouth, but He seems to come down when we receive Him, that He may dwell in us, that we may not be alien from His grace. To us He seems to come down, not that He does come down, but that our mind ascends to Him. Of which we would speak more fully did we not remember that in the former treatise¹⁵⁴ there was set forth that the Father said: "Let us go down and confound their language,"¹⁵⁵ and that the Son said: "He that loveth Me will keep My saying, and My Father will love him, and We will come to Him and make Our abode with Him."¹⁵⁶

122. The Spirit, then, so comes as does the Father, for where the Father is there is also the Son, and where the Son is there is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, therefore, is not to be supposed to come separately. But He comes not from place to place, but from the disposition of the order to the safety of redemption, from the grace of giving life to that of sanctification, to translate us from earth to heaven, from wretchedness to glory, from slavery to a kingdom.

123. The Spirit comes, then, as the Father comes. For the Son said, "I and the Father will come, and will make Our abode with Him."¹⁵⁷ Does the Father come in a bodily fashion? Thus, then, comes the Spirit in Whom, when He comes, is the full presence of the Father and the Son.

124. But who can separate the Spirit from the Father and the Son, since we cannot even name the Father and the Son without the Spirit? "For no one saith Lord Jesus, except in the Holy Spirit?"¹⁵⁸ If, then, we cannot call Jesus Lord except in the Holy Spirit, we certainly cannot proclaim Him without the Spirit. But if the Angels also proclaim Jesus to be Lord, Whom no one can proclaim except in the Spirit, then in them also the office of the Holy Spirit operates.

125. We have proved, then, that the presence and the grace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one, which is so heavenly and divine that the Son gives thanks therefore to the Father, saying, "I give thanks to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."¹⁵⁹

Chapter XII. The peace and grace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one, so also is Their charity one, which showed itself chiefly in the redemption of man. Their communion with man is also one.

126. Therefore since the calling is one, the grace is also one. Lastly, it is written: "Grace unto you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁶⁰ You see, then, that we are told that the grace of the Father and the Son is one, and the peace of the Father and the Son is one, but this grace and peace is the fruit of the Spirit, as the Apostle taught us himself, saying: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience."¹⁶¹ And peace is good and necessary that no one be troubled with doubtful disputations, nor be shaken by the storm of bodily passions, but that his affections may remain quietly disposed as to the worship of God, with simplicity of faith and tranquillity of mind.

127. As to peace we have proved the point; but as to grace the prophet Zechariah says, that God promised to pour upon Jerusalem the spirit of grace and mercy,¹⁶² and the Apostle Peter says: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the grace of the Holy Spirit."¹⁶³ So grace comes also of the Holy

Spirit as of the Father and the Son. For how can there be grace without the Spirit, since all divine grace is in the Spirit?

128. Nor do we read only of the peace and grace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but also, faithful Emperor, of the love and communion. For of love it has been said: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God."¹⁶⁴ We have heard of the love of the Father. The same love which is the Father's is also the Son's. For He Himself said: "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him,"¹⁶⁵ And what is the love of the Son, but that He offered Himself for us, and redeemed us with His own blood.¹⁶⁶ But the same love is in the Father, for it is written: "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son."¹⁶⁷

129. So, then, the Father gave the Son, and the Son gave Himself. Love is preserved and due affection is not wronged, for affection is not wronged where there is no distress in the giving up. He gave one Who was willing, He gave One Who offered Himself, the Father did not give the Son to punishment but to grace. If you enquire into the merit of the deed, enquire into the description of the affection. The vessel of election shows plainly the unity of this divine love, because both the Father gave the Son and the Son gave Himself. The Father gave, Who "spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all."¹⁶⁸ And of the Son he also says: "Who gave Himself for me."¹⁶⁹ "Gave Himself," he says. If it be of grace, what do I find fault with. If it be that He suffered wrong, I owe the more.

130. But learn that in like manner as the Father gave the Son, and the Son gave Himself, so, too, the Holy Spirit gave Him. For it is written: "Then was Jesus led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."¹⁷⁰ So, too, the loving Spirit gave the Son of God. For as the love of the Father and the Son is one, so, too, we have shown that this love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, and is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, because "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience."¹⁷¹

131. And that there is communion between the Father and the Son is plain, for it is written: "And our communion is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."¹⁷² And in another place: "The communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."¹⁷³ If, then, the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one, the grace one, the love one, and the communion one, the working is certainly one, and where the working is one, certainly the power cannot be divided nor the substance separated. For, if so, how could the grace of the same working agree?

Chapter XIII.

St. Ambrose shows from the Scriptures that the Name of the Three Divine Persons is one, and first the unity of the Name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as each is called Paraclete and Truth.

132. Who, then, would dare to deny the oneness of Name, when he sees the oneness of the working. But why should I maintain the unity of the Name by arguments, when there is the plain testimony of the Divine Voice that the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one? For it is written: "Go, baptize all nations in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."¹⁷⁴ He said, "in the Name," not "in the Names." So, then, the Name of the Father is not one, that of the Son another, and that of the Holy Spirit another, for God is one; the Names are not more than one, for there are not two Gods, or three Gods.

132. And that He might reveal that the Godhead is one and the Majesty one, because the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one, and the Son did not come in one Name and the Holy Spirit in another, the Lord Himself said: "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye did not receive Me, if another shall come in his own name ye will receive him."¹⁷⁵

133. And Scripture makes clear that that which is the Father's Name, the same is also that of the Son, for the Lord said in Exodus: "I will go before thee in My Name, and will call by My Name the Lord before thee."¹⁷⁶ So, then, the Lord said that He would call the Lord by His Name. The Lord, then, is the Name of the Father and of the Son.

134. But since the Name of the Father and of the Son is one, learn that the same is the Name of the Holy Spirit also, since the Holy Spirit came in the Name of the Son, as it is written: "But the Paraclete, even the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things."¹⁷⁷ But He Who came in the Name of the Son came also certainly in the Name of the Father, for the Name of the Father and of the Son is one. Thus it comes to pass that the Name of the Father and of the Son is also that of the Holy Spirit. For there is no other Name given under heaven wherein we must be saved.¹⁷⁸

155. At the same time He showed that the oneness of the Divine Name must be taught, not the difference, since Christ came in the oneness of the Name, but Antichrist will come in his own name, as it is written: "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye did not receive Me, if another shall come in his own name, ye will receive him."¹⁷⁹

156. We are, then, clearly taught by these passages that there is no difference of Name in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that that which is the Name of the Father is also the Name of the Son, and likewise that which is the Name of the Son is also that of the Holy Spirit, when the Son also is called Paraclete, as is the Holy Spirit. And therefore does the Lord Jesus say in the Gospel: "I will ask My Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth."¹⁸⁰ And He said well "another," that you might not suppose that the Son is also the Spirit, for oneness is of the Name, not a Sabellian confusion of the Son and of the Spirit.¹⁸¹

157. So, then, the Son is one Paraclete, the Holy Spirit another Paraclete; for John called the Son a Paraclete, as you find: "If any man sin, we have a Paraclete [Advocate] with the Father, Jesus Christ."¹⁸² So in like manner as there is a oneness of name, so, too, is there a oneness of power, for where the Paraclete Spirit is, there is also the Son.

158. For as the Lord says in this place that the Spirit will be forever with the faithful, so, too, does He elsewhere show that He will Himself be forever with the apostles, saying: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."¹⁸³ Therefore the Son and the Spirit are one, the Name of the Trinity is one, and the Presence one and indivisible.

159. But as we show that the Son is called the Paraclete, so, too, do we show that the Spirit is called the Truth. Christ is the Truth, the Spirit is the Truth, for you find in John's epistle: "For the Spirit is Truth."¹⁸⁴ Not only, then, is the Spirit called the Spirit of Truth. but also the Truth, as the Son is also declared to be the Truth, Who says: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."¹⁸⁵

Chapter XIV.

Each Person of the Trinity is said in the sacred writings to be Light. The Spirit is designated Fire by Isaiah, a figure of which Fire was seen in the bush by Moses, in the tongues of fire, and in Gideon's pitchers. And the Godhead of the same Spirit cannot be denied, since His operation is the same as that of the Father and of the Son, and He is also called the light and fire of the Lord's countenance.

160. But why should I argue that as the Father is light, so, too, the Son is light, and the Holy Spirit is light? Which certainly pertains to the power of God. For God is Light, as John said: "For God is Light, and in Him is no darkness."¹⁸⁶

161. But the Son, too, is Light, because "the Life was the Light of men."¹⁸⁷ And the Evangelist, that he might show that he was speaking of the Son of God, says of John the Baptist: "He was not light, but [was sent] to be a witness of the Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into this world."¹⁸⁸ 2 So, then, since God is Light, and the Son of God the true Light, without doubt the Son of God is true God.

162. And you find elsewhere that the Son of God is Light: "The people that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death have seen a great light."¹⁸⁹ But, which is still more clear, it is said: "For with Thee is the fount of Life, and in Thy light we shall see light,"¹⁹⁰ which means that with Thee, O God the Father Almighty, Who art the Fount of Life, in Thy Son Who is the Light, we shall see the light of the Holy Spirit. As the Lord Himself shows, saying: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit,"¹⁹¹ and elsewhere: "Virtue went out from Him."¹⁹²

163. But who can doubt that the Father is Light, when we read of His Son that He is the Brightness of eternal Light? For of Whom but of the Father is the Son the Brightness, Who both is always with the Father, and always shines, not with unlike but with the same radiance.

164. And Isaiah shows that the Holy Spirit is not only Light but also Fire, saying: "And the light of Israel shall be for a fire."¹⁹³ So the prophets called Him a burning Fire, because in those three points we see more intensely the majesty of the Godhead; since to sanctify is of the Godhead, to illuminate is the property of fire and light, and the Godhead is wont to be pointed out or seen in the appearance of fire: "For our God is a consuming Fire," as Moses said.¹⁹⁴

165. For he himself saw the fire in the bush, and had heard God when the voice from the flame of fire came to him saying: "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."¹⁹⁵ The voice came from the fire, and the voice was in the bush, and the fire did no harm. For the bush was burning but was not consumed, because in that mystery the Lord was showing that He would come to illuminate the thorns of our body, and not to consume those who were in misery, but to alleviate their misery; Who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire, that He might give grace and destroy sin.¹⁹⁶ So in the symbol of fire God keeps His intention.

166. In the Acts of the Apostles, also, when the Holy Spirit had descended upon the faithful, the appearance of fire was seen, for you read thus: "And suddenly there was a sound from heaven, as though the Spirit were borne with great vehemence, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire."¹⁹⁷

167. For the same reason was it that when Gideon was about to overcome the Midianites, he commanded three hundred men to take pitchers, and to hold lighted torches inside the pitchers,

and trumpets in their right hands. Our predecessors have preserved the explanation received from the apostles, that the pitchers are our bodies, fashioned of clay, which know not fear if they burn with the fervour of the grace of the Spirit, and bear witness to the passion of the Lord Jesus with a loud confession of the Voice.

168. Who, then, can doubt of the Godhead of the Holy Spirit, since where the grace of the Spirit is, there the manifestation of the Godhead appears. By which evidence we infer not a diversity but the unity of the divine power. For how can there be a severance of power, where the effect of the working in all is one?

169. What, then, is that fire? Not certainly one made up of common twigs, or roaring with the burning of the reeds of the woods, but that fire which improves good deeds like gold, and consumes sins like stubble. This is undoubtedly the Holy Spirit, Who is called both the fire and light of the countenance of God; light as we said above: "The light of Thy countenance has been sealed upon us, O Lord."¹⁹⁸ What is, then, the light that is sealed, but that of the seal of the Spirit, believing in Whom, "ye were sealed," he says, "with the Holy Spirit of promise."¹⁹⁹

170. And as there is a light of the divine countenance, so, too, does fire shine forth from the countenance of God, for it is written: "A fire shall burn in His sight."²⁰⁰ For the grace of the day of judgment shines beforehand, that forgiveness may follow to reward the service of the saints. O the great fulness of the Scriptures, which no one can comprehend with human genius! O greatest proof of the Divine Unity For how many things are pointed out in these two verses!

Chapter XV. The Holy Spirit is Life equally with the Father and the Son, in truth whether the Father be mentioned, with Whom is the Fount of Life, or the Son, that Fount can be none other than the Holy Spirit.

171. We have said that the Father is Life, the Son is Life, and the Holy Spirit is Life; let us also learn that the Father is Life, the Son Life, and the Holy Spirit Life. For John said: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, and which we have seen, and have beheld with our eyes, and our hands have handled concerning the Word of Life; and the Life appeared, and we saw and testify, and declare to you of that Life which was with the Father."²⁰¹ He said both Word of Life and Life that he might signify both the Father and the Son to be Life. For what is the Word of Life but the Word of God? And by this phrase both God and the Word of God are shown to be Life. And as it is said the Word of Life, so, too, the Spirit of Life. Therefore, as the Word of Life is Life, so, too, the Spirit of Life is Life.

172. Learn now that as the Father is the Fount of Life, so, too, many have stated that the Son is signified as the Fount of Life;²⁰² so that, he says, with Thee, Almighty God, Thy Son is the Fount of Life. That is the Fount of the Holy Spirit,²⁰³ for the Spirit is Life, as the Lord says: "The words which I speak unto you are Spirit and Life,"²⁰⁴ for where the Spirit is, there also is Life; and where Life is, is also the Holy Spirit.

173. Many, however, consider that in this passage the Father only is signified by the Fount. Let them, however, notice what the Scripture relates: "With Thee is the Well of Life." That is, the Son is with the Father; since the Word was with God, Who was in the beginning, and was with God.

174. But whether in this place one understands the Fount to be the Father or the Son, we certainly do not understand a fount of that water which is created, but the Fount of that divine grace, that is, of the Holy Spirit, for He is the living water. Wherefore the Lord said: "If thou knowest the gift of God, and Who He is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked Him, and He would have given thee living water."²⁰⁵

175. This was the water for which the soul of David thirsted. The hart desires the fountain of these waters,²⁰⁶ not thirsting for the poison of serpents. For the water of the grace of the Spirit is living, that it may purify the inner parts of the mind, and wash away every sin of the soul, and purify the transgression of hidden faults.

Chapter XVI. The Holy Spirit is that large river by which the mystical Jerusalem is watered. It is equal to its Fount, that is, the Father and the Son, as is signified in holy Scripture. St. Ambrose himself thirsts for that water, and warns us that in order to preserve it within us, we must avoid the devil, lust, and heresy, since our vessels are frail, and that broken cisterns must be forsaken, that after the example of the Samaritan woman and of the patriarchs we may find the water of the Lord.

176. But lest perchance any one should speak against as it were the littleness of the Spirit, and from this should endeavour to establish a difference in greatness, arguing that water seems to be but a small part of a Fount, although examples taken from creatures seem by no means suitable for application to the Godhead; yet lest they should judge anything injuriously from this comparison taken from creatures, let them learn that not only is the Holy Spirit called Water, but also a River, as we read: "From his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this He said of the Spirit, Whom they were beginning to receive, who were about to believe in Him."²⁰⁷

177. So, then, the Holy Spirit is the River, and the abundant River, which according to the Hebrews flowed from Jesus in the lands, as we have received it prophesied by the mouth of Isaiah.²⁰⁸ This is the great River which flows always and never fails. And not only a river, but also one of copious stream and overflowing greatness, as also David said: "The stream of the river makes glad the city of God."²⁰⁹

178. For neither is that city, the heavenly Jerusalem, watered by the channel of any earthly river, but that Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Fount of Life, by a short draught of Whom we are satiated, seems to flow more abundantly among those celestial Thrones, Dominions and Powers, Angels and Archangels, rushing in the full course of the seven virtues of the Spirit. For if a river rising above its banks overflows, how much more does the Spirit, rising above every creature, when He touches the as it were low-lying fields of our minds, make glad that heavenly nature of the creatures with the larger fertility of His sanctification.

179. And let it not trouble you that either here it is said "rivers,"²¹⁰ or elsewhere "seven Spirits,"²¹¹ for by the sanctification of these seven gifts of the Spirit, as Isaiah said,²¹² is signified the fulness of all virtue; the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and godliness, and the Spirit of the fear of God. One, then, is the River, but many the channels of the gifts of the Spirit. This River, then, goes forth from the Fount of Life.

180. And here, again, you must not turn aside your thoughts to lower things, because there seems to be some difference between a Fount and a River, and yet the divine Scripture has provided that the weakness of human understanding should not be injured by the lowliness of the language. Set

before yourself any river, it springs from its fount, but is of one nature, of one brightness and beauty. And do you assert rightly that the Holy Spirit is of one substance, brightness, and glory with the Son of God and with God the Father. I will sum up all in the oneness of the qualities, and shall not be afraid of any question as to difference of greatness. For in this point also Scripture has provided for us; for the Son of God says: "He that shall drink of the water which I will give him, it shall become in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life."²¹³ This well is clearly the grace of the Spirit, a stream proceeding from the living Fount. The Holy Spirit, then, is also the Fount of eternal life.

181. You observe, then, from His words that the unity of the divine greatness is pointed out, and that Christ cannot be denied to be a Fount even by heretics, since the Spirit, too, is called a Fount. And as the Spirit is called a river, so, too, the Father said: "Behold, I come down upon you like a river of peace, and like a stream overflowing the glory of the Gentiles."²¹⁴ And who can doubt that the Son of God is the River of life, from Whom the streams of eternal life flowed forth?

182. Good, then, is this water, even the grace of the Spirit. Who will give this Fount to my breast? Let it spring up in me, let that which gives eternal life flow upon me. Let that Fount overflow upon us, and not flow away. For Wisdom says: "Drink water out of thine own vessels, and from the founts of thine own wells, and let thy waters flow abroad in thy streets."²¹⁵ How shall I keep this water that it flow not forth, that it glide not away? How shall I preserve my vessel, lest any crack of sin penetrating it, should let the water of eternal life exude? Teach us, Lord Jesus, teach us as Thou didst teach Thine apostles, saying: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where rust and moth destroy, and where thieves break through and steal."²¹⁶

182. For He intimates that the thief is the unclean spirit, who cannot find entrance into those who walk in the light of good works, but if he has caught any one in the darkness of earthly desires, and in the midst of the enjoyment of earthly pleasures, he spoils them of all the flower of eternal virtue. And therefore the Lord says: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth destroy, and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also."

183. Our rust is wantonness, our rust is lust, our rust is luxury, which dim the keen vision of the mind with the filth of vices. Again, our moth is Arius, our moth is Photinus, who rend the holy vesture of the Church with their impiety, and desiring to separate the indivisible unity of the divine power, gnaw the precious veil of faith with sacrilegious tooth. The water is spilt if Arius has imprinted his tooth, it flows away if Photinus has planted his sting in any one's vessel. We are but of common clay, we quickly feel vices. But no one says to the potter, "Why hast Thou made me thus?"²¹⁷ For though our vessel be but common, yet one is in honour, another in dishonour.²¹⁸ Do not then lay open thy pool, dig not with vices and crimes, lest any one say: "He hath opened a pool and digged it, and is fallen into the pit which he made."²¹⁹

184. If you seek Jesus, forsake the broken cisterns, for Christ was wont to sit not by a pool but by a well. There that Samaritan woman²²⁰ found Him, she who believed, she who wished to draw water. Although you ought to have come in early morning, nevertheless if you come later, even at the sixth hour, you will find Jesus wearied with His journey. He is weary, but it is through thee, because He has long sought thee, thy unbelief has long wearied Him. Yet He is not offended if thou only comest, He asks to drink Who is about to give. But He drinks not the water of a stream

flowing by, but thy salvation; He drinks thy good dispositions, He drinks the cup, that is, the Passion which stoned for thy sins, that thou drinking of His sacred blood mightest quench the thirst of this world.

185. So Abraham gained God after he had dug the well.²²¹ So Isaac, while walking by the well, received that wife²²² who was coming to him as a type of the Church. Faithful he was at the well, unfaithful at the pool. Lastly, too, Rebecca, as we read, found him who sought her at the well, and the harlots washed themselves in the blood in the pool of Jezebel.²²³ 1: Judg. vi. 11.

2: Judg. vi. 14.

3: Judg. vi. 19-21.

4: 1 Cor. x. 4.

5: Num. xi. 4.

6: Judg. vi. 21.

7: S. Luke xii. 49.

8: Judg. vi. 26.

9: Isa. xi. 2.

10: S. John viii. 56.

11: Judg. vi. 36.

12: S. Matt. xv. 24.

13: Jer. ii. 13.

14: Isa. v. 6.

15: Ps. lxxii. [lxxi.] 6.

16: Josh. v. 13.

17: S. Luke x. 2.

18: S. Matt. xx. 28.

19: S. John xiii. 4.

20: S. John xiii. 8.

21: Cant. v. 3.

22: S. John xiii. 13, John xiii. 14.

23: Gen. xviii. 4.

24: Whence this statement is derived cannot be ascertained. Possibly it is merely an assumption of St. Ambrose founded on his estimate of Gideon's character.

25: S. John xiii. 7.

26: Ps. xxiii. [xxii.] 2.

27: Ps. lxxv. [lxxiv.] 11.

28: " Alia est iniquitas nostra, alia calcanei nostri, in quo Adam dente serpentis est vulneratus et obnoxiam hereditatem successionis humanoe suo vulnere dereliquit, ut omnes illo vulnere claudticemus. " St. Aug. Exp. Psal. xlviii. 6, and St. Ambrose, Enar. in Ps. xlviii. 9: " Unde reor uniuersitatem calcanei magis lubricum delinquendi quam reatum aliquem nostri esse delicti. " This lubricum delinquendi, the wound of Adam's heel, seems to have been understood of concupiscence, which has the nature of sin, and is called sin by St. Paul.

29: Gen. iii. 15.

30: S. Luke x. 19.

31: 1 [3] Kings xvii. 9.

32: 2 [4] Kings v. 14.

33: Athanaricus, king or judex of the West Goths in Dacia, defeated in 369 by the Emperor Valens. Subsequently, in 380, being defeated by the Huns and some Gothic chiefs, he was forced to take refuge in Constantinople, when he was received with all the honour due to his rank. He died the next year.

34: Damasus of Rome, Peter of Alexandria, Gregory of Constantinople, and St. Ambrose himself. Peter had died by this time, but the fact was probably not yet known at Milan.

35: Joel ii. 28.

36: Ps. lxviii. [lxvii.] 9.

37: 1 Cor. xii. 11.

38: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 91.

39: 1 Cor. ii. 10.

40: S. John xv. 26.

41: S. John i. 3.

42: S. Matt. x. 20.

43: 1 Cor. viii. 6.

44: 1 Cor. viii. 6.

45: 2 Cor. v. 18.

46: S. John x. 29.

47: 1 Cor. viii. 6.

48: Rom. v. 5.

49: S. Matt. iii. 11; S. Luke iv. 16; S. John i. 26, John i. 27.

50: This passage has given rise to the question whether St. Ambrose taught, as some others certainly did (probably on his authority), that baptism in the Name of Christ alone, without mention of the other Persons, is valid. But it is difficult to believe that St. Ambrose meant more than to refer to the passage in the Acts as implying Christian baptism. He says just below that baptism is not complete unless one confess the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which would seem to imply the full formula, and he would hardly dissent from St. Basil, who distinctly asserts [De Sp. Sanct. XII.] that baptism without mention of the Three Persons is invalid; and St. Augustine [De Bapt. lib. vi. c. xxv. 47] says that it is more easy to find heretics who reject baptism altogether, than such as omit the right form. Compare also St. Ambrose on St. Luke vi. 67; De Mysteriis, IV. 20; De Sacramentis, II. 5 and 7, especially the latter when he says: In uno nomine ...hoc est in nomine Patris et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.

51: Acts xix. 5 ff.

52: Acts x. 38.

53: Acts i. 5.

54: 1 Cor. xii. 13.

55: 1 Cor. viii. 6.

56: Rom. ix. 5.

57: Heb. i. 6.

58: Heb. i. 14.

59: S. John xv. 26.

60: Heb. ii. 3, Heb. ii. 4.

61: 1 Cor. xv. 24.

62: S. John iii. 8.

63: Col. i. 16.

64: Col. i. 16, Col. i. 17.

65: Ps. xxxiii. [xxxii.] 6.

66: S. Matt. xii. 32.

67: S. Matt. xii. 32.

68: Heb. i. 1, Heb. i. 2.

69: Gen. iii. 17.

70: Gen. xviii. 22, Gen. xviii. 23.

71: Gen. xxviii. 17.
72: 2 Pet. i. 21.
73: S. John xx. 22.
74: S. Matt. xxviii. 19.
75: Ps. li. [l.] 11.
76: Ps. cxxxix. [cxxxviii.] 7.
77: 1 Cor. xii. 3.
78: Rom. viii. 9.
79: Rom. viii. 11.
80: Rom. viii. 2.
81: S. John xiv. 16, John xiv. 17.
82: S. John xx. 22.
83: Acts v. 3.
84: Acts v. 9.
85: S. Matt. x. 20.
86: S. Luke xii. 11, Luke xii. 12.
87: 1 Cor. xii. 13.
88: Gal. iv. 6, Gal. iv. 7.
89: Rom. viii. 19, Rom. viii. 21.
90: De Fid. III. 3.
91: S. Matt. vii. 11.
92: S. Luke xi. 13.
93: Ps. lxxviii. [lxxvii.] 18.
94: Isa. ix. 6.
95: Rom. v. 5.
96: 1 Cor. vii. 22.
97: Ps. xiv. [xiii.] 3.
98: Gal. v. 22.
99: S. Matt. vii. 17.

100: S. John xvi. 15.
101: Eph. v. 8.
102: Ps. cxliii. [cxlii.] 10.
103: S. Matt. xxviii. 19.
104: Lev. xix. 2.
105: 1 John v. 8.
106: Eph. i. 13, Eph. i. 14.
107: Ps. iv. 6, Ps. iv. 7.
108: Ps. xxiv. [xxiii.] 1.
109: Acts i. 8.
110: Ps. cxxxix. [cxxxviii.] 7.
111: Joel ii. 28.
112: S. Luke i. 28.
113: Jer. xxiii. 24.
114: S. Luke iv. 1.
115: Wisd. i. 7.
116: Acts iv. 31.
117: S. Luke i. 35.
118: S. John v. 4.
119: Isa. xlv. 3.
120: Col. i. 9.
121: Eph. v. 18.
122: Acts xi. 17.
123: Isa. xlii. 1.
124: Isa. lxi. 1.
125: Joel ii. 28.
126: Phil. ii. 6.
127: S. John i. 33.
128: Rom. v. 5.

129: Cant. i. 3.

130: Ps. lxxvi. [lxxv.] 1.

131: 1 John iii. 24.

132: Heb. ix. 13, Heb. ix. 14.

133: Ps. xlv. [xliv.] 8.

134: Acts x. 37, Acts x. 38.

135: Ps. iv. 7.

136: 2 Cor. ii. 15.

137: S. Luke iv. 18.

138: S. John iv. 24.

139: Lam. iv. 20.

140: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 120.

141: 1 Pet. ii. 24.

142: Is. liii. 5.

143: 2 Cor. v. 21.

144: Is. vi. 7.

145: Zech. iii. 2, Zech. iii. 3.

146: Ibid. 4.

147: Is. vi. 6.

148: S. John xv. 26.

149: S. John iii. 8.

150: Ibid. xvi. 28.

151: Eccles. xxiv. 5.

152: S. John i. 1.

153: Ibid. xiv. 10.

154: De Fide, V. 7.

155: Gen. xi. 7.

156: S. John xiv. 23.

157: S. John xiv. 23.

158: 1 Cor. xii. 3.

159: S. Matt. xi. 25.

160: Rom. i. 7.

161: Gal. v. 22.

162: Zech. xii. 10.

163: Acts ii. 38.

164: 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

165: S. John xiv. 21.

166: Eph. v. 2.

167: S. John iii. 16.

168: Rom. viii. 32.

169: Gal. ii. 20.

170: S. Matt. iv. 1.

171: Gal. v. 22.

172: 1 John i. 3.

173: 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

174: S. Matt. xxviii. 19.

175: S. John v. 43.

176: Ex. xxxiii. 19.

177: S. John xiv. 26.

178: Acts iv. 12.

179: S. John v. 43.

180: S. John xiv. 16.

181: The Sabellians, anxious to maintain the Unity of God, denied the distinction of Persons, identifying the Father and the Son. See D. Chr. B. III. 568, and Blunt, Dict. of Sects, etc., sub voc.

182: 1 John ii. 1.

183: S. Matt. xxviii. 20.

184: 1 John v. 7.

185: S. John xiv. 6.

186: 1 John i. 5.

187: S. John i. 8.

188: S. John i. 9.

189: Isa. ix. 2.

190: Ps. xxxvi. [xxxv.] 9.

191: S. John xx. 22.

192: S. Luke vi. 19.

193: Isa. x. 17.

194: Deut. iv. 24.

195: Ex. iii. 6.

196: S. Matt. iii. 11.

197: Acts ii. 2, Acts ii. 3.

198: Ps. iv. 6.

199: Eph. i. 13.

200: Ps. l. [xlix.] 3.

201: 1 John i. 1, 1 John i. 2.

202: Ps. xxxvi. [xxxv.] 9.

203: In these words St. Ambrose appears plainly to set forth the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son, though he admits that some consider the Father to be the Fount of Life, but he argues even in this case the Son was with Him.

204: S. John vi. 64.

205: S. John iv. 10.

206: Ps. xlii. [xli.] 3.

207: John vii. 38, John vii. 39.

208: Is. lxvi. 12.

209: Ps. xlv. [xlvi.] 4.

210: S. John. vii. 38.

211: Rev. v. 6.

212: Isa. xi. 2.

213: S. John iv. 14.

214: Isa. lxvi. 12.

215: Prov. v. 15, Prov. v. 16.

216: S. Matt. vi. 19.

217: Rom. ix. 20.

218: Rom. ix. 21.

219: Ps. vii. 15.

220: S. John iv. 6.

221: Gen. xxi. 30.

222: Gen. xxiv. 62.

223: 1 [3] Kings xxii. 36.

On the Holy Spirit - Book 2

Book II.

Introduction.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Chapter XIII.

Book II.

Introduction. The Three Persons of the Godhead were not unknown to the judges of old nor to Moses, for the equality of the Son with the Father, as well as of the Three Persons amongst Themselves, is laid down both elsewhere and by him. Samson also enjoyed the assistance of the Holy Spirit, his history is touched upon and shown to be in some points typical of the Church and her mysteries. When the Holy Spirit left Samson he fell into various calamities, and St. Ambrose explains the spiritual significance of his shorn locks.

1. Even in reading the first book of the ancient history it is made clear both that the sevenfold grace of the Spirit shone forth in the judges themselves of the Jews, and that the mysteries of the heavenly sacraments were made known by the Spirit, of Whose eternity Moses was not ignorant. Then, too, at the very beginning of the world, and indeed before its beginning, he conjoined Him with God, Whom he knew to be eternal before the beginning of the world. For if any one takes good heed he will recognize in the beginning both the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. For of the Father it is written: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."¹ Of the Spirit it is said: "The Spirit was borne upon the waters."² And well in the beginning of creation is there set

forth the figure of baptism whereby the creature had to be purified. And of the Son we read that He it is Who divided light from darkness, for there is one God the Father Who speaks, and one God the Son Who acts.

2. But, again, that you may not think that there was assumption in the bidding of Him Who spoke, or inferiority on the part of Him Who carried out the bidding, the Father' acknowledges the Son as equal to Himself in the execution of the work, saying: "Let Us make man after Our image and likeness."³ For the common image and the working and the likeness can signify nothing but the oneness of the same Majesty.

3. But that we may more fully recognize the equality of the Father and the Son, as the Father spoke, the Son made, so, too, the Father works and the Son speaks. The Father works, as it is written: "My Father worketh hitherto."⁴ You find it said to the Son: "Say the word and he shall be healed."⁵ And the Son says to the Father: "I will that where I am, they too shall be with Me."⁶ The Father did what the Son said.

4. But neither was Abraham ignorant of the Holy Spirit; he saw Three and worshipped One, for there is one God, one Lord, and one Spirit. And so there is a oneness of honour, because there is a oneness of power.

5. And why should I speak of all one by one? Samson, born by the divine promise, had the Spirit accompanying him, for we read: "The Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to be with him in the camp."⁷ And so foreshadowing the future mystery, he demanded a wife of the aliens, which, as it is written, his father and mother knew not of, because it was from the Lord. And rightly was he esteemed stronger than others, because the Spirit of the Lord guided him, under Whose guidance he alone put to flight the people of the aliens, and at another time inaccessible to the bite of the lion, he, unconquerable in his strength, tore him asunder with his hands. Would that he had been as careful to preserve grace, as strong to overcome the beast!

6. And perhaps this was not only a prodigy of valour, but also a mystery of wisdom, an utterance of prophecy. For it does not seem to have been without a purpose that, as he was going to his marriage, a roaring lion met him, which he tore asunder with his hands, in whose body, when about to enjoy the wished-for wedlock, he found a swarm of bees, and took honey from its mouth, which he gave to his father and mother to eat. The people of the Gentiles which believed had honey, the people which was before savage is now the people of Christ.

7. Nor is the riddle without mystery, which he set forth to his companions: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."⁸ And there was a mystery up to the point of the three days in which its answer was sought in vain, which could not be made known except by the faith of the Church, on the seventh day, the time of the Law being completed, after the Passion of the Lord. For thus you find that the apostles did not understand, "because Jesus was not yet glorified."⁹

8. "What," answer they, "is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?" To which he replied: "If ye had not farmed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle."¹⁰ O divine mystery! O manifest sacrament! we have escaped from the slayer, we have overcome the strong one. The food of life is now there, where before was the hunger of a miserable death. Dangers are changed into safety, bitterness into sweetness. Grace came forth from the offence, power from

weakness, and life from death.

9. There are, however, who think on the other hand that the wedlock could not have been established unless the lion of the tribe of Judah had been slain; and so in His body, that is, the Church, bees were found who store up the honey of wisdom, because after the Passion of the Lord the apostles believed more fully. This lion, then, Samson as a Jew slew, but in it he found honey, as in the figure of the heritage which was to be redeemed, that the remnant might be saved according to the election of grace.¹¹

10. "And the Spirit of the Lord," it is said, "came upon him, and he went down to Ascalon, and smote thirty men of them."¹² For he could not fail to carry off the victory who saw the mysteries. And so in the garments they receive the reward of wisdom, the badge of intercourse, who resolve and answer the riddle.

11. Here, again, other mysteries come up, in that his wife is taken away, and for this foxes set fire to the sheaves of the aliens. For their own cunning often deceives those who contend against divine mysteries. Wherefore it is said again in the Song of Songs: "Take us the little foxes which destroy the vineyards, that our vineyards may flourish."¹³ He said well "little," because the larger could not destroy the vineyards, though to the strong even the devil is weak.

12. So, then, he (to sum up the story briefly, for the consideration of the whole passage is reserved for its own season) was unconquered so long as he kept the grace of the Spirit, as was the people of God chosen by the Lord, that Nazarite under the Law. Samson, then, was unconquered, and so invincible as to be able to smite a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass;¹⁴ so full of heavenly grace that when thirsty he found even water in the jawbone of an ass, whether you consider this as a miracle, or turn it to a mystery, because in the humility of the people of the Gentiles there would be both rest and triumph according to that which is written: "He that smiteth thee on the cheek, turn to him also the other."¹⁵ For by this endurance of injuries, which the sacrament of baptism teaches, we triumph over the stings of auger, that having passed through death we may attain to the rest of the resurrection.

13. Is that, then, Samson who broke ropes twisted with thongs, and new cords like weak threads? Is that Samson who did not feel the bonds of his hair fastened to the beam, so long as he had the grace of the Spirit? He, I say, after the Spirit of God departed from him, was greatly changed from that Samson Who returned clothed in the spoils of the aliens, but fallen from his greatness on the knees of a woman, caressed and deceived, is shorn of his hair.¹⁶

14. Was, then, the hair of his head of such importance that, so long as it remained, his strength should endure unconquered, but when his head was shorn the man should suddenly lose all his strength? It is not so, nor may we think that the hair of his head has such power. There is the hair of religion and faith; the hair of the Nazarite perfect in the Law, consecrated in sparingness and abstinence, with which she (a type of the Church), who poured ointment on the feet of the Lord, wiped the feet of the heavenly Word, for then she knew Christ also after the flesh. That hair it is of which it is said: "Thy hair is as flocks of goats,"¹⁷ growing on that head of which it is said: "The head of the man is Christ,"¹⁸ and in another place: "His head is as fine gold, and his locks like black pine-trees."¹⁹

15. And so, also, in the Gospel our Lord, pointing out that some hairs are seen and known, says: "But even the hairs of your head are all numbered,"²⁰ implying, indeed, acts of spiritual virtues, for God does not take care for our hair. Though, indeed, it is not absurd to believe that literally, seeing that according to His divine Majesty nothing can be hidden from Him.

16. But what does it profit me, if God Himself knows all my hairs? That rather abounds and profits me, if the watchful witness of good works reward me with the gift of eternal life. And, in fine, Samson himself, declaring that these hairs are not mystical, says: "If I be shorn my strength will depart from me."²¹ So much concerning the mystery, let us now consider the order of the passage.

Chapter I. The Spirit is the Lord and Power; and in this is not inferior to the Father and the Son.

17. Above, you read that "the Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to go with him."²² Farther on it is said: "And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him."²³ Again he says: "If I be shaven, my strength will depart from me."²⁴ After he was shaven, see what the Scripture says: "The Lord," he says, "departed from him."²⁵

18. You see, then, that He Who went with him, Himself departed from him. The Same is, then, the Lord, Who is the Spirit of the Lord, that is, he called the Spirit of God, Lord, as also the Apostle says: "The Lord is the Spirit, now where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." You find, then, the Holy Spirit called the Lord; for the Holy Spirit and the Son are not one Person [unus] but one Substance [unum].

19. In this place he used the word Power, and implied the Spirit. For as the Father is Power, so, too, the Son is Power, and the Holy Spirit is Power. Of the Son you have read that Christ is "the Power of God and the Wisdom of God."²⁶ We read, too, that the Father is Power, as it is written: "Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power of God."²⁷ He certainly named the Father Power, at Whose right hand the Son sits, as you read: "The Lord said unto My Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand."²⁸ And the Lord Himself named the Holy Spirit Power, when He said: "Ye shall receive Power when the Holy Spirit cometh upon you."²⁹

Chapter II. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are One incounsel.

20. For the Spirit Himself is Power, as you read: "The Spirit of Counsel and of Power (or might)."³⁰ And as the Son is the Angel of great counsel, so, too, is the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Counsel, that you may know that the Counsel of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is One. Counsel, not concerning any doubtful matters, but concerning those foreknown and determined.

21. But that the Spirit is the Arbiter of the Divine Counsel, you may know even from this. For when above³¹ we showed that the Holy Spirit was the Lord of baptism, and read that baptism is the counsel of God, as you read, "But the Pharisees despised the counsel of God, not being baptized of Him,"³² it is quite clear that as there can be no baptism without the Spirit, so, too, the counsel of God is not without the Spirit.

22. And that we may know more completely that the Spirit is Power, we ought to know that He was promised when the Lord said: "I will pour out of ivy Spirit upon all flesh."³³ He, then, Who was promised to us is Himself Power, as in the Gospel the same Son of God declared when He said: "And I will send the promise of the Father upon you, but do you remain in the city until ye be

endued with power from on high."³⁴

23. And the Evangelist so far shows that the Spirit is Power, that St. Luke relates that He came down with great power, when he says: "And suddenly there was a sound from heaven, as though the Spirit were borne with great power."³⁵

24. But, again, that you may not suppose that this is to be referred to bodily things and perceptible to the senses, learn that the Spirit so descended as Christ is to descend, as you find: "They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and majesty."³⁶

25. For how should not the power and might be one, when the work is one, the judgment one, the temple one, the life-giving one, the sanctification one, and the kingdom also of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit one?

Chapter III. As to know the Father and the Son is life, so is it life to know the Holy Spirit; and therefore in the Godhead He is not to be separated from the Father.

26. Let them say, then, wherein they think that there is an unlikeness in the divine operation. Since as to know the Father and the Son is life, as the Lord Himself declared, saying: "This is life eternal to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent,"³⁷ so, too, to know the Holy Spirit is life. For the Lord said: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments, and I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but ye know Him, for He is with you, and in you."³⁸

27. So, then, the world had not eternal life, because it had not received the Spirit; for where the Spirit is, there is eternal life; for the Spirit Himself it is Who effects eternal life. Wherefore I wonder why the Arians stir the question as to the only true God. For as it is eternal life to know the only true God, so, too, is it eternal life to know Jesus Christ; so, again, it is eternal life to know the Holy Spirit, Whom, as also the Father, the world does not see, and, as also the Son, does not know. But he who is not of this world has eternal life, and the Spirit, Who is the Light of eternal life, remains with him for ever.

28. If the knowledge of the only true God confers the same benefit as the knowledge of the Son and of the Spirit, why do you sever the Son and the Spirit from the honour of the true God, when you do not sever Him from conferring the benefit? For of necessity you must either believe that this is the greatest gift of the only true Godhead, and will confess the only true Godhead as of the Father, so also of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; or if you say that he, too, can give life eternal who is not true God, it will happen that you derogate rather from the Father, Whose work you do not consider to be the chief work of the only true Godhead, but one to be compared to the work of a creature.

Chapter IV. The Holy Spirit gives life, not in a different way from the Father and the Son, nor by a different working.

29. And what wonder is it the Spirit works Life, Who quickens as does the Father and as does the Son? And who can deny that quickening is the work of the Eternal Majesty? For it is written: "Quicken Thy servant."³⁹ He, then, is quickened who is a servant, that is, man, who before had not life, but received the privilege of having it.

30. Let us then see whether the Spirit is quickened, or Himself quickens. Now it is written: "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."⁴⁰ So, then, the Spirit quickens.

31. But that you may understand that the quickening of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is no separate work, read how there is a oneness of quickening also, since God Himself quickens through the Spirit, for Paul said: "He Who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit Who dwelleth in you."

Chapter V. The Holy Spirit, as well as the Father and the Son, is pointed out in holy Scripture as Creator, and the same truth was shadowed forth even by heathen writers, but it was shown most plainly in the Mystery of the Incarnation, after touching upon which, the writer maintains his argument from the fact that worship which is due to the Creator alone is paid to the Holy Spirit.

32. But who can doubt that the Holy Spirit gives life to all things; since both He, as the Father and the Son, is the Creator of all things; and the Almighty Father is understood to have done nothing without the Holy Spirit; and since also in the beginning of the creation the Spirit moved upon the water.

33. So when the Spirit was moving upon the water, the creation was without grace; but after this world being created underwent the operation of the Spirit, it gained all the beauty of that grace, wherewith the world is illuminated. And that the grace of the universe cannot abide without the Holy Spirit the prophet declared when he said "Thou wilt take away Thy Spirit, and they will fail and be turned again into their dust. Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be made, and Thou wilt renew all the face of the earth."⁴¹ Not only, then, did he teach that no creature can stand without the Holy Spirit, but also that the Spirit is the Creator of the whole creation.

34. And who can deny that the creation of the earth is the work of the Holy Spirit, Whose work it is that it is renewed? For if they desire to deny that it was created by the Spirit, since they cannot deny that it must be renewed by the Spirit, they who desire to sever the Persons must maintain that the operation of the Holy Spirit is superior to that of the Father and the Son, which is far from the truth; for there is no doubt that the restored earth is better than it was created. Or if at first, without the operation of the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son made the earth, but the operation of the Holy Spirit was joined on afterwards, it will seem that that which was made required His aid, which was then added. But far be it from any one to think this, namely, that the divine work should be believed to have a change in the Creator, an error brought in by Manicheus.⁴²

35. But do we suppose that the substance of the earth exists without the operation of the Holy Spirit, without Whose work not even the expanse of the sky endures? For it is written: "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the strength of them by the Spirit of His Mouth."⁴³ Observe what he says, that all the strength of the heavens is to be referred to the Spirit. For how should He Who was moving⁴⁴ before the earth was made, be resting when it was being made?

36. Gentile writers, following ours as it were through shadows, because they could not imbibe the truth of the Spirit, have pointed out in their verses that the Spirit within nourishes heaven and earth, and the glittering orbs of moon and stars.⁴⁵ So they deny not that the strength of creatures exists through the Spirit, are we who read this to deny it? But you think that they refer to a Spirit produced of the air. If they declared a Spirit of the air to be the Author of all things, do we doubt

that the Spirit of God is the Creator of all things?

37. But why do I delay with matters not to the purpose? Let them accept a plain proof that there can be nothing which the Holy Spirit can be said not to have made; and that it cannot be doubted that all subsists through His operation, whether Angels, Archangels, Thrones, or Dominions; since the Lord Himself, Whom the Angels serve, was begotten by the Holy Spirit coming upon the Virgin, as, according to Matthew, the Angel said to Joseph: "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take Mary thy wife, for that which shall be born of her is of the Holy Spirit."⁴⁶ And according to Luke, he said to Mary: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee."⁴⁷

38. The birth from the Virgin was, then, the work of the Spirit. The fruit of the womb is the work of the Spirit, according to that which is written: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb."⁴⁸ The flower from the root is the work of the Spirit, that flower, I say, of which it was well prophesied: "A rod shall go forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise from his root."⁴⁹ The root of Jesse the patriarch is the family of the Jews, Mary is the rod, Christ the flower of Mary, Who, about to spread the good odour of faith throughout the whole world, budded forth from a virgin womb, as He Himself said: "I am the flower of the plain, a lily of the valley."⁵⁰

39. The flower, when cut, keeps its odour, and when bruised increases it, nor if torn off does it lose it; so, too, the Lord Jesus, on the gibbet of the cross, neither failed when bruised, nor fainted when torn; and when He was cut by that piercing of the spear, being made more beautiful by the colour of the outpoured Blood, He, as it were, grew comely again, not able in Himself to die, and breathing forth upon the dead the gift of eternal life. On this flower, then, of the royal rod the Holy Spirit rested.

40. A good rod, as some think, is the Flesh of the Lord, which, raising itself from its earthly root to heaven, bore around the whole world the sweet-smelling fruits of religion, the mysteries of the divine generation, pouring grace on the altars of heaven.

41. So, then, we cannot doubt that the Spirit is Creator, Whom we know as the Author of the Lord's Incarnation. For who can doubt when you find in the commencement of the Gospel that the generation of Jesus Christ was on this wise: "When Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of [ex] the Holy Spirit."⁵¹

42. For although most authorities read "de Spiritu," yet the Greek from which the Latins translated have "ex pneumatōi agiou," that is, "ex Spiritu Sancto." For that which is "of" [ex] any one is either of his substance or of his power. Of his substance, as the Son, Who says: "I came forth of the Mouth of the Most High;"⁵² as the Spirit, "Who proceedeth from the Father;"⁵³ of Whom the Son says: "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine."⁵⁴ But of the power, as in the passage: "One God the Father, of Whom are all things."⁵⁵

43. How, then, was Mary with child of the Holy Spirit? If as of her substance, was the Spirit, then, changed into flesh and bones? Certainly not. But if the Virgin conceived as of His operation and power, who can deny that the Holy Spirit is Creator?

44. How is it, too, that Job plainly set forth the Spirit as his Creator, saying: "The Spirit of God hath made me"?⁵⁶ In one short verse he showed Him to be both Divine and Creator. If, then, the Spirit is Creator, He is certainly not a creature, for the Apostle has separated the Creator and the

creature, saying: "They served the creature rather than the Creator."⁵⁷

45. He teaches that the Creator is to be served by condemning those who serve the creature, whereas we owe our service to the Creator. And since he knew the Spirit to be the Creator, he teaches that we ought to serve Him, saying: "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision, for we are the circumcision who serve the Spirit of God."⁵⁸

46. But if any one disputes because of the variations of the Latin codices, some of which heretics have falsified, let him look at the Greek codices, and observe that it is there written: "oi pneumatikoi latreuontes," which is, being translated, "who serve the Spirit of God."

47. So, then, when the same Apostle says that we ought to serve the Spirit, who asserts that we must not serve the creature, but the Creator; without doubt he plainly shows that the Holy Spirit is Creator, and is to be venerated with the honour due to the eternal Godhead; for it is written: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."⁵⁹

Chapter VI. To those who object that according to the words of Amos the Spirit is created, the answer is made that the word is there understood of the wind, which is often created, which cannot be said of the Holy Spirit, since He is eternal, and cannot be dissolved in death, or by an heretical absorption into the Father. But if they pertinaciously contend that this passage was written of the Holy Spirit, St. Ambrose points out that recourse must be had to a spiritual interpretation, for Christ by His coming established the thunder, that is, the force of the divine utterances, and by Spirit is signified the human soul as also the flesh assumed by Christ. And since this was created by each Person of the Trinity, it is thence argued that the Spirit, Who has before been affirmed to be the Creator of all things, was the Author of the Incarnation of the Lord.

48. Nor does it escape my notice that heretics have been wont to object that the Holy Spirit appears to be a creature, because many of them use as an argument for establishing their impiety that passage of Amos, where he spoke of the blowing of the wind, as the words of the prophet made clear. For you read thus: "Behold, I am He that establish the thunders, and create the wind [spirit],⁶⁰ and declare unto man his Christ, that make light and mist, and ascend upon high places, the Lord God Almighty is His Name."⁶¹

49. If they make an argument of this, that he said "spirit" was created, Esdras ought us that spirit is created, saying in the fourth book: "And upon the second day Thou madest the spirit of the firmament,"⁶² yet, that we may keep to our point, is it not evident that in what Amos said the order of the passage shows that the prophet was speaking of the creation of this world?

50. He begins as follows: "I am the Lord that establish the thunders and create the wind [spirit]." The order of the words itself teaches us; for if he had wished to speak of the Holy Spirit, he would certainly not have put the thunders in the first place. For thunder is not more ancient than the Holy Spirit; though they be ungodly, they still dare not say that. And then when we, see what follows concerning light and mist, is it not plain that what is said is to be understood of the creation of this world? For we know by every-day experience, that when we have storms on this earth, thunders come first, blasts of wind follow on, the sky grows black with mists, and light shines again out of the darkness. For the blasts of wind are also called "spirits," as it is written: "Fire and brimstone and the spirit of storm."⁶³

51. And that you might know that he called this "spirit," he says: "establishing thunders and creating the wind [spirit]." For these are often created, when they take place. But the Holy Spirit is eternal, and if any one dares to call Him a creature, still he cannot say that He is daily created like the blast of the wind. Then, again, Wisdom herself, speaking after the mystery of the assumed Body, says: "The Lord created Me."⁶⁴ Although prophesying of things to come, yet, because the coming of the Lord was predestined, it is not said "creates" but "created Me;" that men might believe that the Body of Jesus was begotten of the Virgin Mary, not often, but once only.

52. And so, as to that which the prophet declared as it were of the daily working of God in the thunder and the creation of the wind, it would be impious to understand any such thing of the Holy Spirit, Whom the ungodly themselves cannot deny to exist from before the world. Whence with pious asseveration we testify that He always exists, and abides ever. For neither can He Who before the world was moving upon the waters begin to be visible after the world's creation; or else it would be allowable to suppose that there are many Holy Spirits, Who come into being by as it were a daily production. Far be it from any one to pollute himself with such impiety as to say that the Holy Spirit is frequently or ever created. For I do not understand why He should be frequently created; unless perchance they believe that He dies frequently and so is frequently created. But how can the Spirit of life die? If, then, He cannot die, there is no reason why He should be often created.

53. But they who think otherwise fall into this sacrilege, that they do not distinguish the Holy Spirit; who think that the Word Which was sent forth returns to the Father, and the Spirit Which was sent forth is reabsorbed into God, so that there should be a reabsorption⁶⁵ and a kind of alternation of one changing himself into various forms; whereas the distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit always abiding and unchangeable, preserves the Unity of its power.

54. But if any one thinks that the word of the prophet is to be explained with reference to the Holy Spirit, because it is said, "declaring unto men His Christ,"⁶⁶ he will explain it more easily of the Lord's Incarnation. For if it troubles you that he said Spirit, and therefore you think that this cannot well be explained of the mystery of the taking of human nature, read on in the Scriptures and you will find that all agrees most excellently with Christ, of Whom it is thoroughly fitting to think that He established the thunders by His coming, that is, the force and sound of the heavenly Scriptures, by the thunder, as it were, of which our minds are struck with astonishment, so that we learn to be afraid, and pay respect to the heavenly oracles.

55. Lastly, in the Gospel the brothers of the Lord were called Sons of Thunder; and when the voice was uttered of the Father, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again,"⁶⁷ the Jews said that it thundered on Him. For although they could not receive the grace of the truth, yet they confessed unwillingly, and in their ignorance were speaking mysteries, so that there resulted a great testimony of the Father to the Son. And in the Book of Job, too, the Scripture says: "And who knows when He will make the power of His thunder?"⁶⁸ Certainly if these words pertained to the thunders of the heavens, he would have said that their force was already made, not about to be made.

56. Therefore he referred the thunders to the words of the Lord, the sound of which went out into all the earth, and we understand the word "spirit" in this place of the soul, which He took endowed with reason and perfect;⁶⁹ for Scripture often designates the soul of man by the word spirit, as you

read: "Who creates the spirit of man within him."70 So, too, the Lord signified His Soul by the word Spirit, when He said: "Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit."71

57. And that you might know that he spoke of the coming down of Jesus, he added that He declared His Christ to men for in His baptism He declared Him, saying: "Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."72 He declared Him on the mount, saying: "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him."73 He declared Him in His Passion, when the sun hid itself, and sea and earth trembled. He declared Him in the Centurion, who said: "Truly this was the Son of God."74

58. We ought, then, to take this whole passage either to be simply to be understood of that state in which we here live and breathe, or of the mystery of the Lord's Body; for if here it had been stated that the Holy Spirit was created, undoubtedly Scripture would elsewhere have declared the same, as we often read of the Son of God, Who according to the flesh was both made and created.

59. But it is fitting that we should consider His Majesty in the very fact of His taking flesh for us, that we may see His divine power in the very taking of the Body. For as we read that the Father created the mystery of the Lord's Incarnation, the Spirit too created it; and so too we read that Christ Himself created His own Body. For the Father created it, as it is written: "The Lord created Me,"75 and in another place, "God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."76 And the Spirit created the whole mystery, according to that which we read, for "Mary was found with child of the Holy Spirit."77

60. You find, then, that the Father created and the Spirit created; learn, too, that the Son of God also created, when Solomon says: "Wisdom hath made herself a house."78 How, then, can the Holy Spirit Who created the mystery of the Lord's Incarnation, which is above all created things, be Himself a creature?

61. As we have shown above79 generally that the Holy Spirit is our Creator according to the flesh in the outer man, let us now show that He is our Creator also according to the mystery of grace. And as the Father creates, so too does the Son create, and so too the Holy Spirit creates, as we read in the words of Paul: "For it is the gift of God, not of works, test any one should boast. For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus in good works."80

Chapter VII. The Holy Spirit is no less the author of spiritual creation or regeneration than the Father and the Son. The excellence of that creation, and wherein it consists. How we are to understand holy Scripture, when it attributes a body or members to God.

62. So, then, the Father creates in good works, and the Son also, for it is written: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on His Name; who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."81

63. In like manner the Lord Himself also testifies that we are born again of the Spirit according to grace, saying: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, because it is born of flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, because God is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again. The Spirit breatheth82 where He willeth, and thou hearest His voice, but knowest not whence He cometh or whither He goeth, so is every one who is born of the Spirit."

64. It is then clear that the Holy Spirit is also the Author of the grace of the Spirit, since we are created according to God, that we may be made the sons of God. So when He has taken us into His kingdom by the adoption of holy regeneration, do we deny Him that which is His? He has made us heirs of the new birth from above, do we claim the heritage and reject its Author? But the benefit cannot remain when its Author is shut out; the Author is not without the gift, nor the gift without the Author. If you claim the grace, believe the power; if you reject the power, do not ask for the grace. He who has denied the Spirit has at the same time denied the gift. For if the Author be of no account how can His gifts be precious? Why do we grudge the gifts we ourselves receive, diminish our hopes, repudiate our dignity, and deny our Comforter?

65. But we cannot deny Him. Far be it from us to deny that which is so great, since the Apostle says: "But ye brethren, like Isaac, are the children of promise, but as then, he that is born after the flesh persecutes him that is after the Spirit."⁸³ Again certainly is understood from what has gone before, is born after the Spirit. He then who is born after the Spirit is born after God. Now we are born again when we are renewed in our inward affections and lay aside the oldness or the outer man. And so the Apostle says again: "But be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man which is created according to God in truth and righteousness and holiness."⁸⁴ Let them hear how the Scripture has signified the unity of the divine operation. He who is renewed in the spirit of his mind has put on the new man, which is created according to God.

66. That more excellent regeneration is then the work of the Holy Spirit; and the Spirit is the Author of that new man which is created after the image of God, which no one will doubt to be better than this outer man of ours. Since the Apostle has pointed out that the one is heavenly, the other earthly, when he says: "As is the heavenly, such also are the heavenly."⁸⁵

67. Since, then, the grace of the Spirit makes that to be heavenly which it can create earthy, we ought to observe by reason though we be without instances. For in a certain place holy Job says: "As the Lord liveth, Who thus judgeth me, and the Almighty, Who hath brought my soul to bitterness (for the Spirit of God which is in my nostrils)."⁸⁶ He certainly did not here signify by His Spirit the vital breath and bodily breathing passages, but signifies the nostrils of the inner man within him, wherewith he gathered in the fragrance of eternal life, and drew in the grace of the heavenly ointment as with a kind of twofold sense.

68. For there are spiritual nostrils, as we read, which the spouse of the Word has, to whom it is said: "And the smell of thy nostrils;"⁸⁷ and in another place: "The Lord smelled a smell of sweetness."⁸⁸ There are, then, as it were, inward members of a man, whose hands are considered to be in action, his ears in hearing, his feet in a kind of progress in a good work. And so from what is done we gather as it were figures of the members, for it is not suitable for us to imagine anything in the inner man after a fleshly manner.

69. And there are some who suppose that God is fashioned after a bodily manner, when they read of His hand or finger, and they do not observe that these things are written not because of any fashion of a body, since in the Godhead are neither members nor parts, but are expressions of the oneness of the Godhead, that we may believe that it is impossible for either the Son or the Holy Spirit to be separated from God the Father; since the fulness of the Godhead dwells as it were bodily in the substance of the Trinity. For this reason, then, is the Son also called the Right Hand of the Father, as we read: "The Right Hand of the Lord hath done mighty things, the Right Hand of

the Lord hath exalted me."⁸⁹

Chapter VIII.

St. Ambrose examines and refutes the heretical argument that because God is said to be glorified in the Spirit, and not with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is therefore inferior to the Father. He shows that the particle in can be also used of the Son and even of the Father, and that on the other hand with may be said of creatures without any infringement on the prerogatives of the Godhead; and that in reality these prepositions simply imply the connection of the Three Divine Persons.

70. But what wonder is it if foolish men question about words, when they do so even about syllables? For some think that a distinction should be made and that God should be praised in the Spirit, but not with the Spirit, and consider that the greatness of the Godhead is to be estimated from one syllable or some custom, arguing that if they consider that God should be glorified in the Spirit, they point to some office of the Holy Spirit, but that if they say that God receives glory or power with the Spirit, they seem to imply some association and communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.⁷¹ But who can separate what is in- capable of separation? who can divide that association which Christ shows to be inseparable? "Go," says He, "baptize all nations in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."⁹⁰ Has He changed either a word or a syllable here concerning the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit? Certainly not. But He says, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The expression is the same for the Spirit as for the Father and for Himself. From which is inferred not any office of the Holy Spirit, but rather a sharing of honour or of working when we say "in the Spirit."

72. Consider, too, that this opinion of yours tends to the injury of the Father and the Son, for the latter did not say, "with the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," but in the Name, and yet not any office but the power of the Trinity is expressed in this syllable,

73. Lastly, that you may know that it is not a syllable which prejudices faith, but faith which commends a syllable, Paul also speaks in Christ. Christ is not less, because Paul spoke in Christ, as you find: "We speak before God in Christ."⁹¹ As, then, the Apostle says that we speak in Christ, so, too, is that which we speak in the Spirit; as the Apostle himself said: "No man saith Lord Jesus, except in the Holy Spirit."⁹² So, then, in this place not any subjection of the Holy Spirit, but a connection of grace is signified.

74. And that you may know that distinction does not depend upon a syllable, he says also in another place: "And these indeed were you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."⁹³ How many instances of this I can bring forward. For it is written: "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus,"⁹⁴ and elsewhere: "To those sanctified in Christ Jesus,"⁹⁵ and again: "That we might be the righteousness of God in Him,"⁹⁶ and in another place: "Should fall from the chastity which is in Christ Jesus."⁹⁷

75. But what am I doing? For while I say that like things are written of the Son as of the Spirit, I am rather leading on to this, not that because it is written of the Son, therefore it would appear to be reverently written of the Holy Spirit, but that because the same is written of the Spirit, therefore men allege that the Son's honour is lessened because of the Spirit. For say they, Is it written of God the Father?

76. But let them learn that it is also said of God the Father: "In the Lord I will praise the word;"⁹⁸ and elsewhere: "In God we will do mighty deeds;"⁹⁹ and "My remembrance shall be ever in Thee;"¹⁰⁰ and "In Thy Name will we rejoice;"¹⁰¹ and again in another place: "That his deeds may be manifested, that they are wrought in God;"¹⁰² and Paul: "In God Who created all things;"¹⁰³ and again: "Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus to the Church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ;"¹⁰⁴ and in the Gospel: "I in the Father and the Father in Me," and "the Father that dwelleth in Me."¹⁰⁵ It is also written: "He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord;"¹⁰⁶ and in another place: "Our life is hid with Christ in God."¹⁰⁷ Did he here ascribe more to the Son than to the Father in saying that we are with Christ in God? or does our state avail more than the grace of the Spirit, so that we can be with Christ and the Holy Spirit cannot? And when Christ wills to be with us, as He Himself said: "Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am,"¹⁰⁸ would He disdain to be with the Spirit? For it is written: "Ye coming together and my spirit with the power of the Lord Jesus."¹⁰⁹ Do we then come together in the power of the Lord, and dare to say that the Lord Jesus would not be willing to come together with the Spirit Who does not disdain to come together with us?

77. So the Apostle thinks that it makes no difference which particle you use. For each is a conjunctive particle, and conjunction does not cause separation, for if it divided it would not be called a conjunction.

78. What, then, moves you to say that to God the Father or to His Christ there is glory, life, greatness, or power, in the Holy Spirit, and to refuse to say with the Holy Spirit? Is it that you are afraid of seeming to join the Spirit with the Father and the Son? But hear what is written of the Spirit: "For the law of the Spirit is life in Christ Jesus."¹¹⁰ And in another place God the Father says: "They shall worship Thee, and in Thee they shall make supplication."¹¹¹ God the Father says that we ought to pray in Christ; and do you think that it is any derogation to the Spirit if the glory of Christ is said to be in Him?

79. Hear that what you are afraid to acknowledge of the Spirit, the Apostle did not fear to claim for himself; for he says: "To be dissolved and to be with Christ is much better."¹¹² Do you deny that the Spirit, through Whom the Apostle was made worthy of being with Christ, is with Christ?

80. What, then, is the reason that you prefer saying that God or Christ is glorified in the Spirit rather than with the Spirit? Is it because if you say in the Spirit, the Spirit is declared to be less than Christ? Although your making the Lord greater or less is a matter which can be refuted, yet since we read, "For Christ was made sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in Him,"¹¹³ He is found chiefest in Whom we are found most low. So, too, elsewhere you read, "For in Him all things consist,"¹¹⁴ that is, in His power. And the things which consist in Him cannot be compared to Him, because they receive from His power the substance whereby they consist.

81. Do you then understand that God so reigns in the Spirit that the power of the Spirit, as a kind of source of substance, imparts to God the origin of His rule? But this is impious. And so our predecessors¹¹⁵ spoke of the unity of power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, when they said that the glory of Christ was with the Spirit, that they might declare their inseparable connection.

82. For how is the Holy Spirit separated from the Son, since "the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are sons of God, and if sons, also heirs, heirs, indeed, of God and joint-heirs with Christ."¹¹⁶ Who, then, is so foolish as to wish to dis sever the eternal conjunction of the Spirit and Christ, when the Spirit by Whom we are made joint-heirs with Christ conjoins even what is severed.

83. "If so be," he says, "we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."¹¹⁷ If we then shall be glorified together with Christ through the Spirit, how do we refuse to admit that the Spirit Himself is glorified together with Christ? Do we dissociate the life of Christ and of the Holy Spirit when the Spirit says that we shall live together with the Son of God? For the Apostle says: "If we be dead with Christ we believe that we shall also live with Him;" and then again: "For if we suffer with Him we shall also live with Him, and not only shall we live with Him, but shall be also glorified with Him, and not only be glorified but shall also reign with Him."¹¹⁸

84. No division, then, is implied in those particles, for each is a particle of conjunction. And lastly, we often find in holy Scripture the one inserted and the other understood, as it is written: "I will enter into Thy house in whole burnt-offerings,"¹¹⁹ that is, "with whole burnt-offerings;" and in another place: "He brought them forth in silver and gold,"¹²⁰ that is, "with silver and gold." And elsewhere the Psalmist says: "Wilt Thou not go forth with us in our hosts?"¹²¹ for that which is really meant, "with our hosts." So, then, in the use of the expression no lessening of honour can be implied, and nothing ought to be deduced derogatory to the honour of the Godhead, it is necessary that with the heart man should believe unto righteousness, and that out of the faith of the heart confession should be made in the mouth unto salvation. But they who believe not with the heart spread what is derogatory with their mouth.

Chapter IX. A passage of St. Paul abused by heretics, to prove a distinction between the Divine Persons, is explained, and it is proved that the whole passage can be rightly said of each Person, though it refers specially to the Son. It is then proved that each member of the passage is applicable to each Person, and as to say, of Him are all things is applicable to the Father, so may all things are through Him and in Him also be said of Him.

85. Another similar passage is that which they say implies difference, where it is written: "But to us there is one Father, of Whom are all things and we unto Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things, and we through Him."¹²² For they pretend that when it is said "of Him," the matter is signified, when "through Him," either the instrument of the work or some office, but when it is said "in Him," either the place or the time in which all things that are made are seen.

86. So, then, their desire is to prove that there is some difference of substance, being anxious to make a distinction between as it were the instrument, and the proper worker or author, and also between time or place and the instrument. But is the Son, then, alien as regards His Nature from the Father, because an instrument is alien from the worker or author? or is the Son alien from the Spirit, because either time or place is not of the same class as an instrument?

87. Compare now our assertions. They will have it that matter is of God as though of the nature of God, as when you say that a chest is made of wood or a statue of stone; that after this fashion matter has come forth from God, and that the same matter has been made by the Son as if by some sort of instrument; so that they declare that the Son is not so much the Artificer as the

instrument of the work; and that all things have been made in the Spirit, as if in some place or time; they attribute each part severally to each Person severally and deny that all are in common.

88. But we show that all things are so of God the Father, that God the Father has suffered no loss because all things are either through Him or in Him, and yet all things are not of Him as if of matter; then, too, that all things are through the Lord the Son, so that He is not deprived of the attribute that all things are of the Son and in Him; and that all things are in the Spirit, so that we may teach that all things are through the Spirit, and all things from the Spirit.

89. For these particles, like those of which we have spoken before, imply each other. For the Apostle did not so say, All things are of God, and all things are through the Son, as to signify that the substance of the Father and the Son could be severed, but that he might teach that by a distinction without confusion the Father is one, the Son another. Those particles, then, are not as it were in opposition to each other, but are as it were allied and agreed, so as often to suit even one Person, as it is written: "For of Him, and through Him, and in Him are all things."¹²³

90. But if you really consider whence the passage is taken you will have no doubt that it is said of the Son. For the Apostle says, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?"¹²⁴ And he adds: "For of Him and in Him are all things." Which Isaiah had said of the Artificer of all, as you read: "Who hath measured out the water with his hand, and the heaven with a span, and all the earth with his closed hand? Who hath placed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?"¹²⁵

91. And the Apostle added: "For of Him, and through Him, and in Him are all things." What is "of Him"? That the nature of everything is of His will, and He is the Author of all things which have come into being. "Through Him" means what? That the establishment and continuance of all things is His gift. What is "in Him"? That all things by a wonderful kind of longing and unspeakable love look upon the Author of their life, and the Giver of their graces and functions, according to that which is written: "The eyes of all look unto Thee," and "Thou openest Thine hand and fillest every living creature with Thy good pleasure."¹²⁶

92. And of the Father, too, you may rightly say "of Him," for of Him was the operative Wisdom, Which of His own and the Father's will gave being to all things which were not. "Through Him," because all things were made through His Wisdom. "In Him," because He is the Fount of substantial Life, in Whom we live and move and have our being.

93. Of the Spirit also, as being formed by Him, strengthened by Him, established in Him, we receive the gift of eternal life.

94. Since, then, these expressions seem suitable either to the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit, it is certain that nothing derogatory is spoken of in them, since we both say that many things are of the Son, and many through the Father, as you find it said of the Son: "That we may be increased through all things in Him, Who is Christ the Head, from Whom," says he, "the whole body, flamed and knit together through every joint of the supply for the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."¹²⁷ And again, writing to the Colossians of those who have not the knowledge of the Son of God, he says: "Because they hold not the Head, from Whom all the body being supplied and joined together through joints and bands, increaseth to the

increase of God."128 For we said above that Christ is the Head of the Church. And in another place you read: "Of His fulness have all we received."129 And the Lord Himself said: "He shall take of Mine and show it unto you."130 And before, He said: "I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me."131

95. In like manner that you may recognize the Unity, it is also said of the Spirit: "For he that soweth in the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life."132 And John says: "Hereby we know that He is in us because He hath given us of His Spirit."133 And the Angel says: "That Which shall be born of her is of the Holy Spirit."134 And the Lord says: "That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit."135

96. So, then, as we read that all things are of the Father, so, too, that all things can be said to be of the Son, through Whom are all things; and we are taught by proof that all things are of the Spirit in Whom are all things.

97. Now let us consider whether we can teach that anything is through the Father. But it is written: "Paul the servant of Christ through the will of God;"136 and elsewhere: "Wherefore thou art now not a servant but a son, and if a son an heir also through God;"137 and again: "As Christ rose from the dead by the glory of God."138 And elsewhere God the Father says to the Son: "Behold proselytes shall come to Thee through Me."139

98. You will find many other passages, if you look for things done through the Father. Is, then, the Father less because we read that many things are in the Son and of the Son, and find in the heavenly Scriptures very many things done or given through the Father?

99. But in like manner we also read of many things done through the Spirit, as you find: "But God hath revealed them to us through His Spirit;"140 and in another place: "Keep the good deposit through the Holy Spirit;"141 and to the Ephesians: "to be strengthened through His Spirit;"142 and to the Corinthians: "To another is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom;"143 and in another place: "But if through the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live;"144 and above: "He Who raised Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies through the indwelling of His Spirit in you."145

100. But perhaps some one may say, Show me that we can read expressly that all things are of the Son, or that all things are of the Spirit. But I reply, Let them also show that it is written that all things are through the Father. But since we have proved that these expressions suit either the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit, and that no distinction of the divine power can arise from particles of this kind, there is no doubt but that all things are of Him through Whom all things are; and that all things are through Him through Whom all are; and that we must understand that all things are through Him or of Him in Whom all are. For every creature exists both of the will. and through the operation and in the power of the Trinity, as it is written: "Let Us make man after Our image and likeness;"146 and elsewhere: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all their power by the Spirit of His mouth."147

Chapter X. Being about to prove that the will, the calling, and the commandment of the Trinity is one, St. Ambrose shows that the Spirit called the Church exactly as the Father and the Son did, and proves this by the selection of SS. Paul and Barnabas, and especially by the mission of St. Peter to Cornelius. And by the way he points out how in the Apostle's vision the calling of the Gentiles was shadowed forth, who having been before like wild beasts, now by the operation of

the Spirit lay aside that wildness. Then having quoted other passages in support of this view, he shows that in the case of Jeremiah cast into a pit by Jews, and rescued by Abdemelech, is a type of the slighting of the Holy Spirit by the Jews, and of His being honoured by the Gentiles.

101. And not only is the operation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit everywhere one but also there is one and the same will, calling, and giving of commands, which one may see in the great and saving mystery of the Church. For as the Father called the Gentiles to the Church, saying: "I will call her My people which was not My people, and her beloved who was not beloved;"¹⁴⁸ and elsewhere: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations,"¹⁴⁹ so, too, the Lord Jesus said that Paul was chosen by Him to call forth and gather together the Church, as you find it said by the Lord Jesus to Ananias: "Go, for he is a chosen vessel unto Me to bear My name before all nations."¹⁵⁰

102. As, then, God the Father called the Church, so, too, Christ called it, and so, too, the Spirit called it, saying: "Separate Me Paul and Barnabas for the work to which I have called them." "So," it is added, "having fasted and prayed, they laid hands on them and sent them forth. And they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia."¹⁵¹ So Paul received the apostleship by the will not only of Christ, but also of the Holy Spirit, and hastened to gather together the Gentiles.

103. And not only Paul, but also, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, Peter. For when he had seen in his prayer heaven opened and a certain vessel tied at the four corners, as it were a sheet in which were all kinds of four-footed beasts and wild beasts and fowls of the air, "a voice came to him saying, Arise, Peter, kill and eat. And Peter said, Be it far from me, Lord, I have never eaten anything common or unclean. And again a voice came to him, saying, What God hath cleansed call not thou common. And this was done three times, and the vessel was received back into heaven."¹⁵² And so when Peter was silently thinking over this with himself, and the servants of Cornelius appointed by the Angel had come to him, the Spirit said to him, "Lo, men are seeking thee, rise therefore, and go down and go with them; doubt not, for I have sent thee."¹⁵³

104. How clearly did the Holy Spirit express His own power ! First of all in that He inspired him who was praying, and was present to him who was entreating; then when Peter, being called, answered "Lord," and so was found worthy of a second message, because he acknowledged the Lord. But the Scripture declares Who that Lord was, for He Whom he had answered spoke to him when he answered. And the following words show the Spirit clearly revealed, for He Who formed the mystery made known the mystery.

105. Notice, also, that the appearance of the mystery three times repeated expressed the operation of the Trinity. And so in the mysteries¹⁵⁴ the threefold question is put, and the threefold answer made, and no one can be cleansed but by a threefold confession. For which reason, also, Peter in the Gospel is asked three times whether he loves the Lord, that by the threefold answer the bonds of the guilt he had contracted by denying the Lord might be loosed.

106. Then, again, because the Angel is sent to Cornelius, the Holy Spirit speaks to Peter: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the faithful of the earth."¹⁵⁵ Nor is it without a purpose that when He had said before, "What God hath cleansed call not thou common,"¹⁵⁶ the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles to purify them, when it is manifest that the operation of the Spirit is a divine operation. But

Peter, when sent by the Spirit, did not wait for the command of God the Father, but acknowledged that that message was from the Spirit Himself, and the grace that of the Spirit Himself, when he said: "If, then, God has granted them the same grace as to us, who was I that I should resist God?"

107. It is, then, the Holy Spirit Who has delivered us from that Gentile impurity. For in those kinds of four-footed creatures and wild beasts and birds there was a figure of the condition of man, which appears clothed with the bestial ferocity of wild beasts unless it grows gentle by the sanctification of the Spirit. Excellent, then, is that grace which changes the rage of beasts into the simplicity of the Spirit: "For we also were aforetime foolish, unbelieving, erring, serving divers lusts and pleasures. But now by the renewing of the Spirit we begin to be heirs of Christ, and joint-heirs with the Angels."¹⁵⁷

108. Therefore the holy prophet David, seeing in the Spirit that we should from wild beasts become like the dwellers in heaven, says, "Rebuke the wild beasts of the wood,"¹⁵⁸ evidently signifying, not the wood disturbed by the running of wild beasts, and shaken with the roaring of animals, but that wood of which it is written: "We found it in the fields of the wood."¹⁵⁹ In which, as the prophet said: "The righteous shall flourish as the palm-tree, and shall be multiplied as the cedar which is in Libanus."¹⁶⁰ That wood which, shaken in the tops of the trees spoken of in prophecy, shed forth the nourishment of the heavenly Word. That wood into which Paul entered indeed as a ravaging wolf, but went forth as a shepherd, for "their sound is gone out into all the earth."¹⁶¹

109. We then were wild beasts, and therefore the Lord said: "Beware of false prophets, which come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravaging wolves."¹⁶² But now, through the Holy Spirit, the rage of lions, the spots of leopards, the craft of foxes, the rapacity of wolves, have passed away from our feelings; great, then, is the grace which has changed earth to heaven, that the conversation of us, who once were wandering as wild beasts in the woods, might be in heaven.¹⁶³

110. And not only in this place, but also elsewhere in the same book, the Apostle Peter declared that the Church was built by the Holy Spirit. For you read that he said: "God, Which knoweth the hearts of men, bare witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as also to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."¹⁶⁴ In which is to be considered, that as Christ is the Cornerstone, Who joined together both peoples into one, so, too, the Holy Spirit made no distinction between the hearts of each people, but united them.

111. Do not, then, like a Jew, despise the Son, Whom the prophets foretold; for you would despise also the Holy Spirit, you would despise Isaiah, you would despise Jeremiah, whom he who was chosen of the Lord raised with rags and cords from the pit of that Jewish abode.¹⁶⁵ For the people of the Jews, despising the word of prophecy, had cast him into the pit. Nor was there found any one of the Jews to draw the prophet out, but one Ethiopian Abdemelech, as the Scripture testifies.

112. In which account is a very beautiful figure, that is to say, that we, sinners of the Gentiles, black beforehand through our transgressions, and aforetime fruitless, raised from the depth the word of prophecy which the Jews had thrust down, as it were, into the mire of their mind and carnality. And therefore it is written: "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand unto God."¹⁶⁶ In which is signified the appearance of holy Church, who says in the Song of Songs: "I am black and comely,

O daughters of Jerusalem;"¹⁶⁷ black through sin, comely through grace; black by natural condition, comely through redemption, or certainly, black with the dust of her labours. So she is black while fighting, is comely when she is crowned with the ornaments of victory.

113. And fittingly is the prophet raised by cords, for the faithful writer said: "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places."¹⁶⁸ And fittingly with rags; for the Lord Himself, when those who had been first invited to the marriage made excuse, sent to the partings of the highways, that as many as were found, both bad and good, should be invited to the marriage. With these rags, then, He lifted the word of prophecy from the mire.

Chapter XI.

We shall follow the example of Abdemelech, if we believe that the Son and Holy Spirit know all things. This knowledge is attributed in Scripture to the Spirit, and also to the Son. The Son is glorified by the Spirit, as also the Spirit by the Son. Also, inasmuch as we read that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit say and reveal the same things, we must acknowledge in Them a oneness of nature and knowledge. Lastly, that the Spirit searcheth the deep things of God is not a mark of ignorance, since the Father and the Son are likewise said to search, and Paul, although chosen by Christ, yet was taught by the Spirit.

114. And you, too, shall be Abdemelech,¹⁶⁹ that is, chosen by the Lord, if you raise the Word of God from the depth of Gentile ignorance; if you believe that the Son of God is not deceived, that nothing escapes His knowledge, that He is not ignorant of what is going to be. And the Holy Spirit also is not deceived, of Whom the Lord says: "But when He, the Spirit of Truth, shall come, He shall lead you into all truth."¹⁷⁰ He Who says all passes by nothing, neither the day nor the hour, neither things past nor things to come.

115. And that you may know that He both knows all things, and foretells things to come, and that His knowledge is one with that of the Father and the Son, hear what the Truth of God says concerning Him: "For He shall not speak from Himself, but what things He shall hear shall He speak, and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come."¹⁷¹

116. Therefore, that you may observe that He knows all things, when the Son said: "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the Angels of heaven,"¹⁷² He excepted the Holy Spirit. But if the Holy Spirit is excepted from ignorance, how is the Son of God not excepted?

117. But you say that He numbered the Son of God also with the Angels. He numbered the Son indeed, but He did not number the Spirit also. Confess, then, either that the Holy Spirit is greater than the Son of God, so as to speak now not only as an Arian, but even as a Photinian,¹⁷³ or acknowledge to what you ought to refer it that He said that the Son knew not. For as man He could [in His human nature] be numbered with creatures Who were created.

118. But if you are willing to learn that the Son of God knows all things, and has foreknowledge of all, see that those very things which you think to be unknown to the Son, the Holy Spirit received from the Son. He received them, however, through Unity of Substance, as the Son received from the Father. "He," says He, "shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine, therefore said I, He shall receive of Mine, and shall declare it unto you."¹⁷⁴ What, then, is more clear than this Unity? What things the Father

hath pertain to the Son; what things the Son hath the Holy Spirit also has received.

119. Yet learn that the Son knows the day of judgment. We read in Zechariah: "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Him. In that day there shall not be light, but cold and frost, and it shall be one day, and that day is known unto the Lord."¹⁷⁵ This day, then, was known unto the Lord, Who shall come with His saints, to enlighten us by His second Advent.

120. But let us continue the point which we have commenced concerning the Spirit. For in the passage we have brought forward you find that the Son says of the Spirit: "He shall glorify Me." So, then, the Spirit glorifies the Son, as the Father also glorifies Him, but the Son of God also glorifies the Spirit, as we said above. He, then, is not weak who is the cause of the mutual glory through the Unity of the Eternal Light, nor is He inferior to the Spirit, of Whom this is true that He is glorified by the Spirit.

122. And you too shall be chosen, if you believe that the Spirit spoke that which the Father spoke, and which the Son spoke. Paul, in fine, was therefore chosen because he so believed and so taught, since, as it is written, God "hath revealed to us by His Spirit that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."¹⁷⁶ And therefore is He called the Spirit of revelation, as you read: "For God giveth to those who thus prepare themselves the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that He may be known."¹⁷⁷

123. There is, then, a Unity of knowledge, since, as the Father, Who gives the Spirit of revelation, reveals, so also the Son reveals, for it is written: "No one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any one know the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son shall will to reveal Him."¹⁷⁸ He said more concerning the Son, not because He has more than the Father, but lest He should be supposed to have less. And not unfittingly is the Father thus revealed by the Son, for the Son knows the Father even as the Father knows the Son.

124. Learn now that the Spirit too knows God the Father, for it is written that, "As no one knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit which is in him, so too the things of God no one knoweth save the Spirit of God." "No one," he says, "knoweth save the Spirit of God."¹⁷⁹ Is, then, the Son of God excluded? Certainly not, since neither is the Spirit excluded, when it is said: "And none knoweth the Father, save the Son."

125. Therefore the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are of one nature and of one knowledge. And the Spirit is not to be numbered with all things which were made by the Son, since He knew the Father, Whom (as it is written) who can know save the Son? But the Holy Spirit knows also. What then? When the totality of created things is spoken of, it follows that the Holy Spirit is not included.

126. Now I should like them to answer what it is in man which knows the things of a man. Certainly that must be reasonable which surpasses the other powers of the soul, and by which the highest nature of man is estimated. What, then, is the Spirit, Who knows the deep things of God, and through Whom Almighty God is revealed? Is He inferior in the fulness of the Godhead Who is proved even by this instance to be of one substance with the Father? Or is He ignorant of anything Who knows the counsels of God, and His mysteries which have been hidden¹⁸⁰ from the beginning? What is there that He knows not Who knows all things that are of God? For "the Spirit searcheth even the deep things of God."¹⁸¹

127. But lest you should think that He searches things unknown, and so searches that He may learn that which He knows not, it is stated first that God revealed them to us through His Spirit, and at the same time in order that you may learn that the Spirit knows the things which are revealed to us through the Spirit Himself, it is said subsequently: "For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him? so, too, the things of God knoweth no one save the Spirit of God."¹⁸² If, then, the spirit of a man knows the things of a man, and knows them before it searches, can there be anything of God which the Spirit of God knows not? Of Whom the Apostle said not without a purpose, "The things of God knoweth no one, save the Spirit of God;" not that He knows by searching, but knows by nature; not that the knowledge of divine things is an accident in Him, but is His natural knowledge.

128. But if this moves you that He said "searcheth," learn that this is also said of God, inasmuch as He is the searcher of hearts and reins. For Himself said: "I am He that searcheth the heart and reins."¹⁸³ And of the Son of God you have also in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Who is the Searcher of the mind and thoughts."¹⁸⁴ Whence it is clear that no inferior searches the inward things of his superior, for to know hidden things is of the divine power alone. The Holy Spirit, then, is a searcher in like manner as the Father, and the Son is a searcher in like manner, by the proper signification of which expression this is implied, that evidently there is nothing which He knows not, Whom nothing escapes.

129. Lastly, he was chosen by Christ, and taught by the Spirit. For as he himself witnesses, having obtained through the Spirit knowledge of the divine secrets, he shows both that the Holy Spirit knows God, and has revealed to us the things which are of God, as the Son also has revealed them. And he adds: "But we received, not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are given to us by God, which we also speak, not in persuasive words of man's wisdom, but in manifestation of the Spirit and in the power of God."¹⁸⁵

Chapter XII.

After proof that the Spirit is the Giver of revelation equally with the Father and the Son, it is explained how the same Spirit does not speak of Himself; and it is shown that no bodily organs are to be thought of in Him, and that no inferiority is to be supposed from the fact of our reading that He hears, since the same would have to be attributed to the Son, and indeed even to the Father, since He hears the Son. The Spirit then hears and glorifies the Son in the sense that He revealed Him to the prophets and apostles, by which the Unity of operation of the Three Persons is inferred; and, since the Spirit does the same works as the Father, the substance of each is also declared to be the same.

130. It has then been proved that like as God has revealed to us the things which are His, so too the Son, and so too the Spirit, has revealed the things of God. For our knowledge proceeds from one Spirit, through one Son to one Father; and from one Father through one Son to one Holy Spirit is delivered goodness and sanctification and the sovereign right of eternal power. Where, then, there is a manifestation of the Spirit, there is the power of God, nor can there be any distinction where the work is one. And therefore that which the Son says the Father also says, and that which the Father says the Son also says, and that which the Father and the Son say the Holy Spirit also says.

131. Whence also the Son of God said concerning the Holy Spirit: "He shall not speak from Himself,"¹⁸⁶ that is, not without the participation of the Father and Myself. For the Spirit is not divided and separated, but speaks what He hears. He hears, that is to say, by unity of substance and by the property of knowledge. For He receives not hearing by any orifices of the body, nor does the divine voice resound with any carnal measures, nor does He hear what He knows not; since commonly in human matters hearing produces knowledge, and yet not even in men themselves is there always bodily speech or fleshly hearing. For "he that speaketh in tongues," it is said, "speaketh not to men but to God, for no one heareth, but in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries."¹⁸⁷

132. Therefore if in men hearing is not always of the body, do you require in God the voices of man's weakness, and certain organs of fleshly hearing, when He is said to hear in order that we may believe that He knows? For we know that which we have heard, and we hear beforehand that we may be able to know; but in God Who knows all things knowledge goes before hearing. So in order to state that the Son is not ignorant of what the Father wills, we say that He has heard; but in God there is no sound nor syllable, such as usually signify the indication of the will; but oneness of will is comprehended in hidden ways in God, but in us is shown by signs.

133. What means, then, "He shall not speak from Himself"? This is, He shall not speak without Me; for He speaks the truth, He breathes wisdom. He speaks not without the Father, for He is the Spirit of God; He hears not from Himself, for all things are of God.

134. The Son received all things from the Father, for He Himself said: "All things have been delivered unto Me from My Father."¹⁸⁸ All that is the Father's the Son also has, for He says again: "All things which the Father hath are Mine."¹⁸⁹ And those things which He Himself received by Unity of nature, the Spirit by the same Unity of nature received also from Him, as the Lord Jesus Himself declares, when speaking of His Spirit: "Therefore said I, He shall receive of Mine and shall declare it unto you."¹⁹⁰ Therefore what the Spirit says is the Son's, what the Son hath given is the Father's. So neither the Son nor the Spirit speaks anything of Himself. For the Trinity speaks nothing external to Itself.

135. But if you contend that this is an argument for the weakness of the Holy Spirit, and for a kind of likeness to the lowliness of the body, you will also make it an argument to the injury of the Son, because the Son said of Himself: "As I hear I judge,"¹⁹¹ and "The Son can do nothing else than what He seeth the Father doing."¹⁹² For if that be true, as it is, which the Son said: "All things which the Father hath are Mine,"¹⁹³ and the Son according to the Godhead is One with the Father, One by natural substance, not according to the Sabellian¹⁹⁴ falsehood; that which is one by the property of substance certainly cannot be separated, and so the Son cannot do anything except what He has heard of the Father, for the Word of God endures forever,¹⁹⁵ nor is the Father ever separated from the operation of the Son; and that which the Son works He knows that the Father wills, and what the Father wills the Son knows how to work.

136. Lastly, that one may not think that there is any difference of work either in time or in order between the Father and the Son, but may believe the oneness of the same operation, He says: "The works which I do He doeth."¹⁹⁶ And again, that one may not think that there is any difference in the distinction of the works, but may judge that the will, the working, and the power of the Father and the Son are the same, Wisdom says concerning the Father: "For whatsoever things He doeth,

the Son likewise doeth the same."¹⁹⁷ So that the action of neither Person is before or after that of the Other, but the same result of one operation. And for this reason the Son says that He can do nothing of Himself, because His operation cannot be separated from that of the Father. In like manner the operation of the Holy Spirit is not separated. Whence also the things which He speaks, He is said to hear from the Father.

137. What if I demonstrate that the Father also hears the Son, as the Son too hears the Father? For you have it written in the Gospel that the Son says: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest Me."¹⁹⁸ How did the Father hear the Son, since in the previous passage concerning Lazarus the Son spoke nothing to the Father? And that we might not think that the Son was heard once by the Father, He added: "And I knew that Thou hearest Me always."¹⁹⁹ Therefore the hearing is not that of subject obedience, but of eternal Unity.

138. In like manner, then, the Spirit is said to hear from the Father, and to glorify the Son. To glorify, because the Holy Spirit taught us that the Son is the Image of the invisible God,²⁰⁰ and the brightness of His glory, and the impress of His substance.²⁰¹ The Spirit also spoke in the patriarchs and the prophets, and, lastly, the apostles began then to be more perfect after that they had received the Holy Spirit. There is therefore no separation of the divine power and grace, for although "there are diversities of gifts, yet it is the same Spirit; and diversities of ministrations, yet the same Lord; and diversities of operations, yet the same God Who worketh all in all."²⁰² There are diversities of offices, not severances of the Trinity.

139. Lastly, it is the same God Who worketh all in all, that you may know that there is no diversity of operation between God the Father and the Holy Spirit; since those things which the Spirit works, God the Father also works, "Who worketh all in all." For while God the Father worketh all in all, yet "to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit; to another the gift of healings, in the one Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of sayings; but all these worketh one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one as He will."²⁰³

140. There is then no doubt but that those things which the Father worketh, the Spirit worketh also. Nor does He work in accordance with a command, as he who hears in bodily fashion, but voluntarily, as being free in His own will, not the servant of the power of another. For He does not obey as being bidden, but as the giver He is the controller of His own gifts.

141. Consider meanwhile whether you can say that the Spirit effects all things which the Father effects; for you cannot deny that the Father effects those things which the Holy Spirit effects; otherwise the Father does not effect all things, if He effects not those things which the Spirit also effects. But if the Father also effects those things which the Spirit effects, since the Spirit divides His operations, according to His own will, you must of necessity say, either that what the Spirit divides He divides according to His own will, against the will of God the Father; or if you say that the Father wills the same that the Holy Spirit wills, you must of necessity confess the oneness of the divine will and operation, even if you do it unwillingly, and, if not with the heart, at least with the mouth.

142. But if the Holy Spirit is of one will and operation with God the Father, He is also of one substance, since the Creator is known by His works. So, then, it is the same Spirit, he says, the same Lord, the same God.²⁰⁴ And if you say Spirit. He is the same; and if you say Lord, He is the same; and if you say God, He is the same. Not the same, so that Himself is Father, Himself Son, Himself Spirit [one and the selfsame Person]; but because both the Father and the Son are the same Power. He is, then, the same in substance and in power, for there is not in the Godhead either the confusion of Sabellius nor the division of Arius, nor any earthly and bodily change.

Chapter XIII.

Prophecy was not only from the Father and the Son but also from the Spirit; the authority and operation of the latter on the apostles is signified to be the same as Theirs; and so we are to understand that there is unity in the three points of authority, rule, and bounty; yet need no disadvantage be feared from that participation, since such does not arise in human friendship. Lastly, it is established that this is the inheritance of the apostolic faith from the fact that the apostles are described as having obeyed the Holy Spirit.

143. Take, O sacred Emperor, another strong instance in this question, and one known to you: "In many ways and in divers manners, God spake to the fathers in the prophets."²⁰⁵ And the Wisdom of God said: "I will send prophets and apostles."²⁰⁶ And "To one is given," as it is written, "through the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit; to another, the gift of healings, in the one Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy."²⁰⁷ Therefore, according to the Apostle, prophecy is not only through the Father and the Son, but also through the Holy Spirit, and therefore the office is one, and the grace one. So you find that the Spirit also is the author of prophecies.

144. The apostles also said: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."²⁰⁸ And when they say, "It seemed good," they point out not only the Worker of the grace, but also the Author of the carrying out of that which was commanded. For as we read of God: "It pleased God;" so, too, when it is said that, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit," one who is master of his own power is portrayed.

145. And how should He not be a master Who speaks what He wills, and commands what He wills, as the Father commands and the Son commands? For as Paul heard the voice saying to him, "I am Jesus, Whom thou persecutest,"²⁰⁹ so, too, the Spirit forbade Paul and Silas to go into Bithynia. And as the Father spake through the prophets, so, too, Agabus says concerning the Spirit: "Thus saith the Holy Spirit, Thus shall the Jews in Jerusalem bind the man, whose is this girdle."²¹⁰ And as Wisdom sent the apostles, saying, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel,"²¹¹ so, too, the Holy Spirit says: "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."²¹² And so being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, as the Scripture points out farther on, they were distinguished in nothing from the other apostles, as though they were sent in one way by God the Father, in another way by Spirit.

146. Lastly, Paul having been sent by the Spirit, was both a vessel of election on Christ's part, and himself relates that God wrought in him, saying: "For He that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision, wrought for me also unto the Gentiles."²¹³ Since, then, the Same wrought in Paul Who wrought in Peter, it is certainly evident that, since the Spirit wrought in Paul,

the Holy Spirit wrought also in Peter. But Peter himself testifies that God the Father wrought in him, as it is stated in the Acts of the Apostles that Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice amongst us that the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel from my mouth." See, then, in Peter God wrought the grace of preaching. And who would dare to deny the operation of Christ in him, since he was certainly elected and chosen by Christ, when the Lord said: "Feed My lambs."²¹⁴

147. The operation, then, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one, unless perchance you, who deny the oneness of the same operation upon the Apostle, think this; that the Father and the Spirit wrought in Peter, in whom the Son had wrought, as if the operation of the Son by no means sufficed for him to the attainment of the grace. And so the strength of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit being as it were joined and brought together, the work was manifold, lest the operation of Christ alone should be too weak to establish Peter.

148. And not only in Peter is there found to be one operation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but also in all the apostles the unity of the divine operation, and a certain authority over the dispensations of heaven. For the divine operation works by the power of a command, not in the execution of a ministry; for God, when He works, does not fashion anything by toil or art, but "He spake and they were made."²¹⁵ He said, "Let there be light, and there was light,"²¹⁶ for the effecting of the work is comprised in the commandment of God.

149. We can, then, easily find, if we will consider, that this royal power is by the witness of the Scriptures attributed to the Holy Spirit; and it will be made clear that all the apostles were not only disciples of Christ, but also ministers of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As also the teacher of the Gentiles tells us, when he says: "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers; then miracles, the gift of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues."²¹⁷

150. See, God set apostles, and set prophets and teachers, gave the gift of healings, which you find above to be given by the Holy Spirit; gave divers kinds of tongues. But yet all are not apostles, all are not prophets, all are not teachers. Not all, says he, have the gift of healings, nor do all, says he, speak with tongues.²¹⁸ For the whole of the divine gifts cannot exist in each several man; each, according to his capacity, receives that which he either desires or deserves. But the power of the Trinity, which is lavish of all graces, is not like this weakness.

151. Lastly, God set apostles. Those whom God set in the Church, Christ chose and ordained to be apostles, and sent them into the world, saying: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He that shall believe and be baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe. In My Name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."²¹⁹ You see the Father and Christ also set teachers in the Churches; and as the Father gives the gift of healings, so, too, does the Son give; as the Father gives the gift of tongues, so, too, has the Son also granted it.

152. In like manner we have heard also above concerning the Holy Spirit, that He too grants the same kinds of graces. For it is said: "To one is given through the Spirit the gift of healings, to

another divers kinds of tongues, to another prophecy."220 So, then, the Spirit gives the same gifts as the Father, and the Son also gives them. Let us now learn more expressly what we have touched upon above, that the Holy Spirit entrusts the same office as the Father and the Son, and appoints the same persons; since Paul said: "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock in the which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to rule the Church of God."221

153. There is, then, unity of authority, unity of appointment, unity of giving. For if you separate appointment and power, what cause was there [for maintaining] that those whom Christ appointed as apostles, God the Father appointed, and the Holy Spirit appointed? unless, perhaps, as if sharing a possession or a right, They, like men, were afraid of legal prejudice, and therefore the operation was divided, and the authority distributed.

154. These things are narrow and paltry, even between men, who for the most part, although they do not agree in action, yet agree in will. So that a certain person being asked what a friend is, answered, "A second self." If, then, a man so defined a friend as to say, he was a second self, that is to say, through a oneness of love and good-will, how much more ought we to esteem the oneness of Majesty, in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, when by the same operation and divine power, either the unity, or certainly that which is more, the tautothj, as it is called in Greek, is expressed, for tauto signifies "the same," so that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have the same; so that to have the same will and the same power does not arise from the affection of the will, but inheres in the substance of the Trinity.

155. This is the inheritance of apostolic faith and devotion, which one may observe also in the Acts of the Apostles. Therefore Paul and Barnabas obeyed the commands of the Holy Spirit. And all the apostles obeyed, and forthwith ordained those whom the Spirit had ordered to be separated: "Separate Me," said He, "Barnabas and Saul."222 Do you see the authority of Him Who commands? Consider the merit of those who obey.

156. Paul believed, and because he believed he cast off the zeal of a persecutor, and gained a crown of righteousness. He believed who used to make havoc of the Churches; but being converted to the faith, he preached in the Spirit that which the Spirit commanded.223 The Spirit anointed His champion, and having shaken off the dust of unbelief, presented him as an insuperable conqueror of the unbelievers to various assemblies of the ungodly, and trained him by many sufferings for the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus.

157. Barnabas also believed, and obeyed because he believed. Therefore, being chosen by the authority of the Holy Spirit, Which came on him abundantly, as a special sign of his merits, he was not unworthy of so great a fellowship. For one grace shone in these whom one Spirit had chosen.

158. Nor was Paul inferior to Peter, though the latter was the foundation of the Church, and the former a wise builder knowing how to make firm the footsteps of the nations who believed; Paul was not, I say, unworthy of the fellowship of the apostles, but is easily comparable with the first, and second to none. For he who knows not that he is inferior makes himself equal.

1: Gen. i. 1.

2: Gen. i. 4.

3: Gen. i. 26.

- 4: S. John v. 17.
- 5: S. Matt. viii. 8.
- 6: S. John xvii. 24.
- 7: Judg. xiii. 25.
- 8: Judg. xiv. 14.
- 9: S. John vii. 39.
- 10: Judg. xiv. 18.
- 11: Rom. xi. 5.
- 12: Judg. xiv. 19.
- 13: Cant. ii. 15.
- 14: Judg. xv. 15.
- 15: S. Matt. v. 39.
- 16: Judg. xvi. 7, Judg. xvi. 11, Judg. xvi. 19.
- 17: Cant. iv. 1.
- 18: 1 Cor. xi. 3.
- 19: Cant. v. 11.
- 20: S. Matt. x. 30.
- 21: Judg. xvi. 17.
- 22: Judg. xiii. 25.
- 23: Judg. xiv. 6.
- 24: Judg. xvi. 17.
- 25: Judg. xvi. 20.
- 26: 1 Cor. i. 24.
- 27: S. Matt. xxvi. 64.
- 28: Ps. cx. [cix.] 1.
- 29: Acts i. 8.
- 30: Isa. xi. 2.
- 31: Book I. vi.
- 32: S. Luke vii. 30.

33: Joel ii. 28.

34: S. Luke xxiv. 49.

35: Acts ii. 2.

36: S. Matt. xxiv. 30.

37: S. John xvii. 3.

38: S. John xvii. 14, John xvii. 15.

39: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 17.

40: Rom. viii. 11.

41: Ps. civ. [ciii.] 29, Ps. civ. [ciii.] 30.

42: Manes, or Manicheus, born about a.d. 240, seems to have desired to blend Christianity and Zoroastrianism. The fundamental point of his teaching was the recognition of a good and an evil creator. For a full account, see art. "Manicheans," in Dict. Ch. Biog.

43: Ps. xxxiii. [xxxii.] 6.

44: Gen. i. 1.

45: Virg. Aen. VI. 724.

46: S. Matt. i. 20.

47: S. Luke i. 35.

48: S. Luke i. 42.

49: Isa. xi. 1.

50: Cant. ii. 1.

51: S. Matt. i. 18.

52: Ecclus. xxiv. 3.

53: S. John xv. 26.

54: S. John xvi. 14.

55: 1 Cor. viii. 6. The argument from the exact force of prepositions is often urged by the Fathers, as by St. Athanasius and St. Basil among the Greeks. The Latins also use it, as St. Ambrose here, but occasionally the same Greek prepositions are variously rendered, which destroys the force of the argument. With regard to the two prepositions ex and de St. Augustine gives a very good explanation, De Natura Bon, c. 27: " Ex ipso [of Him] does not always mean the same as de ipso [from Him]. That which is from Him can be said to be of Him, but not everything which is of Him is rightly said to be from Him. Of Him are the heavens and the earth, for He made them, but not from Him, because not of His substance." But neither the Vulgate nor even St. Ambrose himself is quite consistent in this matter.

56: Job xxxiii. 4.

57: Rom. i. 25.

58: Phil. iii. 2, Phil. iii. 3.

59: S. Matt. iv. 10.

60: Spiritus is Latin for wind and spirit. See note on §63 of this book.

61: Amos iv. 13.

62: 2 [4] Esdras vi. 41.

63: Ps. xi. [x.] 6.

64: Prov. viii.22.

65: St. Ambrose would seem to be alluding to a certain party amongst the Sabellians, who, to avoid the charge of being Patripassians, maintained that Christ before His Incarnation was one with the Father, from Whom He then emanated, in Whom after His Passion He was again reabsorbed. Cf. De Fide, V. 162.

66: Amos iv. 13.

67: S. John xii. 28.

68: Job xxvi. 14 [LXX.].

69: It has been generally held that our Lord's Soul was from the first endowed with all the fulness of which a human soul is capable, having, for instance, perfect knowledge of all things past, present, and to come: the only limit being that a finite nature cannot possess the infinite attributes of the Godhead.

70: Zech. xii. 1.

71: S. Luke xxiii. 46.

72: S. Matt. iii. 17.

73: S. Mark ix. 7.

74: S. Mark xv. 39.

75: Prov. viii. 12.

76: Gal. iv. 4.

77: S. Matt. i. 18.

78: Prov. ix. i.

79: Ch. V.

80: Eph. ii. 8 ff.

81: S. John i. 12, S. John i. 13.

82: It has been thought well in translating this verse to keep the words "spirit" and "breath" as suiting the argument of St. Ambrose. But there can be little doubt that the ordinary translation is the correct one. Bp. Westcott has the following note: "In Hebrew, Syriac, and Latin the words [for spirit and wind] are identical, and Wiclif and the Rhemish version keep "spirit" in both cases, after the Latin. But at present the retention of one word in both places could only create confusion, since the separation between the material emblem and the power which it was used to describe is complete. The use of the correlative verb (pnei pneuma), and still at the same time the whole of the phraseology is inspired by the higher meaning. Perhaps also the unusual word (pneuma , 1 Kings xviii. 45; 1 Kings xix. 11; 2 Kings iii. 17) is employed to suggest this. The comparison lies between the obvious physical properties of the wind and the mysterious action of that spiritual influence to which the name "spirit," "wind," was instinctively applied. The laws of both are practically unknown, both are unseen, the presence of both is revealed in their effects."-Westcott on S. John iii. 8.

83: Gal. iv. 28, Gal. iv. 29.

84: Eph. iv. 23, Eph. iv. 24.

85: 1 Cor. xv. 48.

86: Job xxvii. 2, Job xxvii. 3.

87: Cant. vii. 8.

88: Gen. viii. 21.

89: Ps. cxviii. [cxvii.] 16.

90: S. Matt. xxviii. 19.

91: 2 Cor. ii. 17.

92: 1 Cor. xii. 3.

93: 1 Cor. vi. 11.

94: Gal. iii. 28.

95: 1 Cor. i. 2.

96: 2 Cor. v. 21.

97: 2 Cor. xi. 3.

98: Ps. lvi. [lv.] 4.

99: Ps. lx. [lix.] 12.

100: Ps. lxxi. [lxx.] 6.

101: Ps. lxxxix. [lxxxviii.] 16.

102: S. John iii. 21.
103: Eph. iii. 9.
104: 2 Thess. i. 2.
105: S. John xiv. 10.
106: 2 Cor. x. 17.
107: Col. iii. 3.
108: S. John xvii. 24.
109: 1 Cor. v. 4.
110: Rom. viii. 2.
111: Isa. xlv. 14 [LXX].
112: Phil. i. 23.
113: 2 Cor. v. 21.
114: Col. i. 17.
115: See St. Basil, De Sp. Sancto, III. 29.
116: Rom. viii. 16, Rom. viii. 17.
117: Rom. viii. 16, Rom. viii. 17.
118: 2 Tim. ii. 11, 2 Tim ii. 12.
119: Ps. lxvi. [lxv.] 13.
120: Ps. cv. [civ.] 37.
121: Ps. xlv. [xliv.] 10.
122: 1 Cor. viii. 6.
123: Rom. xi. 36.
124: Isa. xl. 13.
125: Isa. xl. 12 126: Ps. cxlv. [cxliv.] 15, Ps. cxlv. [cxliv.] 16.
127: Eph. iv. 15, Eph. iv. 16.
128: Col. ii. 19.
129: S. John i. 16.
130: S. John xvi. 14.
131: S. Luke viii. 46.

- 132: Gal. vi. 8.
- 133: 1 John iv. 13.
- 134: S. Matt. i. 20.
- 135: S. John iii. 6.
- 136: 1 Cor. i. 1.
- 137: Gal. iv. 7.
- 138: Rom. vi. 4.
- 139: Isa. liv. 15 [LXX.].
- 140: 1 Cor. ii. 10.
- 141: 1 Tim. vi. 20.
- 142: Eph. iii. 16.
- 143: 1 Cor. xii. 8.
- 144: Rom. viii. 13.
- 145: Rom. viii. 11.
- 146: Gen. i. 26.
- 147: Ps. xxxiii. 6.
- 148: Hos. ii. 23.
- 149: Isa. lvi. 7.
- 150: Acts ix. 15.
- 151: Acts xiii. 2 ff.
- 152: Acts x. 11 ff.
- 153: Acts x. 19, Acts x. 20.
- 154: The "mysteries" are the sacrament of baptism, and the "three-fold question" those which preceded baptism, viz.: Dost thou believe in Cod the Father Almighty? Dost thou believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His cross? and Dost thou believe in the Holy Spirit? with the answer, "I believe," to each, as mentioned by the author of De Sacramentis, II. 7 (written probably in the 5th or 6th century).
- 155: Ps. ci. [c.] 6.
- 156: Acts x. 15.
- 157: Tit. iii. 3-7.

158: Ps. lxxviii. [lxxvii.] 30.

159: Ps. cxxxii. [cxxxii] 6.

160: Ps. xcii. [xcii.] 12.

161: Ps. xix. [xviii.] 4.

162: S. Matt. vii. 15.

163: Phil. iii. 20.

164: Acts xv. 8, Acts xv. 9.

165: Jer. xxxviii. 11.

166: Ps. lxxviii. [lxxvii.] 31.

167: Cant. i. 5.

168: Ps. xvi. [xv.] 6.

169: Ebedmelech means "servant of the king."

170: S. John xvi. 13.

171: S. John xvi. 13.

172: S. Mark xiii. 32.

173: There is some little difficulty in ascertaining exactly what were the tenets of Photinus, but it would appear that St. Ambrose considered that he held our Lord to be mere man, and so was worse than the Arians. See Dict. Chr. Biog. art. "Photinus," and Blunt, Dict. of Sects and Heresies, art. "Photinians."

174: S. John xvi. 14, S. John xvi. 15.

175: Zech. xiv. 5, Zech. xiv. 6, Zech. xiv. 7 [LXX].

176: 1 Cor. ii. 9, 1 Cor. ii. 10.

177: Isa. lxiv. 4.

178: S. Matt. xi. 27.

179: 1 Cor. ii. 11.

180: 1 Cor. ii. 7 ff.

181: Cor. ii. 10.

182: 1 Cor. ii. 11.

183: Jer. xvii. 10.

184: Heb. iv. 12.

185: 1 Cor. ii. 12 1 Cor. ii. 13.

186: S. John xvi. 13.

187: 1 Cor. xiv. 2.

188: S. Matt. xi. 27.

189: S. John xv. 15.

190: S. John xv. 15.

191: S. John v. 30.

192: S. John v. 19.

193: S. John xvi. 15.

194: Sabellianism denied the doctrine of the Trinity, maintaining that God is One Person only, manifesting Himself in three characters. See Dict. Chr. Biog. art. "Sabellius," and Blunt, Dict of Sects, etc.

195: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 89.

196: Either S. John v. 17 modified, or a reminiscence of v. 19.

197: S. John v. 19.

198: S. John xi. 41.

199: S. John xi. 42.

200: Col. i. 15.

201: Heb. i. 3.

202: 1 Cor. xii. 4, 1 Cor. xii. 5, 1 Cor. xii. 6.

203: 1 Cor. xii. 8 ff.

204: 1 Cor. xii. 5.

205: Heb. i. 1.

206: S. Luke xi. 49.

207: 1 Cor. xii. 8, 1 Cor. xii. 9, 1 Cor. xii. 10.

208: Acts xv. 28.

209: Acts ix. 5.

210: Acts xxi. 11.

211: S. Mark xvi. 15.

212: Acts xiii. 2.

213: Gal. ii. 8.

214: S. John xxi. 15.

215: Ps. xxxiii. [xxxii.] 9.

216: Gen. i. 3.

217: 1 Cor. xii. 28.

218: 1 Cor. xii. 30.

219: S. Mark xvi. 15 ff.

220: 1 Cor. xii. 8, 1Cor. xii. 9.

221: Acts xx. 28.

222: Acts xiii. 2.

223: Acts ix. 20.

On the Holy Spirit - Book 3

Book III.

Chapter I.

Chapter II.

Chapter III.

Chapter IV.

Chapter V.

Chapter VI.

Chapter VII.

Chapter VIII.

Chapter IX.

Chapter X.

Chapter XI.

Chapter XII.

Chapter XIII.

Chapter XIV.

Chapter XV.

Chapter XVI.

Chapter XVII.

Chapter XVIII.

Chapter XIX.

Chapter XX.

Chapter XXI.

Chapter XXII.

Book III.

Chapter I. Not only were the prophets and apostles sent by the Spirit, but also the Son of God. This is proved from Isaiah and the evangelists, and it is explained why St. Luke wrote that the

same Spirit descended like a dove upon Christ and abode upon Him. Next, after establishing this mission of Christ, the writer infers that the Son is sent by the Father and the Spirit, as the Spirit is by the Father and the Son.

1. In the former book¹ we have shown by the clear evidence of the Scriptures that the apostles and prophets were appointed, the latter to prophesy, the former to preach the Gospel, by the Holy Spirit in the same way as by the Father and the Son; now we add what all will rightly wonder at, and not be able to doubt, that the Spirit was upon Christ; and that as He sent the Spirit, so the Spirit sent the Son of God. For the Son of God says: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me, He hath sent Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and sight to the blind."² And having read this from the Book of Isaiah, He says in the Gospel: "To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears;"³ that He might point out that it was said of Himself.

2. Can we, then, wonder if the Spirit sent both the prophets and the apostles, since Christ said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me"? And rightly did He say "upon Me," because He was speaking as the Son of Man. For as the Son of Man He was anointed and sent to preach the Gospel.

3. But if they believe not the Son, let them hear the Father also saying that the Spirit of the Lord is upon Christ. For He says to John: "Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending from heaven and abiding upon Him, He it is Who baptizeth with the Holy Spirit."⁴ God the Father said this to John, and John heard and saw and believed. He heard from God, he saw in the Lord, he believed that it was the Spirit Who was coming down from heaven. For it was not a dove that descended, but the Holy Spirit as a dove; for thus it is written: "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven as a dove."⁵

4. As John says that he saw, so, too, wrote Mark; Luke, however, added that the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form as a dove; you must not think that this was an incarnation, but an appearance. He, then, brought the appearance before him, that by means of the appearance he might believe who did not see the Spirit, and that by the appearance He might manifest that He had a share of the one honour in authority, the one operation in the mystery, the one gift in the bath, together with the Father and the Son; unless perchance we consider Him in Whom the Lord was baptized too weak for the servant to be baptized in Him.

5. And he said fittingly, "abiding upon Him,"⁶ because the Spirit inspired a saying or acted upon the prophets as often as He would, but abode always in Christ.

6. Nor, again, let it move you that he said "upon Him," for he was speaking of the Son of Man, because he was baptized as the Son of Man. For the Spirit is not upon Christ, according to the Godhead, but in Christ; for, as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, so the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ is both in the Father and in the Son, for He is the Spirit of His mouth. For He Who is of God abides in God, as it is written: "But we received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God."⁷ And He abides in Christ, Who has received from Christ; for it is written again: "He shall take of Mine:"⁸ and elsewhere: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death."⁹ He is, then, not over Christ according to the Godhead of Christ, for the Trinity is not over Itself, but over all things: It is not over Itself but in Itself.

7. Who, then, can doubt that the Spirit sent the prophets and apostles, since the Son of God says: "The Spirit of the Lord is. upon Me."¹⁰ And elsewhere: "I am the First, and I am also for ever, and Mine hand hath rounded the earth, and My right hand hath established the heaven; I will call them and they shall stand up together, and shall all be gathered together and shall hear. Who hath declared these things to them? Because I loved thee I performed thy pleasure against Babylon, that the seed of the Chaldaeans might be taken away. I have spoken, and I have called, I have brought him and have made his way prosperous. Come unto Me and hear ye this. From the beginning I have not spoken in secret, I was there when those things were done; and now the Lord God hath sent Me and His Spirit."¹¹ Who is it Who says: The Lord God hath sent Me and His Spirit, except He Who came from the Father that He might save sinners? And, as you hear, the Spirit sent Him, lest when you hear that the Son sends the Spirit, you should believe the Spirit to be of inferior power.

8. So both the Father and the Spirit sent the Son; the Father sent Him, for it is written: "But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name."¹² The Son sent Him, for He said: "But when the Paraclete is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth."¹³ If, then, the Son and the Spirit send each other, as the Father sends, there is no inferiority of subjection, but a community of power.

Chapter II. The Son and the Spirit are alike given; whence not subjection but one Godhead is shown by Its working.

9. And not only did the Father send the Son, but also gave Him, as the Son Himself gave Himself. For we read: "Grace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins."¹⁴ If they think that He was subject in that He was sent, they cannot deny that it was of grace that He was given. But He was given by the Father, as Isaiah said: "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given;"¹⁵ but He was given, I dare to say it, by the Spirit also, Who was sent by the Spirit. For since the prophet has not defined by whom He was given, he shows that He was given by the grace of the Trinity; and inasmuch as the Son Himself gave Himself, He could not be subject to Himself according to His Godhead. Therefore that He was given could not be a sign of subjection in the God-head.

10. But the Holy Spirit also was given, for it is written: "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete."¹⁶ And the Apostle says: "Wherefore he that despiseth these things despiseth not man but God, Who hath given us His Holy Spirit."¹⁷ Isaiah, too, shows that both the Spirit and the Son are given: "Thus," says he, "saith the Lord God, Who made the heaven and fashioned it, Who stablished the earth, and the things which are in it, and giveth breath to the people upon it, and the Spirit to them that walk upon it."¹⁸ And to the Son: "I am the Lord God, Who have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thine hand, and will strengthen Thee; and I have given Thee for a covenant of My people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out of their fetters those that are bound."¹⁹ Since, then, the Son is both sent and given, and the Spirit also is both sent and given, They have assuredly a oneness of Godhead Who have a oneness of action.

Chapter III. The same Unity may also be recognized from the fact that the Spirit is called Finger, and the Son Right Hand; for the understanding of divine things is assisted by the usage of human language. The tables of the law were written by this Finger, and they were afterwards broken, and

the reason. Lastly, Christ wrote with the same Finger; yet we must not admit any inferiority in the Spirit from this bodily comparison.

11. So, too, the Spirit is also called the Finger of God, because there is an indivisible and inseparable communion between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For as the Scripture called the Son of God the Right Hand of God, as it is said: "Thy Right Hand, O Lord, is made glorious in power. Thy Right Hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy;"²⁰ so the Holy Spirit is called the Finger of God, as the Lord Himself says: "But if I by the Finger of God cast out devils."²¹ For in the same place in another book of the Gospel He named the Spirit of God, as you find: "But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils."²²

12. What, then, could have been said to signify more expressly the unity of the Godhead, or of Its working, which Unity is according to the Godhead of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Holy Spirit, than that we should understand that the fulness of the eternal Godhead would seem to be divided far more than this body of ours, if any one were to sever the unity of Substance, and multiply Its powers, whereas the eternity of the same Godhead is one?

13. For oftentimes it is convenient to estimate from our own words those things which are above us, and because we cannot see those things we draw inferences from those which we can see. "For the invisible things of Him," says the Apostle, "from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by those things which are made."²³ And he adds: "His eternal power also and Godhead."²⁴ Of which one thing seems to be said of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit; that in the same manner as the Son is called the eternal Power of the Father, so, also, the Spirit, because He is divine, should be believed to be His eternal Godhead. For the Son, too, because He ever lives, is eternal life. This Finger, then, of God is both eternal and divine. For what is there belonging to God which is not eternal and divine?

14. With this Finger, as we read, God wrote on those tables of stone which Moses received. For God did not with a finger of flesh write the forms and portions of those letters which we read, but gave the law by His Spirit. And so the Apostle says: "For the Law is spiritual, which, indeed, is written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but on fleshy tables of the heart."²⁵ For if the letter of the Apostle is written in the Spirit, what hinders us from believing that the Law of God was written not with ink, but with the Spirit of God, which certainly does not stain but enlightens the secret places of our heart and mind?

14. Now it was written on tables of stone, because it was written in a type, but the tables were first broken and cast out of the hands of Moses, because the Jews fell away from the works of the prophet. And fitly were the tables broken, not the writing erased. And do you see that your table be not broken, that your mind and soul be not divided. Is Christ divided? He is not divided, but is one with the Father; and let no one separate you from Him. If your faith fails, the table of your heart is broken. The coherence of your soul is lessened if you do not believe the unity of Godhead in the Trinity. Your faith is written, and your sin is written, as Jeremiah said: "Thy sin, O Judah, is written with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond. And it is written," he says, "on thy breast and on thy heart."²⁶ The sin, therefore, is there where grace is, but the sin is written with a pen, grace is denoted by the Spirit.

15. With this Finger, also, the Lord Jesus, with bowed head, mystically wrote on the ground, when the adulteress was brought before Him by the Jews, signifying in a figure that, when we judge of the sins of another, we ought to remember our own.

16. And lest, again, because God wrote the Law by His Spirit, we should believe any inferiority, as it were, concerning the ministry of the Spirit, or from the consideration of our own body should think the Spirit to be a small part of God, the Apostle says, elsewhere, that he does not speak with words of human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, and that he compares spiritual things with spiritual; but that the natural man receiveth not the things which pertain to the Spirit of God.²⁷ For he knew that he who compared divine with carnal things was amongst natural things, and not to be reckoned amongst spiritual men; "for they are foolishness," he says, "unto him."²⁸ And so, because he knew that these questions would arise amongst natural men, foreseeing the future he says: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."²⁹

Chapter IV. To those who contend that the Spirit because He is called the Finger is less than the Father, St. Ambrose replies that this would also tend to the lessening of the Son, Who is called the Right Hand. That these names are to be referred only to the Unity, for which reason Moses proclaimed that the whole Trinity worked in the passage of the Red Sea. And, indeed, it is no wonder that the operation of the Spirit found place there, where there was a figure of baptism, since the Scripture teaches that the Three Persons equally sanctify and are operative in that sacrament.

17. But if any one is still entangled in carnal doubts, and hesitates because of bodily figures, let him consider that he cannot think rightly of the Son who can think wrongly of the Spirit. For if some think that the Spirit is a certain small portion of God, because He is called the Finger of God, the same persons must certainly maintain that a small portion only is in the Son of God, because He is called the Right Hand of God.

18. But the Son is called both the Right Hand and the Power of God; if, then, we consider our words, there can be no perfection without power; let them therefore take care lest they think that which it is impious to say, namely, that the Father being but half perfect in His own Substance received perfection through the Son, and let them cease to deny that the Son is co-eternal with the Father. For when did the Power of God not exist? But if they think that at any time the Power of God existed not, they will say that at some time Perfection existed not in God the Father, to Whom they think that Power was at some time wanting.

19. But, as I said, these things are written that we may refer them to the Unity of the Godhead, and believe that which the Apostle said, that the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Christ,³⁰ which dwells also in the Father, and dwells in the Holy Spirit; and that, as there is a unity of the Godhead, so also is there a unity of operation.

20. And this may also be gathered from the Song of Moses, for he, after leading the people of the Jews through the sea, acknowledged the operation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, saying: "Thy Right Hand, O Lord, is glorious in power, Thy Right Hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy."³¹ Here you have his confession of the Son and of the Father, Whose Right Hand He is. And farther on, not to pass by the Holy Spirit, He added: "Thou didst send Thy Spirit

and the sea covered them, and the water was divided by the Spirit of Thine anger."³² By which is signified the unity of the Godhead, not an inequality of the Trinity.

21. You see, then, that the Holy Spirit also co-operated with the Father and the Son, so that just as if the waves were congealed in the midst of the sea, a wall as it were of water rose up for the passage of the Jews, and then, poured back again by the Spirit, overwhelmed the people of the Egyptians. And many think that from the same origin the pillar of cloud went before the people of the Jews by day, and the pillar of fire by night, that the grace of the Spirit might protect His people.

22. Now that this operation of God, which the whole world rightly wonders at, did not take place without the work of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle also declared when he said that the truth of a spiritual mystery was prefigured in it, for we read as follows: "For our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized in Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink."³³

23. For how without the operation of the Holy Spirit could there be the type of a sacrament, the whole truth of which is in the Spirit? As the Apostle also set forth, saying: "But ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."³⁴

24. You see, then, that the Father works in the Son, and that the Son works in the Spirit. And therefore do not doubt that, according to the order of Scripture, there was in the figure that which the Truth Himself declared to be in the truth. For who can deny His operation in the Font, in which we feel His operation and grace?

25. For as the Father sanctifies, so, too, the Son sanctifies, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies. The Father sanctifies according to that which is written: "The God of peace sanctify you, and may your spirit, soul, and body be preserved entire without blame in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."³⁵ And elsewhere the Son says: "Father, sanctify them in the truth."³⁶

26. But of the Son the same Apostle said: "Who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."³⁷ Do you see that He was made sanctification? But He was made so unto us, not that He should change that which He was, but that He might sanctify us in the flesh.

27. And the Apostle also teaches that the Holy Spirit sanctifies. For he speaks thus: "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren dearly beloved of the Lord; because God chose you as first-fruits unto salvation, in sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."³⁸

28. So, then, the Father sanctifies, the Son also sanctifies, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies; but the sanctification is one, for baptism is one, and the grace of the sacrament is one.

Chapter V. The writer sums up the argument he had commenced, and confirms the statement that unity is signified by the terms finger and right hand, from the fact that the works of God are the same as are the works of hands; and that those of hands are the same as those of fingers; and lastly, that the term hand applies equally to the Son and the Spirit, and that of finger applies to the Spirit and the Son.

29. But what wonder is it if He Who Himself needs no sanctification, but abounds therewith, sanctifies each man; since, as I said, we have been taught that His Majesty is so great, that the Holy Spirit seems to be as inseparable from God the Father as the finger is from the body?

30. But if any one thinks that this should be referred not to the oneness of power, but to its lessening, he indeed will fall into such madness as to appear to fashion the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as it were into one bodily form, and to picture to himself certain distinctions of its members.

31. But let them learn, as I have often said, that not inequality but unity of power is signified by this testimony; inasmuch as things which are the works of God are also the works of hands, and we read that the same are the works of fingers. For it is written: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth the work of His hands;"³⁹ and elsewhere: "In the beginning Thou didst found the earth, O Lord; and the heavens are the works of Thy hands."⁴⁰ So, then, the works of the hands are the same as the works of God. There is not therefore any distinction of the work according to the kind of bodily members, but a oneness of power.

32. But those which are the works of the hands are also the works of the fingers, for it is equally written: "For I will behold Thy heavens, the works of Thy fingers, the moon, and the stars, which Thou hast established."⁴¹ What less are the fingers here said to have made than the hands, since they made the same as the hands, as it is written: "For Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work, and in the works of Thy hands will I rejoice,"⁴²

33. And yet since we read that the Son is the hand (for it is written: "Hath not My Hand made all these things?"⁴³ and elsewhere: "I will place thee in the cleft of the rock, and I will cover thee with Mine hand, I have placed My hand under the covering of the rock,"⁴⁴ which refers to the mystery of the Incarnation, because the eternal Power of God took on Itself the covering of a body), it is certainly clear that Scripture used the term hand both of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

34. And again, since we read that the Spirit is the finger of God, we think that fingers [in the plural] are spoken of to signify the Son and Spirit. Lastly, that he may state that he received the sanctification both of the Son and of the Spirit, a certain saint says: "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me."⁴⁵

Chapter VI. The Spirit rebukes just as do the Father and the Son; and indeed judges could not judge without Him, as is shown by the judgments of Solomon and Daniel, which are explained in a few words, by the way; and no other than the Holy Spirit inspired Daniel.

35. Why do we reject like words when we assert the oneness of power, since the oneness of power extends so far that the Spirit rebukes, as the Father rebukes, and as the Son rebukes. For so it is written: "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy displeasure."⁴⁶ Then in the forty-ninth [fiftieth] Psalm, the Lord speaks thus: "I will rebuke thee, and will set thy sins before thy face"⁴⁷ And in like manner the Son said of the Holy Spirit: "When I go away, I will send the Paraclete to you. And He, when He is come, will rebuke the world, concerning sin, and concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment"⁴⁸

36. But whither is the madness of faithless men leading us, so that we appear to be proving, as if it were a matter of doubt, that the Holy Spirit rebukes, whereas judges themselves are unable to judge, except through the Spirit. Lastly, that famous judgment of Solomon, when, amongst the

difficulties arising from those who were contending, as one, having overlain the child which she had borne, wished to claim the child of another, and the other was protecting her own son, he both discovered deceit in the very hidden thoughts. and affection in the mother's heart, was certainly so admirable only by the gift of the Holy Spirit For no other sword would have penetrated the hidden feeling of those women, except the sword of the Spirit, of which the Lord says: "I am not come to send peace but a sword."⁴⁹ For the inmost mind cannot be penetrated by steel, but by the Spirit: "For the Spirit of understanding is holy, one only, manifold, subtle, lively," and, farther on, "overseeing all things."⁵⁰

37. Consider what the prophet says, that He oversees all things. And so Solomon also oversaw, so that he ordered that sword to be brought, because while pretending that he intended to divide the infant, he reflected that the true mother would have more regard for her son than for her comfort, and would set kindness before right, not right before kindness. But that she who feigned the feelings of a mother, blinded by the desire of gaining her end, would think little of the destruction of him in regard to whom she felt no outgoing of tenderness. And so that spiritual man, that he might judge all things (for he that is spiritual judgeth all things),⁵¹ sought in the feelings the natural disposition which was concealed in the language, and questioned tenderness that he might set forth the truth. So the mother overcame by the affection of love, which is a fruit of the Spirit.

38. He judges in a prophet, for the word of wisdom is given by the Spirit;⁵² how, then, do men deny that the Spirit can rebuke the world concerning judgment, Who removes doubt from judgment, and grants the successful issue?

39. Daniel also, unless he had received the Spirit of God, would never have been able to discover that lustful adultery, that fraudulent lie. For when Susanna, assailed by the conspiracy of the elders, saw that the mind of the people was moved by consideration for the old men, and destitute of all help, alone amongst men, conscious of her chastity she prayed God to judge; it is written: "The Lord heard her voice, when she was being led to be put to death, and the Lord raised up the Holy Spirit of a young youth, whose name was Daniel."⁵³ And so according to the grace of the Holy Spirit received by him, he discovered the varying evidence of the treacherous, for it was none other than the operation of divine power, that his voice should make them whose inward feelings were concealed to be known.

41. Understand, then, the sacred and heavenly miracle of the Holy Spirit She who preferred to be chaste in herself, rather than in the opinion of the people, she who preferred to hazard [the reputation of] her innocence, rather than her modesty, who when she was accused was silent, when she was condemned held her peace, content with the judgment of her own conscience, who preserved regard for her modesty even in peril, that they who were not able to force her chastity might not seem to have forced her to petulance; when she called upon the Lord, she obtained the Spirit, Who made known the hidden consciousness of the elders.

42. Let the chaste learn not to dread calumny. For she who preferred chastity to life did not suffer the loss of life, and retained the glory of chastity. So, too, Abraham, once bidden to go to foreign lands, and not being held back either by the danger to his wife's modesty, nor by the fear of death before him, preserved both his own life and his wife's chastity.⁵⁴ So no one has ever repented of trusting God, and chastity increased devotion in Sarah, and devotion chastity.

43. And lest any one should perhaps think that, as the Scripture says, "God raised up the Holy Spirit of a young youth," the Spirit in him was that of a man, not the Holy Spirit, let him read farther on, and he will find that Daniel received the Holy Spirit, and therefore prophesied. Lastly, too, the king advanced him because he had the grace of the Spirit For he speaks thus: "Thou, O Daniel, art able, forasmuch as the Holy Spirit of God is in thee."⁵⁵ And farther on it is written: "And Daniel was set over them, because an excellent Spirit was in him."⁵⁶ And the Spirit of Moses also was distributed to those who were to be judges.⁵⁷

Chapter VII. The Son Himself does not judge or punish without the Spirit, so that the same Spirit is called the Sword of the Word. But inasmuch as the Word is in turn called the Sword of the Spirit, the highest unity of power is thereby recognized in each.

44. But what should we say of the other points? We have heard that the Lord Jesus not only judges in the Spirit but punishes also. For neither would He punish Antichrist, whom, as we read, "the Lord Jesus shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth,"⁵⁸ unless He had before judged of his deserts. Yet here is not a grace received, but the unity remains undivided, since neither can Christ be without the Spirit, nor the Spirit without Christ. For the unity of the divine nature cannot be divided.

45. And since that instance comes before us. that the Lord Jesus shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, the Spirit is understood to be as it were the Sword of the Word. Lastly, in the Gospel also the Lord Jesus Himself says: "I came not to send peace but a sword."⁵⁹ For He came that He might give the Spirit; and so there is in His mouth a two-edged sword,⁶⁰ which is in truth the grace of the Spirit So the Spirit is the Sword of the Word.

46. And that you may know that there is no inequality but unity of nature, the Word also is the Sword of the Holy Spirit, for it is written: "Taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of Salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."⁶¹

47. Since, then, the Sword of the Word is the Holy Spirit, and the Sword of the Holy Spirit is the Word of God, there is certainly in Them oneness of power.

Chapter VIII. The aforesaid unity is proved hereby, that as the Father is said to be grieved and tempted, so too the Son. The Son was also tempted in the wilderness, where a figure of the cross was set up in the brazen serpent: but the Apostle says that the Spirit also was there tempted. St. Ambrose infers from this that the Israelites were guided into the promised land by the same Spirit, and that His will and power are one with those of the Father and the Son.

48. And we may behold this unity also in other passages of the Scriptures. For whereas Ezekiel says to the people of the Jews: "And thou hast grieved Me in all these things, saith the Lord;"⁶² Paul says to the new people in his Epistle: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in Whom ye were sealed."⁶³ Again, whereas Isaiah says of the Jews themselves: "But they believed not, but grieved the Holy Spirit;"⁶⁴ David says of God: "They grieved the Most High in the desert, and tempted God in their hearts."⁶⁵

49. Understand also that whereas Scripture in other places says that the Spirit was tempted, and that God was tempted, it says also that Christ was tempted; for you have the Apostle saying to the

Corinthians: "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted, and perished by serpents."⁶⁶ Just was the punishment that the adversaries should feel the venom, who had not venerated the Maker.

50. And well did the Lord ordain that by the lifting up of the brazen serpent the wounds of those who were bitten should be healed; for the brazen serpent is a type of the Cross; for although in His flesh Christ was lifted up, yet in Him was the Apostle crucified to the world and the world to him; for he says: "The world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world."⁶⁷ "So the world was crucified in its allurements, and therefore not a real but a brazen serpent was hanged; because the Lord took on Him the likeness of a sinner, in the truth. indeed, of His Body, but without the truth of sin, that imitating a serpent through the deceitful appearance of human weakness, having laid aside the slough of the flesh, He might destroy the cunning of the true serpent. And therefore in the Cross of the Lord, which came to man's help in avenging temptation, I, who accept the medicine of the Trinity, recognize in the wicked the offence against the Trinity.

51. Therefore when you find in the book of Moses, that the Lord being tempted sent serpents on the people of the Jews, it is necessary that you either confess the Unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the Divine Majesty, or certainly when the writing of the Apostle says that the Spirit was tempted, it undoubtedly pointed out the Spirit by the name of Lord. But the Apostle writing to the Hebrews says that the Spirit was tempted, for you find this: "Wherefore the Holy Ghost saith this: Today if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts, like as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness, where your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works. Forty years was I near to this generation and said: They do alway err in their heart; but they did not know My ways, as I sware in My wrath, If they shall enter into My rest."⁶⁸

52. Therefore, according to the Apostle, the Spirit was tempted. If He was tempted, He also certainly was guiding the people of the Jews into the land of promise, as it is written: "For He led them through the deep, as a horse through the wilderness, and they laboured not, and like the cattle through the plain. The Spirit came down from the Lord and guided them."⁶⁹ And He certainly ministered to them the calm rain of heavenly food, He with fertile shower made fruitful that daily harvest which earth had not brought forth, and husbandman had not sown.

53. Now let us look at these points one by one. God had promised rest to the Jews; the Spirit calls that rest His. God the Father relates that He was tempted by the unbelieving, and the Spirit says that He was tempted by the same, for the temptation is one wherewith the one Godhead of the Trinity was tempted by the unbelieving. God condemns the people of the Jews, so that they cannot attain to the land flowing with milk and honey, that is, to the rest of the resurrection; and the Spirit condemns them by the same decree: "If they shall enter into My rest." It is, then, the decree of one Will, the excellency of one Power.

Chapter IX. That the Holy Spirit is provoked is proved by the words of St. Peter, in which it is shown that the Spirit of God is one and the same as the Spirit of the Lord, both by other passages and by reference to the sentence of the same Apostle on Ananias and Sapphira, whence it is argued that the union of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son, as well as His own Godhead, is proved.

54. Perhaps, however, some one might say that this passage cannot be specially applied to the Holy Spirit, had not the same Apostle Peter taught us in another place that the Holy Ghost can be tempted by our sins, for you find that the wife of Ananias is thus addressed: "Why have ye agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?"⁷⁰ For the Spirit of the Lord is the very Spirit of God; for there is one Holy Spirit, as also the Apostle Paul taught, saying: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."⁷¹ He first mentioned the Spirit of God and immediately adds that the Same is the Spirit of Christ. And having spoken of the Spirit, that we might understand that where the Holy Spirit is there is Christ, he added: "But if Christ be in you."⁷²

55. Then, in the same way as we here understand that where the Spirit is there also is Christ; so also, elsewhere, he shows that where Christ is, there also is the Holy Spirit. For having said: "Do ye seek a proof of Christ Who speaketh in me?"⁷³ he says elsewhere: "For I think that I also have the Spirit of God."⁷⁴ The Unity, then, is inseparable, for by the testimony of Scripture where either the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit is designated, there is all the fulness of the Trinity.

56. But Peter himself in the instance we have brought forward spoke first of the Holy Spirit, and then called Him the Spirit of the Lord, for you read as follows: "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to deal fraudulently concerning the price of the field? While it remained did it not continue thine own, and when sold was it not in thy power? Why hast thou conceived this wickedness in thy heart? Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God."⁷⁵ And below he says to the wife: "Why have ye agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?"⁷⁶

57. First, we understand that he called the Holy Spirit the Spirit of the Lord. Then, since he mentioned first the Holy Spirit and added: "Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God," you must necessarily either understand the oneness of the Godhead in the Holy Spirit, since when the Holy Spirit is tempted a lie is told to God; or, if you endeavour to exclude the oneness of the Godhead, you yourself according to the words of Scripture certainly believe Him to be God.

58. For if we understand that these expressions are used both of the Spirit and of the Father, we certainly observe the unity of truth and knowledge in God the Father and the Holy Spirit, for falsehood is discovered alike by the Holy Spirit and by God the Father. But if we have received each truth concerning the Spirit, why do you, faithless man, attempt to deny what you read? Confess, then, either the oneness of the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, or the Godhead of the Holy Spirit. Whichever you say, you will have said each in God, for both the Unity upholds the Godhead and the Godhead the Unity.

Chapter X. The Divinity of the Holy Spirit is supported by a passage of St. John. This passage was, indeed, erased by heretics, but it is a vain attempt, since their faithlessness could thereby more easily be convicted, The order of the context is considered in order that this passage may be shown to refer to the Spirit. He is born of the Spirit who is born again of the same Spirit, of Whom Christ Himself is believed to have been born and born again. Again, the Godhead of the Spirit is inferred from two testimonies of St. John; and lastly, it is explained how the Spirit, the water, and the blood are called witnesses.

59. Nor does the Scripture in this place alone bear witness to the Qeothj, that is, the Godhead of the Holy Spirit; but also the Lord Himself said in the Gospel: "The Spirit is God."⁷⁷ Which passage

you, Arians, so expressly testify to be said concerning the Spirit, that you remove it from your copies,⁷⁸ and would that it were from yours and not also from those of the Church! For at the time when Auxentius⁷⁹ had seized the Church of Milan with the arms and forces of impious unbelief, the Church of Sirmium⁸⁰ was attacked by Valens and Ursatius, when their priests [i.e. bishops] failed in faith; this falsehood and sacrilege of yours was found in the ecclesiastical books. And it may chance that you did the same in the past.

60. And you have indeed been able to blot out the letters, but could not remove the faith. That erasure betrayed you more. that erasure condemned you more; and you were not able to obliterate the truth, but that erasure blotted out your names from the book of life. Why was the passage removed, "For God is a Spirit," if it did not pertain to the Spirit? For if you will have it that the expression is used of God the Father, you, who think it should be erased, deny, in consequence, God the Father. Choose which you will, in each the snare of your own impiety will bind you if you confess yourselves to be heathen by denying either the Father or the Spirit to be God. Therefore your confession wherein you have blotted out the Word of God remains, while you fear the original.

61. You have blotted it out, indeed, in your breasts and minds, but the Word of God is not blotted out, the Holy Spirit is not blotted out, but turns away from impious minds; not grace but iniquity is blotted out; for it is written: "I am He, I am He that blot out thine iniquities."⁸¹ Lastly, Moses, making request for the people, says: "Blot me out of Thy book, if Thou sparest not this people."⁸² And yet he was not blotted out, because he had no iniquity, but grace flowed forth.

62. You are, then, convicted by your own confession that you cannot say it was done with wisdom but with cunning. For by cunning you know that you are convicted by the evidence of that passage, and that your arguments cannot apply against that testimony. For whence else could the meaning of that place be derived, since the whole tenour of the passage is concerning the Spirit?

63. Nicodemus enquires about regeneration, and the Lord replies: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again by water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."⁸³ And that He might show that there is one birth according to the flesh, and another according to the Spirit, He added: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, because it is born of the flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit, because the Spirit is God."⁸⁴ Follow out the whole course of the passage, and you will find that God has shut out your impiety by the fulness of His statement: "Marvel not," says He, "that I said, Ye must be born again. The Spirit breatheth where He listeth, and thou hearest His voice, but knowest not whence He cometh or whither He goeth, so is every one who is born of the Spirit."⁸⁵

64. Who is he who is born of the Spirit, and is made Spirit, but he who is renewed in the Spirit of his mind?⁸⁶ This certainly is he who is regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit, since we receive the hope of eternal life through the layer of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁷ And elsewhere the Apostle Peter says: "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."⁸⁸ For who is he that is baptized with the Holy Spirit but he who is born again through water and the Holy Spirit? Therefore the Lord said of the Holy Spirit, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again by water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And therefore He declared that we are born of Him in the latter case, through Whom He said that we were born in the former. This is the sentence of the Lord; I rest on what is written, not on argument.

65. I ask, however, why, if there be no doubt that we are born again by the Holy Spirit, there should be any doubt that we are born of the Holy Spirit, since the Lord Jesus Himself was both born and born again of the Holy Spirit. And if you confess that He was born of the Holy Spirit, because you are not able to deny it, but deny that He was born again, it is great folly to confess what is peculiar to God, and deny what is common to men. And therefore that is well said to you which was said to the Jews: "If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?"⁸⁹

66. And yet we find each passage so written in Greek, that He said not, through the Spirit, but of the Spirit. For it stands thus: *αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα*, that is, of water and the Spirit. Therefore, since one ought not to doubt that "that which is born of the Spirit" is written of the Holy Spirit; there is no doubt but that the Holy Spirit also is God, according to that which is written, "the Spirit is God."

67. But the same Evangelist, that he might make it plain that he wrote this concerning the Holy Spirit, says elsewhere: "Jesus Christ came by water and blood, not in the water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth; for there are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are one."⁹⁰

68. Hear how they are witnesses: The Spirit renews the mind, the water is serviceable for the laver, and the blood refers to the price. For the Spirit made us children by adoption, the water of the sacred Font washed us, the blood of the Lord redeemed us. So we obtain one invisible and one visible testimony in a spiritual sacrament, for "the Spirit Himself beareth witness to our spirit."⁹¹ Though the fulness of the sacrament be in each, yet there is a distinction of office; so where there is distinction of office, there certainly is not equality of witness.

Chapter XI. The objection has been made, that the words of St. John, "The Spirit is God," are to be referred to God the Father; since Christ afterwards declares that God is to be worshipped in Spirit and in truth. The answer is, first, that by the word Spirit is sometimes meant spiritual grace; next, it is shown that, if they insist that the Person of the Holy Spirit is signified by the words "in Spirit," and therefore deny that adoration is due to Him, the argument tells equally against the Son; and since numberless passages prove that He is to be worshipped, we understand from this that the same rule is to be laid down as regards the Spirit. Why are we commanded to fall down before His footstool? Because by this is signified the Lord's Body, and as the Spirit was the Maker of this, it follows that He is to be worshipped, and yet it does not accordingly follow that Mary is to be worshipped. Therefore the worship of the Spirit is not done away with, but His union with the Father is expressed, when it is said that the Father is to be worshipped in Spirit, and this point is supported by similar expressions.

69. But perhaps reference may be made to the fact that in a later passage of the same book, the Lord again said that God is Spirit, but spoke of God the Father. For you have this passage in the Gospel: "The hour now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and truth, for such also doth the Father seek. God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth."⁹² By this passage you wish not only to deny the divinity of the Holy Spirit, but also, from God being worshipped in Spirit, deduce a subjection of the Spirit.

70. To which point I will briefly answer that Spirit is often put for the grace of the Spirit, as the Apostle also said: "For the Spirit Himself intercedeth for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;"⁹³ that is, the grace of the Spirit, unless perchance you have been able to hear the groanings of the Holy Spirit. Therefore here too God is worshipped, not in the wickedness of the heart, but in the grace of the Spirit. "For into a malicious soul wisdom does not enter,"⁹⁴ because "no one can call Jesus Lord but in the Holy Spirit."⁹⁵ And immediately he adds: "Now there are diversities of gifts."⁹⁶

71. Now this cannot pertain to the fulness, nor to the dividing of the Spirit; for neither does the mind of man grasp His fulness, nor is He divided into any portions of Himself; but He pours into [the soul] the gift of spiritual grace, in which God is worshipped as He is also worshipped in truth, for no one worships Him except he who drinks in the truth of His Godhead with pious affection. And he certainly does not apprehend Christ as it were personally, nor the Holy Spirit personally.

72. Or if you think that this is said as it were personally of Christ and of the Spirit, then God is worshipped in truth in like manner as He is worshipped in Spirit. There is therefore either a like subjection, which God forbid that you should believe, and the Son is not worshipped; or, which is true, there is a like grace of Unity, and the Spirit is worshipped.

73. Let us then here draw our inferences and put an end to the impious questionings of the Arians. For if they say that the Spirit is therefore not to be worshipped because God is worshipped in Spirit, let them then say that the Truth is not to be worshipped, because God is worshipped in truth. For although there be many truths, since it is written: "Truths are minished from the sons of men;"⁹⁷ yet they are given by the Divine Truth, which is Christ, Who says: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."⁹⁸ If therefore they understand the truth in this passage from custom, let them also understand the grace of the Spirit, and there is no stumbling; or if they receive Christ as the Truth, let them deny that He is to be worshipped.

74. But they are refuted by the acts of the pious, and by the course of the Scriptures. For Mary worshipped Christ, and therefore is appointed to be the messenger of the Resurrection to the apostles,⁹⁹ loosening the hereditary bond, and the huge offence of womankind. For this the Lord wrought mystically, "that where sin had exceedingly abounded, grace might more exceedingly abound."¹⁰⁰ And rightly is a woman appointed [as messenger] to men; that she who first had brought the message of sin to man should first bring the message of the grace of the Lord.

75. And the apostles worshipped; and therefore they who bore the testimony of the faith received authority as to the faith. And the angels worshipped, of whom it is written: "And let all His angels worship Him."¹⁰¹

76. But they worship not only His Godhead but also His Footstool, as it is written: "And worship His footstool, for it is holy,"¹⁰² Or if they deny that in Christ the mysteries also of His Incarnation are to be worshipped, in which we observe as it were certain express traces of His Godhead, and certain ways of the Heavenly Word; let them read that even the apostles worshipped Him when He rose again in the glory of His Flesh.¹⁰³

77. Therefore if it do not at all detract from Christ, that God is worshipped in Christ, for Christ too is worshipped;¹⁰⁴ it certainly also detracts nothing from the Spirit that God is worshipped in the Spirit, for the Spirit also is worshipped, as the Apostle has said: "We serve the Spirit of God,"¹⁰⁵

for he who serves worships also, as it is said in an earlier passage: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."¹⁰⁶

78. But lest any one should perchance seem to elude the instance we have adduced, let us consider in what manner that which the prophet says, "Worship His Footstool," appears to refer to the mystery of the divine Incarnation, for we must not estimate the footstool from the custom of men. For neither has God a body, neither is He other than beyond measure, that we should think a footstool was laid down as a support for His feet. And we read that nothing besides God is to be worshipped, for it is written: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." How, then, should the prophet, brought up under the Law, and instructed in the Law, give a precept against the Law? The question, then, is not unimportant, and so let us more diligently consider what the footstool is. For we read elsewhere: "The heaven is My throne, and the earth the footstool of My feet."¹⁰⁷ But the earth is not to be worshipped by us, for it is a creature of God.

79. Let us, however, see whether the prophet does not say that that earth is to be worshipped which the Lord Jesus took upon Him in assuming flesh. And so, by foot-stool is understood earth, but by the earth the Flesh of Christ, which we this day also adore¹⁰⁸ in the mysteries, and which the apostles, as we said above, adored in the Lord Jesus; for Christ is not divided but is one; nor, when He is adored as the Son of God, is He denied to have been born of the Virgin. Since, then, the mystery of the Incarnation is to be adored, and the Incarnation is the work of the Spirit, as it is written, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and that Holy Thing Which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,"¹⁰⁹ without doubt the Holy Spirit also is to be adored, since He Who according to the flesh was born of the Holy Spirit is adored.

80. And let no one divert this to the Virgin Mary; Mary was the temple of God, not the God of the temple. And therefore He alone is to be worshipped Who was working in His temple.

81. It makes, then, nothing against our argument that God is worshipped in Spirit, for the Spirit also is worshipped. Although if we consider the words themselves, what else ought we to understand in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but the unity of the same power. For what is "must worship in Spirit and in truth"? If, however, you do not refer this to the grace of the Spirit, nor the true faith of conscience; but, as we said, personally (if indeed this word person is fit to express the Divine Majesty), you must take it of Christ and of the Spirit.

82. What means, then, the Father is worshipped in Christ, except that the Father is in Christ, and the Father speaks in Christ, and the Father abides in Christ. Not, indeed, as a body in a body, for God is not a body; nor as a confused mixture [confusus in confuso], but as the true in the true, God in God, Light in Light; as the eternal Father in the co-eternal Son. So not an ingrafting of a body is meant, but unity of power. Therefore, by unity of power, Christ is jointly worshipped in the Father when God the Father is worshipped in Christ. In like manner, then, by unity of the same power the Spirit is jointly worshipped in God, when God is worshipped in the Spirit.

83. Let us investigate the force of that word and expression more diligently, and deduce its proper meaning from other passages. "Thou hast," it is said, "made them all in wisdom."¹¹⁰ Do we here understand that Wisdom was without a share in the things that were made? But "all things were made by Him."¹¹¹ And David says: "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established."¹¹²

So, then, he himself who calls the Son of God the maker even of heavenly things, has also plainly said that all things were made in the Son, that in the renewal of His works He might by no means separate the Son from the Father, but unite Him to the Father.

84. Paul, too, says: "For in Him were all things created in the heavens and in the earth, Visible and invisible."¹¹³ Does he, then, when he says, "in Him," deny that they were made through Him? Certainly he did not deny but affirmed it. And further he says in another place: "One Lord Jesus, through Whom are all things."¹¹⁴ In saying, then, "through Him," has he denied that all things were made in Him, through Whom he says that all things exist? These words, "in Him" and "with Him," have this force, that by them is understood one and like in all respects, not contrary. Which he also made clear farther on, saying: "All things have been created through Him and in Him;"¹¹⁵ for, as we said above, Scripture witnesses that these three expressions, "with Him," and "through Him," and "in Him," are equivalent in Christ.¹¹⁶ For you read that all things were made through Him and in Him.

85. Learn also that the Father was with Him, and He with the Father, when all things were being made. Wisdom says: "When He was preparing the heavens I was with Him, when He was making the fountains of waters."¹¹⁷ And in the Old Testament the Father, by saying, "Let Us make,"¹¹⁸ showed that the Son was to be worshipped with Himself as the Maker of all things. As, then, those things are said to have been created in the Son, of which the Son is received as the Creator; so, too, when God is said to be worshipped in truth by the proper meaning of the word itself often expressed after the same manner it ought to be understood, that the Son too is worshipped. So in like manner is the Spirit also worshipped because God is worshipped in Spirit, Therefore the Father is worshipped both with the Son and with the Spirit, because the Trinity is worshipped.

Chapter XII. From the fact that St. Paul has shown that the light of the Godhead which the three apostles worshipped in Christ is in the Trinity, it is made clear that the Spirit also is to be worshipped. It is shown from the words themselves that the Spirit is intended by the apostles. The Godhead of the same Spirit is proved from the fact that He has a temple wherein He dwells not as a priest, but as God: and is worshipped with the Father and the Son; whence is understood the oneness of nature in Them.

86. But does any one deny that the Godhead of the eternal Trinity is to be worshipped? whereas the Scriptures also express the inexplicable Majesty of the Divine Trinity, as the Apostle says elsewhere: "Since God, Who said that light should shine out of darkness, shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."¹¹⁹

87. The apostles truly saw this glory, when the Lord Jesus on the mount shone with the light of His Godhead: "The apostles," it says, "saw it and fell on their face."¹²⁰ Do not you think that they even, as they fell, worshipped, when they could not with their bodily eyes endure the brightness of the divine splendour, and the glory of eternal light dulled the keenness of mortal sight? Or what else did they who saw His glory say at that time, except, "O come let us worship and fall down before Him"?¹²¹ For "God shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."¹²²

88. Who is He, then, Who shined that we might know God in the face of Jesus Christ? For he said, "God shined," that the glory of God might be known in the face of Jesus Christ. Whom else do we

think but the manifested Spirit? Or who else is there besides the Holy Spirit to Whom the power of the Godhead may be referred? For they who exclude the Spirit must necessarily bring in another, who may with the Father and the Son receive the glory of the Godhead.

89. Let us then go back to the same words: "It is God Who shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." You have Christ plainly set forth. For Whose glory is said to give light but that of the Spirit? So, then, he set forth God Himself, since he spoke of the glory of God; if of the Father, it remains that "He who said that light should shine out of darkness, and shine in our hearts," be understood to be the Holy Spirit, for we cannot venerate any other with the Father and the Son. If, then, you understand the Spirit, Him also has the Apostle called God; it is necessary, then, that you also confess the Godhead of the Spirit, who now deny it.

90. But how shamelessly do you deny this, since you have read that the Holy Spirit has a temple. For it is written: "Ye are the temple of God, and the Holy Spirit dwelleth in you."¹²³ Now God has a temple, a creature has no true temple. But the Spirit, Who dwelleth in us, has a temple. For it is written: "Your members are temples of the Holy Spirit."¹²⁴

91. But He does not dwell in the temple as a priest, nor as a minister, but as God, since the Lord Jesus Himself said: "I will dwell in them, and will walk among them, and will be their God, and they shall be My people."¹²⁵ And David says: "The Lord is in His holy temple."¹²⁶ Therefore the Spirit dwells in His holy temple, as the Father dwells and as the Son dwells, Who says: "I and the Father will come, and will make Our abode with him."¹²⁷

92. But the Father abides in us through the Spirit, Whom He has given us. How, then, can different natures abide together? Certainly it is impossible. But the Spirit abides with the Father and the Son. Whence, too, the Apostle joined the Communion of the Holy Spirit with the grace of Jesus Christ and the love of God, saying: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."¹²⁸

91. We observe, then, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit abide in one and the same [subject] through the oneness of the same nature. Therefore, He Who dwells in the temple has divine power, for as of the Father and of the Son, so are we also the temple of the Holy Spirit; not many temples, but one temple, for it is the temple of one Power.

Chapter XIII. To those who object that Catholics, when they ascribe Godhead to the Holy Spirit, introduce three Gods, it is answered, that by the same argument they themselves bring in two Gods, unless they deny Godhead to the Son; after which the orthodox doctrine is set forth.

92. But what do you fear? Is it that which you have been accustomed to carp at? lest you should make three Gods. God forbid; for where the Godhead is understood as one, one God is spoken of. For neither when we call the Son God do we say there are two Gods. For if, when you confess the Godhead of the Spirit, you think that three Gods are spoken of, then, too, when you speak of the Godhead of the Son because you are not able to deny it, you bring in two Gods. For it is necessary according to your opinion, if you think that God is the name of one person, not of one nature, that you either say that there are two Gods, or deny that the Son is God.

93. But let us free you from the charge of ignorance, though we do not excuse you from fault For according to our opinion, because there is one God, one Godhead and oneness of power is understood. For as we say that there is one God, confessing the Father, and not denying the Son under the true Name of the Godhead; so, too, we exclude not the Holy Spirit from the Unity of the Godhead, and do not assert but deny that there are three Gods, because it is not unity but a division of power which makes plurality. For how can the Unity of the Godhead admit of plurality, seeing that plurality is of numbers, but the Divine Nature does not admit numbers?

Chapter XIV.

Besides the evidence adduced above, other passages can be brought to prove the sovereignty of the Three Persons. Two are quoted from the Epistles to the Thessalonians, and by collating other testimonies of the Scriptures it is shown that in them dominion is claimed for the Spirit as for the other Persons. Then, by quotation of another still more express passage in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, it is inferred both that the Spirit is Lord, and that where the Lord is, there is the Spirit.

94. God, then, is One, without violation of the majesty of the eternal Trinity, as is declared in the instance set before us. And not in that place alone do we see the Trinity expressed in the Name of the Godhead; but both in many places, as we have said also above, and especially in the epistles which the Apostle wrote to the Thessalonians, he most clearly set forth the Godhead and sovereignty of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For you read as follows: "The Lord make you to increase and abound In love one toward another, and toward all men, as we also do toward you, to the stablishing of your hearts without blame in holiness before God and our Father at the coming of the Lord Jesus."¹²⁹

95. Who, then, is the Lord Who makes us to increase and abound before God and our Father at the coming of the Lord Jesus? He has named the Father and has named the Son; Whom, then, has he joined with the Father and the Son except the Spirit? Who is the Lord Who establishes our hearts in holiness. For holiness is a grace of the Spirit, as, too, is said farther on: "In holiness of the Spirit and belief of the truth."¹³⁰

96. Who, then, do you think is here named Lord, except the Spirit? And has not God the Father been able to teach you, Who says: "Upon Whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him, this is He Who baptizeth in the Holy Spirit"?¹³¹ For the Spirit descended in the likeness of a dove,¹³² that He might both bear witness to His wisdom, and perfect the sacrament of the spiritual layer, and show that His working is one with that of the Father and the Son.

97. And that you should not suppose that anything had fallen from the Apostle by oversight, but that he knowingly and designedly and inspired by the Spirit designated Him Lord, Whom he felt to be God, he repeated the same in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, saying: "But the Lord direct your hearts in the love of God and in the patience of Christ."¹³³ If love be of God and patience of Christ, it ought to be shown Who is the Lord Who directs, if we deny that the direction is of the Holy Spirit.

98. But we cannot deny it, since the Lord said of Him: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of Truth, shall come, He will lead you into all truth."¹³⁴ And David says of Him: "Thy good Spirit shall lead me into the right way."¹³⁵

99. See what the voice of the Lord uttered concerning the Holy Spirit. The Son of God came, and because He had not yet shed forth the Spirit, He declared that we were living like little children without the Spirit. He said that the Spirit was to come Who should make of these little children stronger men, by an increase, namely, of spiritual age. And this He laid down not that He might set the power of the Spirit in the first place, but that He might show that the fulness of strength consists in the knowledge of the Trinity.

100. It is therefore necessary either that you mention some fourth person besides the Spirit of whom you ought to be conscious, or assuredly that you do not consider another to be Lord, except the Spirit Who has been pointed out.

101. But if you require the plain statement of the words in which Scripture has spoken of the Spirit as Lord, it cannot have escaped you that it is written: "Now the Lord is the Spirit."¹³⁶ Which the course of the whole passage shows to have been certainly said of the Holy Spirit. And so let us consider the apostolic statement: "As often as Moses is read," says he, "a veil is laid over their heart; but when they shall be turned to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; but where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."¹³⁷

102. So he not only called the Spirit Lord, but also added: "But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. So we all with unveiled face, reflecting the glory of the Lord, are formed anew into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord the Spirit;"¹³⁸ that is, we who have been before converted to the Lord, so as by spiritual understanding to see the glory of the Lord, as it were, in the minor of the Scriptures, are now being transformed from that glory which converted us to the Lord, to the heavenly glory. Therefore since it is the Lord to Whom we are converted, but the Lord is that Spirit by Whom we are formed anew, who are converted to the Lord, assuredly the Holy Ghost is pointed out, for He Who forms anew receives those who are converted. For how should He form again those whom He had not received.

103. Though why should we seek for the expression of words, where we see the expression of unity? For although you may distinguish between Lord and Spirit, you cannot deny that where the Lord is, there too is the Spirit, and he who has been converted to the Lord will have been converted to the Spirit. If you cavil at the letter, you cannot injure the Unity; if you wish to separate the Unity, you confess the Spirit Himself as the Lord of power.

Chapter XV.

Though the Spirit be called Lord, three Lords are not thereby implied; inasmuch as two Lords are not implied by the fact that the Son in the same manner as the Father is called Lord in many passages of Scripture; for Lordship exists in the Godhead, and the Godhead in Lordship, and these coincide without division in the Three Persons.

104. But perhaps, again, you may say: If I call the Spirit Lord, I shall set forth three Lords. Do you then when you call the Son Lord either deny the Son or confess two Lords? God forbid, for the Son Himself said: "Do not serve two lords."¹³⁹ But certainly He denied not either Himself or the Father to be Lord; for He called the Father Lord, as you read: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth."¹⁴⁰ And the Lord spoke of Himself, as we read in the Gospel: "Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye do well, for so I am."¹⁴¹ But He spoke not of two Lords; indeed He shows that He did not speak of two Lords, when He warns them: "Do not serve two lords." For there are not two

Lords where the Lordship is but one, for the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, and so there is one Lord.

105. Such, too, was the teaching of the Law: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord,"¹⁴² that is, unchangeable, always abiding in unity of power, always the same, and not altered by any accession or diminution. Therefore Moses called Him One, and yet also relates that the Lord rained down fire from the Lord.¹⁴³ The Apostle, too, says: "The Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord."¹⁴⁴ The Lord rains down from the Lord; the Lord grants mercy from the Lord. The Lord is neither divided when He rains from the Lord, nor is there a separation when He grants mercy from the Lord, but in each case the oneness of the Lordship is expressed.

106. In the Psalms, too, you find: "The Lord said unto my Lord."¹⁴⁵ And he did not therefore deny that the Father was his Lord, because he spoke of the Son as his Lord; but therefore called the Son his Lord, that you might not think Him to be the Son, but the Lord of the prophet, as the Lord Himself showed in the Gospel, when He said: "If David in the Spirit called Him Lord, how is he his Son?"¹⁴⁶ David, not the Spirit, calls Him Lord in the Spirit. Or if they falsely infer from this that the Spirit called Him Lord, they must necessarily by a like sacrilege seem to assert that the Son of God is also the Son of the Spirit.

107. So, as we do not say that there are two Lords, when we so style both the Father and the Son, so, too, we do not say that there are three Lords, when we confess the Spirit to be Lord. For as it is profane to say that there are three Lords or three Gods, so, too, is it utter profanity to speak of two Lords or two Gods; for there is one God, one Lord, one Holy Spirit; and He Who is God is Lord, and He Who is Lord is God, for the Godhead is in the Lordship, and the Lordship is in the Godhead.

108. Lastly, you have read that the Father is both Lord and God: "O Lord my God, I will call upon Thee, hear Thou me."¹⁴⁷ You find the Son to be both Lord and God, as you have read in the Gospel, that, when Thomas had touched the side of Christ, he said, "My Lord and my God."¹⁴⁸ So in like manner as the Father is God and the Son Lord, so too the Son is God and the Father Lord. The holy designation changes from one to the other, the divine nature changes not, but the dignity remains unchangeable. For they are not [as it were] contributions gathered from bounty, but free-will gifts of natural love; for both Unity has its special property, and the special properties are bound together in unity.

Chapter XVI. The Father is holy, and likewise the Son and the Spirit, and so They are honoured in the same Trisagion: nor can we speak more worthily of God than by calling Him Holy; whence it is clear that we must not derogate from the dignity of the Holy Spirit. In Him is all which pertains to God, since in baptism He is named with the Father and the Son, and the Father has given to Him to be greater than all, nor can any one deprive Him of this. And so from the very passage of St. John which heretics used against His dignity, the equality of the Trinity and the Unity of the Godhead is established. Lastly, after explaining how the Son receives from the Father, St. Ambrose shows how various heresies are refuted by the passage cited.

109. So, then, the Father is holy, the Son is holy, and the Spirit is holy, but they are not three Holies;¹⁴⁹ for there is one Holy God, one Lord. For the true holiness is one, as the true Godhead is one, as that true holiness belonging to the Divine Nature is one.

110. So everything which we esteem holy proclaims that Sole Holiness. Cherubim and Seraphim with unwearied voices praise Him and say: "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of Sabaoth."¹⁵⁰ They say it, not once, lest you should believe that there is but one; not twice, lest you should exclude the Spirit; they say not holies[in the plural], lest you should imagine that there is plurality, but they repeat thrice and say the same word, that even in a hymn you may understand the distinction of Persons in the Trinity, and the oneness of the Godhead and while they say this they proclaim God.

111. We too find nothing of more worth, whereby we are able to proclaim God, than the calling Him holy. Everything is too low for God, too low for the Lord. And therefore consider from this fact also whether one ought at all to derogate from the Holy Spirit, whose Name is the praise of God. For thus is the Father praised, thus is the Son also praised, in the same manner as the Spirit also is named and praised. The Seraphim utter praise, the whole company of the blessed utter praise, inasmuch as they call God holy, the Son holy, the Spirit holy.

112. How, then, does He not possess all that pertains to God, Who is named by priests in baptism with the Father and the Son, and is invoked in the oblations, is proclaimed by the Seraphim in heaven with the Father and the Son, dwells in the Saints with the Father and the Son, is poured upon the just, is given as the source of inspiration to the prophets? And for this reason in the divine Scripture all is called *Qeopneustoj*, because God inspires what the Spirit has spoken.

113. Or if they are unwilling to allow that the Holy Spirit has all things which pertain to God, and can do all things, let them say what He has not, and what He cannot do. For like as the Son has all things, and the Father grudges not to give all things to the Son according to His nature, having given to Him that which is greater than all, as the Scripture bears witness, saying: "That which My Father hath given unto Me is greater than all."¹⁵¹ So too the Spirit has of Christ that which is greater than all, because righteousness knows not grudging.

114. So, then, if we attend diligently, we comprehend here also the oneness of the Divine Power. He says: "That which My Father hath given unto Me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are One."¹⁵² For if we rightly showed above that the Holy Spirit is the Hand of the Father, the same is certainly the Hand of the Father which is the Hand of the Son, since the Same is the Spirit of the Father Who is the Spirit of the Son. Therefore whosoever of us receives eternal life in this Name of the Trinity, as he is not torn from the Father; so he is not torn from the Son, so too he is not torn from the Spirit.

115. Again, from the very fact that the Father is said to have given to the Son, and the Spirit to have received from the Son, as it is written: "He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you"¹⁵³ (which He seems to have said rather of the office of distributing, than of the prerogative of Divine Power, for those whom the Son redeemed the Spirit also, Who was to sanctify them, received), from those very words, I say, from which they construct their sophistry, the Unity of the Godhead is perceived, not the need of a gift.

116. The Father gave by begetting, not by adoption; He gave as it were that which was contained in the very prerogative of the Divine Nature, not what was lacking as it were by favour of His bounty. And so because the Son acquires persons to Himself as the Father does; so gives life as does the Father, He expressed His equality with the Father in the Unity of Power, saying: "I and

the Father are One." For when He says, "I and the Father," equality is revealed; when He says, "are One," Unity is asserted. Equality excludes confusion; Unity excludes separation. Equality distinguishes between the Father and the Son; Unity does not separate the Father and the Son.

117. Therefore, when He says, "I and the Father," He rejects the Sabellian, for He says that He is one, the Father another; He rejects the Photinian, for He joins Himself with God the Father. With the former words He rejects those, for He said: "I and the Father;" with the latter words He rejects the Arians, for He says: "are One." Yet in both the former and the latter words He refutes the heretical violence (1) of the Sabellians, for He said: "We are One [Substance]," not "We are One[Person]." And (2) of the Arians, for He said: "I and the Father," not "the Father and I." Which was certainly not a sign of rudeness, but of dutifulness and foreknowledge, that we might not think wrongly from the order of the words, For unity knows no order equality knows no gradation; nor can it be laid to the Son of God that the Teacher Himself of dutifulness should offend against dutifulness by rudeness.

Chapter XVII.

St. Ambrose shows by instances that the places in which those words were spoken help to the understanding of the words of the Lord; he shows that Christ uttered the passage quoted from St. John in Solomon's porch, by which is signified the mind of a wise man, for he says that Christ would not have uttered this saying in the heart of a foolish or contentious man. He goes on to say that Christ is stoned by those who believe not these words, and as the keys of heaven were given to Peter for his confession of them, so Iscariot, because he believed not the same, perished evilly. He takes this opportunity to inveigh against the Jews who bought the Son of God and sold Joseph. He explains the price paid for each mystically; and having in the same manner expounded the murmuring of the traitor concerning Magdalene's ointment, he adds that Christ is bought in one way by heretics in another way by Catholics, and that those in vain take to themselves the name of Christians who sever the Spirit from the Father.

118. It is worth while to notice in what place the Lord held this discussion, for His utterances are often[better] estimated by the kind of places in which He conversed. When about to fast, He is led(as we read) into the wilderness to render vain the devil's temptations. For although it deserves praise to have lived temperately in the midst of abundance, yet the enticements of temptation are more frequent amongst riches and pleasures. Then the tempter, in order to try Him, promises Him abundance, and the Lord in order to overcome cherishes hunger. Now I do not deny that temperance can exist in the midst of riches; but although he who navigates the sea often escapes, yet he is more exposed to peril than he who will not go to sea.

119. Let us consider some other points. When about to promise the kingdom of heaven, Jesus went up into a mountain. At another time He leads His disciples through the corn-fields, when about to sow in their minds the crop of heavenly precepts. so that a plentiful harvest of souls should ripen. When about to consummate the work of the flesh which He had taken, having now seen perfection in His disciples, whom He had established upon the root of His words, He enters a garden, that He might plant the young olive-trees¹⁵⁴ in the house of the Lord, and that He might water the just flourishing like a palm-tree,¹⁵⁵ and the fruitful vine with the stream of His Blood.

120. In this passage too He was walking, as we read, in Solomon's porch on the day' of the dedication, that is, Christ was walking in the breast of the wise and prudent, to dedicate his good affection to Himself. What that porch was the prophet teaches, saying: "I will walk in the midst of Thy house in the innocency of my heart."¹⁵⁶ So, then, we have in our own selves the house of God, we have the halls, we have also the porches, and we have the courts, for it is written: "Let thy waters flow abroad in thy courts."¹⁵⁷ Open, then, this porch of thy heart to the Word of God, Who says to thee: "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it."¹⁵⁸

121. Let us, therefore, hear what the Word of God, walking in the heart of the wise and peaceful, says: "I and My Father are One."¹⁵⁹ He will not say this in the 'breast of the unquiet and foolish, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him."¹⁶⁰ The narrow breasts of sinners do not take in the greatness of the faith. Lastly, the Jews hearing, "I and the Father are One, took up stones to stone Him."¹⁶¹

122. He who cannot listen to this is a Jew; he who cannot listen to this stones Christ with the stones of his treachery, rougher than any rock, and if you believe me, he wounds Christ. For although He cannot now feel a wound: "For now henceforth we know not Christ after the flesh,"¹⁶² yet He Who rejoices in the love of the Church is stoned by the impiety of the Arians.

123. "The law of Thy mouth, O Lord, is good unto me, I keep Thy commandments."¹⁶³ Thou hast Thyself said that Thou art one with the Father. Because Peter believed this, he received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and without anxiety for himself forgave sins. Judas, because he believed not this, strangled himself with the cord of his own wickedness. O the hard stones of unbelieving words! O the unseemly cord of the betrayer, and the still more hideous purchase-money of the Jews! O hateful money wherewith either the just is bought for death, or sold! Joseph was sold, Jesus Christ was bought, the one to slavery, the Other to death. O detestable inheritance, O deadly sale, which either sells a brother to suffering or sets a price on the Lord to destroy Him, the Purchaser of the salvation of all.

124. The Jews did violence to two things which are chief of all, faith and duty, and in each to Christ the Author of faith and duty. For both in the patriarch Joseph was there a type of Christ, and Christ Himself came in the truth of His Body, "Who counted it not robbery that He should be equal with God, but took on Him the form of a servant,"¹⁶⁴ because of our fall, that is to say, taking slavery upon Himself and not shrinking from suffering.

125. In one place the sale is for twenty pieces, in the other for thirty. For how could His true price be apprehended, Whose value cannot be limited? There is error in the price because there is error in the inquiry. The sale is for twenty pieces in the Old Testament, for thirty in the New; for the Truth is of more value than the type, Grace is more generous than training, the Presence is better than the Law, for the Law promised the Coming, the Coming fulfilled the Law.

126. The Ishmaelites made their purchase for twenty pieces, the Jews for thirty. And this is no trivial figure. The faithless are more lavish for iniquity than the faithful for salvation. It is, however, fitting to consider the quality of each agreement. Twenty pieces are the price of him sold to slavery, thirty pieces of Him delivered to the Cross. For although the Mysteries of the Incarnation and of the Passion must be in like manner matters of amazement, yet the fulfilment of faith is in the Mystery of the Passion. I do not indeed value less the birth from the holy Virgin, but I receive even

more gratefully the Mystery of the sacred Body. What is more full of mercy than that He should forgive me the wrongs done to Himself? But it is even fuller measure that He gave us so great a gift, that He Who was not to die because He was God, should die by our death, that we might live by His Spirit.

127. Lastly, it was not without meaning that Judas Iscariot valued that ointment at three hundred pence, which seems certainly by the statement of the price itself to set forth the Lord's cross. Whence, too, the Lord says: "For she, pouring this ointment on My body, did it for My burial."¹⁶⁵ Why, then, did Judas value this at so high a rate? Because remission of sins is of more value to sinners, and forgiveness seems to be more precious. Lastly, you find it written: "To whom much is forgiven the same loveth more."¹⁶⁶ Therefore sinners themselves also confess the grace of the Lord's Passion which they have lost, and they bear witness to Christ who persecuted Him.

128. Or because, "into a malicious soul wisdom does not enter,"¹⁶⁷ the evil disposition of the traitor uttered this[@] and he valued the suffering of the Lord's body at a dearer rate, that by the immensity of the price he might draw all away from the faith. And therefore the Lord offered Himself without price, that the necessity of poverty might hold no one back from Christ. The patriarchs sold Him for a small price that all might buy. Isaiah said: "Ye that have no money go buy and drink; eat ye without money,"¹⁶⁸ that he might gain him who had no money. O traitor Judas, thou valuest the ointment of His Passion at three hundred pence, and sellest His Passion for thirty pence.¹⁶⁹ Profuse in valuing, mean in selling.

129. So, then, all do not buy Christ at the same price; Photinus, who buys Him for death, buys Him at one price; the Arian, who buys Him to wrong Him, at another price; the Catholic, who buys Him to glorify Him, at another. But he buys Him without money according to that which is written: "He that hath no money let him buy without price."¹⁷⁰

130. "Not all," says Christ, "that say unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven!"¹⁷¹ Although many call themselves Christians, and make use of the name, yet not all shall receive the reward. Both Cain offered sacrifice, and Judas received the kiss, but it was said to him, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"¹⁷² that is, thou fillest up thy wickedness with the pledge of affection, and sowest hatred with the implement of peace, and inflicteth death with the outward token of love.

131. Let not, then, the Arians flatter themselves with the employment of the name, because they call themselves Christians. The Lord will answer them: You set forward My Name, and deny My Substance, but I do not recognize My Name where My eternal Godhead is not. That is not My Name which is divided from the Father, and separated from the Spirit; I do not recognize My Name where I do not recognize My doctrine; I do not recognize My Name where I do not recognize My Spirit. For he knows not that he is comparing the Spirit of the Father to those servants whom He created. Concerning which point we have already spoken at length.¹⁷³

Chapter XVIII. As he purposes to establish the Godhead of the Holy Spirit by the points already discussed, St. Ambrose touches again on some of them; for instance, that He does not commit but forgives sin; that He is not a creature but the Creator; and lastly, that He does not offer but receives worship.

132. But to sum up, in order at the end more distinctly to gather up the arguments which have been used here and there, the evident glory of the Godhead is proved both by other arguments, and most especially by these four. God is known by these marks: either that He is without sin; or that He forgives sin; or that He is not a creature but the Creator; or that He does not give but receives worship.

133. So, then, no one is without sin except God alone, for no one is without sin except God.¹⁷⁴ Also, no one forgives sins except God alone, for it is also written: "Who can forgive sins but God alone?"¹⁷⁵ And one cannot be the Creator of all except he be not a creature, and he who is not a creature is without doubt God; for it is written: "They worshipped the creature rather than the Creator, Who is God blessed for ever."¹⁷⁶ God also does not worship, but is worshipped, for it is written: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shall thou serve."¹⁷⁷

134. Let us therefore consider whether the Holy Spirit have any of these marks which may bear witness to His Godhead. And first let us treat of the point that none is without sin except God alone, and demand that they prove that the Holy Spirit has sin.

135. But they are unable to show us this, and demand our authority from us, namely, that we should show by texts that the Holy Spirit has not sinned, as it is said of the Son that He did no sin.¹⁷⁸ Let them learn that we teach by authority of the Scriptures; for it is written: "For in Wisdom is a Spirit of understanding, holy, one only, manifold, subtle, easy to move, eloquent, undefiled."¹⁷⁹ The Scripture says He is undefiled, has it lied concerning the Son, that you should believe it to have lied concerning the Spirit? For the prophet said in the same place concerning Wisdom, that nothing that defiles enters into her. She herself is undefiled, and her Spirit is undefiled. Therefore if the Spirit have not sin, He is God.

136. But how can He be guilty of sin Who Himself forgives sins? Therefore He has not committed sin, and if He be without sin He is not a creature. For every creature is exposed to the capability of sin, and the eternal Godhead alone is free from sin and undefiled.

137. Let us now see whether the Spirit forgives sins. But on this point there can be no doubt, since the Lord Himself said: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit. Whosoever sins ye forgive they shall be forgiven."¹⁸⁰ See that sins are forgiven through the Holy Spirit. But men make use of their ministry for the forgiveness of sins, they do not exercise the right of any power of their own. For they forgive sins not in their own name but in that of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. They ask, the Godhead gives, the service is of man, the gift is of the Power on high.

138. And it is not doubtful that sin is forgiven by means of baptism, but in baptism the operation is that of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. If, therefore, the Spirit forgives sin, since it is written, "Who can forgive sins except God alone?"¹⁸¹ certainly He Who cannot be separated from the oneness of the name of the Nature is also incapable of being severed from the power of God. Now if He is not severed from the power of God, how is He severed from the name of God.

139. Let us now see whether He be a creature or the Creator. But since we have above¹⁸² most clearly proved Him to be the Creator, as it is written: "The Spirit of God Who hath made me;"¹⁸³ and it has been declared that the face of the earth is renewed by the Spirit, and that all things languish without the Spirit,¹⁸⁴ it is clear that the Spirit is the Creator. But who can doubt this, since, as we have shown above, not even the generation of the Lord from the Virgin, which is

more excellent than all creatures, is without the operation of the Spirit?

140. Therefore the Spirit is not a creature, but the Creator, and He Who is Creator is certainly not a creature. And because He is not a creature, without doubt He is the Creator Who produces all things together with the Father and the Son. But if He be the Creator, certainly the Apostle, by saying in condemnation of the Gentiles, "Who served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is God blessed for ever,"¹⁸⁵ and by warning men, as I said above, that the Holy Spirit is to be served, both showed Him to be the Creator, and because He is the Creator demonstrated that He ought to be called God. Which he also sums up In the Epistle written to the Hebrews, saying: "For He that created all things is God."¹⁸⁶ Let them, therefore, either say what it is which has been created without the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or let them confess that the Spirit also is of one Godhead with the Father and the Son.

141. The writer taught also that He was to be worshipped, Whom he called Lord and God. For He Who is the God and Lord of the Universe is certainly to be worshipped by all, for it is thus written: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shall thou serve."¹⁸⁷

142. Or let them say where they have read that the Spirit worships. For it is said of the Son of God: "Let all the Angels of God worship Him;"¹⁸⁸ we do not read, Let the Spirit worship Him. For how can He worship Who is not amongst servants and ministers, but, together with the Father and the Son, has the service of the just under Him, for it is written: "We serve the Spirit of God."¹⁸⁹ He is, therefore, to be worshipped by us, Whom the Apostle taught that we must serve, and Whom we serve we also adore, according to that which is written, to repeat the same words again: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

143. Although the Apostle has not omitted even this point, so as to omit to teach us that the Spirit is to be worshipped. For since we have demonstrated that the Spirit is in the prophets, no one can doubt that prophecy is given by the Spirit, and plainly when He Who is in the prophets is worshipped, the same Spirit is worshipped. And so you find: "If the whole Church be assembled together, and all speak with tongues, and there come in one unlearned or unbelieving, will he not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one unlearned and unbelieving, he is convicted by all, he is judged by all. For the secrets of his heart are made manifest, and so falling down on his face he will worship God, declaring that God is in truth among you."¹⁹⁰ It is, therefore, God Who is worshipped, God Who abides and Who speaks in the prophets; but the Spirit thus abides and speaks, therefore, also, the Spirit is worshipped.

Chapter XIX.

Having proved above that the Spirit abides and speaks in the prophets, St. Ambrose infers that He knows all things which are of God, and therefore is One with the Father and the Son. This same point he establishes again from the fact that He possesses all that God possesses, namely, Godhead, knowledge of the heart, truth, a Name above every name, and power to raise the dead, as is proved from Ezekiel, and in this He is equal to the Son.

144. And So as the Father and the Son are One, because the Son has all things which the Father has, so too the Spirit is one with the Father and the Son, because He too knows all the things of God. For He did not obtain it by force, so that there should be any injury as of one who had suffered loss; He did not seize it, lest the loss should be his from whom it might seem to have been

plundered. For neither did He seize it through need, nor through superiority of greater power did He take it by force, but He possesses it by unity of power. Therefore, if He works all these things, for one and the same Spirit worketh all,¹⁹¹ how is He not God Who has all things which God has?

145. Or let us consider what God may have which the Holy Spirit has not. God the Father has Godhead, and the Son, too, in Whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead, has it, and the Spirit has it, for it is written: "The Spirit of God is in my nostrils."¹⁹²

146. God, again, searches the hearts and reins, for it is written: "God searcheth the hearts and reins."¹⁹³ The Son also has this power, Who said, "Why think ye evil in your hearts?"¹⁹⁴ For Jesus knew their thoughts. And the Spirit has the same power, Who manifests to the prophets also the secrets of the hearts of others, as we said above: "for the secrets of his heart are made manifest," And why do we wonder if He searches the hidden things of man Who searches even the deep things of God?

147. God has as an attribute that He is true for it is written: "Let God be true and every man a liar."¹⁹⁵ Does the Spirit lie Who is the Spirit of Truth?¹⁹⁶ and Whom we have shown to be called the Truth, since John called Him too the Truth, as also the Son? And David says in the psalm: "Send out Thy light and Thy truth, they have led me and brought me to Thy holy hill and to Thy tabernacles."¹⁹⁷ If you consider that in this passage the Son is the light, then the Spirit is the Truth, or if you consider the Son to be the Truth, then the Spirit is the light,

148. God has a Name which is above every name, and has given a name to the Son, as we read that in the Name of Jesus knees should bow. Let us consider whether the Spirit has this Name. But it is written "Go, baptize the nations in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."¹⁹⁸ He has, then, a Name above every name. What, therefore, the Father and the Son have, the Holy Spirit also has through the oneness of the Name of His nature.

149. It is a prerogative of God to raise the dead. "For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, so the Son also quickeneth whom He will."¹⁹⁹ But the Spirit also (by Whom God raiseth) raiseth them, for it is written: "He shall quicken also your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you."²⁰⁰ But that you may not think this a trivial grace, learn that the Spirit also raises, for the prophet Ezekiel says: "Come, O Spirit, and breathe upon these dead, and they shall live. And I prophesied as He commanded me, and the Spirit of life entered into them, and they lived, and stood up on their feet an exceeding great company."²⁰¹ And farther on God says: "Ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall open your graves, that I may bring My people out of their graves, and I will give you My Spirit, and ye shall live."²⁰²

150. When He spoke of His Spirit, did He mention any other besides the Holy Spirit? For He would neither have spoken of His Spirit as produced by blowing, nor could this Spirit come from the four quarters of the world, for the blowing of these winds, which we experience, is partial, not universal; and this spirit by which we live is also individual, not universal. But it is the nature of the Holy Spirit to be both over all and in all. Therefore from the words of the prophet we may see how (the flame-work of the members long since fallen asunder being scattered) the bones may come together again to the form of a revived body, when the Spirit quickens them; and the ashes may come together on the limbs belonging to them, animated by a disposition to come together before being formed anew in the appearance of living.

151. Do we not in the likeness of what is done recognize the oneness of the divine power? The Spirit raises after the same manner as the Lord raised at the time of His own Passion, when suddenly in the twinkling of an eye the graves of the dead were opened, and the bodies living again arose from the tombs, and the smell of death being removed, and the scent of life restored, the ashes of those who were dead took again the likeness of the living.

152. So, then, the Spirit has that which Christ has, and therefore what God has, for all things which the Father has the Son also has, and therefore He said: "All things which the Father hath are Mine."²⁰³

Chapter XX. The river flowing from the Throne of God is a figure of the Holy Spirit, but by the waters spoken of by David the powers of heaven are intended. The kingdom of God is the work of the Spirit; and it is no matter for wonder if He reigns in this together with the Son, since St. Paul promises that we too shall reign with the Son.

153. And this, again, is not a trivial matter that we read that a river goes forth from the throne of God. For you read the words of the Evangelist John to this purport: "And He showed me a river of living water, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street thereof, and on either side, was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruits, yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of all nations."²⁰⁴

154. This is certainly the River proceeding from the throne of God, that is, the Holy Spirit, Whom he drinks who believes in Christ, as He Himself says: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as saith the Scripture, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spoke He of the Spirit."²⁰⁵ Therefore the river is the Spirit.

155. This, then, is in the throne of God, for the water washes not the throne of God. Then, whatever you may understand by that water, David said not that it was above the throne of God, but above the heavens, for it is written: "Let the waters which are above the heavens praise the Name of the Lord."²⁰⁶ Let them praise, he says, not let it praise. For if he had intended us to understand the element of water, he would certainly have said, Let it praise, but by using the plural he intended the Powers to be understood.

156. And what wonder is it if the Holy Spirit is in the throne of God, since the kingdom of God itself is the work of the Holy Spirit, as it is written: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."²⁰⁷ And when the Saviour Himself says, "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be destroyed,"²⁰⁸ by adding afterwards, "But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out devils, without doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you."²⁰⁹ He shows that the kingdom of God is held undivided by Himself and by the Spirit.

157. But what is more foolish than for any one to deny that the Holy Spirit reigns together with Christ when the Apostle says that even we shall reign together with Christ in the kingdom of Christ: "If we are dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure, we shall also reign with Him."²¹⁰ But we by adoption, He by power; we by grace, He by nature.

158. The Holy Spirit, therefore, shares in the kingdom with the Father and the Son, and He is of one nature with Them, of one Lordship, and also of one power.

Chapter XXI.

Isaiah was sent by the Spirit, and accordingly the same Spirit was seen by him. What is meant by the revolving wheels, and the divers wings, and how since the Spirit is proclaimed Lord of Sabaoth by the Seraphim, certainly none but impious men can deny Him this title.

159. Since, then, He has a share in the kingdom, what hinders us from understanding that it was the Holy Spirit by Whom Isaiah was sent? For on the authority of Paul we cannot doubt, whose judgment the Evangelist Luke so much approved in the Acts of the Apostles as to write as follows in Paul's words: "Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying: Go to this people and say, Ye shall hear with the ear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive."²¹¹

160. It is, then, the Spirit Who sent Isaiah. If the Spirit sent him, it is certainly the Spirit Whom, after Uzziah's death, Isaiah saw, when he said: "I saw the Lord of Sabaoth sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the house was full of His majesty. And the Seraphim stood round about Him, each one had six wings, and with two they were covering His face, and with two they were covering His feet, and with two they were flying; and they cried out one to the other, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Sabaoth, the whole earth is full of His majesty."²¹²

161. If the Seraphim were standing, how were they flying? If they were flying, how were they standing? If we cannot understand this, how is it that we want to understand God, Whom we have not seen?

162. But as the prophet saw a wheel running within a wheel²¹³ (which certainly does not refer to any appearance to the bodily sight, but to the grace of each Testament; for the life of the saints is polished, and so consistent with itself that later portions agree with the former). The wheel, then, within a wheel is life under the Law, life under grace; inasmuch as Jews are within the Church, the Law is included in grace. For he is within the Church who is a Jew secretly; and circumcision of the heart is a sacrament within the Church. But that Jewry is within the Church of which it is written: "In Jewry is God known;"²¹⁴ therefore as wheel runs within wheel, so in like manner the wings were still, and the wings were flying.

163. In like manner, too, the Seraphim were veiling His face with two wings, and with two were veiling His feet, and with two were flying. For here also is a mystery of spiritual wisdom. Seasons stand, seasons fly; the past stand, the future are flying, and like the wings of the Seraphim, so they veil the face or the feet of God; inasmuch as in God, Who has neither beginning nor end, the whole course of times and seasons, from this knowledge of its beginning and its end, is at rest. So, then, times past and future stand, the present fly. Ask not after the secrets of His beginning or His end, for there is neither. You have the present, but you must praise Him, not question.

164. The Seraphim with unwearied voices praise, and do you question? And certainly when they do this they show us that we must not sometimes question about God, but always praise Him. Therefore the Holy Spirit is also the Lord of Sabaoth. Unless perchance the Teacher Whom Christ chose pleases not the impious, or they can deny that the Holy Spirit is the Lord of powers, Who gives whatever powers He Himself wills.

Chapter XXII. In proof of the Unity in Trinity the passage of Isaiah which has been cited is considered, and it is shown that there is no difference as to its sense amongst those who expound it of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Spirit. If He Who was crucified was Lord of glory, so, too, is

the Holy Spirit equal in all things to the Father and the Son, and the Arians will never be able to diminish His glory.

165. It is now possible to recognize the oneness of the majesty and rule in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For many say that it was God the Father Who was seen at that time by Isaiah. Paul says it was the Spirit, and Luke supports him. John the Evangelist refers it to the Son. or thus has he written of the Son:"These things spake Jesus, and departed and hid Himself from them. But though He had done so great signs before them, they did not believe on Him, that the word of Isaiah might be fulfilled which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the Arm of the Lord been revealed?²¹⁵ Therefore, they could not believe, because Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, that they might not see with their eyes and understand with their heart and be converted, and I should heal them.²¹⁶ These things said Isaiah when he saw His glory, and spake of Him."²¹⁷

166. John says that Isaiah spoke these words, and revealed most clearly that the glory of the Son appeared to him. Paul, however, relates that the Spirit said these things. Whence, then, is this difference?

167. There is, indeed, a difference of words, not of meaning. For though they said different things, neither was in error, for both the Father is seen in the Son, Who said, "He that seeth Me seeth the Father also,"²¹⁸ and the Son is seen in the Spirit; for as "no man says Lord Jesus, except in the Holy Spirit,"²¹⁹ so Christ is seen not by the eye of flesh, but by the grace of the Spirit. Whence, too, the Scripture says: "Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee."²²⁰ And Paul, when he had lost his eyesight, how did he see Christ except in the Spirit?²²¹ Wherefore the Lord says: "For to this end I have appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness of the things wherein thou hast seen Me, and of the things wherein thou shalt see Me."²²² For the prophets also received the Spirit and saw Christ.

168. One, then, is the vision, one the right to command, one the glory. Do we deny that the Holy Spirit is also the Lord of glory when the Lord of glory was crucified who was born from the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary? For Christ is not one of two, but is one, and was born as Son of God of the Father before the world; and in the world born as man by taking flesh.

169. And why should I say that, as the Father and the Son, so, too, the Spirit is free from stain and Almighty, for Solomon called Him in Greek pantodunamon, panepixopon, because He is Almighty and beholds all things,²²³ as we showed above to be,²²⁴ is read in the Book of Wisdom. Therefore the Spirit enjoys honour and glory.

170. Consider now lest perchance something may not beseem Him, or if this displease thee, O Arian, drag Him down from His fellowship with the Father and the Son. But if thou choose to drag Him down thou wilt see the heavens reversed above thee, for all their strength is from the Spirit.²²⁵ If thou choose to drag Him down, thou must first lay hands on God, for the Spirit is God. But how wilt thou drag Him down, Who searcheth the deep things of God?

1: Bk. II. 12.

2: Isa. lxi. 1 [LXX.].

3: S. Luke iv. 21.

4: S. John i. 33.
5: S. John i. 32.
6: S. John i. 33.
7: 1 Cor. ii. 12.
8: S. John xvi. 14.
9: Rom. viii. 2.
10: S. Luke iv. 18.
11: Isa. xlii. 12 ff. [LXX].
12: S. John xiv. 26.
13: S. John xv. 26.
14: Gal. i. 3, Gal. i. 4.
15: Isa. ix. 6.
16: S. John xiv. 16.
17: 1 Thess. iv. 8.
18: Isa. xlii. 5.
19: Isa. xlii. 6, Isa. xlii. 7.
20: Ex. xv. 6.
21: S. Luke xi. 20.
22: S. Matt. xii. 28.
23: Rom. i. 20.
24: Rom. i. 20.
25: 2 Cor. iii. 3.
26: Jer. xvii. 1.
27: 1 Cor. ii. 13, 1 Cor. ii. 14.
28: 1 Cor. ii. 13, 1 Cor. ii. 14.
29: 1 Cor. ii. 16.
30: Col. ii. 9.
31: Ex. xv. 6.
32: Ex. xv. 10.

33: 1 Cor. x. 1, 1 Cor. x. 2, 1 Cor. x. 3, 1 Cor. x. 4.
34: 1 Cor. vi. 11.
35: 1 Thess. v. 23.
36: S. John xvii. 17.
37: 1 Cor. i. 30.
38: 2 Thess. ii. 13.
39: Ps. xix. [xviii.] 1.
40: Ps. cii. [ci.] 26.
41: Ps. viii. 3.
42: Ps. xcii. 4.
43: Isa. lxvi. 2.
44: Ex. xxxiii. 22.
45: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 73.
46: Ps. vi. 1.
47: Ps. l. [xliv.] 21.
48: S. John xvi. 7, John xvi. 8.
49: S. Matt. x. 34.
50: Wisd. vii. 22, Wisd. vii. 23.
51: 1 Cor. ii. 15.
52: 1 Cor. xii. 8.
53: Hist. Sus. [Dan. iii.], 44, 45.
54: Gen. xx. 1 ff.
55: Dan. v. 14.
56: Dan. vi. 3.
57: Num. xi. 25.
58: 2 Thess. ii. 8.
59: S. Matt. x. 34.
60: Rev. xix. 15.
61: Eph. vi. 16, Eph. vi. 17.

62: Ezek. xvi. 43.

63: Eph. iv. 30.

64: Isa. lxiii. 10.

65: Ps. lxxviii. [lxvii.] 17, Ps. lxxviii. [lxvii.] 18.

66: 1 Cor. x. 9.

67: Gal. vi. 14.

68: Heb. iii. 7-11.

69: Isa. lxiii. 13, Isa. lxiii. 14.

70: Acts v. 9.

71: Rom. viii. 9.

72: Rom. viii. 10.

73: 2 Cor. xiii. 3.

74: 1 Cor. vii. 40.

75: Acts v. 3, Acts v. 4.

76: Acts v. 5.

77: S. John iii. 6. See below §63, n. 4.

78: "The charge is an admirable illustration of the groundlessness of such accusations of wilful corruption of Scripture. The words in question have no Greek authority at all, and are obviously a comment." Westcott on S. John v. 6.

79: Auxentius, a Cappadocian, was ordained priest a.d. 343 by Gregory, the violent opponent of St. Athanasius. After the synod of Milan a.d. 355, when the bishop of that see, Dionysius, having refused to renounce Athanasius and the Nicene faith, was banished, Auxentius was forcibly intruded as bishop, and, in spite of the efforts of St. Hilary of Poitiers and other Catholics, maintained his position till his death in 374.

80: The reference must be to the synods of Sirmium. In one held a.d. 351, against Photinus, there was a great attempt to make the semi-Arians appear orthodox, and St. Hilary accepted, while St. Athanasius rejected, their formula. Another synod was held a.d. 357, when the aged Hosius was tormented into accepting a formula, called by St. Hilary the "Sirmian blasphemy." Another, no less injurious to the faith, was held in 358, by the desire of Constantius. During this time-but forgeries and the loss of some patristic writings make the history of the whole period somewhat uncertain-dates the weakness of Liberius, so that St. Ambrose may well speak of *nutantibus sacerdotibus*. See Hefele, *Conc. Geschichte*, I. on the Sirmian synods; Athanasius, Vol. IV. in this series, p. 464 ff.; *Dict. Chr. Biog.* III. 171, art. "Hosius;" Socrates, H. E., in this series, Vol. II. pp. 56, 57, 58.

81: Isa. xliii. 25.

82: Ex. xxxii. 32.

83: S. John iii. 5.

84: S. John iii. 6. This is the full reading of the passage according to St. Ambrose, referred to above in §59.

85: S. John iii. 7, John iii. 8.

86: Eph. iv. 23.

87: Tit. iii. 5.

88: Acts xi. 16.

89: S. John iii. 12.

90: 1 John v. 6, 1 John v. 7, 1 John v. 8.

91: Rom. viii. 16, 92: S. John iv. 23, John iv. 24.

93: Rom. viii. 26.

94: Wisd. i. 4.

95: 1 Cor. xii. 3.

96: 1 Cor. xii. 4.

97: Ps. xii. [xi.] 1.

98: S. John xiv. 6.

99: S. John xx. 17 John xx. 18.

100: Rom. v. 20.

101: Heb. i. 6.

102: Ps. xcix. [xcviii.] 5.

103: S. Matt. xxviii. 17.

104: St. Ambrose here argues against Apollinarianism, who separated the two natures in Christ and taught that He should not be adored except in His Godhead, giving to the orthodox the nickname of anqrwpolatrai . The Apollinarians held that Christ was Qeoj sarkoforoj , as Nestortans made Him anqrwpoj Qeoforoj , instead of the proper Qeanqrwpoj . Apollinaris said Christ is oute anqrwpoj aploj, oute Qeoj, alla Qeou kai anqrwpou micij 105: Phil. iii. 3.

106: Deut. vi. 13.

107: Isa. lxvi. 1.

108: There can be no doubt that St. Ambrose held what is known as the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and is here asserting the custom of his day, viz., that Christ was worshipped as indivisibly God and Man in that Sacrament. Similar expressions are to be found in other Fathers, and in St. Ambrose elsewhere; e.g. De Fide, V. 10; De Mysteriis, §§52-54, 58. Bishop Andrewes, formerly of Winchester (ob. a.d. 1626), refers to St. Ambrose as follows: " Nos vero et in Mysteriis Carnem Christi adaramus cunct Ambrosio, et non id, sed eum qui super altare colitur. Nec Carnero manducamus quin adoremus prius cum Augustino. ...El Sacramentum tamen nulli adaremus. " Resp. ad Bellarmin, p. 195.

109: S. Luke i. 35.

110: Ps. civ. [ciii.] 24.

111: S. John i. 3.

112: Ps. xxxiii. [xxxii.] 6.

113: Col. i. 16.

114: 1 Cor. viii. 6.

115: Col. i. 16.

116: Bk. II. 8, 9.

117: Prov. viii. 27.

118: Gen. i. 26.

119: 2 Cor. iv. 6.

120: S. Matt. xvii. 6.

121: Ps. xcv. [xciv.] 6.

122: 2 Cor. iv. 6.

123: 1 Cor. iii. 16.

124: 1 Cor. vi. 19.

125: Lev. xxvi. 12.

126: Ps. xi. [x.] 4.

127: S. John xiv. 23.

128: 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

129: 1 Thess. iii. 12, 1 Thess. iii. 13.

130: 2 Thess. ii. 13.

131: S. John i. 33.

132: S. Luke iii. 22.

133: 2 Thess. iii. 5.

134: S. John xvi. 12, John xvi. 13.

135: Ps. cxliii. [cxlii.] 10.

136: 2 Cor. iii. 17.

137: 2 Cor. iii. 15-17.

138: 2 Cor. iii. 17, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

139: S. Matt. vi. 24.

140: S. Matt. xi. 25.

141: S. John xiii. 13.

142: Deut. vi. 4.

143: Gen. xix. 24.

144: 2 Tim. i. 18.

145: Ps. cx. [cix.] 1.

146: S. Matt. xxii. 43, S. Matt. xxii. 45.

147: Ps. xxx. [xxix.] 2.

148: S. John xx. 28.

149: This is, of course, to be understood as in the Athanasian Creed. The attributes of eternity, omnipotence, etc., are ascribed to each of the Three Persons, and we are then told that there are not three Eternals, etc. Each Person of the Holy Trinity possesses each attribute, but the attributes are all one and cannot be divided any more than the Godhead. Each Person is holy, but thoro are not, so to say, three separate Holinesses.

150: Isa. vi. 3.

151: S. John x. 29.

152: S. S. John x. 29, John x. 30.

153: S. John xvi. 14.

154: Ps. cxxviii. [cxxvii.] 3.

155: Ps. xcii. [xci.] 12.

156: Ps. ci. [c.] 2.

157: Prov. v. 16.

158: Ps. lxxxi. [lxxx.] 10.

159: S. John x. 30.

160: 2 Cor. ii. 14.

161: S. John x. 31.

162: 2 Cor. v. 16.

163: Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 72, Ps. cxix. [cxviii.] 73.

164: Phil. ii. 6, Phil. ii. 7.

165: S. Matt. xxvi. 12.

166: S. Luke vii. 47.

167: Wisd. i. 4.

168: Isa. lv. 1.

169: St. Ambrose is not quite accurate here in his proportions, though the point is in itself immaterial. The denarius, or "penny," was worth about ninepence, and was the day wage of a labourer; the shekel or "piece of silver," was worth more, being of the value of four denarii. Thirty shekels was the price of a slave.

170: Isa. lv. 1, Isa. lv. 2.

171: S. Matt. vii. 21.

172: S. Luke xxii. 48.

173: Book I. 1.

174: S. Matt. xix. 17.

175: S. Luke v. 21.

176: Rom. i. 25.

177: Deut. vi. 13.

178: 1 Pet. ii. 22.

179: Wisd. vii. 22.

180: S. John xx. 22.

181: S. Mark ii. 7.

182: Cp. B. II. 5, 6.

183: Job xxxiii. 4.

184: Ps. civ. [ciii.] 29, Ps. civ. [ciii.] 30.

185: Rom. i. 25.

186: Heb. iii. 4.
187: Deut. vi. 13.
188: Heb. i. 6.
189: Phil. iii. 3.
190: 1 Cor. xiv. 23-25.
191: 1 Cor. xii. 11.
192: Job xxvii. 3.
193: Ps. vii. 9.
194: S. Matt. ix. 4.
195: Rom. iii. 4.
196: S. John xvi. 13.
197: Ps. xliii. [xlii.] 3.
198: S. Matt. xxviii. 19.
199: S. John v. 21.
200: Rom. viii. 11.
201: Ezek. xxxvii. 9, Ezek. xxxvii. 10.
202: Ezek. xxxvii. 13, Ezek. xxxvii. 14.
203: S. John xvi. 15.
204: Rev. xxii. 1, Rev. xxii. 2.
205: S. John vii. 37, John vii. 38.
206: Ps. cxlviii. 4.
207: Rom. xiv. 17.
208: S. Matt. xii. 25.
209: S. Matt. xii. 27.
210: 2 Tim. ii. 11, 2 Tim. ii. 12.
211: Acts xxviii. 25, Acts xxviii. 26.
212: Isa. vi. 1-3.
213: Ezek. i. 16.
214: Ps. lxxvi. [lxxv] 1.

215: Isa. liii. 1.
216: Isa. vi. 10.
217: S. John xii. 36-41.
218: S. John xiv. 9.
219: 1 Cor. xii. 3.
220: Eph. v. 14.
221: Acts ix. 8.
222: Acts xxvi. 16.
223: Wisd. vii. 22.
224: B. III. 18.
225: Ps. xxxiii. [xxxii.] 6.

On the Instruction of the Virgin and the Perpetual Virginité of Mary

The Book of Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, On the Instruction of the Virgin and the Perpetual Virginité of Saint Mary, to Eusebius.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.
- Chapter XII.
- Chapter XIII.
- Chapter XIV.
- Chapter XV.
- Chapter XVI.
- Chapter XVII.
- In Exhortation to Virginité Admonition

Chapter I.

It is rightfully said that parents have a greater concern for a consecrated virgin than for the rest of their offspring. How excellent is that consecration, especially when it comes to silence, which truly commends the modesty of virginité no less than the Church, whose entire glory comes from within,

and which we ought to imitate in our prayers.

Entrust to me your pledge, which is also mine, the sacrament of the Lord's Ambrosia: and with devout affection you assert that it surpasses all other concerns. And truly it is so in the faithful mind; for you instruct others to leave their homes and unite with strangers, but you will always have this with you: in all other matters you embrace them with the bond of a father's piety; in this you go beyond even a father, and with a vow and zeal you advance, so as to please God. Although it is a more excellent reason for prayers, nevertheless only she may repay whatever you owe for herself and for all her children. This is the sacrifice that Abel offered from the firstborn lambs of his flock (Gen. IV, 4). This sacrifice is praised by the Apostle above all others, saying to the Corinthians: 'For he who is firmly established in his heart, and judges in his heart to keep his virgin, does well. Therefore, he who joins his virgin to marriage does well; and he who does not join her does better' (I Cor. VII, 37, 38). Thus, when David beautifully described the grace of the Church, whose glory is all within and not without (for in good thoughts, and in an immaculate desire for chastity, and in a sincere intention of conscience is the highest praise), he added: 'Virgins shall be brought after her to the King' (Psalm. XLIV, 15, 16). And turning to the Lord the Father, he said, 'They shall be brought near to you: they shall be brought near with joy and exultation, they shall be led into the temple of the king.'

What is closer than that which draws near to Christ, to whom the Word says: Arise, come, my closest ((.....)) and my dove; for behold, winter has passed (Song of Songs II, 10, 11)? Before receiving the Word of God, it was a dishonorable winter, without fruit: but when it received the Word of God, and the world was crucified to it, it became summer. Finally, being vaporized by the fervor of the Holy Spirit, it began to be a flower, and to breathe the fragrance of faith, the aroma of chastity, the sweetness of grace.

Hence also elsewhere it is added: Your eyes are like doves behind your veil (Song of Songs 4:1); because the whole spiritual and simple soul, like a dove, in whose likeness the Holy Spirit was seen descending by John, sees spiritual things and knows to keep silent about the mysteries that it sees. For it is not a small virtue to keep silent; for there is a time to be silent, just as there is a time to speak, as it is also written: The Lord has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary (Isaiah 50:4).

Therefore, the gift of virginity is a certain modesty, which is commended by silence. Therefore, the glory of the Church is inward, not in much speaking, but in the senses or in the innermost recesses of the sacraments, as she herself says to the Bridegroom: Who will give you to me as a brother, sucking the breasts of my mother? Finding you outside, I will kiss you, and indeed they will not despise me. I will take you, and bring you into the house of my mother, and into the secret place of the one who conceived me (Song of Songs 8:1-2). And above he says: The king brought me into his chamber (Song of Songs 1:3). The Church kisses Christ outside and is led by Him into the bedroom. He kissed her outside, when, like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, he rejoiced like a giant to run his course (Psalm. XVIII, 6). Like a giant he is outside; because he did not consider being equal to God as a robbery, he took on the form of a servant (Phil. II, 6, 7). Therefore, he became outside, who was inside. See him inside, when you read what is in the Father's bosom: recognize him outside, when he seeks us, to redeem us. He went outside so that he could be inside with me and become in the middle of us. So let us be there, where Christ is in

the midst, rooted and fixed in our hearts. And therefore, as he himself commanded: When you pray, go into your inner room (Matt. VI, 6), and pour out your soul upon yourself; your inner room is your secret chamber, your inner room is your conscience. Finally, Ecclesiastes says to you: Do not curse the king even in your conscience, and do not curse the rich man in the innermost chambers (Eccles. X, 20). Therefore, pray and pray in secret, so that He who hears in secret may hear you: and pray without anger and dispute, having cast aside the hidden shame (I Tim. II, 8): For the just man does not fear the betrayal of a crime, but the contagion.

Chapter II.

The speech should begin with the praises of God, and after our requests have been stated, it should end in expressions of gratitude. It should also be recommended with peace and tranquility, in which the Evangelical passage is most clearly explained, which commands the virgins to observe.

What a good speech with mercy! A good speech that preserves order, so that we begin with divine praises first. For if when we act in the presence of a man, we want to make a good impression, how much more when we pray to our Lord! Therefore, let us first offer to God the sacrifice of praise; hence the Apostle says: I beseech you therefore, first of all, to offer prayers, supplications, and thanksgivings (I Tim. II, 1).

Let the eighth psalm of David teach you, which begins with the praise of God: O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is your name in all the earth! For your magnificence is elevated above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have perfected praise (Psalm 8:2 et seq.). Thus far the prayer: then follows the supplication, that the enemy be destroyed; the request, that he see the moon and the stars; the moon representing the Church, the stars representing the children of the Church, shining with the light of heavenly grace: and what he asks, he promises to see in the spirit of prophecy: a thanksgiving, because the Lord defends man, and confirms this by the divine visitation of our earthly bodies; or because he has subjected to man all the different kinds of living creatures.

Similarly, the Lord's Prayer encompasses everything, which there is no need to translate into the vernacular. But you, who are reading this, recognize how you should distinguish; especially, as I said, the prayer should be commended, as I have mentioned, with calmness of mind and tranquility; so that each person remains true to themselves and matches, and that which is written may be fulfilled: If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew 18:19, 20). Who are these two, if not soul and body? Where Paul chastised his own flesh, and brought it into subjection (I Cor. IX, 27); so that his flesh might be subject to his soul as to its empress, and obey the commands of his mind; so that there would not be discord and war within one man, and the law of the mind would not oppose the law of the body. Therefore, he united these two different things in a certain way and peace, as he himself affirmed, saying: For Christ is our peace, who made both one and broke down the middle wall of partition, making enmities in his flesh (Ephes. II, 14); so that he would not do what he did not want, and he would do what he hated. These, therefore, are two, the soul and the flesh. Hence also David says: I will not fear what the flesh may do to me, which he recognized as an adversary to his soul. (Psalm 55:5)

However, these two, to express more clearly, are not only two, but also two men, one interior, the other exterior. If these two, united in equality, converge with their thoughts in actions, and with their actions in thoughts, the wheel of our life will turn without any offense, as it is written: Let the voice of your thunder be heard in the wheel (Psalm 76:19). Therefore, these two are one; not only one, but one man. And the Apostle says: That he might make in himself of twain one new man, making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby And that he might reconcile both, unto God in one body, by the cross, having slain the enmities in himself (Ephes. II, 15 et seq.) .

There are also two men, old and new. That old man is guilty and obsolete, worn and torn like old clothing, whom we affix to the cross in baptism. Hence the Apostle says: Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin (Rom. VI, 6). Therefore, the old is affixed, in order to die to sin; so that the new may arise, who is renewed by grace. Diximus de duobus.

Perhaps someone may say: What do you say about the three, since Scripture says: For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20)? The reason is also evident; for the same Apostle says: Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Therefore, where these three are present in their entirety, there Christ is in their midst: He who governs and rules them within, and establishes faithful peace.

Therefore, let this virgin preserve these three things intact above all others; that she may give no cause for complaint concerning sacred virginity, and may be blameless, without wrinkle, without stain. Although we may have spoken of this in frequent books, nevertheless, for the sake of the mentioned pledge, we have decided to entrust this book to you for preservation.

Chapter III.

It is not to be blamed that the female sex, to whom such great gifts have been bestowed by God, was not created immediately after man; for God approved of this, both because the dignity of man does not consist in the body but in the soul and the divine image, and because man is to be praised only at the end of the whole work, and finally because woman had not yet been created, who was both formed from man himself and was to express the likeness of a great sacrament with him; from which it is also evident that she received her name.

Good virginity, which not only absolves both sexes from sin, but also leads them to grace. However, we often accuse the female sex, which has brought about the cause of error: and we do not consider how much more justly the reproach is turned back on us. For, in order to go back to the beginning and inquire into the origins of things, we will investigate how much has been given to her: and how much grace the woman has nevertheless found in the miserable condition of human frailty. For when God has praised all His works, the heavens, the earth, the seas, the night and the day, because they have all contributed to the use of labor, and have all led to the enjoyment of rest, He has praised wild beasts also. But when it came to man, he alone does not seem to be praised, for whose sake all these creatures were made. (Gen. II, 10 et seq.) What could be the reason for this, except perhaps that other creatures are visible in their species, while man is

concealed? You will find nothing more in beasts than what is visible; in man, nothing is lower than what is visible. Although man consists of both soul and body, the body serves what is visible in man, while what is invisible governs it.

Therefore, rightly so, other things are praised at the beginning, but the praise of this one is not displayed, but reserved; because the favor of others is outward, while the favor of this one is inward: the favor of others is in birth, while the favor of this one is in the heart. For what is as lofty and as profound as the mind of man, which is covered and hidden as if by a certain wrapping of the body; so that it is not easily seen and examined by anyone? Therefore, man is not praised first, because he must be tested not in outward appearance, but in the inner man, and then he is worthy of being proclaimed: whom the apostle Peter beautifully described as a hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptibility of a quiet and modest spirit, which is rich before God (1 Peter 3:4).

Therefore, it is deservedly postponed, so that his borrowed praise may follow: for its delay is not a loss, but an increase. Therefore, let no one despise himself as if he were worthless, nor esteem himself by the appearance of his body. For even though the holy Job may say, 'Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither' (Job 1:21), nevertheless he had something by which he would be found rich not only among men, but also before God. But what can be richer than that which is according to the image and likeness of God? According to the image, however, man is exterior, not this interior one: the one who is valued by sensation, not comprehended by the eyes. Therefore, he must be observed who is investigated more deeply. Therefore, God did not think that the structure of man should be praised; because the greater portion of him is in virtue. Indeed, it is a splendid species, and more excellent than other animals: but let the irrationals be valued by the species of the body; however, those which are full of reason, they should separate themselves for common praise.

Therefore, this person should be admired and stand out not only in appearance but also in attitude; so that they may be praised in those things in which even God is praised by prophetic judgment, of whom it is written: 'Awesome in his counsels over the sons of men' (Psalm 65:5): whose works may shine before God, who weaves together good deeds without ceasing; and therefore, praise for him is not at the beginning, but at the end: for no one is crowned unless they have competed lawfully. Therefore the Wise Man says to you: Do not praise any man before his death (Eccles. XI, 30). He explained the reason for this, saying: Because at the end of a man's life, his deeds are revealed (Ibid., 29).

Let us consider the third [aspect], in which God revealed His judgment; for when He had made man and placed him in paradise to work and to guard [it], He said it was not good for man to be alone. Let us make, He said, a helper for him corresponding to him [Gen. II, 18]. Therefore, without woman, man does not have praise; in woman it is proclaimed. For when He says it is not good for man to be alone, He certainly confirms that it is good for the human race if the female sex is joined to the male sex. At the same time, it must be considered that just as man was made from the earth and clay, woman was made from man. And while flesh is clay, man was still shapeless, while woman was formed.

Now let us consider the excellent example of the Apostles, which we have written: For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church (Ephesians 5:31-32).

Therefore, we observe that through the woman, that heavenly mystery of the Church is fulfilled, in which grace is prefigured, for which Christ descended and completed that eternal work of human redemption. And Adam called the name of his wife Life (Gen. II, 23); for in people also the succession and propagation of human life is spread through a woman, and through the Church eternal life is conferred.

Chapter IV.

The sin of the woman being lighter than that of the man is proven by the difference of sex, the reason of temptation, divine sentence, and the responses of both. After which, remedies against the temptations of women are prescribed to men: in these, the imitation of their fasting is especially emphasized.

Certainly we cannot deny that a woman has made a mistake. But why are you surprised if she has made a mistake, when the weaker sex is more prone to error, even though error is also a characteristic of the stronger sex? A woman has an excuse in sin, a man does not. As Scripture asserts, she was deceived by the wisest of all serpents, you were deceived by a woman: that is, a superior creature deceived her, an inferior creature deceived you; for even though she was deceived by an evil one, she was still an angel. If you could not resist an inferior being, how could she resist a superior being? Your fault absolves her.

If you doubt the merit of guilt, let us ask for the opinion. It is said to them: In sorrow you will bear children, and your turning shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you (Genesis, 3:16). But to the man it is said: You are dust, and to dust you shall return (Genesis, 3:19). And truly a just opinion; since if Adam could not keep what he heard from the Lord God, how could the woman keep what she heard from the man? If God's voice did not confirm him, how could this voice confirm her?

Finally, Adam, having tasted the divine precepts that he had heard in person, had nothing to say, except that the woman had given it to him, and he had eaten it. But the woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.' How much greater is the woman's absolution! He is accused, she is questioned. Add to this, that he also confesses his guilt beforehand; for the woman who says that she was deceived, testifies to her mistake. Therefore, confession is the remedy for error. In the very judgment, how much more merciful is a woman towards a man! He accused his own wife; she, on the other hand, did not turn back the accusation against the serpent, that is, she did not accuse him of a crime; but she preferred to absolve her very accuser, if she could, rather than bind him.

Therefore, you have both the forgiveness of sin in confession and the executing of the sentence. In sorrow, it says, you will bear children. He recognizes the weight of his condemnation and carries out the punishment of his condition. For you, a woman fights through her sufferings and finds recompense from punishment so that she may be set free through the children by whom she is afflicted. Thus, grace is given from injury, salvation from weakness; for it is written: She will be saved through the bearing of children (I Tim. II, 15). With health, therefore, she gives birth to those whom she conceived in sadness: and she educates for praise those whom she bore with pain. But you say, O man, that woman is a temptation to man. That is true. But if she is virtuous, behold another temptation. However, when Abraham went down to Egypt, the beauty of his wife did not

harm him, but rather benefited him; for he was honored through his wife, not ridiculed because of her (Gen. XII, 16, 20). But why do you seek beauty in a spouse more than good character? Let the wife be pleasing by virtue rather than physical appearance. Let her be chosen who resembles Sarah in her character. It is not a fault of a woman to be born as such, but it is a fault of a man to seek in a wife that which he often desires; in which, if she is weaker, the woman herself fails; if stronger, the man is at risk. We cannot condemn the work of the divine creator; but just as physical beauty delights someone, much more should that inner beauty, which is closer to the image of God, delight.

Therefore, if a wife is a temptation, be more cautious, seek a remedy against the danger of temptation: Watch, he says, and pray, so that you may not enter into temptation (Matthew 16:13). The Lord said this, the man heard, the woman fulfilled. Women fast every day, and perform fasts without being commanded: they acknowledge the sin, they seek the remedy. Once, a woman ate in violation of the prohibition, and she daily fulfills it with fasting. Whoever follows someone who is in error, follow them when they are correcting themselves. You both have eaten, why does she alone fast? This is, you both have made a mistake, why does she alone seek a remedy for the error?

Chapter V.

Thus, the sentence of condemnation is understood to be in Sarah as being freed, but much more so in Mary, who gave birth to God while remaining a virgin and also exhibited the sign of the same virtue. How shamelessly the heretics have denied that the virgin herself persisted, whose arguments are refuted by evidence from the Gospels.

Come, Eve, now sober; come, Eve, even though you were once intemperate, now fasting in your offspring. Come, Eve, now such that you are not excluded from paradise, but are taken up into heaven. Come, Eve, now Sarah, who will bear sons not in sadness, but in rejoicing; not in mourning, but in laughter. Isaac will be born to you many times. Come again, Eve, now Sarah, of whom it is said to her husband: Listen to your wife Sarah (Gen. XXI, 12). Although it is appropriate for you to be subject to your husband, you quickly overturned the sentence, so that your husband may be commanded to listen to you.

If that woman deserved to be heard by a man by giving birth to the type of Christ, how much does the sex that generated Christ, while preserving her virginity, prevail! Come, therefore, Eve, now Mary, who brought us not only the incentive of virginity but also God. Hence, with great joy and jubilation, Isaiah says about such a gift: Behold, a virgin shall conceive in her womb, and shall bring forth a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:14), which is interpreted as 'God with us' (Matthew 1:23). Whence this gift? Not from the earth, surely, but from heaven. Christ chose for himself a vessel through which he would descend and consecrated the temple of modesty. He descended through one, but called many. Hence, Mary, the special one of the Lord, found this name, which means: God from my lineage.

Many things were said before Mary: for Mary, the sister of Aaron, was also called Mary (Exod. XV, 20, 23); but that Mary was called the bitterness of the sea. Therefore, the Lord came into the bitterness of human frailty, so that the bitterness of our condition may be sweetened by the sweetness and grace of the heavenly Word. This was signified by the fountain of Merrha through

the sweetened wood; because the bitter people of the nations, before sins, or our flesh by the tempering of the passion of the Lord, may be changed for other uses.

Therefore, Mary, who raised the banner of sacred virginity and the pure flag of integrity for Christ, is truly distinguished. And yet, even though everyone is called to imitate the holy virginity of Mary, there were some who denied that she remained a virgin. We have long preferred to remain silent about this great sacrilege, but because the matter has been brought into the open in such a way that even the Bishop himself was accused of her fall, we believe it should not be left unpunished; especially since we read that she was a woman, as the Lord himself said to the one who told him at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, 'They have no wine,' he replied, 'Woman, what does this have to do with me and with you?' (John 2:3,5). And elsewhere we read what Matthew said about Joseph and Mary: 'She was found to be with child before they came together, having conceived by the Holy Spirit' (Matt. 1:18). And later: 'He did not know her until she had given birth' (ibid., 1:19). And again about Joseph: 'He did not want to expose her' (Matt. 12:47). And the brothers of the Lord seem to indicate that they were born of Mary. And the Apostle says: 'But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law' (Gal. 4:4). What needs to be clarified for us is that the one who reads it is not bound by this type of conversation. Therefore, let us respond in its proper order.

About the name of woman, what are we moved by? It relates to the sex; for it is not a corruption, but a term for the sex. Common usage does not prejudice the truth. Finally, virginity first received this name; for when God had taken one of Adam's ribs and had formed flesh in its place, He built it, He said, into a woman (Gen. II, 22). Indeed, she had not yet known man, and already she was called woman. Holy Scripture also does not keep silent about the reason for this name, saying: for Adam said: Bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. This will be called woman, because she was taken from her husband. Because she was taken, it says, from her husband, not because she had known a man. Therefore, as long as she was in paradise, she was called woman and was not known by man. But when she was expelled from paradise, it is then written that Adam knew his wife Eve, and then she conceived and bore a son. Thus, the first knot was untied. The second question, because it is written, Before they came together, she was found to be with child (Matt. 1:18). However, the custom of divine Scripture is that it presents the cause that has been undertaken and defers the incident. The third question is also resolved, in which it is said: She did not know it until she gave birth to the Son (Ibid., 19). So what then? Did she know afterwards? No. Finally, you have it written: I am God, and I am until you grow old (Isaiah XLVI, 4). Therefore, did God cease to exist after those to whom it was said grew old? Likewise, in the prophecy of David we read: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet (Psalm CIX, 1). Did the Son, who refused to be worshiped by the nations of subject peoples that were once seen as enemies and denied the author of salvation, cease to sit at the right hand of the Father, or will he not sit there forever? But what harm did it do to Mary, if Joseph did not understand the mystery of the heavenly plan and thought that the virgin whom he saw was not pregnant? The angels also did not know about her resurrection, as the words imply: Lift up your gates, O leaders, and be lifted up, O everlasting gates, and the King of glory will enter. Who is this King of glory (Psalm 24:7-8)? They ask as if they do not know, and others answer: The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, he is the King of glory. And the Prophet repeated the same verses, and nonetheless they, as if ignorant, asked again; for thus it is written: Lift up your

gates, O princes, and be lifted up, O eternal gates, and the King of glory shall enter in. Who is this King of glory (Psalm 24:7-10)? Therefore, how was a man able to know a divine secret that the angels did not know? And in the book of Isaiah you have: Who is this that comes from Edom, with his garments stained red from Bozrah (Isaiah 63:1)? And surely it was less for a man to be resurrected than for a virgin to give birth. For indeed, by the prayers of Elijah and the prayers of Elisha, the dead had been resurrected (3 Kings 17:22); but never before, never afterwards, did a virgin give birth (4 Kings 4:17). But he thought that he should divorce her, as if she were guilty, before he was warned by the angel (Matt. 1:20); but afterwards he kept the oracle of her chastity as a faithful and undoubting man.

Chapter VI. After the other two objections have been resolved regarding the same matter, it is added that it would have been absurd if Christ had not chosen his mother to remain in virginity, or if he had denied her the most remarkable gifts of virginity. And let not this disturb us, which he says, 'Because Joseph took his wife and went into Egypt' (Matt. 1, 24); for a woman, when betrothed, takes the name of her husband. For when marriage is contracted, the name of marriage is assumed; it is not the deflowering of virginity that makes marriage, but the marital agreement. In conclusion, when a girl is joined, it is marriage, not when it is known by a man's admixture. But what was espoused by marriage, although we have spoken more fully elsewhere, it is enough now to mention the cause of the heavenly mystery; so that those who saw Mary with a heavy womb would believe not in the adultery of her virginity, but in the legitimate birth of one espoused. For the Lord preferred that some should doubt of his own generation rather than doubt the honor of his mother.

Moreover, the Lord himself teaches that brothers may be called the fellowship of the family and the people, when he says: I will tell your name to my brothers; in the midst of the Church I will praise you (Psalm 21:23). Paul also says: I wished myself to be an anathema for the sake of my brothers (Romans 9:3). However, the brothers could be from Joseph, not from Mary. Indeed, if someone were to pursue this further, they would find it. We did not consider it necessary to pursue this, since it is clear that the name of brotherhood is common to many. But if the Lord Jesus had chosen her as His mother, who could defile the heavenly court with the seed of man, as if she to whom it would be impossible to preserve the custody of virgin modesty? By whose example the rest are provoked to a study of integrity, she herself would deviate from the function that would be intended for others by herself. And what could be greater than the reward the Lord bestowed upon His mother, whom He honored above all others? For He deemed no gift more abundant than virginity, as Scripture teaches us. For thus the Lord spoke through Isaiah: Let not the eunuch say, I am but a dry tree. Thus says the Lord to the eunuchs: Whoever keeps my commandments, and chooses what I desire, and embraces my covenant, I will give them a place in my house and on my wall, a name better than sons and daughters, an everlasting name will I give them, which shall not be cut off (Isa. 56:3 et seq.). He promises others that they will not fail: did he allow his mother to fail? But Mary does not fail, the teacher of virginity does not fail; nor could it be possible that she who carried God would think of carrying a human being: nor would the righteous Joseph have fallen into such madness, to mingle with the mother of the Lord in physical union.

Chapter VII. When it was proven that Mary persevered in virginity, from the fact that she was given to the disciple as a mother, the objective of her virginity is confirmed to not have been able to be changed by her, whose such constancy shone forth in the passion of the Son, and whose such

virtue shone forth in the exultation of John the Baptist. But nevertheless, let Mary be defended by her own, not others', customs. She did not fail, as I have said. The Son of God himself is a witness, who when he was on the cross, entrusted his disciple to his mother as a son: he handed her over to the disciple as a mother (John 19:26-27). This was taught by John, who wrote more mystical things; for the other Evangelists wrote that during the Passion of the Lord, the earth quaked, the sun fled, forgiveness was asked for the persecutors. But he, the beloved of the Lord, who had drawn secret wisdom from his heart, and the hidden mysteries of his pious will, diligently pursued this, so that he might prove by his judgment the perseverance of maternal virginity (John 13:23); as if he were a son concerned about his mother's modesty, lest anyone should tarnish her with such contempt for her integrity. For it was fitting that He who granted forgiveness to the thief should absolve the mother of doubtful modesty. For He says to His mother: Woman, behold thy son! And He says to the disciple: Behold thy mother! (Luke 23:43). He Himself is the disciple to whom His mother is entrusted. How could He take a wife to Himself if Mary had been joined in marriage, or had known the use of the marriage bed?

Close your mouths, wicked ones; open your ears, pious ones; listen to what Christ is saying. The Lord Jesus testifies about the cross (John 19:26) and delays for a moment the public salvation, so as not to leave his mother dishonored. John subscribes to the testament of Christ. Let there be read in defense of the mother's modesty, a testimony of her integrity; let there also be read the disciple's custody of the mother, out of grace for piety. And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own (Ibid. 27). Not in fact did Christ make a divorce, nor did Mary leave her husband. But with whom should the virgin dwell, other than with the one whom she knew to be the guardian of her integrity, the heir of her sons? The mother stood before the cross, and to the fleeing men, she stood fearless. See whether the mother of Jesus could change her modesty, who did not change her spirit. She looked with pious eyes upon the wounds of her son, through whom she knew the future redemption would come. The mother stood, no less brave than the spectacle, who did not fear the executioner. The son was hanging on the cross, and the mother offered herself to the persecutors. If this were the only reason, that she would be prostrated before her son, the commendable affection of piety should be praised, because she did not want to survive her son; but truly, if she were to die with her son, she desired to rise with him, knowing the mystery that she had given birth to would also be resurrected. At the same time, she knew that she was offering her own death for the public good, and she awaited if by chance her own death would add anything to the public duty. But the passion of Christ did not lack assistance, as the Lord himself predicted long before: And I looked, and there was no helper: And I sought, and no one took notice; and I will deliver them by my own arm (Isaiah 63:5).

So, how was it that the integrity of Mary, who did not fear the punishments but offered herself to dangers while the apostles were fleeing? Her grace was so great, that not only did she preserve the grace of her virginity in herself, but also bestowed the mark of integrity on those she visited. She visited John the Baptist, and leaped in the womb of his mother before he was born (Luke 1:41). At the sound of Mary's voice, the baby rejoiced, obeying her before he was even born. And so it is no wonder that he remained pure in body, whom the mother of the Lord exercised with the oil of her presence and the balm of her integrity for three months. And afterwards she entrusted herself to John the Evangelist, not knowing marriage. Therefore, I am not surprised that he spoke the divine mysteries more than others, to whom the court of heavenly sacraments was present.

Chapter VIII.

The testimonies of Ezekiel, especially those concerning the gate that should not be opened, align with Mary, for through her alone Christ passed without the gate being opened, and he strengthened her in such a way that even Joseph did not open it afterwards.

Now let those who sow this question tell me, what is it that the Lord says through the prophet: 'Now I will bring back the captivity of Jacob, and I will have mercy on the house of Israel' (Ezekiel 39:25). And further, 'I will gather them from the nations, and assemble them from the countries of the nations, and I will be sanctified in them in the sight of the nations: and they shall know that I am the Lord their God, when I appear to them among the nations; and I will no longer hide my face from them, for I have poured out my wrath upon the house of Israel,' says the Lord (ibid., 27 et seq.). And below, the prophet says that he saw on a very high mountain the construction of a city (Ezek. XL, 2 et seq.), whose gates are signified by many; however, one gate is described as closed, about which he says: I turned toward the way of the outer gate of the holy sanctuary, which faces east, and it was closed. And the Lord said to me: This gate will be closed, and it will not be opened, and no one will pass through it; for the Lord God of Israel will pass through it. And it will be closed, since the Lord will sit in it, to eat bread in the sight of the Lord. According to the way of the gate of the East, he will enter and by its way he will leave (Ezekiel 44:1-3). What is this gate, if not Mary; closed because she is a virgin? Therefore, Mary is the gate through which Christ entered into this world, when he was born of a virgin, and the locks of virginity were not opened. The barrier of modesty remained intact, and the seals of integrity remained unbroken; when he came forth from the virgin, whom the world could not contain in her greatness.

He said, 'This door will be closed and will not be opened.' Good is the door of Mary, which was closed and was not being opened. Christ passed through it, but did not open it. And so that we may teach that every man has a gate through which Christ enters: 'Lift up, O gates, your lintels, reach up, you ancient doors, and the King of glory will come in' (Psalm 23:7). Therefore, how much more was the gate in Mary, in whom Christ dwelled and departed? For she was also the gate of the womb. Hence holy Job says: 'Let the stars of its night be dimmed; let it not close the doors of my mother's womb' (Job 3:9, 10).

There is, therefore, a door of the womb, but it is not always closed; rather, only one could remain closed, through which the birth of a virgin came forth without the expense of the genital organs. Therefore, the prophet says (Ezekiel 44:2): 'This door shall be closed; it shall not be opened, and no one shall pass through it,' that is, no human being, for the Lord God of Israel shall pass through it. And it shall be closed, that is, before and after the passage of the Lord it shall be closed, and it shall not be opened by anyone, nor is it open; for she always had her own gate, Christ, who said: 'I am the gate' (John 10:7), which no one could take away from her. This gate faced the east; because it shed true light, it brought forth the East, and gave birth to the Sun of Righteousness. Let the foolish therefore hear: This gate, he says, will be closed, which only receives the God of Israel. Therefore, can't he strengthen his gate, of whom it was said to the Church: Because he has strengthened the bars of your gates (Ps. Xclvii, 13)? But he has indeed strengthened it, and kept it intact. Finally, it is not open.

Therefore, let them hear the prophet saying: It shall not be opened, and it shall be closed, that is, it shall not be opened by the one to whom she is betrothed; for it is not permitted for it to be opened

through which the Lord will pass. And after him, he says, it shall be closed, that is, it shall not be opened by Joseph; for it will be said to him: Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for what is born of her is of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20).

Chapter IX.

How is virginity signified by various symbols, and what should sacred virgins learn from each of them?

Therefore, a closed gate is virginity: and a closed garden is virginity: and a sealed fountain is virginity. Listen, maiden, more diligently with open ears, and with modesty kept, open your hands, that the poor may recognize you: close the door, lest the tempter enter: open your mind, preserve your seal. The virginity is also like a branch from a root, for it is written: There shall come forth a branch from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up from his root (Isaiah 11:1). This branch is not hollow, but solid. Therefore, no one shall break your branch in order to preserve your flower. You are the branch, O virgin, you shall not bend, you shall not be bent down to the ground, so that the flower of the paternal root may ascend in you.

You are a closed garden, O virgin, keep your fruits: let thorns not rise up in you, but let your grapes flourish. You are a closed garden, O daughter, let no one take away the hedge of your modesty: for it is written: And the serpent shall bite him that breaketh into the hedge (Eccles. X, 8). But let him alone take away that which is said: What is cut away from the hedge (Gen. XXXVIII, 29)? Let no one destroy your wall, lest you be trampled upon. O virgin, beware of being another Eve.

You are a sealed fountain, virgin; no one shall pollute your waters, no one shall disturb you; so that you may always contemplate your image in your fountain.

You are a closed door, virgin, let no one open your door, which the Holy and True One has once closed, who has the key of David, who opens, and no one shuts: let no one open who shuts (Apocalypse 3:7). He has opened the Scriptures to you, let no one close them: he has closed your shame, let no one open it.

Chapter X.

It is affirmed that virginity is a crown in the hand of the Lord, whom Scripture does not portray as equal to the Father and the Spirit. Heretics object to this text of the Gospel, but the Catholic faith in the Trinity is confirmed by other testimonies.

'Come,' he said, 'quickly, hold on to what you have, so that no one may take your crown' (Rev. III, 11). What is your crown but that of which it is said: 'And you shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord' (Isaiah LXXII, 3)? Who says this, except the one about whom Ecclesiastes spoke: There is one and there is not a second (Eccles. 4:8)? Who is this, except the one about whom it was said: Your master is one, Christ (Matt. 23:10)? He is one, because he is the only begotten Son of God: because he alone, as it is written: He alone spread out the heavens and walks upon the sea as on dry land (Job 9:8). Therefore, he is not second, because he is the first: he is not a second, because he is one: One God the Father, from whom all things are, and we in him: and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and we through him (1 Cor. 8:6). One God the Father, and one God the Son, and one Holy Spirit, as it is written: 'Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good' (1 Corinthians 12:11). One, they say,

because there is one God. No second; because He does what He wants, not what is commanded. Therefore, one God the Father, and one God the Son. One and one, because they are not two gods. One Son; because He is one with the Father, as He Himself said: 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:29). And one Spirit, because it is the unity of the Trinity, not distinct in order, nor in time. But they say that it is written: Go, baptize the nations in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt. XXVIII, 19); and they object that he first named the Father, second the Son, third the Holy Spirit. Therefore, because the Gospel says: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God (John I, 1), did it imply that the Father is inferior; because first it mentioned the Word of God always being and having been in the beginning? And when the Apostle said, 'In the kingdom of Christ and God' (Ephesians 5:5), did he establish an order? Or when the Lord Jesus Himself says, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives' (Luke 4:18), did He testify to the Spirit of the Son of God being superior?

Listen, young woman, as I explain these things. Open your ears, close your mouth. Open your ears to hear the truth; close your mouth to hold your modesty.

Then they read this, because he said: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and they do not understand that he had said before: In the name, he says. He does indeed signify three persons, but affirms the name of the Trinity as one.

There is therefore one God, one name, one divinity, one majesty. Therefore, no one is second: because the Trinity is the beginning of all things, and the primacy of the Trinity is above all things. Therefore, He is one and not second. He is one who does not have a second; for He alone is without sin, alone without assistance, who says: I looked, and there was no one to help (Isa. LXIII, 5).

Chapter XI.

Since Christ worked so much for us, it is necessary for us to work for him alone. We are not bound to follow him except insofar as he is human, in which sense he is also called the Last One. And this is the meaning that the book of Ecclesiastes and the example of Elisha convey.

There is no end to his toil (Eccles. IV, 8); for our advocate is with the Father for all things, and he has taken upon himself our weaknesses, and he grieves for us, he is infirm for us, as it says: I was sick, and you did not visit me (Matt. XXV, 43). Whose eye is not satisfied with riches (Ibid.); because He Himself is the height of the riches of wisdom and knowledge of God, in whom are the treasures of heavenly mysteries. Why then do we labor for the world instead, and defraud our soul at the expense of such goodness, to whom we owe service to no one other than this Lord?

Therefore, there is no second here. I certainly testify to this: I read because it is the first, I read because there is no second. Let those who claim otherwise prove it with evidence. But someone says because it is written: The first man was of the earth, earthly; the second man is from heaven, heavenly (I Cor. XV, 47). But pay attention to what he says. The second, he says, man; as if he said the second man. And I say that the first is second in divinity, before whom there is none; but the second is second in flesh, because he comes after Adam.

I say more, not only according to man, but also as the last. Finally, you have this written: The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. (Ibid., 45). See the mercy of Christ: He is both the first and the last. He who was the first made himself the last for us. First, because through him all things were made; last, because through him is resurrection. For he descended and humbled himself, so that he fell below all, making himself lower than all, in order to lift up all who were lying down.

Therefore, the Preacher also says: For if one falls, his companion will lift him up; woe to him who is alone when he falls, for there is no one to lift him up. And indeed, if two sleep together, they will be warmed; but how can one be warm alone? (Ecclesiastes 4:10-11). This means that whoever has Christ with him, even if he falls, will rise again; even if he has died, he will be revived; because there is one who has come to send fire on the earth (Luke 12:49). Finally, when Elisha raised the boy, he breathed into him (4 Kings 4:34) so that he might infuse the warmth of life. Therefore, have this fire with you in your heart, which will revive you; lest the coldness of perpetual death creep upon you. So this young man threw himself who came through Mary and poured the warmth of life into the hearts of those listening. Hence they say in the Gospel: 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?' (Luke 24:32).

Chapter XII.

The name of the second young man designated as Christ is understood in the book of Ecclesiastes, as well as in other places, and also in its continuation: therefore, he is described as both having passed through the gate and sitting in it while eating.

Here is the second young man, as the Ecclesiastes says: I saw all the living who walk under the sun with the second young man, who will rise for him? For who will rise for Christ, when he has risen for all, and in him all have risen, when they have received the hope of resurrection? But it is clear that this statement refers to Christ, when you consider that it corresponds with the blessing or prophecy of Jacob, who said of Judah: Who will raise him up (Gen. XLIX, 9)? Certainly no one else; because he raised himself up, as he himself said: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up (John II, 19). But he was speaking of the temple of his body.

It is truly fitting for Christ alone that which He added: There is no end to all His people (Eccles. IV, 16); because the people of Christ, innumerable, have no end, to whom the faith of the resurrection of eternal life acquires the age of perpetual life. Therefore, according to the flesh, it is said both of the young and the old, and it is not doubtful to fall or to rise. Finally, He added this also; because the best child is poor and wise (Ibid. 13): for He became poor, even though He was rich.

Therefore, the king of Israel himself passed through this gate, the leader himself sat in it; when the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (John 1:14), like a king sitting in the royal court of the virgin womb, or in a boiling pot, as it is written: Moab is the pot of my hope, or the pot of my hope (Psalm 59:10). For both are found in different manuscripts. The royal court is the virgin who is not subject to a man, but to God alone. And the pot is the womb of Mary, which was filled with the fervent Spirit that came upon her and brought forth the Savior, filling the whole world.

He who ate at the gate sitting down (Ezek. XLIV, 3), surely that food of which he says: My food is to do the will of my Father who is in heaven (John IV, 34).

Chapter XIII.

The virginity of Mary is beautifully depicted by the pot and the light cloud: the rain of this cloud, prefigured by many types in the ancient covenant, should be gathered by the virgins, just as the most effective ointment of that pot should be received; poverty should not be pretended by anyone, but preparation should be applied.

Oh, the riches of Mary's virginity! It boiled like a pot and poured down like rain upon the earth the grace of Christ; for it is written of her: Behold, the Lord comes sitting upon a light cloud (Isaiah 19:1). Truly light, who knew not the burdens of matrimony: truly light, who lifted this burden from the heavy weight of sins. She was light, who carried in her womb the forgiveness of sins. Finally, she lifted up John who was placed in her womb, who leaped at the sound of her voice, and the infant rejoiced in joy, being animated by the sense of devotion before the infusion of the life-giving Spirit (Luke 1:41).

Therefore, receive, receive, holy virgins, the spiritual rain of this cloud, the tempering of corporeal heat, so that you may extinguish all the burning of the body and moisten the internal parts of your mind. Our sacred fathers announced to us that the salvation of the world would come from this rain of the sacred cloud (Ps. 71, 6). They signified that this rain would come in the form of trickling drops falling upon the earth, which Hierobaal requested and deserved. Follow the good cloud, which gave birth to a fountain within itself, by which it watered the earth. (Judges 6:36 et seq.) Receive therefore the voluntary rain, the rain of blessing, which the Lord has poured out for his inheritance. Receive the water, and let it not flow away from you; for it is a cloud, let it dissolve you and bathe you with sacred moisture; for it is a pot, let it steam with eternal breath.

Therefore, receive from this Moabite jar of heavenly grace the unguent, and do not fear that it will fail: for what has been emptied out is now overflowing, for the odor of it has gone forth into all the earth (Ps. LIX, 10), as it is written: 'Your name is like a poured-out ointment'; therefore have the young women loved you (Cant. I, 2). Let this unguent descend into the depths of the heart, and the secret parts of the viscera, so that the holy Mary may not emit the fragrances of pleasures, but rather the breath of divine grace may be diffused. This rain extinguished the appetite of Eve: this ointment cleansed the stench of hereditary error, this ointment Mary the sister of Lazarus poured on the feet of the Lord, and the whole house was filled with a fragrant smell (John 12:3). And let no one consider themselves poor, let no one think themselves destitute, let no one fear that they cannot afford to buy this precious ointment, or think that this fountain is for sale. He says, 'Come to the water, you who are thirsty, and you who do not have money, come and buy, and drink without money' (Isaiah 55:1). And elsewhere it is said, 'You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money' (Isaiah 52:3). Therefore, the Lord, though rich, became poor, so that everyone may buy him, and make the needy rich with his poverty.

Prepare, therefore, vessels of the Lord, that you may receive this fountain of living water, the fountain of virginity, the unguent of integrity, the odor of faith, and the sweet grace of mercy abounding. Clothe yourselves with the innocence of his lamb, who, when he was cursed, did not curse in return, when he was struck, did not strike back (I Peter II, 23).

Chapter XIV.

It is shown how virgins are more strongly encouraged to imitate Mary, many things which have been mystically said about the Church also apply to the same Virgin Mother of God.

Daughters, imitate this, to whom that which was prophesied about the Church is fitting: 'Your steps have become beautiful in sandals, O daughter of Aminadab' (Song of Songs VII, 1); because the Church has proceeded beautifully through the preaching of the Gospel. The soul proceeds beautifully, which uses the body as if it were a sandal; so that it can freely carry its own footprint wherever it wishes without any hindrance. In these beautiful shoes, Mary walked, who without any mingling of bodily intercourse, as a Virgin, gave birth to the author of salvation. Hence John says splendidly: I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of His shoes (John 1:27), that is, I am not worthy to comprehend the mystery of the Incarnation in the narrowness of the human mind and to complete it in the poverty of speech. Hence Isaiah also says: Who shall declare His generation? (Isaiah 53:8)? Therefore, the steps of either Mary or the Church are beautiful; for the feet of those who proclaim the Gospel are beautiful.

How beautiful are those things also which are prophesied of in the figure of the Church concerning Mary, if indeed you understand them not as the members of the body, but as the mysteries of her generation! For it is said to her: Thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of an artist. Thy navel is like a round bowl never wanting cups mixed with wine. Thy belly is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies (Song of Songs VII, 1, etc.); because He who is contained therein has, in all things, the birth of Christ from the Virgin, just as conquerors are wont to adorn the necks of the brave of this world with torques; so did He lighten our yoke, so as to crown the necks of the faithful with the badges of virtue.

Truly, however, that vessel of Mary, the turning pitcher, in which was Wisdom, who mingled in the pitcher her wine, supplying an inexhaustible grace of pious knowledge from the fullness of her divinity. In which, in the womb of the virgin, a heap of wheat and the grace of a lily flower sprouted; for it produced both the grain of wheat and the lily. The grain of wheat, as it is written: Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone (John 12:24). But because from one grain of wheat a heap was made, that prophetic saying was fulfilled: And the valleys shall abound with wheat (Psalm 65:14), for that dead grain brought forth abundant fruit. Therefore, this grain has satisfied all people as an eternal food of heavenly gifts. And the prophecy of the same mouth has been fulfilled, as David said: He fed them with the fat of wheat, and satisfied them with honey from the rock (Psalm 80:17). In this grain the divine oracles even testify also the lily; because it is written: I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys: as a lily among thorns (Song of Songs 2:1). Christ was the lily among thorns, when he was among the Jews.

Chapter XV.

Virgins can be said in a unique way to be the lilies of Christ; but Christ himself is rightly depicted surrounded by a heap of wheat, symbolizing that he has both enriched the Church and brought together various crowns of victories.

Listen, maiden, to what he says: 'I am the Lily of the valley', Christ, that is, the meek and gentle one. Therefore, be meek, humble, and gentle, so that Christ may bloom in you like a lily. Concerning this, you also have elsewhere: 'His lips are like lilies, dripping liquid myrrh' (Song of

Songs 5:13); that is, those who speak of Christ's passion and celebrate it with their mouths, and bear his mortification in their bodies, are the lilies of Christ; especially sacred virgins, whose virginity is splendid and immaculate. Most people understand that the Church seems to say: I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys, which in this valley of the world exhales the grace of a good odor by the diligent confession of piety. Finally, she also says elsewhere: My brother went down into his garden, into the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am for my brother, and my brother is for me, who feeds among the lilies (Song of Songs 6:1-2). From that womb of Mary, therefore, spread out into this world is a heap of fortified wheat among lilies; when Christ was born from her, to whom the prophet David says: You will bless the crown of the year of your kindness, and your fields will be filled with abundance. The boundaries of the desert will become rich, and the hills will be encircled with rejoicing. The rams of the sheep have been clothed, and the valleys abound with grain; for indeed they will cry out and sing a hymn (Psalm 65:12-13).

What is the year of the Lord's favor, except the one of which it is said: 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you' (Isaiah 49:8); when the Church, in the faith of the peoples, has put on justice like a garment? Hence the Apostle says: 'Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation' (2 Corinthians 6:2); when the Lord came to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of retribution, as he himself mentioned in his Gospel, saying: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me,' etc. (Luc. IV, 18)

Then, therefore, the Lord crowned the time of His coming with His works and glory and honor; for that whole year of His life in this world had various struggles of passions. The little child conquered Herod (Matthew 2:16), over whom He triumphed in the passion of the infants. He hungered, He thirsted, He was scourged for us, He endured unworthy humiliations for us, He ascended the cross, He died for us.

Chapter XVI.

The virgins must go out to meet Christ, and in what manner. Indeed, He has been crowned by His mother, but there should be no doubt about His divinity. Therefore, they must take the perfect faith in that food which Jacob prepared and in the robe which the wise woman wove, prefigured; so that the virgin, having received blessings from Christ, may see God in the man, or rather, may be clothed in Christ, along with all the ornaments of virtues.

You see what great struggles there are! But nonetheless, the exactor of the prize is not greedy, to whom a celestial crown of virtue has abounded. From where you go forth, daughters of Jerusalem, as the divine Scripture in the Song of Songs exhorts you: Go forth and see King Solomon in the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, and on the day of the gladness of his heart (Cant. III, 11); for he has made for himself, it says, a charity from the daughters of Jerusalem, that is: Go forth from these bodily narrowness and anxieties, go forth from this carnal pleasure, and travel as a pilgrim from the body, so that you may be able to serve the Lord; for those who are in the flesh cannot please their Lord. Therefore it is said to you that you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit (Rom. VIII, 8, 9), if you can understand the true peaceful love of Solomon, which he made for himself; and therefore he received a crown from his mother.

Blessed mother of Jerusalem, blessed is the womb of Mary, who crowned the Lord with such great glory. She crowned Him when she formed Him: she crowned Him when she gave birth to Him. Even though she formed Him without any operation of her own (for the Holy Spirit overshadowed the virgin; hence, He Himself says: Your eyes have seen my unformed substance), yet by conceiving and giving birth to Him for the salvation of all, she placed the crown of eternal piety on His head, so that through the faith of believers, Christ would become the head of every man. Therefore, the flesh of Christ, whom the Virgin Mary conceived in an extraordinary and new mystery of the Incarnation, without any mixture of masculine seed, assumed the disposition of divine grace, which was flesh, from the Virgin, and formed in her the members of the last Adam, the immaculate man.

You hear a man, but understand above man; for it is written: Do not boil a lamb in its mother's milk (Exodus XXXIV, 26). And elsewhere in the law: He is a man, and who will recognize him (Jeremiah XVII, 9)? Therefore, you should not estimate that lamb, in which the fullness of divinity dwells bodily (Colossians II, 9), with the powers of human condition, and conclude the majesty of incomprehensible power with the weakness of degenerate knowledge. For Jacob did not cook that food of perfect faith in milk, by which Isaac the father was so delighted, that he conferred upon him the entire prerogative of prophetic blessing. And therefore the Apostle wrote that the milk is the juice of a thin food, saying: For everyone who is nourished by milk is without the words of righteousness; for he is a little one, but solid food is for the mature. And so, daughter, take that cloak woven with the piety of a woman, who opens her hands to the poor, and her lamp does not go out at night (Prov. XXXI, 19 and following): and put it on, and bring such food to your father, so that he says: What is it that you have found so quickly, daughter (Gen. XXVII, 20 and following)? praising both wisdom in tender age, and also the affection of piety. And let him say to you: Approach me, daughter; and may he bless you, having smelled the aroma of your garments, saying: Behold the aroma of my daughter, like the aroma of a field full which the Lord has blessed; and may God give you abundance from the dew of heaven above, and from the fertility of the earth. And to these [commandments], add: Whoever curses you, shall be cursed; and whoever blesses you, shall be blessed.

Jacob, dressed in this robe, saw God in the form of a man, and asked for a blessing from him, calling the place the Vision of God (Gen. XXXII, 26 et seq.). Dressed in this robe, he saw the robe of Christ, of which it is said: He will wash his robe in wine (Gen. XLIX, 11). And Joseph also blessed, saying: My son Joseph, may my son Joseph be enlarged, may my younger son be zealous, return to me (Ibid., 22), indicating the emblem of the Lord's resurrection. And he added: The blessing of your father and your mother prevailed over the blessings of the everlasting mountains and the desires of the eternal hills (Genesis 49:26), that is, over the king of grace.

Take this garment, in order to put on Christ, and be renewed in the knowledge of Him. Put on, therefore, as the chosen ones of God, compassion, kindness, humility, patience, meekness, and love, which is the bond of unity (Colossians 3:12-14); so that you owe nothing to anyone except to love your sister in return. Do not envy her grace, but rather, imitate her, in order to appear more approved. May the peace of Christ and the grace and the Word of God dwell in your heart, and may you flee the thoughts of this world.

Once you die to the world, I beg you, do not touch or defile the things of this age; but always be led away from the conversation of this age in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God and not to man (Colossians 2:20 et seq.). And just as Mary made things holy (Luke 2:19), let it be reflected in your heart. Like a good little lamb, chew on the divine precepts in your mouth, so that you may also say: I will meditate on your wonders (Psalm 118:27). Let not your soul sleep or be silent from weariness. For gutters cast a man out of his own house in the winter time: but the soul of the perfect raineth not, wherein is no more grievous sin. But it remaineth in its own house, and rejoiceth and is glad in the novelty of an offenseless dwelling. But if anything should by chance shake it, thou mayest say: Confirm me in thy words (Ps. CXVIII, 28).

Chapter XVII.

The grace of God is at work, that the life of the angels, once lost in paradise, now shines in the virgins; and that virginity was worthy to bring forth Christ to the world and lead the Hebrews through the sea. After this, Ambrosia herself is commended and offered to God, so that He may protect His gift in her and unite her in heavenly marriage to spiritual childbirth, and may bestow upon her the virtues of dowry and ornaments, by the benefit of which she may deserve to hold her Spouse. Finally, Christ beseeches that he may receive his servant with joy.

Now, after all things have been accomplished, Father of grace, I turn my prayers to you, to whose goodness we give innumerable thanks because on earth we see the life of the angels in holy virgins, which we once lost in paradise. For what could contribute more to imitating the zeal of the virgins and strengthening virtue, or to celebrating the glory of virginity, than God being born of a virgin? Our fault has benefited us more than it has harmed us: in it our redemption found a divine gift. But also your only begotten Son, coming into the world to receive what was lost, could not find a purer generation of his own flesh, than to dedicate the heavenly courtyard of a virgin as his dwelling place; in which there would be both a sanctuary of unstained chastity, and a temple of God. But what shall I say about that, which by your divine favor the virgin Mary, with the holy Moses and Aaron, led the feet of the Hebrew army through the waves? I leave behind the old, I do not seek personal gain: it is enough that this nobility belongs to the virgin family.

I beseech you to protect this servant of yours, who has presumed to serve you, to dedicate herself to you, and to devote herself to her integrity. Whom I offer in a priestly duty, I commend to you with a paternal affection; that you may graciously bestow upon her grace, so that, dwelling in the innermost chambers of heavenly mysteries, she may be worthy to see the Bridegroom, may be admitted into the chamber of her divine King; may be worthy to hear him saying to her: 'Come here from Lebanon, O Bride, come here from Lebanon; you shall pass and pass through from the beginning of faith' (Song of Songs 4:8); that she may pass through this age and pass through to those eternal things.

Therefore, Father, focus on your task, for in sanctifying it you sought no one's advice; rather, you bestowed such great favor upon it without any petitioner or judge, that no one could have believed before divine oracles that a virgin would bear God in her womb. The preeminence of this office, provoked by those examples of virginity and sacred integrity, increases devotion to it. With this in mind, may your humble servant also be called to the grace of this virtue, assisting at your altars not with a dyed golden hair indicative of a flamboyant wedding, but with that hair which the holy woman Mary wiped the feet of Christ with diligent piety, and then filled the whole house with the

poured-out ointment, offering sacred vestments to be consecrated.

There appears a girl, whom not the festivals of marriages, not rewards, not the burden of a loaded womb, agitate with vows of married sorrows, but she asks for immaculate childbirths to her, and exposes them to piety; that she may receive in her womb of the Holy Spirit, and may bear, fertile to God, a spirit of salvation. But in order that these things may be able to proceed through the grace of merits, you, God Almighty Father, join the suffrages of commendation; for it is not the solitary dowry of modesty. She should adorn the sacred crown of virginity with modesty, sobriety, and continence so that, accompanied by a retinue of virtues and clothed in the purple veil of the Lord's blood, she may bear in her flesh the mortification of the Lord Jesus; for these are the better garments, the clothing of virtues, by which guilt is covered and innocence is revealed.

So, clothe your servant in garments that are clean at all times; for whatever has been stained by no intervening fault remains clean, so that it may be rightly said of her: 'Your works have pleased God' (Eccl. 9:7-8). Let your garments be white at all times, and let not the oil be lacking on her head, with which she may ignite her mystical torches; so that when the Bridegroom comes, she may be counted worthy among those wise virgins (Matt. 25:10), and be deemed worthy of the heavenly chamber, illuminating the sacred profession with the light of her devotion, faith, and seriousness.

Therefore, protect your handmaid, Father of Charity and Glory, so that she may hold the locks of modesty as if in a closed garden and a sealed spring, the seals of truth. Let her cultivate her field, which the holy Jacob cultivated, and let her receive sixty and a hundredfold of its fruits. In these virtues and strengths of the field, stir up grace in her and revive love. Let her find the one she loved, hold onto him, and not let him go until she receives the wounds of love, which are preferred to kisses. Always prepared, let her awaken with her whole spirit of mind both at night and during the day, (Song of Songs 5:7), so that the Word may never find her asleep. And because her beloved wants to be sought after more frequently, to explore her affection; let her follow him when he comes back, let her soul and faith go out from her body to wander in your word, so that she may be present to God: let her heart be awake, let her flesh sleep, so that she may not begin to watch over sins.

Lord, grant her other adornments of sacred virginity, grant diligent religious observance; so that she may know how to possess her vessel, may know how to be humble: may hold love, the wall of truth, the barrier of modesty. May her veil not be made of pine, may cypresses not surpass her modesty, may turtles not conquer her chastity, may doves not surpass her simplicity. May simplicity be in her heart, moderation in her words, modesty towards all, piety towards relatives, mercy towards the needy and the poor: may she hold on to what is good, abstain from all forms of evil; may the blessing of the dying come upon her, and may the mouth of the widow bless her (Job 29:13).

Place, therefore, your word as a seal upon his heart, as a seal upon his arm (Song of Songs 8:6), so that in all his senses and actions Christ may shine forth, may aim at Christ, may speak Christ. Let not the abundance of worldly waters extinguish his charity, nor the sword of persecution, nor danger: but strengthened in every good work and word, may he clothe himself with your glory, and may he turn towards you in your grace in this world. Sanctify him in truth, confirm him in virtue, connect him in charity, and by your divine favor lead him to that heavenly glory of purity and

integrity, the unblemished and unspotted crown; so that there he may follow the footsteps of the Lamb, and may pasture at midday, may remain at midday, nor may he walk among the flock of companions, but mixed with your lambs, may he be a companion of virgins without offense, a follower of the Marys.

Therefore, go forth, Lord Jesus, on the day of your betrothal, receive now the devout spirit and also the declaration; fulfill the knowledge of your will; take from the beginning unto salvation, in the sanctification of the spirit and the faith of truth, so that your servant may say: You have held my right hand, and in your will you have guided me, and in glory you have taken me up (Psalm 67:24). Open your hand and fill her soul with blessing (Psalm 144:16); that you may save those who hope in you (Psalm 85:2), and may she become a vessel sanctified for honor, useful to the Lord, approved for every good work: through that eternal cross, through that venerable glory of the Trinity, to whom be honor, glory, and eternity, Father God, and Son, and Holy Spirit, from ages, and now, and forever, and in all ages, Amen. In Exhortation to Virginité Admonition God, most excellent and divine, never allows individuals to become godlike, unless it is for the greater glory of Himself and the benefit of them and the Church, as is revealed by that Ambrosian journey which gave rise to this work. The holy man had heard that Eugenius the tyrant was coming to Italy, and even to Milan, in order to subvert the Christian religion, as Paulinus relates in the Life of Ambrose. Therefore, thinking that it was not necessary to wait for a man who, under the pretense of the Christian faith, was attempting to lead people back to idolatry, he went to Bologna. Meanwhile, while he was staying there, a solemn translation was celebrated of the bodies of the martyrs Vitalis and Agricola, which seemed to have been revealed to the bishop Paulinus himself (ibid.). When the people of Florence learned of this, they invited him with great enthusiasm to come and bless their new church. The holy bishop agreed to their request, although he had originally planned to go elsewhere (Chapter 1, number 1, and Paulinus in Life of Ambrose). And when he had brought with him some relics of the martyrs of Bologna, he deposited them in that Church which he himself consecrated there with a splendid procession. On the same solemnity, he also gave the speech from which this book is composed. At the beginning of his work, he himself declares (Chapter 1, number 1). Under which, after a detailed description of the torture of the martyrs and the excavation of their relics (Numbers 2 and following), he adds that he himself brought a part of these relics collected by his own hands to them, namely nails, triumphant blood, and the wood of the cross (Chapter 2, number 9). For he denies (Ibid, number 10) that it was fair for him to suffer rejection from the widow Juliana, who had built the sacred altar, called the Ambrosian altar, because the same Ambrose had inaugurated it. But when that pious mother, truly a Christian, was not satisfied with consecrating her possessions to Christ in the building of a noble basilica, she furthermore decided to dedicate herself and her whole family to Him at her own home. Indeed, while her husband was still alive, she had already offered the first fruits of her sacrifice as if in libation. For although he did not fall short of his wife in the praise of piety, not long before his death, despite bearing the heavy burdens of marriage, namely a son and three daughters, he did not refuse to be initiated into Holy Orders for the sake of the benefit of the Church with the consent of his wife. Therefore, she had already set the task of continence for the novice; but after her husband had fulfilled his mortal fate, she wanted to apply the finishing touch to her work. Therefore, in order to encourage her children to embrace the profession of continence, she motivated them with the following speech, which the holy Doctor, adorned with his own style and eloquence, presented to all who had gathered there, in this sense (Chapter 3 and following). At the

beginning, having addressed her son who had not yet reached the years of boyhood, she asserts that his name, Laurentius, was given to him for this reason (Chapter 3, number 14 and following), because when his parents had already despaired of producing male offspring, they obtained his patronage through the intercession of such a great martyr. From this it is inferred that he, just as Anna dedicated Samuel to God, promised before his divine presence to exempt his mother (Chapter 3, number 17 and following). Then, addressing her daughters, she urges them to dedicate their chastity to Christ, opposing the disadvantages of marriage and the benefits of celibacy. Finally (Chapter 4, numbers 25 and following), now speaking to his son, now to his daughters, now even to all together, he leaves nothing untried in order to persuade them to fulfill the vows their parents had made in their name. And it was not in vain, that desire of their pious mother. Laurentius was enrolled in the number of readers (Chapter 8, number 54); his sisters, however, having professed chastity in the customary manner (Chapter 14, number 93), observed it in their mother's house.

So, moved by this, Ambrose wanted to continue the conversation with Juliana, even with his own exhortation (Chapter 9 and following). There he instructs those same virgins what their duty is, how they should devote themselves to exercises, and what they should provide, so that they can live according to the rules of their profession along with their mother. Then he also instructs other Christian virgins (Chapter 10, number 71, and following), to whom he transfers the conversation from those three victims of integrity. Then, after presenting various examples that they themselves should imitate, he does not fail to mention holy Sotheris (Chapter 12, number 81), whom, as we have seen elsewhere (Book III on Virginité, number 39), she describes as enduring willingly and with a bloody mind the torment of the executioner's blows with her own fist. He also adds some other instructions (Chapter 13, numbers 83 and following), and when these are finished, he promises abundant reward from Christ to that widow who had devoted herself, her children, and all her possessions to Him (Chapter 14, number 92). Finally, he prays to God (*Ibid.*, no. 93), that in the Church that he was consecrating, He may always be present and gracious, and may accept the prayers of the faithful and the sacrifice of the Lord's body, but above all, may admit the complete offering of this entire family.

It is probable that in that treatise, which, as we have seen, was delivered in a public gathering, nothing else is contained except a single speech. But although the holy Doctor was very skilled in speaking, he could hardly bring himself to cut his speech short in such a joyful celebration. Nor have we deviated from the truth if we believe that the version preserved in the manuscripts is exactly as it was delivered in Florence. Indeed, since he himself was composing books from his own sermons, he would often insert something into them, from which that change could be recognized. Hence it is more aptly titled *Exhortation to Virginité* in the manuscripts, and in the ancient editions, *Exhortation to Virgins*, which in Rome is treated as *On the Exhortation to Virginité*: but nevertheless, the fact that each of these titles does not inelegantly agree with the argument of the work that we have hitherto explained, proves abundantly. But it can seem remarkable that the widow, speaking to her daughters with them listening, was influenced by Ambrosius and that the speech which she herself had given could be inferred to have been adapted by the same person. But without a doubt, he performed this in such a way that greater force would be added to his exhortation.

Moreover, when he had this document, at the time when Eugenius was fleeing, and also after the secrets of the sacred lip-salve of the saints Vitalis and Agricola were revealed, it is concluded that the aforementioned tyrant committed treason not before he returned to our bishopric on the Kalends of August in the year 394, which had not yet been restored. Baronius indeed attributes the year 392 to this work (Ad ann. 392), which, however, without a doubt, should be rejected as belonging to the following year. Moreover, it also seems certain that the same prayer was composed and spoken with Easter approaching; for this is what the holy man says: The day of Easter is coming, etc. (Chapter 7, number 42), is openly indicated.

On the Sacrament of the Incarnation of the Lord

The Book of Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, On the Sacrament of the Incarnation of the Lord, Book One.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.

Chapter I.

Having mentioned the occasion of speaking, Ambrosius approaches the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. He then explores what displeased God in the offering of the former. Then, after explaining the few who would strike a wide-ranging verdict against Cain, he teaches about the burnt offering of Abel.

Brothers, I desire to pay my debt, but I cannot find my creditors from yesterday, unless perhaps they thought we should be disturbed by an unexpected meeting: but true faith is never disturbed.

So, while they perhaps come, let us turn away the farmers who have been proposed, one of whom, that is Cain, from the fruits of the earth: but the other, namely Abel, offered a sacrifice to the Lord from the firstborn of his sheep (Gen. IV, 3, 4). I find nothing in the nature of the offerings that I would criticize, except that Cain also knew that his offerings were displeasing, and the Lord said: If you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly, you have sinned (Ibid., 7). So where then is the crime? where is the fault? Not in the offering of a gift, but in the attitude of the offering. There are some who rightly judge that one person, in offering something, has chosen one thing, while another, in offering, has chosen something of lesser value. But we are not so lacking in the spiritual senses

within us as to not understand that the Lord sought a bodily sacrifice, not a spiritual one. And therefore, he added, 'rest' (Ibid.), indicating that it is more tolerable to abstain from offering gifts than to offer a gift with an unbelieving spirit. For whoever does not know how to divide, does not know how to judge: but the spiritual person judges all things (I Cor. II, 15). And therefore Abraham divided the sacrifice that he was offering (Gen. XV, 10).

Abel also knew how to divide, who offered a sacrifice from the firstborn of his sheep (Gen IV, 4), teaching that it is not the gifts of the earth that please God, which had degenerated in the sinner, but those in which the divine grace of the mystery shines forth. Therefore, he prophesied that we would be redeemed from sin through the passion of the Lord, about whom it is written: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sin of the world (John I, 29). Hence, he also offered the firstborn, in order to designate the primogeniture. Therefore, it shows us the true sacrifice of God that we will be, of whom the Prophet says: Bring to the Lord the sons of rams (Psalm 28:1), and it is rightly confirmed by the judgment of God. But to them it is said, 'Keep silent,' which I believe is a general statement applicable to all those outside the Church; for here I perceive the representation of many peoples whom divine judgment encompasses, among whom, in the case of Cain, it already rejected the offerings.

Chapter II. The following are various types of people who, under the false pretense of being Christian, shine a light on the Church and are subject to the mentioned sentence. It reminds us how we should avoid the same mindset. For this is the general opinion regarding all the impious. Therefore, if a Jew offers, who separates the son of the virgin Mary from God the Father, he is told: If you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly, you have sinned: be at peace. (Ibid., 7).

If Eunomianus, who, coming forth from the impious source of Arian impiety, glides down in the overflowing mire of his own perfidy, asserts that the generation of Christ, which is above all things, is to be gathered from the traditions of Philosophy: whereas surely there is one reason of creatures, and another secret power of the divine; and the saying itself is: 'If you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly, you have sinned: cease.' This is said of the Sabellians, who confound the Father and Son. This is said of the Marcionites, who believe in a different God of the New Testament than the God of the Old Testament. This is said of the Manicheans and Valentinians, who did not believe that the truth of human flesh was assumed by Christ. Paul of Samosata and Basilides are also counted in the same category of opinion.

Likewise, by the authority of the same sentiment, those who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit are condemned. For some are either Arian Jews or Arian Jews; because just as the former separate the Son from the Father, so too do the latter separate the Spirit from God the Father and the Son of God.

Novatus also and Donatus and all who have sought to rend the body of the Church, it is said to them severally: If you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly, you are guilty. For the sacrifice of the Church is, which is offered to God, to which Paul said: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, to offer your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God (Rom. XII, 1). Therefore, they have divided the sacrifice wrongly, by tearing the members of the Church. This statement also confounds those who, by separating the rational soul from the sacrament of the Lord's incarnation, desire to separate the nature of man from man. And perhaps these people rightly offer it to the Trinity, but they do not know how to distinguish between the reason and the nature of the

divine and human; for the nature of God is simple, and man consists of a rational soul and a body. If you take away one, you have taken away the whole nature of man.

Therefore, this is the opinion against all heresies, which do not persecute the Church with a brotherly spirit, but rather with a spirit of enmity. Indeed, under the guise of the name Christian and by a certain claim of faith relatedness, they desire to wound us with parricidal swords; because our conversion is towards them, and sinners rule over us in this world. For the sinner rules in this world, the righteous in the kingdom of God.

Let us beware, therefore, lest anyone separate us from the chamber of the eternal king and attempt to separate us from the secret of the mother Church, to which the soul in the Song of Songs signifies that it has been introduced as the Word of God (Song of Solomon 3:4). Let us beware lest we separate the substance of the hidden nature of the only-begotten Son from the bosom of the Father and the paternal womb, and let us meditate on not inflicting any prejudice on the divine generation by these words by which the truth of the assumed incarnation is portrayed; lest anyone say to us, 'If you offer correctly but do not divide correctly, you have sinned; be silent.' That means: if we do not know how to distinguish what is proper to the eternal divinity and the incarnation; if we compare the Creator with His own works; if we say that the author of time began His existence after time. For it cannot be that the one through whom all things exist is one among all.

Chapter III.

Those who do not accept John's testimony about the eternity of the Word, you rebuke. And at the same time, you praise the same evangelist and explain the passage: where he not only teaches that the eternity and divinity of the Word are signified, but also that the same attributes are demonstrated in the Father. In the Word, nothing corporeal should be considered, and although we do not fully grasp its nature, we should be satisfied with the authority of John, who explains how he saw the Word.

Let it not be believed by us, let the Scripture be recited. It is not I who say that in the beginning was the Word (John 1:1), but I hear: I do not fabricate, but I read; which we all read, but not all understand. And when it is read, we all hear, and not all hear: For the heart of some has become thick, and their ears have become heavily burdened (Acts 28:27); namely, the ears of the inner affection. For it is not the flesh that sins, which keeps its duty and receives sound, but it is the corrupt interpreter of a pure hearing, who refuses to hear what is said, and to understand what is read. Why do you close your ears like wax and lead, and yet you cannot exclude the benefits and services of nature on Sundays? You hear against your will, you hear with disgust: you hear, so that you cannot excuse yourself for not having heard.

Therefore, when it is read 'In the beginning was the Word' (John 1:1). Who says this? John, certainly that fisherman: but he does not say this as a fisherman, but as one affected by a human fisherman; who now no longer catches fish, but gives life to men (Luke 5:10). It is not his own statement, but that of the one who granted him the power to give life. For the fisherman, he was more silent about the fish he used to catch; and about divine mysteries, more mute, who did not know the author of his voice: but being given life by Christ, he heard a voice in John, recognized the Word in Christ. And therefore, being full of the Holy Spirit, who knew that the beginning was

not of time, but above time, he left the ages, and ascending by the spirit above every beginning, said: In the beginning was the Word, that is, let there be heaven; for it was not yet, when in the beginning was the Word. For although heaven has a beginning, God does not. Finally, in the beginning, God made heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1). It is one thing to have made; it is another thing to have been. What happens, begins: what was, does not receive a beginning, but precedes. Let time also remain, for after the sky there is time. Let angels and archangels also remain. And if I do not find the beginning of them, nevertheless there was a time when they were not. For they were not always. Therefore, if I cannot find the beginning of them, whom it is certain have a beginning, how can I find the beginning of the Word, by whom every beginning, not only of creatures, but also of all our thoughts, is preceded?

Therefore, he had openly expressed his eternal divinity; but to ensure that no one would divide the eternity of the Word from the Father, so that we would believe that the Word is the same as the Father's, that good fisherman added: And the Word was with God (John 1:1). This statement should be understood in the following way: The Word was, just as the Father was; because he was with the Father, and in the Father, and with the Father always. Indeed, just as we read about the Father, was; so also we read about the Word, was.

What do you distinguish in understanding, if you do not distinguish in hearing? It is of the Father's nature to be the Word: It is of the Father's nature to be with the Word; for we read that the Word was with God. Therefore, if, according to your opinion, it was sometimes not, then, according to your opinion, neither was He in the beginning, with whom the Word was. For by the Word I hear, by the Word I understand that God was. For if I believe that the Word is everlasting, which I believe, I cannot doubt the eternity of the Father, of whom the Son is everlasting. If I consider his temporal generation, he begins to have communion with us, so that he appears to have started as the Father: but if you have no doubt about the Father, because it is not possible for God to begin to exist, you have no doubt about the Father, because he has eternal perfection as God; lest perhaps you stumble in the use of human speech, when you say Word and Son, therefore he added: And the Word was God (John 1).

Certainly, He has what the Father has, because He was God. How do you deny eternity to Him, whose name is one with the Father's God? Let not the sound and similarity of speech deceive you: there is another Word, which has time, which is composed of syllables and formed by letters: the Son is not such a Word, because the Father of the Word is not such.

Therefore, we must be careful not to introduce the question of the corporeal voice there either. God is incorporeal: He certainly does not have a corporeal voice. If the corporeal voice is not in the Father, neither is the Son a corporeal word. If there is no body in the Father, there is no time in the Father either. If there is no time in the Father, there is certainly no time in the Word. If there is no beginning of time in the Word, there is no number or degree of the Word either. Because if there is number in the Word, then there are many words. If there are many words, then there are many sons. But there is one Word, which excludes both degree and number: one according to nature. Do not inquire about the nature of things. I do not know much better than I know this. This is the only thing I know well, that I do not know what I cannot know. He says, 'What we have seen and heard' (1 John 1:3), John says: he said that he knows only this well, what he heard and what he saw, who was reclining on the chest of Christ. Therefore, it is enough for them to hear, but it is not

enough for me. But what he heard, he told me; and what he heard from Christ, I cannot deny that it is true about Christ. Therefore, what he heard, I heard; and what he saw, I saw; for he saw what he saw: not, of course, the divinity, which cannot be seen according to its own nature. But because it could not be seen according to its own nature, he assumed what was beyond the nature of divinity; so that he could be seen according to the nature of the body. Finally, the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove (Luke 3:22); because the divine nature could not be seen in the truth of its glory.

Chapter IV.

It is not enough if we believe in Christ having true flesh, unless we also separate it from any confusion or weakness with divinity: nor if we say that He is the God of both covenants, unless we profess that He is co-eternal with the Word Himself: and finally, if we acknowledge that He began before the Virgin, we must proclaim that He is older than all beginning. Peter's confession is praised; and why he remained silent while others were speaking, and how wonderfully he responded afterward, is explained.

Therefore, do not interpret according to nature what is beyond the nature of divinity. For even if you believe that true flesh was assumed by Christ, and you offer the body to be transfigured on the altars; yet you do not distinguish between the nature of divinity and the body, and it is said to you: If you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly, you have sinned (Gen. 4:7). Divide what is mine, divide what is the Word's. I did not have what was His, and He did not have what is mine. He accepted what is mine, in order to share what is his: He accepted not to confuse, but to fulfill. If you believe in acceptance, you fabricate confusion; you ceased to be a Manichaeon, yet you did not begin to be a son of the Church.

If you believe in the reception of the body, you join compassion to divinity: you have certainly turned away from faithlessness, not faithlessness; for you believe that what you presume is beneficial to you, but you do not believe what is worthy of God.

Moreover, if you believe that the same God is the author of both the new and the old Testament, but you attribute times and moments to his Word: Valentinus is more tolerable, who believes that there are not ages before God, but rather that there are gods, which are the ages; for it is less sacrilegious to join the ages to divinity than to prefer them.

If you believe again that Christ did not take His beginning from the Virgin, but nevertheless consider some beginning to exist before Christ: in time there is a disagreement about impiety; for you denied that He is equal to the Virgin, not to time. Moreover, I will not deny that He is equal to the Virgin in terms of receiving a body, and I will confess the Creator of time. For what profit is it if you say whether Christ is this or that creature? The creature changes, not the divinity that is worshipped.

He did not want himself to be recognized as Christ in this way, nor did he want his merits to be valued only for what is beyond human. Finally, when he asked: Who do men say that I am? (Matthew 16:13), and some said Elijah, others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets; he did not proclaim anyone's opinion. But when Peter said: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God (ibid., 16), he rightly praised him alone.

Therefore John said, Peter said, Christ proved, and you do not believe, Ariane? Do you not think that John and Peter should be believed, whom our Lord Jesus Christ himself believed to excel in the testimony of his glory to the faith of all? Finally, as a testimony to the Old and New Testaments, Moses is joined with Elijah, as John is often mentioned with Peter (Matthew 17:1).

Peter says, 'You are' (John 13:23); he does not say, 'You have begun to be.' Peter says, 'You are the Son of God'; he does not say, 'You are a creature.' John said this. If you still do not believe because you have not understood the mystery that surpasses wisdom, Peter repeated it. Christ commended both, one by judgment, the other by mystery; for he added that you should read what was leaning on Christ's chest and understand that his head, in which the principal of all senses is, was filled with a certain hidden wisdom. But if you do not think that the mystery should be understood, at least do not attack the judgment. Peter is praised because he believed in the Son of God, whom he saw; because he separated himself from the ignorant opinions of the common people. Finally, when the Lord asked what people thought of the Son of Man, when the opinion of the crowd was stated, Peter remained silent.

Therefore, be silent, Simon, and while others are answering, you remain silent. (Matth. XVI, 14). Even though you are the first, you, without being asked, ask questions. And do not fear being reprimanded by the Lord because you do not respond to the one asking. Therefore, he says, I do not respond because my own opinion is not being asked, but rather someone else's. For it is written: Let my mouth not speak the works of men (Psal. XVI, 4): however, it is the work of the deceitful to preach deceitfulness. Therefore, I remain silent for now, because I have not yet been asked about what I feel: I will not utter with my lips what my mind has not approved. There will be a time when I will respond. I myself will be asked what I feel, and only then will I respond with what is mine; it is mine to speak the truth, assert piety, proclaim gratitude.

Therefore, he does not remain silent as if he were slower in understanding or slower in speech, nor does he differ in the compliance of his voice as if he were disdainful: but he avoids the danger of common opinion as a cautious person, who did not avoid the danger of salvation. In conclusion, in the latter you have because he jumped out of the boat to meet the Lord, not desiring glory, but being eager for obedience.

Therefore, he who previously kept silent, in order to teach us that we should not repeat the words of the wicked, this one, I say, when he heard: But who do you say that I am? (Matt. XVI, 15), immediately mindful of his place, asserted his primacy: the primacy of confession, certainly not of honor; the primacy of faith, not of order. This is to say: Now let no one overcome me, now the roles are reversed: I must compensate for what I have kept silent, what I have kept silent must benefit. My tongue has no thorns; faith should come forth without hindrance. While others, although they bring up the matter, evacuate the impurity of their alien descent, those who have said that either Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the prophets is Christ (Matt. XVI, 14); for that voice had impurity, it had thorns: while others, I say, wash off this impurity, while these thorns are unraveled in others, let our voice yield the Son of God, Christ. To me, the word is pure, from which impiety has left no expressed thorns. This is therefore Peter who responded for the other apostles, indeed before the others (Ibid., 16); and therefore he is called the foundation, because he knows how to preserve not only his own, but also the common [good]. To him Christ also gave his approval, the Father revealed. For he who speaks of the true generation of the Father received it from the Father, he

did not receive it from the flesh.

Chapter V.

This faith is

Therefore, faith is the foundation of the Church: for it is not said of the flesh of Peter, but of faith, that the gates of death shall not prevail against it; but confession has conquered hell (Ibid.). And this confession has not excluded one heresy alone; for when the Church is often buffeted by many waves like a good ship, the foundation of the Church must prevail against all heresies. The day will fail me sooner than the names of heretics and various sects; yet a general faith opposes all of them, because Christ is the Son of God, everlasting from the Father, and born of the Virgin Mary. Whom the holy prophet David describes as a giant, because he is of two natures and shares in divinity and corporeality: who, like a bridegroom, proceeds from his chamber and rejoices like a giant to run his course (Psalm 19:6). The bridegroom of the soul according to the Word: a giant of the earth, because he traversed the duties of our usage, always being the eternal God, he received the sacraments of the incarnation, not divided, but one, because he is one in both, that is, in divinity and in body: for he is not one from the Father and another from the Virgin, but the same from both, although in different ways.

Generation does not prejudice generation, nor does flesh prejudice divinity; for neither does the pledge belong to the Father, nor does the will belong to suffering, nor does suffering belong to the will. For He both suffered and did not suffer; He died and did not die; He was buried and did not remain buried; He rose again and did not rise again, because He raised His own body; for what fell, rises again, and what did not fall, does not rise again. Therefore, He rose again according to the flesh, which had died and risen again; He did not rise again according to the Word, which had not been dissolved into the earth, but always remained with God.

Therefore, He both died according to the nature He assumed, and did not die according to the eternal substance of life. And He suffered according to the assumption of the body, so that the truth of the assumed body might be believed. And He did not suffer according to the impassible divinity of the Word, which is devoid of all pain. Finally, the same One said: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Psalm 22:1) Because according to the flesh, He was forsaken, He who according to His divinity could neither be forsaken nor forsake.

He also says the same thing: Far be it from my salvation to speak words of my sins (Ibid.), that is, let not one say, 'Why have You forsaken me?' but let him understand that these things are spoken according to the flesh, which are far from the fullness of divinity. For words of sins are foreign to God, because sins of words are foreign as well. But since I have taken on foreign sins, I have also taken on the words of foreign sins, so that I may say that I am forsaken by the Father God, even though I am always with God.

Therefore, he was immortal in death, impassible in suffering. For as though death did not capture him like a god, and the underworld saw him as though he were a man. In the end, he gave up his spirit (Matthew 27:50), and yet, as though an arbiter of stripping off and taking on a body, he gave up his spirit, he did not lose it. He was hanging on the cross, and he shook everything. The world trembled at the wood, whom the whole world trembled in fear of. He was amidst the torments, receiving wounds, and giving the kingdom of heaven. He became the sin of all, he washed away

the sins of the human race. Finally, he died and, rejoicing and exulting a second and third time, I say, he died; so that his death might become the life of the dead. But even his tomb did not lack a miracle. For when he was anointed by Joseph and buried in his tomb (Luke 23:53), he himself, who was dead among the dead, unlocked the graves of the dead with a new work. And indeed, his body lay in the tomb, but he himself, free among the dead, giving remission to those in hell and breaking the law of death, was granting forgiveness. Therefore, his flesh was in the tomb, but his power was working from heaven. He was shown to all through the truth of his body that he was not just flesh, but that the Word was flesh. Indeed, flesh tasted death, but the impassible power of God: and if it stripped off the body, nevertheless God suffered no loss from the body.

Why do you attribute the sufferings of the body to divinity, and connect the weak pain of human nature with divine nature? Now the soul, he said, is troubled (John 12:27). The soul is troubled, not wisdom; for wisdom remained unchanged, although it was surrounded by the garment of flesh. For in that servant form was the fullness of true light: and when he emptied himself, he was the light. Finally, he said: Walk while you have the light (John 12:35). And when he was in death, he was not in the shadow. Finally, even in hell, he poured out the light of eternal life. There the true light of wisdom shone, illuminating hell, but hell was not closed. For where is wisdom? Finally the righteous one says: But where is wisdom found? But where is discipline found? Man does not know its way, nor is it found among humans (Job 28:12-13).

Therefore, Wisdom is neither in time nor in place, as it indicates the existence of time. But how can it be in time, that which was in the beginning? How can it be in place, that which was with God? The Only Begotten Son is sought after, and is found in the bosom of the Father by the evangelical spirit. Do you think the bosom of the Father is a place? And you inquire how he was born, when the prophetic man says: 'No man knows her way' (Job 28:13)? And do you estimate his origin according to men, when Job says that it has not been found among men? And you attribute death to Wisdom, about which the abyss says: It is not in me; and the sea says: It is not with me (Ibid., 14). It does not say heaven, It is not in me, but the abyss says, It is not in me. For he did not say to the abyss, but to the Father: Into your hands I commend my spirit (Luke 23:46). Although the soul was once in the abyss, it is no longer; because it is written: For you will not abandon my soul in Hades, nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption (Psalm 16:10).

Therefore, the sea says: He is not with me, that is, my life says that it is restless amidst the waves of the world. For his flesh is not among men, because according to the flesh we no longer know Christ (II Cor. V, 16). The earth says: He is not with me, because he has risen. Finally, the Angel says: Why do you seek the living among the dead (Luke XXIV, 5)? And the sea rightly said: He is not with me; for he was above the sea. Finally, he walked on the sea and on physical footsteps, when he commanded Peter to walk on the sea (Matt. XIV, 29); although Peter faltered, he faltered not because of the weakness of the one commanding, but because of the obedience of the weak.

Therefore, do not allow the stain of our human nature to corrupt the splendor of glory, nor pour the fog of human flesh onto the light. Furthermore, by preaching passion, if you do not acknowledge what is capable of suffering, you have denied the piety of the Lord and rejected your own salvation. Therefore, we must consider those who, upon hearing the Son of God say, 'Why do you hit me?' (John 18:23), deemed subject to injury the one who is subject to the nature of divinity, as mentally deranged. For he said: 'Why do you strike me?' but the divine nature did not feel the

blow. He said: 'I have given my back to the lashings, and my cheeks to those who pluck out the beard: I did not turn away my face from the insults and spitting.' (Isaiah 50:6). He spoke of his back and cheeks and face, that is, parts of the human body. For just as the flesh suffered in the Word, remaining in the flesh, so the Word of God suffered in the flesh, as it is written: 'For Christ suffered in the flesh' (1 Peter 4:1); he referred this to himself in relation to the assumption of the body; so that he might take upon himself what is ours, and clothe himself with the human.

Therefore, rightly according to its own nature, the flesh suffered, and its nature was not changed by the suffering of the body; for in truth, our resurrection is real, and therefore the passion of Christ is preached in truth.

Chapter VI. These heretics, who claim that Christ either suffered in a phantom or embraced two persons in himself, are all refuted, just like those who distinguish the Word of God from the Son of God or do not distinguish divinity from the flesh, or subject divinity to the injuries of the body as if it were imperfect. However, Ambrose shows that the authors of all of these errors are those who pretended that the divinity and the flesh of the Lord are of one nature, falsely selling the authority of the Council of Nicaea, while he reveals that only the humanity of Christ is described in the Scriptures. He took on flesh in order to redeem what he had sinned, since nothing can be common to God and sin. Finally, he reveals how absurd the things that follow from the opinions of his adversaries are. For neither, as some say, did he suffer in appearance, since he did not walk on the sea in appearance, as the disciples are reported to have thought in the Gospel (Matthew 14:26). But they are excused because: the Spirit had not yet been given (John 7:39); for Jesus had not yet been honored (Romans 5:5). Christ has now been crucified and risen for us: the Spirit has now been given to us, who is the advocate of truth. And indeed, the disciples sometimes made mistakes, so that we would not be able to make mistakes later. Therefore, their error benefits us. As if men have erred, as if disciples have believed. And therefore we must condemn those who preach that Jesus came in a phantom, and also those who, contrary to the line of error, do not say that he is the same and only Son of God: but that there is one who was born of God the Father, and another who was generated from the Virgin; whereas the Evangelist says that the Word became flesh (John 1:1), so that you would believe in one Lord Jesus, not two.

Some even believed that the Word of God and the Son of God were different: whereas the Evangelist testifies that He Himself, who was the Word in the beginning and was with God the Father, came in His own person. But there are those who, just as they believed that the prophets were only one, also believed that the Word was made Christ, not that He Himself was the Word of God. But it is not said of any of the prophets that the Word was made flesh. None of the prophets took away the sins of the world. No other has it been said: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased (Matt. III, 17). Nowhere in the prophets do we read that the Lord of majesty, whom the Apostle said the Jews crucified (I Cor. II, 8), refers to anyone else but Christ. But while we refute these arguments, others arise who claim that the flesh of the Lord and the divinity are of one nature. What sacrilege have these vomited forth from hell? Now the Arians are more tolerable, whose strength of perfidy grows through these people; for they assert with even greater contention that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not of one substance; because these people have attempted to say that the divinity of the Lord and the flesh are of one substance. Then when these people say that the Word has been transformed into flesh, hair, blood, and bones, and has been changed from its own nature; a place is given to them to twist the weakness of the flesh, through a

certain divine change, to the weakness of the divinity.

There are also those who have fallen into such impiety that they think that the divinity of the Lord was circumcised and made imperfect by the incarnation, and that on the cross, it was not flesh that hung there, but the divine substance, which is the agent of all things, coagulated in the likeness of flesh. But who would not shudder? Who would listen to the claim that the Word of God did not assume passible flesh for itself from the Virgin Mary, but made it out of divine substance? By asserting this, they fall into the error of contending that the body of the Lord was not assumed in time but has always coexisted with the Word of God. Of all these authors are those who said that the divinity and the flesh of the Lord were of one nature. I read that I should not believe, unless I read myself: I read, I say, in the books of a certain person, it is written this way, that the organ and the one who moved the organ were of one nature in Christ. I have put this here so that the name of the author may be discovered from the writings; and let them take note that, although with the most exquisite arguments and adorned speeches, the force of truth cannot be obscured. And here he frequently mentions that he holds the treatise of the Council of Nicaea. But in that treatise our fathers said that they affirmed not the flesh, but the Word of God to be of one substance with the Father; and that the Word indeed proceeded from the paternal substance, but that the flesh was confessed to be from the virgin. Therefore, how is the name of the Council of Nicaea invoked and new things introduced which our ancestors never experienced; when surely the Scriptures say that Christ suffered according to the flesh (1 Peter 1:2), not according to the divinity: the Scriptures say that a virgin will conceive in her womb and bear a Son (Isaiah 7:14)? For she received virtue, and she gave birth to a Son, whom she herself conceived.

Finally, Gabriel also declares this in his own words, saying: 'And what is born of you will be called the Son of God' (Luke 1:35). He says 'of you' in order to point out that as far as the human aspect is concerned, what is born of Mary is true human nature, while according to the divine aspect, it retains the prerogative of the Lord's body and is in no way separated from it. Indeed, Paul also says that he was predestined in the Gospel of God: 'which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh' (Romans 1:2-3). And to the Galatians: But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman (Gal. IV, 4). And to Timothy He said: Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David (II Tim. II, 8).

Therefore, He received from us what was proper to offer for us, so that He might redeem us from ourselves; and He gave us what was not ours, out of His divine generosity. According to His nature, He offered Himself for us, so as to operate beyond our nature. The sacrifice is ours, the reward is His: and in the same act you will find both according to nature and beyond nature. For according to the condition of the body, He was in the womb, He was born, He was nursed, He was placed in a manger; but beyond the condition, the Virgin conceived, the Virgin gave birth: so that you may believe that He was God, who renewed nature; and He was man, who was born according to nature from a man. For indeed, as some have interpreted, the very nature of the Word has not changed, which is always unchangeable, as He Himself said: 'See, see Me, for I am, and I have not changed' (Malachi 3:6). But even Paul said: 'For Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, He Himself is unto the ages' (Hebrews 13:8), that is, He who was not changed according to the nature of flesh, but remained unchangeable even in the mutable condition of human quality.

Therefore, you have learned that he offered a sacrifice from our own. For what was the cause of the Incarnation, if not so that the flesh which had sinned might be redeemed by itself? Therefore, what had sinned, that is what was redeemed. Therefore, the divinity of the Word was not immolated, because the divinity of the Word had not sinned; and therefore the nature of the Word was not transformed into the nature of the flesh; because the divinity, which was free from sin, should not offer itself for the sin that it had not committed. For Christ offered in himself what he put on: and put on what he did not have before. Therefore, he did not put on the divinity of his divinity, in which there was the fullness of eternal divinity: but he took on flesh, so that he might strip off the spoils of the flesh, and in himself crucify the possessions of the devil, and raise the trophies of virtue.

Therefore, if the flesh of all was subject to injury in Christ, how can you say that Word is of the same substance with divinity? If the Word and the flesh are of one substance, and the flesh has a nature derived from the earth, how is it asserted that the Word and the soul are of one substance, which soul has assumed a perfect nature of human beings? However, the Word is of the same substance with God according to the profession of the Father, and the assertion of the Lord Himself, who says: 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:30). Therefore, the Father is preached as having one substance with the earthly body. And yet you are indignant at the Arians because they say that the Son of God is a creature, when you yourselves say that the Father is of one substance with creatures. But what else are you accomplishing by saying these things, except that you either compare the slime of Adam and our earthly substance to the divine nature, or certainly transfer divinity into an injustice of earthly corruption? For by saying that the Word became flesh and bones, you certainly say that it was turned into earth; since flesh and bones are from the earth.

They say that it is written: 'And the Word became flesh' (John 1:14). It is written, I do not deny it; but consider what follows: 'And dwelt among us', that is, that Word which took on flesh, dwelt among us, that is, dwelt in human flesh; and therefore he is called Emmanuel, that is, God with us (Matthew 1:23). Therefore, this Word became flesh, because he became a man. As also in Joel it is said: I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28); for it is not upon irrational flesh, but upon men, that the promise of the outpouring of spiritual grace is future. But if you hold to the letter, as you think, from what is written, that the Word was made flesh, that the Word of God was made flesh; do you deny that it is written about the Lord, that he did not commit sin, but became sin (II Cor. 5:21)? Therefore, the Lord was not turned into sin (Gal. 3:13)? Not so; but because he took on our sins, he was called sin. For the Lord was also called cursed, not because the Lord was turned into a curse, but because he himself took on our curse: Cursed is he who hangs on a tree (Deut. 21:23). Therefore, you marvel because it is written: The Word was made flesh, when flesh was assumed by the Word of God; for when it is written that he was made sin, it means that he was made sin in the likeness of sinful flesh, not in nature or operation of sin, but in order to crucify our sin in his own flesh, he assumed the reception of the weaknesses of our guilty body, which is carnal.

Therefore, let them stop saying that the nature of the Word has been changed into the nature of the body, so that it does not appear that the nature of the Word has been changed into the contagion of sin. For it is one thing that He assumed, and another thing that was assumed. The power came into the Virgin, just as the Angel said to her: The power of the Most High will overshadow you (Luke 1:35). But the body was born from the Virgin, and therefore there is a

descent from heaven indeed, but a human conception. Therefore, the nature of the flesh and the nature of divinity could not be the same.

Chapter VII.

The one who added this to the previous books is excused: then, when he demonstrated the foolish arguments of those who denied that the soul is received from Christ, he establishes the same reception of the soul with testimonies from Scripture; then, after explaining why the soul should not be overlooked by the Lord, he shows that they are troubled by empty fear. How Christ is said to fear or to make progress; and yet there is no danger of being divided or of appearing wicked: this last point is turned against them themselves.

I could pursue this more extensively, but I fear that these very things may seem superfluous or prolix to some. For perhaps someone might say: Did you not promise that you would conclude in the five books you wrote about the divinity of the Father and the Son? But what should I do when new and diverse questions arise daily? The promise is not overlooked, but the objection constrains. For how can there be a limit to the response if there is no limit to the objection? And yet, in the previous book, I had promised to fulfill the response to the divinity of the Father and the Son. However, in this book on the sacrament of the Lord's incarnation, a fuller discussion has been made, as it should be. For when the Lord says, 'My soul is sorrowful even unto death' (Matt. 26:38), and later, 'Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will but as you will' (ibid., 39), this is not referring to the compassion of the Holy Spirit, but to the rational assumption of the soul and human nature. Therefore, it is necessary to assert that the sacrament of the Lord and the fullness of human nature were accomplished in Christ, and that we distinguish them from any weakness of the Spirit. For he is not subject to weakness who is not subject to passion.

Therefore, I inquire by what reasoning certain individuals believe that the soul is not received from the Lord Jesus; is it because of the fear that Christ would be corrupted by human sensation? Indeed, they say that the desire of the flesh is contrary to the law of the mind (Rom. VII, 23). But whoever says this, is so far from thinking that Christ, under the law of the flesh, should have been led into the bonds of sin; that he himself, in the heat of human frailty, believed that he could be helped by Christ, saying: Wretched me, a man! Who will free me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 7:24). So he who freed others from the slippery flesh, could he possibly fear being overcome by the dominion of that same flesh? But he was afraid of the allurements of that flesh, as they wished. Therefore, he should have avoided the acceptance of flesh, so that he would not be drawn into the slippery slope of error. But how could he fear the slippery slope of sin, who had come to forgive sin? And therefore, when he assumed human flesh, it follows that he received the perfection and fullness of the incarnation; for there is nothing imperfect in Christ. Therefore, he assumed flesh in order to resurrect: he took on a soul, but a perfect soul, endowed with reason, he assumed and received a human soul. For who can deny that he received his soul, since he himself says: I lay down my life for my sheep? And again: Therefore the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again (John 10:15). This is not said in a parable, nor with a superficial meaning, in which one thing is said and another is understood, as in this: My soul hates your New Moons and your Sabbaths (Isaiah 1:13); although this can also be referred to the soul of Christ, which was laid down in order to abolish the

error of Jewish superstition and establish the truth of one sacrifice. But let them doubt about this prophecy, they cannot refute this statement about the property of the soul; since it is about the death and resurrection of the Lord; finally he adds: No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again (John 10:18). Therefore, he lays down the same soul that he took up. I say he took it up; for the Word itself, the living God, was not made in his own flesh in place of our soul: but just as he took up our flesh, so he took up our complete soul by the assumption of human nature. He assumed my soul in order to bless it with the sacrament of his incarnation; He accepted my affection in order to mend it. But what need was there for taking on flesh without a soul; when surely flesh that is insensible and without reason neither is subject to sin nor worthy of reward? Therefore, He took on for us that which was more in danger among us. But what profit is it to me if He has not redeemed the whole of me? But He has redeemed the whole of me, who says: 'You make me unworthy, who have made the whole man sound on the Sabbath' (John 7:23)? He has redeemed the whole of me, because in a perfect man, faithful not in part but in entirety, He rises again.

Therefore, let those who are compassionate not fear that Christ, who even controlled the foal of a donkey that no one had ridden before, could not govern his own flesh, soul, and human understanding. The one who planted the ear, will he not hear? The one who governed others could not govern himself? The one who forgave sins committed sin himself? Let those overly worried individuals, like the tutors of Christ, cease to fear that the law of the mind, which did not oppress Paul but only resisted, will also oppress desire for the flesh in Christ himself. The athlete of Christ counts the victories of his mind. Do they tremble lest the flesh waver in the Lord, which conquered in a servant?

Christ does not want us to fear for Himself, the Lord does not want us to weep for Himself. Finally, He says: Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, weep for yourselves (Luke 23:28). And to those, He says: Do not fear for me, fear for yourselves. Have you not heard David saying: The LORD is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1). And elsewhere: I shall not fear what man can do to me (Psalm 118:6); and elsewhere: I shall not fear what flesh can do to me (Psalm 56:5).

Therefore He says: I could fear the fall of human nature which man himself did not fear: and so, before flesh, God took on the perfection of human nature: I took on the senses of man, but I am not inflated by the sense of the flesh. By the sense of man I said that my soul was troubled: by the sense of man I hungered: by the sense of man I prayed, as I always heard the prayers of those who pray: by the sense of man I made progress, as it is written: And Jesus advanced in age and wisdom and grace with God and men (Luke 2:52).

How did the Wisdom of God progress? Let the order of words teach you. It advanced in age and wisdom, but in a human way. Therefore, it preceded age so that you would believe the statement according to a human being. Age belongs to the body, not to divinity. Therefore, if it advanced in the age of a human, it advanced in the wisdom of a human. Wisdom, however, progresses through the senses, because wisdom comes from the senses. But Jesus advanced in both age and wisdom. Who was making progress in understanding? If human, then he himself underwent change: if divine, then he is mutable by progress. For whatever makes progress, certainly changes for the better: but what is divine does not change: therefore, what changes is not necessarily

divine. Therefore, human understanding was making progress; therefore, it assumed a human understanding. And so that we may know that he was speaking according to the human, he added above, saying: But the boy grew and was strengthened and filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was with him (ibid., 40). And the boy, it is the name of our age: neither the power of God could be strengthened, nor God could grow, nor the height of God's wisdom, nor the fullness of God's divinity could be fulfilled. Therefore, what was being fulfilled was not God's wisdom, but our own. For how could he be fulfilled, who descended to fulfill all things (Ephesians 4:10)? But how did Isaiah say it, that the child did not know his father or mother? For it is written: Before the child knows his father or mother, he will receive the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria (Isaiah 8:4). For the wisdom of God, which is to come and is hidden, does not deceive; but through human imprudence, infancy lacks knowledge and remains ignorant of what it has not yet learned.

But, you say, we must be cautious lest if we attribute two primary senses or a twofold wisdom to Christ, we divide Christ. When we worship both his divinity and his flesh, do we divide Christ? When we venerate in him the image of God and the cross, do we divide him? Surely the Apostle, who said of him: For although he was crucified through weakness, yet he lives by the power of God (2 Corinthians 13:4); he himself said that Christ is not divided. Do we also divide Him when we say that He received a rational and intellectual soul capable of our understanding? (I Cor. I, 13) For God himself, the Word, in his flesh, was not a rational and intelligent soul, but a rational and intelligent soul, and the same human, and of the same substance as our souls, and a flesh similar to our own, and of the same substance as our flesh. The Word of God, assuming this, was also a perfect man, without any stain of sin; for he himself did not sin, but was made sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:21). Therefore, the flesh is of the same essence as the soul, and our soul and flesh are of the same substance. Nor do I fear that I may appear to introduce a quaternity, for we truly adore the Trinity, we who assert this. For I do not divide Christ when I distinguish the substance of His flesh and His divinity, but I proclaim one Christ with the Father and the Spirit of God, and I will demonstrate that those who say that the flesh of Christ is of the same substance as His divinity introduce a quaternity. For it is not that which is of the same substance that is one, but one is, for surely those who confess the Son of the same substance as the Father in the treatise of the Council of Nicaea did not believe in one person, but in one divinity in the Father and the Son.

Therefore, when they say that the flesh of Christ, which was also the Son of God, was of the same substance, they themselves incur the folly of a vain assertion, as they seek to divide Christ. Thus, they introduce a fourth uncreated entity, which we adore, even though only the uncreated divinity of the Trinity exists.

Chapter VIII.

Against this Catholic sentence, that the Son who is begotten is equal to the Father who begot him, opponents argue that the begotten cannot be of the same nature as the unbegotten; it is replied that the terms begotten and unbegotten, which are not found in the Scriptures, are introduced by them, since they reject them in terms of nature and substance because they deny their existence in the same Scriptures. Moreover, it is shown from the sacred scriptures that there is nature and substance in God.

I had concluded the book, but there was a concern that we might seem to disregard religion because we were unable to solve it. For a while now, certain individuals have been saying to us that the Son of God, who was born, cannot be unequal to the Father who begot him, even though the former was born and the latter begot, because generation is not about power but about nature. They consider the question to be closed against them in that regard, but in an objectionable way they turn the discussion around in the same place, thinking that by changing the wording, they can change the issue, saying: How can the unbegotten and the begotten be of the same nature and substance?

So, in order to respond, most merciful Emperor, to the question you have posed to me; first of all, I do not find in the holy Scriptures anything innate: I have not read, I have not heard. Whose therefore are the people of such changeability, that they say we use those things which are not written; when we, on the other hand, say those things which are written: and they themselves object that it is not written? Do they not oppose themselves, and undermine the authority of their own false accusation? For they say that it is not written that God is substance and nature; whereas certainly the Scripture testifies that the Son of God is the brightness of his glory, and the character of his substance (Hebrews 1:3), and in another book we have shown very fully that many others have spoken of the divine substance (Book III on Faith, chapter 4). Who then would deny that divine nature? When the apostle Peter wrote in his epistle that the mercy of the Lord was accomplished through the passion of the cross, in order to make us partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). But elsewhere Paul also wrote: But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those who by nature are not gods (Galatians 4:8). We also find this in Greek manuscripts, which have greater authority. So what, therefore, do those mean who deny that nature is divine, except that now they not only slander the Son but also the Father? For if it is denied that God is by nature, then it follows that he is by grace, like humans. Or certainly it is falsely believed, like demons, whose images are given the name of God. But let us follow the authority of the Apostle, so that we may say that nature is not divine in idols. Therefore, if it is not in idols, it is not in demons: it remains that in God there is a divine nature and substance.

Therefore, with apostolic authority, we affirm that it is right to say of God the Father that His nature is God; let them now understand that the same nature of God the Father is also that of the Son, and likewise that of the Holy Spirit; lest perhaps they say the same thing: Indeed, we read that nature is divine, but we do not read of the unity of the divine nature. But when the Son Himself said: I and the Father are one (John 10:30); He proved the unity of the divinity. When He said: All that the Father has is mine (John 16:15); and further: Father, all that is mine is yours, and yours is mine (John 17:10); He affirmed the unity. When he said, 'The Father who dwells in me, he himself does the works that I do' (John 14:10), he clearly declared unity.

Then Peter shows that there is one divine nature: 'That he might make us sharers of the divine nature' (2 Peter 1:4). For he could have said it differently; he could have said, I say, 'That he might make us sharers of the divine natures'; especially since we pass into participation in the divine nature through the Son. Can he give what he does not have? Therefore, there is no doubt that he gives from what he has; and therefore, he who gives the sharing in the divine nature has the divine nature. The Apostle Paul also says: 'Those who are not by nature gods' (Galatians 4:8); he shows that there is only one true nature of God. For he himself could have said: 'Those who are not by nature gods' if he knew that there is a plurality of divine nature, with something different in

the Father, something different in the Son, something different in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, by saying 'Those who are not by nature gods,' he expressed the unity of the divine nature. But what is the nature of God, if not to be the true God? as he said to the Thessalonians: How you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God (I Thess. I, 9). For they pretend to be gods, but God by nature is living and true. For even in our use of language, the Son by adoption is also the true Son. We do not say that the adopted Son is Son by nature, but we say that he is by nature the one who is the true Son.

Therefore, we have proven by reading that both the nature and substance are divine: and the apostolic authority has also demonstrated that the nature of God is unity, not plurality.

Chapter IX.

While the heretics want to claim that the unbegotten Father, which they did not read in Scripture, should be granted to them, they reveal their eagerness for debate. However, it must be admitted that it is written, but by Arius, who is opposed by the Apostle. Their objection is turned back against themselves, and the voice of the unbegotten is also affirmed for all creatures. After explaining the reasoning of the opponents, Ambrose responds that the terms "begotten" and "unbegotten" do not signify nature, but rather quality. With the examples presented, this proves the point extensively, but in particular it is longer in that it makes it clear that the same substance can arise from different beginnings.

Now they argue that when they have read the Unbegotten Father. But if they demand that it be granted to them in the manner of dialectic, that they may use as a premise what has not been read and pretend that it has been read, they reveal that they are driven by the desire for controversy rather than the pursuit of knowledge of the truth. For in dialectic itself, if what they demand to be granted to them is not granted, they are unable to find a starting point for their argument, which they desire in order to find an approach to controversy, rather than to examine the truth. And this is the case where the dispute is more about the clever tactics of argumentation than about the investigation of truth. For this is indeed the glory of dialecticians, if they seem to conquer with words and refute the truth; and on the other hand, it is contrary to the definition of faith that truth, not words, should be weighed. In short, simple truth excludes the words of philosophers, just as it does the nets of fishermen.

Therefore, what is this assertion, where if I do not grant them the word of the uncreated, they cannot find the beginning of the assertion? So, let them demonstrate where they have read it.

He had forgotten: now I remember. It has been read, they say; for Arius said that the Father is uncreated, and the Son is begotten and created. Behold, they contend against the apostolic writings in this matter: let them contend, however, if they confess themselves to be disciples of Arius. For how can they deny the teacher whose invention they follow? But if they say this, what Arius said: I should more justly say what the Apostle said (Ephesians 3:14). For he called the Father, not ungenerated: he called the Son, and he called him begotten Son. What I have read, I do not deny; indeed, I gladly use it: what I have not read, I should not use. But yet, what we would not do in dialectic, they may use; and perhaps they may say that because we do not read the Father as begotten like the Son, therefore we must consider him ungenerated. This is understood, therefore it is not read. But if it is understood, neither is the Holy Spirit born read: therefore, the

Spirit, because it is not born, must certainly be called uncreated according to your opinion. Therefore, if you say that the uncreated and the born cannot be of one substance; it remains that you do not deny the unity of the divine nature and substance of the Father and the Holy Spirit, because we do not read of the Father being born, nor of the Holy Spirit. For if the power of your entire argument is that the ungenerated and generated cannot be of the same nature, therefore, he who is not generated is of the same nature and substance as he who is not generated. And if you think that the Father is greater because he is not generated, is the Holy Spirit also greater than the Son?

Many and countless examples can be provided to show that something which is not generated is called ungenerated. For many have said that even the world is ungenerated, and that the matter of all things, which the Greeks call 'hyle' as if it were a material forest, is ungenerated. Therefore, they see that this word cannot have a certain prerogative of power, unless perhaps they seem to honor God with this word, by which philosophers believed the world should be considered a gift. Is the Father, therefore, begotten in such a way as the world? Far from it. Or does only this speech befit God, since God is beyond the scope of all speeches? Therefore, there is nothing precious to God in that speech, which can be common with others. But nevertheless, however you want it, let the incomparable prerogative of this speech be, which is not designated by any authority, but is estimated by your judgment. Therefore, what advantage does this have, that you want to create a difference in nature, a difference in power between the Father and the Son from a word? Unbegotten, it says, and begotten cannot be of the same nature and substance; or, as they sometimes say, the uncreated and the created are not of the same nature. For neither do the ingenerate and inoperative make a distinction, nor do they want there to be a distinction between the begotten and the created, in such a way that they would call the Son a creature.

Therefore, they say that because the Father is the ultimate cause, that is, ἀρχή as the Greeks say, and has surpassed all others, since he was not created from another, he is not a son; since he is indeed substance, not having a beginning or cause from elsewhere, from which he exists. And therefore, they say, there cannot be another substance like this, because all things have their cause for existence from Father God. Hence, they say it is not plausible that the Son, because he is from the Father, and does not have a cause of his own to exist, but receives it from the Father, should be similar to the Father: since the Father does not have a cause from elsewhere, but the Son, as they argue, could not have existed unless he had received this very thing from the Father to be. And so they say that what is begotten and what is uncreated are dissimilar; as if, indeed, as I have often said elsewhere, generation is about power, not nature. For when I say what is begotten, I am expressing not a property of nature but the meaning of generation; and I will prove this with more evident examples. For if I were to say 'Son' generally, without adding whose, it could be understood as both the son of a human, and the son of wickedness, and the son of destruction, and the son of the devil, as the Scripture testifies about the Jews (John 8:44); and likewise what is in use for the offspring of a beast and the young of doves. And therefore in the appellation of sons, the expression of nature is not signified. But indeed if I desire to designate nature, I will call a man, or name a horse, or say a bird, so that nature can be understood.

So, if I want to designate divine nature, I should name the true God. But when I say Son, I indicate that he was born: when I also say Father, I declare that he has begotten. Therefore, do not make a distinction in nature, since this indicates the nature of the one who begets and the one who is

begotten: indications of this kind express the quality of the substance; for there are many sons, as I said, but there is a difference among the sons: one by nature, another by grace.

Many creatures are invisible and visible: invisible, like Principalities and Powers, Thrones and Dominions; visible, like the sun, moon, stars, man, and earth. Therefore, there are various species and various substances of creatures. So, if you want to express the property of any creature, you will name either the sun, or the moon, or the stars; and thus what you consider to be significant is understood.

Moreover, if you were to say 'made' or 'created,' which they sometimes say about the Son, since many things have been made and created, you do not seem to have meant the property of substance, but rather the appearance of quality. For substance is one thing, quality another. Furthermore, we have said in another place that the Latins have translated ουσία as 'substance.' But when the substance of God is spoken of, what else is signified except that God always exists? This is expressed by the very letters, because when the divine power is always being, that is, when it always exists, it is called οὐσία, with the order of one letter changed for the sake of sound and the conciseness and elegance of speech. Therefore, οὐσία, which always signifies God, declares how the appellation of ungenerated or generated is, as you wish, namely, that the Father is not from another, nor is the Son from Himself. Here, there seems to be a different species. Certainly, a distinct species, but an indistinct divinity.

You ask how this can be proven? I will demonstrate also in creatures a different species, different beginnings in many, and one substance, and I will produce examples from the Scriptures. Therefore, if this can be applicable in mortal things; in the same way as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit impose a law of necessity on divinity.

Indeed, all flying creatures, which appear to be of the same kind, are certainly of the same nature, just as there is one kind and one nature of eagles, and likewise of vultures and others according to their species. However, as for how they began to be flying creatures, we find three species and we have read that their origins have different causes. For it is written that God said: Let the waters bring forth the creeping creatures having life, and the flying creatures flying above the earth (Gen. I, 20). And a little later, when God had made paradise and placed man in it, it is written that God formed beasts of the field and birds of the air from the earth (Gen. II, 19). Therefore, the birds in this place are figuratively represented as being from the earth. Moreover, you have also read that God said to the birds: Increase and multiply (Gen. I, 22); certainly commanding the increase of offspring from the union of male and female. Therefore, we also observe that those of one kind began in different ways: some from water, some from earth, some from the union of male and female; yet these are all of the same nature and do not have a difference in substance. But what about the unity of nature, as our flesh is with the truth of the Lord's body? Yet both are derived from different causes and have different origins. For the flesh of the Lord, generated by the Spirit coming upon the Virgin (Luke 1:35), did not require the customary union of male and female intercourse. But our flesh, unless the male and female sexes unite in their natural channels, cannot be formed within the mother's womb. And yet, even though the cause of their generation is different, the flesh of Christ is one with all human flesh. For the birth of the Virgin did not change nature, but it renewed the use of procreation. Indeed, flesh was born from flesh. Therefore, the Virgin had something of her own to give, for the mother did not give something foreign, but

contributed her own from her womb in an unusual way, but in the usual manner. Therefore, the Virgin had flesh, which she transmitted by the established right of nature into the offspring. Therefore, Mary, who gave birth according to the flesh, and the nature of the one born, are not unlike brothers, for the Scripture says that he was to become like his brothers in every respect (Heb. II, 17). Likewise, our Son of God is similar, not according to the fullness of divinity, but according to the nature of the rational soul, and to express it more clearly, the truth of our human body. But what can we say about Adam himself, who, being formed from the clay of the earth, surely begot sons of his own consorts of nature, participants of his race, heirs of his succession (Gen. II, 17)? Indeed, there are different beginnings in both parents and children, but there is one human nature; yet, the dissimilarity of origin did not prejudice the similarity of substance. Therefore, just as a son is similar to his father even in those things which, due to the frailty of human condition, could not possess the fullness of similarity, how then is the Son of God the true dissimilar to the Father?

Chapter X. Those who acknowledge the Son to be like the Father, but deny that they are of the same substance, do not differ from those who came before them. For it is not possible for there to be an accidental or partial likeness between them; such likenesses are attributed to mere humans in relation to God, but the likeness between the Son and the Father is of nature, of which the Son is also the perfect image. Therefore, the term 'begotten' does not hinder the Catholic faith, but reveals the perfidy of heretics; for by using an unfamiliar term in Scripture, they denied the omnipotence that is attributed to those persons there. But most of those who follow the same sect think that they disagree with them in the form of discussion, those who say that the Son is dissimilar to the Father in all things. Therefore, let us also refute the nonsense of those who say that the Son is similar, but not of one substance with the Father. But those things that are not of the same nature are necessarily different and distant: and those that are of different nature, it follows that they cannot be similar; unless perhaps you say they are similar in appearance, but dissimilar in truth. For both milk and snow and a white swan are of the same color, but they preserve the difference of their distinct natures; nor does the difference of natures of species become colored by the similarity of appearance.

How then do they say that the Father and the Son are similar, who deny the unity of substance? Do they think that they are similar according to form, figure, and color? But these are attributes of the body, they indicate a certain composition. But how do we fit invisibility with similarity according to color or form? Or how can a creature be similar to the uncreated? How can the splendor of glory and the character of his substance (Heb. I, 3) be similar if, as they say, glory and substance are different?

They say that the Son is similar in glory and operation, and therefore he is called the image of God. Therefore, if he is similar in some things, but not in all things, he is similar in part and dissimilar in part. It follows from this proposition that if he is similar in part, he is not identical in whole, but is a composite image of God. And therefore, it follows that he himself appears to be composite, whose image is composite. But if the composite maintains similarity in its parts, its image cannot be similar in part. But those who deny similarity according to the unity of nature, consider similarity to others. For they often say: Why do you think that Scripture gave much to the Son because it said image; when God himself said to men: Be holy, for I am holy (Lev. XIX, 2)? And the Son said: Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matth. XVI, 48)? And they do not

understand that by this it is implied: that the Son is similar to the Father not according to a part, but according to the fullness of divinity and the perfection. Finally, if many are similar, why is only the Son called the invisible image of God, and the character of his substance; unless it is because in him is the unity of the same nature, and the expression of his majesty? For there is one kind of likeness according to imitation, another according to nature, as the words themselves of the examples proposed indicate; for the Scripture says: Be holy, that they may become so through imitation. Therefore, it is said to men: Be holy, because they are not so; but God says of Himself: I am holy, because I am so by nature, not by progress in growing holiness. Then Wisdom says: Be perfect, that they may begin to possess what they do not yet possess. But concerning the Father it says: As your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect. Therefore the Father is perfect, who always is. Hence His being, whether in Greek called οὐρανός, because it always exists, or in Latin called substance, because it remains in itself and does not subsist by the help of another.

Therefore, the Father is holy and perfect, the Son is also holy and perfect, as the image of God. But the image of God, because all things that are God are seen in the Son, that is, eternal divinity, omnipotence, and majesty. Therefore, just as God is, so His image appears. Therefore, it is necessary that you believe the image to be such as God is. For if you take away from the image, it will appear that you have taken away from the one whose image it is. If you believe the image to be lesser, then a lesser God will appear in the image. For as you have judged the image to be, so shall he appear to you, whose image is invisible. The image said: He who sees me, sees the Father also (John 14:9). And as you have judged him to be, whose image you believe the Son to be; so necessarily must the Son be judged by you. Hence, since the Father is uncreated, so is the Son uncreated; since the Father is not less, so is the Son not less; since the Father is omnipotent, so is the Son omnipotent.

Therefore it has been said, even if they use what they do not read, so that they may call it innate; nevertheless, that word does not hinder us from believing that Christ is of one nature and substance with the Father. And if of one nature, certainly of one power. This place is not difficult to refute the studies of the perfidious. For how do they deny the omnipotent Christ, which is written, who are willing to claim that which they do not teach in writing? For we have taught the omnipotent Christ above (Book 2, De Fide, chapter 3), in the Apocalypse of John the Evangelist, and in the prophecy of Zechariah, and in the Gospel. If anyone thinks these things should be reviewed, let him review and repeat.

However, because I almost passed by there due to the congestion of testimonies, let them say about what they think was said, that which Amos prophesied; for it is written thus: 'The Lord who touches the earth, and it trembles, and all who dwell in it mourn. And he rises up like the river of Egypt, for he builds his ascent above the heavens, and he establishes his promise upon the earth: he calls the waters of the sea and pours them out upon the face of the earth, the Lord Almighty is his name.' Do they not understand that all these things agree in the Son, who, descending to the earth, touched it, was moved in his passion, ascended from the earth into heaven, and descended upon the earth from heaven, as he himself promised? But why do I labor about the Son, when Scripture also testifies about the omnipotent Spirit? For it is written: By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and by the breath of His mouth all their power (Psalm 32:6). And concerning Wisdom, it is written that it possesses the omnipotent Spirit; for Solomon says: For Wisdom, the artificer of all, taught me (Wisdom 7:12). Indeed, in Wisdom there is a spirit of

understanding, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, immaculate, manifest, invulnerable, loving what is good, keen, provident, powerful, benevolent, steadfast, untroubled, all-seeing, and penetrating through all intelligent spirits.

On the Sacraments

On the Sacraments by Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Book One
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Caut III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Book Two
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Book Three
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Book Four
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.

- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Book Five
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Book Six
- Chapter I.
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.

Book One

Chapter I.

When he has sent to do concerning the sacraments, which it was not necessary to explain before, he approaches the mystery of opening, which he teaches designated by Christ in the cure of the deaf and mute.

About the sacraments that you have received, I begin my speech, the reason for which did not need to be mentioned beforehand; for in a Christian man, faith is foremost. Therefore, even in Rome, they are called faithful who have been baptized; and our father Abraham was justified by faith, not by works (Rom. IV, 3). Therefore, you have received baptism, you have believed. It would be wrong for me to consider anything else; for you would not have been called to grace unless Christ had judged you worthy by His grace. So what did we do on Saturday? Indeed, the opening: which mysteries were celebrated in the opening, when the priest touched the ears and nose. This signifies in the Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ, when a deaf and mute man was brought to Him, and He touched his ears and his mouth, saying: Ephphatha (Mark 7:34). This is a Hebrew word, which in Latin means to open. Therefore, the priest touched your ears so that your ears would be opened to the word and to the conversation with the priest. But you ask me: Why the nose? There, because he was mute, he touched his mouth; so that because he could not speak the heavenly sacraments, he could receive a voice from Christ. And there, because he was a man; here, because women are baptized, and the purity of the servant is not the same as that of the Lord (for while he forgives sins, the sins of this one are forgiven, what comparison can there be?). Therefore, because of the grace of the work and the gift, the bishop does not touch the mouth, but

the nose; so that you may receive the good smell of eternal piety, and so that you may say: For we are the good smell of Christ to God, as the holy Apostle said (II Cor. II, 15); and may there be in you a fragrance full of faith and devotion.

Chapter II.

He explains the function of the Christian athlete, which is to encourage him to maintain the faith of renunciation, amplifying the dignity of the witnesses who were present when it was made, and finally adding light to the matter through example.

We came to the fountain (On the Consecration, dist. 4, c. You Came to the Fountain), you entered: consider whom you saw, consider what you said, repeat diligently. A Levite comes to you, a priest comes to you: you are anointed as an athlete of Christ, as if about to wrestle the struggles of this world, you have declared the contests of your struggle. He who struggles, has something to hope for: where there is struggle, there is a crown. You wrestle in the world, but you are crowned by Christ, and are you crowned for the struggles of the world? For although the reward is in heaven, here the merit of the reward is bestowed. When he asked you: Do you renounce the devil and his works, what did you respond? I renounce. Do you renounce the world and its pleasures, what did you respond? I renounce. Remember your promise and never let your series of caution slip away. If you give a promissory note to someone, you are bound to him in order to receive his money: you are bound and the reluctant lender binds you; if you refuse, you go to the judge, and there you are convicted by your own caution.

6 and 7. Where you have promised, consider, or to whom you have promised. You have seen the Levite, but he is a minister of Christ. You have seen him ministering before the altars. Therefore, your written document is held not on earth, but in heaven. Consider where you receive the heavenly sacraments. If this is the body of Christ, here are also the angels. Where the body is, there also the eagles, as you have read in the Gospel (Matthew 24:28). Where the body of Christ is, there also the eagles are accustomed to fly; so that they may flee from earthly things and seek heavenly things. Why do I say this? Because both human beings and angels who announce Christ are seen to be assigned a place among the angels. How? Take the example of John the Baptist. John was born of a man and a woman; nevertheless, listen to this: he himself is an angel. 'Behold, I send my angel before your face, who will prepare your way before you' (Matthew 11:10). Take another example from the prophet Malachi: 'The lips of the priest guard knowledge, and people seek instruction from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts' (Malachi 2:7). These things are said in order to proclaim the glory of the priest, not to attribute anything to personal merits.

Therefore, renounce the world, renounce the age, be diligent. He who owes money always considers his guarantee: and you, who owe faith to Christ, keep faith, which is much more precious than money; for faith is an eternal inheritance, money is temporal. And therefore, always remember what you have promised; and you will be more cautious. If you keep your promise, you will also keep your guarantee.

Caut III.

Although neophytes may only see the fountain and the servants, the author reveals that there are greater things that are not seen.

Then you approached closer: you saw the fountain, you also saw the priest above the fountain. And I cannot doubt that what did not occur to your mind, happened to that Syrian Naaman (IV Kings, 5:11 et seq.); because even though he was cleansed, he still doubted. Why? I will tell you, listen.

You entered, you saw water, you saw the priest, you saw the Levite. Lest perhaps someone may say: Is this the whole? No, it is the whole. Truly the whole, where there is complete innocence, complete piety, complete grace, complete sanctification. You have seen what you were able to see with the eyes of your body, and with human sight: you have not seen those things which they accomplish; because they are not seen. Those things which are not seen are much greater than those which are seen; because those things which are seen are temporal: those which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Chapter IV.

The sacraments of Christians are more divine and prior than those of the Jews: and therein is the significance of the word 'Pascha'.

Therefore let us first say, keep the caution of my voice, and demand. We wonder at the mysteries of the Jews, which were given to our fathers, first by the ancient sacraments, then by their surpassing holiness. I promise that the sacraments of Christians are more divine and prior than those of the Jews.

What is more remarkable than the fact that the Jewish people crossed the sea? Let us speak for now about baptism. However, those Jews who crossed over all died in the desert. Moreover, (On Consecration, Distinction 4, Chapter On the water of baptism) whoever crosses through this font, that is, from earthly things to heavenly things; this is indeed a crossing, therefore it is called Pascha, that is, His crossing, a crossing from sin to life, from guilt to grace, from pollution to sanctification: whoever crosses through this font does not die, but rises again.

Chapter V. In the story of the leper Naaman, it is said that only the water that has the grace of Christ can heal. Christ wanted to be baptized for our sake alone. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, appearing in the form of a dove, did not descend on him until he entered the water of the Jordan: in this way, the entire Trinity was present there. So Naaman, therefore, was a leper, a certain girl said to his wife: If my lord wishes to be cleansed, let him go to the land of Israel, and there he will find someone who can remove his leprosy. His wife said to her mistress, the wife to her husband, Naaman, the king of Syria, who sent him as a very welcome person to the king of Israel. The king of Israel heard that the one who could cleanse his leprosy had been sent to him and tore his clothes. Then the prophet Elisha sent him a message: Why did you tear your clothes, as if there is not a powerful God who can cleanse the leper? Send him to me. He sent him; and when he came, the prophet said to him: Go to the Jordan, immerse yourself, and you will be healed.

He began to think to himself and say: Is this all? I came from Syria to the land of Judah, and it is said to me: Go and descend into the Jordan, immerse yourself, and you will be healed; as if the rivers are not better in my own country. Therefore his servants said to him: Master, why do you not do the word of the prophet? Do more and try. Then he went to the Jordan, immersed himself, and rose healed (2 Kings 5:1 et seq.). So what does it mean? You saw water: but not all water heals (On the Consecration, dist. 4, chap. On water, § Not all); but the water that has the grace of Christ

heals. One thing is the element, another is the consecration: one thing is the work, another is the operation. Water is the work, the operation is of the Holy Spirit. Water does not heal unless the Spirit descends and consecrates that water; as you have read that when our Lord Jesus Christ gave the form of baptism, he came to John and said to him: I ought to be baptized by you, and you come to me! Christ responds to him: Let it be so now. For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:14-15). See that all righteousness is established in baptism.

Therefore why did Christ descend, if not to cleanse this flesh, the flesh which he assumed from our condition? For the washing of their sins was not necessary for Christ, who did not commit sin: but it was necessary for us, who remain subject to sin. Therefore, if baptism is established for us, it is established as a form of our faith.

Christ descended, and John stood who was baptizing, and behold, as if a dove the Holy Spirit descended. It was not a dove that descended, but as if a dove. Remember what I said: Christ took on flesh, not like flesh; but he took on the truth of that flesh, true flesh Christ took on: But the Holy Spirit did not descend in the truth of a dove, but in the likeness of a dove from heaven. Therefore, John saw and believed.

Christ descended, the Holy Spirit descended as well (De Consec., dist. 4, c. Per aquam, § Descendit). Why did Christ descend first, and then the Holy Spirit, when the form and use of baptism require that the font be consecrated before and then the one to be baptized descends? For when the priest first enters, he performs the exorcism according to the nature of water, then he offers the invocation and prayer, so that the font may be sanctified and the presence of the eternal Trinity may be present: but Christ descended before, and then the Spirit followed. By what reasoning? So that the Lord Jesus Himself would not appear to need the mystery of sanctification, but rather that He Himself would sanctify, and that the Spirit would sanctify as well.

Therefore, Christ descended into the water, and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove (Matthew 3:16). Additionally, God the Father spoke from heaven. You have the presence of the Trinity.

Chapter VI. The figure of baptism is shown to have preceded the individual parts by the arrangement of the Red Sea. The same is also shown in the flood, with fewer words: after the completion of the first speech, the following is promised. But the Apostle says that the figure of this baptism appeared in the Red Sea, saying: Because our fathers were all baptized in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. X, 1, 2). And he added: But all these things happened in figure to them (Ibid., 6): to them in figure, but to us in reality. At that time, Moses held his rod, the people of the Jews were enclosed; the Egyptians were approaching with weapons on one side, and on the other side the Hebrews were closed off by the sea; they could neither cross the sea, nor turn back against the enemy: they began to murmur (Exod. XIV, 21 et seq.).

See, do not let yourself be provoked because they have been heard. Even though the Lord has heard, nevertheless those who complained are not without blame. It is up to you where you are confined, to believe that you will escape, not to complain; to invoke, to pray, not to express complaint.

Moses held a staff and led the people of the Hebrews at night with a pillar of light and during the day with a pillar of cloud. What is light but truth; for it pours forth clear and full illumination? What is the pillar of light but Christ the Lord, who dispelled the darkness of unbelief and infused the light of

truth and spiritual grace into human hearts? But the pillar of cloud is indeed the Holy Spirit. The people were in the sea, and the pillar of light went before them; then the pillar of cloud followed, like the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. You see that he demonstrated through the Holy Spirit and through water the symbol of baptism. In the flood also there was already the figure of baptism, and certainly at that time there were not yet the mysteries of the Jews. Therefore, if the form of this baptism preceded, you see the higher mysteries of the Christians, how much more so the Jews were. But for now, according to the weakness of our voice and the measure of time, it is enough today to have even tasted the sacred fountain of mysteries. Tomorrow, if the Lord grants me the ability or opportunity to speak, I will disclose more fully. It is necessary that your holiness have attentive ears, a ready mind, so that you may be able to retain what we are able to gather from the series of Scriptures and communicate to you, so that you may have the grace of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. To whom belongs the eternal kingdom, now and forever, and unto all ages of ages.

Book Two

Chapter I. Resume the explanation of the flood, where it is asserted that it was a true baptism; and briefly discuss other baptisms. In the flood, also, we began to discuss the prefiguration of baptism. What is the flood (Gen. 7:23) if not the means by which the righteous are preserved for the propagation of righteousness, sin dies? Therefore, the Lord, seeing the sins of men multiplying, saved only the righteous with their progeny; but He commanded water to rise above the mountains as well. And so, in that flood, all corruption of the flesh perished, only the lineage and form of the righteous remained. Is this not the flood, which is baptism; by which all sins are washed away, only the righteous mind and grace are revived?

There are many kinds of baptisms, but one baptism, declares the Apostle (Ephes. IV, 5). Why? There are baptisms of the Gentiles, but they are not true baptisms. They are washings, but they cannot be baptisms. The body is washed, but the guilt is not washed away; indeed, in that washing it is contracted. However, there were baptisms of the Jews (Marc. VII, 8), some excessive, some symbolic. And the symbol itself benefits us, because it is a messenger of truth.

Chapter II.

The healing of the Pool of Bethesda, stirred by an angel, and the response of the paralyzed man to Christ, are recounted.

What was read yesterday? The Angel, he said, came down into the pool at certain times, and whoever went in first after the stirring of the water was healed from whatever sickness he had. (John 5:4) This signifies the figure of our Lord Jesus Christ to come.

Why the Angel? For he is the Angel of great counsel (Isaiah IX, 6). According to the time that was kept for the last hour, so that at the very setting it might catch the day, and defer the setting. Therefore, as often as the Angel descended, the water was moved. You might ask: Why is it not moved now? Hear why? Signs for unbelievers, faith for believers (I Cor. XIV, 22). The one who descended first was healed of every infirmity. Who is the first, in time or in honor? Understand both. If in time, the one who descended first was healed before, that is, more from the people of the Jews than from the people of the nations. If in honor, the one who descended first, that is, the one who had the fear of God, the pursuit of justice, the grace of charity, the desire for chastity; he

himself was more healed. However, at that time only one was healed, then, I say, in the form of time, the one who descended first alone was cured. How great is the grace of the Church in which all are saved, whoever may enter? But behold the mystery. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to the pool, and many sick people were lying there. And there were many sick people lying there easily, where only one was healed. Then he said to the paralyzed man: Get up. He said: I have no man (John V, 7). See where you are being baptized. From where is baptism, if not from the cross of Christ, from the death of Christ? There is every mystery, because he suffered for you. In him you are redeemed, in him you are saved.

He said, I do not have a man; that is, because through a man is death, and through a man is the resurrection of the dead (I Cor. 19:21). He could not descend, he could not be saved, who did not believe that our Lord Jesus had taken flesh from the Virgin. But this one who was waiting for the mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, expecting him of whom it was said: And the Lord will send a man to save them (Isaiah 19:4); he said: I do not have a man; and therefore he deserved to come to health, because he believed in the one who was coming. However, it would have been better and more perfect if he had believed that the one he hoped would come had already arrived.

Chapter III.

Having recounted some of the history of Naaman, he then proceeds to describe several other figures of the same sacrament.

Now consider each point. We mentioned that the figure had gone ahead in the Jordan, when Naaman the leper was cleansed. That girl from among the captives (2 Kings 5:5), unless she who had the appearance of the Church and represented a figure? For the captive was the people of the nations, they were captive, I do not say held captive under any particular nation: but I say that captivity which is greater, when the devil with his cruel dominion rules and subjects the necks of sinners to himself.

Therefore you have one baptism, another in the flood, you have a third kind, when the fathers were baptized in the Red Sea, you have a fourth kind in the pool, when the water was stirred. Now I advise you whether you should believe because you have the presence of the Trinity in this baptism, by which one is baptized in the Church.

Chapter IV.

The Author presents two figures of baptism; one in the iron that floated at the prayer of Elisha, and the other in the fountain which, with wood thrown in, became sweet.

Therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ says in his Gospel to the Apostles: Go, baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). This is the sermon of the Savior.

Tell me, O man! Elijah called down fire from heaven, and fire came down from heaven (1 Kings 18:38). Elisha called upon the name of the Lord, and the iron axe head that had sunk into the water came up (2 Kings 6:6). Behold another kind of baptism. Why? Because every person, before baptism, is pressed down and submerged like iron; but once baptized, they are not like iron, but rather like the lighter form of fruitful wood that is lifted up. Therefore, here is another

representation. There was an axe with which the wood was being chopped. The head of the axe fell off, that is, the iron was immersed. The son of the prophet did not know what to do: but he only knew to ask the prophet Elisha and request a remedy. Then he sent the wood, and the iron was lifted up. Do you see, therefore, that on the cross of Christ the weakness of all humanity is lifted up?

Another thing, although we do not maintain the order; for who can comprehend all the works of Christ? Just as the apostles said (John 21:25). When Moses came into the desert and the people sat down, and they came to the fountain of Merriha, and desired to drink water, because when he first drank, he sensed bitterness and could not drink; therefore Moses put wood into the fountain, and the water which was bitter before began to sweeten (Exodus 15:23 et seq.).

What does it mean, if not that every creature is subject to corruption, bitter water is for everyone. Although it is sweet for a time, although it is pleasant for a time; however, it is bitter, as it cannot take away sin. Where you drink, you will be thirsty: where you start to drink, you will feel sweetness, but again bitterness. Therefore, the water is bitter: but where is the cross of Christ, where you receive the heavenly sacrament, it begins to be sweet and pleasant: and rightfully sweet, in which guilt is revoked. Therefore, if the sacraments had such power in their outward form, how much more power does the sacrament have in its truth?

Chapter V.

He confirms that the Trinity is present at the priest's prayers and gathers from the higher powers, and from the physical forms through which the Holy Spirit is said to descend into Christ and the disciples.

Now, let us consider. The priest comes (De Consec., dist. 4, cap. The priest comes), says a prayer at the font, invokes the name of the Father, the presence of the Son and the Holy Spirit: he uses celestial words. What celestial words? They are Christ's, that we may baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. If, therefore, the presence of the Trinity was present at the speech of men and the invocation of the Holy, how much more is it present there, where eternal speech operates? Do you want to know why the Spirit descended? Did you hear that He descended like a dove (Matt. III, 16)? Why like a dove? So that the unbelievers would be called to faith. In the beginning, there had to be a sign, but in later times there must be perfection.

Take another example: After the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles were in one place, and they were praying on the day of Pentecost; and suddenly there was a loud noise, as if a strong wind were blowing, and tongues appeared, like fire (Acts II, 2, 3). What does this mean, if not the descent of the Holy Spirit, who wanted to show himself even physically to the unbelievers, that is, physically by a sign, spiritually by a sacrament? Therefore, clear evidence of his coming is given, but to us the prerogative of faith is already bestowed; for in the beginning signs were given to unbelievers, but now in the fullness of the Church truth must be gathered not by a sign, but by faith.

Chapter VI.

When the sentence of death had been pronounced against men on account of sin, baptism is found to be established for the purpose of their resurrection.

Now let us discuss what is called baptism. You came to the font, you descended into it, you observed the high priest, the deacon, and the presbyter at the font. What is baptism? In the beginning, our God created man so that if he did not taste sin, he would not die. He contracted sin, became subject to death, and was expelled from paradise. But the Lord, who wanted his benefits to remain and to abolish all the snares of the serpent, and to annul everything that harmed; first, indeed, pronounced a sentence against man: You are dust, and to dust you shall return (Gen. III, 19); and made man subject to death. It was a divine decree that could not be fulfilled by human condition. The remedy given was for man to die and rise again. Why? So that what had yielded its place to condemnation may yield its place to the benefit. What is that if not death? You ask how? Because death, intervening, puts an end to sin. For when we die, we certainly cease to sin. Therefore, it seemed that the sentence was satisfied, because the man who was made to live, if he did not sin, began to die. But in order for man to persevere in the perpetual grace of God, he died; but Christ found resurrection, that is, to restore the heavenly blessing that was lost by the deceit of the serpent. Therefore, both are for us; because death is the end of sins, and resurrection is the reforming of nature.

However, in order to prevent the fraud and deceit of the devil from prevailing in this world, baptism was instituted. Concerning this baptism, listen to what the Scripture says, or rather, the Son of God, because the Pharisees who refused to be baptized with John's baptism rejected the counsel of God (Luke 7:30). Therefore, baptism is the counsel of God. How great is the grace where the counsel of God is!

Therefore, listen: so that in this age also the bond of the devil may be dissolved, it was discovered how a living man would die, and rise again while still alive. What is a living man? It is the life of the living body, when it comes to the fountain, and is immersed in the fountain. What is water, if not from the earth? Therefore, the heavenly sentence is satisfied without the stupor of death. That sentence is dissolved by immersion: You are dust, and to dust you shall return (Gen. III, 19); the sentence is fulfilled, and there is a place for heavenly blessing and remedy. Therefore, water from the earth, but the possibility of our life did not allow us to be covered by the earth and to rise from the earth. Then, it is not the earth that cleanses, but water cleanses; therefore, the fountain is like a burial place.

Chapter VII.

An example of triple questioning and immersion emerged in Peter's threefold response. Therefore, since the entire Trinity forgives sins, it is said that there is one name in which we must be saved; and by what means do we participate in Christ's baptism and anointing into eternal life?

You were asked: Do you believe in God the Father Almighty? You said: I believe, and you were immersed, that is, you were buried. You were asked again: Do you believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His cross? You said: I believe, and you were immersed; therefore, you were also buried with Christ: for whoever is buried with Christ, rises with Christ. You were asked for the third time: Do you also believe in the Holy Spirit? You said: I believe, and were immersed for the third time, so that the triple confession might absolve the multiple lapse of an earlier age.

Finally, as an example for you, the holy apostle Peter, after appearing weak in the weakness of human condition during the passion of the Lord, who had previously denied, later to efface and

dissolve that fall, is questioned for the third time by Christ if he loved Him; then he says: You know, Lord, that I love You (John 21:15 et seq.). He said it a third time, so that he might be absolved for the third time.

Therefore the Father forgives sin, just as the Son forgives sin, and so does the Holy Spirit. However, we are commanded to be baptized in one name, that is, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Do not be surprised that he said one name where there is one substance, one divinity, one majesty. This is the name of which it is said: In which it is necessary for everyone to be saved (Acts 4:12). In this name you all have been saved, you have been restored to the grace of life.

Therefore the Apostle cries out, as you have heard in the current reading: For whoever is baptized, is baptized in the death of Jesus (Rom. 6:3 ff). What is meant by 'in death'? That just as Christ died, so you too may taste death: just as Christ died to sin and lives to God; so may you die to the former enticements of sins through the sacrament of baptism, and rise again through the grace of Christ. It is death, indeed, but not in the truth of bodily death, rather in its likeness. For when you immerse yourself, you take on the likeness of death and burial: you receive the sacrament of that cross which Christ hung on, and His body was pierced with nails. So when you are crucified, you adhere to Christ, you adhere to the nail of our Lord Jesus Christ; lest the devil can drag you away. May the nail of Christ hold you, which recalls the weakness of human condition.

Therefore, you were baptized (On the Consecration, dist. 4, ch. Baptized), you came to the priest: what did he say to you? God, he said, the almighty Father who regenerated you through water and the Holy Spirit, and who forgave you your sins, will anoint you himself with eternal life. See where you have been anointed: with eternal life, he said. Do not prefer this life to that life. For example, if an enemy arises, if he wants to take away your faith, if he threatens death in order to make someone transgress, see what you choose: do not choose that in which you have not been anointed, but choose that in which you have been anointed; so that you may prefer eternal life to temporal life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Book Three

Chapter I.

Why do those who have been plunged and brought back to life in baptism receive anointing on the head, and what is regeneration: by what means should we also imitate the nature of a fish in the sea of this world? Likewise, the usefulness of the mystery of foot-washing, although it does not obtain in the Roman Church, is declared to be not insignificant.

Yesterday we debated about the fountain, the appearance of which is like the form of a tomb; into which, believing in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, we are received and immersed and rise again, that is, we are resurrected. But you receive the oil, that is, the ointment, on your head (On the Consecration of the Chalice, Distinction 8, chapter You Have Received the Mystery). Why on the head? Because the senses of the wise are in their head, as Solomon says (Ecclesiastes 2:14); for wisdom is cold without grace: but when wisdom receives grace, then its work begins to be perfected. This is called regeneration.

What is regeneration? In the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 13:33), there is a verse that is quoted from Psalm 2: 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you,' which seems to refer to the resurrection. The holy apostle Peter interpreted in the Acts of the Apostles that when the Son rose from the dead, the voice of the Father revealed the truth: 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you' (Psalm 2:7). And so the firstborn from the dead is called. Therefore, what is resurrection, if not when we rise from death to life? So likewise in baptism, since it is a likeness of death, without a doubt, when you are immersed and rise again, it becomes a likeness of resurrection. Therefore, according to the interpretation of the apostle Peter, just as that resurrection was a regeneration, so is this resurrection a regeneration. But what do you say about dipping into the water? Is it because you are a foreigner, is that why you are hesitant? We do indeed read: Let the earth bring forth the green herb (Gen. II, 11). Likewise, you have also read about the waters: Let the waters bring forth creatures (Ibid, 20), and creatures were born. Those were indeed creatures at the beginning: but it is reserved for you, that water may regenerate you unto grace, as it has generated others unto life. Imitate that fish that has obtained a lesser grace indeed; but it should still be a marvel to you. In the sea it is and above the waves it is: in the sea it is and it swims above the waves. In the sea the storm rages, the gales howl: but the fish swims, it is not submerged; because it is accustomed to swimming. Therefore, to you also this world is like the sea. It has various waves, heavy waves, fierce storms. And you, be like a fish, so that the wave of the world does not engulf you. Beautifully, however, the Father says to the Son: Today I have begotten you (Psalm II, 7), that is, when you redeemed the people, when you called them to the kingdom of heaven, when you fulfilled my will, you proved to be my Son.

You ascended from the fountain, what followed? You heard the reading. The high priest, though the presbyters also do it, nevertheless the beginning of the ministry is from the high priest. The high priest, I say, washed your feet. What is this mystery? You surely heard that when the Lord had washed the feet of the other disciples, he came to Peter and Peter said to him: 'Do you wash my feet?' (John 13:8). Is this, you the Lord washing the feet of a servant? Do you, the immaculate one, wash my feet? Do you, the creator of the heavens, wash my feet? Do you have this elsewhere: He came to John and John said to him: I should be baptized by you, and you come to me (Matt. III, 14)? I am a sinner, and you come to me, a sinner, to wash away your sins as if you had not committed any sins? See all righteousness, see humility, see grace, see sanctification: Unless I wash your feet, he says, you will not have any part with me.

We do not ignore that the Roman Church does not have this custom, whose type we follow in all things and its form: however, it does not have this custom of washing feet. See therefore, perhaps on account of the multitude, it declined. Nevertheless, there are those who say and attempt to excuse, because this is not to be done in a mystery, not in baptism, not in regeneration: but as if the feet of a guest were to be washed. Humility is one thing, sanctification is another. Finally, listen because it is a mystery and sanctification: Unless I wash your feet, you will not have a share with me (John XIII, 8). I say this for a reason, not because I am reproaching others, but to commend my own duties. In all things, I desire to follow the Roman Church, but we humans also have our own judgement; therefore, when something is more rightly observed elsewhere, we also observe it more rightly.

We follow the apostle Peter, we cling to his devotion. What does the Roman Church respond to this? Certainly Peter himself is the author of this assertion for us, Peter the apostle, who was a

priest of the Roman Church. Peter himself says: Lord, not only the feet, but also the hands and the head (Ibid., 9). See the faith. What he excused before was humility; what he offered afterwards was devotion and faith. The Lord responded to him, because he said hand and head: The one who has washed does not need to wash again, except to wash only the feet (Ibid., 10). Why is this? Because in baptism all sin is washed away. Therefore, sin is removed: but because Adam was deceived by the devil (Gen. III, 6), and poison was poured upon his feet, you wash the feet; so that in the part where the serpent laid its ambush, a greater assistance of sanctification may be added, so that it cannot deceive you thereafter. Therefore, wash your feet, so that you may wash away the poison of the serpent. It also leads to humility, so that we may not be ashamed in the mystery of that which we scorn in service.

Chapter II.

The baptized are signed with the Holy Spirit, to whom all virtues belong, but in a certain special right, seven especially pertain: to the same baptized, when he approaches the altar, his blind eyes, described in the Gospel of John, are anointed with mud, by which the confession of sins is signified; in this place, with those who deny themselves to be sinners confuted, it is shown that the eyes are opened to see spiritual things by this imposition of mud.

Following is the spiritual sign that you have heard today being read (De Consec., dist. 4, c. Accepisti, § Sequitur); for after the font it remains for perfection to be made; when at the priest's invocation the Holy Spirit is poured out, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge and piety, the Spirit of the fear of the Holy Spirit: the seven quasi virtues of the Spirit (Isaiah XI, 2). And indeed all virtues pertain to the Spirit, but these are like the cardinal virtues, like the principal ones. For what is so principal as piety? What is so principal as the knowledge of God? What is so principal as virtue? What is so principal as the counsel of God? What is so principal as the fear of God? Just as the fear of the world is weakness, so the fear of God is great strength.

These are the seven virtues when you enumerate them. For as the holy Apostle says: 'Because the wisdom of our God is manifold' (Ephesians 3:10). And just as the wisdom of God is manifold, so is the Holy Spirit manifold, who has diverse and varied virtues. Therefore, God is also called the God of virtues, which can be attributed to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But this is a discussion for another time, and another occasion.

After this, what follows? You have come to the altar (Ps. 79:5). Because you have come, you have the ability to see what you did not see before, that is, the mystery that you read in the Gospel; if indeed you have not read, surely you have heard. The blind man offered himself to the Savior to be healed: and He, who healed others only with a word and a command, restored the light of his eyes; yet in the Gospel book that is written according to John, who truly saw great mysteries above all others, and pointed them out, and explained them; this mystery he wanted to foreshadow in him. Indeed, all the holy evangelists, all the apostles except for the traitor, all the saints; however, Saint John, who wrote the Gospel last, as though necessary, requested and chosen by Christ, with a greater trumpet, poured out eternal mysteries. Whatever he spoke, it is a mystery. Another one said that a blind man was healed, said Matthew, said Luke, said Mark: what does John alone say? He took clay and spread it on his eyes, and said to him: Go to the pool of Siloam. And he arose and went, and washed, and came seeing (John 9:6, 7).

Consider also the eyes of your heart. You saw what is physical with physical eyes, but what is sacramental you could not yet see with the eyes of your heart. Therefore, when you gave your name, he took clay and anointed your eyes. What does this signify? That you should confess your sin, recognize your conscience, and repent of your offenses. In other words, that you should acknowledge the condition of the human race. For even if one who comes to baptism does not confess their sin, by seeking to be baptized, they fulfill the confession of all sins, that they may be justified, that is, that they may pass from guilt to grace. Do not think that it is idle. There are some, I know for certain that there was someone who said, when we would say to them: In this age you should be baptized more, he would say: Why should I be baptized? I do not have sin. Have I contracted sin? This mud did not have, which Christ did not remove from him, that is, he did not open his eyes to it; for no man is without sin.

Therefore, he recognizes himself as a human who seeks refuge in the baptism of Christ. And so, he put clay on you, that is, modesty, prudence, consideration of your weakness; and he said to you: Go to Siloam. What is Siloam? It is translated as 'sent', that is: Go to that fountain in which the cross of the Lord is proclaimed: go to that fountain in which Christ redeemed the errors of all.

You, who have been baptized, have come to the altar, and have begun to see things which you had not seen before. This happened when your eyes were opened by the fountain of the Lord and the preaching of His passion. You, who were blind in heart, have begun to see the light of the sacraments. Therefore, beloved brethren, we have come to the altar for a more extensive discourse. And because time does not permit us to begin a complete discussion now, it is enough that what has been said today has been said; and tomorrow, if it pleases the Lord, we will discuss the sacraments themselves.

Book Four

Chapter I. According to the old law of the Tabernacle and the customs that were observed there, the baptismal font and the effects of baptism are adapted. In the old Testament, the priests used to enter frequently into the first tabernacle: the high priest entered the second tabernacle once a year (Lev. XVI, 2 et seq.). The apostle Paul explains this clearly, recalling the series of the old Testament to the Hebrews (Heb. IX, 1 et seq.). In the second tabernacle, there was manna, there was also Aaron's rod that blossomed, and there was incense. To what does this refer? So that you may understand what is according to the tabernacle, into which the priest has led you, into which the high priest used to enter once a year, that is, to the baptistery, where Aaron's rod blossomed (Num. XVII, 8). Before it was dry, afterwards it blossomed again: and you were dry, and you began to flourish in the irrigating fountain. You had withered by sins, you had withered by errors and offenses: but you have now begun to bear fruit, planted beside the streams of waters. But perhaps you would say: What does this have to do with the people, if the rod of the priest had blossomed and flourished? The people themselves are none other than the priestly. To whom it was said: But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, as the apostle Peter says (1 Peter 2:9). Each one is anointed into the priesthood, and is also anointed into the kingdom: but it is a spiritual kingdom, and a spiritual priesthood. In the second tabernacle also there is a thurible (Heb. IX, 4), which is accustomed to emit a good fragrance; so too you now are a good odor of Christ, now no longer is there in you the lot of sins, no longer the scent of weighty error.

Chapter II.

In baptism, the condition of the human person is a source of admiration for the angels themselves; for through it, one is restored to the grace of innocence and youthfulness.

It follows that you come to the altar. You have begun to come: the angels looked on, they saw you coming, and suddenly they saw that human condition, which before was smeared with the dark filth of sins, shining forth. And so they said: Who is this that comes up from the desert, white as snow? (Song of Songs 8:5) Therefore the angels marvel. Do you want to know why they marvel? Listen then to the Apostle Paul saying that things have been revealed to us that the angels desire to see. (1 Peter 1:12) And again: What no eye has seen, nor ear heard what God has prepared for those who love him (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Then recognize what you have received. Saint David the prophet saw and desired this grace in figure. Do you want to know why he desired it? Hear again the saying: You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: You shall wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow (Ps. 50:9). Why? Because snow, although it is white, quickly becomes blackened and corrupted by some dirt: this grace that you have received, if you hold onto what you have received, will be lasting and perpetual.

So, you came desiring to approach the altar, since you had seen such great grace; you came desiring to approach the altar, where you would receive the sacrament. Let your soul say: I will go in to the altar of my God, to God who gives joy to my youth (Psalm 42:4). You have cast off the old age of sins, you have taken on the youthfulness of grace; this is what the heavenly sacraments have accomplished for you. Lastly, hear again what David says: Your youth will be renewed like the eagle's (Psalm 103:5). You have begun to be a good eagle, who seek heaven; you despise earthly things. Good eagles around the altar: Where the body is, there the eagles will be (Matthew 24:28). The form of the body is the altar, and the body of Christ is on the altar: you are the eagles, having been renewed by the cleansing of sin.

Chapter III.

He demonstrates that our sacraments are both more ancient and more divine than those of the Jews, by comparing the first part of the institution between Melchizedek and Abraham; where he clearly shows that Melchizedek was both the author of our mysteries and a prefiguration of Christ.

You came to the altar, you saw the sacraments placed on the altar, and indeed you marveled at the very creature; yet a solemn and well-known creature.

Perhaps someone might say: God bestowed such great grace on the Jews that manna rained down for them from heaven (Exod. XVI, 13): what more has God given to his faithful, what more has he granted to those to whom he has made greater promises?

Receive what I say, that the mysteries of Christians are more ancient than those of the Jews, and the sacraments of Christians are more divine than those of the Jews. How so? Receive. When did the Jews begin to exist? From Judah, surely, the great-grandson of Abraham; or, if you prefer to understand it in this way, from the Law, that is, when the Jews began to receive the Law. Therefore, the Jews were called so from the great-grandson of Abraham, or from the time of holy Moses. And if at that time God, with the Jews murmuring, rained manna from heaven, for you, however, the figure of these sacraments preceded, when Abraham was, when he gathered three

hundred and eighteen born servants, and pursued your adversaries, delivering his grandson from captivity; then the victorious one came, Melchizedek the priest met him, and offered him bread and wine (Gen. XIV, 18). Who had bread and wine? Abraham did not have. But who had? Melchizedek. He is therefore the author of the sacraments (Heb. VII, 1 et seq.). Who is Melchizedek? He is the one who is signified as the king of righteousness, the king of peace. Who is this king of righteousness? Can any man be the king of righteousness? Therefore, who is the king of righteousness, if not the justice of God, who is the peace of God, the wisdom of God? Who could say: My peace I give to you, my peace I leave with you (John. XIV, 27).

Therefore, first understand that the sacraments which you receive are more ancient than the sacraments of Moses, whatever the Jews claim to have; and that the Christian people began before the Jewish people: but we in predestination, they in name.

Therefore Melchizedek offered bread and wine. Who is Melchizedek? Without father, he said, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life: this is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Without father, he said, and without mother he is. Similar to whom? The Son of God. Without mother he was born of God, born in a heavenly generation, because he was born only of God the Father: and again without father he was born, when he was born of the Virgin; for he was not generated from male seed: but he was born of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20) and the Virgin Mary, being born in a virginally conceived womb, similar in all ways to the Son of God. The priest was also Melchizedek; because Christ is also a priest, of whom it is said: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4).

Chapter IV.

In order to convince that this sacrament is to be held more divinely than manna, Christ himself asserts that the bread itself becomes his body by the same word of Christ: which, after various effects were produced, by which the efficacy of the same word is evident, he confirmed; he gives the reason why the blood is given under another species.

So, who is the author of the sacraments if not the Lord Jesus? These sacraments came from heaven, for every plan is from heaven. Truly, it is a great and divine miracle that God rained manna from heaven for the people, and the people did not labor yet ate.

You may say: My bread is ordinary. But that bread is bread before the words of the sacraments (On Consecration, dist. 2, c. It is bread): when consecration takes place, bread becomes the flesh of Christ. Let us now explain this. How can he who is bread be the body of Christ? Through consecration. But by what words is consecration effected, by whose words? By the words of the Lord Jesus. For all the other things that are said in the preceding context, they are said by the priest, praises are offered to God, prayer is made for the people, for kings, for others; but when one comes to the point of celebrating the venerable sacrament, the priest no longer uses his own words, but he uses the words of Christ. Therefore, the word of Christ completes this sacrament.

What is the word of Christ? Truly, it is the word by which all things were made. The Lord commanded, and the heavens were made; the Lord commanded, and the earth was made; the Lord commanded, and the seas were made. The Lord commanded, and every created creature came into existence (Gen. I, 1 et seq.). Therefore, you see how effective the word of Christ is. If there is such power in the word of the Lord Jesus that things that did not exist began to exist, how

much more effective is it that things that existed should be changed into something else? There was no sky, there was no sea, there was no earth; but hear David saying: He himself spoke, and they were made: he himself commanded, and they were created (Psalm 148:5).

So, in order to answer you, the body of Christ was not present before the consecration, but after the consecration I tell you that it is now the body of Christ. He himself said it, and it happened. He himself commanded it, and it was created. You were yourself, but you were an old creature: after being consecrated, you began to be a new creature. Do you want to know how new? Everyone, he says, is a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

Therefore, understand how the speech of Christ has the power to change and alter every created thing, and how it changes the established laws of nature as it wishes. How do you ask? Understand, first of all, the example of his birth. It is the custom that a man is not born unless from a man and a woman, through the bond of marriage: but because the Lord willed it, and because he chose this mystery, Christ was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, that is, the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus (I Tim. II, 5). Do you see, therefore, that because it is contrary to nature and order, man is born from a Virgin?

Take another example. The people of the Jews were being pursued by the Egyptians and were cut off by the sea. By divine command, Moses touched the waters with his rod, and the sea divided itself, not according to its natural custom, but by the grace of the heavenly command (Exodus 14:21 et seq.). Take another example. The people were thirsty and came to a well. The well was bitter, so the holy Moses threw a log into the well, and it became sweet, even though it was bitter. That is, it changed its natural condition and received the sweetness of grace (Exodus 15:23 et seq.). Take the fourth example. The iron axe had fallen into the waters, as if the iron had sunk according to its usual nature: Elisha threw wood into the water, and immediately the iron floated and emerged from the waters (2 Kings 6:6), contrary to the nature of iron; for its material is heavier than the element of water.

Therefore, do you not understand how much the heavenly word operates among all these things? If the word operates in earthly matters, if the heavenly word operates in other things, does it not operate in heavenly Sacraments? Therefore, you have learned that the body of Christ is made from bread, and that wine and water are placed in the chalice: but blood is made by the consecration of the heavenly word (On Consecration, distinction 2, chapter Bread, section Therefore, and section But perhaps). But perhaps you say: I do not see the appearance of blood. But it has a likeness: for just as you received the likeness of death, so also you drink the likeness of precious blood; so that there is no horror of blood, and yet the price of redemption is accomplished. Therefore, you have learned that what you receive is the body of Christ.

Chapter V. With the very words of the Lord, his body and blood are consecrated and truly made present; hence it can be well understood that this sacrament excels manna, the truth of which is confirmed by the word, Amen. Do you want to know why it is consecrated with heavenly words? Receive the words. The priest says: 'Make this offering written, ratified, reasonable, acceptable, which is the figure of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who, on the day before he suffered, took bread into his holy hands, looked up to you, holy Father almighty, eternal God, giving thanks, he blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his apostles and disciples, saying: Take and eat all of you from this; for this is my body which will be broken for many.' (Luke 22:19).

Similarly, also, after supper, on the eve of his passion, he took the chalice, looked up to heaven to you, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, giving thanks, he blessed it, and gave it to his apostles and disciples, saying: Take and drink of this, all of you; for this is my blood. (Matt. XXVI, 27, 28). See all of that. Those words of the evangelist go up to 'Take', whether the body or the blood. Here are the words of Christ: Take, and drink from this all of you; for this is my blood. And see each one.

He took bread in his holy hands the day before he suffered. Before it is consecrated, it is bread; but when the words of Christ have been spoken, it becomes the body of Christ. Finally, listen to him saying: Take and eat of this all of you; for this is my body. And before the words of Christ, the cup is full of wine and water: when the words of Christ have been spoken, there the blood of Christ is made, which redeemed the people. Therefore, see how mighty is the word of Christ in converting all things. Then the Lord Jesus himself testifies to us that we should receive his body and blood. Should we doubt his faith and testimony?

Now return with me to my proposition. Great indeed and venerable is the fact that manna rained down from heaven for the Jews (Exod. XVI, 13): but understand. What is greater, manna from heaven or the body of Christ? Surely the body of Christ, who is the author of heaven. Furthermore, the manna that was eaten, died: whoever eats this body, will have forgiveness of sins and will not die eternally (De Consec., dist. 2, c. Ante, § Qui manduc.)

Therefore, you do not say in vain: Amen, now in spirit confessing that you receive the body of Christ. The priest says to you: The body of Christ; and you say: Amen, that is, true. Let the confession of the tongue be held by the heart.

Chapter VI. The excellence of this sacrament having been proven, that through it the Passion of the Lord is renewed on Sunday, he concludes his sermon, forewarning strictly about the matter to be dealt with in the coming days. In order for you to know that this is indeed a sacrament, its figure precedes. Then understand how great the sacrament is. See what He says: As often as you do this, you shall do it in remembrance of me, until I come again (1 Corinthians 11:26). And the priest says: Therefore, remembering His most glorious passion, and His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension into heaven, we offer to You this spotless host, this reasonable host, this unbloody host, this holy bread and the cup of eternal life. And we ask and pray that You may accept this offering on Your sublime altar, through the hands of Your angels, as You graciously accepted the gifts of Your righteous servant Abel and the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham, and what the high priest Melchizedek offered to You.

Therefore, whenever you receive, what does the Apostle say to you? Whenever we receive, we proclaim the death of the Lord. If we proclaim his death, we proclaim the forgiveness of sins. Whenever his blood is poured out, it is poured out for the forgiveness of sins; I must always receive it, so that my sins are always forgiven. As I always sin, I must always have the medicine. In the meantime, today as much as we could, we have explained: but tomorrow, on Saturday and Sunday, we will speak about the order of prayer, as we are able. May our Lord God preserve for you the grace He has given, and may He deign to fully illuminate the eyes He has opened for you, through His only-begotten Son, our king and savior, the Lord our God, by whom, and with whom, there is praise, honor, glory, magnificence, power, with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever, from the ages, and now, and always, and for all ages to come. Amen.

Book Five

Chapter I.

First, he repeats what has already been said about the sacrament, and therefore that the figure of Christ himself and his sacrifice preceded in Melchizedek. Then he presents the two-fold reason why water is mixed in the chalice.

Yesterday our conversation and discussion was directed all the way to the sacraments of the holy altar. And we came to know that the figure of these sacraments preceded the time of Abraham, when the holy Melchizedek offered sacrifice (Gen. XIV, 18), having neither beginning nor end of days. Listen, man, what Paul the apostle says to the Hebrews. Where are those who say that the Son of God is from the time of Melchizedek? It is said that He has neither beginning nor end of days: if Melchizedek does not have a beginning of days, could Christ have had one (Hebr. VII, 1 et seq.)? But it is not more image than truth. Therefore, you see that he is the first and the last (Apoc. I, 8). First, because he is the author of all: last, not because he finds an end, but because he concludes everything.

Therefore, we say that a chalice and bread are placed on the altar. What is placed in the chalice? Wine. And what else? Water (On the Consecration, distinction 2, chapter On the Chalice. Exodus 17:6). But you say to me: How then did Melchizedek offer bread and wine? What is the meaning of the mixture with water? Understand the reasoning.

First of all, what is the meaning of the figure that came before the time of Moses? When the people of the Jews were thirsty and complained that they could not find water, God commanded Moses to strike the rock with his staff. Moses struck the rock, and a great amount of water came forth from the rock, as the Apostle says: 'And they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ' (I Cor. X, 4). It was not an immovable rock that followed the people. And you drink, so that Christ may follow you. See the mystery. Moses, that is, the prophet: the staff, that is, the word of God. The priest touches the rock with the word of God, and water flows, and the people of God drink. Therefore, the priest touches, the water overflows into the chalice, it jumps into eternal life, and the people of God, who have received the grace of God, drink. So you have learned this.

Take and read another. At the time of the Lord's Passion, when the Great Sabbath was approaching, because our Lord Jesus Christ was alive, as were the thieves, they were sent to strike them: but when they came, they found our Lord Jesus Christ dead; then one of the soldiers touched his side with a spear, and water and blood flowed from his side (John 19:33 et seq.). Why water? Why blood? Water, to cleanse; blood, to redeem. Why from the side? Because from where there is fault, there is also grace. Fault through the woman, grace through the Lord Jesus Christ (De Consec., dist. 2, c. In calicem, § De latere).

Chapter II.

Just as one who has been cleansed is invited by Christ and aspires to the inexplicable sweetness of the sacrament, the mystical interpretation of certain passages from the Songs reveals this.

You have come to the altar, the Lord Jesus calls you, either your soul or the Church, and He says: Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth (Song of Solomon 1:1). Do you want to unite with

Christ? Nothing is more joyful. Do you want to unite with your soul? Nothing is more pleasant.

Let him kiss me. Do you see that you are free from all sin, because your sins have been cleansed? Therefore, he judges you worthy of heavenly sacraments and invites you to the heavenly feast: Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.

However, due to the following reasons, your soul, either human condition or the Church, seeing that it is cleansed from all sins, and worthy to approach the altar of Christ (for what is the altar but the form of the body of Christ), saw wonderful sacraments, and said: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, that is, let Christ imprint a kiss on me.

Why? Because your breasts are better than wine (Song of Solomon 1:1); that is, your senses are better, your sacraments are better than wine. Above that wine, which, even though it has sweetness, joy, and grace, has secular gladness, but in you there is spiritual joy. Therefore, Solomon now introduces the wedding of either Christ and the Church, or the spirit and the flesh and the soul. And he added: Your name is like a precious ointment that has been poured out, therefore the young women love you. What are these young women, if not the souls of each individual who have cast off the old age of this body, renewed by the Holy Spirit?

Draw us, we shall run after the fragrance of your ointments (Canticles, 1:3). See what it says. You cannot follow Christ unless He himself draws you. Finally, so you may know: And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself (John 12:32). The King led me into his chamber. The Greek said: He has in his storeroom, and in his cellar. There are good libations, pleasant fragrances, sweet honey, various fruits, and various meals; so that your lunch may be prepared with many dishes.

Chapter III.

May abundant fruits return to those who have received the body of the Lord, and in what way Christ responds to the Church overflowing with conviviality: finally, how much joy do the faithful, freed from Egyptian slavery, feel in this food.

Therefore, you came to the altar and received the body of Christ. Listen again to what sacraments you have received. Listen to the holy David saying this; and he foresaw these mysteries in the Spirit, and rejoiced, and said he lacked nothing. Why? Because whoever receives the body of Christ will not hunger forever.

How many times have you heard the twenty-second psalm and not understood it? See how suitable it is for heavenly sacraments (De Consec., dist. 2, c. In calicem, § Audi psalmum): The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He has placed me in a place of pasture. He has led me beside still waters. He has converted my soul. He has guided me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear evil, for You are with me. Your rod and your staff, they have comforted me (Psalm 23, 1 et seq.). The rod represents power, the staff represents suffering, that is, the eternal divinity of Christ, but also His physical suffering: the former created, the latter redeemed. You have prepared a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows. How wonderful!

Therefore, you came to the altar, you received the grace of Christ, you obtained heavenly sacraments. The Church rejoices in the redemption of many, and she is delighted to have a chosen family standing before her with spiritual exultation. You have this in the Song of Songs. She rejoices and calls upon Christ, having prepared a banquet that seems worthy of heavenly feasting. Therefore, she says: Let my brother come down into his garden, and take the fruit of his apple trees (Song of Songs 5:1). What are these fruit-bearing trees? You were dry wood in Adam, but now through the grace of Christ you sprout fruit-bearing trees. The Lord Jesus willingly receives and in heavenly favor responds to His Church: 'I descended,' He says, 'into the garden, I harvested myrrh with my ointments; I ate my bread with my honey and drank my wine with my milk. Eat, my brothers,' He says, 'and be intoxicated.' (Ibid.)

I gathered myrrh with my perfumes. What is this harvest? Learn about the vineyard, and you will recognize the harvest. 'You transferred the vineyard from Egypt,' he says (Psalm 79:9), that is, the people of God. You are the vineyard, you are the harvest: like a vineyard planted, like a harvest you have produced fruit. I gathered myrrh with my perfumes, that is, for the fragrance that you have received.

I ate my bread with honey. Do you see that in this bread there is no bitterness, but all sweetness? I drank my wine with milk. Do you see the joy that is not polluted by any stain of sin? For whenever you drink, you receive the forgiveness of sins and are intoxicated in the spirit. Hence the Apostle says: Do not get drunk with wine... but be filled with the Holy Spirit; for those who are drunk with wine stagger and stumble, but those who are intoxicated in the Spirit are rooted in Christ. And therefore, the excellent drunkenness, which operates the sobriety of the mind. These are the things that we briefly go through about the sacraments.

Chapter IV.

In order to establish new faithful in the form of prayer, she presents to them, as though in a mirror, the Lord's Prayer in a few words.

Now what remains, if not prayer? And do not think that it is a small matter to know how to pray. The holy apostles said to the Lord Jesus: Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples. Then the Lord gave the prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven: give us this day our daily bread: and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Luke 11:1 et seq.). You see how brief a speech, and full of virtues: the first discourse of how great grace it is!

O man! You did not dare to lift your face to the sky, you directed your eyes to the ground, and suddenly you received the grace of Christ, all your sins are forgiven. You have become a good son from a wicked servant; therefore, presume not from your own works, but from the grace of Christ: for by grace you have been saved (Ephesians 2:5), says the Apostle. Therefore, this is not arrogance, but faith: to preach what you have received is not pride, but devotion. Therefore, lift up your eyes to the Father, who begot you through the baptism: to the Father who redeemed you through the Son, and say: Our Father. This is a good presumption, but one that is humble. You say Father as if you were a son: but do not claim any special privilege for yourself. The Father belongs exclusively to Christ, but is a Father for all of us in common; because He begot only Him,

but created us. Therefore, say also by grace: Our Father; so that you may deserve to be a son. Commend yourself in the sight and consideration of the Church. Our Father, who art in heaven. What is in heaven? Listen to the Scripture saying: The Lord is high above all heavens (Psalm 113:4). And everywhere you have that the Lord is above the heavens of heavens, as if not in the heavens and the angels, as if not in the heavens and the dominions. But in those heavens, of which it is said: The heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:2). Heaven is there, where guilt has ceased; heaven is there, where crimes are punished; heaven is there, where there is no wound of death. Our Father, who art in heaven: hallowed be thy name. What does 'hallowed' mean? It is as if we wish that he who says 'Be holy, for I am holy' (Leviticus 19:2) may be hallowed by something added from our prayer of sanctification. No, but let him be hallowed in us, so that his sanctification may come to us. Our Father, who art in heaven: hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come. As if the kingdom of God were not eternal. Jesus himself says: I was born for this (John 18:37); and you say to the Father: Thy kingdom come (Luke 17:21); as if it has not come. But then the kingdom of God comes, when you have attained his grace (On the Consecration, dist. 2, c. In calicem, § Thy will be done). For he himself says: The kingdom of God is within you.

Thy kingdom come: thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: give us this day our daily bread. By the blood of Christ, all things have been reconciled, either in heaven or on earth: the heaven has been sanctified, the devil has been cast down. Where does he wander? Wherever there is man, whom he has deceived. Thy will be done, that is, let there be peace on earth, as in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. I remember my discussion on the sacraments (Sup. lib. IV, cap. 4). I told you that before the words of Christ that are offered, it is called bread; when the words of Christ have been spoken, it is no longer called bread, but is called the body (De Consec., dist. 2, c. In calicem, § Dixi vobis). So why in the Lord's Prayer that follows afterwards does it say: Give us our bread (John 6:35)? Indeed, he said bread, but **■πιο■σιον**, which means supersubstantial. This bread is not the one that goes into the body, but that bread of eternal life, which supports the substance of our souls (On the Consecration, dist. 2, chap. Non iste panis). Therefore, it is called **■πιο■σιος** in Greek; but in Latin it is called daily bread, which the Greeks say is coming; because the Greeks say **τ■ν ■πιο■σαν ■μ■ραν**, meaning the coming day. Therefore, what the Latin said, and what the Greek said, both seem useful: the Greek expressed both with one word, the Latin said daily.

If daily bread is necessary, why do you take it after a year, as the Greeks in the East are accustomed to do? Receive daily what will benefit you daily. Live in such a way that you deserve to receive daily. Whoever does not deserve to receive daily does not deserve to receive after a year. Just as the holy Job offered a daily sacrifice for his sons (Job, I, 5) lest they may have sinned in their hearts or in their words. Therefore, you hear that whenever the sacrifice is offered, it signifies the death of the Lord, the resurrection of the Lord, the elevation of the Lord, and the forgiveness of sins. And you do not take this bread of life as something that is not daily (I Cor. XI, 26)? Who has a wound, needs medicine. The wound is because we are under sin: medicine is a heavenly and venerable sacrament.

Give us this day our daily bread. If you receive it daily, it is daily for you today. If Christ is for you today, He rises for you daily. How? You are my son, I have begotten you today (Psalm 2:7). Therefore, today is when Christ rises. He is the same yesterday and today, as the apostle Paul

says (Hebrews 13:8). But he also says elsewhere: The night is far spent, the day is at hand (Romans 13:12): yesterday's night has passed, today's day has approached.

It follows: Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. What is a debt but a sin? Therefore, if you had not received money on loan, you would not be in need; and thus the sin is imputed to you. You had money, with which you were born rich. You were rich, made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. I, 26): you lost what you had, that is, humility, when you desired to vindicate arrogance; you lost money, just as Adam became naked (Gen. III, 7): you accepted a debt from the devil, which was not necessary. And therefore, you who were free in Christ, became a debtor to the devil. Your caution was held by the enemy, but the Lord crucified it and wiped it out with his blood (Colossians 2:14): he took away your debt, he restored freedom to you.

Therefore he says: And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. Consider what you say: Just as I forgive, so you also forgive me? If you forgive, you agree well, so that you may be forgiven. If you do not forgive, how do you expect to be forgiven? And do not allow us to be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil. See what he says: And do not allow us to be led into temptation, which we cannot bear. He does not say: Do not lead us into temptation, but rather he wants such a temptation as can be borne by human condition, like an athlete; and let everyone be freed from evil, that is, from the enemy, from sin. But the Lord is powerful, who has taken away your sin, and forgiven your transgressions, to protect and guard you against the snares of the opposing devil, so that the enemy, who is accustomed to generating fault, does not creep upon you. But those who commit themselves to God do not fear the devil; for if God is for us, who is against us? To Him, therefore, be praise and glory from ages, and now, and always, and forever and ever. Amen.

Book Six

Chapter I.

Since the true flesh and true blood of Christ are in the sacrament, consecrated by the divine power of the Word, and veiled under a different appearance so as not to cause offense, from this we understand that we participate in the divine substance in that food.

Just as Jesus Christ, our Lord, is true God, not in the same way as men through grace, but as the Son from the substance of the Father; so true is his flesh, as he himself said, which we receive, and true is his blood. But perhaps you might say (what the disciples of Christ themselves said at that time, hearing him say, 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you' - John 6:54): Perhaps you might say, How can this be true? I see a likeness, but I do not see the truth of blood.

First of all I have told you (Sup. lib. IV, cap. 4) about the discourse of Christ, which works so that it can change and convert the established forms of nature (John VI, 67). Then when the disciples heard that Christ would give them His flesh to eat and His blood to drink, they withdrew; only Peter said: Do you have the words of eternal life, and how can I leave you? (Ibid., 69). So, in order not to have many say this, as if there were a horror of blood, but for the grace of redemption to remain, you take the sacrament in a likeness, but truly you attain the grace and power of nature.

'I am,' he says, 'the living bread which came down from heaven.' But flesh did not descend from heaven, that is, He assumed flesh on earth from the Virgin. How, then, did the bread descend from heaven, and the living bread? Because our Lord Jesus Christ is the same, both a sharer in divinity and in body: and you who receive the flesh participate in that divine substance as nourishment.

Chapter II.

In all the sacraments, it can be observed the activity of the Trinity and the equality of the divine persons, where incidentally the error of the Arians is exposed.

Therefore, having received the sacraments, you have fully understood everything that you were baptized in the name of the Trinity. In all that we have done, the mystery of the Trinity has been preserved. Everywhere, there is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one operation, one sanctification, although some things may seem special.

How? God who anointed you, and sealed you, and placed the Holy Spirit in your heart (II Cor. I, 21, 22). Therefore, you have received the Holy Spirit in your heart. Receive another, for just as the Holy Spirit is in the heart, so Christ is also in the heart. How? You have this in the Song of Songs, Christ saying to the Church: Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm (Can. VIII. 6).

Therefore God anointed you, Christ marked you. How? Because you were marked with the form of his cross, with his passion: you received the seal in his likeness; so that you may rise in his form, live in his image, who was crucified for sin and lives for God: and your old self, immersed in the font, was crucified for sin, but rose again for God (Rom. VI, 4 and following).

Then you have elsewhere something special, that God has called you, but in baptism you are crucified with Christ as if specially. Then as if specially, when you receive the spiritual seal, see the distinction of persons to be, but the whole mystery of the Trinity to be interconnected.

Then what did the Apostle say to you, as it is written again? There are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit. There are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. There are diversities of operations, but the same God, who works all in all (I Cor. XII, 4 et seq.). He says, 'God works all things.' But it is also written of the Spirit of God: 'But all these things one and the same Spirit accomplishes, dividing to each one according as He wills' (Ibid., 21). Listen to the scripture saying that the Spirit divides according to its own will, not out of obedience. Therefore, the Spirit distributes grace to you as it wants, not as it is commanded; and especially because the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ. And hold on to this, that it is the Holy Spirit itself, the Spirit of God itself, the Spirit of Christ itself, the Spirit of the Comforter itself. The Arians think that they derogate from the Holy Spirit if they say that he is the Paraclete. What is the Paraclete, if not the Comforter? As if it were not also said of the Father, because he himself is the God of consolation (2 Cor. 1:3). Therefore, you see that they think that they derogate from the Holy Spirit, in whom the power of the eternal Father is proclaimed with pious affection.

Chapter III.

In giving instructions on prayer, he reconciles the words of Christ and the Apostles, declaring that the room where Christ speaks should be interpreted as referring to the secrecy and silence of the heart.

Now, how we ought to pray, take note. There are many virtues of prayer. Where we ought to pray is not a small, nor a mediocre question. The apostle says: But I will that men pray in every place, lifting up pure hands, without anger and disputing (1 Timothy 2:8). And the Lord says in the gospel: But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber; and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father (Matthew 6:6). Does it not seem contradictory to you, that the apostle says: Pray in every place; and the Lord says: Enter into thy chamber, and pray? But it is not the opposite. Therefore, let us complete this: then how you should begin a speech, and in what order to distinguish, what to develop, what to cite, how to conclude a speech, then for whom you should pray: let us discuss all these things.

First, where should you pray? Paul seems to say one thing, and the Lord another. Does Paul contradict Christ's teachings? Certainly not. How so? Because he is not an adversary, but an interpreter of Christ: Be imitators of me, he says, as I am of Christ. So what? You can pray anywhere, and always pray in your own room. You have your room everywhere. Even if you are among the Gentiles, among the Jews; you still have your secret place everywhere. Your mind is your own room. Although placed among the people, you still preserve your secret and hidden self within. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you (Matthew 6:6). So let not your prayer be only with your lips. Focus your mind entirely, enter into the innermost recess of your heart, enter with your whole self. Let not the one you want to please see you as superficial. Let them see that you pray from the heart, so that they may deign to hear you as one who prays from the heart. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)

What is a closed door? Listen to what door you have that you should close when you pray. If only women would listen! You have already heard; the holy David taught you, saying: Set, O Lord, a guard over my mouth, and a door around my lips (Psalm 140:3). There is another door, which the apostle Paul says: That the door of the word may be opened to me to speak the mystery of Christ (Colossians 4:3); that is, when you pray, do not shout in your speech, nor spread your prayer, nor boast among the people. In your secret place, pray, secure that he may be able to hear you in secret, who sees all things and hears all things. And pray to your Father in secret, who hears you in secret while you are praying.

Chapter IV.

Why it is preferable to pray in secret rather than with loud shouting? Why men should pray in every place, but not women? And to what purpose do the voices that are directed? Raising pure hands, etc.

Let us consider what benefit it is to ask how we ought to pray in secret more than with loud shouting. Listen: let us take an example from the custom of men. If you ask someone who hears quickly, do you not think that shouting is unnecessary (Cicero, on shouting)? Rather, you ask quietly with a moderated voice. If you ask someone who is deaf, do you not begin to shout so that he may hear you? Therefore, the one who shouts believes that God cannot hear except when one shouts; and when he prays in this way, he detracts from His power. But the one who prays in silence shows faith and confesses that God is the searcher of hearts and kidneys (Psalm 7:10), and He hears your prayer before it is poured out from your mouth. So let us see: I want men to

pray in every place (I Tim. 2:8). Why did he specify men? Surely prayer is common to both men and women. The reason he mentioned men is perhaps so that women would not take over, would not misunderstand and start shouting everywhere, which we cannot tolerate in the Church. But I desire men, that is, those who can keep the precept, to pray in every place, lifting up pure hands. What does it mean to lift up pure hands? Should you show the cross of the Lord to the Gentiles in your prayer? That is indeed a sign of power, not of modesty. However, you should pray in such a way that you do not show a physical gesture, but rather your light actions. If you want to perform your work, lift up pure hands through innocence. Lift them up not every day: once you have lifted them, there is no need to do so again.

However, I want men to pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without anger and dispute. Nothing is truer: Anger, he says, destroys even the wise (Prov. XV, 1). Therefore, at all times, as much as possible, a Christian man should temper his anger, especially when approaching prayer; so that the indignation of anger does not disturb your soul, and so that no fury hinders your prayer: but rather approach with a calm heart. For what are you angry about? The servant sinned? You approach prayer, so that your sins may be forgiven, and yet you are indignant. This is, without anger.

Chapter V.

On the disorderly debate of the praying ones, and on the modesty with which women ought to pray: also on the beginning of prayer, and its middle and end; with a repeated exposition of the Lord's Prayer, which leads the treatise to its conclusion.

Now let us consider about argument. Most of the time a merchant comes to speak, either a greedy one: one thinks about money, another about profit, another about honour, another about desire; and thinks that God can hear him. And therefore when you pray, it is fitting for you to prefer the divine to the human.

Similarly, women, he says, should pray not boasting themselves in adornments, nor in pearls, says the apostle Paul. But also the apostle Peter: The grace of a woman, he says, is very powerful so that her husband's affections are turned by her good conversation, and the unbeliever turns to the grace of Christ. The gravity and modesty of a woman, and her good conversation, have this power to call her husband to faith and devotion, which the speech of a wise man often accomplishes. Therefore, the woman, he says, should not have her adornment in the arrangement of her hair, nor in curled hair, but in prayer from a pure heart; where is the hidden person of the heart, who is always rich before God (Ibid. 3, 4). So you have in what you are rich. In Christ, your riches are purity and chastity, faith, devotion, and mercy. These are the treasures of righteousness, as the prophet has mentioned (Isaiah 33:6).

Then where you should begin. Tell me, if you want to ask a person, and thus begin: Give me, behold that which I ask of you; does the speech not seem arrogant? And therefore the speech should begin with praise of God, so that you ask the Almighty God, to whom all things are possible, who has the will to grant. The supplication follows, as the Apostle taught, saying: I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made (I Tim. II, 1). Therefore, the first prayer ought to have praise of God; the second, supplication; the third, petition; the fourth, thanksgiving. You should not begin with the food, like a hungry person,

but with praises of God. And so these wise orators have this discipline, that they present themselves as an advocate to the judge: they begin with praises of him, to make him friendly towards them as a knower. Then they gradually begin to ask the judge to deign to listen patiently. He dares to put forth his request for the third time, to express what he asks for. Just as he began with praises of God, so he must end in praise.

You have this in the Lord's Prayer: Our Father who art in heaven (Matt. VI, 9). It is the praise of God that the Father is preached: in Him is the glory of piety. Praise to God, for He dwells in heaven, not on earth. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, that is, that He may sanctify His servants; for His name is sanctified in us, when Christian men are preached. Therefore, it is the wish that thy name be sanctified. Your kingdom come (Ibid., 10). The request, that the kingdom of Christ may be in us. If God reigns in us, the adversary cannot have a place. Sin does not reign, wrongdoing does not reign: but virtue reigns, chastity reigns, devotion reigns. Then: Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread (Ibid., 11). This is the greatest request of those that are requested. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors (Ibid., 12). Therefore, receive daily, so that daily you may seek forgiveness for your debts. And do not allow yourself to be led into temptation: but deliver us from evil. (Ibid., 13) What follows? Listen to what the priest says: through our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is to you, with whom is to you honor, praise, glory, magnificence, power with the Holy Spirit from ages, and now, and always, and unto all ages of ages, Amen.

Another: Although the Psalms of David are contained in one book, having the qualities of prayer that we mentioned above (Sup., no. 22); yet often all these parts of prayer are found in one psalm, as we find in the eighth psalm. Finally, it begins like this: O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is thy name in the whole earth! (Psalm VIII, 2). Therefore, the first part is a prayer. Then, a supplication: For I will see thy heavens, the works of thy fingers: that is, I will see the heavens, the moon and the stars, which thou hast founded (Ibid., 4). Certainly, I will not see heaven, but I will see the heavens, in which the grace and celestial splendor begin to appear. The Prophet promised these heavens to those who would deserve heavenly grace from the Lord. He calls the moon and the stars which you have established: the moon the Church, and the stars he calls the saints shining with heavenly grace. Then see his petition: What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and set him over the works of your hands. (Psalm 8:5) And another thanksgiving: You have put everything under his feet, all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, etc. (Psalm 8:7-8).

We have taught according to our ability, perhaps what we have not learned; and as much as we could, we have expressed. Your holiness, informed by priestly institutions, may strive to hold what you have received from God: and may the offering, like a pure sacrifice, always recognize its seal in you, so that you yourselves may be able to attain grace and rewards of virtues, through our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom is glory, honor, praise, perpetuity from age to age, now and always, and in all ages of ages. Amen.

Second Apology for the Prophet David

The Second Apology by Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, for the Prophet David.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents

- Chapter I.
- Caput II.
- Caput III.
- Caput IV.
- Caput V.
- Caput VI.
- Caput VII.
- Caput VIII.
- Caput IX.
- Caput X.
- Caput XI.
- Caput XII.

Chapter I.

I have found that some people may be offended because David committed adultery, and Christ forgave the adulteress who was presented to him; especially because the same prophet revealed his own sin. But, it is shown that while David erred, it is impossible for Christ to err; therefore, those who detract from the power or providence of God should be rejected.

Perhaps the title of the psalm may have offended many of you, which you heard being read, that it came to David through the prophet Nathan, when he went to Bathsheba. And it could also have caused no small amount of scruple for those who are ignorant of the reading of the Gospel (John 8:11), in which you observed the adulterous woman being presented to Christ and then being dismissed without condemnation. For surely if someone receives these things with idle ears, they fall into the temptation of error, when they read of a holy man committing adultery and the absolution of the adulteress; by an example almost both human and divine, that both a man might think that adultery should be committed and God would judge that adultery should not be

condemned. Therefore, prepare yourself for either the path of repentance or the path of desire.

Moreover, there is this, which seems to add fuel to the flames of youthful lust: that he did not blush for his adultery, did not hide it, but proclaimed it in a certain divine song. So, was Saint David so shameless, so thoughtless, that he himself sang his own disgrace? Especially since he himself, in another psalm that has been passed down to today, said: How long, O Lord, how long will sinners boast, how long will sinners glory? (Psalm 93:3) He prohibits others from boasting about sin, and yet he himself also boasts with sacred song. So how do we distinguish these things?

Furthermore, even if David erred petulantly, did Christ also err, so that we may think He did not have a right judgment? Well then, David prophetically spoke today to them saying: Understand, foolish ones, and fools, finally understand (Same source, 8). For how could Christ have erred? It is not permissible for this to come into our understanding. He who planted the ear, does He not hear? Or He who formed the eye, does He not consider? He who corrects the nations, will He not rebuke? He who teaches humanity knowledge (Same source, 9 and 10)? Therefore, did Christ not know how to question guilt and hear a just accusation? Could Christ approve of insolence? Did Christ, who rebukes the nations, not think that an adulteress should be accused? Did Christ, who knows the innermost thoughts of each person and teaches the knowledge of the Law, could He be deceived by error or judge contrary to the sequence of the Law? And how did He Himself say: 'I have not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it' (Matthew 5:17)? Could Christ, who condemns hidden things, conceal public things? Can Christ, who made time, not know the times? He who knows the vain thoughts of men, does he not also know the sinful ones?

4. And therefore it is enough for those who cannot deny the creator, yet deny the power of the creator: those who confess wisdom, assert foolishness by objecting his lack of foreknowledge. We could speak more extensively on this matter, but it seems that another treatise is proposed to us. And although the series of readings has taken different courses, they all progress towards the same assertion, especially the title of the psalm and the Gospel reading. But although one assertion is appropriate, nevertheless there should be order in the sequence of readings; and for this reason it seems that the discussion of the title of the psalm should come first.

Caput II. The author writes that the purpose and argument of this work are not easy to judge. Then he explains in what order and before whom he will defend the cause of David, who is accused of erring. The story is set, which involves adultery and murder. For we find it written in the book of Kings (2 Kings 11:2 et seq.); because when King David was walking in his house, he saw Bathsheba, Uriah's wife, bathing and immediately fell in love with her, and ordered her to be brought to him. Then, as the Scripture says, he ordered her innocent husband to be exposed to the fiercest warriors, to be crushed by hostile force. These things happened and are not denied, so how are they defended? The Gospel reading (John 8:11) rightly admonishes that even when a secret sin is revealed, judgment should be left to the judge. And let everyone remember their own condition and merit. Often, in passing judgment, the greater sin is the judgment itself, rather than the sin on which judgment is passed. For if some wise people of the world prescribe caution in judging, so that the punishment is not greater than the offense, and if this is followed, it seems even more necessary that each person, who is about to judge another, first judge themselves, and not condemn lesser mistakes in others when they themselves have committed greater ones. Who are you, then, who judge David, the holy man? I speak as a Gentile, I speak as a Jew, I speak as a

Christian; and therefore it seems to me that the treatise must be divided into three parts, one against the Gentiles, another against the Jews, a third among Christians.

Caput III.

He warns the Gentiles not to look upon David, who was not so much wandering as repenting, because just as that is common to men, so this is rare in kings. Then he declares how inclined he is to be overcome by lust, and confirms it by citing examples of holy men.

6. The first argument against the Gentiles, therefore, that they are accustomed to object, is this: Behold how Christians follow innocence, prefer faith, venerate religion, teach chastity, whose leaders are reported to have committed homicides and adulteries. David himself, of whose lineage, as you say, Christ chose to be born, celebrated his own homicides and adulteries. And what sort of disciples can those be, whose leaders are such?

7. So what then? Do we deny the fact or reject the teacher? Neither of these. But let one who objects to the appearance consider the community. The appearance of the fact is the community of nature. Therefore, it is not surprising that the species is contained within the generality. For I acknowledge that David was a man, and there is nothing surprising about that. I acknowledge the commonality that man should sin. For it is not a new weakness of the human condition, and it seems more surprising if a man is devoid of sin than if he is affected by some sin. Therefore, the holy David sinned, there is no doubt about it. He committed adultery, devised murder, and executed it. He sinned as kings often do, but he repented and wept, which kings do not often do. He begged for forgiveness, not as one with power, but as one aware of his weakness. He prostrated himself on the ground and covered himself in sackcloth, forgetting his position of authority and remembering his guilt.

8. Whom could you find for me, a man of this kind, who, being in power, does not love his own sins, preach blame, defend crimes; who believes that what is not proper for him is not lawful; who binds himself with his own laws; and who acknowledges that what is not allowed by justice, is not allowed by power? For power does not dissolve justice, but justice dissolves power; nor is the king exempt from the laws, rather he sets the laws free by his own example. Is it possible for someone who judges others to be free from their own judgment and to accept it in themselves, which also binds others?

9. Therefore, David is an even greater wonder because he conquered power instead of love. Chastity is sometimes attributed to the body, and frequently to error; power is subject to God; and it is easier for someone to restrain themselves in love than to control themselves in power. Therefore, you do not forgive what is lesser, in which you admire greater things. For human nature is slippery and inclined to sin in all people; the slippery license of power and the offering of ability are also slippery in good morals. For the anger of a lion is not separate from the wrath of a king; but he who provokes and mixes with it, sins against his own soul. Therefore, let no one provoke authority, lest the soul, entangled in bodily inconsistencies, is not able to free itself from vice. Thus, it is not surprising that even David fell in appearance of power; but it is much more admirable that he is recalled through the contemplation of faith.

Therefore, you see that this secular power frequently profits nothing, and often harms; for often the outcome of faults is in the authority of power. Therefore, whoever you are, do not presume about

the power and ability; for the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord. Do not be flattered by the subjection of the people; for the king will not be saved by the multitude of his virtue, nor will he be safe in the multitude of his virtue. For it is not in the heights of the roofs of the tabernacles, and in the precious summit of the roofs, but it is pleasing to the Lord above those who fear Him, and those who hope in His mercy.

Therefore, we see that power has a slippery ability towards vices, although I would not necessarily say that it is always corrupt; since we read that David, with his royal power, elevated divine worship, and Solomon consecrated the temple to God.

12. Now, what we have touched upon, we assert, is the power of command, the incentive to sin, and let us continue according to the sequence of history. David would not have violated the right of another's marriage bed and the covenant of marriage, unless he had seen a naked and bathing woman in the inner parts of his house. And therefore it is well written: Do not gaze at the beauty of a woman, and do not desire a woman (Eccl. II, 5, 28). It is said elsewhere: Beware of every irreverent eye (Eccl. XXVI, 14). Do not boast about the virtue of your self-control. For the fornication of a woman is recognized in the haughtiness of her eyes and in her eyelids (Ibid, 12); therefore, flee the cause of sin first. No one is strong for a long time. It is said not only to someone fragile, but to every person: Do not let the desire of beauty conquer you (Prov. VI, 25); if you do not want to be conquered, do not engage in sins, so that vices may not be crowned upon you; do not let yourself be captured by the eyes, do not let yourself be carried away by the eyelids (Ibid). A woman may seem worthless to you in terms of price, but strong in terms of vice; for a woman captures the precious souls of men (Ibid.).

13. Therefore, it is difficult for anyone to escape unscathed from the allurements of desire. Not only is this my opinion, but it is also considered impossible in the Proverbs of the holy Solomon, who says by way of example: 'Can one hold fire against his chest without burning his clothes? Can one walk on hot coals without scorching his feet?' (Proverbs 6:27-28) So be cautious and do not ignite the fire of desire and love within the depths of your mind; lest the spiritual garment be consumed by that fire and you lose the eternity of resurrection. Indeed, the trace of your mind will be scorched if you consider that you should advance through the torches of lust. For the one who is burning in the heart, is consumed by the body.

14. Therefore, in every way the encounter with a lascivious woman must be avoided. And for that reason, acquire prudent discipline for yourself, he says, so that it may guard you from another man's wife and a harlot (Prov. VII, 5); lest the snares of her lips hold you bound, and she envelops you in the curls of error. And thus, the prophet taught you from where you should beware of the prostitute (Ibid., 6), so that you may avoid her entrance from the window. For she enters into her own home from the window. His window is an eye: and therefore beware of every irreverent eye, lest love enter through the window, lust penetrate. For indeed a promiscuous woman illicitly loves with her sight; and unless you restrain the lascivious gaze of the mind and soul, death enters through the window. It is not a lazy impertinence of a prostitute, not a useless wantonness, which makes the hearts of young men fly; so that they are unable to hold the constancy of their own mind, and are carried away here and there with fervent love. Beware of such a woman, who does not rest her feet, wanders outside, lies in wait in corners, blinds with her eyes, speaks unlawfully, weaves her bed with deceit, and spreads Egyptian carpets; for she seeks not divine

contemplation, but rather worldly seduction: she rightly calls her husband absent, because every adulteress cannot have Christ present.

You see, therefore, by what things even the hearts of the saints are captivated; and so do not be surprised if even the holy David was captivated. Indeed, he was a great man, and one who conquered the giant Goliath not only with his body but also with his faithful weapons, but I wish he had conquered himself, I wish he could have defeated and overcome his inner adversary as he struck down that external adversary! The battle of the one within is more severe than that of the one who fights outside.

16. But what about David alone? Let us also consider others in such a discussion, so that we do not think David's weakness was simply that of one man, but rather the weakness of his physical condition. Samson, strong and mighty, strangled a lion, but he could not stifle his love. He broke the chains of his enemies, but he could not break the bonds of his own desires. He set ablaze the harvest of others, and he himself, inflamed by the spark of one woman, lost the harvest of his own virtue. Solomon built a temple for God, but I wish he had preserved his own body as a temple! But let us return to the one to whom I was speaking. David triumphed in ten thousand: but he erred in twenty thousand and more; and because he erred, he knew himself to be a man, confessed his fault, begged for forgiveness, saying to the Lord: Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger, nor chastise me in your fury. Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am weak (Psalm 6:2-3). If David is weak, are you strong? If Solomon has fallen, are you immovable? If Paul is the foremost of sinners, can you be the foremost of saints? Therefore, if the righteous have erred, they have erred as humans, but they have recognized their own sin as righteous. If the righteous have received the sentence of a severe punishment, how do you propose hope of impunity for yourself, when the Scripture says: If the righteous is scarcely saved, where will the sinner and the ungodly appear (I Peter 4:18)?

17. Therefore, children, be aware how often even a good intention is undermined by the cause of adultery; and therefore you must first flee from and avoid the very causes themselves. Do you not want to be captivated by love? Do not focus on the appearance of a woman, for your eyes, when they see someone else, your mouth will speak perversity, and you will lie as if in the heart of the sea, and like a ship's captain in a great storm. For the multitudes of desires create a great tempest, which, like a certain strait in the body, disturbs the one sailing here and there, so that the captain's mind cannot be his own, unaware of the day and night darkness of love.

18. Therefore, desire is excited by the eyes, but it is ignited by drunkenness. For every drunkard and fornicator becomes poor. Do not boast about your power to drink. Noah was drunk, and he who was not drunk by the flood, was drunk by wine. But he did not know the nature of wine, for he had not drunk before: you have learned to be careful in that matter. Lot was deceived in his sleep, and if you do not want to be deceived, shake off the sleep of your mind, so that your drunkenness does not deceive your son or daughter while they are asleep. There is no piety there, but rather drunkenness returned; there is no father there, but rather a sleeping person deceived. Do you not want to be burned? Do not approach the fire. Do you not want to fall headlong? Avoid swaying things, beware of precipices, decline from falling and slipping things.

Therefore, you see that in those who have deserved to be just, there was not another nature, but rather another discipline. After the fall of the first man and the just judgment when the desire of the flesh was condemned in one, the condition drew vice and infected nature; but the vice of nature

itself was tempered by faith and the intention of devotion mitigated the offense.

Therefore, let the nations turn to the Lord, knowing that the Lord is God. He made us, not we ourselves. Know that we are flesh and dust. Let us therefore abandon what we have done, and let us worship the author himself, who gave us life, forgave our sins, and who alone can say: I am, I am the one who blots out your iniquities, and I will not remember (Isaiah 43:25). Truly great and merciful is God, who bestows blessings without reproach. You marvel because David made him king, and victor over many nations? Thus he is accustomed to exalt his servants. He is not greedy for gifts, nor sparing of kindness, nor narrow and stingy in his grace; but abundant in generosity, he increases those he has redeemed from sin with rewards. These things are against the Gentiles.

Caput IV. He refutes the mistaken belief of the Jews that David, who was guilty of sin, or Solomon, to whom the words about Christ do not apply, are the Son of God; and he refutes the false interpretation of certain heretics regarding the Son of God. But since we have promised a three-part division of this treatise, one part against the Gentiles, another against the Jews, and a third among the Church; now it seems to be necessary to discuss against the Jews. Therefore, let us recall what our purpose is. The title, he says, is 'The understanding of the psalm of David when Nathan the prophet came to him: when he went in to Bathsheba'. Surely this story introduces both the adulterous David and the murderer, and you, Jews, say that he is the Son of God? But God is the God of virtues, not of crimes. And about this, God the Father says: His throne is like the days of heaven (Ps. LXXXVIII, 30); whoever commits deceit will not overcome sins? And as it is written: No one is without sin, except for one God (Luke XVIII, 19). Therefore, if it is impossible for God not to exist, who is the Son of God, certainly the Son of God is the judge of justice, not subject to guilt.

22. But by what opinion do you judge either David to be the son of God, or do you consider Solomon? Or is it because it is written, "Give your judgment to the king, and your righteousness to the son of the king" (Ps. 71:2)? And because the title of the psalm says that it is composed for Solomon in Psalm 71? But pay attention to whom it says Solomon refers to. For Solomon is peaceful, this is what the interpretation says. The psalm is said to be about him, whom we truly know to be the author of peace. But how is Solomon peaceful? This does not indicate the blood of Joab, whom he ordered to be killed among the altars of the temple; nor the punishment of Adonijah, whom he struck as guilty of royal affinity, nor being recalled from indignation by the pleas of his mother. However, how do you suppose that what is written, 'he shall endure with the sun and before the moon forever and ever' (Psalm 71:5), applies to Solomon, the son of David, when he will have obtained only a brief span of life and will have passed through the narrow limits of living? But how is it said of him: He shall have dominion from sea to sea (Ibid., 8); when he, being placed within Syria, that is, within the province of one region, had the boundaries of his empire limited? But Christ alone has extended his dominion to the ends of the whole world. For he alone is the one about whom the psalmist prophesied well, that the kings of Arabia and Sheba will bring gifts, and all the kings of the earth will worship him: all nations will serve him (Psalm 72:10-11). For we know that he ruled over all peoples and nations, with unbounded authority and endless power. Therefore, he is not Solomon, the son of God.

23. But by what reasoning did you believe him to be the Son of God? Was it because he was wise? But here he demanded wisdom, so that he might receive what he did not have: Christ himself is wisdom, naturally possessing it in its entirety, which Solomon received by grace in

human affairs. In the end, what is received in time is possessed in time. For Solomon did not have wisdom at the beginning, nor did he possess it at the end. Nor did he believe that he possessed what he asked for; and afterwards, turning away from the worship of God, he fell not as a wise man, but as a foolish one, in order to offend. He offended to such an extent that he even lost what he had deserved. So why did you believe in this son of God? Is it because he built a temple for God? But from this you should have believed that he is not the Lord and God, because it is written: Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain (Ps. 126:1). In vain did he labor, who built that temple, which was consumed by fire. Or is it because it was said to his own father David: You shall not build me a house. But when you sleep, I will raise up your seed after you; and I will build a house to my name. However, there the promised temple is not a physical or material one, for God does not dwell in things made by hands, but the temple is the holy Church, which is founded not by human power, but by celestial virtue.

24. For if we marvel at the works of those who have outstanding skill, yet are still human, we find many such individuals whom we can compare to David and Solomon. And therefore, where there is an equality of work, there is no excellence of power. Nor can we say that there are multiple sons of God, when we have read of only one Son of God; but it is a grievous offense against the Son of God to attribute to Him the benefits He bestowed upon our ancestors. For there are many illustrious men, but it is written that the sun stood still for one Joshua son of Nun, against Gibeon (Joshua 10:13). You see him having surpassed the power of King David; for David ruled over earthly things, not heavenly ones. You also see that he is a servant of the sun, not its master, who even obeyed the human voice. And yet he stood, because he recognized in Jesus both the image of the future and his name. For it was not by his own power that Joshua commanded the heavenly lights, but by the mystery of Christ; for it was indicated that the Son of God would come into this world, who by his divine power would delay the setting of the worldly light that is already declining into darkness, restore the light, and bring in glory. Enoch was also taken up to heaven: but yet he was taken up, but here he returned. He was taken up, lest his heart be changed by wickedness; here he abolished the very wickedness of this age. Elijah ascended to heaven in a chariot and horses; but Christ descended from heaven, not in a chariot and horses, as he ascended, because he could not have done so otherwise; but here he returned by his own power. Elisha commanded the leper to wash himself in the Jordan, so that he would be cleansed from all contamination; but here in the Jordan he washed away the whole world. Moses himself, to whom the people of the Jews trusted, divided the water; and indeed he divided the elements, because he did not divide the power of the Trinity; he separated the masses of water, because he did not separate the Father from the Son.

25. You see how great men, and of what kind of works they left behind. Therefore, just as you recognize those who are equal to David the king or to Solomon in virtue, you judge them to be unequal in condition, so that you may think Solomon the son of David to sit at the right hand of God. Especially since David himself clearly expressed about whom it was said, for he would not say about his son: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand (Ps. CIX, 1). For how could he call his son Lord? The law prohibits, religion opposes, faith abhors that you place a mortal man at the right hand of Almighty God. He is the other one who sits at the right hand, who received a body, not the one who began from a body; who was born before Lucifer, that is, before the brightness of all lights; for he himself created the dignities of various lights: for Solomon is after

Lucifer. Solomon was not a priest; and therefore it could not be said to him by the Almighty Lord: From the womb before Lucifer I have begotten you (Ibid., 3); it could not be said to him: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Ibid., 4); especially since during the time when Solomon was, there were priests according to the order of Aaron, not according to the order of Melchizedek. For up until now, the priests were offering the blood of goats and bulls for the sins and errors of the people; but after Christ came, who offered himself for the salvation of the world (so that the blood of bulls could not cleanse, but the blood of Christ could), the priests began to offer themselves as sacrifices.

Therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ silenced the mouths of all heretics with one question, and he refuted sacrileges. For he not only refuted the Jews, but also the Photinians, the Arians, and the Sabellians with this question. And for this reason, we must now address the Arians, who do not differ much from the Jews, as well as the Photinians and Sabellians, and touch upon some points in this discussion. Let Photinus, therefore, be silent, who says that Christ is the son of David, not the son of God; and let him be silent, condemned by the heavenly voice. For how can he say that Christ is the son of David, when David himself says in the book of Psalms: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool (Ps. 109:1)? If David, he says, calls him Lord, how is he his son (Luke 20:13-14)? Therefore, not the son of David, but the son of God is Christ. Let Sabellianus also be silent; and when he reads that the Lord said to the Lord, let him understand that it is not the same person who speaks as to whom it is spoken: for the Father did not say this to Himself, Sit thou on my right hand; nor to Himself, Set thy enemies as a stool to thy feet. But let them recognize that the Father is one, the Son another; the Father He who commands, the Son He who obeys: to the Father He who sends, to the Son He who is sent. To the Father He who gives, to the Son He who receives. Lastly, let them observe the distinction of persons in a way that the Unity may be believed in. Let them not, therefore, make the Son the Father, because they will lose the Son, if they do not admit Him to be the Son of the Father; neither let them make the Father the Son, as the Sabellian heretics have done, who will lose the Father, not having Him as the Father, unless they hold Him to be the Son. Let him hear the Lord saying to the Lord, let him hear that the Son is sitting on the right hand of the Father; and let him cease from questioning the divinity of the human order. Let him not argue here, because the Father says, sit; for we read elsewhere that the Son is seated without the Father's command, as it is written: And he sits on the right hand of God (Mark XVI, 20). And elsewhere: Henceforth you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of God (Matthew XXVI, 64). For it is He to whom it is said, 'Sit at my right hand, who is called the Son of Man'; He hears as a man, He sits as the Son of God. What can be said to be more excellent than this power, which has also placed the flesh of man at the right hand of God; and after the weakness of human nature, nevertheless, united it with the divinity of the eternal Word, when the Word became flesh?

27. But what is this? After Photinus fell silent, Arius was silent, Sabellius lost his voice; yet I still see different heresies with mouths that stir up controversy against the Church. For behold, there is Manichaeus and Valentinianus, and every derivation of the Manichaeans depends on the same weapon by which others have been destroyed; and it fabricates a prejudice against faith, it constructs a testimony for faith. For the detestable heresy says: 'Behold, Christ denied that he is the son of David' (Luke 20:41); and therefore, it says, it must be believed that he did not assume flesh. Which the Scripture very clearly affirms from the very beginning of the Gospel, when it says:

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David (Matt. 1:1). So why is David sometimes called the son of someone else, or sometimes the son of David is denied, unless you understand that according to his divine nature he is the Son, and according to his assumption of flesh he is the son of David? For according to his divine nature, he is the Son of God; according to the flesh, he is the son of David. Therefore, when the generation according to the flesh of the Savior is described, he is called the son of David; but when the fullness of confession is required, when the generation of the Savior is designated, he does not want to be called the son of David, but the son of God; for the designation of his majesty interprets his nature. But now that you have refuted the interpretations of the wicked, the discourse must be turned to the Church.

Caput V.

He confirms the arguments brought against the Jews and Gentiles, and turns to the discourse to the Church.

28. However, the fact that we often repeat the title of the fiftieth psalm is not an example of presumption, but of weakness. For in one day, either due to the limitations of our understanding or the frailty of our voice, we cannot deliver the entire series of discourses. And therefore, since our previous discourse was directed against the Jews, who were subjected to the evidence of faith to such an extent that Christ was placed on the heavenly throne, which certainly cannot apply to a mere mortal. For it is not credible that anyone other than the Son of God should sit at the right hand of God. Certainly no one but the Son of God should sit at the right hand of the Father for us, once all ambiguous things have been removed, he is to be esteemed. Furthermore, since Scripture says: 'I will set upon your throne the fruit of your womb' (Psalm 131:11), it is to be believed that the same Son of God received flesh from Mary, in whom the prophetic fruit of the womb is found. This is so that you may truly recognize the succession of origin and not hesitate to believe that this same Son of God, who later became the son of man by accepting human flesh, sits on the heavenly throne of the Father. For Christ did not have any royal throne in this world, so that you may think that another throne similar to that of David has been promised; especially since the Lord Himself said: My kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36).

Therefore, they conclude on all sides, deriving the conditions of their treachery, that it is unbelievable that God would assume flesh; however, they cannot explain the manner by which He could not assume it. For I ask whether they think that the reason the flesh could not be assumed by God is due to impossibility or injustice? If impossibility, then there is something impossible for God: for there is nothing that He wills to do and is unable to do. Therefore, it remains to be taught whether He willed it or not. But what greater indication of will than what He Himself said: 'I have appeared openly to those who did not ask for Me... I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people' (Isa. 65:1-2)? If, therefore, He both wanted and could, do we think that He would not have wanted without cause for injustice? And what injury does divinity feel? For it is devoid of insult, and it is not subject to our passions; for neither could the flesh bring harm or benefit to divinity, nor increase it.

30. But those who object to this argue that the Son of God could not take on flesh. If the pagans, who cannot deny that their gods (since they admit them to have been men) appeared in human form? Did their king, whom they prefer above all their gods, not assume outrageous forms out of love: and yet Christ, the Son of Man, whom He made in His own image, could not assume that

most excellent work of His for the salvation of the world? And is it more beautiful to them because of the adultery of an alien bed than because of the redemption of all mankind in the assumed form of flesh? But if a Jew objects to this, how does he read: Behold, a virgin shall conceive in her womb, and shall bring forth a son; and his name shall be called Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:14), which is interpreted, God is with us? How does he read: Behold, here I am who spoke (Isaiah 53:6)? How does he also claim: Behold, I will meet them like a leopard... and like a bear robbed of her whelps (Hosea 13:7-8)? Therefore, the Son of God could not assume flesh for the redemption of all, since they themselves cannot deny that God, moved by the cruelty of wild beasts, has taken on a certain affliction for the punishment of our sins; so that He, who is by nature kind and merciful, is nevertheless moved by the enormity of our crimes to assume a certain savagery of beasts towards us.

31. But now, since I believe that I have sufficiently responded to the Jews both yesterday and today, dear brothers, a prophetic explanation must be given to you. For when the title of this psalm is read, which says, 'When Nathan went to David, when he went to Bathsheba,' we said that many events of this story are confused: and therefore we have taken up a threefold treatment of it; and we thought that the division of the treatment should be made in such a way that the lapse of condition is not denied among the Gentiles, but the correction of error is established; but among the Jews we would teach that the lapse was holy for David, so that the perfidy of the Jews would no longer stumble, and they would cease to believe that he, whom they saw subject to the common condition of sin, was the Son of God; but Christians can understand the mysteries of the rising Church. Therefore, a threefold division has been made: one according to nature, another according to faith, and a third according to grace; neither weakness excludes from mercy, and faith excuses from fault; the sacraments also reconcile the grace promised long ago.

Caput VI.

He teaches the Church why David and many other authors of the holy race were allowed to fall into error; and in order to more easily bring forth the mysteries from them, he recounts the history of David's murder and adultery.

32. David sinned so that the whole world would not go astray; he sinned for himself, so that he could correct all of us; finally, he sinned against his own body (for whoever commits fornication, sins against his own body), he sinned against his own body so that he could be redeemed in the body of Christ: behold, the one whom we thought was difficult to defend, we now see proclaiming. For who is there that does not want divine gifts to be preached in him more than human works? For we believe, according to the apostle (Rom. III, 28), that a person is justified by faith, without works of the Law. Therefore, let David be justified by faith, who, by the Law, acknowledged sin but believed in the forgiveness of sin through faith; let David be justified, for in his sin the mysteries of the Church shone forth.

Someone asks, in what way did the chosen author of the Dominican lineage commit both adultery and homicide? I say, such an author of the Dominican lineage should have been chosen for his body. For what is corporatio, if not the forgiveness of sins? And therefore, he could not have been void of sin, so that he might offer divine grace both in example and in message. Finally, by that disposition, Bathsheba and Tamar are included among the authors of the Dominican lineage: one of whom committed adultery, the other committed incest. Both Achab and Jechonias are included

in the lineage of Christ, as Matthew the Evangelist described (Matt. 1:9 and 11), so that he, who would redeem all men, might begin his benefit from his ancestors. At the same time, so that no one who subjected himself to the passion of the body would seem to have acquired the nobility of an immaculate origin. For this boasting of men is to seek the glory of another, not one's own; and yet among men, the grace of virtue is greater than nobility. At the same time, there was an example of eating together, so that everyone could understand that the faults of our ancestors cannot bring shame to future generations; that each person can erase the stain of their own merit through virtue. Do you see how many and how gravely sinful the succession of the Lord's generation includes, from whose origin Christ did not hesitate to be born because of you? And if you believe this, these are gifts of divine mercy to you, and this is the mark of celestial power. For sin abounded, so that grace might also abound. Therefore, David was not exempt from fault in order to be chosen for grace.

34. But now let us recount the mysteries of the history itself, and let us draw from the very sources of the Scriptures; and so that we may be able to examine the entire series of mysteries, let us repeat the text of the history itself. For thus we remember it expressed in the book of Kings (2 Kings 11:2 ff.), that when David saw Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, bathing, he fell in love with her; then he ordered her to come to his house, while her husband was absent; not long after, her husband returned, a religious and devout man, who, during the time of war, did not think it fitting to enter his house, when he saw his companions intent on the war, not in domestic chambers, but keeping watch in battle tents; afterwards, by David's order, he was called back to the war, under the command that he should be exposed to the enemy warriors, so that the king might have free access to the woman by the death of her husband. And here there is also a certain shame of sin, and the shame of guilt, because he sought a hiding place for his error; and he did not assume the authority of royal power for the unjust killing, but he avoided the envy. He admits guilt, but the shame that is suppressed is more tolerable than the insolence that is preached. So Uriah, having been exposed to the warriors, is dead, but afterwards the same ones who killed him, by the order of David, were destroyed after the city was captured. This is a series of stories, in which you can explore profound mysteries.

Caput VII.

With the divine Spirit invoked, it begins to reveal the mysteries that were concealed under the adultery of David and Bathsheba, as well as under the birth itself.

35. And since we do not receive David as needing to be defended by my own help, but rather to be excused or rather to be preached; lest I may waver in such a deep mystery, it is just that I use his mouth, whose history I use. Therefore, I will use the prophetic response, saying: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me (Psalm 51:10). For no one can behold such divine mysteries without the infusion of the Holy Spirit. For if that great prophet, the Holy Spirit, seeks the gift to be poured out upon himself, what should the weak person do? Especially since even the holy Apostle believes that he is also helped by the prayers of the people, that the door may be opened to him to speak the mystery of the word. Oh, if Christ would deign to open that door for me! Let us knock, however; for he is accustomed to hear those who knock, for he himself said: Knock, and it will be opened to you (Luke 11:9). Oh, if he would open himself to me, for Christ is the door: he is within, he is outside, he is the way that leads, he is the life to which we

strive to attain.

36. Come therefore, Lord Jesus, and open to us your fountains, so that we may drink from the water that whoever drinks it, may not thirst forever (John 4:13). Or if we are not yet able to draw from your fountain, deign to grant us at least to draw from the well, from which you promise to the Samaritan woman who was still doubting. And indeed, you promise to everyone from your fountain, but to those who doubt, like that Samaritan woman, your fountain is still a deep well. Let us drink the water of heavenly secrets. And since we have merited to come to your fountain, let us at least be allowed to see the image of celestial mysteries.

So, unless I am mistaken, by the Prophet we understand the Holy Spirit; by the adulteress, however, we may think of various fornications of the Synagogue. And therefore, long before, we see revealed from the Holy Spirit and from the family of the Jews (whose fathers, and from whom Christ according to the flesh), that the Lord Jesus is to be born (Gen. 49:10), who indeed was born as it were a Jew from an adulterous family, but as it were immaculate from a Virgin. He was under the Law, he was like a member of the Jewish family; the observance of the Law had to be abolished, so that truth and grace could be substituted.

We have one mystery: take another; yet in such a way that you remember that from the first conception Bathsheba gave birth to a child who died, and then she gave birth to Solomon: the former child from a secret conception; the latter Solomon already from the profession of marriage. Therefore it is clear that by David the prophet is understood, by the Prophet the prophetic people, from whom and from the Synagogue that first one who was born (because he had degenerated from his ancestors and was formed through crimes, and the Jewish people had become consolidated through vices) could not attain to the eternity of the resurrection, nor grow into a perfect man; but in a smallness of senses, and in a kind of infancy of virtue, he lacked. But indeed, that people who was afterwards conceived from the lawful union, the Christian people, that wise and peaceful people, is unfolded by this interpretation of Solomon, to the white-haired age of eternal resurrection, and reaches that heavenly kingdom. Through that people, the Law was dissolved, through this one, grace was reformed.

39. Also receive the third mystery. Which the Hebrews call David lofty, but the Latins interpret as humbled. But who is truly humbled if not the one who does not consider being equal to God a robbery: But taking the form of a servant, he humbled himself, being obedient unto death (Philippians 2:6 et seq.)? Therefore, this is he who is signified by David, lofty by nature, but humbled by mercy: sublime in divinity, but gentle in body. So where there is humility, there is obedience. For obedience is born from humility and ends in it. For when one is called obedient, it means they were obedient even unto death (which was not the death of divinity, but of the body); that obedience was not of divinity, but of the body; and that humility was not of majesty, but of the flesh. Therefore, as for the acceptance of the body, the apostolic reading has revealed in what respect there was humility in Christ; but as for the nature of divinity, it has been revealed in the Gospel reading: which you have followed with pious agreement, when you heard it said in the Law by the Son of God: 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:30). For indeed God the Father and the Son are one in divinity, but they are not one in the sacrament of the body and the eternity of divinity. Yet not only the Apostle said that the Lord is humble, but he also mentioned himself as being humble, saying: Take my yoke upon you, for it is light; for I am meek and humble of heart

(Matthew 11:29). And yet it is not only by interpretation, but also by designation, that it is marked; for it is written: I have found David my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him (Psalm 88:21). And below he says, 'You are my Father' (Ibid. 27); and, 'I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son.' Therefore, we have found David, whom we were looking for: a slave in appearance, but the Lord in truth.

Caput VIII.

What does the royal house, in which David walks, signify? What does the nudity and bathing of Bathsheba signify? And what does it signify that she is immediately loved when seen naked?

40. So David walked within his own house. Which indeed is the house of Christ, unless it is the one of which He says: 'In my Father's house there are many mansions' (John 14:2)? Therefore, in that royal house, He saw human nature stripped bare and pitied it, and loved it. For it was still naked of virtues, because through the serpent's ambush it had been deprived of its natural clothing. For it does not seem likely that a woman would be undressed before the house of the king, nor that a woman would wash herself before the house of the king: as if another place could not exist with a suitable bath. It does not fit, it does not agree, it does not accord with truth: it is far from the truth, it is repugnant to reason. A king could loathe such a person, so insolent, so shameless, not love them. Could she, if she were not ashamed in the presence of a true man, not even be afraid of the royal gaze? Could her ministers not have kept her away before the king saw her? So if this cannot agree with faith, let us inquire what this naked condition is, namely, the human condition, stripped of all the vestments of nature, lacking the clothing of immortality, and robbed of the covering of innocence. For he is naked who is stripped of sin and guilt. Finally, that first sinner of our kind, and would that he were the only one, before he sinned, did not feel that he was naked, but after he sinned, he saw that he was naked; and therefore, he thought he should be covered with leaves, because he knew himself to be naked. So he became naked to himself, after he became guilty of the crime. In that state, the entire human condition was revealed, through the succession of nature; not only subject to guilt, but also to suffering. Therefore, he felt and saw himself naked: thus is our entire condition, that whoever thinks themselves naked, sees and feels themselves naked. Indeed, whoever desires wealth is naked: whoever despises it, is wealthy. Each person's own sense is a suffering, and each person's own virtue is devoid of injury. Therefore, Christ first claimed the human condition for himself through the Law, which he later rejected. Hence he said: 'Which of you is free from the bill of divorce that I have given to your mother?' (Isaiah 50:1). Therefore, in this way, Christ saw his family naked and loved them: for Christ loves the holy soul. In conclusion, Jesus loved Lazarus and Mary: Christ loved his Church, even though she was naked and not yet clothed with the adornment of virtues.

Finally, so that we may understand the sequence of the proposed discussion of the Scriptures, let us learn about the clean Church, let us learn about the one seeking, hurrying, and washing herself before the house of Christ, when John was baptizing in the Jordan, saying: I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he who comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. (Matthew 3:11). Therefore, when the people were being baptized for repentance, they were certainly seeking Christ, who was already seeking their house nearby, in order to attain grace. Thus, the Church sought Christ from John, saying: 'Tell me who my soul loves' (Song of Songs 1:6); she recalled that he is the cause of

her desire, the cause of her cleansing, as you have: 'I am dark but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon' (Ibid., 1:4). You have the reason why he longs to cleanse himself, because he recalls that he is dark. For when John, as if questioning, asked in what way the common people, who were flocking together, might be eager to be baptized, she replied: I am dusky and fair, the daughter of Jerusalem. Because she is dusky, she desires to be washed; because she is fair, she is not afraid to appear naked. Do not, she said, look at me because I am dim, because the sun does not look at me. Therefore, let us be dusky when we are not seen by Christ; but when we are seen, we grow white. Therefore, he who sees her, to whom all things are naked, and the hidden things of the heart cannot be concealed; because he is the searcher of hearts and reins: nothing is hidden from him, nothing is covered. He saw his church naked, and he saw, and he loved. He saw his beloved naked, and he loved her like a son of charity.

See how he sees, see how he calls. These are not the reproaches of adultery, but the mysteries of chastity. You are completely beautiful, my friend, my closest one, and there is no blame in you. Come here from Lebanon, my bride, come here from Lebanon, you will pass through and pass by from the beginning of faith (Song of Songs 4:7 and 8). And blessed from the beginning of faith. Therefore, when you have faith, you should not fear adultery; faith is the bond of marriage, deceit is adultery. But in order to be present from Lebanon, he sent a message beforehand, saying: Arise, come, my neighbor, my beautiful one, my dove, my perfect one (Song of Songs 2:10). My neighbor, certainly with a desire for faith; my beautiful one, with the beauty of virtue; my dove, with spiritual grace. For the silver wings of a dove can signify that eternal power; and the flight of a dove has declared the presence of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Christ calls her to himself, that she may come; because she was already coming with spiritual rewards: For lo, he says, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers have appeared on the earth (ibid., 11 and 12). See how the holy Church invites. Winter, it says, has departed from itself, so that it does not fear a naked winter, not the season's winter, but the winter of weakness, which strips the fertile field of the soul of all its flowers. For it is not the winter of the earthly sun, it is the winter of the mind, when coldness creeps into the soul, when the steam of the mind evaporates, when the strength of the senses dissolves, when excessive moisture overflows and weighs down the mind, when the inner vision is darkened. And so the Lord says: Take heed that your flight not be in winter or on the Sabbath (Matth. XXIV, 20). For it is good that the day of judgment or death should come when there is a gentle tempering of the soul, when the heavenly mystery shines forth in clear light, when our hearts burn within us. For then Christ is present, as testified in the Gospel by Ammaon and Cleophas, saying: Was not our heart burning within us while he was opening the scriptures to us (Luc. XXIV, 32)? But the soul is revived when even a flower is seen on earth. Who is this flower of sweet fragrance, if not the one who said: I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys (Song of Songs 2:1)? Concerning whom it is also written in Isaiah: And there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit (Isaiah 11:1). The root is indeed the family of the Jews, the branch is Mary, the flower is Christ of Mary, who when he shines forth in our land and delights the field of the soul, or blossoms in his Church, we cannot fear the cold, nor dread the rain, but await the day of judgment.

44. And therefore the Church, in order to see this flower, hastened with every effort, as she herself testifies, saying: In my bed, in the nights I sought him whom my soul loves: I sought him, and did

not find him: I called him, and he did not hear me. Therefore I will rise, and go about the city, in the streets and in the squares, and seek him whom my soul loves (Song of Songs, 3:1-2). I sought, and did not find him... The watchmen who go about the city found me, they struck me, and took away my cloak from me (Song of Songs, 5:7). You see how he seeks whom he desires to find, so that he may not fear being wounded. But these wounds are not to be feared, but to be desired; because the wounds are wounds of love; as she herself says: I am wounded by love (Ibid. 8). The wounds of love are good. In fact, the wounds of a friend are more useful than the voluntary kisses of an enemy.

Caput IX.

He continues the same subject, and shows that the Church of Christ, which he has rejected as a veiled Synagogue, was pleasing to Him when it was naked; then he describes the ardor of the Church in seeking Him; and finally he explains the fulfillment of the Law foreshadowed in the murder of Uriah.

45. She is naked, therefore, by merit, because she has lost her cloak: or perhaps she is naked for this reason, because sometimes it is the virtue of the heart not to have it covered, the heart not to have it veiled. In conclusion, Christ has despised and rejected that veiled Synagogue (II Cor. III, 13 et seq.), which had a veil in the reading of the Old Testament, which is now revealed, because it is annulled in Christ; I say, veiled, Christ despised and rejected the Synagogue, which is why today the veil is placed upon the hearts of the Jews. But truly, that which turns the whole mind to the Lord is naked and clear. For when someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away, so that we may see, beholding the glory of God. Moreover, elsewhere it is a sign of virtue to be naked, for it is written: 'I have put off my tunic, how shall I put it on again? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?' (Cant. V, 3)

Therefore, let us reveal from the Scriptures if we can, how one should take off and put on this tunic. For there is a certain bodily tunic, and there are certain woven coverings of desires; and therefore, sometimes it is better to be naked in body than veiled in heart. Hence, even Paul admonishes us to strip off, saying elsewhere: Stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge, according to the image of Him who created him (Colossians 3:9-10). Therefore, she who is stripped and has washed feet, and hence she who has bathed, does not know how they can become dirty again. For she forgets through grace what she had drawn through nature. Therefore, great is the righteous love of the woman before David, washing himself in the royal house. But she not only washes, but also calls; as we have learned from the same book, with the Holy Church saying: 'Come, my brother, let us go out into the field, let us rest in the castles, let us rise early in the vineyards, let us see if the vine has flourished' (Song of Solomon 7:11-12). Therefore, she not only washes, but also provokes and invites Christ to come to her, saying: 'To you I will give my breasts' (Ibid.). And not only her own, but also the new and the old, as you have: 'I have kept new and old for you, my brother' (Ibid. 13). And, as if impatient of love, he seeks the support of someone by whom Christ may be asked to come. See him burning, see him longing: 'Who,' he says, 'will give you, O my brother, to suck the breasts of my mother?' (Song of Solomon 8:1). And he shows by what means he seeks, and by what grace he invites, and how he can hold on: how he waits for the one who is staying outside; and he implores that he may enter his house, saying: 'Finding you outside I will kiss you, I will take hold of

you, and will bring you to the house of my mother, and into the secret place of her who conceived me' (ibid. 2). You see how exposed it is, which cannot have a hidden shelter of undefiled nature, a hidden shelter of intimate conscience, not designated by any audacity of vice. For the closed garden is the holy Church, and immaculate virginity, which, for this reason, merits this grace from Christ, because it sought, desired, and found the Word of God, vigilantly watching before the gates of wisdom, as it itself says: Blessed is the man who hears me and the person who keeps my ways, vigilantly watching at my gates daily, guarding the entrances to my doors. My end, the ends of life. (Prov. VIII, 34).

48. Thus Christ desired and prepared himself to take as his wife the appearance of his Church. But since he sought her under the Law (for under the Law Peter, John, and the other apostolic men), he thought that first the bonds of bodily observance should be relaxed for us. For though the religious Law, the just Law, summoned the person of Uriah, who was so religious and chaste that, upon returning from war, he did not recognize his wife nor enter into her; yet because Uriah, through David, that is, through the humble man, perceived the union of the Church, departing from the union of the Synagogue, he prepared a place for future nuptials. And so John also received the type of the Law, who, although he was from the Fathers, announced the preparation of the ways of the Lord and prophesied the joining of the Church; and therefore he is portrayed as being killed, in order to demonstrate the failure of legitimate observance. For the Law and the prophets were until John. Therefore, now Uriah was killed in the type of the Law, so that the Synagogue of the Law would be freed from its snares, because a woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he is alive; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. Therefore, while her husband is alive, she will be called an adulteress if she is joined to another man; but if her husband is dead, she is freed from the law of her husband, so that she is not an adulteress if she is with another man. Therefore, she is not an adulteress in the human condition, although she may have been under the Law, yet she has been freed in a sense from the observance of the Law, and is vindicated by grace.

However, Christ did not abolish the observance of the law. Therefore, Uriah was not killed by David, but he suffered being killed by warriors: that is, the ritual observance coming from the Law was profaned by the invasion of barbarians and the captivity of the Jews, Christ suffered. Finally, Uriah is called my light. And what is the light of Christ except the Law and the Gospel? For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me. Because the light of Christ preceded in the Law, which afterwards in the grace of the Gospel, as if in a sevenfold spirit, filled all the world of this age. Therefore, he took away the flesh from the Law or the Church and joined it to himself: the hostile people diminished the light of the Law when they violated the sacred Law. Therefore, the light of God is diminished in the people of the Jews; blindness has partly befallen Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles enters, and thus all Israel shall be saved.

Caput X.

With renewed attention, it explores the deeper mystery hidden in the adulterous affair of David, namely the union of the divine Word with human nature.

50. There remains a fourth mystery, which, I implore you, you may receive with calm ears and not weigh our minds by words; for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. Adultery is committed, and murder is committed. This is what was spoken to the Prophet: Take for yourself a

rod of nutwood (Jerem. I, 11). And elsewhere we read of a rod of nutwood, through which we understand a certain law and the summit of prophecy, which is bitter outside like a nut shell; hard in the middle, like the shell; but soft and fruitful within. Therefore, even though you have heard bitter things in history, you have recognized harshness in the example, nevertheless hope for fruitful things in the mystery. Adultery, I say, was done in the example of salvation; for not all adultery is to be condemned. Finally, it is said to the Prophet: Go, take for yourself a prostitute as a wife (Hosea 1:2). The Lord commands this, that there may be marriage with her who has committed adultery, of which marriage, as we said above (above, chapter 9 of this book), Christ is the offspring. For the son who was born from fornication, the name Jezrahel was given by the Lord, which is a divine generation. So if that pious union of fornication is indeed a pious union of adulterous society. But that is of the Jews. However, I dare not name the divine ones as pious adultery, although it is pious, lest the sound of the word offend anyone, although the sense of reverence is evident; however, it can be said more cautiously, although not more explicitly, that a pious connection was made from disparate unions when the Word became flesh. For there is no legitimate union of divinity and flesh; and just as the flesh and soul are joined in a certain agreement of nature, so also the divinity and flesh of the righteous observe, in a certain way, the law of marriage. God took on flesh, assumed a soul, and through an unprecedented and illegitimate incarnation, made the union to be legitimate, so that God may be all in all.

51. Finally, so that you may know that it is a mystery, interpret the words. For you receive David as a type of Christ, Bathsheba is indeed called daughter of the Sabbath, or daughter full, or the well of an oath. What, then, could be more explicit than the fact that the daughter of the Sabbath is the flesh of Christ; for God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law? She is also called full, because in His passion there is the fullness of the Law, or because she is full of the grace of the Holy Spirit. For Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan. Likewise, the well of the oath, that is, of religion and faith. And it is a good well, because living waters flow from its womb. Therefore, God the Word, taking this upon Himself, made it a legitimate bond; a mystery which those nuptials in the Song of Songs signify, in which the Church is joined to Christ and the flesh to the Spirit. And thus, the wounded, the naked, the adulteress in all things, though immaculate in Christ, the miserable flesh sought a redeemer.

52. Christ joined himself to her, in order to make her spotless: he united himself with her, in order to remove adultery. And because he was under the Law, it was necessary for him to die, so that he could be freed from the Law, and so that through that death, the marriage of the Law and the flesh could be dissolved. Therefore, the flesh died in Christ, so that we, who have been deadened to the Law through the body of Christ, as the Apostle said (Rom. VII, 4), might become those who have risen from the dead, and that the passions and desires of the flesh, and the thoughts of sins that were in our members because of the Law, might die in that death; but we, freed from the law of death, as a new bond of Christ, might rise again in the newness of spirit.

53. And yet those who violated the Law in the flesh of Christ and thought it should be violated were all killed by the warriors at David's command. By this evidence it is shown that what they taught later was a sign, that none of those who killed Christ escaped; and this is most clearly revealed, that those whom Jesus had taken before his death, like the Jews, perished as children and infants: but those whom he admitted into the number of sons after his death, are saved in the kingdom. According to this mystery, it is fitting that the first birth among the Jews was weak, so that later an

eternal fruit could be born among Christians.

Caput XI.

The parable of Nathan is proposed, and it is understood morally, and soon it is translated allegorically.

54. But now let us move on to the message. For in the previous days we had discussed with us about that infamous adultery and murder of David the prophet, and having gone through the mysteries, we found not only nothing to condemn, but also something to praise. Now the discussion begins about the message which the title of the previous psalm, often repeated, indicates. For it is written as follows: Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba (Psalm 50:1). And so this part of the story must be told, which is as follows. There were a rich man and a poor man living in the same city (2 Samuel 12:1 et seq.). The rich man had many cattle and many sheep; the poor man had only one sheep, which he nourished with bread and wine and kept in his bosom. A guest came to the rich man; the rich man did not take anything from his own cattle or his own flocks, but killed the one sheep of the poor man. When David learned of this, he said, 'That man shall surely die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold.' Then Nathan said to him, 'You are the man!' After that, he opened to him the heavenly command, saying that the Lord had commanded many good things to him, that is, royal possessions, taking away from the number of the shepherds, and that he had poured out his mercy upon him. And because he had angered the Lord with his sin, everything would be taken away from him, plundered by enemies, and his house would be laid waste. Then he said, 'I have sinned.' And Nathan replied, 'Since you confess your sin, the Lord will forgive you; but your son who was born of Bathsheba will die.' When his son was sick, David wept, lay on the ground, covered himself with sackcloth, fasted. When he learned of his son's death, he rose, washed, ate, and comforted others.

See how many things. First of all, because God is kind and merciful, we accept the adversities that happen to us as the price of our error. Therefore, we have learned that captivity is the price of sin; for this is the punishment for the crime. Then we notice that the downfall of kings is the punishment of peoples. For just as we are saved by their virtue, so we are also endangered by their error. Hence it is desirable for us to be able to have a glorious and perfect king. Therefore, if we want to have a perfect king, do we not want to have a perfect Lord? Or can those who do not want God to be perfect desire man to be perfect? This also briefly demonstrates the workings of the story, so that we may note how quickly hope follows forgiveness. But there is no small significance to what Nathan the prophet denounces, that is, the lesser prophet. For indeed, it is serious shame and modesty of a sin to be reproved by someone of lower status. You see that fault diminishes grace. Nathan knew what David did not know: his mind was so clouded by a certain cloud of vices. Then there is Nathan, who in previous times prophesied to David, having been accepted by the Lord; so that he might grieve for the sin being rebuked by the same person by whom his merit had been praised.

57. But now let us investigate the mystery. There were two men, he says, in one city, one rich and the other poor (2 Kings 12:1). Who is this rich or poor man, if not perhaps one Jewish people and the other Christian people? That one is rich in the Law, rich in the words of God entrusted to him, rich in prophecies, rich in oracles; but this one is poor. But do not shun this poverty, for the

kingdom of heaven follows it. For it is written: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3). Good poverty, which does not lose what it has. Good poverty, which if it does not have the treasures of money, nevertheless has the treasures of knowledge and wisdom. Sons, do not despise poverty as if it were worthless. This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him (Psalm 34:7). Do not envy great wealth: The rich have become poor and hungry (ibid., 11). But if you want to have good things, seek the Lord: Those who seek the Lord will not lack any good thing (ibid.). Therefore, do not refuse every poor person. Peter was poor, and he did not have a coin to give; but he gave a more valuable gift than all money: salvation. That poor man was Lazarus in the Gospel (Luke 16:19 et seq.); but the one who lay before, rich in purple and fine linen, desired to be refreshed by the finger of the poor man after the end of life. Although that proud man, adorned with royal purple and fine clothes, despised the wounds of the poor man and abhorred the poor man, he, being placed in hell, desired to have been in the same place as Lazarus. In this passage, it does not seem to be describing a rich or poor person in terms of money, but rather a poor person who, for faith and devotion, is not afraid of suffering bodily wounds and enduring hunger and fasting.

Since the Jewish people had many flocks of sacrificial animals, yet he chose to take one small lamb that the poor people had, subjecting it to glorious suffering. Do you want to know which lamb? He was led like a lamb to the slaughter (Isaiah 53:7), he was nourished with the bread of the poor, he used the drink of the poor, and he slept in the bosom of the poor. He used our food, he rested in the lap of our hearts. For he remembered that he could not find rest in the bosom of the Jews, saying: The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head (Luke 9:58). And the guest came, he said, to that rich man. Who is this guest, if not a miserable sin? For indeed guilt entered into this world like a guest, foreign and alien to our nature. Therefore, he did not offer a sacrifice from his own flock; but he took the little lamb of the poor, and killed it. Although the passion of that sacrifice may have benefited some for their salvation; yet it seems to them to have been the nourishment of their own madness, and the food of guilt, and an incentive to sin. Finally, Judas received the bread from Christ, and then he was even more filled with the devil; because he did not accept in faith, he who was preparing betrayal for such a hospitable Lord.

60. And David became angry at that man. We said that the people of the Jews are declared through the Prophet, and therefore condemns himself under this figure. That man is worthy of death who did this, and he will restore the little sheep fourfold, that is, the people of the Jews will perish, but the Christian people will enjoy more abundant goods; because the status that is owed from the resurrection is more excellent than present circumstances.

61. It was my intention, that you might deign to remember, to speak against those who think that David should be accused of murder and adultery, and for me to respond in my own words: and so our course of discussion turned out with the support of your unity in such a way that it seemed to deserve to be preached by the mouth of all, which we thought could not be defended. But since our holy man does not need our help, let him now speak for himself to you, and let his actions be defended by his own words.

Caput XII.

David confesses his sin to God, composing Psalm 50, in which several verses are explained; first, it is asked what great mercy is and how great a multitude of mercies there are; then it is taught that

only God can forgive our iniquities, which cannot be hidden, as David himself confesses. Finally, it becomes clear that the Arians fall into the impiety of the Manicheans.

62. Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to your great mercy. (Psalm 50:3). Perhaps, dear brothers, this conjunction of words is new, that it should be said 'according to your great mercy'. I do not easily recall having read it elsewhere, and therefore we will not easily say what great mercy is. However, we do read about the great power of God. And therefore, by considering what great power is, we can infer what great mercy he wanted to designate. For we read in the Holy Jeremiah: Who are you, Lord? You have made heaven and earth, in your great power and with your outstretched arm (Jer. XXXII, 17). Therefore, great power has made heaven. What is this great power; of the Father or of the Son? It is certainly the great power of the Father; for he made heaven and earth through the Son, as you have: In the beginning God created heaven and earth (Gen. I, 1). However, the Son is also of great power. For when you read of the power of the Father, the Son, as you have, is Christ, the wisdom and power of God, and certainly since the Son is the power of the Father, he is of great power. Therefore, since the Almighty is denied, whom we confess to be the great power of God? Therefore, this great power made the heavens; because the Son made the heavens, as you have: All things were made by him (John I, 3). Therefore, if both the Father and the Son made, certainly the unity of their operation indicates unity. Therefore, the operation of the Father and the Son does not differ. But if there is one operation, certainly there is one power of operation, and there is one majesty of the works. This is about the Father and the Son.

63. Why then do we remain silent about the Spirit, especially when the divine Scripture does not allow us to remain silent? For it provides the most opportune testimony to the unity of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son, so that we may not separate His operation from the work of the Father and the Son. For we read that there is great power in the Father, who made the heavens; and there is also great power in the Son, who also made the heavens: not only did He make them, but He also established them. For by the word of the Lord the heavens were established (Psalm 32:6). Therefore, if both the creation and the establishment of the heavens are of great power, we cannot separate the Holy Spirit from the majesty of great power; for it is written: 'And by the breath of his mouth, all their power.' (Ibid.). For when the heavens and the earth were created, the Spirit was borne; as the prophet David also says elsewhere: 'Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created.' (Psalm 103:13). Of whom he also said elsewhere: 'For I will see your heavens, the works of your fingers.' (Psalm 8:4). For God did not create heaven and earth with physical fingers, but with the sevenfold grace of the Spirit, namely that finger about which you have in the Gospel: But if I cast out devils by the finger of God (Luke 11:20). For elsewhere He called this finger the Spirit, as you have: But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:28). Therefore, if the Spirit of God is a finger, since the arm of God is the Son, undoubtedly the Spirit, cooperating with the Father and the Son through the unity of operation, created heaven and earth. Therefore, the Son is called the Finger, so that as the unity of the body is expressed, so is the unity of divinity. Therefore, if great power created the heavens, surely great wisdom created the heavens, because it is written: You have made all things in wisdom (Psalm 103:24).

64. Therefore, we have learned what great virtue is, now let us gather what great mercy is. If great virtue made the heavens, and great mercy must be from heaven, and great justice must be from heaven; for justice looked down from heaven, and mercy came from heaven. Great mercy,

therefore, has been made, because the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John I, 14). Therefore, great virtue made the heavens, great virtue inclined the heavens, as we read: And he inclined the heavens and came down (Psalm XVII, 10). Whereby it is shown that the Son of God, never devoid of His divinity, nor when He dwelt among men; for although He assumed what He was not, He did not cease to be what He was. Therefore, when it is said: And He inclined the heavens and came down, it does not seem so much that He descended from heaven, as that He descended with heaven itself. For when the Father addressed the Son while situated on earth, and the angels ministered, it seems that the Son of God did not so much change the abode as transfer it. Therefore, we have learned that mercy is great.

Therefore, if it is a great mercy that has descended from heaven, we must understand and distinguish the multitude of mercies. For it follows: 'According to the multitude of your mercies, wipe away my iniquity' (Psalm 50:3). These two verses do not have the same meaning. The first is referring to the Incarnation, while the second seems to refer to the injuries that the Son of God suffered in the flesh, because he fasted, he hungered, he wept, he was beaten, he was crucified, he died, and he was buried. For these are the insignia of the flesh, not of divinity. And it was necessary, in order to drive away the multitude of sufferings, that the multitude of mercies would be of benefit to us in the struggle of the Lord's passion. For he did not remove his own sins, for he had committed no sin; but because he became sin, our sins had to be removed, as David said: Remove my iniquity. What does remove mean? Let us consider this word; for it is not idle. Moreover, elsewhere he says: I am the one who removes your iniquities, and I will not remember (Isaiah XLIII, 25). Indeed, there are certain deep-seated wounds of our conscience, and certain scars of our minds and souls, which are covered by the ulcers of our errors. Therefore, it has its own characters and accents by which it is revealed: not something we invent with our own skill, but something we mark with the authority of prophecy. It is written, therefore; and where it is written, see: 'In the inscriptions of your heart,' he says (Jer. 17:1). That is, there the series of guilt is written, but also the form of virtue; not on stone tablets, but on carnal tablets of the heart. But the good things are not written with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; the wicked things, however, with an iron stylus and a diamond pen. Such is the nature of sin: it is written with an iron stylus, it is restrained by an iron rod, as it is written: You shall rule them with an iron rod (Psalm 2:9). There is another straight rod, the rod of your kingdom (Psalm 44:7): it punishes the guilty, it governs the innocent. Therefore, the fault is written: let us see where. Not outside, but inside your heart and your chest. For just as the word is close to your mouth and in your heart: so the figure of sin and the image of error are expressed in the hearts of the unbelievers. Therefore, both fault and virtue are within. And therefore the Lord says: 'I feel virtue has gone out from me' (Luke, 8:46), to show that good things proceed from the interior, and conversely, bad things come forth from the interior. For it is not what enters into the mouth that defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth' (Matthew, 15:11). For out of the heart come forth thoughts, and therefore beware that evil thoughts do not come forth from your heart, which will accuse and condemn you in the future. For God does not need witnesses or arguments to convict you: your own fault accuses and betrays you.

67. Then in this psalm David says well: And my sin is always against me (Psalm 50:5). Woe to me, for I desire to hide, and I cannot hide! For how can I hide, who carry within my heart the inscriptions of my own sinful acts? On that day of judgment, the heart of each person will be laid

bare, with their conscience bearing witness to them, and their thoughts either accusing or defending them. On the day when the Lord judges the secrets of men, everything will be revealed. What shame is that, when that which we thought hidden is exposed to all; when each image of wrongdoing begins to reveal itself, so that each is convicted by the series of his own crimes? What shame is it when you see that one whom you judged contemptible in this world, is seen to be exalted; your servant, whom you thought inept and incapable according to the cunning of this world, you now know to be honored by the wealth of his simplicity? Therefore, while we live, let us take refuge in him who can erase sin. Do not fear what is written with an iron stylus and a diamond nail; for here he broke down iron gates and gates made of adamant, and do not fear to admit fault.

68. David confessed, he acknowledged his iniquity, he acknowledged his error; and therefore he said: For I acknowledge my iniquity. David acknowledges, and you do not acknowledge? David confesses, and you deny? Paul proclaims himself guilty, and you assert yourself innocent? Therefore, there is no greater place for shame, when there are associations mixed with many sins; if, however, we follow the desire to correct. Nor should you fear again that the confession of guilt will be held against you for punishment. For God, who is both good and merciful, is accustomed not only to forgive the sins of those who confess them, but also to bestow rewards on those who correct them; if, however, each person seeks to be given what they understand is not hidden. Therefore, confess your iniquities, that you may be justified (Isaiah 43:26). This is the voice of God, who is willing to forgive; this is the voice of God, who promises to destroy your sin.

69. David says to you, 'I have sinned and done evil before you.' This means that even if humans cannot see, you see; even if humans cannot judge me, because they are participants in the offenses, you are still the judge of each individual, because you are free from offenses. Although harmful thoughts may hide in the innermost heart, they are still before you, who can say, 'Why do you think evil thoughts in your hearts?' (Matthew 9:4) Christ himself says this. Therefore, whoever knows what is written in the heart can erase whatever is written in the heart. Our David confesses not only to have sinned in himself, but also in the first man, while divine precepts were being disregarded.

70. Moreover, dear brethren, it is allowed to turn one's attention to the fact that all heresies, while they attack one another, recur within themselves. Thus the Arians, while separating the power of the Father and the Son, fiercely fall into the outcome of dispute, so that their assertion coincides with that of the Manichaeans, for those ones say that there is one God of the Old Testament and another of the New. This profane assertion the holy Church condemns, which acknowledges one God, because there is one God the Father from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus through whom are all things (1 Corinthians 8:6). Certainly the all-powerful power is declared as both the Father and the Son, so that we do not separate the grace of the New Testament from the Father, nor do we separate the Son from the restoration of the world.

71. Finally, let us consider whether the same God is the creator of both Testaments. Indeed, we all sinned in the first man, and through the succession of nature, the succession of guilt is also transmitted from one to all. In whom, then, did I sin? In the Father or in the Son? Surely in the one who believed in me, because I sinned by not keeping the commandment. It was commanded to man to taste everything that was in paradise, but not to touch the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen., II, 17). Therefore, Adam is in each of us. For in him human nature fell, because

through one man sin passed into all. I see the highest trust that has been given to me; I see the weight of transgression that I have taken on while tasting forbidden and prohibited things. Hence, I must pay interest on the entrusted fate; because spotless faith could not preserve the interest of heavenly commands.

72. We have recognized the one who is believed, let us also recognize the one who believes. For it is the right of the creditor to demand and to release; and therefore the one who has the right to demand also releases. So when Christ says to me in the Gospel: Your sins are forgiven you (Luke 5:20), do I not understand Him as the Lord of mercy, whom I acknowledge as the judge of forgiveness? Or if the Father believed and the Son released, not by unity, as we say, but as the Arians assert, by a difference of power: did a different God believe and a different God release? Where they rush in to not escape the treachery of the Manicheans. Then by calling the one good God, they should take note of the snares of their own madness. If it is good, the one who believed, then how is it not good, the one who relaxed? Therefore, they have a share with the Arians, into whose assertion they come. It is not surprising if the one who once began to stray from the truth, becomes entangled in the bonds of another's error.

73. And therefore there is one opinion, which destroys all the schemes of the heretics, that we believe in the Trinity of one power, majesty and virtue; and therefore let us not separate the Father from what the Son has done, nor let us separate the Son from what the Father has commanded. For in this way, we will not introduce two gods, one of the Old Testament and another of the New Testament, but through the unity of power, both the Son is understood in the Father, and the Father is understood in the Son; and the Son is enthroned in the Father, and the Father is revealed in the Son. For the Father also forgives sin: We have already said that He has forgiven the Son.

74. Take heed that the Father also sends. Forgive, he says, our debts, as we also forgive our debtors (Matt. 6:12). Indeed, the Son says this in our person to the Father. And he does not say this as if he himself cannot forgive, but he says this so that you may understand the unity of power.

75. Finally, if you seek authority in the Son: 'Now you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you', he says (John 15:3). He dismisses with a word, he dismisses with a command, but he dismisses with reason, saying: 'Go, and from now on do not sin anymore' (John 5:14). You have authority, because he has given the old; you have judgment, because he has prescribed the future.

Sermon Against Auxentius on the Giving Up of the Basilicas

Sermon Against Auxentius on the Giving Up of the Basilicas.

Sermon Against Auxentius on the Giving Up of the Basilicas. To calm the anxiety of the people over the imperial decree, he lays his answer before them, and adds that he did not go to the consistory, because he was afraid of losing the basilica. Then, first challenging his opponents to a discussion in the church, he says that he is not terrified at their weapons; and also, after recalling his answer on the subject of the sacred vessels, declares that he is ready for the contest. The will of God, he maintains, cannot be frustrated, nor can His protection be overcome, yet He is ready too to suffer in His servants. Since he has not already been taken before this, it is plain that the heretics are causing this disturbance for no reason whatever. Next, after applying Naboth's history and Christ's entry into Jerusalem to the present state of affairs, he censures Auxentius' cruel law, answers the Arians' objections, and states that he will gladly discuss the matter in the presence of the people. Auxentius, he adds, has been already condemned by the pagans, whom he had chosen to sit as judges, as he had been condemned by Paul and by Christ. The heretic had forgotten the year before, when he had made the same appeal to Caesar; and the Arians, in stirring up ill-will against the servants of Christ, are much worse than the Jews: for the Church does not belong to Caesar, but displays the image of Christ. Then adding to these a few more words on his answer and his hymns, he declares that he is not disobedient, that the Emperor is a son of the Church, and that Auxentius is worse than a Jew.

1. I See that you are unusually disturbed, and that you are closely watching me. I wonder what the reason is? Is it that you saw or heard that I had received an imperial order at the hands of the tribunes, to the effect that I was to go hence, whither I would, and that all who wished might follow me? Were you afraid that I should desert the Church and forsake you in fear for my own safety? But you could note the message I sent, that the wish to desert the Church had never entered my mind; for I feared the Lord of the universe more than an earthly emperor; and if force were to drag me from the Church, my body indeed could be driven out, but not my mind. I was ready, if he were to do what royal power is wont to do, to undergo the fate a priest has to bear.

2. Why, then, are you disturbed? I will never willingly desert you, though if force is used, I cannot meet it. I shall be able to grieve, to weep, to groan; against weapons, soldiers, Goths, my tears are my weapons, for these are a priest's defence. I ought not, I cannot resist in any other way; but to fly and forsake the Church is not my way; lest any one should suppose I did so from fear of some heavier punishment. You yourselves know that I am wont to show respect to our emperors, but not to yield to them, to offer myself freely to punishment, and not to fear what is prepared for me.

3. Would that I were sure the Church would never be given over to heretics. Gladly would I go to the Emperor's palace, if this but fitted the office of a priest, and so hold our discussion in the palace rather than the church. But in the consistory Christ is not wont to be the accused but the judge. Who will deny that the cause of faith should be pleaded in the church? If any one has confidence let him come hither; let him not seek the judgment of the Emperor, which already

shows its bias, which clearly proves by the law that is passed that he is against the faith; neither let him seek the expected goodwill of certain people who want to stand well with both sides. I will not act in such a way as to give any one the chance of making money out of a wrong to Christ.

4. The soldiers around, the clash of the arms wherewith the church is surrounded, do not alarm my faith, but they disquiet me from fear that in keeping me here you might meet with some danger to your lives. For I have learnt by now not to be afraid, but I do begin to have more fear for you. Allow, I beg you, your bishop to meet his foes. We have an adversary who assails us, for our adversary "the devil goeth about, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,"¹ as the Apostle said. He has received, no doubt, he has received (we are not deceived, but warned of this) the power to tempt in this wise, lest I might perhaps by the wounds of my body be drawn away from the earnestness of my faith. You have read how the devil tempted holy Job in these many ways, and how at last he sought and obtained power to try his body, which he covered with sores.

5. When it was suggested that I should give up the vessels of the Church, I gave the following answer: I will willingly give up whatever of my own property is demanded, whether it is estates, or house, or gold, or silver-anything, in fact, which is in my power. But I cannot take aught away from the temple of God; nor can I give up what I have received to guard and not to give up. In doing this I am acting for the Emperor's good, for it would neither be right for me to give it up, nor for him to receive it. Let him listen to the words of a free-spoken bishop, and if he wishes to do what is best for himself, let him cease to do wrong to Christ.

6. These words are full of humility, and as I think of that spirit which a bishop ought to show towards the Emperor. But since "our contest is not against flesh and blood, but also" (which is worse) "against spiritual wickedness in high places,"² that tempter the devil makes the struggle harder by means of his servants, and thinks to make trial of me by the wounds of my flesh. I know, my brethren, that these wounds which we receive for Christ's sake are not wounds that destroy life, but rather extend it. Allow, I pray, the contest to take place. It is for you to be the spectators. Reflect that if a city has an athlete, or one skilled in some other noble art, it is eager to bring him forward for a contest. Why do you refuse to do in a more important matter what you are wont to wish in smaller affairs? He fears not weapons nor barbarians who fears not death, and is not held fast by any pleasures of the flesh.

7. And indeed if the Lord has appointed me for this struggle, in vain have you kept sleepless watch so many nights and days. The will of Christ will be fulfilled. For our Lord Jesus is almighty, this is our faith: and so what He wills to be done will be fulfilled, and it is not for us to thwart the divine purpose.

8. You heard what was read to-day: The Saviour ordered that the foal of an ass should be brought to Him by the apostles, and bade them say, if any one withstood them: "The Lord hath need of him."³ What if now, too, He has commanded that foal of an ass, that is, the foal of that animal which is wont to bear a heavy burden, as man must, to whom is said: "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take My yoke upon you, for it is easy;"⁴ what if, I say, He has commanded that foal to be brought to Him now, sending forth those apostles, who, having put off their body, wear the semblance of the angels unseen by our eyes? If withstood by any, will they not say: The Lord hath need of him? If, for instance, love of this life, or flesh and blood, or earthly intercourse (for perhaps we seem pleasing to some), were to withstand them? But

he who loves me here, would show his love much more if he would suffer me to become Christ's victim, for "to depart and be with Christ is much better, though to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."⁵ There is nothing therefore for you to fear, beloved brethren. For I know that whatever I may suffer, I shall suffer for Christ's sake. And I have read that I ought not to fear those that can kill the flesh.⁶ And I have heard One Who says: "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."⁷

9. Wherefore if the Lord wills, surely no one will resist. And if as yet He delay my struggle, what do you fear? It is not bodily guardianship but the Lord's providence that is wont to fence in the servant of Christ.

10. You are troubled because you have found the double doors open, which a blind man in seeking his chamber is said to have unfastened. In this you learn that human watchfulness is no defence. Behold! one who has lost the gift of sight has broken through all our defences, and escaped the notice of the guards. But the Lord has not lost⁸ the guard of His mercy. Was it not also discovered two days ago, as you remember, that a certain entrance on the left side of the basilica was open, which you thought had been shut and secured? Armed men surrounded the basilica, they tried this and the other entrance, but their eyes were blinded so that that could not see the one that was open. And you know well that it was open many nights. Cease, then, to be anxious; for that will take place which Christ commands and which is for the best.

11. And now I will put before you examples from the Law. Elisha was sought by the king of Syria; an army had been sent to capture him; and he was surrounded on all sides. His servant began to fear, for he was a servant, that is, he had not a free mind, nor had he free powers of action. The holy prophet sought to open his eyes, and said: "Look and see how many more are on our side than there are against us."⁹ And he beheld, and saw thousands of angels. Mark therefore that it is those that are not seen rather than those that are seen that guard the servants of Christ. But if they guard you, they do it in answer to your prayers: for you have read that those very men, who sought Elisha, entered Samaria, and came to him whom they desired to take. Not only were they unable to harm him, but they were themselves preserved at the intercession of the man against whom they had come.

12. The Apostle Peter also gives you an example of either case.¹⁰ For when Herod sought him and took him, he was put into prison. For the servant of God had not got away, but stood firm without a thought of fear. The Church prayed for him, but the Apostle slept in prison, a proof that he was not in fear. An angel was sent to rouse him as he slept, by whom Peter was led forth out of prison, and escaped death for a time.

13. And Peter again afterwards, when he had overcome Simon, in sowing the doctrine of God among the people, and in teaching chastity, stirred up the minds of the Gentiles. And when these sought him, the Christians begged that he would withdraw himself for a little while. And although he was desirous to suffer, yet was he moved at the sight of the people praying, for they asked him to save himself for the instruction and strengthening of his people. Need I say more? At night he begins to leave the town, and seeing Christ coming to meet him at the gate, and entering the city, says: Lord, whither goest Thou? Christ answers: I am coming to be crucified again. Peter understood the divine answer to refer to his own cross, for Christ could not be crucified a second time, for He had put off the flesh by the passion of the death which He had undergone; since: "In that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God."¹¹ So Peter

understood that Christ was to be crucified again in the person of His servant. Therefore he willingly returned; and when the Christians questioned him, told them the reason. He was immediately seized, and glorified the Lord Jesus by his cross.

14. You see, then, that Christ wills to suffer in His servants. And what if He says to this servant, "I will that he tarry, follow thou Me,"¹² and wishes to taste the fruit of this tree? For if His meat was to do the will of His Father,¹³ so also is it His meat to partake of our sufferings. Did He not, to take an example from our Lord Himself, - did He not suffer when He willed, and was He not found when He was sought? But when the hour of His passion had not yet come, He passed through the midst of those that sought Him,¹⁴ and though they saw Him they could not hold Him fast. This plainly shows us that when the Lord wills, each one is found and taken, but because the time is put off, he is not held fast, although he meets the eyes of those who seek him.

15. And did not I myself go forth daily to pay visits, or go to the tombs of the martyrs? Did I not pass by the royal palace both in going and returning? Yet no one laid hands on me, though they had the intention of driving me out, as they afterwards gave out, saying, Leave the city, and go where you will. I was, I own, looking for some great thing, either sword or fire for the Name of Christ, yet they offered me pleasant things instead of sufferings; but Christ's athlete needs not pleasant things but sufferings. Let no one, then, disturb you, because they have provided a carriage,¹⁵ or because hard words, as he thinks them, have been uttered by Auxentius, who calls himself bishop.

16. Many stated that assassins had been despatched, that the penalty of death had been decreed against me. I do not fear all that, nor am I going to desert my position here. Whither shall I go, when there is no spirit that is not filled with groans and tears; when throughout the Churches Catholic bishops are being expelled, or if they resist, are put to the sword, and every senator who does not obey the decree is proscribed. And these things were written by the hand and spoken by the mouth of a bishop who, that he might show himself to be most learned, omitted not an ancient warning. For we read in the prophet that he saw a flying sickle.¹⁶ Auxentius, to imitate this, sent a flying sword through all cities. But Satan, too, transforms himself into an angel of light,¹⁷ and imitates his power for evil.

17. Thou, Lord Jesus, hast redeemed the world in one moment of time: shall Auxentius in one moment slay, as far as he can, so many peoples, some by the sword, others by sacrilege? He seeks my basilica with bloody lips and gory hands. Him to-day's chapter answers well: "But unto the wicked said God: Wherefore dost thou declare My righteousness?"¹⁸ That is, there is no union between peace and madness, there is no union between Christ and Belial.¹⁹ You remember also that we read to-day of Naboth, a holy man who owned his own vineyard, being urged on the king's request to give it up. When the king after rooting up the vines intended to plant common herbs, he answered him: "God forbid that I should give up the inheritance of my fathers."²⁰ The king was grieved, because what belonged by right to another had been refused him on fair grounds, but had been unfairly got by a woman's device. Naboth defended his vines with his own blood. And if he did not give up his vineyard, shall we give up the Church of Christ?

18. Was the answer that I gave then contumacious? For when summoned I said: God forbid that I should give up the inheritance of Christ. If Naboth gave not up the inheritance of his fathers, shall I give up the inheritance of Christ? And I added further: God forbid that I shall give up the

inheritance of my fathers, that is, the inheritance of Dionysius, who died in exile in the cause of the faith; the inheritance of the Confessor Eustorgius, the inheritance of Mysocles and of all the faithful bishops of bygone days. I answered as a bishop ought to answer: Let the Emperor act as an emperor ought to. He must take away my life rather than my faith.

19. But to whom shall I give it up? Today's lesson from the Gospel ought to teach us what is asked for and by whom it is asked. You have heard read that when Christ²¹ sat upon the foal of an ass, the children cried aloud, and the Jews were vexed. At length they spoke to the Lord Jesus, bidding Him to silence them. He answered: "If these should hold their peace, the stones will cry out."²² Then on entering the temple, He cast out the money-changers, and the tables, and those that sold doves in the temple of God. That passage was read by no arrangement of mine, but by chance; but it is well fitted to the present time. The praises of Christ are ever the scourges of the unfaithful. And now when Christ is praised, the heretics say that sedition is stirred up. The heretics say that death is being prepared for them, and truly they have their death in the praises of Christ. For how can they bear His praises, Whose weakness they maintain. And so to-day, when Christ is praised, the madness of the Arians is scourged.

20. The Gerasenes could not bear the presence of Christ;²³ these, worse than the Gerasenes, cannot endure the praises of Christ. They see boys singing of the glory of Christ, for it is written: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise."²⁴ They mock at their tender age, so full of faith, and say: "Behold, why do they cry out?" But Christ answers them: "If these should hold their peace, the stones will cry out,"²⁵ that is, the stronger will cry out, both youths and the more mature will cry out, and old men will cry out; these stones now firmly laid upon that stone of which it is written: "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner."²⁶

21. Invited, then, by these praises, Christ enters His temple,²⁷ and takes His scourge and drives the money-changers out of the temple. For He does not allow the slaves of money to be in His temple, nor does He allow those to be there who sell seats. What are seats but honours? What are the doves but simple minds or souls that follow a pure and clear faith? Shall I, then, bring into the temple him whom Christ shuts out? For he who sells dignities and honours will be bidden to go out. He will be bidden to go out who desires to sell the simple minds of the faithful.

22. Therefore, Auxentius is cast out. Mercurius is shut out. The portent is one, the names are two! That no one might know who he was, he changed his name so as to call himself Auxentius, because there had been here an Arian bishop, named Auxentius. He did this to deceive the people over whom the other had had power. He changed his name, but he did not change his falseness. He puts off the wolf, yet puts on the wolf again. It is no help to him that he has changed his name; whatever happens he is known. He is called by one name in the parts of Scythia, he is called by another here. He has a name for each country he lives in. He has two names already, and if he were to go elsewhere from here, he will have yet a third. For how will he endure to keep a name as a proof of such wickedness? He did less in Scythia, and was so ashamed that he changed his name. Here he has dared to do worse things, and will he be ready to be betrayed by his name wherever he goes? Shall he write the death warrant of so many people with his own hand, and yet be able to be unshaken in mind?

23. The Lord Jesus shut a few out of His temple, but Auxentius left none. Jesus with a scourge drove them out of His temple, Auxentius with a sword; Jesus with a scourge, Mercurius with an axe. The holy Lord drives out the sacrilegious with a scourge; the impious man pursues the holy with a sword. Of him you have well said to-day: Let him take away his laws with him. He will take them, although he is unwilling; he will take with him his conscience, although he takes no writing; he will take with him his soul inscribed with blood although he will not take a letter inscribed with ink. It is written: "Juda, thy sin is written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond, and it is graven upon thy heart,"²⁸ that is, it is written there, whence it came forth.

24. Does he, a man full of blood and full of murder, dare to make mention to me of a discussion? He who thinks that they whom he could not mislead by his words are to be slain with the sword, giving bloody laws with his mouth, writing them with his hand, and thinking that the law can order a faith for man to hold. He has not heard what was read to-day: "That a man is not justified by the works of the law,"²⁹ or "I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I may live unto God,"³⁰ that is, by the spiritual law he is dead to the carnal interpretation of the law. And we, by the law of our Lord Jesus Christ, are dead to this law, which sanctions such perfidious decrees. The law did not gather the Church together, but the faith of Christ. For the law is not by faith, but "the just man lives by faith."³¹ Therefore, faith, not the law, makes a man just, for justice is not through the law, but through the faith of Christ. But he who casts aside his faith and pleads for that the claims of the law, bears witness that he is himself unjust; for the just man lives by faith.

25. Shall any one, then, follow this law, whereby the Council of Ariminum is confirmed, wherein Christ was said to be a creature. But say they: "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."³² And so they say "made," that is, "created." Do they not consider these very words which they have brought forward; that Christ is said to have been made, but of a woman; that is, He was "made" as regards his birth from a Virgin, Who was begotten of the Father as regards His divine generation? Have they read also to-day, "that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us"?³³ Was Christ a curse in His Godhead? But why He is called a curse the Apostle tells us, saying that it is written: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,"³⁴ that is, He Who in his flesh bore our flesh, in His body bore our infirmities and our curses, that He might crucify them; for He was not cursed Himself, but was cursed in thee. I So it is written elsewhere: "Who knew no sin, but was made sin for us, for He bore our sins,"³⁵ that he might destroy them by the Sacrament of His Passion."

26. These matters, my brethren, I would discuss more fully with him in your presence; but knowing that you are not ignorant of the faith, he has avoided a trial before you, and has chosen some four or five heathen to represent him, if that is he has chosen any, whom I should like to be present in our company, not to judge concerning Christ, but to hear the majesty of Christ. They, however, have already given their decision concerning Auxentius, to whom they gave no credence as he pleaded before them day by day. What can be more of a condemnation of him than the fact, that without an adversary he was defeated before his own judges? So now we also have their opinion against Auxentius.

27. And that he has chosen heathen is rightly to be condemned; for he has disregarded the Apostle's command, where he says: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust and not before the saints? Do ye not know the saints shall judge the world?"³⁶

And below he says: "Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, who can judge between heathen? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers."³⁷ You see, then, that what he has introduced is against the Apostle's authority. Do you decide, then, whether we are to follow Auxentius or Paul as our master.

28. But why speak of the Apostle, when the Lord Himself cries through the prophet: "Hearken unto Me, My people, ye who know judgment, in whose heart is My law."³⁸ God says: "Hearken unto Me, My people, ye that know judgment." Auxentius says: Ye know not judgment. Do you see how he condemns God in you, who rejects the voice of the heavenly oracle: "Hearken unto Me, My people," says the Lord. He says not, "Hearken, ye Gentiles," nor does He say, "Hearken, ye Jews." For they who had been the people of the Lord have now become the people of error, and they who were the people of error have begun to be the people of God; for they have believed on Christ. That people then judges in whose heart is the divine, not the human law, the law not written in ink, but in the spirit of the living God;³⁹ not set down on paper, but stamped upon the heart. Who then, does you a wrong, he who refuses, or he who chooses to be heard by you?

29. Hemmed in on all sides, he betakes himself to the wiles of his fathers. He wants to stir up ill-will on the Emperor's side, saying that a youth, a catechumen ignorant of the sacred writings, ought to judge, and to judge in the consistory. As though last year when I was sent for to go to the palace, when in the presence of the chief men the matter was discussed before the consistory, when the Emperor wished to seize the basilica, I was cowed then at the sight of the royal court, and did not show the firmness a bishop should, or departed with diminished claims. Do they not remember that the people, when they knew I had gone to the palace, made such a rush that they could not resist its force; and all offered themselves to death for the faith of Christ as a military officer came out with some light troops to disperse the crowd? Was not I asked to calm the people with a long speech? Did I not pledge my word that no one should invade the basilica of the church? And though my services were asked for to do an act of kindness, yet the fact that the people came to the palace was used to bring ill-will upon me. They wish to bring me to this now again.

30. I recalled the people, and yet I did not escape their ill-will, which ill-will, however, I think we ought rather to tempt than fear. For why should we fear for the Name of Christ? Unless perchance I ought to be troubled because they say: "Ought not the Emperor to have one basilica, to which to go, and Ambrose wants to have more power than the Emperor, and so refuses to the Emperor the opportunity of going forth to church?" When they say this, they desire to lay hold of my words, as did the Jews who tried Christ with cunning words, saying: "Master, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?"⁴⁰ Is ill-will always stirred up against the servants of God on Caesar's account, and does impiety make use of this with a view to starting a slander, so as to shelter itself under the imperial name? and can they say that they do not share in the sacrilege of those whose advice they follow?

31. See how much worse than the Jews the Arians are. They asked whether He thought that the right of tribute should be given to Caesar; these want to give to Caesar the right of the Church. But as these faithless ones follow their author, so also let us answer as our Lord and Author has taught us. For Jesus seeing the wickedness of the Jews said to them: Why tempt ye Me? show Me a penny. When they had given it, He said: "Whose image and superscription hath it?"⁴¹ They

answered and said: Caesar's. And Jesus says to them: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."⁴² So, too, I say to these who oppose me: Show me a penny. Jesus sees Caesar's penny and says: Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Can they in seizing the basilicas of the church offer Caesar's penny?

32. But in the church I only know of one Image, that is the Image of the unseen God, of Which God has said: "Let us make man in Our image and Our likeness;"⁴³ that Image of Which it is written, that Christ is the Brightness of His glory and the Image of His Person.⁴⁴ In that Image I perceive the Father, as the Lord Jesus Himself has said: "He that seeth Me seeth the Father."⁴⁵ For this Image is not separated from the Father, which indeed has taught me the unity of the Trinity, saying: "I and My Father are One,"⁴⁶ and again: "All things that the Father hath are Mine."⁴⁷ Also of the Holy Spirit, saying that the Spirit is Christ's, and has received of Christ, as it is written: "He shall receive of Mine, and shall declare it unto you."⁴⁸

33. How, then, did we not answer humbly enough? If he demand tribute, we do not refuse it. The lands of the Church pay tribute. If the Emperor wants the lands, he has the power to claim them, none of us will interfere. The contributions of the people are amply sufficient for the poor. Do not stir up ill-will in the matter of the lands. Let them take them if it is the Emperor's will. I do not give them, but I do not refuse them. They ask for gold. I can say: Silver and gold I do not ask for. But they stir up ill-will because gold is spent. I am not afraid of such ill-will as this. I have dependents. My dependents are Christ's poor. I know how to collect this treasure. On that they may even charge me with this crime, that I have spent money on the poor I and if they make the charge that I seek for defence at their hands, I do not deny it; nay, I solicit it. I have my defence, but it consists in the prayers of the poor. The blind and the lame, the weak and the old, are stronger than hardy warriors. Lastly, gifts to the poor make God indebted to us, for it is written: "He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to God."⁴⁹ The guards of warriors often do not merit divine grace.

34. They declare also that the people have been led astray by the strains of my hymns.⁵⁰ I certainly do not deny it. That is a lofty strain, and there is nothing more powerful than it. For what has more power than the confession of the Trinity which is daily celebrated by the mouth of the whole people? All eagerly vie one with the other in confessing the faith, and know how to praise in verse the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So they all have become teachers, who scarcely could be disciples.

35. What could show greater obedience than that we should follow Christ's example, "Who, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself and became obedient even unto death?"⁵¹ Accordingly He has freed all through His obedience. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous."⁵² If, then, He was obedient, let them receive the rule of obedience: to which we cling, saying to those who stir up ill-will against us on the Emperor's side: We pay to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. Tribute is due to Caesar, we do not deny it. The Church belongs to God, therefore it ought not to be assigned to Caesar. For the temple of God cannot be Caesar's by right.

37. That this is said with respectful feeling for the Emperor, no one can deny. For what is more full of respect than that the Emperor should be called the son of the Church. As it is said, it is said without sin, since it is said with the divine favour. For the Emperor is within the Church, not above

it. For a good emperor seeks the aid of the Church and does not refuse it. As I say this with all humility, so also I state it with firmness. Some threaten us with fire, sword, exile; we have learnt as servants of Christ not to fear. To those who have no fear, nothing is ever a serious cause of dread. Thus too is it written: "Arrows of infants their blows have become."⁵³

37. A sufficient answer, then, seems to have been given to their suggestion. Now I ask them, what the Saviour asked: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or men?"⁵⁴ The Jews could not answer Him. If the Jews did not make nothing of the baptism of John, does Auxentius make nothing of the baptism of Christ? For that is not a baptism of men, but from heaven, which the angel of great counsel⁵⁵ has brought to us, that we might be justified to God. Wherefore, then, does Auxentius hold that the faithful ought to be rebaptized, when they have been baptized in the name of the Trinity, when the Apostle says: "One faith, one baptism"?⁵⁶ And wherefore does he say that he is man's enemy, not Christ's, seeing that he despises the counsel of God and condemns the baptism which Christ has granted us to redeem our sins.

1: 1 Pet. v. 8.

2: Eph. vi. 12.

3: S. Luke xix. 35.

4: S. Matt. xi. 28 ff.

5: Phil. i. 23.

6: S. Matt. x. 28.

7: S. Matt. x. 39.

8: The words *amisit* (lost) and *custodiam* (guard) are repeated by St. Ambrose from the earlier part of the sentence. Such play upon words is not uncommon in his writings.

9: 2 Kings vi. 16.

10: Acts xii. 4 ff.

11: Rom. vi. 10.

12: S. John xxi. 22.

13: S. John iv. 34.

14: S. John vii. 30.

15: The story is related at length by Paulinus in his *Life of St. Ambrose*, ch. 12. He tells us that whilst many tried to drive the saint into exile, one named Euterymius went the greatest lengths to accomplish this purpose. He hired a house near the church and kept a carriage there, so as to be able the more readily to carry off St. Ambrose into exile, if he could once but seize him. But that very day year he was himself put into the same carriage, and from the same house was carried into exile. For "his wickedness fell on his own pate." (Ps. vii. 7.) He adds also that the bishop did much to comfort him, and gave him money and other things he needed.

16: Zech. v. 1.
17: 2 Cor. xi. 14.
18: Ps. l. 16.
19: 2 Cor. vi. 15.
20: 1 Kings xxi. 3.
21: S. Luke xix. 35.
22: S. Luke xix. 40.
23: S. Luke viii. 37.
24: Ps. viii. 2.
25: S. Luke xix. 40.
26: Ps. cxviii. [cxvii.] 22.
27: S. John ii. 15.
28: Jer. xvii. 1.
29: Gal. ii. 16.
30: Gal. ii. 19.
31: Gal. iii. 11.
32: Gal. iv. 4.
33: Gal. iii. 13.
34: Gal. iii. 13.
35: 2 Cor. v. 21.
36: 1 Cor. vi. 1, 1 Cor. vi. 2.
37: 1 Cor. vi. 5.
38: Isa. li. 7.
39: 2 Cor. iii. 3.
40: S. Matt. xxii. 17.
41: S. Matt. xxii. 18.
42: S. Matt. xxii. 21.
43: Gen. i. 26.
44: Heb. i. 3.

45: S. John xiv. 9.

46: S. John x. 30.

47: S. John xvi. 15.

48: S. John xvi. 14.

49: Prov. xix. 17.

50: St. Augustine speaks of this introduction of hymns into the services of the Church at Milan (Confess. IX. 7): "Then was it first instituted that after the manner of the Eastern Churches, hymns and psalms should be sung, lest the people should wax faint through the tediousness of sorrow."-Eng. Trans. Such a hymn as "The eternal gifts of Christ the king," etc., written by St. Ambrose, was perhaps first sung there.

51: Phil. ii. 7, Phil. ii. 8.

52: Rom. v. 19.

53: Ps. lxiv. [lxiii.] 7.

54: S. Luke xx. 4.

55: Isa. ix. 6.

56: Eph. iv. 5.

The Memorial of Symmachus

The Memorial of Symmachus, Prefect of the City. The Memorial of Symmachus, Prefect of the City.

Symmachus addresses his memorial in the name of the Senate, nominally to the three Emperors, Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius, though really to the first of these alone, who was sole Emperor of the West. The memorial sets forth a request that the old religion should be restored, and the Altar of Victory again erected in the Senate House, that the ancient customs might be observed. The example of the late emperors should be followed in what they maintained, not in what they did away. The treasury Would suffer no loss, whilst it is unjust that the Vestal Virgins and priests should be deprived of ancient legacies, a sacrilege which the gods punished by a famine. The memorial is drawn up with consummate skill, both in what is brought forward and in what is left unsaid.

1. As soon as the most honourable Senate, always devoted to you, knew that crimes were made amenable to law, and that the reputation of late times was being purified by pious princes, it, following the example of a more favourable time, gave utterance to its long suppressed grief, and bade me be once again the delegate to utter its complaints.¹ But through wicked men audience as refused me by the divine² Emperor, otherwise justice would not have been wanting, my lords and emperors, of great renown, Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius, victorious and triumphant, ever august.

2. In the exercise, therefore, of a twofold office, as your Prefect I attend to public business, and as delegate I recommend to your notice the charge laid on me by the citizens. Here is no disagreement of wills, for men have now ceased to believe that they excel in courtly zeal, if they disagree. To be loved, to be revered, to be esteemed is more than imperial sway. Who could endure that private disagreement should injure the state? Rightly does the Senate censure those who have preferred their own power to the reputation of the prince.

3. But it is our task to watch on behalf of your Graces. For to what is it more suitable that we defend the institutions of our ancestors, and the rights and destiny of our country, than to the glory of these times, which is all the greater when you understand that you may not do anything contrary to the custom of your ancestors? We demand then the restoration of that condition of religious affairs which was so long advantageous to the state. Let the rulers of each sect and of each opinion be counted up; a late one³ practised the ceremonies of his ancestors, a later⁴ did not put them away. If the religion of old times does not make a precedent, let the connivance of the last⁵ do so.

4. Who is so friendly with the barbarians as not to require an Altar of Victory? We will be careful henceforth, and avoid a show of such things. But at least let that honour be paid to the name⁶ which is refused to the goddess-your fame, which will last for ever, owes much and will owe still more to victory. Let those be averse to this power, whom it has never benefited. Do you refuse to

desert a patronage which is friendly to your triumphs? That power is wished for by all, let no one deny that what he acknowledges is to be desired should also be venerated.

5. But even if the avoidance of such an omen⁷ were not sufficient, it would at least have been seemly to abstain from injuring the ornaments of the Senate House. Allow us, we beseech you, as old men to leave to posterity what we received as boys. The love of custom is great. Justly did the act of the divine Constantius last but for a short time. All precedents ought to be avoided by you, which you know were soon abolished. We are anxious for the permanence of your glory and your name, that the time to come may find nothing which needs correction.

6. Where shall we swear to obey your laws and commands? by what religious sanction shall the false mind be terrified, so as not to lie in bearing witness? All things are indeed filled with God, and no place is safe for the perjured, but to be urged in the very presence of religious forms has great power in producing a fear of sinning. That altar preserves the concord of all, that altar appeals to the good faith of each, and nothing gives more authority to our decrees than that the whole of our order issues every decree as it were under the sanction of an oath. So that a place will be opened to perjury, and this will be determined by my illustrious Princes, whose honour is defended by a public oath.

7. But the divine Constantius is said to have done the same. Let us rather imitate the other actions of that Prince, who would have undertaken nothing of the kind, if any one else had committed such an error before him. For the fall of the earlier sets his successor right, and amendment results from the censure of a previous example. It was pardonable for your Grace's ancestor in so novel a matter to fail in guarding against blame. Can the same excuse avail us if we imitate what we know to have been disapproved?

8. Will your Majesties listen to other actions of this same Prince, which you may more worthily imitate? He diminished none of the privileges of the sacred virgins, he filled the priestly offices with nobles, he did not refuse the cost of the Roman ceremonies, and following the rejoicing Senate through all the streets of the eternal city, he contentedly beheld the shrines with unmoved countenance, he read the names of the gods inscribed on the pediments, he enquired about the origin of the temples, and expressed admiration for their builders. Although he himself followed another religion, he maintained its own for the empire, for everyone has his own customs, everyone his own rites. The divine Mind has distributed different guardians and different cults to different cities. As souls are separately given to infants as they are born, so to peoples the genius of their destiny. Here comes in the proof from advantage, which most of all vouches to man for the gods. For, since our reason is wholly clouded, whence does the knowledge of the gods more rightly come to us, than from the memory and evidence of prosperity? Now if a long period gives authority to religious customs, we ought to keep faith with so many centuries, and to follow our ancestors, as they happily followed theirs.

9. Let us now suppose that Rome is present and addresses you in these words: "Excellent princes, fathers of your country, respect my years to which pious rites have brought me. Let me use the ancestral ceremonies, for I do not repent of them. Let me live after my own fashion, for I am free. This worship subdued the world to my laws, these sacred rites repelled Hannibal from the walls, and the Senones from the capitol. Have I been reserved for this, that in my old age I should be blamed? I will consider what it is thought should be set in order, but tardy and discreditable is

the reformation of old age."

10. We ask, then, for peace for the gods of our fathers and of our country. It is just that all worship should be considered as one. We look on the same stars, the sky is common, the same world surrounds us. What difference does it make by what pains each seeks the truth? We cannot attain to so great a secret by one road; but this discussion is rather for persons at ease, we offer now prayers, not conflict.

11. With what advantage to your treasury are the prerogatives of the Vestal Virgins diminished? Is that refused under the most bountiful emperors which the most parsimonious have granted? Their sole honour consists in that, so to call it, wage of chastity. As fillets are the ornament of their heads, so is their distinction drawn from their leisure to attend to the offices of sacrifice. They seek for in a measure the empty name of immunity, since by their poverty they are exempt from payment. And so they who diminish anything of their substance increase their praise, inasmuch as virginity dedicated to the public good increases in merit when it is without reward.

12. Let such gains as these be far from the purity of your treasury. Let the revenue of good princes be increased not by the losses of priests, but by the spoils of enemies. Does any gain compensate for the odium? And because no charge of avarice falls upon your characters, they are the more wretched whose ancient revenues are diminished. For under emperors who abstain from what belongs to others, and resist avarice, that which does not move the desire of him who takes it, is taken solely to injure the loser.

13. The treasury also retains lands bequeathed to virgins and ministers by the will of dying persons. I entreat you, priests of justice, let the lost right of succession be restored to the sacred persons and places of your city. Let men dictate their wills without anxiety, and know that what has been written will be undisturbed under princes who are not avaricious. Let the happiness in this point of all men give pleasure to you, for precedents in this matter have begun to trouble the dying. Does not then the religion of Rome appertain to Roman law? What name shall be given to the taking away of property which no law nor accident has made to fail. Freedmen take legacies, slaves are not denied the just privilege of making wills; only noble virgins and the ministers of sacred rites are excluded from property sought by inheritance. What does it profit the public safety to dedicate the body to chastity, and to support the duration of the empire with heavenly guardianship, to attach the friendly powers to your arms and to your eagles, to take upon oneself vows efficacious for all, and not to have common rights with all? So, then, slavery is a better condition, which is a service rendered to men. We injure the State, whose interest it never is to be ungrateful.

14. And let no one think that I am defending the cause of religion only, for from deeds of this kind have arisen all the misfortunes of the Roman race. The law of our ancestors honoured the Vestal Virgins and the ministers of the gods with a moderate maintenance and just privileges. This grant remained unassailed till the time of the degenerate money-changers, who turned the fund for the support of sacred chastity into hire for common porters. A general famine followed upon this, and a poor harvest disappointed the hopes of all the provinces. This was not the fault of the earth, we impute no evil influence to the stars. Mildew did not injure the crops, nor wild oats destroy the corn; the year failed through the sacrilege, for it was necessary that what was refused to religion should be denied to all.

15. Certainly, if there be any instance of this evil, let us impute such a famine to the power of the season. A deadly wind has been the cause of this barrenness, life is sustained by trees and shrubs, and the need of the country folk has betaken itself once more to the oaks of Dodona.⁸ What similar evil did the provinces suffer, so long as the public charge sustained the ministers of religion? When were the oaks shaken for the use of men, when were the roots of plants torn up, when did fertility on all sides forsake the various lands, when supplies were in common for the people and for the sacred virgins? For the support of the priests was a blessing to the produce of the earth, and was rather an insurance than a bounty. Is there any doubt that what was given was for the benefit of all, seeing that the want of all has made this plain?

16. But some one will say that public support is only refused to the cost of foreign religions. Far be it from good princes to suppose that what has been given to certain persons from the common property can be in the power of the treasury. For as the State consists of individuals, that which goes out from it becomes again the property of individuals. You rule over all; but you preserve his own for each individual; and justice has more weight with you than arbitrary will. Take counsel with your own liberality whether that which you have conferred on others ought to be considered public property. Sums once given to the honour of the city cease to be the property of those who have given them, and that which at the commencement was a gift, by custom and time becomes a debt. Any one is therefore endeavouring to impress upon your minds a vain fear, who asserts that you share the responsibility of the givers unless you incur the odium of withdrawing the gifts.

17. May the unseen guardians of all sects be favourable to your Graces, and may they especially, who in old time assisted your ancestors, defend you and be worshipped by us. We ask for that state of religious matters which preserved the empire for the divine parent⁹ of your Highnesses, and furnished that blessed prince with lawful heirs. That venerable father beholds from the starry height the tears of the priests, and considers himself censured by the violation of that custom which he willingly observed.

18. Amend also for your divine brother that which he did by the counsel of others, cover over the deed which he knew not to be displeasing to the Senate. For it is allowed that that legation was denied access to him, lest public opinion should reach him. It is for the credit of former times, that you should not hesitate to abolish that which is proved not to have been the doing of the prince.

1: This is the legation to Gratian referred to in §10 of the preceding letter; Symmachus fared ill, being ordered from the imperial presence, and forbidden to come within a hundred miles of Rome.

2: i.e. deceased.

3: Julian.

4: Valentinian I.

5: Valentinian and Valens.

6: The play upon the words *nomen* (name) and *numen* (divinity) cannot be reproduced in English.

7: The evil omen resulting from destroying the image and altar of Victory.

8: i.e. to acorns for food.

9: Valentinian I., who, as Symmachus said above, did not destroy idol worship, though he did not practise it, so that St. Ambrose says in his funeral oration on Valentinian II.: " Quod patri defuerat adjunxit; quod frater constituit, custodivit. "

The Six Days of Creation

The Six Days of Creation, books by Saint Ambrose of Milan, Bishop.

Latin Text from public domain Migne Editors, Patrologiae Cursus Completus.

Translated into English using ChatGPT.

Table of Contents • Book One. Of the Work of the First Day.

- Chapter I. (Sermo I.)
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII. (Sermo II.)
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Book Two. Of the Work of the Second Day.
- Chapter I. (Sermo III.)
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Book Three. Of the Work of the Third Day.
- Chapter I. (Sermo IV.)
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.

- Chapter VI. (Sermo V.)
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.
- Chapter XII.
- Chapter XIII.
- Chapter XIV.
- Chapter XV.
- Chapter XVI.
- Chapter XVII.
- Book Four. Of the Work of the Fourth Day.
- Chapter I. (Sermo VI)
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Book Five. Of the Work of the Fifth Day.
- Chapter I. (Sermo VII.)
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.

- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.
- Chapter X.
- Chapter XI.
- Chapter XII. (Sermo VIII.)
- Chapter XIII.
- Chapter XIV.
- Chapter XV.
- Chapter XVI.
- Chapter XVII.
- Chapter XVIII.
- Chapter XIX.
- Chapter XX.
- Chapter XXI.
- Chapter XXII.
- Chapter XXIII.
- Chapter XXIV.
- Chapter XXV.
- Book Six. Of the Work of the Sixth Day.
- Chapter I. (Sermo IX.)
- Chapter II.
- Chapter III.
- Chapter IV.
- Chapter V.
- Chapter VI.
- Chapter VII.
- Chapter VIII.
- Chapter IX.

• Chapter X.

Book One. Of the Work of the First Day.

Chapter I. (Sermo I.) On the beginning, duration, and unity of the world. The errors of philosophers are recounted and criticized. Did people really adopt such opinions, that some of them posited three principles for everything: God, the archetype, and matter, like Plato and his followers? And did they assert that these are incorruptible, uncreated, and without beginning: and that God, not as the creator of matter, but as the craftsman following the archetype, that is, the idea, made the world out of matter, which they call hyle, and which is said to have given the causes of generation to all things? And did they also believe that the world itself is incorruptible, not created or made? Others, as Aristotle believed, posited two principles, matter and form, and a third, which is called the operative, that was suitably able to bring about what it thought should be created.

What, then, could be more incongruous than to attribute eternity of work to the eternity of Almighty God, or to say that the work itself is God; so that they would exalt with divine honors the sky, the earth, and the sea? From this it happened that they believed the parts of the world to be gods, although there is considerable debate among them about the world itself.

3. For Pythagoras claims that there is only one world; others, like Democritus, say that there are innumerable worlds, as the antiquity of their authority has acknowledged. And Aristotle, for his part, asserts that the world has always existed and always will; in contrast, Plato presumes to argue that the world has not always existed, but will always exist. However, many testify in their writings that neither has the world always existed, nor will it always exist.

4. Among them, is there any true estimation of their disagreements? For some say that the world itself is God, because they think that a divine mind is believed to be within it; others say it is the parts of it, others say it is both; in which neither the shape of the gods, nor the number, nor the place, nor the life, nor the care can be comprehended. Indeed, by the estimation of the world, it is fitting to understand God as fickle, round, fiery, driven by certain movements, without sensation, who is carried by the motion of another, not his own.

Chapter II.

Moses' opinion on the beginning of things, the author of the world, and the creation of matter. The same is recommended by many names: to whom alone, with atoms and ideas expelled, it is shown that belief must be given.

5. Therefore, foreseeing by the divine spirit that these errors of humanity would happen, and perhaps have already begun, the holy Moses, at the beginning of his discourse, says this, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' (Gen. 1:1); this beginning of things comprehends the author of the world, the creation of matter, so that you may know that God existed before the beginning of the world, or that He Himself is the beginning of all things; just as in the Gospel the Son of God, when the people asked Him, 'Who are You?', answered, 'The beginning, which I also speak to you' (John. 8:25); and that He Himself gave the beginning to things to be born, and that He Himself is the creator of the world, not as an imitator of matter led by some idea, from which He would form His works not according to His own will, but according to the proposed form. And beauty, he says, God made in the beginning; so that by the incomprehensible

swiftness of the work He might express the effect of a completed operation before He had indicated the beginning of the work.

6. Who must we pay attention to when saying this? Surely that educated Moses, who was knowledgeable in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, whom Pharaoh's daughter loved as a son and supported with royal assistance, desired to be informed and instructed in all the secular disciplines of prudence. And although he received his name from water, he did not think that everything consisted of water, as Thales said. And even though he was raised in the king's court, he preferred to voluntarily undergo exile for the sake of justice, rather than acquire the enjoyment of sin through the height of tyranny. Finally, before he was called to the task of liberating the people, he was provoked by a natural sense of justice, avenging the injury inflicted upon his fellow citizens. Giving in to envy and denying himself pleasure, he avoided all the disturbances of the royal house and withdrew to the secret depths of Ethiopia. Removed from all other responsibilities, he directed his entire mind towards the knowledge of the divine, desiring to see the glory of God face to face. Scripture testifies to this, saying that no prophet has arisen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face (Deut. XXXIV,10). Not in a vision, nor in dreams, but face to face with the highest God; not in a form, nor through riddles, but endowed with the clear and evident presence of divine favor.

7. So Moses opened his mouth and poured out what the Lord spoke in him, according to what He had said to him, when he was directing him to Pharaoh the king: 'Go therefore, and I will open your mouth, and teach you what you must speak' (Exod. IV, 12). For if he received what he spoke about releasing the people from God, how much more what he spoke about from heaven? Finally, he dared to say not in the persuasion of human wisdom, nor in the deceitful disputes of philosophy, but in the manifestation of spirit and power, as a witness of the divine work: 'In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.' He did not, as if the world were created by the collision of atoms, expect a late and lazy task; nor did he think that by contemplating matter, he could shape the world according to a certain discipline, but that he should express God the creator. For the man full of wisdom observed that the mind alone contains the substances, origins, and causes of visible and invisible things, not as philosophers argue, that the more powerful combination of atoms provides a constant cause of persistence, but he judged that those who give such small and insubstantial principles to the heavens and the earth would be weaving a spider's web, which would be connected by chance and dissolved by chance and haphazardly, unless they relied on the divine power of their governor. And not without reason they do not know the governor, who do not know God, through whom all things are ruled and governed. Let us therefore follow Him, who knows both the author and the governor, and let us not be led astray by empty opinions.

Chapter III.

Its beginning to have the world from God: and therefore it, although it is a spherical figure, is not eternal.

8. In the beginning, he said. What a good order, that it asserted first what they were accustomed to deny, that they might know that the world has a beginning, so that people would not think the world to be without a beginning. Hence, when David spoke about the heavens, the earth, and the sea, he said, 'You have made all things in wisdom' (Psalm 103:25). Therefore, he gave a beginning to the world, and he also gave weakness to the creature, so that we would not believe it to be

anarchic, uncreated, and a companion of divine substance. And he beautifully added, 'He did not want it to be thought that there was any delay in his doing; but so that people might understand how incomparable of an operator he was, who completed such a work in a short and brief moment of his work, that the effect of his will surpassed the sense of time. No one saw the one working, but they recognized the one who had worked. So where is the delay when you read, 'For he spoke, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created' (Psalm 148:5)?' Therefore, he who fulfilled the majesty of such a great work in an instant of his will, did not consider the use of skill or the expenditure of virtue, so swiftly did he make things that were not, to be, that neither did his will precede his action, nor did his action precede his will.

9. You marvel at the work, you seek the operator, who has given the beginning to such a work, who has made it so quickly? He immediately added, saying that God created the heavens and the earth. You have heard the author, you should not doubt. This is the one in whom Melchizedek blessed Abraham, the father of many nations, saying: Blessed is Abraham by the highest God, who created the heavens and the earth (Gen. XIV, 19 and 22). And Abraham believed in God and said: I will stretch out my hand to the highest God, who created the heavens and the earth. You see that this was not found by man, but God has announced it. For God is indeed Melchizedek, who is the king of peace and justice, with no beginning or end. Therefore, it is not surprising that God, who has no beginning, gave a beginning to all things, so that things that did not exist could begin to exist. It is not surprising that God, who contains everything by His power and encompasses all things with His incomprehensible majesty, has made the visible things, even as He has also made the invisible things. Who would deny that the things which are seen are inferior to the things which are not seen? Since the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Who would doubt that God has made these things, who spoke through the Prophet, saying: 'Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or who has been his counselor or instructed Him?' (Isaiah 40:12). We also read elsewhere: Because it holds the circuit of the earth and has made the earth as nothing. And Jeremiah says: The gods who have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. The Lord who made the earth in His power, and established it in His wisdom, and by His understanding stretched out the heavens, and caused a multitude of waters to be in the heaven (Jeremiah 10:11). And he added: Man is made foolish by his knowledge (ibid., 14). For anyone who follows the corruptible things of the world, and from these things believes that they can grasp the truth of divine nature, how can they not be bewitched by the cunning craftiness of disputation?

10. So when you hear so many oracles by which God testifies that he created the world, do not believe that it has no beginning; for it is said that the world is like a sphere, so that no beginning seems to exist; and when it thunders, as if everything is moved around in a circle, it is not easy to comprehend where they begin and where they end; for it is considered impossible to infer the beginning of a circuit by the senses. For you cannot find the beginning of a sphere, or from where the globe of the moon began, or where the monthly eclipse of the moon ends. And indeed, even if you yourself do not comprehend, therefore you do not begin, or by no means cease. If you yourself draw a circle or a line with ink or pen or compass, you do not easily gather visually or mentally where you began or where you ended, with an interval in between; and yet you are

witness to both beginning and ending. For even if the sense escapes you, it does not destroy the truth. Those things which have a beginning, also have an end; and to those to whom an end is given, it is evident that a beginning was given. But the Savior himself teaches in his Gospel that the end of the world will come, saying: Heaven and earth will pass away (Matthew XXIV, 55). And further: Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the world (Matthew XXVIII, 20). And the Apostle: For the form of this world is passing away (1 Corinthians VII, 31).

11. Therefore, how do they assert that the world is coeternal with God, and associate it with the creator of all, and argue that the created being is equal to him, and think that the material body of the world should be joined to that invisible and inaccessible divine nature, especially since according to their opinion, they cannot deny that as the parts of the world are subject to corruption and changeability, it is necessary for the whole universe to be subject to the same passions to which its own portions are liable?

Chapter IV.

Various kinds of principles: and in what way God is to be understood as having made the heavens and the earth.

12. Therefore, it teaches that the one who says, 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth,' is the beginning. And this beginning is referred to time, or to number, or to foundation; just as in building a house, the beginning is the foundation. We also know that the beginning of conversion and corruption can be said to be the authority of the Scriptures. The art itself is also the beginning of art, from which the operation of various artists subsequently began. The best end is also the beginning of good works, such as mercy, which is the beginning, pleasing to God what you do. For we are most prompted to bring assistance to men by this consideration. There is also a divine power, which is expressed by this appellation. It is referred to a time, if you wish to say at what time God made the heavens and the earth, that is, at the beginning of the world, when it began to be made, as Wisdom says: When he prepared the heavens, I was there (Prov. 8:27). But if you refer it to number, it is such that you take it first that God made the heavens and the earth, then the hills, the regions, the uninhabitable places. And so, before the rest of the visible creatures, He made day, night, fruitful trees, diverse kinds of animals, heaven and earth. But if you refer to the foundation, you have read that the beginning of the earth is its foundations, as Wisdom says: When He established the foundations of the earth, I was with Him, arranging all things (Wisdom 8:29). It is also the beginning of good discipline, as it is written: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7); for those who fear the Lord turn away from error and direct their ways to the path of virtue. For unless someone fears God, they cannot renounce sin.

13. And we can also understand the same about this: 'This month shall be to you the beginning of months' (Exod. XII, 2); although it is understood as the 7th in terms of time, because it spoke of the Lord's Passover, which is celebrated at the beginning of spring. Therefore, in this beginning of months, He made the heavens and the earth, which was fitting for the beginning of the world, where a suitable spring season was for everyone. Hence, the year of the world also expressed the image of its birth, so that after winter's ice and winter's mists, the brighter splendor of the usual springtime may shine forth. Therefore, the first rising of the world gave form to the courses of future years, so that by this law the cycles of years would arise and at the beginning of each year the earth would bring forth new shoots of seeds, in accordance with what the Lord God had first

commanded: Let the earth bring forth grass, yielding seed according to its kind, and yielding fruit with its seed in it (Gen. 1:11). And immediately the earth brought forth grass and fruit-bearing trees; in which both the divine providence of perpetual moderation and the swift growth of the earth in springtime contribute to our estimation of the passing of time. For although at any time and by God's command it was ready to obey the earthly nature, so that amidst winter's ice and wintry frost it would produce offspring with the nourishing warmth of the heavenly kingdom; nevertheless, it was not fitting to suddenly release the fields, bound by the rigid cold of eternal order, into green crops, and to mingle flowery shoots with the dreadful frost. Therefore, in order to show that the times were written in the constitution of the world, He says: 'This month shall be to you the beginning of months; it shall be the first in the months of the year' (Exodus 12:2), calling the first month the springtime. For it was fitting that the beginning of the year be the beginning of generation, and that generation itself be nurtured by gentler breezes. For tender beginnings of things could not endure the hardship of harsh cold, nor withstand the injury of raging heat.

14. At the same time, it is possible to notice this, because it converges by law, so that at that time it seems to belong to this generation and to these uses, at the time when there is a legitimate transition from this generation to the next. Indeed, in the springtime, the children of Israel left Egypt and crossed the sea, baptized in the cloud and in the sea, as the Apostle said (1 Corinthians 10:1ff): and at that time, the yearly Passover of the Lord Jesus Christ is celebrated, that is, the passage of souls from vices to virtues, from the passions of the flesh to grace and sobriety of mind, and from the leaven of malice and wickedness to truth and sincerity. Therefore, it is said to be regenerated: This month is the beginning of months for you; it is the first for you in the months of the year (Exod. XII, 2). For he forsakes and abandons, who is washed, that understanding prince of this world, saying: I renounce you, devil, and your angels, and your works, and your powers. Nor does he now serve him, either the earthly passions of this body, or the errors of a corrupted mind, who, having plunged into all evil, desires, fortified by good works on both the right and left, to pass over the waves of this present world unharmed. In the book also, which is titled On Numbers, Scripture says: 'The beginning of the nations is Amalek, and his seed shall perish' (Num. XXIV, 20). And indeed, Amalek is not the first of all nations; but because by interpretation Amalek is taken to mean the king of the wicked, and the wicked are the nations: beware lest we should take the prince of this world, who commands the nations doing his will, whose seed shall perish. But his seed are the wicked and the unbelievers, to whom the Lord says: 'You are of your father the devil' (John VIII, 24).

15. It is also a mystical beginning, as it is said, I am the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Rev. 1:8). And that in the Gospel especially, when the Lord was asked who he was, he replied: The beginning, that is also what I speak to you (John 8:25). He who truly and according to his divinity is the beginning of all things, because there is no one before him; and the end, because there is no one beyond him: and according to Solomon (Prov. 8:22) he is the beginning of the ways of the Lord in his works; so that through him the human race might learn to follow the ways of the Lord and to do the works of God. In this beginning, that is, in Christ, God made heaven and earth; because through him all things were made, and without him nothing was made. What was made, in him was life; because in him all things consist. And he himself is the firstborn of all creation, either because before every creature; or because he is holy, because the firstborn of the holy ones are, like the firstborn of Israel, not because before all, but because holier than the rest.

But the Lord is holy above all creation and according to the reception of the body; because alone without sin, alone without vanity. But every creature is subject to vanity.

We can also understand: In the beginning God created heaven and earth; that is, before time: just as the beginning of a road is not yet a road, and the beginning of a house is not yet a house. Finally, others have said, **ἐν κεφαλῇ**, as in the head, by which the completion of the work is signified in a brief and small moment. Therefore, there are those who do not understand the beginning as pertaining to time, but before time, **καὶ κεφαλῇ** or the head; so that we may say in Latin, as it were, the sum of the work; because the sum of visible things is heaven and earth, which seem to pertain not only to the adornment of this world, but also to a sign of invisible things and a certain proof of those things which are not seen, as is this prophetic statement: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims the work of his hands (Ps. 18:1). The Apostle, following others, concluded in the same sentiment, saying: Because His invisible things are understood through the things that are made (Rom. I, 20). For we easily understand that the author of the Angels and Dominations and Powers, who in the moment of His command made this great beauty of the world exist out of nothing, which did not exist before; and He did not give substance to existing things or causes.

Chapter V.

The world is a reflection of divine operation: it is not correctly called the shadow of God by the Gentiles, for it is only fitting for the Son, as the image of God.

17. Therefore, this world is a sample of divine operation; for while the work is seen, the worker is preferred. For just as other arts are active, which are in the motion of the body or in the sound of the voice; when the motion or sound ceases, nothing is left, and nothing remains for those who are watching or listening: others are theoretical, which exercise the power of the mind: others of this kind, so that even when the duty of the operation ceases, the task of the work appears, such as building and weaving, which show skill even when the craftsman is silent, so that the testimony of his work may support the worker. Similarly, this world is a sign of divine majesty, so that through it God's wisdom may be revealed. Seeing this, the Prophet, at the same time raising the eyes of his mind to invisible things, says: How magnified are your works, Lord! You have made all things in wisdom (Psalm 103:24).

18. Nor is it read in vain; because many of the pagans, who desire the world to be co-eternal with God, assert that it also exists spontaneously as a reflection of divine power; and even though they confess that God is the cause of its existence, they still want the cause to be made not according to their own will and arrangement, but in such a way that the cause is like the shadow of a body. For a shadow clings to a body, and brightness is more closely joined to natural light by natural association than by arbitrary will. Therefore Moses beautifully says that God made the heaven and the earth. He did not say that He made them to be subject; He did not say that He provided the cause for the world to exist, but He made them as good as what would be useful: as wise as what He judged to be best: as omnipotent as what He foresaw to be most abundant. However, how could He be like a shadow when there was no body, since the incorporeal representation of God cannot be bodily? How can the splendor of incorporeal light also be bodily?

19. But if you seek the splendor of God, the Son is the image of the invisible God. Therefore, the image is as the God is. God is invisible, and the image is also invisible. For he is the splendor of the Father's glory and the image of his substance. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Therefore, the world was made and began to exist, which did not exist before. But the Word of God was in the beginning, and it always was. However, even the Angels, Dominions, and Powers, although they started at some point, they already were when this world was made. For all things have been created and established, visible and invisible, whether Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers: all things were created through him and in him (Colossians 1:16). What does it mean to be created in him? It means that he is the heir of the Father, because the inheritance has passed from the Father into him, as the Father says: Ask of me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance (Psalm 2:8). However, this inheritance passes from the Father to the Son, and it returns to the Father from the Son. Therefore, the Apostle excellently said in this place that the Son is the author of all things and contains all things in His majesty. And to the Romans, he says about the Father: 'For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things' (Rom. 11:36). From Him is the beginning and origin of the substance of all things, that is, from His will and power. For all things began from His will; because there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things. Indeed, He made them as it were from Himself, because He made them as He desired. Through him is continuation; the end is in him. From him therefore is matter. Through him is the operation that bound and held together all things. In him, because as long as he wishes, all things remain and persist by his power, and their end is returned to the will of God; and by his judgment they are resolved.

Chapter VI.

In heaven and earth, there are four elements from which all things are composed. What is the nature of the heavens, and what is the position of the earth, and how differently have philosophers judged the nature of the heavens: disregarding them, one must listen to divine authority.

20. In the beginning, therefore, God created the heavens and the earth. For time is from this world, not before the world: but the day is a portion of time, not the beginning. And although by the series of reading we can show that on the first day the Lord made day and night, which are the rotations of time; and on the second day he made the firmament, by which he separated the water which is below the heavens and the water which is above the heavens; nevertheless, it is enough for the present assertion that he made the heavens in the beginning, from which there is the prerogative of generation and cause; and that he made the earth, in which the substance of generation would be. For indeed those four elements were created, from which all of these things that are in the world are generated. And indeed four elements, air, fire, water, and earth, which are mixed together in all things. For indeed you will find fire in the earth, which is often produced from stones and iron; and in the sky, since the pole is fiery and shining with bright stars, it can be understood to be water, which is either above the sky or is often sent down to the earth from that upper place in abundant rain. We could gather many things from this if we saw that they were conducive to the building up of the Church. But because it is fruitless to be occupied with these matters, let us focus our minds more on those things which lead to eternal life.

Therefore, it is enough to mention the qualities and substance of the heavens that we find in the writings of Isaiah, who expressed the nature of the celestial sphere in ordinary and familiar

language, saying that God has made the heavens firm like smoke, not wanting to reveal its subtle and immaterial nature. And he also speaks of its appearance, saying that God has made the heavens like a vault, within which all things in the sea and on land are enclosed. It is similarly signified when it is read: Because the Lord has stretched out the heavens (Isaiah 34:4). For it is extended like a skin to the dwellings and abodes of the saints; or like a book, so that the names of many who have deserved the grace of Christ by faith and devotion may be written, to whom it is said: Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

22. It is of no use to speculate about the quality or position of the earth in order to have hope for the future. It is enough to know, according to the divine Scriptures, that the earth is suspended in nothingness (Job 26:7). Why should we debate whether it hangs in the air or is situated above water, as if there were a controversy about how the nature of the thin air could support the weight of the earth? Or how, if it is above the waters, the heavy mass of the earth does not sink into the water? But how was it that the wave of the sea did not yield to it, and that by its movement it spread out on its sides in its own place? Many have also said that the earth is in the middle of the air and remains immovable by its own weight, because it hangs evenly from side to side. About this we think enough has been said by the Lord to his servant Job, when he spoke through the cloud and said: Where were you when I founded the earth? Tell me, if you have knowledge. Who determined its dimensions, if you know? Who is there who has laid the measure upon it, or upon what are its supporting circles fastened? (Job 38:4) And later: I have enclosed the sea with doors, and said: Thus far you shall come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed. (Ibid. 10) Does not God clearly show that all things rely on His Majesty for their existence in number, weight, and measure? For it is not the creature that has given the law, but rather it has received it and keeps it. Therefore, the reason why the earth is in the middle, as if suspended by a level balance, is not because of its own weight, but because the majesty of God, by His will, binds it by a law, so that it may remain stable and unchanging above the unstable and empty, as the prophet David also testifies, saying: He has founded the earth upon its firmament, it shall not be moved forever and ever (Ps. 103:5). Here, God is not described merely as an artisan, but as the omnipotent, who has not hung the earth from a certain center, but has suspended it by the command of His will from the firmament, and does not allow it to incline. Therefore we ought not to understand the measure of the center, but of divine judgment; for it is not the measure of art, but of power: the measure of justice, the measure of knowledge; for all things do not pass before His knowledge as if they were immense, but they submit to His knowledge as if they were limited. For when we read, 'I have confirmed its pillars' (Psalm 74:4), we can truly estimate them not by the pillars themselves, but by the virtue that supports the substance of the earth and sustains it. Finally, gather from this that the establishment of the earth is in the power of God, as it is written: 'He looks at the earth, and it trembles' (Psalm 104:32). And elsewhere: 'Yet once more I shake the earth' (Haggai 2:6). Therefore, it does not remain motionless in its balance, but it is frequently moved by the will and power of God, as even Job says: 'For the Lord shakes it from its foundation; its pillars tremble' (Job 9:6). And elsewhere: The naked underworld is in his sight, and there is no covering for death, extending the North for nothing, suspending the earth into nothingness, binding the water in his clouds... The pillars of the heavens tremble and quake at his reproof; by his power he stilled the sea, by his understanding he struck down Rahab. By his wind the heavens were made fair; his hand pierced the fleeing serpent. And these are but the outskirts of his ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand? (Job

26:6-14) Therefore, it does not rely on its own foundations, nor does it persist stable on its own supports; but the Lord has established it and sustains it by the firmness of His will; for all the ends of the earth are in His hand. And this simplicity of faith surpasses all arguments. Let others praise that the earth never falls; because according to its nature, it occupies its own region in the middle, since it is necessary for it to remain in its region and not incline towards another part, when it does not move against nature, but according to nature. They proclaim the excellence of the divine artist and eternal creator; for who has not received from him the skill of artists? Or who has given women the knowledge of weaving, or the discipline of variety? Yet I, who am unable to comprehend the deep majesty and excellence of his art, do not rely on the balances and measures of argumentation: but I believe that everything is held in his will, that his will is the foundation of the universe, and that because of him this world still exists. Moreover, it is permissible to assert with the example of the Apostolic authority. For it is written: 'For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that made it subject, in hope' (Rom. VIII, 20). But the creature itself also shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, when the grace of divine recompense shall shine forth. But now let me enumerate the nature and quality of celestial substances that philosophers have woven in their arguments. Some assert that the composite sky is made up of four elements, while others introduce a fifth nature of a new body to its constitution, and posit that it is an ethereal body, to which neither fire, nor air, nor water, nor earth is mixed; these elements have their own course, use and movement of nature, so that the heavier things sink and are carried forward, while the empty and light things rise upwards; for each has its own motion, but these are mixed up in the circuit of the sphere, and lose the force of their course, since the sphere turns in its own circle, and things above are changed for things beneath, as are also the higher things changed for the lower. However, those things which are changed according to the nature of motion are necessarily said to be accustomed to change the qualities of their substances. Therefore, why do we defend that the heavenly body is ethereal, so that it does not seem prone to corruption? For that which is composed of corruptible elements must necessarily be dissolved. For by the very fact that the same elements of nature are different, they cannot have a simple and unchangeable motion, since the motion of different elements opposes each other. For one motion cannot be suitable for all things, and agree with different elements. For the one that is adapted to light elements becomes burdensome to heavier elements. Therefore, when motion towards the higher parts of the heavens is necessary, it is burdensome to earthly things; when descent towards the lower parts is sought, that fiery force is violently attracted. Indeed, it is forced downwards against its own nature. However, everything that is forced in the opposite direction, not serving nature, but necessity, quickly dissolves and is separated into its constituent parts, each returning to its own region. Therefore, considering that these things cannot be stable, they thought that the ether is the substance of the celestial bodies, introducing a fifth nature of matter, believing that it would endure as the everlasting substance of the heavens.

24. But this opinion of prophecy could not withstand the evidence, which the divine majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ also confirmed in the Gospel. For David said: In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, O Lord, and the works of your hands are the heavens. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, and like clothing you will change them, and they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end (Psalm 102, 26-27). The Lord approved so much in the Gospel that He said: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my

words will not pass away (Matt. XXIV, 35). Therefore, those who thought that a fifth ethereal body should be introduced in order to assert the perpetuity of the heavens accomplish nothing; for they equally see that the addition of a dissimilar portion of one member to the others usually brings more harm than good to the body. At the same time, note this: when the prophet David mentioned the earth first (Ps. CXLVIII, 5) and later the heavens, it was believed that the work of the Lord needed to be declared; for when He said, "and they were made," it makes no difference what you express first, since both were made simultaneously; at the same time, so that this at least does not seem to be a divine prerogative of the celestial substance, let it be considered as of greater value by the privilege of being the firstborn creature. So let us leave those in their own disputes, who refute themselves through mutual arguments. But for us, it is enough for salvation, not the controversy of disputes, but the truth of teachings; not the cunning of arguments, but the faith of the mind, so that we may serve the Creator rather than the creature, who is God blessed forever.

Chapter VII. (Sermo II.) Those who try to prove the eternity of matter from the words of Scripture are encountered. The earth is said to be invisible because it was covered with water. Why is it signified to have been created first, before being adorned. But the earth was invisible and unformed. The skilled craftsman first lays the foundation; then, after the foundation is laid, he distinguishes the various parts of the building and adds ornamentation. Therefore, with the foundation of the earth in place and the substance of the heavens established (for these two are like the hinges of all things), he weaves together: But the earth was invisible and unformed. What does 'was' mean, except that they may not extend their opinions infinitely and without a beginning, and say: Behold, because matter, that is, hyle as the philosophers say, even according to the divine Scripture, had no beginning. But you will answer to those who say this because it is written: Now Cain was a tiller of the ground (Gen. IV, 2). And of him who is called Jubal, Scripture has: He was the father of all who play the harp and flute (Ibid., 21). And, there was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job (Job. I, 1). Therefore, let them cease to argue about the word, especially since Moses has already stated that God created the earth. Therefore, it was, from the time it was created. For if they say that it exists without a beginning, they not only say that God exists, but also that matter exists without a beginning; therefore, they should define where it was. If they say it was in a place, then it follows that a place without a beginning is postulated, in which the matter of things existed, which had no beginning. But if it seems absurd to believe in a place, see if perhaps we should consider the earth as a floating object, which, not having a foundation, was suspended by the wings of the oars. Therefore, where shall we get wings for it, unless perhaps we interpret the prophetic saying in this way: 'From the wings of the earth, we have heard prodigies' (Isa. 24:16)? And this: Woe to the land of ships with wings (Isaiah 18:1)? But if we accept this, in what air did the land fly? It could not fly without air, but air could not yet exist because there was no distinction made of the material of the elements of things, since the elements themselves had not yet been made. So where was this material of wings supported by oars? It was not in the air, because air is the substance of the world: but that air is a substance is taught by the lesson that as soon as an arrow is launched it cleaves the air, which is at once resolved into itself. So where was matter, unless it is said with some insane intention, that it was in God? Therefore, God, who is of invisible nature and inviolable, who dwells in inaccessible light, incomprehensible and most pure spirit, was the place of worldly matter, and it was a part of God in the world, although his mind is not of this world, as it is written: They are not of this world, as I am not of the world (John 17:14).

26. Just as, therefore, invisible things were joined to visible things, and He who gave order and beauty to all joined them together in inharmonious conjunction? Unless it be that, because the earth was invisible, and they believe it to be invisible from its substance; and, therefore, because it was covered with waters, it could not be seen by corporeal eyes; just as many things placed in the depths of waters are unseen by the sight and pass beyond the range of the eye. For nothing is invisible to God, but every creature of the world is estimated by the disposition of the creature. The earth was also invisible, because there was not yet light to illuminate the world, nor was there yet a sun: for afterward the luminaries of the heavens were made. And if the ray of the sun often illuminates even the waters covered by it, and brings forth with the splendor of its light those things which are immersed in the depths, who can doubt that those things which are in the depths cannot be invisible to God; unless perhaps we take the invisible earth in this sense, that it was not yet visited by the word of God and his protection, which did not have man for whom the Lord would look upon the earth, as it is written: "The Lord looked down upon the sons of men, to see if there is an intelligent one, or one seeking after God." (Psalm 13:2) And elsewhere he says: Judgement was shot from heaven: the earth trembled and was still (Psalm 75:9). And rightly so invisible, because it was unformed, which had not yet received a suitable shape and form from its own creator.

27. And perhaps they may ask: For why did God, just as He said and it came to pass, not bestow suitable decorations upon the rising elements all at once, so that the sky, as soon as it was created, would be adorned with stars and the earth would be clothed with flowers and fruits? Surely He could have done so, but for that reason the things created first are then arranged in order, so that they would not be believed to be truly uncreated and without a beginning, if the species of things appeared as though generated from the beginning and not added afterwards. The unarranged earth is read, and it is honored by philosophers with the same privileges of eternity as God; what would they say if its beauty bloomed from the beginning? Submerged in water, it is described as if it were devoted to a shipwreck of its own principles, and still some do not believe it; what if it claimed its firstborn beauty? It is added that God wanted us to be imitators of him, so that we would first make something and then embellish it; lest while we strive for both at the same time, we cannot fulfill either. But our faith grows in a certain degree. Therefore, God first made, then adorned, so that we may believe that the same one who made, also adorned; lest we think that one adorned, the other created: rather, that both are the works of the same person; that first he would make, then he would arrange, so that one would be believed based on the other. You have a clear testimony of this in the Gospel (John 11:44). For when the Lord is about to raise Lazarus, he commanded the Jews to remove the stone from the tomb, so that seeing the dead, they would later believe that he was raised from the dead. Then he called Lazarus, and he rose from the dead, and coming out with his hands and feet bound. Was he not able to remove the stone, who was able to raise the dead? And he who could restore life to the deceased, could he not untie the bonds? To him, whose feet were bound, he gave the ability to walk, but he could not give the ability to walk when the bonds were broken? But certainly, we observe that he first wanted to demonstrate the dead to their own eyes, so they would believe; then to resurrect; thirdly, to command them to untie the bonds of the funeral; so that faith would be instilled in the unbelieving during these events, and credulity would be born through certain steps.

Chapter VIII.

The earth was formless; both because there was no distinction in it and because it was covered in darkness. The Holy Spirit, who was carried upon the waters, declares this as well as other things, but most importantly, that malice only arises from us.

28. Therefore God made the heavens and the earth first, but not as if they were eternal, but rather that they would be subject to the corruption of created things. Hence in the book of Isaiah it says: Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look down on the earth; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, and the earth will become worn out like a garment (Isaiah 51:6). This is the earth, which before was formless. For the seas had not yet been separated by their limits, and therefore the earth was flooded by the unstable waves and the deep abyss. Consider that even now the land is accustomed to shuddering with marshy dampness, and it cannot bear the plow when the moisture poured out of the earth is overflowing. Therefore it was uncultivated; as is to be expected of a skillful farmer, unplowed by cultivation, because a cultivator was still lacking. It was uncultivated; because it was devoid of plants, without grassy banks, without shady woods, without fertile fields, without shady mountain slopes, without fragrant flowers, without pleasant vineyards. Deservedly composed, which needed adornments, which lacked the fault of jeweled garlands. For God wanted to show that not even the world itself would have grace unless it had adorned it with various forms of art. The sky itself, covered with clouds, is accustomed to arouse horror in our eyes and sadness in our souls. The earth, soaked with rain, becomes tiresome. The sea, disturbed by storms, what fears do they not instill? The beauty of things is most beautiful, but what would it be without light? What without moderation? What without the gathering of waters, by which the beginnings of this pole were submerged before? Remove the sun from the Earth, remove the globes of the stars from the heavens, everything becomes dark. Thus it was before the Lord infused light into this world. And for this reason the Scripture says: 'And darkness was upon the face of the deep' (Gen. 1, 2). Darkness was there, because the splendor of light was lacking. Darkness was there, because the air itself is murky. The water itself is dark because the water in the clouds is dark. There were darknesses over the deep waters. For I do not think that the powers should be understood as evil, because the Lord created their evil; for surely evil is not substantial, but a deviation from the goodness of nature.

Therefore, in the formation of the world, the opinion of evil should be set aside so as not to appear to mix the divine operation and the most beautiful creation with things that are dull, especially since it follows: And the spirit of God hovered over the waters (Genesis). Although some understand this as air, others as the spirit, which we breathe and draw from this vital breath, we, in agreement with the opinion of the saints and the faithful, understand it as the Holy Spirit, so that the work of the Trinity may shine forth in the formation of the world. For it has been stated that in the beginning God created heaven and earth, that is to say, God created in Christ, or the Son of God, or through the Son God created; for all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made, the fullness of operation remained in the Spirit, as it is written: By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and by the breath of his mouth all their power (Psalm 32:6). Therefore, just as we are taught in the Psalm the operation of the Word, which is the Word of God, and the power which the Holy Spirit gave; so here the prophetic oracle is fulfilled, because God spoke and God made. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. For by adorning the heavenly sphere and beautifying the earth with budding plants, the Spirit was moving over it splendidly, because through it the seeds of new creations were able to germinate, as the

prophet said: 'Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth' (Ps. 103:30). Lastly, the Syrian, who is close to the Hebrews and agrees with them in language in many things, has it this way: 'And the Spirit of God cherished the waters,' that is, brought them to life, so that it could gather new creatures and by its nourishment animate them with vitality. For we also read of the Holy Spirit as creator, with Job saying, 'The divine Spirit who made me' (Job. XXXIII, 4). So whether the Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters, darkness could not have power over them, being contrary to the power of the Spirit, where such grace claimed its rightful place. Or, as some argue, if they consider the air, they should explain why it is called the Spirit of God, when it would have been enough to call it a spirit.

Hi, therefore, desire from our Lord God the first four generated elements: heaven, earth, sea, and air; because the causes of things are fire and air, earth and water, from which the beauty and form of the world are composed. So where could the darkness of spiritual wickedness have found a place when the world was adorned with the august shape of this image? Could God have created evil at the same time? But that evil arises from us, not from the Creator God, produced by the levity of our morals, having no superiority over any creature, nor any authority over natural substance, but rather the defect of mutability and the error of falling away. God wants to eradicate this, how would he generate it himself? The prophet cries out: Stop your wickedness (Is. I, 17). And especially holy David: Cease from evil, and do good (Ps. XXXIII, 15); so how do we give it a beginning from the Lord? But this deadly opinion is of those who thought to disturb the Church. Hence Marcion, hence Valentinus, hence those plagues of the Manicheans, attempted to bring harmful contagions to the minds of the saints. Why do we search for the darkness of death in the very light of life? Divine Scripture suggests salvation, it emits the fragrance of life, so that by reading you may grasp its sweetness, not that you may incur the danger of a precipitous fall. Simply read, O man, do not dig for yourself a corrupt pit as an interpreter; the language is simple because God made heaven and earth. He made what was not, not what was. And the earth was invisible from the moment it was made; it was invisible because water overflowed and covered it, and darkness was spread over it, because it was not yet the light of day, nor the rays of the sun, which usually reveal hidden things even under the water. What then do they say, that God created evil, when contrary and adverse things are by no means generated against themselves? For neither does life generate death, nor does light generate darkness. For the progressions of generations are not like the changes of emotions. Those are turned from contrary things to contrary things by a deflection of purpose: these are not turned from contrary things to adverse things, but rather they are created from the same kind of authors or causes, and are referred to the likeness of their author.

31. What then shall we say? For if it is neither without a beginning, like something uncreated, nor made by God, where does it have its wicked nature? For no wise person has denied that there is evil in this world, since the frequent falls to death in this age are so common. But from what we have already said, we can conclude that it is not a living substance, but rather a corruption of the mind and soul, a deviation from the path of virtue, which often creeps in on careless minds. Therefore, the greatest danger to us is not from outsiders, but from ourselves. The enemy is within, the primary author of error is within, closed off within ourselves. Examine your own intentions, explore the state of your mind, stand guard against the thoughts and desires of your own mind. You yourself are the cause of your wickedness, you yourself are the leader of your

crimes, and the instigator of your vices. Why do you call upon the nature of others to excuse your own failings? I hope that you yourself are not driven, I hope that you do not fall, I hope that you do not involve yourself in excessive studies, or in anger, or in desires, which hold us bound as if in certain nets. And certainly it is within us to moderate our studies, to restrain our anger, to control our desires: within us also is the ability to indulge in luxury, to nurture lust, to ignite anger, or to accommodate an inflamed ear, to be more elevated in pride, to pour out into savagery, rather than being restrained by humility, to love gentleness. Why do you accuse nature, O man? She has, as it were, certain impediments, old age and infirmity. But old age itself is sweeter in good morals, more useful in counsel, more prepared for enduring death with constancy, stronger in repressing desires. The infirmity of the body is also sobriety of the mind. Hence the Apostle says: When I am weak, then I am strong (II Cor. XII, 10). Therefore, he did not glory in virtues, but in weaknesses. There also shone forth a divine response from the saving oracle; because strength is perfected in weakness. Those things must be avoided, which come forth from our own will, the sins of youth, and irrational passions of the body. Therefore, of those things over which we have control, let us not seek their origins from outside; nor let us attribute them to others, but let us acknowledge those things which are properly our own. For what we can choose not to do if we do not wish, we should attribute the choosing of this evil to ourselves rather than to others. Therefore, in the judgments of this world, guilt constrains voluntary criminals, not compelled by necessity, and punishment condemns them. For if someone kills an innocent person out of madness, they are not liable to death. Indeed, even by the divine law itself (Exod. XXI, 13), if someone unintentionally causes death, they receive the hope of impunity, the opportunity for refuge, so that they may escape. Therefore, let this be said about what seems to be proper evil. For truly, only those things are bad which entangle the mind with guilt and bind the conscience. However, no wise person would call poverty, low birth, illness, or death bad, nor include them in the category of evils; because they do not have contrary qualities to the greatest goods, some of which seem to happen to us by nature, and others by convenience.

32. This digression did not proceed in vain for us; so that we might prove that darkness and abyss are simply to be understood. For darkness was from the overshadowing of the sky; because every body makes a shadow, by which it overshadows either neighboring or lower things, especially those that it seems to cover and enclose. But the sky itself includes it, because the sky extends like a vault, as we have shown above. Therefore, the substance that was dark was not primary: but darkness, like a shadow, followed the body of the world, the mist of darkness. And so, at the moment of divine instruction, the world, rising up, enclosed itself in shadow; just as if someone were to suddenly block off a place in the middle of a field, which is illuminated by the midday sun, and cover it with thick branches and leaves, would not the splendor of that place appear brighter from the outside, while inside it becomes darker with the terrifying scene of the enclosed depths? Or from where did they call a cave, enclosed on all sides, a place of this kind, if not because it bristles with blackness and is overwhelmed by darkness? Therefore, these darknesses were over the depths of the waters. For the multitude of the abyss and the depth of the waters is called, as the reading of the Gospel teaches (Luke, VIII, 31), where the demons begged the Savior not to command them to go into the abyss. But He who taught that the desires of the demons should not be fulfilled, commanded them to go into the pigs. And the pigs, casting themselves into the pool of waters, so that what the demons refused, they would not escape, but would be deservedly sunk. Therefore, this was the unarranged appearance and shape of the world.

Chapter IX.

Creature of light: it is distinguished and approved by the same from the darkness: and for this reason light is called day, and darkness is called night.

33. And the Spirit, he says, of God was carried above the waters, and God said: Let there be light (Gen., I, 3). The Spirit of God was sent forth with good reason, where divine work was beginning. Let there be light, he says. From where should the voice of God in divine Scripture begin, if not from light? From where should the adornment of the world come, if not from the beginning of light? For it would be in vain, if it were not seen. Indeed, God Himself was in the light, because He dwells in inaccessible light, and He was the true light, which enlightens every person coming into this world: but He wished that light to be made, which could be perceived by bodily eyes. Whoever desires to construct a building worthy of a father's dwelling, before laying the foundations, explores from where to pour in light, and this is the first grace, which, if lacking, the whole house horrifies with its ugly neglect. Light is what adorns the other decorations of the house. Let there be light, he says. The full voice of light does not signify an arrangement of disposition, but shines forth with the effect of its operation. The creator of nature spoke light, and created it. The will of God is speech, the work of God is nature: He created light, He illuminated darkness. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. He did not say this so that the operation would follow, but with the saying He completed the task. Hence that beautiful saying of David: He spoke and they were made (Ps. 148:5), because the effects fulfilled what was spoken. Therefore, God is the author of light: but the world is the place and cause of darkness. But the good author spoke light in such a way that He opened the world itself with infused light, and adorned its appearance. Therefore, the air suddenly shone brightly, and the darkness trembled at the brightness of the new light. It suppressed them, and as if plunged into the depths, the glow of light suddenly spread throughout the entire world. Beautifully and appropriately, it said: Let there be light. Just as quickly as light illuminates the heavens, the earth, and the seas, and in an instant, without any understanding, the splendor of the rising day reveals itself to the regions, it envelops our sight; so too, its rising had to be quickly explained. Why are we amazed if God spoke light, and light shone on the darkened world, when someone can vomit oil after being submerged in water, revealing things that were hidden by the depths? God said this not so that a sound of speech would come out through vocal organs, nor so that the movement of the tongue would form a heavenly address, and a certain clamor of words would strike this air: but so that He might reveal the recognition of His will through the effect of His operation.

34. And he separated the light from the darkness; and God saw the light that it was good (Gen. I, 4). He spoke and no one heard the sound of His voice; he separated and no one perceived the workings of His operation; he saw and no one gazed upon the intention of His eyes. And he saw, he said, the light that it was good. He did not see what he was ignorant of; he did not approve what he did not know beforehand or had not seen: but it is characteristic of good works that they do not require an external commendation, but their own grace, when they are seen, testifies for them. There is more that is proven by appearance than that which is praised by speech. For it uses its own testimony, not the testimony of others. And if judgment is passed by our eyes, by which both the beauty of charm and the measure of things are comprehended: how much more does God see all that He approves, and approves all that He sees, as it is written, 'The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous' (Ps. 33:16)? The nature of light is such that it is not in number, not in measure, not

in weight, like other things, but all its grace is in appearance. Therefore, in its own language, it expresses the nature of light, which pleases by being seen, since it itself supplies the duty of seeing. And not unjustly could it find for itself a preacher, from whom it rightly receives its first praise; since it has made it so that even the other parts of the world are worthy of praise. Therefore, God saw the light, and He illuminated it with His countenance, and He saw that it is good. It is not a partial judgment of God, but a general one. Therefore, it is proven by the grace of light not only in splendor, but in every usefulness. And so discretion is made between light and darkness; just as the nature of light and darkness is separate, nothing appears within itself to be confused. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night (Gen. I, 5); so that by its very name he might distinguish day from night. We observe, therefore, that the dawn of light seems to open before the sun the day; for the beginnings of the day close the end of the night, and the boundary of time and the boundary of states seem to be prescribed for the night and the day. The sun illuminates the day, light creates it. Often the sky is covered with clouds, so that the sun may be covered, and no ray of it may appear; but the light still shows the day, and conceals the darkness.

Chapter X.

Contrary to what might seem to some, the night is considered to come before the day. Why is one day called 'prior' rather than 'first'; and why does it end at the conclusion of morning?

36. And it was evening, and it was morning, one day (Gen. I, 5). Some ask why the Scripture mentions evening first and then morning, lest it appear to signify night before day. They do not notice at first that it mentioned day by saying: And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night; then that evening is the end of the day, and morning is the end of the night. Therefore, in order to give the prerogative and primacy of the birth of the day, it indicated the end of the day first, after the following night, and then it added the end of the night afterwards. However, the Scripture could not prefer the night of the day until the end, so that it enclosed the times of both day and night, claiming the name of day with primary authority. And we prove by frequent examples that it is the custom of Scripture to assign the name to the more important one. For indeed Jacob said, 'The days of my life, few and evil' (Gen. 47:9). And again, 'All the days of my life.' And David stated, 'The days of our years' (Ps. 89:10); he did not say 'and nights.' Wherefore we observe that those things which are now related in the form of history were at first established by the law of God for the future. The beginning of the day, therefore, is the word of God: let there be light, and there was light. The end of the day is evening. Now the following day succeeds from the end of the night. But the clear intention of God, because He first called the light day, and the darkness He called night.

37. He also very cleverly called one day not the first; for the following second, and third day, and thereafter the rest, he could have called the first: and this seemed to be an order, but he established a law, that only twenty-four hours of daylight and darkness should be defined by name for one day, so that if he were to say: 'The measure of twenty-four hours is the time of one day.' Just as the generation of men is computed, and the generation of women is also understood, because they are connected with the second and superior; so also the days are counted, and the nights are assessed as attached. Just as there is one circle, so there is one day. For many also call one week one day; because it returns to itself as if it were one day, and as if it were recurring

seven times within itself. And this circle begins from itself and returns to itself. Therefore, at times, the Scriptures call it one age. For although it uses the term age in other places, it seems to signify more the diversities of public states or affairs rather than define any successions of ages: Because the day of the Lord is great and very glorious (Joel 2:11). And elsewhere, why are you seeking the day of the Lord? (Amos V, 16) And here there is darkness and not light. For it is clear that for those with a guilty conscience and unworthy, that day will be dark, in which innocence will shine, and the guilty mind will be tormented. Moreover, without the interruption of nights and the succession of darkness, Scripture teaches us that that perpetual day will be the future of eternal retribution. (Isaiah LX, 19).

However, beautifully, having both roles to be spoken of in one day, he concluded with the end of the morning, in order to teach that he began the day from light and ended in light. For it is not complete day time, unless night has been fulfilled. Therefore, let us always walk as if in the day, and let us cast off the works of darkness. For we know that night is given for the rest of the body, not for the pursuit of any task or work, which is passed in sleep and oblivion. Let there not be among us revelry, drunkenness, debauchery. Let us not say: Darkness and walls cover us, and who knows if the Most High will see? But let there be among us a love of light and a care for honesty, so that as if walking in daylight, we may desire our works to shine before God, to whom be honor, praise, glory, power, with our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit from eternity, and now and forever, and for all ages, Amen.

Book Two. Of the Work of the Second Day.

Chapter I. (Sermo III.)

After the works of the first day were strictly examined and those who claimed that eternal matter was added to the world were rejected, he proceeds to the second day: and in the creation of things, he teaches that we should consider not the possibility of nature, but the power of God.

First, or rather one, let the prerogative of prophetic discourse remain, which we were able to complete; in which we have come to know the heaven created, the earth made, the abundance of waters, the surrounding air, the separation of light and darkness by the operation of Almighty God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, and also of the Holy Spirit. So who would not marvel at the fact that a world with dissimilar parts rises up into one body, and by an indissoluble law of harmony and charity, they come together in society and connection, though they are so distant by nature, as if they are woven together by an indivisible bond of unity and peace? But who, seeing this, would question the possibility of reason with a weak mind? All these things, by the divine power, incomprehensible to human minds and indescribable by our words, have been connected by the authority of His will.

Therefore, God made the sky and the earth, and He commanded them to exist as if He were their creator, not as if He were inventing figures, but as if He were an operator of nature. For how do the operative power of the impassible God and the nature of the passible matter agree with each other, as if one needed the other, borrowing from it? For if matter is uncreated, therefore it seems that the power of creating matter was lacking in God, and the things subservient to operation were borrowed from it. But if truly unformed, it is truly amazing that it could not confer eternal matter to God, which did not receive its substance from the creator, but possessed it without time.

Therefore, the creator found more than he conferred. He found matter in which he could work: but he conferred form, which would bring beauty to the things he found. Hence, he should be distinguished from the others as one day and not to be compared with the others as the first day, on which the foundations of all things were laid and the causes began to exist, by which the substance of this world and all visible creatures is supported. Why the marvelous works of the second day should come forth to us, the greatness of which is not according to the ability of our discourse, but according to the truth of the writer, to be referred to the praise of the Creator.

Therefore, I ask you to naturally value what we say probably, and to think diligently with a simple mind and careful intelligence, not according to philosophical traditions and the empty persuasion of collecting plausible arguments, but according to the rule of truth, which is expressed in the oracles of divine speech and is infused into the hearts of the faithful through contemplation of such great majesty, for it is written: Confirm me in your words. The unjust exercises were narrated to me, but not as your law, O Lord: all your precepts are truth (Psalm 128:28, 85 and 86). Therefore, let us consider not according to the natures of the elements, but according to Christ, who did everything he desired, overflowing with the fullness of his divinity, let us consider what has been done, and let us inquire about the possibility of nature. For when he healed the lepers in the Gospel, he did not restore sight to the blind, but the people who were present and witnessed those things recognized the order of medicine: but marveling at the power of the Lord, they gave praise to God, as it is written (Luke 18:43). Moses did not stretch out his hand to divide the Red Sea according to the numbers of the Egyptians and the movements of the stars, but he obeyed the divine command of power. Therefore he himself says: Your right hand, O Lord, is glorified in strength; your right hand, O Lord, has shattered the enemy. (Exodus 15:6) So, holy people, lift up your mind and focus your whole being on that. God does not see as man sees; God looks into the heart, while man looks at the face. Therefore, a man does not see in the same way as God. You hear that God saw and praised. Therefore, do not assess with your own eyes what has been done, and do not draw conclusions from opinions. Instead, consider what God saw and approved, and do not think that they should be retracted.

Chapter II. The firmament is created to separate the waters from the waters. The heavens are proved to be more, and the harmony of the celestial spheres is refuted. And God said: Let there be a firmament amidst the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And it was so (Gen. I, 6). Listen to the words of God, He says 'Let it be.' It is a command, not an estimation. It commands nature, it does not obey possibility, it does not gather measurements, it does not weigh. His will is the measure of all things. His word is the purpose of the work: 'Let there be a firmament amidst the waters.' Everything that God establishes is firm. And He introduced a rather beautiful preface: Let there be a firmament, before He placed it amidst the water; so that you might believe that the firmament was made by the command of God, before you doubted the nature of the water pouring forth. If you consider the nature of the elements, how is the firmament solidified among the waters? They flow, it is restrained: they run, it remains. And He said, Let it separate the water. But water tends to confuse, not to separate. How does he command what he knows to be contrary according to the ratio of the elements? But since his speech arises from nature, he rightly claims to give the law of nature, who gave the origin.

5. But first let us consider what the firmament is, whether it is the same thing as the heaven mentioned above, or something else, and whether there are two heavens or more. For there are

those who say that there is only one heaven and no other can be made, since there was, as they say, enough matter for only one, because when all the matter for the upper heaven was used up, there was nothing left to build the second or third heaven. But others assert that there are innumerable heavens and worlds, which their own people mock. For indeed, it is not greater for us to fight against them than against their own, who contend by geometric numbers and necessities to prove that there cannot be another heaven, nor can nature endure to be second or third, nor the power of the operator suitable to make many heavens. And who would not mock this skilful rhetoric of theirs, when, while they do not deny that many things of the same kind can be made by men from one and the same cause, they doubt about the creator of all, whether he could have made many heavens, concerning whom it is written, 'But the Lord made the heavens' (Psalm 95:5). And elsewhere: He has done whatever he has desired (Ps. CXIII, 3). For what is difficult for him, for whom to desire is to have already done? Therefore, their reasoning of impossibility flows away when they discuss about God, to whom it is truly said: For nothing is impossible for you.

Therefore, we cannot deny that we are not only in the second heaven, but also in the third heaven, as the Apostle confirms by testifying that he was caught up to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2). David also established the heavens of heavens in praise of the Lord (Psalm 148). Following his example, philosophers introduced the harmonious motion of five planets, the sun, and the moon, describing how all things are connected by their orbits or rather globes that are thought to rotate backwards and contrary to the motion of the rest. And by this impulse and motion of these spheres, a sweet and full sound of artistry and pleasing modulation is produced, as the divided air, with its artful motion and the tempering of high and low notes, creates harmonies so varied and evenly balanced that it surpasses the sweetness of any musical composition.

If you seek and expect proof of this matter to be proven to us by sense and hearing, there is hesitation. For if they were true, how would the celestial sphere, which is said to have the courses of the fixed stars attached to it and that are constantly revolving with great motion, have a more rapid revolution and produce a sharper sound, while the lunar sphere, on the other hand, which is the heaviest, would not be heard by us, when we are accustomed to hearing lighter sounds? Therefore, if we demand proof of the truth of this discussion by means of our testimony and the function of hearing, they report that our ears have become deaf and our sense of hearing has become dull because of that customary sound that we have had since the beginning of our generation. And they bring forward an example, namely that the Nile, the greatest of rivers, in that very place where it hurls itself down from the highest mountains in that waterfall, blocks the ears of the people living nearby with the magnitude of its roar, so that they are said to lack the gift of hearing. But the truth easily refutes these things itself. For if we were to hear the thunder generated by the collision of clouds, the movements of such great orbs, which are certainly estimated to move with a larger motion, would they not also produce louder sounds? Moreover, they add that for this reason this sound does not reach the lands, so that captivated humans, through its sweetness and charm, which that fastest movement of the heavens has produced, from the eastern regions all the way to the west, would abandon their own affairs and tasks, and everything would remain idle here, by some departure of the human mind from earthly sounds to celestial ones. But let us leave those things that are foreign to our study and to the sequence of divine reading to those who are outside: let us adhere to the guidance of the heavenly Scriptures.

Chapter III. The firmament is not the same as the sky: it is falsely denied that true waters reside above it, and this is shown by Scripture, examples, and multiple reasons; those who deny that heat is inherent in the sun are refuted. Our purpose, therefore, is because God said: 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.' And from this, it is discussed whether this firmament is called what was already made, as it is written: 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.' It is not overlooked that some before us have understood it this way, because the Scripture expresses the heaven, which was created and formed by God, as the work and creation, while here the exposition of the work is spread out, and the quality of the operation is set forth by the very nature of the things that come together. But it moves us, because another name is signified, and a more solid appearance, and a cause is discerned, and the person of the one cooperating is added. For thus it is written: And God separated between the waters that were under the firmament, and the waters that were above the firmament (Gen. I, 7).

9. And first, they want to destroy that which is unusual and impressed upon our minds by frequent reading of the Scriptures, namely, that water cannot be above the heavens, saying that the round orb of the heavens, with the earth in the middle, would not allow water to remain in it and stay still, as it is necessary to flow and fall downward from higher to lower places. For how can water, as they say, remain above the orb, when the orb itself is rotating? This is that subtlety of dialectic. Give me a place where I can respond to you. But if it is not given, no word is returned. They ask for the concession that the axis of the heavens can be twisted by rapid motion, but the earth itself is immovable; so they argue that it is not possible for the waters to be above the heavens, because by rotating all of them the axis would spill them out. As if I were to indeed grant them what they request, and according to their opinions I were to respond to them, they could deny that in that altitude and depth there is both length and width, which no one can comprehend except the one who is filled with the fullness of God, as the Apostle says (Ephesians 3:18-19). For who can easily be an evaluator of divine work? Therefore, there is expansiveness in the very height of the sky. There are also, as we will speak about things we can know, many buildings that are round on the outside and square on the inside, and square on the outside and round on the inside, in which the upper parts are flat, in which water tends to stagnate. However, we say these things in order to point out that their opinions can be constrained by more plausible opinions, and that they should stop measuring the work of God solely by contemplation of human operation and our own capacity.

10. However, we follow the series and order of the Scriptures, and we value the work through contemplation of the author, and we seek what has been said, and who said it, and to whom it was said: 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' I hear that the firmament was created by a command by which the water was divided, and the lower waters were separated from the higher. What could be clearer? He who commanded the water to be divided by inserting the firmament in the middle provided a way for it to remain divided and separate. The power of God is the nature's virtue, and the substance of eternity as long as He wishes it to remain, as it is written: He has established it forever and ever, He has given a command, and it will not pass away (Psalm 148:6). And so you may know, that about these waters He has said this, which you deny can be in the higher heavens, listen to what is written above: Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters that are above the heavens, let them praise

the name of the Lord (Psalm 148:4, 5). Has he not spoken to you as if he were opposing: Because he spoke and they were made; he commanded and they were created: he established them forever and ever, he set a law and it shall not pass away (ibid. 5). Does not the author seem to be suitable to you, who would give his law to his work? It is God who speaks, venerable by nature, in immeasurable greatness, immense in rewards, incomprehensible in works, whose height of wisdom can be investigated by someone easily? He speaks to the Son, that is, he speaks to his arm, he speaks to his power, he speaks to his wisdom, he speaks to his justice. And the Son acts as if powerful, acts as if the power of God, acts as if the wisdom of God, acts as if the divine justice. When you hear these things, why are you amazed if by the operation of such great majesty the wave could be suspended above the firmament of the sky?

11. From others derive this: from those things which the eyes of men have seen, consider how the water divided itself for the passage of the Jews, if you seek reason. This is not the usual nature, that water should separate itself from water, and that in the depths the mixtures of waters should be divided by the middle of the earth. For the waves froze, and in the appearance of the sky they curbed their course with an unusual end. Wasn't it possible for the Hebrew people to be liberated in another way as well? But he wanted to show you, in order that also by that spectacle you might estimate that those things which you did not see are to be believed. Jordan also, with its river winding back, returns to its source. It is considered impossible for water to stand still as it flows; to return again to its upper reaches without any barrier is also considered impossible. But what is impossible for someone who has given the power to the weak to say: 'I can do all things in him who strengthens me' (Philippians 4:13). Let them explain how the air is gathered into a cloud, whether rain is generated from the clouds, or whether it is collected in the bosom of the clouds. We often see clouds coming forth from the mountains. I wonder whether the water rises from the earth or descends from what is above the heavens in copious rainfall. If it rises, it is certainly against nature for it to ascend to higher regions which are heavier and be carried by air, since air is more subtle. Or if water is carried by the movement of the whole rotating sphere, just as it is carried by the lowest sphere, it is also dispersed by the highest sphere. If it is poured out as they claim, it certainly does not cease to be carried away: for if the axis of the sky is always moving, then water is always being drawn up. If it descends; therefore it always remains above the heavens from where it descends. Then what is the obstacle if they confess that water was suspended above the heavens? For by what word do they say that the earth is suspended in the middle and remains immobile, since it is undoubtedly heavier than water; by this reasoning they can say that the water does not fall precipitously by the rotation of that heavenly sphere which is above the heavens. For just as the earth is suspended by empty space, or remains immobile with weight balanced on all sides; so too is water either weighed down by heavier or equal weights to the earth. And so the sea does not easily overflow the land, unless it is commanded to depart.

12. Then when they say that the celestial sphere, shining with burning stars, revolves on its own, didn't divine providence necessarily foresee that water would flow within and overflow beyond the celestial sphere to temper the fiery heat of the axis? Therefore, because fire overflows and burns, water also overflowed on the Earth so that the rising heat from the sun and the shining of the stars would not consume it, and so that the tender beginnings of things would not be harmed by the unusual vapor. How many springs, rivers, and lakes irrigate the lands, because a certain internal fire vaporizes them? For from where would trees sprout, or crops burst forth, or newly grown crops

be cooked; unless that internal fire also animates them? It is also frequently expelled from rocks, and often leaps out from the wood itself while being cut. Therefore, just as fire is a necessary creature, so that it may remain orderly and organized, and the kindness of the heavens tempers the severity of the waters; so too the excess of waters is not superfluous, as one would consume the other, because unless there is a suitable measure of both, just as fire dries out water, so too water extinguishes fire. And so He examined all things with weight and measure; for the rainfall has been counted for Him, as we read in the Book of Job. Knowing that either an easy lack of things or a resolution of the universe would occur if one were exceeded by the other, He tempered the expenses of both so that neither fire would consume too much nor water would overflow, but the decrease of both would be moderate, which would both remove the excess and preserve the necessary. Therefore, when such great flows of rivers burst forth from the lands, the Nile, stagnating Egypt with its overflowing river, the Danube, cutting across the lands of barbarians and Romans until it reaches the Black Sea, the Rhine, directing its course from the Alps to the depths of the Ocean, a remarkable wall of the Roman Empire against wild peoples, the Po faithful in bringing maritime supplies to Italy, the Rhone, flowing rapidly and splitting the straits of the Tyrrhenian Sea, where there is said to be no small danger for sailors as the waves of the sea and the currents of the river contend with each other, and likewise the Phasis, flowing from the Caucasus mountains in the northern part and rushing into the Black Sea with several others, it is extensive to enumerate the names of each of these rivers that either flow into our sea or discharge into the Ocean; therefore, even though there is such abundance of water, the land of the southern region is often parched by heat and exhausted by the heat, and the miserable farmers, having expended their labor, frequently lack vital relief in the form of drinking water, as the wells dry up and the stream runs dry. And there will indeed come a time when he will say to the abyss: you will be deserted, and I will dry up all the rivers, as he foretold through Isaiah (Isaiah 44:27). But even before that day comes, by divine decree, the nature of the elements themselves frequently determines the world to be shaken either by floods or by excessive heat and drought.

13. Therefore, do not imagine an incredible number of waters, but consider the power of heat, and you will not be incredulous. Fire absorbs a great deal: this should be evident to us from the fact that doctors attach certain vessels to the body, which are narrow at the mouth, wider at the top, concave inside, and shine with the gentle light of a lamp, so that this heat may draw all moisture into itself. Therefore, who would doubt that the fiery ether, burning with great heat and vapor, would ignite and consume everything, unless it were restrained by a certain law of its creator, so that neither rivers, nor lakes, nor the very seas could extinguish its power? And therefore, descending from above with a certain force, it is often disrupted into such heavy rainfalls that rivers and lakes are suddenly filled, and even the seas overflow. Hence, we frequently see the sun wet and dripping. In this, it provides clear evidence that it has taken water as nourishment for its temperature.

However, they have such a strong desire to attack the truth that they deny that the sun itself is of warm nature; because it is white, not red, or ruddy in the appearance of fire. And therefore they say that it is not of fiery nature, and if it has any heat, they claim that it occurs from excessive motion of transformation. They think that this should be said so that it does not seem to consume moisture: because the heat by which moisture is either diminished or often exhausted, does not have a natural quality. But they accomplish nothing when they construct such things; for it makes

no difference whether one has heat from natural causes or from some accident or other, since every fire consumes a supply of moisture or something of that sort, such as flames are accustomed to devour. For whether one collects fire from wood not at all charred, but simply pounded together, and takes the flame up in leaves, the flame still burns, just as though you were lighting a torch from a fire; or whether you light a lamp from the flame of another lamp, the kind and nature of the light are the same as though the light had originated, not from a natural fire, but as the result of an accident. Hence, at least from here they contemplate the heat of the sun, by which God has established different places and times for its course; so that if it always stayed in the same places, it would be consumed by daily vapor. They say that the sea itself has salty and bitter water because the water that flows into the sea from the rivers is evaporated by the heat, and only as much vapor is consumed daily as is brought in from the various courses of the rivers. This is said to happen through a certain judgment of the sun, which takes for itself what is pure and light, and leaves behind what is heavy and earthly: from which remains that salty and dry thing, which is unpleasant and tasteless for drinking.

Chapter IV.

Coelum, a common noun; but specifically, firmament: and from where both words are derived. Hence, some meanings of coelum; and finally, the moral interpretation of both the heavens and the firmament, as well as the waters.

15. But let us return to the point. Let a firmament be made in the midst of the waters. Let it not move, as I have already said, because it says above 'heaven' here it says 'firmament', for David also says: 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims the work of his hands' (Ps. 19:1), that is, the work of the world, when it is seen, praises its creator. For through the things that are seen, his invisible majesty is recognized. And it seems to me that the common name for the heavens is 'heavens' because Scripture testifies to many heavens, but the specific name is 'firmament'. Indeed, here it is said: 'And God called the firmament Heaven' (Gen. I, 8), so that it seems to have spoken generally above, that the heaven was made in the beginning, so as to comprehend the entire structure of celestial creatures. But here, the specific solidity of this outer firmament, which is called the firmament of heaven, as we read in the prophetic hymn: 'Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven' (Dan. III, 36). For heaven, which is called οὐρανός in Greek, is called 'caelatum' in Latin because it has the impressed lights of the stars as signs, as if it were engraved: just as we call silver that shines with prominent signs 'caelatum'. But οὐρανός is so called from the fact that it can be seen. Therefore, the land, which is darker, is called the sky because it is clear, as if visible. Hence, I believe this saying: 'The birds of the sky always see the face of my Father, who is in the heavens' (Gen. I, 20). And: 'Birds fly around the firmament of the sky,' because the powers that exist in that visible place can observe all these things and have them within their sights.

16. Finally, heaven is said to be closed in the times of Elijah when Ahab and Jezebel ruled with treachery, and the people served in royal sacrilege, because no one lifted their eyes to heaven, no one honored its creator, but they worshipped wood and stones. How do we gather this? Because even in the curses of the people of Israel, God said: 'The sky above you shall be bronze, and the earth beneath you iron' (Leviticus 26:19), when the people of Judah paid the price for their treachery and were punished by the inclemency of the heavens and the infertility of the earth; for it

is from heaven that fertility comes. Lastly, Moses bestowed blessings upon Joseph from the boundaries of the sky and the dew of the depths of the fountains downward, and according to the hour from the course of the sun, and from the suitable months, and from the summit of the eternal mountains and hills, giving, by heavenly moderation, nourishment to the fertility of the earth. Therefore, the sky is like iron, which does not release any moisture when the rain is not broken by any clouds. The sky is also made of iron and is sub-dusky, compressed and cloudy with a rusty color, when the earth is tightened by the cold, then moisture seems to be suspended over our head, and it threatens to descend momentarily. Usually, even the waters that freeze in snow are solidified by the freezing gusts of winds, and when the air is ruptured, the snow is poured forth. For this firmament cannot be ruptured without some kind of loud noise. Therefore, it is also called firmament because it is not weak or slack. Hence, the Scripture says about thunder, which, having been conceived within the bosom of the clouds with a strong spirit, is about to burst forth violently, that it strengthens the thunder (Amos 4:13). Therefore, firmament is called firmament, or that which is strengthened by divine power, as Scripture teaches us, saying: Praise Him in the firmament of His power (Ps. 150:1).

17. And it does not pass over to recount some heavens of heavens to intelligible virtues, the firmament to operative ones. And therefore to praise the heavens, or to narrate the glory of God, to announce the firmament: but not as spiritual, but as the works of the world narrate, as we have said above. Others also interpret the purifying virtues as the waters that are above the heavens. We understand these as fitting for the discourse: yet it does not seem foreign and absurd to us if we understand the true waters for that reason which we mentioned. For both dew and frost and cold and heat, according to the prophetic hymn, bless the Lord, and the earth also blesses. And we do not refer these to intelligible natures, but to the truth. Even the dragons praise the Lord; for when their nature and appearance are seen, it neither lacks beauty nor shows the presence of reason.

Chapter V.

The perfect union of the Father and the Son in their works. To see in God the same as to approve. To praise the work while the parts are not yet complete is proper to God.

18. And God saw that it was good (Gen. I, 3). The Son does what the Father wants: the Father praises what the Son does. Nothing is found in Him that deviates from nature, whose work does not deviate from the will of the Father. He saw, indeed, not with bodily eyes, but he determined that it was fitting for the fullness of grace, so that his judgment might be known to me; for we are accustomed also to discuss those things which are divine. And what wonder if they can retract from the work, who ask questions about the generation of the very operator Himself? They call Him into judgment, they try to assert that He is unequal and degenerate. Thus the law: And God said, and God did. The Father and the Son are honored with the same name of majesty. And God saw that it was good. He spoke as if knowing everything the Father willed, and He saw as if knowing everything the Son would do, holding knowledge and acting in partnership.

He saw that it was good. He did not know it as something unknown, but he approved of what pleased him. It was not as if a work unknown pleased him; for neither was the Father unknown who was pleased in the Son, as it is written: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matt. III, 17) . But the Son always knows the will of the Father, and the Father of the Son, and the

Son always hears the Father, and the Father the Son, through the unity of nature, will, and substance. Finally, the Son testifies to this in his Gospel, saying to the Father: I knew that you always hear me (John 11:42). For the Son is the image of the invisible God. He expresses all things of the Father as an image, he illuminates all things of his as the splendor of glory, and he reveals them to us. The Son sees the work of the Father, just as the Father sees the work of the Son; as the Lord himself declared: The Son can do nothing by himself, unless he sees the Father doing it (John 5:19). Therefore he sees the Father who is doing, and he sees through the secret of the invisible nature, and he hears likewise. Finally he says: As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is true; because I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent me (John 8:16).

20. This is mystical, that is moral. It has seen for me, it has approved for me. What God has approved, may you not speak reprehensibly of; for what God has cleansed, may you not call common (Acts X, 15), you remembered it is written for you; therefore, let no one blaspheme the good of God. If the firmament is good, how much more so is its creator good; even if the Arians refuse, let the Eunomians cry out, the fruit of a degenerate root is worse.

21. God saw, He said, that it was good. Artists usually create individual parts first and then skillfully connect them together: those who carve human faces or shape bodies from marble, sculpt with bronze, or mold from wax, do not know how the individual parts will fit together or what beauty the future connection will bring; and therefore they either dare not praise or praise only in part. But God, as the judge of the whole, foreseeing what is to come, praises as if already perfect those things that are still at the beginning of the first work, surpassing the knowledge of the end of the work. It is not surprising, therefore, that someone who sees the perfection of things, not in the completion of the work, but in the predestination of their own will, praises each part as if it were suitable for the future: praises the fullness of the individual parts put together with beauty. For that is true beauty, both to have what is fitting in each individual part and also in the whole, so that grace may be praised in each part and the fullness of a suitable form may be praised in all.

22. But now, even the second day is coming to a close for us, so that while we are constructing the framework of the firmament, we do not make those who listen weaker with our long-windedness; while the conversation is extended into the night, which is still without the light of the moon and the stars, for the luminaries of the heavens have not yet been created, it may bring darkness to those who are returning: at the same time, let their bodies be taken care of with food and drink, so that while their minds are feasting, the frailty of the flesh does not complain about the fasting of the night as well.

Book Three. Of the Work of the Third Day.

Chapter I. (Sermo IV.) When the waters obey divine command, it is disgraceful for humans not to obey it. The gathering of waters in the Church symbolizes this. How splendid a spectacle the Church presents; and how it is founded upon the rivers. On this third day, let us be born in our discourse, which arose in the reading. A glorious day, which set the land free from shipwreck, as God said: 'Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place' (Gen. I, 9). Let us begin with a preface to this. It is said, 'Let the water be gathered,' and it was gathered; and it is often said, 'Let the people be gathered,' and they are not gathered. It is no small shame to the elements, which are insensible, to obey the command of God, and for men not to obey, to whom the sense has been given by the same author. And perhaps shame has prompted you to gather more today, so

that on the day when the water gathered into one assembly, the people would not seem to be gathered in the Church of the Lord.

2. Nor do we have this example of obedient water only; for it is also written elsewhere: The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and trembled (Ps. 76:17). For it seems unlikely that this is not said about the waters, since the same prophet also says elsewhere: The sea saw and fled, the Jordan turned back (Ps. 114:3). For who is ignorant of the truly amazing fact, that the sea fled before the crossing of the Hebrews, when the waves were divided; the people passed over with dusty footprints, believing the sea to have been destroyed and the waves to have fled? Finally the Egyptian believed this, and entered: but the wave returned to him, which had fled. So the water knows how to gather, and to fear, and to flee, when God commands. Let us imitate this water and know the one gathering of the Lord, the one Church.

3. Once, water was gathered here from every valley, from every swamp, from every lake. The valley is heresy, the valley is paganism; for God is of the mountains, not of the valleys. In the Church there is rejoicing, in heresy and paganism there is weeping and mournfulness. Thus it says: He has assigned weeping in the valley (Ps. LXXXIII, 6-7). Therefore, the Catholic people are gathered from every valley. Now there are not many congregations, but there is one congregation, one Church. And it is said here: let water be gathered from every valley, and a spiritual gathering was made, and one people was formed; the Church is filled with heretics and pagans. The valley is a stage, the valley is a circus, where the deceitful horse runs for salvation, where base and contemptible contention occurs, where there is a hideous ugliness of disputes. Therefore, from those who were accustomed to adhere to the circus, the faith of the Church grew, and the daily assembly increased.

4. The marsh is luxury, the marsh is intemperance, the marsh is incontinence: in which are swirling the desires, the murmurs of beasts, the hiding places of passions: where all who fall in are engulfed and do not emerge: where footprints slip, where the steps of individuals float: where coots pollute themselves while bathing: where mournful cooing of doves comes from above: where the lazy turtle remains stuck in the muddy whirlpool; finally, the boar in the marsh, the deer at the springs. And so, from all the swamp, where the frogs were singing an old complaint, faith was gathered, purity of heart was gathered, and simplicity of mind.

5. The water is gathered from every lake and every well, so that no one may dig a well for his brother, into which he himself falls; but let everyone love one another, let everyone support one another, and, like one body, let the different members sustain each other: not by deadly songs and the entertainments of actors that soften the mind for love, but by the harmony of the Church and the melodious voice of the people praising God and the pious life pleasing to him: not by purple spectacles and precious curtains for the sake of pleasure, but by beholding this most beautiful structure of the world, this connection of distant elements, the vaulted sky as a accommodation, covering those who dwell in this world, the earth given for work, the spread out air, the enclosed seas; this people is the instrument of divine operation, in which the melody of the divine oracle resounds and the Spirit of God works within; this temple is the sanctuary of the Trinity, the dwelling place of holiness, the holy Church, in which the heavenly curtains shine, of which it is said: Enlarge the place of your tents, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; spare not: lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes; still extend them to the right hand and to the left,

and your descendants shall possess the nations and inhabit the desolate cities (Isaiah 54:2-3). Therefore, he has curtains, which lift up a good life, cover sins, and overshadow fault. This is the Church which is established upon the seas, and prepared upon the rivers. For it is confirmed and prepared above you, who like pure rivers flow into it from the fountain of the world, of which it is said: The rivers have lifted up, O Lord, the rivers have lifted up their voices from the voice of many waters (Psalm 92:3). And it adds: Wonderful are the elevations of the sea, wonderful is the Lord on high (ibid. 4). Good are the rivers; for you have drawn from that perpetual and full fountain, from which you flow, of whom it is said to you: Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from his belly (John 7:38). But he was speaking about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were about to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. But now, as if you were turning back with me to the beginning of the Jordan's streams.

Chapter II.

The land, previously invisible, appeared when waters were poured over it and converged into the same place. The divine power bestowed stability and later fluidity to the waters, as is demonstrated by various examples. How remarkable that all waters could be contained in one place and that God could assign them their boundaries.

7. 'Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place,' he said, 'and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. Perhaps someone may not have believed our previous words, in which we discussed that the earth was invisible because it was covered by waters and could not be seen with physical eyes. For the prophet referred this to himself, that is, to our condition, not to the majesty of divine nature, which certainly sees all things. But, in order that you may be aware that we undertook this task of treating (the subject) at your suggestion, not to make a display of our skill, but for the sake of your instruction, we testify that after the gathering together of the waters which were upon the earth, and after their separation into the seas, the dry land appeared. Let them cease, therefore, to raise objections to us on the ground of dialectical discussions, saying: How is it possible for the invisible earth, which has naturally inherent in it, in every part of it, both form and color, to be subject to the sight, when every color is subject to sight? The voice of God proclaims: Let the water be gathered together and let the dry land appear. And again Scripture says: The water was gathered together into one place, and the dry land appeared. Why was it necessary to repeat, unless the prophet wished to anticipate questions? Does it not seem to say: I did not say invisible according to nature, but according to the superabundance of waters? Finally, it added that the dry land appeared, the veil being removed, which was not seen before.

Moreover, they also raise other questions, saying: If there was water in different congregations, how is it that if those congregations were in higher places, the water did not flow down to the place to which it was directed after the command of the Lord? For the nature of water naturally flows downward. But if those congregations were in lower places, how does the water ascend to higher places against its nature? Therefore, either the natural course did not obey the command, or it could not advance against its nature by the command. I will easily answer this question, if I myself answer it before the commandment of the Lord that this was the nature of waters, that they would glide, that they would flow. For this does not have the use of the other elements, but a special and proper use: not from a certain order, but rather from the will and operation of the highest God.

They hear what God has commanded. But the voice of God is the efficient cause of nature. The effect of operation fulfills that voice. The water began to glide and to gather into one congregation, which before was spread throughout the earth and clung to many receptacles. I haven't read his course before, I haven't learned his movement before, neither my eyes have seen, nor my ears have heard. The water stood in different places, moved at the voice of God. Does it not seem that this voice of God made such a nature for it? The creature followed the command, and made use of the law. For the law of the original constitution left a form for the future. Finally, he made the day and the night once: from that time, the succession of both continues, and the continuous renewal. Also the water is commanded to run together: from there it runs, springs flow into rivers, rivers flow into the seas, lakes are carried into the oceans; the water itself goes before, presses, and follows. There is one channel, one body. And although there is a different height, nevertheless the equality of its back is undivided. Therefore, I think it is called a sea because its surface is level.

9. I replied in accordance with their proposal; let them now respond to me, if they have never seen springs gushing forth from the depths, water rising from the ground. Who causes it? From where does it burst forth? How does it not run dry? How is it that the lowest parts of the sun emit waves? These are secrets of hidden nature. Moreover, who is unaware that, when descending rapidly to the lowest points, it rises up to higher places, and rises even to the summit of a mountain; and often, when directed through channels by the hand of an artist, it rises as much as it has descended? Therefore, if it is carried by its own impetus, or is led and lifted up against its own nature by the skill of the craftsman, are you amazed that by the divine operation of precept something has been added for its use, which was not present in its use before? Now let them tell me how, as it is written, he gathered the waters of the sea into a vessel (Ps. 32:7), how he brought forth water from a rock? He who was able to bring forth water from a rock that was not, was he not able to bring forth water that was? He struck the rock, and the waters flowed out (Ps. 77:20), exclaims David, and the torrents overflowed. And elsewhere: The waters will stand on the mountains (Ps. 104:6). You have in the Gospel (Matt. 8:24 et seq.) that when there was a severe storm and a great disturbance in the sea, so that the apostles were in danger of shipwreck and trembled, they woke up the sleeping Lord Jesus in the stern and He rose up and commanded the wind and the sea, and the storm was calmed, the tranquility was restored. Who was able to calm the entire sea with his authority, but was not able to move the waters with his authority? Yet during the flood we have learned that the fountains of the deep burst forth, and that afterwards the Spirit was sent and dried up the water. If they do not want to obey nature, and acknowledge that the use of the elements has been turned into the authority of God, let them at least concede that with the wind sent forth, the waters can flow, as we see every day in the sea, where the waters flow from where the wind has blown. If, at the time of Moses, with a strong south wind, the sea was dried up, in the same way the congregation of waters could not be dried up, and water could flow into the sea, which was later separated from the deep (2 Kings, 6:6)? But let them learn that nature can be changed, when water flowed from a rock, and iron floated on water, which certainly Elisha deserved to do by praying, not by commanding. Therefore, if Elisha lifted up iron against nature, could Christ not move the waters? But he moved, who was able to say: Lazarus, come forth (John 11:23), and he raised the dead; for God does what he commands. Therefore, take it as an equal example when it is said: Let the water be gathered, and it was gathered. But in saying let it be gathered, he not only moved it from its place, but he also established it in a place, so that it would not just flow by, but would remain.

Therefore, it is a greater miracle how all the congregations have flowed into one congregation, and one congregation has not been filled. For even the Scripture establishes this among its wonders, saying: All the rivers go to the sea, and the sea is not filled (Ecclesiastes 1:7). Therefore, both are by the command of God, that the water flows and does not overflow. Therefore, the seas are bounded by a set limit, so that they do not overflow the land and hinder the cultivation of the fields, depriving them of the gift of earthly fertility. Therefore, let them understand that these are divine commandments and the work of heaven. Moreover, the Lord, through a cloud, spoke to Job and, among other things, also about the boundaries of the sea: 'I determined its limits, set bars and doors for it. And I said to it: 'You may come this far, but no farther; here your proud waves will stop' (Job 38:10). Do we not ourselves see the sea frequently restless, so that when its waves rise high like a towering mountain of water, they crash against the shore, dissolve into foam, and, being pushed back by certain barriers of the low-lying sand, return, as it is written: 'Or will you not fear me?' declares the Lord. 'Will you not tremble in my presence? I made the sand a boundary for the sea, an everlasting barrier it cannot cross' (Jeremiah 5:22)? Therefore, the weakest force of all, the power of the sand's dust restrains the violence of the raging sea, and as if directed by heavenly reins, it is called back with a prescribed limit, and the violent movement of the water is broken into itself, and its surging waves are divided into their recessed bays.

11. Moreover, unless the force of the celestial ordinance were to inhibit it, what could prevent the Red Sea from mingling with the Egyptian Sea through the flat plains of Egypt, which are said to lie in the lowest valleys of the plain? Indeed, those who desired to connect these two seas and pour them into each other have taught this. Sesostris the Egyptian, who was older, and Darius the Mede, who desired to bring it into effect with a view to greater power, attempted what had been previously attempted by a native. This fact is evidence that the Indian Ocean is above the Red Sea, in which the Egyptian Sea below it flows. And perhaps so that the sea would not spread more widely, cascading from higher to lower areas, both kings recalled their respective efforts.

Chapter III.

There is only one continuous collection of waters, but different names are given according to the diverse regions. This is how God prepared a place for the waters, which are spread throughout the whole world. Also, it includes lakes and ponds within the same gathering.

12. Now I ask, when he says: 'Let the water be gathered into one place,' how could one gathering receive the waters that are spread throughout lakes, marshes, ponds, rivers, and overflowed in valleys and plains and all the flatter places, flowing from springs and rivers? Or how could one gathering, when even now the seas are different? For we call it the Ocean sea, and the Tyrrhenian, and the Adriatic, and the Indian, and the Egyptian, and the Pontic, and the Propontis, and the Hellespont, and the Black, and the Aegean, and the Ionian, and the Atlantic sea. Many also call the Cretan Sea and the Northern Caspian Sea. Therefore, let us consider the words of Scripture, which have been examined by a balanced scale.

13. 'Let the water be collected,' he says, 'into one collection. The collection of waters is one and continuous, but the bays of the sea are different, as some of the legal writers say (Plat. in Timaeus). For indeed the sea has the most extensive bays, and deservedly in different places there are different names, because the names have adhered to the waters from the names of the regions. But the collection of waters is one, because the continuous waves, from the Indian Sea to

the shores of Cadiz, and from there, encompassing the globe, it encloses the Red Sea in the Ocean: and within it the Adriatic and other seas are mixed with the Tyrrhenian, distinguished by names, not by waves.' Where you have it beautifully, because God called the collections of waters seas (Gen. I, 10). So also there is one overall collection, which is called the sea, and many collections which are called seas for regions. Just as there are many lands, such as Africa, Spain, Thrace, Macedonia, Syria, Egypt, Gaul, and Italy, which are called by the names of regions, and there is one land, so also many seas are called by the names of places, and there is one sea, as the prophet says, saying: Yours are the heavens, and yours is the earth, you founded the circle of the earth and its fullness, you created the north wind and the sea (Ps. LXXXVIII, 12). And to Job the Lord himself said: But have the gates of the sea been shut up? (Job 38:8).

14. Now, because we have spoken about a single collection, this question arises: whether, when waters were spread out throughout nearly all the earth and above the earth, in the valleys of fields, hollows of mountains, and the plains of the plains, a single gathering, poured forth from the sea, could have received and drained all those waters, which were stagnating before being poured forth through the entire river. For if everything was covered in this manner, he would not say, the earth was seen, unless he wanted to indicate that it was uncovered in all places. If the flood during the time of Noah covered and hid the mountains, when the separation had already been made between the waters above the heavens and those below the firmament, how much more can it not be doubted that even the tops of the mountains were concealed by that flooding? Therefore, from where was all that excess water derived? What receptacles were able to absorb it, so continuous and interconnected? Much could be said on this matter.

First, because the Creator of all things was able to spread out the spaces of the lands themselves; this some before us, affirming, have established according to their own opinion. I do not omit what He was able to do; I pass over what He did, which I have not learned clearly from the authority of the Scriptures, as it were a secret, lest from here perhaps other questions might be sought by them also. Nevertheless, I assert according to the Scriptures that He was able to spread out lowly places and open fields, just as He Himself says: 'I will walk before you and make mountains plain' (Isaiah 45:2). The force of the water itself could also make deeper things, which had settled, more turbulent: with such a movement of waves and such a surge of a more agitated element, which daily twists the depths of the sea and turns the sands out of the deep. Who then knows to what extent that great and uncharted sea, which encloses Britain raging with waves, establishes itself for sailors and extends into the farther and even inaccessible secrets of the stories themselves? Who then does not gather how much Lucrinus and Avernus in Italy, Tiberias also in Palestine, and that lake which stretches between Palestine and Egypt to the deserts of Arabia, and the various ports of Augustus and Trajan, and the sea poured out through the whole world?

16. But there are also lakes that are not mixed with waves, and stagnant pools that do not mingle with the currents, like Lake Como and Lake Garda, Lake Albano and many others, how is this one gathering of waters? But just as it is said that God made two lights, that is, the sun and the moon, even though there are also the lights of the stars, so too one gathering is said, even though there are many. For those that do not mix are not counted.

Chapter IV.

The particular quality of the earth, when it is called dry, is signified. The properties of the elements, by which they are mutually connected, are discussed; and this is specifically examined with regard to the earth.

17. But, as it seems, since we were talking about the sea, we have strayed a bit; let us return to the point and consider what the Lord says: Let the water be gathered together into one gathering, and let the dry land appear, and let it not be called, earth. Who does not notice the excellent placement of this? For the earth can be mixed with mud, wet with water, whose species does not appear when water is poured over it. But the dry land refers not only to the general nature, but also to the specific kinds of land, so that it may be useful, dry, suitable, and ready for cultivation. At the same time it is considered, lest it appear to be dried up more by the sun than by the command of God, because it became dry before the sun was created. Hence David, distinguishing the sea and the earth, says of the Lord God: For the sea is his, and he made it; and his hands founded the dry (Ps. 94:5). For the expression 'dry' is a description of nature, the appellation 'earth' is a simple designation of a matter which has its own quality. For just as the designation 'animal' signifies a type of being in which there is something proper and excellent, so also 'earth' can be said generally to be either teeming with water or barren and impassable, and without water. Therefore, even those things that are abundant in water have the ability to become dry. For when water is removed, it begins to be dry, as it is written: 'He turned rivers into a desert, springs of water into thirsty ground' (Ps. 107:33), that is, he made dry land from watery soil.

Therefore, the earth has its own specific quality, just as each element does. For air has a humid quality, water has a cold quality, and fire has a hot quality. And this is the main characteristic of each individual element, which we deduce through reason. However, if we want to comprehend sensibly and corporeally, we find them connected and composed; for example, dry and cold earth, cold and humid water, hot and humid air, hot and dry fire; and thus, through these paired qualities, the individual elements mix with one another. Since the earth is of a dry and cold nature, it is connected to water by the affinity of cold nature, and by the aid of heat, because air is moist. Therefore, water seems to embrace the earth and air with two arms, one of coldness and moisture, the other of earth and moist air. Air also, being in the middle between two opposing elements by nature, namely water and fire, reconciles both elements to itself; for it is connected to water by moisture and to fire by heat. Fire, which is also hot and dry in nature, is connected to air through heat, but is replenished with dryness through its association with earth; and in this way, they come together in a certain circuit and harmony of unity. Hence, they are called in Greek στοιχεῖα, which in Latin we call elements, because they come together and harmonize with each other.

Here, however, we have made progress, because Scripture says that God called the dry land, that is, that which is its principal attribute, by the name of 'land'. For the natural property of the land is dryness: this is its special prerogative. Therefore, dryness is the principal attribute. It also possesses coldness, but second to the first attributes. And in order to be moist, it acquires this by its affinity with water. Therefore, it is its own, this is foreign: its own, because it is dry; foreign, because it is moist. Therefore, the author of nature held on to what he first gave, because that is from nature, but this is from a cause. Therefore, the property should be defined from the main things, not from the accidents of the earth, so that our knowledge would be informed according to the prerogative of its quality.

Chapter V.

Some consider that certain things have been added to this place in Scripture. The commendation of the sea is due to its beauty and manifold usefulness, but especially because it embraces the island hermits with its waves, and represents the figure of the ecclesiastical community: which is enclosed by the pious prayer of the author.

20. And God saw that it was good (Gen., I, 10). We do not overlook the fact that some people believe that this verse does not exist in Hebrew or in other interpretations: 'For the waters were gathered together into their respective places, and the dry land appeared; and God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas.' When God says that it was so, it is sufficient for them as a sign of the celebrated operation. But because in other creatures it has both the definition of command and the repetition of operation as a sign or effect, we do not think it absurd that which is reported to have been added, even if the truth is shown to be available or the authority from other interpreters. For indeed we have found many things not without purpose added and joined to the Hebrew reading by the Seventy men.

Therefore God saw that the sea is good. Although the appearance of this element is beautiful, either when it whitens with rising heaps and peaks of waves, and the white rocks drip with spray, or when it is made crisp by a gentle breeze, and it presents the color of a calm serenity blushing with purple, which is frequently poured forth from afar for those who look on, when it does not strike neighboring shores with violent waves, but as it were embraces them peacefully and greets them with a kiss, what sweet sound, what pleasant roar, what pleasing and harmonious echo! Yet I do not think that the beauty of this creature can be esteemed with the eyes, but rather it corresponds and agrees according to the reason of its operation and the judgment of its maker.

Therefore, the sea is good, first because it necessarily supports the lands with moisture, secretly supplying a certain useful juice through certain veins. The sea is good, like a host of rivers, a source of rain, a channel of alluvium, a means of transportation for distant peoples, a way to remove the dangers of battles, a means to contain barbaric fury, a support in times of need, a refuge in dangers, a source of pleasure, a promoter of health, a connection between separated people, a shortcut in travel, an escape for the toiling, a support for taxes, and a source of sustenance in times of barrenness. From this, rain is transferred to the earth; for water is drawn from the sea by the rays of the sun, and that which is subtle is carried away: then, the higher it is lifted, the more it cools by the shadow of the clouds, and it becomes rain which not only moderates the dryness of the earth but also fertilizes barren fields.

23. Why should I enumerate the islands, which are mostly covered like a necklace, on which those who renounce the enticements of secular intemperance choose to hide from the world with a steadfast commitment to self-restraint, and to divert from the uncertain twists and turns of this life? Therefore, the sea is the secret of temperance, the exercise of self-restraint, the retreat of solemnity, the haven of security, the tranquility of the age, the sobriety of this world, and the incentive of devotion for faithful and devout men, so that they may compete with the gentle sound of the flowing waves in the singing of the psalms, so that the islands may applaud in harmony with the calm waves and the chorus of saints, and so that the hymns of the saints may resound. Where do I find a way to grasp all the beauty of the sea that the operator saw? And what more? What else is that harmony of the waves, if not a certain harmony of the people? Hence the Church is

often compared to the beautiful sea, which, at the entrance of the people, sends forth waves through all its gates; then, in the prayer of the whole people, it resounds like the waves receding, with responsories of psalms, the singing of men, women, virgins, and children, echoing like the crashing of waves. For what shall I say, that the water washes away sin, and the holy breath of the Spirit breathes salvation? May the Lord make those streams of success run for us on a prosperous wood, to safely come to harbor, to not experience spiritual wickedness greater than we can bear, to not know temptations, to be ignorant of the shipwrecks of faith, to have profound peace: and if ever there is something that stirs up heavy waves of this world for us, to have the vigilant Lord Jesus as our pilot, who commands with a word, who calms the storm, who restores the tranquility of the sea, to whom is honor and glory, praise, everlastingness from ages and now and always, forever and ever. Amen.

Chapter VI. (Sermo V.)

The appearance of the earth, which is found in its sprouting and greenness, is conveniently added; it provides the voice of God as the cause of fertility, which some mistakenly attribute to the heat of the sun.

25. As the water receded, it was fitting that the appearance of the earth and grace should be given, so that it would no longer be invisible and formless. For many also say that what does not have appearance is invisible; and therefore they take the earth to have been invisible, not because it could not be seen by the highest God or his angels, for humans had not yet been created, nor even animals, but because it was without its appearance. However, the appearance of the earth is the budding and greenness of the field. And so, in order to make the earth visible and composed, God said: Let the earth bring forth grass, yielding seed according to its kind, and the fruit tree yielding fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself (Gen. I, 11).

26. Let us hear the words of truth, whose series is the salvation of those who listen. For the first voice of God, imparted to each created being for the purpose of procreation, is the law of nature, which remains on earth for all ages, giving a prescription for future succession, so that the process of reproduction and fructification may grow in usefulness. Therefore, the first germination occurs when the nascent things seem to burst forth: then, when the germ bursts forth and progresses, it becomes a plant: and when the plant has progressed a little, it becomes hay. How useful, how powerful a voice. Let the earth bring forth the grass of hay, that is, let the earth itself bring forth, needing no help from any other, not requiring anyone's assistance.

27. For many are accustomed to say: Unless the milder heat of the sun warms the earth and in some way nurtures it with its rays, the earth will not be able to bring forth vegetation. And for this reason, people attribute divine honor to the sun; because with the power of its heat it penetrates the depths of the earth and nurtures scattered seeds, or it loosens the frozen veins of trees. Therefore, listen to God as if he were uttering this voice: Let the foolish talk of men who is to come to an end, let empty opinion depart. Before the sun becomes a luminary, let the grass grow: let its antiquity have precedence over that of the sun. Lest the error of men prevail, let the earth bring forth before receiving the nourishment of the sun. Let all know that the sun is not the creator of what is born. The gentleness of the earth loosens it, and by the indulgence of God, it produces fruits. How does the sun serve the purpose of life to the newly born, when they are first brought forth by the divine operation of vivification before the sun comes into play for these purposes of

life? He is younger than the plants, younger than the hay.

Chapter VII.

Why was food created for livestock before it was created for humans? Lush grass represents the human condition, whose fragility is beautifully portrayed. We should imitate the same grass by bearing fruit; this is where the Manichaeans and the Eunomians are criticized.

28. And perhaps someone may wonder that food for cattle was created before food for man. In this we must first recognize the profoundness of God, who does not neglect even the smallest things, as the Wisdom of God says in the Gospel: Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (Matthew 6:26). For when they are fed by the grace of God, no one should boast of their own industry and virtue. Then because he ought to prefer simple and natural food to other foods. For this is the food of temperance, the others of pleasure and luxury: this is the common food of all animals, that of a few. Therefore, it is an example of frugality, a teaching of thrift, that everyone should be content with the food of simple herbs and cheap spices or of the fruit that nature has offered, which the first generosity of God has given. That is healthy, that is useful food, which repels diseases, which cuts off indigestions, not by the labor of human childbirth, but poured out by the divine gift, crops without sowing, fruits without seeds, so sweet, so pleasing, that it is even to the fullness of pleasure and use. Finally, he moved on to the first course, and remained for the second.

29. But what miracle of this creature should I examine, and what proof of the working of wisdom should I express? For in this species of germination, both the image of human life is observed, and a certain emblem of our nature and condition is seen, and a mirror shines forth. That herb and the flower of hay are a representation of human flesh, as the interpreter of divine goodness expressed by means of the instrument of his own voice, saying: 'Cry out.' What shall I cry out? All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man is like the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls: but the word of the Lord endures forever (Isaiah 40:6 et seq.). It is the opinion of God that the human voice is. God says, Cry: but in him Isaiah speaks. He replied, What shall I cry? And when he heard as if he were speaking, he added: All flesh is grass. And truly; for the glory of man flourishes in the flesh like grass: and what is considered lofty, is small like grass, premature like a flower, fleeting like grass it produces the greenness of life in appearance, not the solidity of fruit, offering the joyfulness of a flower, which will soon fall, like grass, which before it is uprooted, withers. For what strength can there be in the flesh, what lasting health can there be.

Today you may see a strong young man, in the prime of adolescence, flourishing with a pleasing appearance and a sweet complexion; tomorrow he appears to you changed in face and expression: he who yesterday seemed most elegant in the beauty of his appearance, today appears pitifully weakened by illness. For many, either labor breaks them, or poverty wastes them away, or indigestion troubles them, or wine corrupts them, or old age weakens them, or excessive pleasure emasculates them, or luxury fades their color. Isn't it true that the hay burns and the flower falls? Another noble bird, adorned with the plumes of ancestors and esteemed with the insignia of his forefathers, rich in friends, surrounded by clients and protected on both sides, leading and supporting a large household, suddenly disturbed by the weight of some unexpected danger, is abandoned by all, deserted by companions, attacked by those closest to him. Behold, it

is true that the life of man, like the hay, withers before it is uprooted. There is also someone who, having long been abundant in wealth, flying on the fame of generosity in the mouths of individuals, renowned in honors, superior in powers, lofty in tribunals, elevated on the throne, blessed, esteemed by the people, while he is being led by the shouting of heralds, is suddenly dragged into the prison by a sudden reversal of events, where he himself had thrown others, and among his fellow prisoners laments the torment of impending punishment. How great a crowd of applauding people led him, with envy, in a splendid procession to the house of the populous, and one night erased that glorious splendor of the procession, and sudden pain in his side mixed mournful heavy succession with the outpouring of joys! Therefore, the glory of man is like the flower of hay: which, even when it is carried away, adds nothing to works, in which no fruit is obtained; and when it is lost, it fades away, abandoning all the stage of man, and the shadow it cast from above, and the life it animated within.

31. And would that we imitate this herb, about which the Lord says: Let the earth bring forth grass, yielding seed according to its kind, and according to its likeness. Therefore, let us sow seed according to its kind. What is that kind? Hear Him who says that we must seek that divine thing, if we can handle or find it: Although it is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as some of your poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' (Acts 17:28). According to this kind, we sow seed not in flesh, but in spirit. For we ought to sow not carnal, but spiritual seeds, if we desire to attain eternal life. You are not ignorant of the likeness, for you were created in the image and likeness of God. The herb corresponds to its kind, but you do not correspond to your own kind. The grain of wheat, when scattered on the earth, produces fruit according to its kind, and yet you become degenerate. Crops do not adulterate the purity of their own seed, but you adulterate the purity of your soul, the vigor of your mind, and the chastity of your body.

32. You do not acknowledge that you need Christ's work. He, as we read, formed you with His own hands and you, Manichaeans, associate another author with yourself. The Father God says to the Son: Let us make man in our image and likeness (Gen., I, 26); and you, Photinians, say that Christ was not yet in the constitution of the world; and you, Eunomians, say that the Son is dissimilar to the Father. For if He is an image, He is certainly not dissimilar: but expressing the whole from the whole, the Father, whom the Father has marked with the unity of His substance. The Father says: 'Let us do it'; and you deny being a coworker? what the Father said, the Son did; and you deny being equal, in which the Father was pleased.

Chapter VIII.

On the virtue of planting; and on the truly remarkable mode of germination and fruit bearing: also on the fertility of the earth, the beauty of the full field, and the healing power and remedies of herbs.

33. Let the earth bring forth grass, he says, according to its kind. In all things that are said to be born from the earth, the first thing is the seed; when it has lifted itself up a little, it becomes a plant, then hay, and then it becomes fruit. There are things that germinate from the root, like trees that are not sown, they grow from the roots of other trees. In the reed we see how at its extremity a certain knot is formed on the side, and from there another reed sprouts. Therefore, there is a certain force in the root of the seed. The shoots also sprout in the upper parts. Thus, in some

cases, a series of succession is acquired from the root, and in other cases, a different function. For in each individual that is born, there is either a seed or some kind of seminal power, and this power is according to its kind, so that what is born from it may produce something similar to what was sown or originated from the root. From wheat comes wheat, from millet comes millet, and from wheat produces white flowers; similarly, the chestnut tree emerges from the root of the chestnut tree.

54. "The earth," he says, "may produce grass according to its kind." And immediately the earth, as if in labor, brought forth new offspring and clothed itself in the garb of greenness, assumed the grace of fertility, and, adorned with various shoots, assumed its own ornamentation. We marvel that it has sprouted so quickly; how much greater are the miracles if you consider each individual thing, how seeds, once thrown into the earth, are dissolved and, unless they are dead, produce no fruit; but if they are dissolved by a kind of death, they rise again into more abundant fruitfulness. So the rotten grain receives the earth in its womb, and the scattered stalk holds it back, and as if it were nurtured in its mother's lap, it cherishes and compresses it. Then, when that grain has dissolved, it brings forth grass, a pleasant species of greenery itself, which immediately reveals the likeness of its cultivated kind; so that at the very beginning of its own line you can recognize what kind of herb it is, and in herbs the fruits appear; and gradually it grows like hay, and it rises up and becomes covered in stems. But when the kneeled spike has already been raised, certain sheaths are prepared for the future grain, in which the inner grain is formed; so that its tender beginnings are not harmed by cold or burned by the heat of the sun or shaken by the harshness of the winds or the violence of the rain. Certain rows of spikes follow, formed with marvelous skill, either pleasing to the eye or bound together by a certain natural connection as a means of protection, which divine providence formed. And so that the support of the heavier grain may not yield, like a certain prop of stems, the stem itself is enclosed in certain sheaths, so that with doubled strength it may be able to support manifold grain, lest it be bent to the ground by an uneven burden. Then above the grain itself a wall is built of awns, as if to protect it with a kind of fortress, lest it be harmed by the nibbles of smaller birds, or be stripped of its own fruit, or be trampled by footsteps.

35. What can I say about how the mercy of God has looked out for the benefit of humanity? It restores what it receives with interest, and multiplies it with a heap of usury. People are often deceived, and they themselves defraud their own usurer in turn: the land remains faithful. And if ever it does not repay, perhaps due to the harshness of winter, or excessive drought, or an immense amount of rain, it compensates for the losses of the previous year in the following year; and likewise, when the crop fails to fulfill the farmer's hope, the land is not to blame: and when it smiles, the abundance of the fruitful mother pours itself out into childbirth, so as never to bring any harm to its creditor. But what a sight is a full field! What a scent! What sweetness! What pleasure for farmers! What can we adequately describe, if we use our own speech? But we have testimonies from Scripture, by which we compare the sweetness of fields to the blessing and grace of the saints, as holy Isaac says: The scent of my son is like the scent of a full field (Gen., XXVII, 27). So, what can I describe? The purplish violets, the white lilies, the shining roses, the depicted fields now with golden, now with various, now with yellow flowers, in which you do not know whether the beauty of the flowers or the delightful fragrance is more pleasing. The eyes are nourished by a pleasing spectacle, the fragrance spreads far and wide, and we are filled with its

sweetness. Hence the divine Lord says: 'And the beauty of the field is with me' (Psalm 49:11); for what he formed is with him. For what other artist can express such singular beauty of things? Consider the lilies of the field (Matthew 6:28), how great is their brightness in the leaves, how the clustered leaves themselves seem to rise from the bottom to the top, as if they were expressing the form of a cup, as if a certain brilliance of gold were shining inside, which, however, enclosed by the rampart around the flower, opens to no damage. If anyone were to pick this flower and release its petals, what great skill of an artist would be able to reform it into the shape of a lily? Who is such a great imitator of nature, that he presumes to restore this flower, of which the Lord gave such testimony, saying: 'Not even Solomon, in all his glory, was dressed as one of these' (ibid., 29)? The most wealthy and wise king is considered inferior to the beauty of this flower.

Why should I enumerate the beneficial juices of herbs? Or the remedies of shrubs and leaves? A sick deer gnaws on olive branches and becomes healthy. Locusts, too, are relieved of illness by olive leaves soaked in water. Snake is killed by placing raspberry leaves on it. Mosquitoes will not touch you if you boil wormwood herb with oil and anoint yourself with it.

Chapter IX. Evil is generated with useful things not without reason; when what is harmful to one is beneficial to another; and God has bestowed reason upon humans to avoid harmful things, as instinct has been given to animals. What a beautiful order is preserved in the fruitfulness of the earth. But perhaps some might say: What about the fact that even harmful and deadly things are produced alongside beneficial ones? With hemlock, for example, which is found among life-sustaining foods and can be harmful to health if not identified in advance. Among other sources of sustenance, hellebore is also found. Aconite too often deceives and misleads those who gather it. But this is like criticizing the earth because not all people are good. But consider this: not all angels in heaven are good either. The sun itself, due to excessive heat, parches the ears of grain, but it burns the early beginnings of those that are growing. The moon also shows the way to travelers, and it reveals the ambushes of robbers. Therefore, is it worthy for us to neglect the gratitude towards the creator in favor of those things which are useful, just because of certain harmful aspects of food in relation to the foresight of the creator, as if indeed everything should have been brought forth for the sake of gluttony, or as if there are only a few things that divine indulgence has provided for our stomachs? We have defined meals, which are known to everyone, that generate both pleasure and the health of the body.

39. But each of the things that are generated from the earth has a special reason, which fills the whole fullness of creation with a male portion. Therefore, some are born for food, others for other uses. Nothing is empty, nothing is barren on the earth. What you think is useless to you, is useful to others; indeed, it is often useful to you in a different way. What does not help you as food, suggests medicine: and often the same things that are harmful to you provide harmless nourishment to birds or wild animals. Finally, starlings feed on henbane, and it is not harmful to them, because through the quality of their body they avoid the poison of deadly juice. For the cold power of this juice, which is conducted through delicate pores to the seat of their heart, they prevent premature digestion before it attacks their vital organs. However, experts say that hellebore is their food and nourishment, because through a certain natural temperament of their body, they avoid the harmful force of the food. For indeed, often by the rationality of medicine, it is adapted to the well-being of the human body, which seems to be contrary: the more it benefits by the nature's property for food, which is turned into health by the healing hand! Through mandrake

also sleep is frequently summoned, where the sick are afflicted by the discomfort of wakefulness. For what should I say about opium, which has become known to us almost daily by its nearly constant use, since the most severe pains of internal organs are often lulled by it? Nor does it pass unnoticed that connubial love often quenches the burning passions of lust, and the long-standing afflictions of the sick body are relieved by hellebore.

40. Therefore, not only is there no blame on the creator in these things, but there is even an increase in gratitude. For what you thought to be a danger, works for your salvation. For even what is a danger is avoided through providence, and what is for salvation is not lost through diligence. Have not sheep and goats learned to avoid things that are harmful to them, and by the smell alone, through a certain mystery of nature, even though they lack reason, they recognize the method of avoiding danger and preserving their safety, and they distinguish what is harmful from what is helpful. So much so that often, when they have sensed the weapons armed with poison, they seek known herbs and are said to apply them as a remedy for their wounds? Therefore, food is their medicine, so that you see the arrows rebounding from a wound and poison fleeing, not creeping. Finally, food is poison to deer. The snake flees from the deer, kills the lion: it binds the dragon-elephant, whose downfall is the death of the victor. And therefore, with the utmost force, the battle is fought on both sides; the former to bind the foot, in which the bound one cannot harm itself; the latter so that it is not caught by the hindmost foot or a narrow path, where it cannot turn, and crush the dragon with a heavy step, or not have the help of the following elephant.

Therefore, if irrational animals are aware of the herbs that can either heal them or provide assistance, then man does not know to whom rational sense is inherent or is so estranged from the truth that he least understands what is suitable for each individual's use. Either he is ungrateful to nature's blessings or, because the consumption of bull's blood is lethal to humans, he thinks that laborious animals should not have been born or that they should have been generated without blood. Their virtues support farmers in various tasks: useful for the cultivation of fields, suitable for the use of wagons, delightful for sustenance. To these farmers, to whom God has bestowed his blessings if they understand them, he says: Let the earth bring forth grass yielding seed according to its kind. For it includes not only the natural nourishment found in plants and roots, and in the fruits of trees and other produce, but also that which is obtained through industry and acquired through the work of farmers.

42. How proper it is that he commanded the seeds not to be immediately sown into the earth and bear fruit, but to first sprout, then cover the fields with grass, and afterwards grow into plants according to their own nature, so that the fields would never be empty of grace, which first adorned them with pleasing beauty and then provided them with the usefulness of fruits!

Chapter X. Seeds never truly degenerate, when their species is not changed, but their perfection: for tares and weeds do not at all arise from the seed of the wheat. The Word of God bestowed a wonderful fertility upon the earth before man sinned; yet the earth is not completely deprived of it even now. But perhaps someone might ask: How does the earth bring forth seeds according to their kind, when often the sown seeds degenerate? And when good wheat has been sown, its color becomes dull and its form becomes inferior? But if this ever happens, it seems to be referred not to a change in kind, but to a certain sickness and inequality of the seed. For the wheat does not cease to be wheat if it is scorched by cold or soaked by rain, but it is changed more in

appearance than in kind, in color and corruption. Finally, frequently soaked grains return to their own kind if they are either dried by the sun or fires, or entrusted to diligent cultivators, if they are nurtured by the temperate air and fertile land. Therefore, what has degenerated in the parent is repaired in the offspring. Hence, we do not fear that this command of God, whose use has become ingrained in nature, will be lacking in the future due to the defect of succession, since even today the purity of its own kind is preserved in the seeds.

44. For we have learned from the reading of the Gospel (Matt. XIII, 24) that darnel and other adulterated seeds are often mixed with wheat, and are called zizania. But they have a distinct nature of their own; having been translated from the seed of wheat into another kind of seed by a change of color, they have acquired a degenerate nature. Finally, the Lord teaches this, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat' (ibid). Indeed, we are warned that weeds and wheat seem to be distinct in both name and nature. Finally, the servants said to the master of the household: Lord, did you not sow good seed in your field? So where does the weed come from? And he said to them: An enemy has done this (Ibid., 27). For one is the seed of the devil, another is the seed of Christ that is sown for righteousness. Finally, the Son of Man has sown something different, and the devil has sown something different. So different is the nature of each seed, that the sower is contrary. What Christ sows is the kingdom of God: what the devil sows is sin. How then can the kingdom and sin be of the same kind? It is, he says, the kingdom of God, just as if a man throws seed upon the earth.

45. There is also a man who sows the word, about which it is written: He who sows, sows the word (Mark IV, 14). This man sowed the word upon the earth, when he said: Let the earth bring forth grass, and suddenly the buds of the earth sprouted, and the various species of things shone forth. From this the green grace of meadows supplied an abundance of fodder: hence the yellowing ear of the fields expressed the image of the sea, with the commotion of the ripening crop. Spontaneously all the fruits of the earth sprouted forth: although it could not be cultivated without a cultivator, for the farmer had not yet been formed; nevertheless, the untilled land abounded with abundant harvests, and I have no doubt of a greater yield. For indeed the fertility of the land could not be deprived by the negligence of the cultivator. Now, fertility is acquired by each person according to the merit of their labor, where the cultivation of the fields is observed; and negligence or offense, or the flooding of rain, or the dryness of the land, or the hurling of hail, or any other cause, is punished by the sterility of the fertile soil. Then, however, the earth produced spontaneous fruit in all places; for He had commanded, who is the fullness of all. For the Word of God made the earth fruitful, and there was as yet no cursed land. For the beginnings of the world that was created are older than our sins; and the more recent guilt is that by which we are condemned to eat bread by the sweat of our brow and to be ignorant of nourishment without sweat.

46. Finally, even today the fertility of the earth operates a long-standing abundance through the spontaneous use of fertility. For there are many things that still generate spontaneously. But even in these things that are sought by human hands, a great part of divine benefits remain with us, so that even the grains themselves are produced while we are at rest. This is taught as an example of the proposed lesson, with the Lord saying: For the kingdom of God is like a man who throws seed upon the earth and then sleeps and rises, night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows, while

he does not know how (Mark, IV, 26). For the earth produces fruit willingly, first grass, then ear, then full wheat in the ear. And when it has produced fruit, it immediately sends forth the sickle, for the harvest is at hand. Therefore, to you, o man, who sleep and know not its fruits, the earth produces them willingly. You sleep and rise, and marvel at the growth of wheat during the night.

Chapter XI.

On the origin of trees: and therein of the rose, which first grew without thorns, but afterward became bristly, and has become a mirror of our life.

We have spoken about the grass of hay, now let us speak about the fruitful wood that produces fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself. He spoke and it became, and suddenly, as above with flowers and the greenness of herbs, so here the earth was clothed with forests. The trees gathered together, the woods arose, the tops of the mountains suddenly became covered in foliage. From here the pine tree and the cypress raised themselves to the heights, the cedars and firs gathered together. The fir tree, not content with earthly roots and an airy summit, also ventured to brave the dangers of the sea with secure rowing, contending not only with winds but also with waves. And the laurel, rising up, gave forth its fragrance, never to be stripped of its covering. The shady oaks also raised their tops, preserving their shaggy hair even in winter. For nature granted this privilege to each of them individually, which they received when the world was created, and thus their prerogative remains with the oaks, it remains with the cypresses, so that no wind may strip them of the glory of their foliage.

Before the flowers rose, the rose was mixed with earthly thorns without any deceit, and the most beautiful flower bloomed without any fraud. Afterwards, the thorn concealed the grace of the flower, like a mirror of human life, which often pricks its sweetness with neighboring stimuli of cares. For the elegance of our life is surrounded by certain anxieties, so that sadness is joined to grace. Therefore, when each person rejoices either in the sweetness of reason or in the successes of a prosperous course, it is fitting for him to remember the fault through which the thorns of the mind and the brambles of the soul have been duly assigned to us who flourish in the delightful paradise. Therefore, it is useless, o man, whether in the splendor of nobility, or the height of power, or the brilliance of virtue, there is always a thorn next to you, always prickly, always looking down on your lower parts, you grow upon thorns, and no prolonged grace remains: quickly, everyone withers in the flower of their age.

Chapter XII.

The vine is praised, and compared with the Church: and moreover its example is set before us for imitation.

Indeed, just as you know that perishable things are common to you with flowers, so also joyful things are common to you with vines, from which wine is produced, which gladdens the heart of man. And I hope, O man, that you imitate the example of this kind, so that you yourself may bear fruit of joy and delight! The sweetness of your grace is within yourself, it sprouts from you, it remains in you, it is within you, that is, the joy of your conscience is to be sought within yourself. Therefore, it says: Drink water from your own vessels, and from the fountains of your own wells (Prov., V, 15). First of all, nothing is more pleasing than the scent of a blooming vine. For, from the flower of the vine, a juice is extracted to make a kind of drink that is both delightful and healthful.

Then, who would not marvel at how the vine, starting from the grape, climbs all the way to the top of the tree's summit, as if it were embracing it, and binds it with certain branches, and surrounds it with its arms, adorns it with its tendrils, and crowns it with clusters of grapes? This, resembling our own lives, first establishes a living root, then because it is flexible and perishable by nature, it binds whatever it grasps with certain branches and also with little key-like appendages, and raises and lifts itself up with them.

50. This people of the Church is similar, which is planted as if with a certain root of faith, and is restrained by the shoot of humility, of which the Prophet says beautifully: You have transplanted a vine from Egypt, and have planted its roots, and have filled the earth. Its shade has covered the mountains, and its branches the cedars of God. You have stretched out its branches to the sea, and its shoots to the river (Psalm 79:9). And through Isaiah the Lord himself spoke, saying: A vineyard has been made for my beloved in a fertile place. And I have enclosed it with a wall, and have dug around the vineyard of Sorech, and have built a tower in its midst (Isaiah 5:1-2). For it has surrounded her like a wall of celestial precepts, and the guardianship of angels. For the angel of the Lord will encamp around those who fear Him. He has placed her in the Church like a tower of the apostles and prophets and teachers, who are accustomed to defend the peace of the Church. He has dug around her, when he has relieved her of the burden of worldly anxieties. For nothing burdens the mind more than the solicitude and desire for wealth or power in this world. What is shown to you in the Gospel (Luke 13:11) when you read, that the woman who had a spirit of infirmity was bent over and could not look up. For her soul was crooked, inclined to earthly gains, and she did not see heavenly grace. Jesus looked at her, called her, and immediately the woman laid down her earthly burdens. He demonstrates that those who were burdened also had those desires, to whom he says: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you (Matthew 11:28). Therefore, that woman's soul, as if surrounded, breathed and stood up. But the same vine, when it has been dug around, is pruned and raised up so that it does not hang down to the ground. Some of the branches are cut off and others are propagated: those branches that grow excessively are cut off, while those that the good farmer judges to be fruitful are propagated. Should I describe the ranks of supports and the arrangement of the vines, which truly and clearly teach that equality must be preserved in the Church, so that no one exalts himself because of wealth or honor, and no one casts aside the poor or despairs because of ignobility? Let there be equal and unified freedom for all in the Church, let common justice and grace be shared with all. Therefore, there is a tower in the midst, which serves as an example for the common farmers and fishermen, who have deserved to hold the fortress of virtues: let our emotions be elevated by their examples, and not lie low as base and despised; but let each person's mind strive for higher things, so that they may dare to say: But our conversion is in heaven. Wherever one may be shaken by the storms of the world and led astray by the tempest, they are embraced by those key and circular bonds as if in the arms of love, and find rest in their union. Therefore, it is charity that connects us to the higher realm and joins us to heaven. For whoever remains in charity, God remains in them. Hence, the Lord says: Abide in me, and I in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches (John, 15:4).

52. Therefore, the vine has clearly indicated itself as an example to be drawn upon for the establishment of our way of life, which is first said to bud when warmed by the temperature of

spring: then to produce fruit from the very joints of its branches, from which the budding grape is formed, and gradually growing, it retains the bitterness of its immature offspring, and can only become sweet when fully ripe and cooked. Meanwhile, the vine is covered with flourishing tendrils, which provide considerable support against the cold and protect it from the heat of the sun. But what is more pleasing to me, or more delightful than a spectacle, than to see wreaths hanging like beautiful rural necklaces, to pluck grapes shining with a golden or purple color? You think the hyacinths and other gems sparkle, the Indian gems flash, and the grace of the white ones gleam. Do not overlook the warning in these, O man, lest your final days find your fruits premature, or the time of a full life make your unfinished works disgraceful. For bitter fruit tends to be more unpleasant; and it cannot be sweet unless it has reached the maturity of perfection. To this perfect man, neither the cold of dreaded death nor the sun of iniquity usually does harm because he is overshadowed by spiritual grace and extinguishes the fires of all worldly desires and bodily lusts. Let all who behold you praise you, and let the ranks of the Church marvel at you like a garland of palm branches. Let each one behold the beautiful necklaces of the faithful souls; let them delight in the maturity of prudence, the splendor of faith, the beauty of confession, the loveliness of justice, and the abundance of mercy, so that it may be said to you: Your wife is like a fruitful vine on the sides of your house (Ps. CXXVII, 3); because you imitate the abundance of a fruitful vine and the bountiful gift of generosity.

Chapter XIII.

On the usefulness and diversity of trees; on the method of grafting and healing them; finally, on the properties of tree sap: with a moral explanation for each point.

53. But why should I dwell only on human life, when all kinds of trees are useful, some created for fruit, others for utility? For even those without abundant fruit have a precious use. The cedar is suitable for hanging roofs, because this type of wood is tall and spacious, but not burdensome to the walls. The cypress is also suitable for ceilings and gables. Hence, the Church says in the Canticles: 'The beams of our houses are made of cedar, our ceilings of cypress' (Song of Songs 1:16), explaining that the decorations of its structure are in these, as if the beams sustain the crown of the Church with their own strength and adorn its peak. The laurel and the palm are the symbols of victory. The heads of the victors are crowned with laurel, and the hand of the conqueror is adorned with a palm. Hence the Church says: I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches (Song of Songs, 7:8). Seeing the excellence of the Word and hoping that she can ascend to His height and the summit of knowledge, she says: I will go up to the palm tree, so that she may leave behind all lower things and strive for higher things, for the reward of Christ, so that she may enjoy and taste the sweet fruits of His love. For the fruit of virtue is sweet. The people also declare mystically with crowns the victorious shady tree, and the flexible willow useful for binding vines, what else do they declare except that the bonds of Christ are good, which do not harm, the bonds of grace, the bonds of charity, so that everyone may boast in their own bonds, just as Paul also boasted, saying: Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ (Philem. I, 1)? Bound by these bonds, he said: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Rom. VIII, 35)? The chains of abstinence, the chains of charity. Bound by these chains, David also says: In the willows, in the midst thereof, we hung up our harps (Ps. CXXXVI, 2). Likewise, the boxwood tree, useful for carving the tips of musical instruments, shapes the skill of a young hand with its light material. Hence the Scripture says: Write in boxwood (Esa., XXX, 8). At the same time, may the very

material that is always green and never sheds its leaves remind you to never be exposed by the dissimulation of your hope, but may it always bring forth hope of salvation to you through faith.

Why should I enumerate the great variety of trees, the diverse and beautiful adornment in each one, the expansive beech trees, the tall firs, the abundant pines, the shady oaks, the two-colored poplars, the wooded and evergreen chestnut trees, which, when cut down, are accustomed to sprout as if a forest from themselves; just as in the trees themselves, either a mature or a young age is found; for the younger ones have thinner branches, while the older ones have stronger and knotty limbs: the former have smooth and spread-out leaves, the latter have more condensed and rough leaves. There are also trees that, even with an old and dead root, do not know how to regenerate themselves if they are cut down. Others, in which either youth flourishes or nature is more fruitful, benefit from being cut down, so that they are renewed through the succession of their offspring.

There is also, something which you may marvel at, distinction of sex even in fruits, and distinction of sex in trees. For you may see a palm which bears dates, mostly bending its branches and submitting them, and assuming the appearance of desire and embrace to that tree, which boys of the country call a male palm. Therefore, that palm is of linen, and confesses its sex by the appearance of submission. Hence, the tillers of the place throw upon the branches of it the seeds of date-palms, or shoots of male trees, with which seeds the female tree, as it were with some representation of performance, is impregnated, and the desired cohabitation is represented. By this skill, when again given, it is raised up and lifts its branches and raises its hair again to its old condition. The same opinion is held about the fig tree. And therefore many people are said to graft a wild fig tree onto a domestic and fruitful fig tree, because the fruits of that fertile and domestic fig tree are reported to fall quickly either by an attempted breeze or by heat to the ground. Hence those who are knowledgeable about this, bind the branches of the wild tree to that fruitful tree in order to heal its weakness, so that it may be able to save its own fruits, and soon if they are in danger of being destroyed, the remedies will be about to fall. In this way, we are reminded not to give up on those who have separated from our faith and community, as if they were a puzzle of nature. The more serious the proponent of the error, the more vehemently they can become a defender of the faith. And if someone converts from heresy, they can confirm the side they have turned to, especially if they have something directly related to nature. Their viewpoint can be vivid if supported by the attention of sobriety and the observance of chastity. Therefore, immerse yourself deeply in your study of him, so that you may strengthen your virtue through the fruitful likeness of that fig tree, from its presence and connection to that rustic tree. For in this way, your intention will not be dissolved, and the fruits of diligence and grace will be preserved. But there are many things that teach that natural hardness can be tempered by the study of diligence, as the example of rural cultivation brings! For often, pomegranate trees quickly bloom, but they cannot bear fruit unless they are cultivated with proper remedies by experts: often the juice fades away internally, and its strong appearance is displayed beautifully. This can rightfully be compared to the Church, as you have in the Song of Songs directed to the Church: Your cheeks are like the skin of a pomegranate (Song of Songs, 4:3). And below: If the vine flourished, the pomegranates also flourished (Song of Songs, VII, 12). For the Church presents the good splendor of faith and confession, with the beauty of many martyrs' blood, and what is more, endowed with the blood of Christ; at the same time, preserving many fruits within itself by the use of this fruit under one

protection, and encompassing many matters of virtue. For the wise spirit conceals affairs. Farmers are also said to heal the almond tree with this kind of medicine, so that its bitter fruits become sweet, and also to burn its root and insert a branch of that same tree, which the Greeks call a 'pine', but we call it a fir tree; by doing this, the bitterness of the sap is removed. Therefore, if agriculture can transform the qualities of plants, can the pursuit of knowledge and the attention to discipline not mitigate any ailments of the passions? Therefore, no one positioned in the slippery slope of youth or intemperance should despair of their transformation. Wood is usually transformed into better uses, can't hearts of humans be changed?

We have learned that not only among different kinds of trees are there diversities of fruits, but often within the same species of trees the fruits themselves are in conflict with one another. For there is one species of male fruits, another of female fruits, as we have stated above concerning dates. But who can comprehend the variety, the species, and the charm of apples, and the individual usefulness of each fruit, and the properties of the juices that seem suitable to each thing? For example, how bitter apples can heal sickly organs of human bodies, and how they can reduce internal inflammation and roughness, and how, conversely, the roughness of certain juices can be tempered by the sweetness of apples. Finally, that more ancient medicine, which used to heal with herbs and juices; and there is no stronger health than the one that is restored by wholesome foods. Therefore, according to nature, we are taught that food alone is medicine for us. Certainly, external wounds are closed with herbs, and internal ones are healed with herbs. And that's why it is the task of doctors to know the powers of herbs. From here, the practice of healing has become ingrained.

Chapter XIV.

On the differences in simple fruits and the diversity of leaves, especially on the grapevine and fig leaves, and the various shapes of other leaves.

58. But, in order to simplify the matter, there are some fruits that are cooked by the sun, while others are filled with pulp or enclosed in a husk or rind. Apples and pears, as well as all types of grapes, are exposed to the sun without any covering. However, walnuts and chestnuts, even their kernels, are nourished and nurtured by the heat of the sun, even though they are covered by a shell or husk. And the denser the shell of a pine nut, the more it is nourished by the heat of the sun.

Then how great is the providence of the Lord, that where the fruit is softer, there the thickness of the leaves provides a stronger covering for the fruit, as we see in the fruit of the fig tree. Therefore, the more delicate things must be protected by stronger ones, as the Lord himself teaches through Jeremiah, saying: 'Just as I will recognize these good figs that I have sent from this place to the land of the Chaldeans as good, and I will set my eyes upon them for good.' (Jeremiah 24:5). As if with a certain stronger covering of his mercy, he protected them like delicate ones, lest the ripe fruits perish prematurely. In the end, he says of them even in the following: My delicate ones have walked in rough ways (Baruch, IV, 26). To them he says further below: Be steadfast, O children, and cry out to God (ibid., 27). For this alone is an inviolable covering, an impenetrable fortress against all storms and injuries. Where there are therefore tender fruits, there will be thicker coverings and protections of leaves. On the other hand, where the fruits are stronger, there will be more delicate leaves, as the apple tree shows. For a stronger fruit does not need much help in

protection; for the shade itself of a thicker protection could harm the fruit more.

Finally, let the vine leaf teach us the grace of nature, and the internal mysteries of divine wisdom. For we see it so divided and separated, as to seem to show the appearance of three separate leaves: with the middle part distinct, so that it would appear separate to onlookers unless it clung to the lower parts. And this seems to be a design of nature, that it both more easily admits the sun, and covers with shade. Finally, the middle part extends higher, and thins at its very top, so that it presents more beauty than covering. For the grape seems to portray the appearance of a mark, signifying that it has the primacy among the other hanging fruits, to which with a certain silent judgment of nature, but with clear evidence, the mark and prerogative of victory is born. Therefore, it carries its own mark with it, by which it is also provided with protection against the injuries of the air, as well as the violence of rain, and it does not hinder the reception of the heat of the sun, by which it is warmed, colored, and increased. The leaf of the fig tree is also divided into four parts, just like the vine leaf: which is clearer the larger the leaf is, although not as much as the vine leaf or the edge of the leaf, or the top of the curled leaf. Just as the thickness of the fig leaf is stronger, so is the appearance of the vine leaf more elegant. Therefore, the thickness of the leaf helps to repel the damage caused by the weather, while the division helps to release the vapor for the sake of the fruits. Finally, this type of fruit does not quickly perceive hail, but it quickly feels ripeness; because it seems to be able to hide from harm, and to be open to favor.

61. Why should I describe the various differences of leaves, how some are round, some are longer, some are flexible, some are stiffer, some are not easily blown by any winds, some are shaken by a gentle breeze?

Chapter XV.

The amazing diversity of water! From it arises the variety of fruits that feed on it, and the difference of tears that fall from trees; to which is added an excuse for more detailed examination.

62. It is inexplicable to desire to investigate the properties of individual things, and to distinguish the manifest testimonies of their diversities, or to reveal hidden and secret causes with unfailing evidence. For, indeed, water is one and the same, and often transforms itself into different appearances: either yellow among the sand, or foamy among the rocks, or greener among the woods, or multicolored among the flowers, or brighter among the lilies, or more dazzling among the roses, or more liquid among the grass, or more turbid among the marsh, or clearer in the spring, or darker in the sea, assuming the color of the places through which it flows. It also changes in intensity in equal measure, so that it boils among vapors, cools among shadows, heats up when reflected by the sun, and turns gray when drenched in glacial moisture. Likewise, its taste itself changes, now rougher, now more bitter, now more intense, now more astringent, now sweeter depending on the quality of the substances with which it has been infused. It becomes rougher with unripe juices, pounded nut shell, and crushed leaves; it becomes more bitter with wormwood, more intense with wine, more astringent with garlic; it becomes heavy with poison, sweetened with honey. But if the juice of lentisk is indeed mixed with the fruits of terebinth or the inner part of the nut, it is easily transferred into a soft oil nature. However, since it is the nourisher of all the shrubs, it provides different uses to each. If it is watered with roots or descends poured from the clouds, it gives distinct powers to all, fattens the root, elevates the trunk, spreads the branches, makes the leaves green, nourishes the seeds of the fruits, and is accustomed to

increase the fruit. Therefore, since the same nurse nourishes all things, some kinds of trees produce more bitter juices, others produce sweeter juices, some produce slower ones, others produce premature ones. They also differ among themselves in terms of sweetness. One sweetness is found in the vineyard, another in the olive tree, another in cherries, another in the river, distinguished in the apple, different in the date palm.

63. The taste of water itself is gentle in some places, rougher in others, and usually thicker. It also often varies in weight as in appearance. For in many places it is considered heavier, in many places lighter. Therefore, it is not surprising that when it differs from itself, the tears of trees, which are generated by the same water's inundation, also differ from each other. And since there is one cause for all, the uses are different for each one, the nature is different. The tears of the cherry tree have a different power than the tears of the mastic tree. Moreover, it is said that even drops of odoriferous balsam are produced by the sweating of aromatic woods of the East; and also that a different kind of tears is shed by the reeds of fennel-giant in Egypt and Libya, by the power, as it were, of a more secret nature. But why should I recount to you, though your attention is kindly, that amber is a tear of fennel-giant and that, as tears harden, so also does this material of such great solidity? Nor is this confirmed by insignificant evidence when tiny leaves or portions of the stems, or even certain small animals, are often found preserved in amber, which seems, while the drop was still soft, to have absorbed them and kept them solidified.

64. But why should I decide with cheap language when I have the deep and precious reasoning of nature, when that language is nourished by human ingenuity, while divine providence has shaped the nature of all things? Hence, like reins that hold back the flow of words, there must be restraint; lest we seem to profanely expose the distinctions of trees and the virtues of roots, and whatever is hidden and unexpected, as it is written (3 Kings 4:33), which are not even made known by Solomon himself; so that it seems to me that he could discuss the different types of plants, but could not fully explain all the reasons of creation.

Chapter XVI.

How the voice of the Lord suddenly caused every kind of shrub to sprout forth, providing sustenance, delight, and medicine. Also, how all plants contain either a seed or something that serves as a substitute for seed within themselves. About the great power of God in each one; specifically about the pine and the myrtle.

65. And if usually the crops are more abundant and green beans flourish, and the multitude of gardens is awakened and revived, then the grace also comes alive when the banks of overflowing rivers are decorated with green beds; just as, according to the word of the Lord, when the abundance of water overflows, all the creatures of the shrubs suddenly bloom. The fields hurried to produce the fruit that was not given to them, the unknown varieties of garden vegetables germinated, the miracles of flowers bloomed, and the banks of the rivers clothed themselves in myrtles: the trees hurried to rise quickly, to put on flower quickly, to provide sustenance for humans and food for cattle. The common fruit is for everyone, and its use is given to everyone. Both the trees produced different things - one for us to eat, the other to protect us from the heat of the sun with its refreshing shade. Food is found in the fruit, while the enjoyment comes from the leaves. However, because the Creator's foresight knew that human greed would claim the fruit for itself, provision was made for other creatures to have their own special nourishment. Thus, there is

not insignificant food in the leaves and the bark of the trees, which are also used for medicinal purposes, such as juices, tears, and small branches. Therefore, those things which we have known to be useful after experience, practice, and example, the Creator in the beginning gave for our benefit, commanding them to go forth from the depths of the earth by His own majesty. And because the Lord commanded that the earth should bring forth grass, herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself (lest perhaps anyone should say that in many trees there is neither fruit nor seed, and the divine commandment may be considered to waver in any way from the truth), let him take notice that it cannot possibly be that all things which bring forth do not make use of seeds or that they have anything which appears to agree with the power of seeds. And if anyone carefully considers this, they will be able to comprehend it by clear evidence. Willow trees do not seem to have seeds; however, they have in their leaves a certain grain that has the power of a seed, so that when it is planted in the earth, it may appear as a tree growing from a twig, and as if it were awakened from a seed. From that grain, the root first grows: from the root sprouts not only a willow tree, but also a whole forest of trees similar to this kind. And the generation of the root also has the power of a seed; hence, many have propagated their memory through this sowing of it.

67. Great is the power of God in individuals. Let no one be surprised that great power of God is spoken of in small things. For he himself said that his great power is in locusts and a gnat, because the offense against divine majesty was resolved with great moderation of Jewish sterility and poverty. For patience is great power, and providence is great power. Indeed, those who harmed the Creator of the earth were unworthy of using earthly fertility. And truly great is he who avenges such a great impiety with miserable hunger. Therefore, if God has generated a barren thorn bush with great power, how much more will he procreate with great power those things that are fruitful!

68. Who, seeing the pine tree, is not amazed at such a divine art, unknown and impressed on nature: how, from its very core, it rises evenly with measurements at varying distances, nourishing its own fruits with glue? Thus, through its circumference, the same species and order are maintained, and in each branch, some plentiful offspring of nuts abound, and the fruit and grace return in a circle. Thus, in this pine tree, it seems to express an image of its own nature, which keeps the privileges received from that first divine and celestial command, and returns its own offspring with a certain order and cycle of years, until the fulfillment of time is complete.

69. But just as in this fruit it marks a pleasing appearance of itself, so also in myrtles, that is, low shrubs, it expresses the form of wicked cunning. For just as men have a double heart everywhere, and display grace and simplicity among the good, and are glued to the most corrupt: so also in watery and desert places, these shrubs grow in a contrary manner. Hence Jeremiah compared doubtful and insincere morals to myrtles (Jer. XVII, 6).

Chapter XVII.

The astounding providence of God is revealed in the deafness of the human heart; this is especially evident in the case of evergreen trees and their variations, as well as in the discussion of the first cultivator of the vine and the use of wine.

70. He says, 'Let the earth bring forth green herb,' and immediately the whole earth, at the rising of the germ, is filled with all kinds of plants. And to man it is said: 'Love the Lord your God' (Deut., VI, 5), and the love of God is not infused into the hearts of all. The hearts of men are more deaf than the hardest rocks. The earth produces fruits for us undeservedly, while obeying its creator; we deny the debt of gratitude, while not honoring the creator.

71. Look at the small things which show the providence of God, and marvel that, though you cannot understand it, He has preserved some things in constant bloom, while others have chosen to change their attire and be stripped bare. Among the white snows, the cold frost, the fields maintain their greenery; and even when the roofs themselves are icy, their offspring still cover themselves with a considerable display of greenery. Likewise, among the various types of trees which are clothed in long-lasting foliage, there is a significant difference. He always preserves his clothing, either with oil or with pine, but nevertheless he often changes the leaves; nor do they pretend to be lasting, but rather as substitutes, overshadowing the beauty of their tree with the perpetual integrity of their dress. But the green palm always remains by means of preservation and longevity, not by the change of leaves. For whatever leaves she first produces, she preserves them without any succession of substitution. Therefore, imitate her, o man, so that it may be said of you as well: Your stature has become like a palm tree (Song of Songs, 7:7). Preserve the greenness of your childhood and that natural innocence which you received from the beginning, so that, being planted beside the flowing waters, you may have your fruit prepared in your time, and your leaf may not wither. The Church, following this ever-flourishing greenness of grace in Christ, says: 'In his shadow I desired, and I sat.' (Song of Songs, 2:3). The Apostles also received this privilege of the evergreen gift, not a leaf of theirs could ever fall, so that even their shadow could heal the sick. For the weaknesses of the body overshadow the faith of the mind, and the flourishing merits of virtues. Therefore, remain planted in the house of the Lord, so that in His courts you may flourish like a palm, and let the grace of the Church ascend in you, and let the fragrance of your nostrils be like apples, and your mouth like the best wine (Song of Songs, 7:9), so that you may be intoxicated in Christ.

72. This verse reminds us to repeat what has been almost forgotten, because we have said that the vine also sprouted by the command of the Lord, which we later learned was planted by Noah after the flood (Gen., IX, 20). So you see, Noah was a farmer of the land, and he planted the vine, and drank from its wine, and fell asleep. Therefore, Noah is not the creator of the vine, but of the planting. For he could not have planted it unless he had found it already generated. Therefore, the worshipper, not the creator, is the source of vice. But God, who knew that wine consumed in moderation would bring health and increase wisdom, and that excessive consumption would lead to vices, created the substance and left its abundance to human discretion. This way, the moderation of nature would serve as a lesson in sobriety, and the harmful consequences of excess would be attributed to human choice. In fact, even Noah himself became intoxicated and fell asleep as a result of wine. And so, through wine, the deformity that arose from the flood became evident to glory: but the Lord also reserved his grace in it, so that he might convert its fruit for our salvation, and through it forgiveness of sins might come to us. Therefore pious Isaac said: The smell of Jacob, the smell of a field full, that is, the natural smell (Gen., XXVII, 27). For what is sweeter than a full countryside? What is more pleasant than the smell of the vine? What is more pleasing than the blossom of the bean? Although whoever with great intelligence has said before

us: The Patriarch did not anoint the vine or the fig tree, but he emitted the grace of virtues; nevertheless, I will accept the simple and sincere fragrance of the earth itself as a blessing, which no deceit has composed, but the truth of heavenly indulgence has poured out. Finally, among the most sacred blessings, it is included that the Lord may grant us the power of wine, oil, and grain from the dew of heaven: to whom is honor, praise, and glory, perpetuity from age to age, now and forever, and for all ages of ages. Amen.

Book Four. Of the Work of the Fourth Day.

Chapter I. (Sermo VI) The reader is prepared for a correct understanding of the creation of the sun, and for refuting idolatry in relation to it; therefore, he establishes a comparison between the sun and its creator, and examines the order in which it was created, with an elegant personification of the earth. When someone gathers the harvest, they are accustomed to cleaning the vessels in which the wine is poured beforehand, so that any stain does not take away from the beauty of the wine. For what benefit is it to plant the vine in rows, to dig it up every year, to draw furrows with plows, to prune, to graft onto elms, and to join in a certain union, if the wines acquired with so much labor are allowed to spoil in the vessel? Also, if someone desires to gaze at the rising of the morning sun, they clean their eyes; so that no dust, no impurity, settles in their eyes, which drink in the sight; and so that no hazy darkness obstructs the bodily sight of the viewer. We must be awakened by the sun in our reading, which was not there before. We have now spent the first day without the sun: the second day we have spent without the sun: the third day we have completed without the sun: on the fourth day God commands the luminaries, the sun, and the moon, and the stars to be made. The sun begins to cleanse the eyes of the mind, O man, and the inner sight of the soul, so that no mote of sin may blind the acuteness of your understanding, and disturb the vision of your pure heart. Cleanse your ear, so that you may receive in a pure vessel the bright streams of the divine Scripture, free from any contamination. The sun proceeds with its great mane, filling the world with great light, and heating with its warmth. Beware, O man, of considering only its magnitude; lest the excessive brightness of its appearance blinds the sight of your mind; just as one who looks directly into its rays, loses sight of everything suddenly due to the reflected light; and unless he turns his face and eyes towards other parts, he thinks he sees nothing and is cheated of the gift of vision; but if he averts his gaze, he continues to perform his complete duty. Therefore, be careful that the rising sun does not confuse your gaze. And for this reason, first behold the firmament of the heavens, which was made before the sun: behold the earth, which before the sun advanced, began to be visible and composed: behold its germs before the light of the sun. The beetle is older than the sun, the grass is older than the moon. Therefore, do not believe in God, to whom you see the gifts of God to be preferred. Three days have passed, and no one has sought the sun, and the brightness of the light has abounded. For it also has its own light, which precedes the sun. Therefore, do not rashly commit yourself to such great splendor of the sun. For it is the eye of the world, the delight of the day, the beauty of the sky, the grace of nature, the excellence of creation.

2. But when you see this, consider its author: when you marvel at this, praise first the creator himself. If the sun, a partner and sharer of creation, is so pleasing, how good is that sun of justice! If this one is so swift, to roam all things with swift courses day and night, how great is he who is everywhere always, and with his majesty fills all things? If the one who is commanded to go forth is admirable, how much more above admiration is he who speaks to the sun, and it does not rise,

as we read (Job IX, 7)? If someone is great who travels to different places every day by the hour, what can be said of someone who even when he empties himself so that we can see him, is the true light that enlightens every person coming into this world? If he is the most excellent one, who often suffers setbacks for the sake of the world; how majestic is he who says: 'Once more I will shake the earth' (Haggai 2:6)? The earth hides him; its motion cannot endure unless supported by the substance of his will. If it is a loss for a blind person to not see the grace of the sun; how much more is it a loss for a sinner, deprived of the gift of true light, to endure the darkness of perpetual night?

Therefore, when you see the sun, pay attention to the earth, which was founded before it: pay attention to the grass of the fen, which surpasses by the privilege of its order: pay attention to the trees, which applaud because they began to exist before the luminaries of the sky. Is the worth of the fen greater than that of the sun? Or is the prerogative of the tree more valuable? Far be it from us to prefer the minister to the sensible objects of such a great gift. Therefore, what did the height of the wisdom and knowledge of God foresee, that the trees would begin to exist before those two luminaries of the world and certain heavenly eyes of the firmament; unless it was so that they would know, by the divine testimony of reading, that the earth can be fruitful without the sun? For just as the first seeds of things were able to germinate without the sun, they are certainly able to nourish the seeds they have received and produce offspring with their own sustenance without the heat of the sun.

Therefore, with this certain voice, nature proclaims of its own gifts: the sun is indeed good, but by service, not by command; he is a good helper of my fertility, but not the creator; he is a good nourisher of my fruits, but not the author. Sometimes he himself burns my offspring; frequently he himself is a detriment to me, leaving me destitute in many places. I am not ungrateful for his preservation; he has been given to me for use, he is entrusted to my labor, he is subjected to my vanity, he is subjected to my corruption, and he serves me in slavery. He groans with me, he labors with me, so that the adoption of sons may come, and the redemption of the human race, by which we too may be liberated from servitude. Standing with me, he praises the author, with me he sings a hymn to the Lord our God. Where his greater grace is, there is his shared fellowship with me. Where the sun blesses, there the earth blesses. The fruitful trees bless, the animals bless, the birds bless with me. The sailor accuses him of being placed in the sea, he longs for me: the shepherd turns away from him on the mountains, hastening to my sprouts, to my trees, which are overshadowed by the scorching heat, he runs to my fountains thirsty and tired.

Chapter II.

To serve the Son of God as the source from which he was created for the adornment of the celestial lights. Fertility is given to the earth by God, not by the sun, as he was made subject to the day, just as the moon is subject to the night, which is also applicable to Christ and the Church.

5. But so that the testimony of your eyes may not seem insufficient, cleanse your ear, bring it close to the heavenly oracles. For every word stands with two or three witnesses. Hear the one saying: Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens for the illumination of the earth (Gen. I, 14). Who says this? God says it. And to whom does He say it if not to the Son? Therefore, God the Father says: Let there be a sun; and the Son made the sun. For it was fitting that the Son of justice should make the sun of the world. So he led him into the light, he himself illuminated him, he

himself granted him the power to create light. Therefore the sun was made; therefore it too serves, for it is said: You have founded the earth, and it remains: by your design the day remains, for all things serve you (Ps. 118:90-91). Indeed, if the day serves, how does the sun not serve, which was made to govern the day? How do the moon and stars not serve, which were made to govern the night? Indeed, the more grace the Creator has bestowed upon these things, the more the air shines with sunlight, the brighter the day, the darkness of the night is illuminated by the light of the moon and stars, the sky seems adorned with flowers, and the shining lights sparkle as if the paradise were radiant with living garlands of breathing roses. Therefore, the more beauty appears to have been bestowed upon these things, the more they should return. Whoever is entrusted with more, owes more. And therefore, it is well said by many that the adornment of the sky is called a precious necklace, because it is a collection of precious stars. And so that we may know that the fertility of the earth is not attributed to the heat of the sun, but is entrusted to divine indulgence, the Prophet says: All things look to you, that you may give them food in due season: when you give it to them, they gather it up, when you open your hand, they are filled with good things (Ps. 104). And further: Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth (ibid., 30). And in the Gospel: Consider the birds of the air, that they neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them (Matt. 6, 16). Therefore, the sun or the moon are not the authors of fertility; but God the Father imparts the gift of fertility to all through the Lord Jesus.

7. But the Prophet explained to us beautifully what he himself says: For God has made the sun to have power over the day, and the moon to have power over the night (Ps. CXXXV, 8 and 9). For even in this hundredth and third psalm, about which we have spoken above, he writes: He made the moon for appointed times, the sun knows its setting (Ps. CIII, 19). For when the sun begins to fulfill its hours, it recognizes its proper setting. Therefore, the sun is in the power of the day, and the moon is in the power of the night, which is compelled to obey the succession of times, and now it is filled with light and now emptied: although many seem to understand this passage mystically concerning Christ and the Church; that Christ acknowledged the passion of His own body, who said: Father, the hour has come, glorify Your Son (John, XVII, 1), so that through His setting He might give eternal life to all, who were being pressed by the setting of perpetual death: and the Church has its own times, namely, of persecution and peace. For it seems that the moon wanes, but it does not wane. It can be overshadowed, but it cannot wane; because indeed it is diminished by the departure of some in persecutions, so that it may be filled by the confessions of martyrs, and its light, purified by the victories of shed blood for Christ, may pour forth a greater brightness of devotion and faith throughout the entire world. For the moon has a diminution of light, not of body, when it seems to deposit its light in its monthly cycle, so that it may be renewed by the sun; which can easily be understood, when it is obscured by no cloud, when clear and transparent air allows it to shine. For the orbit of the moon remains unaltered, though not in an entirely similar manner, so that a part of it shines forth. And just as it is accustomed to appear when it is full of light, so it is in its magnitude: but it appears deprived of its own light through a certain shadow. And hence its horns shine forth; because its body is spread out in a circle, and as if the light of a portion were failing, it is shown through.

Chapter III.

To be the light of the day is one thing, to be the light of the stars is another. The difference between day and night is marked by two signs, and fire has a dual operation, to illuminate and to burn, which will be separated in the retribution of merits. God is said to be a consuming fire, and the reason why. Finally, every body clings to its own shadow.

Moreover, it can be moved, as it says: Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night (Gen. 1:14). For also earlier, when he made the light, God had said, "Let there be a separation among light and darkness." And there was evening, and there was morning, one day. But let us consider that the light of the day is different from the light of the sun and moon, and the light of the stars, because the sun itself seems to add its brightness to the daylight with its rays, which can reveal either the rising or the setting of the day. For before the sun shines indeed, but the day does not shine brightly; because it shines even more with the midday sun. This is shown by the Prophet, saying: And he will bring forth your justice as the light, and your judgment as the noonday (Ps. XXXVI, 6). For he compared the saint's justice not only to light, but also to the midday light.

9. Then he desired not only one sign, but also two, of daylight and of night: so that day might be made by the light's discrimination, and by the dawning of the sun; and again the failing of light and the uprising of stars might distinguish nightfall from day, and the beginning of night. For when the sun sets, yet somewhat of the day remains, until darkness cover the earth: and then follows the rising of the moon and the stars. And from the night indeed it is clear, that lunar and stellar illumination testifies to the spaces of night. Indeed, during the day that lunar radiance, and the rising sun, hide all the stars. Moreover, the sun itself can teach us about the different nature of daylight and the sun, and that it appears discolored. For the species of light is simple; it produces light. But indeed, the sun has not only the power to illuminate, but also to heat; for it is fiery. Fire both illuminates and burns. Therefore, the Lord, desiring to show Moses the miracle of His operation, by which He would provoke Moses to strive for obedience and inflame his desire for faith, appeared in fire in the bush, and the bush was not consumed, but only seemed to shine with the appearance of fire. Therefore, one duty was to be empty (*vacabat*) of burning, while the other was to be active (*operabatur*). The duty of burning involved the power of consuming, while the duty of illuminating involved the power of shining. That is why Moses was amazed, because the fire did not burn the bush against its nature, which typically burns even more flammable material. But the fire of the Lord is accustomed to illuminate, not to burn. But perhaps you say: How is it written: I am a consuming fire (Deut., IV, 24)? You have rightly admonished. It does not usually consume, except sins alone. In the same way, the nature of fire is divided in terms of retributive merits; it illuminates some, it burns others. It illuminates the righteous, it burns the wicked. Those it illuminates, it does not burn; and those it burns, it illuminates. But its illumination is unquenchable for the completion of the good, its burning is intense for the punishment of sins.

11. But let us return to the cycle of day and night. With the rising light of day, night flees; with the setting of the day, night comes. There is no fellowship between light and darkness, for the Lord established this by natural law in His first work. Indeed, when He created light, He also created the distinction between light and darkness. In the course of the day itself, when the sun is already shining upon the earth, we see the shadow of a man or of a tree separate from the light, moving towards the West in the morning, turning back towards the East in the evening, and inclining towards the North during the midday hours. However, it does not confuse or mix with the light, but

retreats and moves away. Similarly, night seems to give way to day, and to decline from its light; for, as more experienced people have demonstrated to us who have gone ahead of us in age or office, the shadow of the earth naturally clings to and attaches itself to the body, so much so that even painters endeavor to depict the shadows of the bodies they have painted, and they assert that it is a skill of art not to interrupt the force of nature; and it is as if someone who violates natural law, whose painting does not even express its own shadow. Therefore, just as during the day when a body comes into the path of the sun, from the side where the light is reflected, a shadow is cast, so when the day recedes and an object is encountered in the direction of its light or the sun, the air is shaded. Hence it is clear that shadows make night on the Earth.

Chapter IV.

Luminaries have been made into signs, but not of birth. The knowledge of mathematicians is useless and impossible. How ineptly it transfers the properties of terrestrial animals to celestial ones, and of these to humans. How ridiculously it asserts that the stable state of life depends on erratic signs. How impiously it attributes qualities to them that harm the innocent. How foolishly it finally presents clearly false things and supplies an excuse for malice and inertia.

12. Therefore, He made the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and established for them the measures of time, the daily courses of the sun, the nightly courses of the moon and the stars, so that the sun may increase the grace of the day, and they may illuminate the shade and darkness. And let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years (Gen., I, 14). The divided times have equal measurements for the monthly cycles of the sun and the moon with the stars, and they are for signs. We cannot deny that some signs are gathered from the sun and the moon; for the Lord Himself also said: And there will be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars (Luke XXI, 25). And when the Apostles asked for a sign of his coming, he answered: The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven (Matthew, XXIV, 29). He said these things would be the signs of the coming end: but it is fitting that the measure of our care be observed.

13. Finally, some have attempted to determine the qualities of the future based on one's birth, which is not only pointless but also useless for those seeking and promising this impossibility. For what could be more useless than each person convincing themselves that they are meant to be what they were born as? Therefore, no one should change their life, status, or habits and strive to become better, but rather remain in this belief. Neither can you praise the virtuous nor condemn the wicked, who appear to respond to the necessity of their birth. And how does the Lord propose rewards to the good and punishments to the wicked, if necessity determines discipline and guides the movement of the stars? And what else is it but to strip man of man if nothing is left of morals, education, or pursuits? How many people do we see, once guilty of crimes and sins, now converted to a better state! The Apostles were redeemed and gathered from sinners: not at the hour of their birth, but the coming of Christ sanctified them, and the hour of the Lord's passion redeemed them from death. The condemned thief, the one who was crucified with the Lord, passed to eternal paradise not by the benefit of his birth, but by the confession of his faith. Jonah did not escape the sea by the power of his birth, but by the hidden divine command he was thrown overboard, and a whale received him, vomited him out after three days as a sign of future mystery, and reserved him by the merit of prophetic grace. The angel of Christ saved Peter from impending

death in prison, not by the order of the stars. A little blindness turned to grace, and being struck by a snake, and being troubled by shipwreck, their own merits of devotion, not the remedies of birth, saved them. What shall we say about those who, by their prayers, rose again from death? Did their own birth or the apostolic grace revive them? What need was there for them to commit themselves to fasts and dangers, if they could have attained the benefit of birth wherever they wanted? But if they had believed, while they waited for the necessity of fate, they would never have attained such great grace. Therefore, that belief is useless.

14. What about the fact that it is also impossible? For let us take something from their discussion, for the sake of refutation, not persuasion: they say that nativity has a great power, and that it should be inferred from certain precise moments; and unless it is inferred more accurately, it signifies a great difference. For the nativities of the poor and the wealthy, the needy and the rich, the innocent and the guilty, are said to differ by a short atom, a small moment; and often at the same hour, long life is born and childhood dies, if the remaining differences are unequal and distinct by a certain point. In order to collect this, let them answer. Determine the birth of a woman; when the midwife first recognizes it, she investigates the cry by which the life of the newborn is gathered, she observes whether it is a male or a female. How many moments do you think pass besides these delays? Put forth a prepared mathematician. Can a man participate in childbirth? While the midwife is carrying out her duties, the Chaldean listens, sets the horoscope; the fates of one newborn have already migrated to another, the fate of the other is being sought, and the birth of the other is proposed. Put their true opinion about the necessities of birth, it cannot be a true collection. Points pass, time flies irreparably. There is no doubt that time is in an atom and in the blink of an eye. I am led to believe, when we are all resurrected in an atom, in a moment, in the blink of an eye, as the Apostle testifies saying: Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall all indeed rise again; but we shall not all be changed, in an atom, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet will sound, and the dead shall rise incorruptible, and we shall be changed (I Cor., XV, 52). Among the outpouring, and reception, and deposition of the pledge, among his weeping and the message, how many atoms have passed! And I have simply woven these things together. For they themselves divide the vital twelvefold circuit of signs into twelve parts: and because in thirty days the sun completes the twelfth part of its sphere, which is considered incomprehensible, in order to complete the circuit of the sun's year, they divide it into thirty portions, which the Greeks call $\muο\sigma\pi\rho\alpha\varsigma$, and they distribute each one of those portions into twelve divisions; they also divide that portion into sixty parts. Once again, each of those sixty-sixty times divides. How incomprehensible it is that the sixtieth portion of the sixtieth moment of birth constitutes, and who the movement or appearance of each sign is in the birth of the newborn! Therefore, since it is impossible to comprehend such subtle minutiae of time, and yet a small alteration brings about a universal error, the whole task is full of vanity. The disputants of what is their own do not know how they know what is foreign? They do not know what is imminent for them, how they can announce to others what is to come for themselves? It is ridiculous to believe that, because if they could, they would provide for themselves first.

15. Now, how foolish is it that if someone says they were born under the sign of Aries, they should be considered the most excellent in advice because they stand out in a flock of such animals, or richer because they have a natural wool and make a profit from selling it every year, and their familiar possessions seem to be sources of income! Similarly, they argue about the signs of

Taurus and Pisces, that the movements of the heavens and the interpretation of signs can determine the powers of lowly animals. Therefore, food provides for our living, and our nourishment, that is, sheep, cattle, and fish, imprint the customs of behavior upon us. Therefore, how do they call forth for us the reasons of things and the substance of this life from the heavens, when those same celestial signs impart the causes of their own movement from the qualities of cheap food? They say that one born under the sign of Aries is generous, because the ram willingly sheds its fleece: and they prefer to attribute this power of a cheap animal to nature rather than to the heavens, from which both serenity shines upon us and rain often descends. They are diligent and patient in their service, which the bull looks upon at their birth, because the hardworking animal willingly submits its neck to the yoke of voluntary servitude. Also the archer, whose birth is accompanied by the scorpion in its own constellation, and vomits forth the poisons of malice, because it is a venomous animal. So why do you claim authority for your way of life by pretending to the dignity of celestial signs, and take as evidence for your argument certain trivial matters? For if the characteristics of such customs are impressed by the movements of the heavens onto animals, and it seems that they are subject to the power of a beastly nature, from which they received the causes of vital substance to impart to humans. But if this is contrary to the truth, much more ridiculous is it to summon belief in their argumentation, being devoid of support from the truth.

16. Then let us consider that which they call the planets, of which they claim our life's necessities are formed by their movements. Therefore, whether, as the name implies, they always wander, or, as they themselves say, they are carried by swift motion and change their varied appearance in their countless revolutions ten thousand times a day, it lacks credibility that they determine for us the fixed and immovable substance of living, and our destiny, in such a wandering and rapid error. They say, however, that the movements of all [celestial bodies] are not equal, but that some have faster, and others slower, revolutions; so that in the same hour they often see each other, and often hide, while one passes by another.

However, they say that it matters a great deal whether the born receive beneficial signs or malevolent and harmful ones; and in this is the difference of the birth, that the aspect of beneficial signs contributes greatly, while malevolent and harmful ones cause the most harm. For in this way, they have accustomed themselves to call the same signs that they worship. For I must necessarily use their names, whose assertions I use, lest their arguments be remembered as unknown rather than refuted and destroyed. And so, when they cannot grasp his wandering and swift movement, it often happens that they attribute to that subtlety the appearance of a beneficial sign, when a heavy and harmful offense is about to occur. And why is it surprising if people are deceived there, where harmless signs are blasphemed? And if these signs are believed to be harmful by nature, then the highest God is thus accused, if he made what is evil, and was the operator of wickedness. But if indeed they are thought to have assumed voluntarily what harms the innocent and those who are still unaware of any wicked deed, to whom punishment is assigned before guilt; what can be more irrational, surpassing even the savagery of irrational beasts, than to attribute the use of fraud or favor to men who do not deserve it, but rather to the movements of the stars? 'He committed no offense,' it is said, 'but a harmful star came upon him.' The planet Saturn encountered him: it turned away for a moment, took away his trouble, and absolved him of the crime.

18. But their wisdom is compared to the web of a spider, into which if a gnat or fly falls, it cannot free itself; but if it seems that any stronger kind of creature has fallen into it, it passes through, breaks the weak snares, and dissipates the empty traps. Such are the nets of the Chaldeans, that the weak get entangled in them, while those with stronger senses are unable to be offended. Therefore, you who are stronger, when you see the mathematicians, say: They have woven a spider's web, which can have no use or bonds if you do not fall into it as if you were a gnat or fly by the slip of your weakness: but as if you were a sparrow or dove, with the swiftness of your flight, you destroy the weak snares. For who among the wise would believe that the movements of the stars, which often change and recur in many ways, bear the insignia of power? For if it were so, how many royal births would be indicated by the stars each day? Therefore, kings would be born daily and the succession of the royal power would not be passed on to sons, but rather they would always arise from a different state, acquiring the right to imperial rule. So, who then determines the birth of a king's offspring, if the power is owed to him, and does not transfer the succession of the kingdom to his own descendants by his own decision? We read that Abia begot Asa, and Asa begot Josaphat, and Josaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Oziam (Matthew, 1, 7 et 8); and so on, the succession through the kings of the same royal lineage and honor extends until the captivity. But just because they were kings, could they control their movements by celestial signs? For who among men can have dominion over these things?

Then, if they refer to the genital necessity, not to the established customs of our actions and deeds, why have laws been proposed, and also promulgated rights, by which punishment is decreed for the wicked, or security is granted to the innocent? Why is pardon not given to the guilty, when, as they themselves say, they have committed wrongs not by their own consent, but out of necessity? Why does the farmer labor and not rather wait to bring in the unlabored fruits into the repositories of the granaries by the privilege of his birth? If someone is born in such a way that wealth flows to them without any effort, surely they should wait for spontaneous income to spring forth from the earth without any sowing. They should not plow the fields with a plow, not bring their hand close to the curved sickle, not undergo the expense of picking the grapes for harvesting, but rather, freely flowing wines should pour out for them without any provocation, and the wild olive berry should sweat oil for them without any pruned branches. They should not be anxious about the danger of crossing the vast sea, nor should the merchant concerned for their own safety, whom a certain lucky chance, as they say, in their idle generative power can let the treasure of wealth fall into their lap. But this is not the opinion of everyone. In fact, the industrious farmer, with his plow pressed down, splits the earth, naked he plows, naked he sows, naked he threshes the toasted grain in the scorching heat of the sun in the field: and the impatient merchant, with the wind blowing, often plows the sea with his gaze. Therefore, condemning their impudence and recklessness, the prophet says: Be ashamed, O Sidon; the sea has spoken (Isaiah 23:4), that is, if dangers do not move you, let shame suppress, let modesty confound. Blush, Sidon, in which there is no place for virtue, no concern for salvation, no young men dedicated to the defense of their country in war, trained in arms, but rather all worry is about profit, all effort is for trade. 'The seed of merchants,' it is said, 'is like a harvest.' (Ibid., 3) But what reward does a Christian man have if he arranges his cares and works not according to his own will, but out of necessity? For where there is a decreed necessity, there is dishonored industry.

Chapter V.

The duration and frequency of annual storms are determined by the proximity or distance of the atmosphere: which is adapted to Christ, the Synagogue, and the Church. Why are shadows longer in winter and shorter in summer; and various other things of this kind. Finally, how the same luminaries are present every day.

20. We have said many things, we do not want to say more; lest anyone think that the things which are used by us to refute and examine their assertions have been assumed. For the things which we laughed at as boys, can we, as old men, recall them? Now let us direct our pen to the remaining things according to the reading.

There are, he says, lights in the signs, and in the seasons, and in the days, and in the years. We have spoken about the signs. But what are the seasons, if not the changes of winter, spring, summer, and autumn? Therefore, in these seasons, either the transit of the sun is faster, or slower. For it dazzles with its rays in some, while it inflames with its heat in others. Thus, when the sun lingers in the southern parts, it is winter for us. For when the sun is further away, the earth freezes with frost, is tightened by cold, and the abundant shadow of the night covers the earth, so that the spaces of the night are much longer than those of the day. From this arises the reason that an excessive force of snow and rain is brought about by winter winds. But when it returns from the southern regions and rises above the earth, it equalizes the times of night and day. And the more it adds delays to its courses, the more it gradually reduces the temperature of this air and brings back the mildness of the breezes, which, nurturing all things, compels them to be born again, so that the earth may bear fruit, and the seeds, released from the furrows, may revive, and the trees may grow, and the succession of annual offspring may be propagated for the perpetuation of their species, whether on land or in water. But when it rises towards the summer solstice in the North, it extends the daylight hours and shortens the nights. And so, the more it is constantly connected to and mixed with this air, the more it vaporizes the air itself, and dries up the moisture of the earth, causing the seeds to grow, and the fruits of the forests to mature as if into strong juices. Then, because it is more intense, it casts smaller shadows at noon, since it illuminates this place from above.

22. And so the Synagogue says in the Song of Songs: Tell me, O Christ, whom my soul loves, where you feed, where you rest at noon, lest I become adorned with the flocks of your companions (Cant. I, 6). Why not rather whom you love? But the Synagogue loved, the Church loves, and never changes her affection towards her Christ. Where, she says, do you feed, where do you rest at noon. I desire to follow you as a foster child, whom I held tightly before as if joined, and to seek your flocks, for I have lost mine. You pasture at midday, that is, in the place of the Church, where justice shines forth, where judgment shines like noonday, where shadow is not seen, where the days are longer, so that the sun of righteousness may linger there longer, like in the summer months. Finally, the day of the Lord is not short, but great; for it is written: Until the great day of the Lord comes (Joel. II, 31). And Jacob also says: All the days of my life that I have lived are short and miserable (Gen. XLVII, 9). For the light is an uncertain evil. Therefore, the short days are days of uncertain and shady light: the great days are without shade, as many have experienced in some warmer places and have learned by example. So, the synagogue, in its short and miserable days, which Jacob often represents in his own person, had a lot of shade, which did not see the sun of righteousness, but saw it shining not from above his head, but from the south, when it was winter for him. But the Church is said: Winter is gone, it has departed for itself, flowers have been seen

on the earth, the time of harvest has come. (Song of Solomon, II, 11). Before the coming of Christ there was winter, after the coming of Christ there are the flowers of spring, and the harvest of summer. Therefore, seeing Him shining from the south and from the conversion of the Gentiles, they are overshadowed. But the people of the Gentiles, who were in confusion, the Gentiles who sat in darkness, saw a great light, those who sat in the region of the shadow of death, a light has arisen for them. Great light of divinity, which no shadow of death interrupts. And therefore it illuminates from above, as it is written, as Zacharias says: In which the rising sun from on high has visited us: to illuminate those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death (Luke 1:78-79). There is indeed a shadow of salvation, not of death, as it is written: Protect me under the shadow of your wings (Psalm 17:8). It is a shadow indeed, because of the body; a shadow, because of the cross, but a shadow of salvation, because in it there was forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the dead.

23. Therefore, we can take an example: because winter days are short, but they have longer shadows; summer days are longer, but they have shorter shadows. Also, the shadow is shorter at noon than at the beginning or end of the day; and this is the case with us in the western part. However, there are those who, for two days of the entire year, have no shadow in the southern parts, because they are illuminated from all sides by the sun above their heads, hence they are called '■σκιτοι' in Greek. Many people also report that the sun appears to rise from the deep, shining through a narrow opening in a well. They are said to be in the Southern Hemisphere, called '■μφ■σκιτοι', because they cast a shadow on both sides. The shadow is behind those who walk towards the rising sun; for example, if you travel east in the morning. If you go against the midday sun, it is in the south; if you go towards the setting sun, it is in the west. Therefore, the sun is visible to you from three directions: from the east, from the south, and from the west. In the morning and evening, it is behind you, and at noon, it is also to the side. But the sun is never in the north, and therefore, if you direct your shadow towards the north, whether in the morning, evening, or noon, it cannot be behind you. For there are only those positioned around the south in this region of the earth that we inhabit, who seem to cast a shadow towards the southern region. However, this is said to happen in the peak of summer, when the sun is directed towards the North. Afterwards, autumn receives us, indeed breaking the intensity of the summer: but with the heat temporarily relaxed and dissipated, through the mildness of moderate weather, without deceit and harm, it delivers us to the wintry blasts.

He says that they also exist for the sake of the days. Not in order to make the days, but so that they may have dominion in them, so that the rising sun may illuminate the day with abundant grace, so that it may have the power to mark its course throughout the entire day. This is how some understand what the prophet says: 'The sun to have dominion over the day, the moon and the stars to have dominion over the night' (Psalm 135:8). For they carry the light around. The sun and the moon are also ordered by years: the moon completes its course in 354 days, according to the Jews, with a few additional days; according to the Romans, it is celebrated twice in the sixth month once every five years with the addition of one day. The solstice year is also when the sun, having completed its circuit through all the signs, returns to the point where it began its course. For it is said that it completes a full cycle of the entire space each year.

Chapter VI.

The magnitude of the sun and moon is proven by the fact that they appear the same to everyone. The objection is resolved and a beautiful discussion about the appearance of distant objects follows: once the magnitude of the sun has been asserted, some remarks are added about its temperament.

25. Therefore God made these two great lights. We can understand them to be great not only in comparison to other things, but also by their own function, as the great sky and the great ocean. For the great sun, which fills the earth with its heat, and the moon with its light, not only illuminate the lands, but also this air and sea, and the face of the sky. Wherever they are in the sky, they illuminate everything and are seen equally by all; so that no people believe that these lights reside only in their own regions, and only exist and shine for themselves; since they shine in the same way for all, so that no one thinks that one light is closer to them than another. An example of their size is evident, as the same appearance of the moon is seen by all people on Earth. For although its light may sometimes increase or decrease, it appears the same to me and to everyone else during the night; for if it appeared smaller to those who are far away, it would shine brighter to those who are closer, and it would reveal an indication of its narrowness and smallness. Indeed, we consider other objects that are far away to be smaller, and we believe them to be larger when we observe them up close; the closer you are, the more the size of what you perceive is magnified. The radius of the sun is closer to none and farther from none; similarly, the globe of the moon is equal to all. The sun appears the same to both the Indians and the Britons at the same moment when it rises. Neither when it sets, does it appear smaller to the Easterners than to the Westerners; nor, when it rises to the Westerners, is it considered lower than to the Easterners. How far, he asks, is the East from the West (Ps. CII, 12)? These things are distant from each other in turn. But the sun is distant from none, closer to none, and farther from none.

26. And let it not bother you that, when it rises, the sun appears to you as the size of a fist: but consider how much space there is between the sun and the earth, which our weak vision cannot pass without great loss to itself. Our vision becomes dim, does the sun become dim, or the moon? Our sight is limited, does that make the things we see smaller? The appearance is diminished, not the size taken away. For we should not attribute the weaknesses of our vision to the luminaries themselves. Our appearance deceives: therefore do not estimate the judgment of it as faithful. The form of the heavenly bodies is smaller than the spectacle, not its own. If you desire to see a plain subject from the highest peak of mountains, and there grazing herds, will you not judge their bodies as resembling ants? If you look at the sea from some lookout of the shore, will not the largest ships among the blue waves, and the shining sails appear as if they cover the appearance of flying doves from a distance? What about those very islands that divide the sea, separate the lands, which are considered to be enclosed by a narrow boundary? How do they appear round from rough things, thick from sparse ones? So consider these weaknesses of your sight; and call upon yourself, as a just judge, the evidence of what we assert.

27. If you want to estimate the magnitude of the sun, not only with the eye of the mind, but also with the body, consider how many spheres of stars seem to be woven into the axis of the sky and adorned with countless lights; yet they cannot dispel the darkness of night or clear the clouds of the sky. As soon as the sun has sent forth its signs of its rising, all the fires of the stars vanish under the brilliance of the one luminary, the air opens up, and the face of the sky is suffused with a reddish purple blush. While still breathing its beginning, and now with the momentary swiftness of

full light, the gleaming spark moves, and the sweet breeze precedes the rising sun. Tell me, please, if the world were not vast, how could it illuminate the great sphere of the earth?

28. But what can I say about the such great restraint and moderation of the creator, who assigned to it the measure of the sun's function; so that neither its fiery vapor, as it seems, would consume the veins of the earth, its juices, and the forms of things infused, nor, cooled again over such vast spaces of the world, would it endure any seed of heat in the earth, but leaving it barren and needy of fruits, it might not pour forth any grace of fertility?

Chapter VII.

Many things that are said about the sun also apply to the moon; however, the moon also has its own effects, some of which are listed here.

29. Similar things apply to the moon's cycle, as we mentioned regarding its companion and brother. Indeed, it undertakes the same ministry as its brother: to illuminate the darkness, nurture the seeds, and increase the fruits. It also has many things distinct from its brother; for example, what the heat of the sun dries out from the earth during the whole day, the same is replenished by the dew in a short time of the night; for the moon itself is said to bring abundant dew. Finally, when the night is clear and the moon shines throughout, then a more generous dew is said to be carried to drench the fields. And many, lying under the open sky, felt that the more they were under the light of the moon, the more they accumulated moisture in their heads. Hence, in the Song of Songs, Christ says to the Church: 'For my head is filled with dew, and my hair with the drops of the night' (Song of Songs 5:2). Then it diminishes and increases, so that it is smaller when it rises anew, and when it is diminished, it accumulates. In this is a great mystery. For the elements also sympathize with its defect: and as it decreases, the things that were emptied out during its course are accumulated, like the brains of animals and the moisture of the sea creatures. Since it is said that fuller oysters are found and many other things when the moon is waxing. The same is also alleged about the inner parts of trees by those who have discovered this by their own experience. Therefore, we see that its rising and waning is a matter of reason, not weakness. For it would never give such a great change to things unless it possessed excellent power and grace conferred by its creator.

Some learned and Christian men have also stated that the air is known to change at the rising of the moon: but if this change were brought about by some violent disturbance, the whole sky would be covered with clouds and rain would pour down at all parts of the horizon. Finally, although we were eager for rain, I did not want such statements to be true. Finally, I was delighted because there was no rain; until, through the prayers of the Church, it was revealed that we should not hope for it from the beginning of the moon, but from the providence and mercy of the Creator. Indeed, when the Euxine Sea overflows on all sides according to the other phases of the moon, it collects and returns the waves received, or even carries them with great force; however, at its rising, it is calm until the moon is without light. But when the return of its days reveals it, then its course turns back in reverse. Moreover, it is said that the tide, which is known to exist in the Ocean, is said to maintain its regular cycle with the other days, but it is said to give a clear indication of its change with the rising of the moon; so that the very western sea, in which the tide is observed, approaches and recedes more than usual, and is carried by a greater tide, as if it were being pulled backwards by certain aspirations of the moon, and then, pushed and pulled

again, it returns to its own measure.

Chapter VIII.

The change of the moon teaches the instability of things: but it is shamefully expressed in our morals. It represents the mystery of Christ and the Church: which those who believe can be taken from the sky by magical chants, are to be ridiculed.

31. So if you wonder how the moon can undergo changes, even though it has such a powerful capacity for transformation, consider this great mystery: by her example you come to know, O man, that there is nothing of human and worldly nature, nothing in the entire created order, that does not at some point dissolve. For even the moon, to whom the Lord entrusted the duty of illuminating the world, waxes and wanes. For everything that has come into existence from nothing and has attained perfection will ultimately diminish once more. Heaven and earth will pass away. Why then do we not adopt moderation, so as not to lose heart in adversity? For the One who made everything out of nothing is also capable of easily raising you to the highest and most perfect state. Likewise, let us not become arrogant in prosperity, nor boast in any power or wealth, nor take pride in physical strength or beauty, for they are susceptible to corruption and frequent change. Let us instead seek to maintain the grace of the soul, which endures into the future. For if the setting of the moon saddens you, which always repairs and transforms itself; much more should it sadden you if your soul, having been filled with the progress of virtue, afterwards frequently changes its pursuits due to the fickleness of the mind and negligence, which is foolishness and ignorance. Hence the Scripture says: 'A fool is changed like the moon' (Ecclesiasticus 27:12). And therefore the wise man is not changed like the moon; but he will remain like the sun. Where the moon is not a partaker of folly; for the moon does not change like a fool, but the fool changes like the moon. Indeed, the seed of the righteous remains perfect like the eternal moon, and is a faithful witness in the sky. For it is one thing to serve by duty, another to be carried by talent, and to not have a fixed opinion due to the weakness of the senses. The moon labors for you, and is subject to the will of God. For vanity, the creature is subject not willingly, but because of the one who subjected it in hope. Therefore, she is not changed willingly: you are changed willingly. She groans and endures in her own change: you do not understand, and you often rejoice. She frequently awaits your redemption, so that she may be freed from the common servitude of all creation: you bring hindrance to both your redemption and her liberty. Therefore, it is your, not her, foolishness that while you wait and do not convert, she is still changing.

32. Therefore, do not estimate the moon with the eye of your body, but with the vivacity of your mind. The moon diminishes in order to fill the elements. This is truly a great mystery. It was given to him who has given grace to all. He emptied it in order to fill the one who also emptied himself, in order to fill all. For he emptied himself in order to descend to us; he descended to us in order to ascend to all. For, as it is written, 'He ascended above all heavens in order to fill all things' (Ephesians 4:10). Therefore, he who came in emptiness filled the apostles with his fullness. Hence one of them says: For from his fullness we have all received (John 1:16). Therefore, the moon announced the mystery of Christ. Not insignificant is the sign that he placed: not insignificant is the symbol that the beloved Church possesses, which the Prophet signifies when he says: righteousness and abundance of peace will arise in his days, until the moon is taken away (Psalm 72:7). And in the Song of Songs, the Lord says of his bride: Who is she that looks forth as the

morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun (Song of Songs 6:9)? And fittingly is the Church fair as the moon, which has shone forth in the whole world, and, illuminating the darkness of this age, says: The night has gone, the day has come near (Romans 13:12). Well does he say, Looking forth, as if looking down upon his own from on high, as you have: The Lord looked down from heaven on the sons of men (Psalm 14:2). Therefore, looking at the Church, just as the moon has frequent waxings and wanings: but it has grown through its defects, and has deserved to be enlarged by them, while it is diminished by persecutions and crowned by the martyrdoms of confessors. This is the true moon, which borrows perpetual light of eternal life and grace from the light of its brother. For the Church shines not by its own, but by the light of Christ; and it draws its splendor from the sun of righteousness, so that it may say: I no longer live, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20). Truly blessed are you, who have deserved such a great honor! I would call you blessed not because of your own merits, but because of the Church's designation. For in those servants, you are loved; in this, you are cherished.

33. How ridiculous it is, however, that people mostly believe that you can be led by magic spells! Those are old women's tales and popular beliefs. For who would think that the work of God can be tested by Chaldean superstitions? It is a mistake for someone to transform themselves into an angel of light and be led by their own will, not by the power of spells. Certainly, you also seem to think that you can be led away from your place and station as if you were the Church. The Church is multi-tentacled: but the spells of sorcery cannot harm it. The enchanter is powerless where the song of Christ is sung daily. It has its own enchanter, the Lord Jesus, through whom he has disarmed the enchanting spells of the magicians and expelled the venom of the serpents. And just as the exalted serpent devours the serpents of the Egyptians, so the deadly spell, though it may mutter, is rendered powerless in the name of Christ. Thus Paul not only blinded the magician Elymas with the infirmity of his sorcery, but also deprived him of sight. Thus Peter, by a high flight of magic, brought down and overthrew Simon seeking the heights of heaven, his power of incantations being dissolved.

Chapter IX.

Conclusion of the fourth day. How futile it is to beware of him; and from where the offense of demons and pagans is derived against him.

34. Beautifully, as I believe, the fourth day has passed. So how then do most people usually take care on the fourth, and think it useless to start anything with this number, with which the whole world emerged with new light? Or did the sun begin with sinister omens? And how can it be a good omen for others, who did not know how to choose the day of their own rising? Or how do they approve the signs of someone whose rising they do not approve? What do we even say about the moon, which began on the fourth day and marks the fourteenth day of salvation? Does the number by which the mystery of redemption is celebrated displease them? Therefore, demons persuade that number to be avoided, by which their wickedness is destroyed. Therefore, the gentiles assert that nothing is to be worshiped; because they know that it was then that their arts began to become void, and the gentile peoples migrated to the Church. Certainly, they believe that if the moon is in its fourth quarter, pure and without dull horns, it is a sign of serenity to be given on other days until the end of the month. Therefore, they do not want to begin with the same beginnings with which serenity begins. But now we must be careful that the fourth day does not pass us by in

conversation; for the shadows grow larger from the mountains, the light diminishes, and the shadows accumulate.

Book Five. Of the Work of the Fifth Day.

Chapter I. (Sermo VII.)

Having adorned the previous two elements, the sea is granted its own prerogative. The obedience of the waters is described, as well as their astonishing fertility, which humans abuse by consuming what is forbidden. Finally, it is shown that reptiles are not only called serpents, but also fish.

1. The earth, adorned with various seeds, was green with all things; the sky also, with the sun and the moon, shone with their twin lights, and was adorned with the beauty of the stars. The third element remained, namely the sea; so that it too might receive the grace of life-giving divine gift. For by the ethereal spirit, all the offspring of the earth are nourished. The earth, also releasing seeds, gives life to everything: and especially then, for the first time, by the command of God's word, it began to grow green, sprouting forth by the gift of its own life-giving power. He needed water, and by the grace of divine operation, he seemed to receive a blessed benefit. The Creator still has something to offer him, by which he may be able to equal the duties of the earth: he reserved for him, so that he, too, might claim something of his own and special from the bestowed privilege of the duty conferred upon him. The earth was brought to life first, but those things which did not have a breathing soul were brought forth. Water is commanded to produce those things which would excel in the vigor and dignity of a living soul, and to receive the sense of preserving salvation and avoiding death. So God said, 'Let the waters bring forth reptiles with living souls according to their kind, and flying creatures flying above the ground according to their kind following the expanse of the sky.' (Gen. I, 20). The command came, and suddenly water was poured out, giving birth to rivers, animating lakes, the sea itself began to give birth to various kinds of reptiles, and according to their kind, it poured out whatever it had formed. Not even the deep abysses or muddy swamps were left empty, as everything took on the power that had been given to them to create. The fish were exiled from the river, the dolphins were playing in the waves, the shells were clinging to the rocks, the oysters were sticking to the depths, and the sea urchins were growing. Woe is me! Before man, temptation began, the abundance of resources, the mother of our excesses. Before man, pleasures. Therefore, temptation came before nature for humans: but nature committed no fault; it provided sustenance, not vices. It gave these things in common, so that you could not claim anything as your own. The earth produces its fruits for you; the rivers yield their harvest to you; and all creatures generate their offspring for you; and yet, not satisfied with these, you tasted forbidden food. All things are accumulated for your envy, so that the weight of your greedy transgression may burden you.

3. But we cannot describe how many species and names there are, which are all animated by a divine inspiration in an instant. At the same time, the form of the body united with the soul, and the vital energy of the remaining power also operated. The earth was filled with plants, the sea with living creatures. There, imperceptible things were sprouting, here perceptible things were turning. Even on the land, water claims its own portions. Fish of the waters lick the earth, and seek their prey from it. Mosquitoes and frogs also make noise around the reproductive swamps, and they themselves heard the command of the Lord saying: Let the waters bring forth living creatures.

4. We know that reptiles are called the kind of serpents, because they crawl on the ground; but much more so, anything that swims, has the ability or the nature to crawl. For even though they seem to split the water when they plunge into the deep; nevertheless, when they float on the surface, they crawl with their whole body, which they drag on certain backs of the waters. Therefore, David also says: This is the great and wide sea, there are reptiles of which there is no number (Ps. 103, 25). Even though many of them have feet and are capable of walking, because they are amphibious creatures that live both in water and on land, like seals, crocodiles, and river horses, which are called hippos because they are born in the Nile River; nevertheless, when they are in the deep waters, they do not walk but swim, and they do not use their footprints to move forward, but rather they use their fins to crawl. Just as a ship glides when propelled by oars, and the hull cuts through the water.

Chapter II.

By the power of this voice, aquatic reptiles are produced, much more in the sea than on land; and this grace is added to the waters, that what is harmful on land is harmless in the sea.

5. God said, 'Let the waters bring forth reptiles.' Brief, but powerful, and widely spreading, He infused a common nature into the smallest and largest creatures. In the same moment, the whale is produced as the frog is born from the same force of operation. God does not labor in the greatest things, nor does He disdain the smallest. Nature does not grieve when giving birth to dolphins, just as it does not grieve when producing tiny mussels and snails. Take note, O man, how many more things there are in the sea than on land. If you can count, there are numerous species of fish, both small and large, cuttlefish, octopuses, crustaceans, crabs, and countless others of their kind. What about the various species of snakes, dragons, moray eels, and eels? And let's not forget scorpions, frogs, turtles, weasels, and sea dogs, sea calves, huge whales, dolphins, seals, and lions. Shall I also mention blackbirds, thrushes, and even peacocks, whose colors we see depicted in birds, such as blackbirds with black feathers, thrushes with different colored backs and necks, and thrushes with various colored bellies, and so on, which have their own land species and names? For first of all those things began in the sea, and in divers rivers. For the water, by the divine commandment, brought forth the living creatures that swim.

6. Add to this grace that those things which we fear on land, we love in water. For what is harmful on land is harmless in water, and even snakes are without venom. The lion is terrifying on land, but sweet in the waves. The moray, which they say has something harmful, is a more precious food. The frightening frog in marshes is beautiful in water, and surpasses almost all other foods. If anyone wants to know more, let them ask different fishermen from different places; for no one can comprehend everything. Certainly beware of dogs, whom the Apostle teaches are annoying and to be avoided in the Church, saying: Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers (Phil. 3:2). The heavy smell of a weasel is pleasant underground and in water. Earthly vengeance knows how to avenge the stench: it has no less charm when captured than when free. Nor will I leave you dishonored, O thymalum, by our prosecution, to whom a name has grown from the flower: whether the water of the Ticino river or the water of the pleasant Adige river has nourished you, you are a flower. Finally, a saying affirms that regarding someone who emanates a pleasant fragrance, it is said wittily: Either he smells of fish or he smells of flowers; thus, it is expressed that the smell of a fish is the same as the smell of a flower. What is more attractive than your appearance? What is more

delightful than your sweetness? What is more fragrant than your scent? Just as honey is fragrant, so do you emit it with your own body. What can I say about the tenderness of crows and even of wolves? The lamb does not fear these wolves. Such is the grace of the waters, that their calves and lions flee from them, so that this prophetic saying about the sanctity of the Church rightly applies to them: Then wolves and lambs will graze together, and lions and oxen will eat straw together (Esa. LXV, 25). No wonder, since even in the Church, water works in the same way, that the washed-away wickedness of the thieves is compared with the innocence. And why should I not mention the purple, which adorns the banquets of kings, and taints the garments? Therefore, there is something in water that is worshipped by kings: it is the appearance of water that shines. Add to this, the sea pigs are also pleasing to the Jews; because there is nothing common that water does not wash away, and therefore they cannot consider them as common, who are born on the land.

Chapter III.

There is a manifold method of generating fish, and a singular sense of piety towards their offspring. How great is their purity, by which they not only surpass other animals, but even human beings themselves.

There are countless uses and countless species of fish. Some lay eggs, which they call different names according to their size, and entrust them to be nurtured by the waters. Therefore, water gives life and creates, and still carries out the task of that first command as if it were a perpetual law, being a kind mother to animals. Others give birth to live offspring from their own bodies, like weasels, and little dogs, and huge sea creatures like dolphins and seals, and other similar animals. When they give birth, if by chance they sense any plots or threats around their young, they open their mouths, and with harmless teeth suspend their young, holding them inside their body and hiding them in their genital pouch. What human feeling can imitate this fish's compassion? Kisses satisfy us; for them, it is not enough to open their bellies and receive and revive their newborns, nourishing them with a kind of warmth and feeding their spirit, and allowing two to live in one body until they either find safety or protect their young by offering their own body as a shield from danger. Who seeing these things, though they may be able to possess them, would not yield to such devotion to the fish? Who would not marvel and be amazed, that nature preserves in fish what it does not preserve in humans? Many, driven by the suspicion and hatred of stepmothers, have killed their own children: others, as we read, have devoured their own offspring in hunger. A mother has become a grave for her human pledges; the womb of fish is like a wall, which preserves the unharmed pledges of internal organs.

Therefore, different species of fish have different uses: some lay eggs, others give birth to live and formed offspring. And those that lay eggs do not build nests like birds, do not endure the labor of long incubation, and do not care for themselves with difficulty. An egg falls, which is gently received by the water as a nurturing mother, and quickly gives birth to a living creature. As soon as it is touched by the parent, the egg comes to life and a fish emerges.

Then there is the pure and untainted succession! No one mixes with another, but each species mates with its own kind, thymallus with thymallus, lupus with lupus. Even Scorpaena preserves the chastity of its immaculate union with its own species. Therefore, it has the modesty of its own kind, but it does not have the poison of its own kind; for Scorpaena does not strike, but it restores. Therefore, the species of alien fish do not know the adulterous contagion, such as those which

mate with donkeys and mares, which are committed with great concern by humans; or again, when a horse mates with a donkey, which are true adulteries of nature. For it is certainly a greater offense to commit an act against the harmony of nature than to harm an individual person. And you, a deceitful interpreter of bestial adultery, consider that animal more valuable which is illegitimate rather than that which is true? You confuse different species and mix various seeds, and often force unwilling creatures into forbidden unions, and you call this cleverness! Because you cannot do this with humans, that the mingling of different kinds could produce offspring, you destroy what is naturally born in a man, strip him of his manhood, deny him his gender by cutting off a part of his body, and make him a eunuch; so you fulfill with audacity what nature denies in humans.

Chapter IV.

To teach the mutual dependence of water and fish, and what kind of dependence there should be between parents and children. How water provides fish with the ability to breathe.

Consider how good water is as a mother. You, O man, have taught about the abandonment of fathers by their sons, separations, hatred, offenses; learn what the necessity is between parents and children. Fish cannot live without water, nor can they be separated from the company of their parent, nor can they be distinguished from their foster mother's care; and this happens by a certain nature, that when separated they die immediately. Neither, indeed, do they live by the breath of this air, as all things do, because the nature of drawing in breath and breathing out is not sufficient for them; otherwise they could not always live under water, not having the infusion of breath. What the spirit is to us, water is to them. Just as the spirit serves us as the substance of life-giving, so does water serve them. With the supply of spirit cut off, we cannot remain alive for even a short time without the vital spirit, and we are immediately extinguished. Likewise, fish removed from water cannot exist without the substance of their own life.

11. And the reason is clear, because in us the lung receives breath through the more spacious cavities of the chest; and since it is itself permeable to most pores, it cools the internal heat by the infusion of breath. For just as the chest receives nourishment, so it also separates excess food and healthy juices and distinguishes the blood. The lung becomes permeable, so that the breath can more easily reach it by aspiration. However, fish have gills, which they now fold and gather, now spread out and open. Therefore, in this collection and filtering process, while water is being taken in, transmitted, and penetrating, it seems to fulfill the function of respiration. Therefore, it is the nature of fish, not common with others; a special purpose, and a certain separate and secret substance for living. That is why they are not nourished, nor do they delight in the touch and caress of human hands like terrestrial animals, even if they live in their own ponds.

Chapter V.

Why are the Pisces so well-toothed? They yield to each other in food: which is imitated by the greedy, who are chastised with vigorous reprimands.

12. But what shall I say about the density of teeth? For they do not have teeth on one side like an ox or a sheep: but both sides are armed with teeth; because they are in water, and if they were to turn their food for a long time, and not quickly transmit it, the flood of water could carry away and dilute their food from their teeth. Therefore, they have dense and sharp teeth, so that they can

quickly bite, quickly finish their food, and easily and without any delay or hesitation transmit it. Finally, they do not ruminate; however, scarus alone is said to ruminate among them, as some say who have witnessed or experienced it or have studied to understand such things.

Indeed, even they themselves did not escape the violence of their own power, and they are subjugated by the greed of the more powerful everywhere. The weaker one is, the more exposed they are to prey. And many indeed feed on herbs and small worms. Yet there are those who devour each other and feed on their own flesh. Among them, the smaller is the food of the bigger: in turn, the bigger is attacked by the stronger and becomes the prey of another predator. Thus, it has become a practice that when one has devoured another, they are devoured by another, and both come together in one stomach, having been devoured by their own devourer, and they share in one body both the prey and the revenge. And this injury perhaps increased of its own accord, as it did not begin in us by nature, but by greed. Either because they were given for the use of humans, they were also made as a sign, so that in them we would see the faults of our customs, and we would beware of examples; lest anyone, more powerful, would attack someone inferior, giving an example of injury to himself. Therefore, whoever harms another, prepares a snare for himself, into which he himself falls. And you are a fish, who invades others' entrails, who sinks the weak, who pursues the yielding until the depths. Be careful that while you pursue him, you do not fall yourself into a stronger one, and let him lead you into other people's snares, who avoids his own, and before he sees your suffering, he himself would have been afraid while pursuing his own. What difference is there between a wealthy one devouring the possessions of the weak with the greed of wickedness, and a catfish filled with the intestines of smaller fish? The wealthy man is dead, and his spoils were of no use to him, indeed his own infamy made him more detestable. He was caught like a silurus, and his useless plunder was discovered. How many are found in him who had devoured others? And you, wealthy man, have in your bosom another predator. He possessed the resources of a poor man which he had seized: you, by oppressing him, have added two fortunes to your own resources, and yet you are not satisfied with such an increase; and you say that you have avenged others, when you commit the same things that you avenge, unjust even more unjust, and unfair even more unfair, and greedy even more greedy. See to it that the same end does not find you as that fish: beware of the hook, beware of the nets. But you presume about your own power, that no one can resist you: the catfish presumed the same, that no one would throw a hook at him, no one would set nets for him, and if he got caught, he would break everything apart; and yet, he did not escape the spear or run into the stronger bonds of a net from which he could not free himself. Without a doubt, the more severe the injustices committed by humans, the less their own wickedness can protect them; rather, at some point, what is paid for with the price of wickedness will inevitably be dissolved, which is difficult to avoid.

Chapter VI.

To be a fish: but to find another fish, one good and another bad: but the good should not fear Peter's hook and net.

15. Therefore, you are a fish, o man. Listen, because you are a fish: The kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea, which gathered fish of every kind. But when it was full, they drew it to shore, and sitting down, they chose the good ones into their vessels, but the bad ones they threw away. So it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come out and separate the wicked from

the midst of the just, and they will cast them into the furnace of fire (Matt. XIII, 47). So there are both good and bad fish, the good ones are kept for a price, the bad ones are immediately burned. The good fish are not entangled in nets, but are lifted up; nor does the hook kill and destroy them, but it bathes them in the blood of a precious wound, in whose mouth the good price is found, by which the apostolic tribute and the census of Christ are able to be paid. For so it is written, as the Lord says: 'Kings of the earth, from whom do they receive a grain of tribute or census?' From their own children, or from strangers? And answering, Peter said, from strangers. The Lord said: Go to the sea, and cast in a hook, and that fish which shall first come up, take: and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a stater: take that, and give it to them for me and thee (Matt. XVII, 24).

16. Therefore, o good fish, do not fear Peter's hook: it does not kill, but consecrates. Do not despise yourself as though you were worthless, because you see a weak body: you have in your mouth that which you may offer for both Peter and Christ. Do not fear Peter's nets, to whom Jesus says: Cast into the deep, and let down your nets. For he sends them not to the left side, but to the right, as Christ commanded. Do not fear his bosom, for it is said to him: From this you shall be a life-giving man. Therefore, he sent out nets and caught Stephen, who was the first to ascend from the Gospel, having on his lips the staff of righteousness. With a steadfast confession, he cried out, saying: Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. For this fish, the Lord Jesus stood; for he knew that there was the price of his redemption in its mouth. Finally, he fulfilled a glorious martyrdom and Peter's judgement, as well as teaching and the grace of Christ, as a wealthy proclaimer.

Chapter VII.

To mark the sea with the Gospel and the Church, and what a fish should accomplish in the sea. Spouses are urged towards mutual tolerance of character, charity, and faith, by the example of the viper. Why is the same example used on both sides?

17. And do not be moved by the fact that I have placed the Gospel in the sea. The Gospel is the sea in which Christ walked: The Gospel is the sea in which Peter wavered, when he denied; yet through the stronghold of Christ's faith, he found the grace of his station: The Gospel is the sea from which the martyr ascended: The Gospel is the sea in which the apostles fish, in which the net is cast, which is like the kingdom of heaven: The Gospel is the sea in which the mysteries of Christ are portrayed: The Gospel is the sea from which the Hebrew escaped, while the Egyptian was destroyed: The Gospel is the sea, for the Church, the bride of Christ, is the sea, and the fullness of divine grace, which is founded above the seas, as the Prophet said: He founded it above the seas (Psalm 24:2). Exile over the waves, O man, because you are a fish: let not the waves of this age overpower you: if there is a storm, seek the deep and the abyss: if there is old age, play in the waves: if there is a tempest, beware of the rocky shore; lest the raging surf strike you against the cliff. For it is written: Be shrewd as serpents (Matt. X, 16).

18. And since there is a proposed example of cunning serpents, let us be cunning in seeking and maintaining marriages, let us cherish the partnerships entrusted to us. And if those who were born in distant regions and separated in time come together, and if a man contends for a foreign land, no distance, no absence diminishes the pleasing love. The same law connects the present and the absent: the same bond of nature binds the distant and the united in the rights of conjugal love.

They are joined under the same yoke of blessing, even if one must endure the long separations of distant regions; for they have received the yoke of grace not on the physical neck, but on the neck of the mind. The viper, the most wicked kind of beast, and cleverer than all other serpentine species, when it has taken on the desire to mate, seeks the well-known company of the sea moray, or prepares a new one: having advanced to the shore, having given testimony to its presence with a hiss, it summons her to the conjugal embrace. But the invited moray is not lacking, and she imparts the desired uses of her poisonous serpent's conjunction. What does such a conversation mean, if not that the behavior of spouses must be endured; and if he is absent, that his presence must be awaited, even if he is harsh, deceitful, inconsistent, slippery, drunken? What is worse than poison, which does not spare even the moray eel in a spouse? It is not lacking in invites, and with careful charity it embraces the slippery serpent. He bears your misfortunes and the fickleness of a woman: can you not, O woman, tolerate your husband? Adam was deceived by Eve, not Eve by Adam (33, q. 5, c. Adam per Evam). Whom the woman called to blame, it is right that she should take on as her leader; lest she stumble again due to female weakness. But he is rough and uncultivated. Once he pleased. Should a man be chosen frequently? He compares his own and seeks an ox, and he loves a horse; and if another is changed, nevertheless he does not know how to drag the yoke like the counterpart of another, and he does not think himself whole: you reject your husband, and you think of changing often; and if one day he is absent, you introduce a rival, and immediately you carry out an unknown cause as if known of shame. A snake seeks the absent one, calls the absent one, and proclaims with a soothing hiss; and when she senses the approaching counterpart, she vomits venom, showing respect to her husband, ashamed of her conjugal grace: you, woman, repel your husband coming from afar with insults. The viper surveys the sea, explores the path of her husband: you obstruct the way to the man with insults: you stir up the poison of quarrels, you do not reject it: you boil with a dreadful venom at the time of conjugal embraces; you are not ashamed of marriage, nor do you respect your husband.

19. But also you, sir, can accept it in this way: set aside the swelling of the heart, the harshness of character, when your diligent wife comes to you: push away indignation, when your charming wife encourages you towards love. You are not a master, but a husband: you did not obtain a servant, but a wife. God wanted you to be the leader of the inferior sex, not the all-powerful one. Return kindness for zeal, return gratitude for love. A viper emits its own venom: can you not set aside the hardness of mind? But you have a natural rigidity: you must temper it with contemplation of marriage, and set aside the harshness of the mind with reverence for the union. It may be done in this way. Do not seek, men, another's bed, do not plot against another's relationship. Adultery is serious, and an injury to nature. God first made two, Adam and Eve, that is, a man and a wife, and a wife from the man, that is, from Adam's rib; and he commanded both to be in one body, and to live with one spirit. Why do you separate one body, and divide one spirit? This is adultery against nature. This is taught by the eel and the snake, who desire the embrace not from a lawful union, but from the passion of lust. Learn, O men, who seek to touch another man's wife, with whom you desire to join in the bed of a serpent, to whom you even compare yourself. Hurry towards the snake, who pours herself into the lap of a man not by the direct path of truth, but by the slippery path of deviant love. She rushes towards her who takes back her poison, as a viper who, having completed the duty of mating, drinks again the poison she had vomited; for she is an adulterous viper. (Prov. XXIII, 32). And Solomon also said that whoever is drunk, when their desire is accustomed to boil through wine, is stretched out as if by a snake's bite, and as if by a lurking one

spreads that poison to them. And so that you know he spoke of an adulteress, he added: 'Your eyes, when they see another woman, your mouth speaks perverse things.' (Ibid., 33).

20. And let no one think that we have set forth contradictory things, such as using the example of this snake both for good and for evil; for in both cases it would profit us to be ashamed either not to show faith to a beloved to whom the snake shows faith, or to abandon holy unions and prefer harmful things which he does who is mixed with a snake.

Chapter VIII.

On the cunning of the octopus and the crab, by which deceitful people are symbolized; with an exhortation to avoid greed.

21. And because we have started to weave our discourse with cunning, by which each person strives to deceive and circumvent his brother, and to devise new frauds; so that he may cheat whom he cannot overcome by force, and cover him with a certain deceitful skill: I will not pass over that fraudulent ingenuity of the polypus, who, having found a rock on a shallow shore, attaches itself to it, and with its cloudy cunning assumes its color, and covered with a similar appearance, unsuspectedly catches many fish that have slipped in, while they do not suspect anything, and think it is a rock, he ensnares them with the tricks of his secret art, and intercepts them in the fold of his own flesh. Thus the prey comes willingly, and is captured by such arguments, which are characteristic of those who often change their disposition, and employ various methods of harming; so that they disturb the minds and senses of individuals, while proclaiming self-control to those who possess it, as if they were deviating from the pursuit of virtue and being immersed in pleasant self-indulgence; so that those who hear or see them believe in their reckless persuasiveness; and thus they slide more quickly, not knowing how to avoid or guard against what harms, since wickedness overshadowed by the mask of kindness is more serious and more harmful. And therefore, those who spread their hair of deceit and disperse their arms far and wide, or assume various forms, must be beware. For these are like many-tentacled octopuses, and they have snares of cunning devices, with which they can entrap whatever falls into the rocks of their deceit.

22. Cancer also has its own cunning tricks for the sake of food! For it delights in oysters itself, and seeks a feast of flesh for itself. But because, just as it is eager for food, it is also watchful for danger: since both hunting and being hunted are difficult: difficult, because the witness is enclosed inside stronger food; for nature has fortified the softness of its flesh with certain imperial precepts, just like certain mice are nourished and nurtured in the concave hollow of shells, and it spreads out as if in a certain valley; and therefore all attempts at capturing the crab are in vain, because no force can open the closed oyster: and it is dangerous if its claw is enclosed, it resorts to arguments and plots new traps with deceit. Therefore, because all species are soothed by pleasure, it examines whether sometimes the oyster, in remote places protected from every wind, opens that double shell of its against the rays of the sun, and unlocks the barriers of its shells, so that it may receive a certain pleasure from the free air of its internal organs; and then secretly inserting a pebble, it hinders the closure of the oyster; and thus, finding the opened barriers, it safely inserts its claws and devours the internal organs. So there are people who, by the use of deceit, creep into the use of another's resources, and support the weakness of their own virtue with a certain cunning, weave deceit for their brother, and feed on another's suffering. But you should be content

with your own possessions and not feed on the losses of others. The good food is the simplicity of innocence. Having their own good, they do not know how to lay traps for others, nor do they burn with the flames of greed, for whom every gain is a loss to virtue and an inflaming desire. And therefore she is blessed, if she knows her own goods, when poverty is true, and to be preferred to all treasures; for it is better to give a little with the fear of God, than to have great treasures without fear. For how much does man nourish? Or if you seek what also abounds to others for grace, that too is not much. For hospitality in vegetables with grace is better than the preparation of fat calves with discord. Therefore let us use our wit to seek grace, and to protect salvation, not to restrict another person's innocence. We are allowed to use maritime examples for the advancement of our own well-being, not for the danger of others.

Chapter IX.

Of the foreknowledge of the hedgehog announcing a future storm. That he has received this gift from God, whose mercy is proclaimed in all things created.

24. The sea urchin, a small, lowly and despised animal, is often said to be a harbinger of future storms or calm seas for sailors. Indeed, when it senses a storm approaching, it grabs hold of a strong pebble and carries it like a burden and drags it like an anchor, so that it is not shaken by the waves. Therefore, it does not rely on its own strength, but is guided by the weight of an external stability. Sailors take this as a sign of future disturbance and take precautions so that they are not caught unprepared by an unexpected whirlwind. Who, as a mathematician, as an astrologer, or as a Chaldean, can comprehend the courses of the stars, the movements of the sky, and the signs? With what genius did he gather this knowledge? Through what teacher did he acquire it? Who was his interpreter of such great divination? Often, people see a confusion in the air, and often they are deceived, because most of the time, it disperses without a storm. The hedgehog is not deceived, it never overlooks its own signs.

25. From where does such knowledge come to a small animal, to predict the future? The more there is nothing in it, the more it can have such wisdom, believe that it has also received this gift of foresight through the kindness of the Lord of all things. For if God clothes the grass, so that we marvel; if he feeds the birds; if he provides food for the raven, for its young cry out to the Lord; if he has given wisdom to women in weaving; if he has not left the spider, which suspends its delicate and skillfully woven webs on doors, immune to wisdom; if he himself has given strength to the horse, and has taken away its fear from its neck, so that it rejoices in the field and mocks kings when they come near, smells the battle from a distance, and is aroused by the sound of the trumpet; if he has filled most of these irrational and other insensible things, like grass and lilies, with the disposition of his wisdom, why do we doubt that he has also bestowed the gift of foresight on the hedgehog? For nothing remains unexplored, nothing hidden. He sees all things, who feeds all things; wisdom fills all things, who made all things in wisdom, as it is written (Ps. 103:24). And if he did not overlook the hedgehog of his visitation; if he considers it, and informs of future things by signs, does he not consider you? Indeed, he does consider, as his divine Wisdom testifies, saying: If he looks at the birds, if he feeds them, are you not worth more than them (Matthew 6:26)? If God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, you of little faith?

Chapter X.

To each species of fish, its own habitats are prescribed, from which human levity and luxury are condemned: however, some fish change places for the sake of their offspring; the reason for this is explained, and human incontinence is criticized. Likewise, about the particular virtues of certain fish.

26. But do we think that the grace of nature remains in fishes without some gift, namely that each species of fish has designated habitats, which no other species exceeds, nor invades the territory of another? Who divided these habitats, which must not be violated at any time? We have heard of a geometer, but we have never heard of a seameter; yet fish know their own measure, not prescribed by city walls and gates, not limited by the buildings of homes, not restricted by the boundaries of fields, but by the measure of what is appropriate; so that it is sufficient for each individual, as much as is abundant for its use, not as much as some excessive greed may claim for itself. There is a certain law of nature to seek only what is sufficient for sustenance, and to consider the fortune of one's possessions in the manner of food. This kind of fish is nourished and born in that sea inlet, while that one is in another. In conclusion, you will not find mixed kinds of fish: but what is abundant here, is lacking elsewhere. And again, that sea inlet nourishes cephalopods, while that one nourishes wolves: one nourishes shellfish, another nourishes locusts. There is no freedom to roam; yet neither is the abundance hindered by mountains or the crossing hindered by flowing rivers, but the use impressed by nature as if holding each person within the boundaries of their homeland and going beyond is considered suspicious by the inhabitants.

27. But our opinion is far different, to exchange our homes for exile, to be held captive by the disdain of the inhabitants, to seek the favor of strangers, to move the perpetual boundaries that our fathers established, to join field to field, house to house. The land fails to provide for men, the seas are crowded. Again, at the whim of individuals the land is intersected, the sea pours in, so that they may make islands, so that they may possess the straits: they claim the spaces of the sea by the right of ownership, and they cite the rights of the fish as being subjected to the condition of native-born servitude. This, he says, is my part of the sea, that is someone else's. The powerful elements divide themselves. Oysters are nourished by these waves; fish are confined in their fish farms. Luxury is not enough for them unless they have warehouses of oysters. Therefore, they count their ages and build receptacles for fish, so that the sea of a rich man can be filled with banquets. How the neighbors hear their name with their ears! How they behold their possessions with their eyes! Just as day and night devise ways to take something from the next day, will you alone inhabit the earth? cries the prophet. The Lord knows these things and reserves them for punishment.

28. They capture the secrets of nature and they know beyond the boundaries of the earth, the sea that no islands interrupt, nor is there any land in between, nor is anything else placed further. Therefore, in that place where the wide sea prevents all use of sight, they are said to hide themselves, the immense race of fish with bodies equal to mountains, as those who have been able to see have reported to us: there they spend a peaceful life separate from the islands, and separate from all the contamination of the coastal cities, they have their own regions and distributed dwellings. They stay within the unoffending boundary of their neighbors and do not seek changes of place through wandering: instead, they love their native soil as if it were their own and consider it pleasant to linger there. They have chosen this in order to be able to lead a solitary life, removed from the interference of judges.

However, there are some species of fish that do not change their habitats easily due to the necessity of breeding. These fish, seeking an appropriate and natural time, gather from many places and different bays of the sea, as if by common agreement. They then head towards the north, propelled by the north wind, and strive towards the northern part of the sea due to a certain law of nature. If you were to see them ascending, you would think that they are some kind of flow, as they rush forward and intersect waves, flowing forcefully through the Propontis into the Black Sea. Who announces these places to the fishes, sets the times? Who gives the arrangement of food, the order of companionship, the limits and times of return? Men have their emperor, whose authority is expected. A sign is displayed, edicts are proposed to the provinces to convene, letters are directed to the military tribunes, a day is appointed; and many are unable to meet on the appointed days. Which emperor gave the command to the fishes? Who grants this discipline to the teacher? Who organizes the paths for the surveyors? Who directs the leaders on the journey so that no encounter is missed? But I recognize who that emperor is, who, by divine arrangement, infuses his authority into the senses of all beings, who, in silence, bestows the order of natural discipline upon mute creatures; not only does he penetrate the great things, but he also establishes himself through the smallest things. The fish obeys the divine law, while humans contradict. The fish solemnly obeys the celestial commands, and humans make void the precepts of God! Does it seem contemptible to you because it is mute and devoid of reason? But be careful not to hold yourself in greater contempt if you are found more irrational than the irrational. But what is more reasonable than this passage of the fish, whose reason is not explained by words but speaks through actions? For during the summer they go to the embrace of the Black Sea, because this gulf is sweeter than the rest of the sea. Not so much because of the sun's heat, as because it delays the others, and this is the reason why it does not completely exhaust all the water which is sweet and potable. But who is ignorant of the fact that even those things which are of the sea often find delight in fresh waters? Furthermore, while they pursue the rivers and ascend to the upper regions, fish of a different kind are often taken in the rivers. Therefore, since this reason makes the Black Sea more agreeable to them, either because the usual heat of the north wind tempers the sun there, or because they consider it more favorable than other places, in which they can generate and rear their own offspring, since the tender offspring can hardly endure the labor of a foreign region, which is fed by the gentle influence of the air there. Therefore, after completing their task, they all return together in the same order in which they had come.

30. By what reasoning should we consider this? The Sinus Ponti (Bay of Pontus) is subject to the most violent blasts of the north wind and the other winds; hence a heavy storm rages there, and tempests arise, so that the sand is turned upside down from the depths: proof of this is the sandy swell, which rises higher with the motion of the winds, then, being heavier in weight, is undoubtedly considered intolerable not only to sailors but also to the very sea creatures themselves. Moreover, it should be noted that many and mighty rivers from the Pontus are mixed together, and in the winter season the very bay itself becomes colder, freezing from the flow of the torrents; for this reason, fish, like judges of the currents, are accustomed to seek the gentleness of the breeze there during the summer: having enjoyed its pleasantness, they then strive to avoid the harshness of winter; and fleeing the harsh Northern region, they retreat into the remaining bays, where either the gentleness of the winds is softer or the temperature of springtime is accustomed to shine. Therefore, a fish knows the time of giving birth, which Solomon Wisdom referred to as a great mystery: It knows the time of going and returning; it knows the time of completing tasks and

resting, and it knows that it cannot be deceived (Eccles. III, 2 et seq.); because it does not rely on reasoning and logical arguments, but on the inspiration of nature, which is the true teacher of piety. In conclusion, all living beings have predetermined times for giving birth, except for humans who are confused and disordered. The remaining species seek the mercy of time, only women harshly pour out their offspring. For a wandering and unrestrained desire for procreation displays a wandering age for giving birth. Fishes cross such great seas in search of some benefit for their kind. We also cross the vast seas, but how much more honorable is it to undertake it out of love for succession than out of greed for money? Finally, for them, it is considered piety, for us, it is considered a means of profit. They bring back offspring more dear than all the goods: we, driven by wretched greed for meager gain, bring back goods far inferior in exchange for danger. Therefore, they return to their homeland: we abandon ours. They gain increase in offspring by swimming: we diminish by sailing.

31. Who then could deny that a divine intelligence and virtue is infused into them? When one sees these people use their lively wit to undertake a solemn pilgrimage to the North; others, with only a small body, possess such strength that they stand with full sails in the midst of raging waves, just as the small fish, the remora, is said to stop an enormous ship with such ease that you would think it was rooted in the sea and not moving. For a long time it keeps its immobility. Do you think that this could have been achieved without the gift of the Creator? Why should I mention swords, or saws, or sea dogs, or whales, or foxes? Why even talk about the center of the turtle, and this being dead? For just as it is said that the fresh mouth of a snake, if someone steps on it, is more harmful than the venom itself, and the wound cannot be healed; so it is also remembered that the dead turtle, with its stinger, brings more danger than when it was alive. The little hare, also a timid animal on land, formidable in the sea, brings mischief quickly and that which cannot easily be taken away. For the creator wanted you to not be safe enough from those who lie in wait in the sea; so that because of the few things that harm, as if stationed on guard, always girded with the weapons of faith and the shield of devotion, you should rely on the protection of the Lord for salvation.

Chapter XI.

On the fishes of the Atlantic Ocean: also on salt, coral, and other things. For these reasons, but especially because of navigation, the sea surpasses the land. After which, with a few mentions of Jonah and Peter, the conversation is concluded.

32. Let us come to the Atlantic Ocean. How enormous and of infinite magnitude are the whales there! If and when they emerge from the waves, you would think they are walking islands, with the highest mountains standing out with their summits reaching towards the sky. These creatures are not driven or carried along by the currents, nor do they appear on the shores, but they are said to be carried in the depths of the Atlantic Sea, so that sailors, when they catch sight of them, are discouraged from sailing in those areas out of fear, and dare not approach the secrets of the elements without extreme terror of death.

33. But now let us ourselves rise from the depths of the sea, and let our discourse emerge a little and elevate itself to higher things: let us look at those things which are common to many, and are full of grace, how water is turned into the solidity of salt, so that it often cuts with iron; which is not at all surprising of British salts, which in appearance are strong like marble, resplendent with the

snowy whiteness of the same metal, and are both a healthy food and a most pleasing drink for the body. Even a coral stone, which is not disgraceful in the sea as a plant, when transferred to the air, solidifies into the firmness of a stone. Hence, nature has also fixed the most precious pearl in oysters, and how the sea water has solidified it in such soft flesh. What is difficult to find among kings lies as if worthless on the shores, and they are collected on rough rocks and cliffs. The golden fleece is also nourished by water, and the coasts produce wool in the likeness of the mentioned metal, whose color no one so far has been able to imitate by various dyes; so human industry does not know how to fulfill the favor of maritime nature! We know with what care even the less valuable fleeces of sheep are treated: although they may be very good, however no dye is produced from them. This is the natural color, which no dye has matched yet: this is also the fish's wool. But even the shellfish themselves, which give the royal purple, are from the sea.

34. And what favor of meadows, or pleasantness of gardens, can compare to the picture of the azure sea? Though gold may shine on the meadows, the shine of gold is also reflected in the sea: and while the former quickly wither, the latter endures for a long time. Lilies shine in gardens from afar, sails on ships: here there is fragrance, there the wind blows. What usefulness in a leaf! How much commerce on ships! Lilies bring sweetness to our noses, sails bring safety to people. Add leaping fish, and playful dolphins: add the waves resounding with hoarse murmurs: add the ships sailing along the shores, or departing from the shores. And when the chariots are sent forth from the starting gates, how eagerly the spectators compete and how ardently they love! The horse runs in vain, but the ships do not run in vain. The former is in vain, because it is empty: the latter is for utility, as if they were full of grain. What is more pleasing to them, which is not done by whip, but by the breath of the winds: where no one opposes, but everyone is a supporter: where no one is defeated whoever arrives, but all the ships that have arrived are crowned: where the reward for salvation is the palm, and victory is the price of return. For there is such a difference between direct and reflected rays! The former continue, the latter dissolve. Attach the shores woven with oars, on which the breeze of departure is blowing from the sky. Therefore, the charioteers return empty applause: they fulfill their vows as saved.

35. What worthy thing shall I speak of Jonah, whom the whale received unto life again, and restored him to the grace of prophecy? The water corrected what the earth had deflected; he sang in the belly of the whale, who lamented upon the earth. And so that the redemption of both elements may not go unnoticed, the salvation of the earth preceded in the sea, for the sign of the Son of Man is the sign of Jonah. Just as he was in the belly of the whale, so Jesus was in the heart of the earth. In both there is a remedy; a greater example of compassion, however, is found in the sea; for the fish received Him whom men rejected, and whom men crucified, the fish preserved. Peter also staggered in the sea, but did not fall: and confessed in the waves, yet denied on land. Therefore, there he is seized as if devoted by hand: here he is met as if forgotten with a censorious look. But now let us ask the Lord, that our speech may be cast out like Jonah onto the land, lest it continue to fluctuate in the salt water. And indeed the gourd has already come forth, which shades us from our evils: but as the sun shines upon it, it withers and reminds us to rest, lest we begin to burn on the earth with conceit, and even our words fail us. Certainly, more forgiveness of sins has been given to us than to the Ninevites in the waters.

Chapter XII. (Sermo VIII.)

He imagines birds flying away from his memory, to which he elegantly recalls his speech. He says that his audience will give him their attention, but he will give them brevity. Finally, he desires the sweetness of various birds.

36. And when he had paused for a moment, he resumed the conversation and said: Beloved brothers, we had escaped into a necessary discussion about the nature of birds, and this kind of conversation had flown away with the birds themselves. For it happens by a certain nature that those who look at something, or want to express it in speech, take on the quality of the things they either look at or speak about; so when we linger with the sluggish, and when we are carried away with the swift by sight, we also use a slower or faster style of speech. Therefore, while I am careful not to pass over submerged things in the sea and to avoid being concealed by waters, I escape from every flying creature; for while I search the lowest whirlpools of the waters, I do not look up to the aerial flights; nor did the shadow of a passing bird divert me, which could have shone in the waters. But when I thought that every task was completed, and I believed that I had finished, and I considered the fifth day to be completed; the nature of birds came to mind, which, when they go to sleep, are accustomed to soothe the air happily with their song, as if they were renewing the duties solemnly with the rising and setting of the day; so that after completing or beginning the night, they may give thanks to their Creator according to the praises of both night and day, at their own appointed time. Therefore, I had lost a great incentive for arousing our devotion. For who, possessing the sense of a human being, would not blush to end the day without the celebration of the psalms, when even the tiniest birds continue the rising and setting of days and nights with solemn devotion and sweet song.

37. Therefore, let the fleeting conversation return to us, which had almost flown out of sight, and as the eagle seeking its high flight had obscured it with clouds; unless because our eyes, having been washed with water while we were lifting them from the abyss to heaven, observed that the void of air was being traversed by the wings of birds, we thought it necessary to recall it for the purpose of the pen. You will be the judges, who are bird-catchers of words, whether it would have flown out more wisely, or whether it has fallen usefully into your nets. And I do not fear that weariness will creep upon us in searching for flying creatures that did not creep in searching through the depths; or that anyone will fall asleep in our discussion, when they can be awakened by the songs of birds. But surely whoever has watched the silent fishes, I doubt that they cannot feel sleep among the singing birds, when they are provoked to stay awake by such a reason. Nor shall it be considered insignificant, that it was able to be passed over, since it is the third part of living creatures. For it is not doubtful that there are three kinds of animals, terrestrial, flying, and aquatic. Finally, it is written: Let the waters bring forth reptiles of living creatures according to their kind, and flying creatures that fly above the earth under the firmament of heaven according to their kind.

38. We are called back to our previous actions like forgetful travelers, who, when they pass by without thought, upon returning to their own carelessness, undertake the punishment of their journey's labor. However, there is also a good traveler, who compensates for the loss of going back by the quick speed of the remaining journey, which I think should be done; especially since we are talking about birds, which are accustomed to glaring at the eyes of people who move too fast. What indeed is suitable for them to linger, in which swiftness is accustomed to please? Therefore, our speech, uncommon and unusual in such a genre of writing, may resound and echo

with melodious birds.

39. But where can I find the swan songs that even in the heavy fear of impending death delight me? Where can I find those natural melodies of song, from which even the resounding marshes emit the sweetest harmony? Where can I find the voice of the parrot and the sweetness of the blackbirds? If only the nightingale would sing, to awaken me from my sleep! For that bird is accustomed to herald the dawn of the rising day, and to bring forth a more abundant joy at daybreak. However, even if their sweetness is lacking, there are cooing turtles, and hoarse doves, and even a crow calls for rain with a loud voice. Therefore, let us pursue the rural aviary in the language and knowledge that the countryside has taught us.

Chapter XIII. He begins by discussing the kingfisher, a bird from the aquatic species, and explains how divine kindness is shown towards this bird, urging us to await God's help. He also talks about the predictions of rain or wind made by birds, and the reliable protection provided by geese. And since we have spoken about aquatic reptiles, it is difficult for our discourse to suddenly ascend to the birds of the sky. Therefore, let us first speak about those birds that dwell around the waters of the sea and rivers, with which we can emerge. So let us begin with the kingfisher. It is a seabird that usually lays its eggs on the shores, so that it deposits them in the sand in the middle of winter. For it has been assigned the task of incubation at that time, when the sea rises most, and more forceful waves crash against the shores, so that the grace of this bird might shine forth with more sudden tranquility. For when the sea has become wavy, once the eggs are placed, it suddenly calms down, and all the storms of the winds cease, and the breezes of the air are still, and the sea stands peaceful without winds, until it warms its eggs with its halcyon. However, seven days are spent on their incubation, after which it brings out the chicks and completes the offspring. Immediately it adds another seven days, in which it nourishes its offspring until they begin to grow. Do not wonder at such a short period of nurturing, when the completion of the offspring is only a few days. However, such a small bird has been granted such great favor by divine intervention, that they observe these fourteen nautical days of presumed calmness, which they also call the halcyon days, during which no disturbances from stormy weather are feared. Is it not true that you are worth more than the sparrows? The Lord said. Therefore, if a tiny bird rises from the contemplation and surges the sea and suddenly gets crushed, and rough storms and winds of heavy winter wipe away the clouds of the sky, and it calms the waves by the sudden infusion of tranquility through all the elements; how much you should presume, O man, made in the image of God, you acknowledge, if you imitate the faith of that little bird with zeal of devotion. Seeing that storm rise, the winds raging, she, not called back by the harsh winter, not turned back, but driven forward. Finally, she places her eggs on the shore, where the wet sand still receives them with the receding wave: nor does she fear the rising waves that she sees crash and flow back.

42. And do not think that it appears to have contempt for eggs; immediately where it has laid its eggs, it builds a nest, and it warms its offspring with its own body, nor does it fear for its own safety from the flooding of the shore: but secure in the grace of God, it entrusts itself to the winds and waves. This is not enough. It adds as many other days for nourishing: nor does it fear to disturb the calmness of the treacherous sea for so many days, and it tests its own worthiness now established by the solemnity of nature. She does not conceal her tender offspring in any hiding places or shelters, nor does she confine them in caves, but exposes them to the bare and icy ground; nor does she protect them from cold, but believes that they will be safer with the divine

heat, by which she despises other things. Who among us does not cover their little ones with clothing and hide them in shelters? Who does not enclose them within the confines of rooms? Who does not diligently seal the windows on all sides, so that no breeze can even penetrate lightly? Those whom we diligently nurture and support, we strip them of the covering of heavenly mercy; but those whom Halcyon casts out naked, she clothes them with divine garments.

43. And I will not pass over you, divers, to whom this name of diving has stuck because of your constant diving; just as you often gather the signs of the breezes while diving, and foreseeing a future storm, swiftly fly in the middle of the sea and hurry to the safe shores with a clamor. Just as well, you coots, who take pleasure in the deep sea, play in the shallows, fleeing when you sense the disturbance of the sea. The heron itself, which is accustomed to cling to the marshes, leaves its familiar places and, fearing the rain, flies above the clouds, so that it cannot feel the storms of the clouds. Let us consider the various birds of the sea, how, with the imminent movement of the winds, they seek safer and more peaceful waters, and there they find hidden sustenance in the depths of the earth. But who wouldn't marvel at the night-time guard duty of geese, who by the constancy of their singing also attest to their vigilance? Indeed, it was by them that even the Roman Capitols were saved from the Gallic enemy. Rome, you owe them a debt deservedly. Your gods were sleeping, while the geese were awake and watchful. Therefore, on those days you offer sacrifices to geese, not to Jupiter. For your gods yield to geese, from whom they know themselves to be defended, lest they themselves be captured by an enemy.

Chapter XIV.

Birds are connected to fish with various relationships; however, they do not lack the function of feet. About the various types and differences of different birds.

45. However, after the description of the fish, a discussion followed about those birds which are accustomed to the waters, because they also delight in swimming and have a talent for it. Therefore, the first connection seems to be between these birds and fish, because there seem to be certain commonalities in swimming between both groups. The second connection is also shared by all birds and fish, because the use of flying is similar to swimming. For just as a fish cuts through water by swimming, so a bird cuts through the air with rapid flight. And both species similarly have tails and wings for propulsion; just as fish raise themselves with the wings to the front, and proceed to the back, they also easily turn their tails with a rudder wherever they want, or direct themselves with a certain force from the opposite direction. Birds also float in the air like they do in water, and as if they extend their wings, they also raise their tails to the higher parts or submerge them in the lower parts. Since in some respects the same use and appearance exist, therefore the creation of both kinds of waters has proceeded from the divine precept. For God said: Let the waters bring forth reptiles having life according to their kind, and flying creatures above the earth under the firmament of heaven according to their kind. Therefore, not without reason, because both kinds are produced from water, swimming is suitable for both.

Certainly, both the smooth snake and all other serpents (for the name 'serpent' is given to them because they cannot walk but instead creep), as well as dragons, are in a similar manner to fishes mostly without feet; no kind of birds is without the function of feet, because they all live on land; and therefore they are supported by the function of feet, because they need this kind of service for seeking food. And so, some birds are armed with talons for seizing prey, like hawks and eagles

which practice hunting for plunder: others, either for walking or for preparing food for themselves, use a fitting use and service.

47. However, there is one name for birds, but different kinds; how could anyone comprehend them with memory or knowledge? Therefore, there are birds that feed on flesh. That is why they have rough claws, a curved and sharp beak, and swift flight; because they live by snatching, so they can quickly seize the prey they follow, and quickly disembowel it with their mouth or claws. There are also birds that feed on discovered seeds: others on different and accidental food. There is also a variety of mating, for the sake of which they engage in raids. For due to their greed for plundering, or for the sake of spying, they do not agree with each other; and therefore they avoid joining together. For avarice rejects the partnership of many. Furthermore, the joining together of many would easily expose itself. Therefore, there is no mating partnership for these birds except the yoke of partnership. Therefore, eagles and hawks have this way of life. On the other hand, pigeons, cranes, starlings, crows, and magpies, as well as thrushes, enjoy the union of many.

48. There are also other types of birds, some of which stay in one place at all times, others that travel to different regions and return after winter is over. There are also some that return during winter and migrate during summer; either because they move to warmer places during winter, or because they prefer to spend most of their time in the more pleasant locations they know. Finally, thrushes return at the end of autumn, near the beginning of winter, as if summer had come to an end. They endeavor to ensnare us with inhospitable cruelty, trying to deceive us now with treacherous traps, now with sticky snares, now with lures. The return of the storks raises the banner of spring. Cranes, because they seek the heights, often love to wander.

49. Some birds subject themselves to the hand, and become accustomed to the master's table, and are soothed by touch: others are afraid: others delight in the same dwellings as humans: others love a hidden life in the deserts, which they compensate for by their love of freedom and the difficulty of seeking food. Some birds only make noise with their voices: others delight with their melodious and sweet modulation. Some speak naturally, others speak with the training of different voices, so that you might think a bird is speaking when it is actually a human speaking. How sweet is the song of the blackbird, how distinct is the voice of the parrot! There are also other simple birds, like doves: others cunning, like partridges: the rooster is more boastful, the peacock more splendid. There are also different ways of life among birds; some work together for the common good and, using their combined strength, take care of the state as if under a king; others focus on themselves, refuse authority, and if captured, prefer to leave servitude unworthy of them.

Chapter XV.

On cranes, and their vigilance in guarding, as well as the order maintained by them while flying. And on this occasion, about the state of the ancient republic and the causes of human negligence.

Therefore, let us begin with those things that have given themselves to our use. For in them there is a certain order and natural defense, while in us it is forced and servile. How diligently the cranes exercise their watchfulness in the night, without being commanded or compelled! You can see the guards stationed: while the rest of their companions are asleep, they go around and inspect, so that no danger may arise from any direction, and they transfer their constant protection with energetic vigilance. After the time of the vigils has been fulfilled, having completed her duty, she

prepares herself for sleep with the sounding of a trumpet; so that she may awaken the one sleeping, to whom she will hand over the duty. But she willingly takes on the role, not unwilling and slower than sleep, but she eagerly rises from her bed, performs her duty, and presents with equal care and diligence the favor she has received. Therefore there is no desertion, because of natural devotion; therefore there is secure protection, because of free will.

They also follow this order while flying, and by means of this arrangement they alleviate all the labor, so that they take turns in performing their duty. For one takes the lead over the others at an appointed time and as if runs ahead of the group: then it turns around and yields to the next in line for leading the flock. What could be more beautiful than this, that both the labor and the honor are shared by all, and that power is not claimed by a few, but is distributed voluntarily among all?

52. This is the ancient duty and a kind of free state. Thus, from the beginning, having received it from nature, men began to exercise the policy of birds as an example; so that there would be common labor, common dignity, individuals would share responsibilities in turn, they would divide obedience and commands, no one would be devoid of honor, no one exempt from work. This was the most beautiful state of affairs, no one became arrogant with perpetual power, no one was broken by long-lasting servitude; because the promotion was bestowed without envy, in accordance with the order of the position and with moderation of time; and what fell to everyone's shared responsibility seemed more tolerable. No one dared to oppress another with slavery, whose mutual aversions would have been burdensome to endure for the sake of future honors; no labor was heavy for anyone, which dignity would relieve. But after the desire for domination began to claim unwarranted powers, and once acquired, they could not be laid aside: after the common right of military service ceased, and servitude began: after it was no longer a matter of assuming power, but of asserting it, even the function of labor itself began to be endured more harshly; and that which is not voluntary quickly yields to neglect. How reluctantly men take on the duties of the watch, how reluctantly each one keeps watch in the camp, having drawn the lot for danger, which is entrusted to him for his own protection by royal order! The punishment for negligence is set forth; and yet negligence often creeps in, the watches are not kept. For necessity, which imposes service unwillingly, often brings with it disdain. For there is nothing so easy that it does not have its difficulties, when done unwillingly. Therefore, constant labor turns away desire, and continuous and long-continued authority begets insolence. Wherever I come among men who willingly lay down their authority and yield the insignia of their leadership, and willingly become the last in rank among the first, I usually argue not only about who is in the first place, but also about who is in the middle, and I claim the first place for myself in the seating at the banquet; and once I have won it, I want it to be perpetual. Therefore, among cranes, there is patience in work, and among the powerful there is humility. They are reminded to perform the duties of their office, but they are not reminded to give up their power; for there, the natural rest of sleep must be interrupted, while here, the favor of voluntary diligence must be extended.

Chapter XVI.

How storks set out, and are led and defended by crows. The hospitality of the same crows is praised, and human negligence is criticized. Finally, our lack of piety towards parents is opposed to the benevolence of storks.

53. Storks are said to set out in a gathered flock, if they think there is somewhere they must go, and they are carried along together to many places around the East, and they move as if all at once with a military token. You would think the army was marching with its standards, that is how all of them preserve the order of traveling together and going ahead. But the crows escort and direct them, and they follow as if attending certain Trojan troops; to such an extent that they are believed to contribute some assistance to the storks fighting against enemy birds, and to undertake others' battles at the risk of their own. The indication of this matter is that no one is found to reside in those places for any period of time; and that when they return with wounds, they speak with a clear voice of their own blood and with other indications that they have undergone the conflicts of serious battles. Therefore, who imposed punishment for their desertion? Who prescribed terrifying penalties for those who abandon military service, so that no one tries to escape from pursuing hospital troops, but all strive eagerly to fulfill the duty of being escorted?

54. Let people learn to observe the rights of hospitality, and from birds let them understand what duties are to be shown to guests, what services are to be assigned to them, and how crows are not accustomed to deny their own dangers. Therefore, we close our doors to those to whom birds even entrust their souls; and those whom they accompany in their separation, we deny shelter; and to those for whom they undertake wars, we frequently wage wars. I am lying if this was not the cause of punishment for the Sodomites: or if an Egyptian madness in attempting to wage war against a hospitable nation, paid the penalty of its treacherous shipwreck by the destruction of the people.

However, the kindness and wisdom of this bird's mercy are worth considering, which not even one of us could imitate, even after an example of irrationality. For it, the offspring, surrounding the naked limbs of their aged father, keeps them warm with the coverings of its long-established wings and the motion of its own feathers. And what shall I say? It feeds them with collected food, and even repairs the losses of nature itself, so that by supporting the old man here and there with the support of its wings, they may exercise him in flying and revive the limbs of their pious father, which have now fallen into disuse, for their former uses. Who among us would not hesitate to relieve a sick father? Who would not place a weary old man on their shoulders, which is hardly believable in the very history itself? Who, in order to be pious, does not assign this duty to their servants? But truly, it is not burdensome for birds, for it is full of piety: it is not burdensome, as it is fulfilled by the debt of nature. Birds do not refuse to feed their father, which many humans have also refused out of fear of punishment. Birds are not taught, but born with their law. Birds have no rules for this duty, but natural gratitude is their duty. Birds are not ashamed to carry the limbs of a revered old man; for it is the transportation of piety, which has become so well known by frequent testimony, that it has found fitting reward of remuneration. For by Roman custom, a pious bird is called. And what is said to have been hardly granted to one emperor with the advice of the senate, these birds have deserved in common. Therefore, these birds have the decree of the fathers as a sign of their own mercy. For it is fitting that the pious sons of the fathers be praised in a previous judgment. They also have the approval of all; for the repayment of favors is called 'antipelargesis', because the stork is called 'pelargos'. Therefore, virtue has received its name from them, since the relationship of gratitude is expressed by the word 'ciconia'.

Chapter XVII.

Of the diligence, industry, and devotion of the swallow towards its offspring. Of the impatience, dishonesty, and despair that are evident in a person's poverty and destitution.

56. We have in the avian offspring an example of devotion to our ancestral customs: let us now consider a great example of maternal diligence towards her children. The tiny swallow, with a small body but an exceptionally pious affection, builds nests more precious than gold, for she skillfully nests. For the nest is more precious than gold. For what is wiser than to enjoy the wandering liberty of flight and to entrust one's small children to the shelter of human dwellings, where no one can harm them? For it is also beautiful that, from the very first day of their birth, it becomes accustomed to human conversation and provides a safer place for its chicks from the attacks of hostile birds. Then, it is remarkable for the skill with which it builds its nests without any assistance. It selects hay with its beak and smears it with mud, so that it can glue them together. But because it cannot carry mud with its feet, it pours water onto the tops of its wings, so that the dust easily sticks to them and becomes a sticky mud with which it gradually gathers the hay or small twigs and makes them adhere. In this way, it constructs the entire structure of the nest, so that its chicks can move about within their little homes on the floor of the nest without stumbling, and no one can insert a foot through the cracks in the woven walls or let in the cold air.

57. But this duty of industry is almost common to many birds: that, however, is extraordinary, in which there is excellent care of piety, and of prudent understanding and knowledge, as well as a certain expertise in medical art; and if any of its young have had their eyes dug out or punctured, it has a certain method of healing, by which it can restore their sight by intercepting their use. Therefore, let no one complain of poverty, for having left empty his own dwelling. The swallow is a poor bird, which abounds in empty air industry. It builds, but does not spend: it raises roofs, and takes nothing away from its neighbor; neither need nor poverty compel it to harm others: neither does it despair in the serious weakness of its offspring. But we are afflicted by poverty, and vexed by the necessity of destitution, and many are driven by need to shame, compelled to crime. We also turn our intellect to frauds out of desire for profit, we prepare our emotions, and in the gravest passions we lose hope, and with a broken spirit we dissolve, inattentive and inert; when we should hope for divine mercy most, when human defenses have failed.

Chapter XVIII.

Love is taught by crows to their offspring, and their impiety is condemned. Hawks and eagles are by no means to be accused of ruthlessness; but the coot that nourishes the abandoned eaglet is to be commended.

Humans learn to love their children through the usefulness and devotion of crows, who diligently accompany their flying children. They are anxious that their young ones may weakly fail, so they provide them with food and do not neglect the duties of nourishing them for a long time. But women of our kind wean them quickly, even those whom they love; or if they are wealthier, they grow tired of nursing. However, the poorer ones reject and abandon their little ones, and deny having taken them. The rich themselves, in order to prevent their wealth from being divided among many, kill their own fetuses in the womb, and extinguish the pledges of their own belly with deadly potions in the very genital chamber, before life is taken away, before it is handed over. Who taught, except a human, to disown their children? Who discovered such cruel laws of fathers? Who made unequal brothers out of the natural bonds of brotherhood? The sons of one wealthy

man are cut down by different fates. One is overwhelmed by the distribution of the entire paternal inheritance, another laments the exhausted and destitute portion of the wealth-filled homeland. Did nature divide the merits of the children? She distributed equally to all, the substance necessary for birth and life. Let nature herself teach you not to differentiate based on inheritance, you who have treated those of equal birth with equal rights. Indeed, you should not envy those whom you have collectively given what they were born with, as nature has appointed them.

Accipitres are said to have a harshness towards their own offspring, because when they notice them attempting their first flights, they throw them out of their nests and eliminate them immediately; and if they hesitate, they repel them with their wings and make them fall, they beat them with their wings and force them to dare what they fear; and afterwards they do not bring them any nourishment. But why should we be surprised if they, accustomed to seizing, become disgusted with nurturing? Let us consider that they have been born for this, so that fear may also train birds to be cautious; so that they do not relax their vigilance everywhere, but anticipate dangers that must be avoided by predators. Then, when they have acquired a certain instinct for hunting with these, they seem to train their young more towards prey than towards giving up the advantages of being fed. They are careful that they do not become lazy in their tender age, that they are not spoiled by pleasures, that they do not wither away in idleness, that they do not learn to expect food rather than seek it, that they do not lose their natural strength. They interrupt their studies in nurturing so that they may force themselves boldly into the practice of seizing. The eagle is also widely known for abandoning its offspring, but not both, only one out of the two chicks. Some have believed this to be due to the aversion to providing for two mouths. But I do not easily believe this, especially since Moses has given such a testimony of the eagle's love for its young, saying: As an eagle protects its nest and trusts in its young and spreads its wings; and takes them and carries them on its shoulders. The Lord alone led them (Deut. XXXII, 11). So how then does he spread his wings, if he kills the other? Therefore, I think that it does not become harsh due to the greed of nourishing it, but rather due to the judgment of examining. For it is always inclined to prove those whom it has begotten; so that the deformity of a degenerate offspring may not diminish the royal pinnacle of its own kind among all birds. Therefore, it is asserted that it exposes its young to the rays of the sun, and hangs the little ones by their claws in the middle of the air; and if someone, with the reflected light of the sun, preserves the fearless sight of the eyes with unharmed vigor, that person is proven to have demonstrated the constancy of a true gaze in accordance with the truth of nature. But if, on the other hand, with his eyes narrowed by the direct ray of the sun, he is rejected as degenerate and unworthy of such a parent; and he is not considered worthy of education, who was unworthy of being received. Therefore, he condemns him not with the harshness of nature, but with the integrity of judgment; not as if he were rejecting his own, but as if he were rejecting something foreign.

However, as it seems to some, the harshness of the royal bird is excused by the clemency of the common bird. For the bird, which is called fulica in Latin and φην in Greek, adopts or abandons, whether recognized or not, an eagle's chick with its own offspring; and, mixing them together, it nourishes and feeds them with the same care and supply of food as its own young. Therefore, the φην bird nourishes others, but we cast away our own with cruel harshness. But when an eagle casts away its young, it does not reject them as its own, but as not recognising them as its own kind: we, worse still, when we recognise them as ours, we abandon them.

Chapter XIX.

The turtledove is praised because of its widowhood, and this virtue is even preferred to women, even Christian ones.

62. But let us come to the turtle-dove, which the law of God has chosen as the offering of a chaste victim (Lev. 12:8). Finally, when the Lord was circumcised, it was offered; for it is written in the law of the Lord that they should offer a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons (Luke 2:24). For this is truly the sacrifice of Christ, chastity of the body, and grace of the spirit. Chastity is referred to the turtle-dove, grace to the pigeon. For the turtle-dove is carried where it has lost its own marital pairing, being widowed, weary of bridal chambers, and no longer having the name of marriage; because the first love deceived it, having been deceived by the death of the beloved, since it was both unfaithful in perpetuity, and bitter in producing more grief from death than sweetness from love. Therefore, she refuses to repeat the conjugal bond, nor does she dissolve the rights of modesty or the agreements of a pleasing husband; she reserves her love only for him, she keeps the name of wife. Learn, women, how great is the grace of widowhood, which is even praised in birds. Who then gave these laws to turtles? If I search for a man, I do not find one. For no man dared, since not even Paul dared to prescribe laws of widowed chastity. Finally, he himself says: I desire, therefore, that younger women marry, bear children, be mothers of families, and give no occasion to the adversary (I Tim. V, 14). And elsewhere: It is good for them, if they so remain, but if they do not contain themselves, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn (I Cor. VII, 8). Paul desires in women what he persists in doves. And elsewhere he encourages the younger ones to marry; because our women can hardly fulfill the chastity of doves. Therefore, God has poured out this affection upon doves, he has given them the virtue of continence, who alone can prescribe what all must follow. The dove does not burn with the flower of youth, it is not tempted by the snare of opportunity: the dove does not know how to break the first faith; because it knows how to keep the chastity promised by the first lot of marriage.

Chapter XX.

They say that vultures, which are said to reproduce without mating with a male, confirm the possibility of virgin births.

We have spoken about the widowhood of birds, and how it first arose from them: now let us discuss integrity, which is said to exist in many birds in such a way that it can also be found in vultures. It is denied that vultures engage in sexual intercourse, and that they mix in a conjugal manner with a marital connection, and thus conceive without any male seed, and generate without union, and their offspring proceed into old age with a long life; so that their series of life is extended until a hundred years, and the end of a narrow life does not easily come upon them.

65. What do those say, who are accustomed to ridicule our mysteries, when they hear that a virgin gave birth, and they think the birth of an unmarried woman, whose modesty no man's custom had violated, is impossible? Is what is impossible in the Mother of God not denied in birds? A bird gives birth without a male, and no one refutes it; and because Mary, a virgin betrothed to a man, gave birth, they question her modesty. Do we not notice that the Lord, from the very nature itself, put forth many examples before, by which He would prove the beauty of the accepted incarnation and establish the truth?

Chapter XXI.

On birds arranged in a certain form of government. Especially concerning bees, and their marvelous nature in the generation of offspring, in the establishment of a king and their loyalty towards him, in the construction of hives, the collection of honey, and also their usefulness, etc.

Now, let us explain how birds seem to take care of a certain republic and live this life under laws. For here, the use of the republic is that the laws are common to all, and that they are observed with common devotion. All are bound by one bond: it is not a right for one person which another understands as not allowed to him; but what is allowed, is allowed to all; and what is not allowed, is not allowed to all. Also, there is a common reverence for the fathers, by whose advice the republic is governed, a common dwelling for all the city, a common duty of socializing, one command for all, one plan to be followed.

67. These things are great, but how much more remarkable are bees, which alone among all living creatures share a common offspring, inhabit one common dwelling, are enclosed within the threshold of one common homeland, have a common labor, a common food, a common activity, a common use and benefit, and a common flight. What more can be said? They have a common generation for all, and also a common integrity of their virgin body and birth; because they do not mix with each other in any sexual union, nor are they dissolved by desire, nor are their births shaken by pains, but they suddenly release a swarm of offspring in great numbers from their mouths, gathering their offspring from leaves and plants.

68. They themselves appoint their king, they themselves create their people; and although they are placed under a king, they are nevertheless free. For they hold the prerogative of judgment and the affection of loyal devotion; because they love it as if it were appointed by themselves, and they honor it with so much scrutiny. But the king is not led by chance; for in chance there is an outcome, not judgement, and often by irrational chance, the last one is preferred to the better. Nor is he marked by the common outcry of the unskilled multitude, which does not consider the merits of virtue, nor gains insight into the benefits of the common good, but wavers in uncertain mobility. Nor does he sit on thrones by the privilege of succession and royal lineage; since ignorant of public life, he cannot be cautious and educated. Add flatteries and pleasures which are accustomed to weaken the sharpness of young age; then the teachings of eunuchs, of whom many, incline the mind of the king more to their own profit than to the public good. But the king is formed by the nature of bees with illustrious features; so that he excels in size and appearance; and especially in the virtues of character that are foremost in a king, gentleness. For although he has a stinger, he does not use it for vengeance. For the laws of nature are not written in books, but are imprinted on customs; so that those who possess the greatest power are more lenient in punishment. But even the bees, if they do not obey the laws of their king, punish themselves with the sting of their own wound. This is said to be observed by the Persian people even today: that they execute the sentence of their own death for a price paid. Therefore, no people show such reverence and devotion to their king as the Persians, who have the harshest laws for their subjects, not the Indians, not the Sarmatians; just as no bees dare to leave their hive or venture out for food until the king has first left and claimed his dominion by flight.

69. The process, however, is through fragrant fields, where one inhales the scent of gardens full of flowers, where a river gushes through the grass, where the banks are delightful: there is the joyful

play of youth, there is rural exercise, there is relief from worries. The work itself is pleasant, as the foundations of the camp are laid with flowers and sweet herbs. For what else is a honeycomb but a certain form of a camp? Ultimately, bees are kept away from these hives. What camps can possess such skill and grace, as they have the lattice of favors, in which minute and round cells are supported by their mutual connection? What architect taught them to compose those hexagonal cells with the discreet equality of the sides, and to hang thin wax panels between the walls of the houses, to pack honeycombs, and to expand granaries woven with flowers with a certain nectar? You can see them all competing for the task, some diligently seeking food, others providing vigilant protection to the camps, others examining the future rains, and observing the gathering of the clouds, others fashioning wax from flowers, others gathering dew infused into the mouth of flowers; yet they do not plot harm through the efforts of others, nor seek out life through plunder: and I wish they did not fear the plots of robbers. However, they have their own spears, and if they are provoked, they pour venom among the honey and place the souls of their vengeance in the burning wound. Therefore, that moisture is poured into the middle of the camp's valleys, and gradually, over time, is turned into honey, when it is liquid from the beginning, and, mixed with wax and the scent of flowers, it begins to emit the sweetness of honey.

70. Scripture rightly compares a good worker to a bee, saying: Go to the bee, and see how it works. It also praises this noble activity, which kings and ordinary people undertake for their well-being. For it is appetizing to all and illustrious (Prov. 6:8). Do you hear what the prophet says? He certainly sends you to follow the example of that little bee, to imitate its work. You see how laborious and pleasing it is. Its fruit is desired and sought after by all, and is not distinguished by the diversity of people: but it sweetens equally for both kings and ordinary people with the same pleasantness. It is not only for pleasure, but also for health: it cleanses the throat and heals wounds, and also pours medicine into internal sores. Therefore, although the bee is weak in strength, it is strong in the power of wisdom and love of virtue.

Lastly, they defend their king with the utmost protection, and they consider it noble to die for him. With the king unharmed, they do not know how to change their judgment or sway their mind. But once he is lost, they abandon their duty to preserve loyalty and they themselves tear apart their own honey; because the one who held the position of duty has been killed.

Therefore, while other birds barely produce one offspring in a year, bees create twins and surpass others in their double fertility.

Chapter XXII.

Volatilia cur dicuntur volantia super terram secus firmamentum coeli. Atque ibidem de ea quae observatur in avibus, corporis diversitate. Postremo nonnulla de cygno et cicada subjunguntur.

73. Let us now consider what he says: Let the waters bring forth reptiles of living souls according to their kind, and flying creatures that fly above the earth according to their kind above the firmament of the sky. Why did he say 'above the earth'? It is certain because they seek their food from the earth. But how 'above the firmament of the sky' when eagles fly higher than other birds and yet they are not above the firmament of the sky? But because in Greek it is called οὐρανός, which we call 'coelum' in Latin: οὐρανός, however, comes from 'seeing', that is, from seeing, because the air is clear, and flying creatures were said to belong to the kinds of animals that fly in

the air, which is purer for seeing. And do not be mistaken by what he says, here the term 'firmament' is not used properly, but metaphorically; because by comparing it to the ethereal body, even this air that we can perceive with our eyes, seems to have the role of a denser and thicker 'firmament'.

Now, because we have said what birds are, what nature and grace they have, and a few things about many; for we do not have the leisure to describe everything, since they are similar and of the same kind; nevertheless, let us consider the diversity that birds themselves have among themselves. For we find that the feet of a crow, for example, are separated and divided by certain distant and separated toes, and similarly the feet of ravens and chicks are also formed differently by nature; we observe that birds that feed on flesh are curved and bent, as if ready for prey. Indeed, those creatures that have the use and habit of swimming have broad feet, and their toes are connected by a certain membrane. In this, the admirable reason of nature is revealed; so that those creatures are able to catch or reach food through their adapted use, and these creatures have suitable aids for swimming, so that they can better float on the water, and with their feet, by the extension of that membrane, they propel themselves through the wider currents of the water as if with certain oars.

75. It is also evident why the swan uses its longer neck; because it is slightly slower in its body and cannot easily reach the depths of the water, it extends its neck to the prey, which it snatches as if it were a prelude to the other parts of the body's food that it has found, and pulls it out from the deep. Add to this that because of its longer and more melodious neck, it is distinguished by a higher and purer tone, and with longer practice it produces a much clearer sound.

76. How sweet is also the song in the small throat of the cicada, with which the bushes are burst in the middle of summer due to the more harmonious songs attracting purer air with their breath at that time, the more resounding are the songs. Nor do bees themselves sing anything unpleasant; for they have a pleasant sweetness in that hoarse murmuring of their voice, which we seem to imitate more slowly in the first broken sound of trumpets, nothing is considered more suitable for exciting the minds into vigor. And this gratitude remains for them, when it is revealed that they do not have the capacity or use of lungs for breathing; but they feed on airy respiration. Finally, if someone pours oil on them, they are quickly killed; because with the pores obstructed, they cannot draw in that airy respiration: and if someone immediately pours vinegar on them, they revive, because the force of the vinegar quickly carries moisture to open the pores, which are blocked by the concretion of oil.

Chapter XXIII.

About the Indian worm, the chameleon, the hare, and the phoenix; through which we are instructed in the preparation for the faith of resurrection and death. About the foreknowledge of the vultures; and about the ministry of the locusts in executing divine vengeance, which, however, is devoured by the Seleucid bird.

77. And because we are talking about birds, we do not think it appropriate to include those things that the Indian worm's history tells us about, nor the accounts of those who have been able to see it. It is said that this horned worm first transforms into the form of a cabbage, and then changes its nature into that of a bombylius; however, it does not retain that form and shape, but appears to

assume wings made of loose and wider leaves. From these leaves, the soft Seres pluck the wool that they claim for their own specific uses. And the Lord said: What did you go out into the desert to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, those who are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings (Matt. 11:8). The chameleon is also said to deceive with various species and colors. Certainly, it is well known that hares turn white in winter and return to their own color in summer.

78. I have mentioned these things so that, in order to have faith in the future resurrection, these examples may also provoke us: but in such a way that we speak of that exchange which the Apostle clearly expressed, saying: Indeed, we shall all rise again, but we shall not all be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51). And further he says: And the dead shall rise incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (ibid., 52). Indeed, many (interpreters) without having received the type of change and forms they had not acquired, in no way lacked inappropriate usurpation of undue presumption. The phoenix bird is also said to live in the regions of Arabia, and it can live up to five hundred years. When it realizes that the end of its life is near, it makes a nest for itself out of frankincense, myrrh, and other fragrances. When the time of its life is complete, it enters the nest and dies. From the juice of its flesh, a worm emerges and gradually grows, and with the passage of a set period of time, it develops the feathers of wings and is restored into the form and shape of a superior bird. Therefore, let this bird teach us to believe in its resurrection, which restores the signs of resurrection to itself without example and without the perception of reason. And certainly, the birds are for the sake of man, not man for the sake of birds. Therefore, let it be an example for us, because the creator and maker of birds does not allow his holy ones to perish forever, who did not allow the unique bird to perish, but desired it to be restored by its own seed. Therefore, who announces to this person the day of death, so that they can make for themselves a burial shroud, fill it with good scents, enter into it, and die there, where the stench of the funeral can be eliminated by the pleasant odors?

80. Make for yourself, O man, a case; stripping off the old man with his actions, put on the new. Your case, your sheath, is Christ, who protects and hides you in the evil day. Do you want to know why the case is protection? My quiver, He says, protected him (Isaiah 49:2). Therefore, your case is faith: fill it with the good scents of your virtues; that is, chastity, mercy, and justice, and in it, enter completely fragrant with the sweet scent of excellent deeds of faith: may this faith-clothed exit of your life be found; so that your bones may become fat, and be like a drunken garden, whose seeds quickly sprout. So know the day of your death, as Paul knew and said: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Thus, he entered his chamber like a good phoenix, which he filled with the sweet scent of martyrdom.

81. I will ask you: however, you respond to me, from where vultures are accustomed to announce the death of men with certain signs, by which indication they have been taught and instructed; so that when a lamentable war is being prepared between opposing armies, many aforementioned birds may follow in a flock, and thereby signify that a multitude of men will fall in battle, becoming prey for vultures? This they seem to conclude with a certain human-like reasoning from the appearance of instruction.

82. Even the locust, by divine grace, penetrates everywhere, and when it has filled the width of each region with its dense swarm, it first strikes without harm, and feeds on the barren land only after receiving the divine signal of permission. Indeed, just as we read in Exodus, it also acts as the celestial executor of righteous vengeance. This bird, called σελευκίς in Greek, also devours it, for this is its name in Greek, given as a remedy for the evils that locusts are accustomed to bring: to which the creator gave an insatiable nature of devouring, so that through an unsatisfied feeding it can extinguish the plague that we mentioned above.

Chapter XXIV. About nocturnal birds; first and foremost about the song of the nightingale hatching: about the owl, bat, and rooster; from which certain things are adapted to our customs. But what is this? While we are carrying on our conversation, behold, nocturnal birds are already flying around you, and in that very moment when they remind us to bring our conversation to a close, they also produce their own reminder. Various birds return to their nests, which they are accustomed to leave at dusk and hide themselves in, singing a song bidding farewell to the setting of the day; so that they do not depart without offering thanks, by which every creature praises their creator.

Night also has its own songs, which it is accustomed to use to soothe the vigils of humans; the owl also has its own songs. But what should I say about the nightingale, which, as a vigilant guardian, warms its eggs with a certain fold of its body and lap, solacing the sleepless labor of the long night with the sweetness of its song? It seems to me that this is the main purpose of its existence, so that it can animate the eggs it warms with not only its sweet melodies, but also with the warmth of its body. That thin, but modest, woman imitating it, drags a stone with her arm for the use of the mill, so that there may be no lack of food for her little ones, and she soothes the sad affliction of poverty with her nocturnal song. And although it cannot imitate the sweetness of the nightingale, nevertheless it imitates it with the diligence of piety. The owl itself, just as it does not feel fear at the darkness of the night with its large and gray pupils of nocturnal darkness, exercises its flights unaffected by the darkness of the night. But when day dawns and the brightness of the sun spreads, its vision becomes dull, as if it wanders in darkness. By this indication, it declares that there are some who, although they have eyes to see, are not accustomed to seeing, and they perform the function of their vision in darkness. I speak of the eyes of the heart, which the wise of the world possess, and yet do not see. They perceive nothing in light, they walk in darkness while exploring the dark depths of demons, and believe they see the heights of heaven, describing the world according to their limited understanding. But they have deviated from faith and are ensnared in the darkness of perpetual blindness. Despite having the light of Christ and the Church before them, they see nothing. They open their mouths as if knowing everything, sharp in trivial matters but dull in eternal matters. They expose their own ignorance through lengthy and convoluted arguments. So while they desire to fly away with subtle words, they vanished like owls in the light.

87. The bat, an unknown creature, received its name from flying at dusk. It is both a flying and a four-legged animal, and it uses teeth that you would not find in other birds. It gives birth to live young, like four-legged animals, rather than laying eggs. It flies in the air like other birds, but it is accustomed to flying at dusk. However, it flies not with feathers, but with the support of its membrane, with which it hovers and moves about as if it were flying with feathers. And there is also this lowly creature, which cling to each other and hang from a certain place like a cluster of grapes: and if one of them lets go, they all come apart. This is accomplished by a certain act of charity, which is difficult to find among the people of this world.

Moreover, the song of the rooster is pleasant in the nights; not only pleasant, but also helpful, as it acts like a good companion and awakens the sleeping, reminds the anxious, and comforts the traveler, announcing the progress of the night with its melodious call. While it sings, the thief abandons his traps; while it sings, Lucifer himself rises, illuminating the sky; while it sings, the worried sailor casts off his sorrow, and every evening storm and tempest calm down with its frequent breezes; while it sings, devout devotion springs forth for prayer and also renews the task of reading; and finally, while it sings, the very rock of the Church washes away its own guilt, which it had previously incurred by denial before the rooster's crowing. With this song, hope returns to everyone, the inconvenience of the sick is relieved, the pain of wounds is diminished, the burning of fevers is mitigated, faith is restored to the fallen, Jesus looks upon the wavering, corrects the wandering. Finally, he looked at Peter, and immediately the error disappeared: the denial was rejected, followed by the confession. This did not happen by chance, but the reading teaches that it happened according to the will of the Lord. For it is written, because Jesus said to Simon: The rooster will not crow until you deny me three times (Matthew 26:34). Peter, although strong during the day, is troubled at night; and he falls before the crowing of the rooster, and he falls a third time; so that you may know that it is not a thoughtless slip of speech, but also a disturbance of the mind. However, after the crowing of the rooster, he becomes stronger, and now worthy to be seen by Christ: for the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous. He recognized that a remedy had come, after which he could no longer err: and transformed from error into virtue, he wept bitterly; so that his tears might wash away his mistake.

Chapter XXV.

The Author's Pious Prayer. Commendation of Tears. Dismissal of the Hearers for Refreshment. Finally, Invitation to the Mysteries of the Lord's Body.

89. Look upon us also, Lord Jesus, that we may acknowledge our own errors, release our guilt with pious tears, and deserve the forgiveness of our sins. Therefore, we have deliberately prolonged our speech, so that the rooster may also crow for us and come to our aid when we speak, so that if any offense has slipped into our words, you, Christ, may forgive the guilt. Please grant us the tears of Peter, for I do not desire the joy of the sinner. The Hebrews wept and were freed through the parting waters of the sea. Pharaoh rejoiced because he had the Hebrews enclosed, and he drowned them in the sea with his own people. Judas also rejoiced in the reward of his betrayal, but he hanged himself with the noose of that same reward. Peter wept for his mistake, and he deserved to erase the mistakes of others.

90. But now it is the time when we should end our speech and close it: it is the time when it is better to be silent or weep: it is the time when the forgiveness of sins is celebrated. Let this mysterious rooster also sing for us in our sacred rites; for now Peter's rooster has already sung in our discourse. Let Peter weep for us, who wept well for himself and may he turn Christ's merciful face towards us. May the passion of Jesus the Lord hasten, which daily forgives our sins and performs the gift of remission.

91. The Lord does not want to send away the hungry, so that no one faints on the way. If he says, I have compassion for this crowd; for they have persevered with me for three days, and have nothing to eat, and I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way (Matth., XV, 32); to which Mary, who was intent on his words, refused the preparations of a feast: how much

more should we consider that there are not many who live by the word of God, and therefore the nourishment of the body is desired! Certainly, our work on the following day of those three days is more laborious.

92. And therefore, let us now sing the mysteries of the Lord, having played with the birds, having sung with the rooster, and let the eagles, renewed by the washing of sin, come to the body of Jesus. For that great whale has now returned Jonah to us: and let us rejoice that evening has become for us the fifth day; may the morning become for us the sixth day.

Book Six. Of the Work of the Sixth Day.

Chapter I. (Sermo IX.) The difficulty of this last topic is explained by the example of contestants in public games; and attention is won by the pleasantness and usefulness of the matters under consideration. This is the sixth day, on which the origin of worldly creatures is concluded; and therefore also the end of our discourse, which we have taken from the beginnings of things, is being prepared. Although it has progressed for the past five days with considerable effort for us; nevertheless, on this day, the burden of cares increases, because there is danger in this day and in the previous days, and the whole outcome of the struggle is at stake. For even if on the lyre or in singing and in the frequent and great contests of athletes, the previous days pass without any expense of a garland, but the last day has the fate of the garland, in which there is both the danger of deciding, and the disgrace of yielding, and the reward of winning: the more in this contest of wisdom, with the judgment not of a few but of all, when today a kind of garland of the struggle proceeds for us, the greater anxiety weighs upon us; lest we pour out the effort of the previous days, and undergo the shame of the present. For the conditions of speaking and singing, or wrestling, are not the same; for in those there is the risk of stumbling, in this the danger of death. If one makes a mistake there, it is a source of annoyance for the spectators; here, it is a loss for the listeners.

Therefore, judges, assist me like a crown and enter with me into this great and admirable theater of the whole visible creation. For if someone who explores the new arrivals of guests shows them around the entire extent of the city, pointing out the most excellent works, he earns considerable gratitude; how much more should you receive without disdain, as if I were leading you by the hand, the homeland that we share in common, and I show you the various species and genera of individual things, seeking to gather from all of them, how much more abundant grace the Creator of the universe has bestowed upon you than upon all others. Therefore, this wreath is presented to you, and today I desire to crown you with your own judgment. For we are not seeking fading garlands like athletes, but rather the green test of your holiness; by which you may judge that divine providence permeates through all creatures, but with you especially it is a shared participation in bodily frailty, yet before all else, you are distinguished by the virtue of your mind, which alone has nothing in common with others.

Chapter II.

Ambrose joins in the discussion of the nature of animals: he teaches that Scripture should be taken at face value: he establishes a comparison between himself and a poor guest: he warns against searching for curious questions; and he confirms this point with the example of Moses.

Now then, let us discuss the nature of animals and the generation of man. For I have heard some whispering for quite some time now, saying: How long will we learn about others and not know ourselves? How long will we be taught about the knowledge of other creatures and remain ignorant of ourselves? Let him speak what is profitable for me, so that I may know myself. And the complaint is just: but the order must be preserved which Scripture has woven together; at the same time, because we cannot know ourselves fully unless we first know the nature of all living beings. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living soul according to its kind, quadrupeds, and serpents, and beasts of the earth, according to their kinds, and all creeping things. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds, and cattle, and everything that creepeth on the earth, according to its kind. And God saw that it was good, and he said: Let us make man (Gen. I, 24, 25, 26). In this place, I am not unaware that some have attributed certain species of beasts, cattle, and serpents of the earth to other things; so that they may refer to the enormities of crimes, the foolishness of sins, and the wickedness of thoughts: but I take the simple natures of each kind. Nor am I afraid that anyone may consider me presumptuous in inviting many guests of low position, for I invite them out of a love of humanity, and I serve them nothing but cheap and ordinary food. I am more likely to incur disapproval from my guests for the simplicity of my table than to receive thanks for my hospitality. For the friends of Elisha did not reject him as a bad dinner guest when he served them rustic vegetables (2 Kings 4:39). This simile of empty relationships is a careful and accurate feast, in which the appearance of pheasants or turtledoves is presented, and inside, a chicken is eaten or a chicken is brought in, and it is stuffed with oysters or mussels; or a drink is consumed that changes in color and smell to different tastes: sea creatures are mixed with land creatures, and land creatures are stuffed with sea creatures. This is a criticism of the providence of the Creator, who has given us everything for sustenance, but has not mixed them together: but these things seem sweet at first, and then they become bitter. For the more excessive luxury there is, the more harmful intemperance becomes. However, Elisha added bitterness, but afterwards sweetness followed. Finally, those who had considered death in that food, afterwards obtained the pleasantness and grace of life in it.

6. Nor is there any fear, lest it should appear that I have invited more guests than I can feed, and that my words should fail you; for even Elisha, though truly deserving to be imitated by us with unhesitating faith, did not consider how many loaves he had, but was willing to divide what he had among all, and thought it sufficient for all. (Ibid., 42). Therefore, he commanded his servant to divide ten barley loaves among the people. And the servant said, 'What, shall I give this before the sight of a hundred men?' And he answered, Give them food yourselves, for thus says the Lord: They shall eat and have some left (same reference). So your faith will make a banquet for the poor of speech abundant. I am not afraid that your fasting will make you more gluttonous; rather, that when you are filled and hungry and empty, you will return, for it is written: The Lord strengthens the righteous, and they shall be satisfied in the days of famine (Psalm XXXVI, 17 and 79). It is much more beautiful to not be ashamed of barley bread and to offer what you have, than to deny. Eliseus, who left nothing for himself, abounded with people. Eliseus, therefore, did not hesitate to offer barley bread; we are ashamed to understand simple creatures, which are declared by simple and their own words! We read the sky, let us accept the sky; we read the earth, let us understand the fruitful earth.

7. What good is it for me to seek what is the measure of its circumference, which mathematicians have estimated to be 180,000 stadia? I willingly admit that I do not know what I do not know, and indeed that knowing it would be of no benefit. It is better to know the types of lands than the spaces that, with the sea surrounding them, the Barbarian regions in between, and the difficult-to-traverse swamps covering them, how can we comprehend? The Scripture demonstrates that this is impossible for humans, with God saying: 'Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens, or enclosed the whole earth in his hand?' Who determined the mountains in a balance and the hills in a scales, and the forests in a yoke? (Isaiah, 40:12). And below: Who stretches out the earth like a curtain and its inhabitants like locusts? Who established the heavens as a canopy? (Ibid., 22). Therefore, who dares to claim equal power and knowledge with God, and presume to have the understanding of what God, in His majesty, has revealed as His own?

Certainly Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians: but because he received the Spirit of God, he disregarded that empty and usurping philosophy of truth and wrote down for me the things he deemed fitting for our hope, namely that God made the earth, that the earth produced plants according to the command of the almighty God, and the work of the Lord Jesus, and every living creature according to its kind. But he did not think it necessary to discuss how much space the shadow of the earth occupies in the air when the sun recedes from us and takes away the day, illuminating the lower parts of the axis; and how when the globe of the moon falls into the region of the shadow of this world, it causes an eclipse; because what passes by, having no profit for us, is as good as nothing. For he saw in the Holy Spirit that some fading vanities of wisdom should be followed, which occupy our minds with inexplicable things and waste our effort, but rather those things should be described which pertain to the progress of virtue.

Chapter III.

For living creatures to adhere to the law of generation imparted by God in the succession of species. It is undeniable that there is truth in the nature of those things which are born: but it is shameful for man to imitate the life of a beast. Finally, there follows an explanation of certain vices, which are familiar to and therefore ought to be avoided by certain animals.

9. Therefore, let us hold fast to the prophetic sayings and not treat the words of the Holy Spirit with contempt. 'Let the earth bring forth living souls of cattle, of beasts, and of reptiles,' it says. Why do we argue otherwise when it is clearly the nature of earthly creatures to be formed? For the Word of God runs through the whole constitution of the world, so that suddenly from the earth all the creatures that God has ordained may come forth, and in the future, according to the prescribed law, they may succeed one another according to their kind and likeness, so that the lion may produce a lion, the tiger a tiger, the ox an ox, the swan a swan, and the eagle an eagle. Once the precept has taken root in nature forever. And therefore, the earth does not cease to offer the service of its ministry, so that the ancient species of animals may be regenerated in a new succession of ages. But do you want to derive things that are born for the use of humans? Do not deny the truth that is proper to each kind of nature, and even more you will adapt them to human pleasure. First, because nature has thrown down all kinds of livestock, wild animals, and fish into the belly; so you see that some crawl on their bellies, others are supported by their feet, the more quadrupedal have a gait that is more immersed in the earth and it seems as if they are fixed to the

ground, rather than free. For indeed, since they do not have the ability to stand erect, they require food from the earth and they pursue only the pleasures of the belly. Beware, oh man! Do not bend like a beast. Beware of being drawn not so much by the body as by desire. Look at the shape of your body and assume a form that is appropriate for lofty strength. Let only animals be inclined to be fed on the ground. Why do you lay yourself low in eating, when nature did not bring you down? Why do you take pleasure in what is against nature? Why do you spend your nights and days focused on food, feeding on earthly things like animals? Why do you dishonor yourself by indulging in physical allurements, while serving your belly and its passions? Why do you take away the understanding that the Creator has given you? Why do you compare yourself to animals, from which God wanted you to be separate, saying: Do not become like the horse and the mule, which have no understanding (Ps. XXXI, 9)? Or if the gluttony of the horse and the intemperance of the mule delight you, and it pleases you to neigh after women, let your jaws be bound by a bit and be confined in a stable. If cruelty feeds you, this is the madness of wild animals, which are slaughtered because of their savagery; see that your own cruelty does not turn into monstrosity within you.

11. The lazy donkey, exposed to prey, and slower in his senses, teaches us nothing else but that we ought to be more lively, and not to become sluggish in laziness of body and mind, and to resort to faith, which has been accustomed to alleviate heavy burdens.

12. Is it not evidence of a useless creature and worthy of hatred due to its stealing, contempt due to its weakness, and therefore unsuspecting of its own safety while it lies in wait for another's?

13. The cunning partridge that snatches the eggs of another, that is, of another partridge, and incubates them with its own body; but it cannot enjoy the fruits of its deceit; because when it brings forth its chicks, it loses them; because when they hear the voice of the one who produced the eggs, they abandon those and naturally and lovingly seek refuge with her, whom they recognize as their true mother through the act of egg generation; signifying that she performs the role of a nurse, while the other is the parent. Therefore, in vain does she pour forth her own labors, and she is punished by the price of her deceit. Hence Jeremiah also says: 'The partridge cried and gathered what it did not hatch' (Jer., XVII, 11), meaning, she gathered eggs and cried out as if triumphing in the effect of her deceit. But she is playing a game; because she brings forth, through great labor, others whom she herself has animated with persistent care. The devil is an imitator of this, who strives to steal the generations of the eternal Creator; and if he is able to gather any foolish and self-absorbed individuals through his power, nourishing them with bodily delights, where the voice of Christ has been infused into little ones, they depart and turn to that mother, who embraces her offspring with a motherly love like a bird. For the devil gathered the pagans, whom he had not created: but when Christ sent out his voice in his Gospel, they especially turned to him, whom he himself received under the shadow of his wings, and gave them to be nurtured by the Mother Church.

14. The lion, proud of his own nature, does not know how to mix with the fierce species of other wild animals: but, like a certain king, he disdains the company of many. He even despises yesterday's food and rejects the remains of his own meal. However, which wild beast would dare to associate with him, whose voice naturally contains such great terror; so that many animals, which could escape his attack through their speed, are astonished and struck down by the roar of

his voice, as if by some force?

15. For even the pard's appearance does not keep silent about the various colors of its coat, which indicate the various movements of its own soul. For Jeremiah says: 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?' (Jer. 13:23). This is not only understood about appearance, but also about the mobility of rage; for the people of the Jews, having been discolored by the dark and restless and fickle changes of an untrustworthy mind and soul, can no longer hold onto the grace of good intention, nor can they return to any kind of amendment and correction, once they have put on a bestial savagery.

Chapter IV.

On the remarkable nature of certain animals in avoiding harm to themselves and pursuing what is beneficial, and on the natural virtues that we ought to imitate in them.

However, there is also in the nature of quadrupeds a prophetic speech that exhorts us to imitate, by which example we avoid laziness and do not turn away from the study of virtue due to the smallness or weakness of the body, nor are we drawn back from the magnitude of any purpose. For even the ant is small, yet it dares with its own strength to undertake greater things; nor is it compelled to work by servitude, but it prepares future supplies of food for itself by its own foresight. The Scripture urges you to imitate the industry of the ant, saying: Consider the ant, O sluggard, and imitate its ways, and be wiser than it (Proverbs, 6:6). For the ant possesses no property, and does not have someone to force it or act as its master. Yet it prepares food by storing the harvest of your labors for itself; and while you often lack, it does not. It has no closed granaries, no impenetrable protections, no inviolable storehouses. The guard watches but dares not prevent thefts: the owner sees his losses and does not seek retribution. The prey is carried through the fields in a black column, the roads sizzle with the crowd of wayfarers, and large quantities of grain that cannot be contained by a wide mouth are pushed with their shoulders. The master of the harvest observes these things and is ashamed to deny the profits of honest industry.

17. But what shall I say about the dogs, to whom it is ingrained by a certain nature to show gratitude and pretend anxious guard for the safety of their masters? Hence Scripture cries out against those ungrateful for kindness and lazy and idle: 'Dumb dogs, who cannot bark' (Isaiah 56:10). So there are dogs who know how to bark for their masters, who know how to defend their own dwelling places. Therefore, you too learn to raise your voice for Christ, when heavy wolves invade the sheepfold of the Church. Learn to hold the word in your mouth, so that you do not seem to have abandoned the custody of faith like a mute dog with the silence of transgression. Such a dog is a traveler and companion of angels, whom Raphael in the prophetic book thought it was not without purpose to join to himself and to the son of Tobias, when he went to chase away Asmodeus and to strengthen the conjugal bond (Tob. VI, 1, and XI, 9). For with the grace of a mindful affection, the demon is driven away and the marriage is established. The holy angel Raphael, in the guise of a mute beast, instructed the young Tobias, whom he had taken upon himself to protect, about the experience of grace. For who would not be ashamed not to repay gratitude to those who deserve it well, when even beasts are seen to shun the crime of ingratitude? And those animals preserve the memory of the bestowed nourishment, do you not preserve the memory of the received salvation?

18. Although the bear, as the Scripture says (Lamentations 3:10), is a crafty animal, it is known to give birth to shapeless offspring and then mold them with its tongue into its own likeness. Are you surprised by the acts of a wild animal with such a loving disposition, which expresses its nature through kindness? Therefore, just as the bear molds its offspring to resemble itself, can you not mold your own children to be like you?

19. Moreover, he did not neglect the practice of healing. For when deeply affected by a wound, he knows how to heal himself with a certain herb called φλ■μος by the Greeks, applying it to his sores; they are cured by contact with the herb alone. Likewise, the snake repels blindness by feeding on fennel, except when it is already afflicted. Therefore, when it feels its eyes starting to dim, it seeks the well-known remedies and is not deceived by their effects. The tortoise, having eaten the innards of a snake, exercises the medicine of its own health when it perceives the poison trying to spread; even though it is submerged in marshy waters, it nevertheless knows how to cure itself with its own antidote, and it proves that the powers of herbs themselves can know how to support its health. You see also a fox with a tearful little pine tree healing itself, and with such a remedy prolonging the time of impending death. The Lord Himself cries out in the book of Jeremiah: The turtle dove and the swallow and the field sparrows have kept the times of their coming: but my people have not known the judgments of the Lord (Jer., XVIII, 7). The swallow knows when it comes, and when it returns. The pious bird also knows how to announce its coming with the testimony of true signs. The ant also knows how to explore the times of tranquility; for when it perceives that its fruits are moistened by the wet rain, it carefully examines the air to determine when it can preserve a constant temperature, it opens its storehouses and carries out supplies from their caves on its shoulders; so that its own grain may be dried by the constant sun. Finally, you will not see rains breaking from the clouds on all those days, unless the ant has gathered its own grain in its storehouses. Cows, with rain impending, have learned to keep themselves at the mangers. Likewise, when they have observed the change of the sky with their natural sense, they look outside and stretch their necks beyond the mangers, all in the same manner, so as to show that they want to come out. The sheep, under the approach of winter, greedily snatch the grass for food, because they anticipate the roughness of the upcoming winter; in order to stuff themselves with grass beforehand, before all the grass fails when the frost sets in. This hedgehog, which is commonly called a sea-urchin, when it senses any danger, closes itself up with its spines and gathers its weapons around itself, so that whoever touches it is wounded. And the same hedgehog, foreseeing the future, provides itself with two ways to breathe; so that when it senses that the North wind will blow, it blocks the Northern passage, and when it knows that the clouds of the air will be cleared by the South wind, it moves towards the North, so that the winds may veer away from it and not harm it.

21. Therefore, Prophet offered a worthy praise to the Lord, saying: How magnified are your works, O Lord! You have done everything with wisdom (Ps. CIII, 24). Divine wisdom penetrates and fills everything: this is more clearly understood from the senses of irrational creatures than from the reasoning of rational creatures. For the testimony of nature is stronger than the argument of doctrine. For an animated being, it is unknown how to safeguard its own well-being: if it has strength, by resisting; if it has speed, by fleeing; if it has cleverness, by taking precaution? Who taught us the knowledge of using medicinal herbs? We are humans, and often deceived by the appearance of herbs, and usually the ones we think are beneficial, we discover are harmful. How

many times has a deadly food slipped among the sweet feasts, and during the very watchful guard of royal attendants, has a deadly meal penetrated the vital organs of kings? Wild animals know how to distinguish between harmful and beneficial by smell alone: no advance testing, no taster takes a bite of the herb, nor does it harm. Nature is indeed the best teacher of truth. Without the guidance of anyone, it infuses the sweetness of health into our senses, and teaches us to avoid the bitterness of pain. Hence life becomes sweeter, and death becomes more bitter. Nature encourages lionesses to care for their cubs, and softens the wild beast with maternal affection. Nature tames the fierceness of tigers, and turns their attention away from imminent prey. For when a stolen brood has been found, she immediately follows the footprints of the thief. But he, though carried by a swift horse, seeing that he could surpass the speed of the wild animal, and that no aid of escape could be available to him, contrives a trick of this kind. When he sees it near him, he throws a glass sphere: but it is deceived by the illusion of itself, and believes it to be its offspring, and recalling its attack, it desires to gather its offspring. Again, with the empty appearance retained, it pours out all its strength to seize the horseman, and, spurred on by anger, it threatens the fleeing one with even greater swiftness. He again delays the object of the sphere; yet he does not exclude the memory of his mother's diligence from his mind: he turns the empty image around and dwells as if on a lactating fetus. Thus deceived by his own piety, he loses both vengeance and offspring.

22. What Scripture offers us, which says: Children, love your parents; parents, do not provoke your children to anger (Colossians 3:20). Nature instills this in animals, that they love their own young, they cherish their offspring. They do not know stepmotherly hatred, nor are parents corrupted by changing partners, nor do they know how to prefer the children of a later union and neglect those of a previous one. They know their own offspring, they do not know the difference of love, the incentives of hatred, the divisions of offenses. The nature of wild animals is simple, they do not know the calumnies of truth. For God has so arranged all things, that to those to whom He has given less reason, He has granted more indulgence of emotions. Which wild animal would not offer itself primarily for the death of its own offspring? Which wild animal, even though its offspring may be besieged by countless wedges of armed men, does not protect them with its own entrails? Although a multitude of weapons may threaten, it still provides its little ones, enclosed by the wall of its own body, with immunity from danger. What does a man say who neglects a command, he denies his nature! A son despises his father, a father disowns his son; and they think this is right, where fertility is condemned: rather the father condemns himself, who renders what he begot void. And this is considered authority, where the nature of sterility is mutilated.

23. No one doubts that the dog is an example of reason; however, if you consider the intensity of its senses, you may think that it acquires the power of reasoning through its keenness of perception. In fact, what few individuals who have spent their entire lives in schools were barely able to comprehend, namely to weave together the connections of syllogisms, this a dog can easily estimate through its natural learning. For when it discovers the track of a hare or a stag, and it reaches a crossroads on the path, and a certain junction where the path is divided into many parts; silently, it examines the beginnings of each path, as if emitting a syllogistic voice by the keenness of its sense of smell, deducing. Either he turned in this direction, he said, or in that; or certainly he turned into this winding path: but he did not enter that path, nor this one either: therefore it remains that without hesitation he turned into this path. What humans assemble with

lengthy meditation of an arranged art, dogs possess by nature; that they detect lies before, and after rejecting falsehood, they find the truth. Don't philosophers spend whole days dividing propositions for themselves in the dust, marking each one with a ray, and since out of the three it is necessary for one of them to be true, they first eliminate the two that agree with falsehood as if they were lies, and thus they define that the force of truth adheres to what remains? Who can be so steadfast in their benevolence and mindful of gratitude? Considering they know how to leap upon robbers for their master, and to prohibit the nocturnal approach of strangers, and to die for their masters, and to die alongside their masters. Often, even the evidence of inflicted death dogs have revealed clues to expose the guilty; so much so that their testimony is usually believed.

24. They say that in a remote part of Antioch, a man was murdered at twilight, who had a dog attached to him. A certain soldier had arisen as a servant of plunder: he had withdrawn to other parts covered in the same darkness at the dawn of the day: the unburied corpse lay, a crowd of spectators stood around, the dog wept with a mournful howl over his master's misfortune. By chance, the one who had inflicted the death, as is the cunning of human nature, in order to gain the belief of innocence by daring to move in the midst of authority, approached that circle of watching people and, as if pitying, came near to the funeral. Then the dog, having temporarily taken on the role of a mediator, with a mournful cry, took up the weapons of revenge, and seized the apprehended and, like a kind of tragic ending, turned everyone into tears, brought forth evidence for the sake of proving his loyalty, which he alone maintained among many, and did not let go. Ultimately, the disturbed man was unable to refute the accusation any longer, as he could not dismiss the clear evidence of the matter, without any motive of hatred, enmity, envy, or injury. Therefore, he pursued revenge, because he could not provide a defense. What do we, who feed on the nourishment of our Creator, consider worthy of Him, as we overlook injuries and often offer feasts to the enemies of God, those same ones we received from God?

25. What is simpler than little lambs, whom we compare to the innocence of small children? Often from these, a little lamb wanders throughout the entire flock, searching for its mother, and when it is unable to find her, it calls out with frequent bleating to summon her response, so that it may follow her wandering footsteps until it hears her voice: even though it may be surrounded by a multitude of sheep, it recognizes the voice of its parent, hastens to its mother, and seeks out the familiar sources of mother's milk: though it may be filled with desire for food and drink, it nevertheless passes by the full udders of other mothers, even though they overflow with milk; it seeks only its own mother, and by desiring the poor juices of its mother's udder, it indicates that they are abundant for it alone. Among the many thousands of lambs, she also knows only her own son; one cries the most, the same species; however, she distinguishes her own offspring from the others and recognizes her only son with a silent testimony of affection. The shepherd errs in the discernment of sheep, but the lamb does not know how to err in recognizing its mother. The shepherd can be deceived by appearance: but the sheep is not deceived by affection. One smell for all, but nevertheless it has its own domestic smell that the dear offspring seems to emit with a certain special property.

26. Nature has its uses, and household senses. Barely beginning to break through teeth, even an infant already knows how to test its own weapons. Not yet with teeth like a dog, and yet it seeks revenge with its own mouth. Not yet with horns like a deer, and yet it playfully threatens with its forehead, and the weapons it hasn't yet experienced. If a wolf sees a human first, it takes away

their voice, and with the voice taken away, it despises them like a victorious one. Likewise, if it senses that it has been foreseen, it abandons its fierceness, it cannot run. The lion fears the rooster and especially the white one. The injured goat seeks a medicinal herb and removes the arrows from the wound. The animals also know their remedies. The sick lion seeks a monkey to devour, so that he may be healed. The leopard drinks the blood of the wild goat and avoids the force of illness. Every sick wild animal is healed by drinking the blood of a dog. The sick bear devours ants. The deer chews on olive twigs.

27. Therefore, wild beasts know how to seek those things that are advantageous to themselves; you, o man, are ignorant of your remedies! You do not know how to snatch virtue from your opponent, so that, like a wolf overcome by surprise, he cannot escape, so that with the eye of your mind you may detect his treachery, and impede the course of his words beforehand, dull his impudence and the sharpness of his argument. But if he should get ahead of you, he takes away your voice; and if you remain silent, he strips off your cloak, so that you may release your speech. And if a wolf rises against you, take the rock, and flee. Your rock is Christ. If you take refuge in Christ, the wolf will flee and cannot terrify you. This rock was sought by Peter when he staggered in the waves, and he found it; for he embraced the right hand of Christ.

28. Why, I ask, do people find pleasure in garlic, and take as food that which even a leopard avoids? In any case, if anyone believes that garlic should be rubbed, a leopard leaps from it and does not resist. This venomous beast cannot bear the smell, but you take it as food and pour it into your inner organs? But it is sometimes used to cure pain. It should be taken as medicine, not as food: it should be taken by the sick, not by those who are feasting. You seek a remedy and avoid fasting, as if you could find a better remedy. If a fasting person's saliva is consumed by a snake, it dies. You see the great power of fasting, that a person can kill an earthly serpent with their own saliva, and rightly so, a spiritual one.

29. The Lord has also infused wisdom into little creatures! The turtle covers its nest with leaves so the wolf doesn't attack its chicks. It knows that wolves are accustomed to fleeing from such leaves. The little fox knows how to nurture its offspring, but you are ignorant, you disregard how to have a safer future against the spiritual wolves of this life's wickedness.

Chapter V. By what reason did the Lord create shorter necks for some animals and longer necks for others? Where are the characteristics, properties, and uses of elephants described, particularly in military matters? But let us return to the order of creation, and consider in what manner the Lord has formed the necks of certain beasts to be shorter, such as lions and tigers, and also bears; and of others to be longer, such as elephants and camels. Is it not evident that the reason is because those wild animals which feed on flesh did not require a long neck? For they do not cast down their necks and mouths to the ground for the purpose of grazing, but either they attack deer, or they tear apart cows and sheep. But since the camel is taller, how would it feed on very small plants unless it extended its long necks down to the ground for grazing? Therefore, the camel, based on its height, has acquired longer necks, the horse has acquired them based on its needs, and likewise the ox; for they feed on grass.

31. The elephant also has a prominent trunk; because it is taller than all the other animals, it cannot bend down to graze. Therefore, it uses the assistance of a servant to gather food. This enormous animal pours a generous amount of fluid into its trunk; this is why it is concave, so that it

can draw water from full lakes to quench its thirst, or it can flood itself with a collected river while drinking. Its neck is certainly smaller than the weight of such a large body would require; so that it would not be more of a burden than a benefit. And so it does not bend its knees, because its legs needed to be more stiff, in order for such a great structure of limbs to be supported like columns. The heel curves slightly, while the rest of the foot remains rigid from top to bottom. And it cannot flex as we often lay down a shield, nor can the beast deflect so much; and rightly it cannot have a common use of rolling and bending with other animals. It is supported on both sides by very large beams so that it can tilt slightly without danger while sleeping, because its foot is not distinguished by any connection of joints. Therefore, certain supports are prepared for gentle animals, by which they are used here. But for wild and savage animals, since no such supports on which they can be sustained are provided, hence comes the use of danger. For those who lean against a tree or rub their ribs, or relax themselves in sleep, when they are sometimes overcome and bent, they are broken by such a great body: truly, the one who had poured himself into the same [tree], falls and cannot raise and lift himself up; and lying there, he perishes, or, betrayed by his groaning, he is stretched out, while his belly and other softer parts are exposed to the wound. For his back and other outer parts do not allow any weapons to penetrate easily. However, there are those who, because of ivory, set these traps for them, so that they might cut off a little from the side to which the elephant is accustomed to lean, where its use is less frequent, in such a way that, when the elephant leans against it, it cannot support the weight of its limbs and brings about its own destruction.

33. But if someone criticizes those things, let them also criticize the height of buildings; because they threaten heavy ruin more quickly, and are more difficult to repair once they have fallen. But if we frequently raise those things either for the sake of beauty or for observation, we must also approve of them in elephants, because they serve a great use in military matters. Hence the fierce Persian nation in wars, strong in arrows and in every throw of weapons, because their weapons are thrown from higher to lower places with a stronger force, their battle line advances as if protected by advancing towers. In the midst of the fields, they fight as if from a wall; and as if positioned on a certain fortress and lookout, they watch the wars more than they engage in them. Thus they appear foreign from danger, protected by the fortifications of wild beasts. For who would dare to approach them, when they are easily struck down from above by javelins, and crushed below by the charge of elephants? Finally, opposing forces and the ranks of armed soldiers yield to them, and those square camps are dissolved. They rush against the enemy with an unbearable onslaught; as if not hindered by any formation of warriors, by any massing of troops, or by the shield-wall of enemies: as if certain mobile mountains are turning in battle, and, like hills with a high peak, they disturb the confidence of all with the roaring clamor of everyone. What can the feet do, though strong in the arms and ready in hand; when a wall of armed people encounters him as he walks? What can the horseman do, when his horse, frightened by the enormity of such a beast, flees? What can the archer do, when even though he cannot feel the impact of his javelin on the iron-clad bodies of men from above; and when the beast is not easily penetrated by a naked blade, but is protected by armor, it can cut through enemy ranks without danger to itself, and crush formations?

34. Therefore, just as immense buildings are supported by strong foundations, so too elephants are supported by stronger legs; otherwise, with their unequal feet, they would slip within a short

period of time. But now they are able to live for three hundred years or more because all their limbs are suited to their size. Therefore, their limbs are not separate like ours, but rather compacted in order to be stronger. As soon as humans stand for a long time, run faster, or walk constantly, their knees and soles become worn out! For conjoined and articulated things are more easily susceptible to the sensation of pain or the occurrence of injury than things that are unified and solidified.

35. And why do you wonder, if they are feared when dressed in armor; since they are always armed with their teeth like natural spears? With their tusks, they can break whatever they wrap them around: but with their feet, they can crush whatever they step on, as if causing a great collapse. They wrap up forests with their tusks for their food, and like some great serpents, they lash out with their coiled tails. They often gather them into a circle, especially when food is gathered from the ground, or drink is consumed. Therefore, these documents are for us, that nothing superfluous has been created; and yet this beast of such great magnitude is subject to us, serving human commands.

Chapter VI. The most strong and fierce beasts, subject to man by the Creator: the smallest animals are a terror and destruction to the same man. Then, after a few arguments about the usefulness of serpents, man is awakened to the knowledge of himself and his own soul. For indeed, since we are about to speak of the creation of man, we ought to lay the foundation and preface his commendation. It seemed that no creature had anything stronger than elephants, nothing so terrifying or tall, nothing so wild as lions or tigers; and these serve man, and lay aside their natural disposition through human training. They forget what they are born for, they put on what they are commanded. Why more? They are taught like children, they serve like the weak, they are beaten like the timid, they are corrected like the submissive, they adopt our customs; since they have lost their own proper movements.

37. Therefore, nature is remarkable in great things; indeed, the Lord is remarkable in lofty things, and also remarkable in small things. For just as we marvel not only at the high peaks of mountains but also at the flatness of plains, and we are amazed not only by the height of a cedar but also by the short fertility of a vine or an olive tree, so I am no more astonished by an elephant because it is tall than I am by a mouse because it is terrifying to the elephant. Therefore, this is the power of nature: that some things are terrifying to others, and others are fearful. For a certain prerogative is granted to each creature, so that they are supported by their own particular privileges. The formidable elephant fears the tiny mouse. Indeed, the lion, the king of beasts, is tormented by the small sting of a scorpion and is killed by the poison of a snake. The extraordinary beauty of the lion shakes off flies with its flowing mane or raises its head with its lifted chest. But who would not marvel at the fact that with such a tiny sting of a scorpion, which you might think is insubstantial, death can come to creatures of great size? And let no one censure this, because the Creator has mixed poisonous creatures and other types of animals or plants with His created beings. For these have been made for our correction, not for our harm. For those things which are usually a cause of offense and fear to the indolent, weak, or impious, are so useful to others, like tutors to little children. They seem to be loved, though they are bitter and troublesome. They are formidable by the scourge, denying freedom to indulge and demanding the necessity of discipline. They hold back childish minds from falling into luxury by means of terror; and so, by the severity of these things, they become frugal, sober, continent, more inclined to glory than play. Do you see what

terrible blows these lashes achieve? In the same way, snakes are lashes for those of weak souls and a certain childish mentality is a virtue; however, they cannot harm stronger individuals. Finally, it was said with confidence in the Lord: You will walk over the asp and the basilisk and you will trample the lion and the dragon (Ps. XC, 13). Paul was bitten by a viper, and they thought that he, barely saved from the shipwreck, would die from the poison as a sinner; but afterwards, when the snake remained unharmed after being shaken off into the fire, it gained even more reverence from those who saw it. But the Lord himself also said to all: Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; but whoever does not believe will be condemned (Mark, XVI, 6). He said that these signs would be for those who believe, so that they can handle serpents with their hands, and even if they drink poison or anything deadly, it will not harm them. Therefore, your disbelief, O man, is more to be feared than the venom of snakes. So fear those things, so that, at least when you fear them, they can prompt you to faith. But if you do not fear God, or dread the vengeful poison of treachery.

39. Now since you see elephants subject to you, and lions subject; know yourself, o man, that it is not, as they say, of Apollo Pythius, but of Solomon the holy, who says: Unless you know yourself beautiful in women (Song of Songs I, 7), although long before Moses wrote in Deuteronomy: Take heed to yourself, o man. Take heed to yourself (Deut. IV, 9), says the law. And the Prophet says: Unless you know yourself. To whom does he say this? Beautiful, he says, in women. What is beautiful in women, if not the soul, which possesses excellence of beauty in both sexes? And deservedly adorned is she, who desires not earthly but heavenly things, not corruptible but incorruptible, in which beauty does not perish. For all bodily things decay with the passage of time or the inequality of illness. Attend to this, says Moses, in which you are wholly, in which the better part of you is. Ultimately, the Lord interpreted who you are, saying. Beware of false prophets (Matthew 7:15); for they weaken the soul and undermine the mind. Therefore, you are not just flesh. For what is flesh without the guidance of the soul, the strength of the mind? Flesh is consumed today and discarded tomorrow. Flesh is temporary, the soul is eternal. Flesh is the garment of the soul, which puts on a kind of clothing in the form of a body. Therefore, you are not the garment, but the one who uses the garment. That is why it is said to you, to strip off the old self with its deeds and put on the new self, which is renewed not in the quality of the body, but in the spirit of the mind and knowledge (Colossians 3:10). No, I say, you are not flesh; for it is not said to the flesh: For the temple of God is holy, which you are (1 Corinthians 3:17). And elsewhere, You are the temple of God, and the Holy Spirit dwells in you (Ibid., 5): but it is said to both the renewed and faithful in whom the Spirit of God remains. However, it does not remain in the fleshly, because it is written: My spirit will not remain in these men, because they are flesh (Genesis 6:3).

Chapter VII.

The creation of man is initiated by the contemplation of the creator. It demonstrates that the son is the image of the Father and that unity and distinction are found between them. Finally, it warns man to know where he comes from, whose image he bears, and in which part he carries it.

40. But let us consider the order of our own creation. 'Let us make man to our image and likeness', He said (Gen., I, 26). Who is saying this? Is it not God, who made you? What is God? Flesh or spirit? Surely not flesh, but spirit, which cannot be like flesh; for He Himself is incorporeal and invisible, while flesh is comprehensible and visible. To whom is He speaking? Surely not to Himself, for He does not say 'Let me make', but 'Let us make'. Not to the angels, because they are

ministers; but servants, however, cannot have a share of operation with a master, and works with an author: but God says to his Son: even if the Jews do not want it, even if the Arians resist. But let the Jews be silent, and let the Arians be silent with their parents, who exclude one from the participation in divine operation and include many; and they deny the prerogative to the Son, but give it to their servants.

41. But let this be understood: that it seems God has needed the help of servants to work. If work is common with the angels of God, is the image common to God and the angels? Would God say to the angels: Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness? But listen to what the image of God is saying: He has rescued us, he says, from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his Son's glory, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation (Coloss. 1:13, et seq.). He is the image of God the Father, who always is, and was in the beginning. Indeed, he is the image who says: Philip, whoever sees me, sees the Father (John 14:8-9). And how can you say, 'Show us the Father,' when you see the living image of the living Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The image of God is power, not weakness; the image of God is wisdom, the image of God is justice. But divine wisdom is, and eternal justice. The image of God is that one alone who said: I and the Father are one (John 10:30); having the likeness of the Father in such a way that he has unity of divinity and fullness. Where he says, let us make, how is there inequality? When he says again, in our likeness, where is there dissimilarity? So also in the Gospel where he says: I and the Father, surely there is not one person: but when he says, we are one, there is no discrepancy of divinity or work. Therefore, in both there is not one person, but one substance. And he added well, we are; because it is always divine to be, so that you believe him to be coeternal, whom you thought to be dissimilar. For he is eternal, of whom Moses says: 'He who is has sent me' (Exodus 3:14). He also well preceded it: I and the Father. For if he had preceded the Father, you would judge the Son to be lesser: but he preceded the Son, whom it is not fitting to believe is superior to the Father. He added, so that you may note that God the Father and His Son are not bound by the prejudice of order.

42. 'Take heed to thyself alone,' saith he (Deut., IV, 9). For we are one thing, our possessions are another, and those things which are about us are another. We are, that is to say, the soul and mind: the members of the body and its sensations are our possessions: but money, slaves, and the outfit of this life belong to those things which are about us. Take heed therefore to thyself, and know thyself, that is to say, not what brawn thou hast, nor what bodily strength, nor what possessions, nor what power, but what soul and what mind, whence all counsels proceed, to what end the fruit of thy acts is referred. For she is indeed full of wisdom, full of piety and justice; because all virtue comes from God. To her God says: Behold, I have painted your walls, O Jerusalem (Isaiah 49:16), she is the soul painted by God, which has the grace of virtues shining forth in it, and the splendor of piety. That soul is well painted, in which the image of divine operation shines forth. That soul is well painted, in which there is the splendor of glory and the image of the Father's substance. According to this shining image, the painting is precious. According to this image, Adam had before sinning; but when he fell, he put aside the image of heaven and took on the likeness of earth. But let us flee from this image, which cannot enter the city of God, for it is written: 'O Lord, You will bring their image to nothing in Your city' (Ps. 73:20). And an unworthy image does not enter, and the one who would enter is excluded; for it will not

enter, as it is said, 'Nothing profane shall enter into it, nor anyone who tells lies or does abominations' (Rev. 21:27); but the one will enter into it whose name is written on the Lamb's forehead.

43. Therefore, our soul is in the image of God. In this, you are everything, O man; for without this, you are nothing, but earth, and you will return to the earth. Finally, so that you may know that without the soul the flesh is nothing: Do not fear, he says, those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul (Matthew, X, 28). Why then do you presume in the flesh, when you lose nothing if you lose the flesh? But fear that, lest you deprive your soul of assistance. For what will a man give in exchange for his soul, in which there is not a small part of himself, but the entire substance of the human universe? This is the part by which you rule over the other living creatures of the earth and the air; this is in the image of God, while the body belongs to the likeness of beasts. In this is the emblem of pious imitation of the divine; in that is the lowly association with wild animals and beasts.

Chapter VIII.

In order to understand more clearly where the divine likeness resides, the qualities of both the body and the soul are examined. It is shown that the whole person is designated by the term 'soul'. Those who deface the image of God with deceit, cruelty, and treachery are rebuked. Under these headings, an exhortation to vigilance against vices, and a comparison between the poor and the rich concludes.

44. But let us consider more closely what it means to be in the image of God. Is the flesh also in the image of God? Therefore, the earth is in God; because the flesh is earth. Therefore, God is corporeal. Therefore, he is weak like flesh, and subject to passions. And perhaps you might think that the head is in the likeness of God, because it stands out: or the eyes, because they see: or the ears, because they hear. If you consider height, do we seem tall, because we slightly rise above the earth with our heads? But why should we not be ashamed, since we are said to be like God, either because we are taller than snakes and other creeping things, or because we are higher than deer and sheep and wolves? And how much more superior are camels and elephants to us in that regard? Truly, it is remarkable to behold the elements of the world, to know what no one else can proclaim, but only your gaze can discern. However, this is only what we see; so that we may say that we are like God in this respect, who sees everything, observes everything, detects hidden emotions, and explores the secrets of the heart. Is there no shame in saying this, when I myself cannot see my whole self? I can see what is in front of me; I cannot see what is behind me. I do not know my own neck, I do not know the back of my head, I cannot see my own kidneys. Likewise, how much is it that we hear; when it is something that is a little bit away, I cannot see and hear? If there are walls in between, vision is hindered, hearing is hindered. Furthermore, our body remains stuck in one place, enclosed in a narrow space. All animals are broader than humans, all are also faster.

45. Therefore, it is not the flesh that can be in the image of God, but our soul, which is free and wanders with diverse thoughts and deliberations, and by considering, looks at everything. Behold now, we are in Italy, and we think about things that seem to pertain to the Eastern or Western parts, and we seem to associate with those who are in Persia, and we see those who live in Africa, if that land has received any known to us: we follow those who depart, we cling to those who

travel, we connect with those who are absent, we speak to those who are separated, we also revive the conversation with the deceased, and we embrace and hold them as if they were alive, and we perform the duties of life and bring them usefulness. Therefore, that is the image of God which is not estimated by bodily appearance but by the strength of the mind: it sees those who are absent, it traverses foreign lands with its gaze, it runs through with its sight, it examines hidden things, in an instant it carries its senses through the boundaries of the whole world and the secrets of the universe: it is joined to God, it adheres to Christ, it descends into hell, and ascends, it freely moves about in heaven. Finally, hear him saying: But our conversation is in heaven (Phil. III, 20). Therefore, is there not an image of God, in which God is always? But listen, because there is an image of God. For the Apostle says: So all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).

46. Therefore, since we know that the soul is in the image of God, let us now consider whether it can be said of the soul: Let us make man in our image. But listen to this, for the soul is called by the name of man. For it is written in Genesis: Now the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were nine souls. So all the souls that entered Egypt with Jacob were seventy-five (Gen. XLVI, 27). And much more appropriately, the soul or man is called in Latin, or in Greek ἄνθρωπος; one from humanity, the other having the power of sight, which undoubtedly pertains more to the soul than to the body. To what matter also that said right agrees, in the Lamentations of Jeremiah: The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him (Lam. 3:25). He spoke about men and thought that the soul should be added. For he seeks these things better if she is alone, drawing herself away from the filth of the body and from carnal desire. She herself is conformed to the image of God, similar to the Lord Jesus. But those who are conformed to the Son of God are holy. For we read as follows, with Paul speaking: And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose: those whom he foreknew and predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified. (Romans 8:30). Therefore, I ask you to answer whether justification seems to be conferred to you according to the body or according to the soul. But you cannot doubt that the righteousness from which justification is derived is of the mind, not of the body.

You are painted, therefore, O man, and painted by your Lord God. You have a good artist and painter. Do not destroy the good painting, shining not with paint but with truth, expressed not with wax but with grace. Erase the painting, woman, if you smear your face with material whiteness, if you drench it with acquired blush. That painting is not of beauty but of vice; that painting is not of simplicity but of deceit; that painting is temporary, it is wiped away by rain or sweat; that painting deceives and tricks; so that you may not please him whom you desire to please, for he understands that what pleases you is not your own but someone else's; and you may displease your creator, who sees that his work has been destroyed. Tell me, if you bring another artisan above a certain craftsman, who covers the work of that superior with new works, does not the one who knows that his work has been adulterated become indignant? Do not take away the image of God and assume the image of a harlot, for it is written: 'Then shall I take away the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot?' (I Cor. VI, 15). But if anyone adulterates the work

of God, he commits a grave crime. For it is a grave crime to think that a man can paint better than God. It is serious that God should say of you: I do not recognize my colors, I do not recognize my image, I do not recognize the face that I myself formed, I reject what is not mine. Seek the one who painted you: have fellowship with him, receive grace from him to whom you have given reward. What will you answer?

48. But if it is a serious matter to commit adultery against the work of God, what shall we say of those who kill the work of God, who shed human blood, who extort the life that God has given, who say: Let us destroy the Just One, for he is useless to us? Hence it is well said today: Foxes have dens, and birds of the air have nests where they may rest: but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head (Matth. VIII, 20). Therefore, the fox hides in a den, the bird takes refuge in a nest: man does not hide in a den, but he is deceived. But the eye of man is a pit, the chest of man is a deep pit, where harmful and deceitful counsels, evil thoughts are. You walk, and another prepares a pit for you. You walk in the midst of traps, which your enemies have hidden for you on the way. Therefore, look around everything, so that you may escape like a deer from nets, and like a bird from a trap. A deer avoids nets with agility: a bird avoids traps, if it flies to higher places and overcomes earthly things. For in the higher realms, no one sets out nets, no one hides a snare. Therefore, whoever's conversation is in the heavens, such a person does not tend to come into the capture as prey. But why are you surprised if a human is deceived by a human, when the Son of Man, where He would rest, had nowhere? And indeed, He made such a human in whom He would recline His head. But afterwards, when in our heart He began not to find rest but a pit; after one began to weave snares for another, whom he should have helped, Christ turned His head away from us: but afterwards He still chose to offer it to death for us. Therefore, do not be deceitful, cruel, or merciless; so that Christ may dwell within you as the head.

Finally, when He had made the creatures of the sea, when He had made the different kinds of wild animals and beasts, He did not rest, but He rested after making man in His image. In whom shall I rest unless it be upon the humble and quiet, and on him who trembles at my words (Isaiah 66:2)? Therefore, be humble and quiet, so that God may find rest in your heart. He did not find rest in the animals, so much more will He not find rest in a bestial heart. For there are bestial souls, there are beasts in human form, of whom the Lord says: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inside they are ravenous wolves (Matt. VII, 15). Therefore, God does not find rest in these, but finds rest in human conduct, which God made in his own image and likeness, when he created man who should not cover his head; for he is the image and glory of God. The soul of this man says: Behold, I have painted your walls, O Jerusalem (Isaiah 49:16). He did not say, I have painted your belly; he did not say, I have painted your private parts; but he said, I have painted your walls, asserting that he has given to man the defenses of walls so that if a vigilant watchman is at the gates, he can repel the danger of a siege. Therefore, he says: I have not given you pleasures, nor the allurements of desires, nor the incentives of luxury, nor the longing for another's beauty, but I have given you the foundations of walls, I have given you the lofty summits of towers, in which, once established, you may not fear being conquered by an enemy, nor be afraid of the formidable temptations of advancing legions. Finally, you have in Isaiah, where the righteous soul or the Church says, 'I am a fortified city, I am a besieged city' (Isaiah 27:3): fortified by Christ, besieged by the devil. But one should not fear the siege when Christ is the helper. For it is fortified by spiritual grace and besieged by worldly dangers. Hence, in the Song of Songs it is

said: 'I am a wall, and my breasts are towers' (Song of Songs 8:10). The wall is the Church and its towers are the priests, who abound in both the word of nature and moral discipline.

50. Therefore, know yourself, beautiful soul; for you are the image of God. Know yourself, O man; for you are the glory of God. Hear how glorious [you are]. The prophet says, 'Your knowledge of me has become wondrous' (Psalm 138:6), that is, your majesty has become more wondrous in my work; in human counsel your wisdom is proclaimed. As I contemplate myself, whom you apprehend in the hidden and internal thoughts, I recognize the mysteries of your knowledge. Therefore recognize yourself, O man, how great you are, and take care of yourself, lest you become the prey of the hunting devil's snares; lest perhaps you fall into the jaws of that foul lion, who roars and prowls seeking whom he may devour. Take care of yourself, so that you may consider what enters into you, and what comes out of you. I am not speaking of food, which is consumed and expelled, but I speak of thoughts, I assert of speech. May not the desire for someone else's bed enter into you, may it not creep into your mind, may it not ravish your eyes the beauty of a passing woman, may the mind not enclose it, may your speech not weave the machines of temptations, may it not betray in deceit, may it not sprinkle your neighbor with reproach. God made you a hunter, not a conqueror, who said: Behold, I send many hunters (Jer. XVI, 16): hunters not of sin, but of absolution; hunters not of blame certainly, but of grace. Christ is the fisherman, to whom it is said: Henceforth you shall be a life-giving man (Luke V, 10). So send forth your nets, so send forth your eyes, so send forth your words: that you may not oppress anyone, but may raise up the struggling. Take heed to yourself, it says (Ecclus. XXVIII, 30). Stand firm, so that you do not fall; run in such a way that you may reach the prize; fight in such a way that you often conquer; for the crown is owed to the legitimate contest. You are a soldier, diligently scout the enemy; so that the nocturnal one does not creep upon you; you are an athlete, be closer to your opponent with your hands than with your face; so that he does not strike your eyes. Let your look be free, your gait sharp; so that you may pour out on the attacker, seize the one retreating, escape the wound with a watchful gaze, repel with a strong encounter. But if you are wounded, attend to yourself, run to the doctor, seek the remedy of repentance. Attend to yourself; for you have flesh, which quickly decays: let the good doctor of souls, the divine word, come to you, sprinkling the oracles of the Lord upon you like healing medicines. Attend to yourself, lest an evil hidden word be made in your heart: for it creeps like poison, and brings deadly contagion. Attend to yourself; lest you forget the God who made you, lest you take His name in vain.

51. Take heed to yourself, the law says, lest when you have eaten and are full, and have built houses and begun to live in them, and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and you have an abundance of gold and silver, and all that you have is increased, your heart becomes proud and you forget the Lord your God (Deut. VIII, 12, et seq.). For what do you have, O man, that you have not received? Do not all these things pass away like a shadow? Is not your house dust and ruin? Are all these things not false? Is not the treasure of this age vanity? Are you not yourself dust? Look into the tombs of men, and see what will remain of you except dust and bones, that is, of your body: look, I say, and tell me who is rich there, who is poor? Distinguish the needy from the powerful. We are all born naked, we all die naked. There is no distinction among the corpses of the dead; unless perhaps that the bodies of the wealthy, swollen by excess luxury, stench more heavily. Whom did you hear died in poverty and misery? Poverty is beneficial to him: it exercises his body, not crushes it. However, we have not heard of a righteous person forsaken, and his

descendants seeking bread; because the one who labors well in his own land, abounds in food. Therefore, take heed, oh wealthy person; for you also carry flesh like the poor.

52. Attend to yourself, poor one; for your soul is precious: and if mortal flesh, a temporary soul: and if you lack money, grace does not lack: and if there is no spacious house, widespread possession, heaven is open, the earth is free. The elements have been given to all in common, the ornaments of the world are open equally to the rich and the poor. Are not the faces of the heavens, adorned with shining stars, more beautiful than the most precious gold-leaf ceilings of luxurious houses? Are the riches of the rich wider than the expanses of the earth? Whence it was said to those who join house to house and villa to villa: Will you alone dwell upon the earth (Isaiah 5:8)? You have a larger house: the poor, in which you cry out and are heard. O Israel, says the prophet, how great is the house of God and its vast place of possession! It is great and boundless (Baruch 3:24-25). The house of God is common to the rich and the poor, yet it is difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. But perhaps you are saddened that no gleaming light of golden lamps shines for you; but the moon shines for you with a much brighter light all around. Perhaps you complain about the winter, because no hypocausts are warmed by panting fires for you; but you have the warmth of the sun, which tempers the world for you and defends you from winter cold. Do you think those people are blessed who are crowded by a multitude of attending slaves? But those who seek their servants' feet are unable to use their own. Finally, a few are surpassed, many are carried. Unless perhaps you wonder about this, that they abound in gold, silver, money: how much you see them abound, how much they need you do not see. But you think it is precious to recline on ivory beds; and you do not consider that the earth is more precious, which for the poor spreads beds of grass, on which there is sweet rest, pleasant sleep, which he, laid on a golden bed, seeks throughout the whole sleepless night, and cannot find. How much more blessed does he judge himself while awake than while at rest! I pass over that which is far more excellent: because the just who has lacked here, will abound there; and he who has endured labor here, will have consolation there: but he who has received goods here, will not be able to hope for their reward there. Poverty indeed reserves its reward, wealth consumes it.

53. Therefore, pay attention to yourself, poor man, pay attention, wealthy man; because there are trials in both poverty and riches. And therefore the Wise Man says: Do not give me riches or poverty, give me only what is sufficient for me. Because riches, like feasts, stretch the stomach and the mind with worries and anxieties. And therefore he asks to be established with what is necessary and sufficient: Lest, he says, being filled, I become a liar and say: Who sees me? But if I become poor, I will commit theft and swear in the name of the Lord (Ibid.). Therefore, the temptations of the world must be avoided and guarded against; lest the poor despair and the wealthy become arrogant. For it is written: When you have driven out the nations and have taken possession of their land, do not say: My own power and the strength of my own hand have won this possession for me (Deut. VIII, 17). Thus is the one who ascribes his wealth to himself deemed deserving. And in this manner, he does not recognize his own error, but instead drags sin along with a long rope. For if one believes that the acquisition of money is either due to chance events or dishonest cunning, then there is no place for arrogance in those who have either no praise and empty labor, or for immodest desire ignorant of setting a limit to pleasure.

Chapter IX.

On the excellence of the human body and on the formation, arrangement, and functions of its individual members.

54. But now we must also speak of the body of man itself, which who would deny to be more excellent than others in beauty and grace? For although the substance of all earthly bodies seems to be the same, the strength and height are greater in some beasts: yet the form of the human body is more attractive, with an upright and lofty posture; so that it is neither excessively tall, nor petty and lowly: moreover, the very proportion of the body is pleasant and pleasing; so that neither monstrous size is terrifying, nor thinness weak and feeble. And first of all, let us understand that the structure of the human body is like that of the world. Just as the sky towers over the air, the earth, and the sea, which are like certain members of the world, so too we see that the head stands out above the other parts of our body and is the most excellent of all, like the sky among the elements, like a citadel among the other fortifications of a city. In this citadel, a certain royal wisdom resides according to the prophetic saying: The eyes of the wise are in their head (Eccl., II, 14); this is the safest for the rest and from it strength and providence are derived for all the members. For what strength and power of the arms can achieve, what swiftness of the feet, if it is not supported by the power of the head, like the imperial authority of its ruler? For either all things are lacking or all things are supported by this. What can strength do, if it does not use the eye as its leader in battle? What can fleeing do if vision is absent? The body is a prison, terrifying in its dark condition; unless it is illuminated by the sight of the eyes. Therefore, just as the sun and moon are in the sky, so are the eyes in a human being. The sun and moon are the two lights of the world: but there are certain eyes that shine like stars on the surface, illuminating the lower parts with bright light, and not allowing us to be engulfed in darkness at certain times of the night. Some of our spies keep watch day and night. For they are awakened from sleep more quickly than the rest of the limbs, and when awake they observe everything; for they are closer to the brain, from which all the use of seeing flows. However, let no one believe hastily that I have descended here, because I commend the highest thing in a part when I speak of the eyes, which are not a foreign matter. It is certain that the eyes are a part of the head. Therefore, the head explores everything with the eyes, searches hidden things with the ears, knows secret things, and hears what others are doing on the earth.

56. But the very top of the head, how delightful and pleasing, how beautiful the hair, how revered in the elderly, how venerable in priests, how fearsome in warriors, how lovely in the young; how neat in women, how sweet in children? Long hair does not suit one gender, short hair does not suit another. From trees, one can estimate the grace of a human head. In the head of a tree, all fruit is found, there all beauty resides, its foliage either protects us from rain or shields us from the sun. Take away the hair from a tree, and the whole tree is ungrateful. Therefore, how much greater is the adornment of the human head, which protects and clothes our brain, that is, the seat and origin of our senses, with the hair of the head, so that it is not vexed by cold or heat? For there is the source of all things, and therefore where injury harms, there grace prevails.

57. What is a man without a head, when his whole being is in his head? When you see the head, you recognize the man: if the head is missing, there can be no recognition: the ignoble torso lies, without honor, without name. Only the heads of emperors, cast in bronze, and the images of leaders made of bronze or marble, are worshiped by men. Therefore, it is not without reason that the other limbs obey this like their advisor, and they bear it with servile actions as if it were a deity,

and they elevate it to a high place. Under the power of censorship, he directs the actions of some slaves as he wishes, and decrees commands to be carried out by individuals. You see each one of his soldiers serving voluntarily without pay. Some carry, some feed, some defend, or fulfill their duty in their own way: they obey as subjects, they serve as slaves to their master. Hence, a certain order proceeds, which appoints the tasks that the hands should perform in completing works related to military service, and which discipline determines the form of abstaining or eating that the stomach should hold.

58. To this front, which is free, open in bare times, it reveals the appearance of its character: now joyful, now sadder: sometimes stern, sometimes more indulgent, which expresses the internal will with forensic signs. A certain image of the soul speaks in the face, the foundation of faith in which the name of the Lord is written and held daily. Two hedges of eyebrows follow it, which extend the protection to the eyes, and cover with grace; so that both the beauty of grace may be pleasing, and the diligence of protection may assist. For if anything dirty falls from the head, either sand dust, or mist of the cloud, or sweat from the damp hair, it is caught by the eyebrow, so that it does not disturb the delicate sight of the gentle eyes.

They adhere like the eyebrows to certain mountain ridges; so that, as if protected by the summit of the mountain, they may be safer, and, as if situated on a high point, may overlook everything from a certain superior scene. For it was not fitting for them to be lowly like the ears or mouth, and even the inner sinuses of the nostrils themselves. For a lookout is always from a high place, so that it can observe the arrival of hostile bands and prevent them from unexpectedly seizing either the peaceful population of the city or the army of the emperor. In this way, they also guard against the attacks of robbers, if scouts are positioned on the walls or towers or high mountain ridges, so that they can look down on the flat regions where the ambushes of the robbers cannot hide. Likewise, if someone on the sea sees that land is approaching, they climb to the tops of the masts, the high horns of the sails, in the very peak of danger, and from a distance they greet the land, which is still invisible to the rest of the sailors.

60. But perhaps you will say: If a higher watchtower was necessary, why were not the eyes placed on the very top of the head, as they are in crabs or beetles whose heads, though not visible, are yet higher than the rest of their body? But these animals have a strong shell, not such a delicate membrane as ours, which can easily be hurt and torn by external objects. There are other animals also of this kind. Some have the power of turning their eyes either towards the front or towards the back of their head, as horses, oxen, and almost all wild beasts; or towards their wings, as birds, that in time of safety may go to rest. But for us, it was necessary that the eyes be situated in the highest part of the body, like in a fortress, and be defended from any even small offense, which seemed contradictory. For if they were in a low position for protection, their function would be hindered; if they were in a high position, they would be exposed to injury. Therefore, in order for nothing to be taken away from the usefulness of their function, and for nothing to be overlooked for defending against injury, the eyes were placed in this location, where the eyebrows from above provide some protection, the raised cheeks below provide a considerable fortification, and they are separated internally by the nostrils, and externally by the prominence of the forehead and cheeks. And though they appear to be surrounded by the interconnected and even borders of bones, within these borders are the orbs of the eyes, both safe for protecting and free for seeing, and beautiful for ornamentation, shining like a crystal. In the middle of which are the pupils, who perform the

function of seeing. These, in order not to be harmed by any accidental injury, are protected all around by a kind of wall formed by intertwining hairs. Therefore, begging for safe assistance to himself, the Prophet says: Guard me, O Lord, as the pupil of the eye (Ps. XVI, 8); so that he may receive as diligent and safe protection as the pupil of the eye, which he was pleased to defend with a most secure wall of nature. At the same time, because innocence and integrity, lightly besmirched, are violated, and the gift of grace is lost; and therefore it must be considered, so that no one may taint it with the dust of error, or disturb it with the stick of sin; for it is written: First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye (Matthew VII, 5).

Therefore, skilled medical practitioners believe that the brain of a human is located in the head for the purpose of sight, while the other senses of our body are situated in a nearby dwelling: the brain. For the brain is the origin of nerves and all voluntary movements of sensation, and from there stems the cause of everything we have mentioned. However, most people think that the beginning of arteries and the inherent heat, which vital organs are animated and warmed by, is the heart. But the senses of each individual are like the organs of the nerves, which, like strings and certain fibres, originate from the brain and are distributed throughout the different parts of the body according to their respective functions. Therefore, the brain is softer than the other parts because it receives all the senses; hence, all the nerves are connected to it and everything that the eye sees, the ear hears, the nose smells, the tongue tastes, or the mouth perceives as touch is referred to it. For what is soft is more inclined to compassion, but what is hard, due to the rigidity of the nerves, is more disposed to action.

62. It is also the most excellent function of hearing, and above all grace to the sight. Therefore, the ears are more prominent, so that they may both bring forward the adornment and catch everything that has flowed from the crown of filth or moisture; at the same time, so that the voice, resounding in their cavities without offense, may enter the inner recesses. For if it were not so, who would not be astonished and rendered deaf by every loud sound; since we frequently experience that we become deafened by a sudden loud noise in the midst of our very duties? Then, as if you see certain defenses extending against the harshness of cold and the burning of heat; so that neither does the cold penetrate the open passages, nor does excessive heat scorch. Furthermore, the winding of the inner ears provides a certain number for modulating and discipline. For through the winding of the ears a certain rhythm is created, and the sound of the voice is expressed through certain melodies. Moreover, the fact that we retain the twists and turns of received speech ourselves teaches us the use of the ears. Indeed, just as a sweet voice is heard in the hollows of mountains, or in the recesses of cliffs, or in the winding of rivers, and the echo returns pleasant responses. The very impurities of the ears also serve a useful purpose in binding the voice: so that its hold on us may be stronger both in memory and in gratitude.

63. But what can I say about the nostrils, which possess a bifurcated and narrow orifice that excels at receiving odors, so that the odor does not pass fleetingly, but rather lingers in the nostrils and nourishes the brain and senses through their duct? Therefore, the odor that is received continues to burn longer than words resonate or sights appear. Often, what you have smelled in a brief moment lingers in your nostrils throughout the day. Through them, waste products of the head flow out, and without deception or any harm to the body, they are removed.

There is also a considerable sense of touch, and in it a most delightful pleasure and a sincere judgment. For often by touch we approve what we cannot approve by sight.

Finally, there is also the function of the mouth or tongue, which however supplies strength to all. For the eyes would not have the power of seeing, if they did not receive the power of bodily substance, which is carried by food and drink, and the ears would not have the power of hearing, or the nose of smelling, or the hands of touching, if the entire body were not strengthened by nourishment. Indeed, we become weak unless we restore these powers with the regular supply of appropriate food. Ultimately, when weakened, we take pleasure in sensations, but as if deprived of their resources, they do not perceive their delights.

66. What should I describe about the fortification of teeth, by which food is chewed and the full expression of voice is made? What nourishment would delight without teeth? Finally, we often observe that those in the prime of life grow old more quickly solely because, with missing teeth, they are unable to take in the power of more substantial food. Therefore, infancy is mute because it does not yet have the vocal organ.

67. Language, moreover, is not only most precious in speaking, but also in eating. For it is, as it were, the voice of the speaker and the hand of the eater, which presents and serves food flowing from the teeth. The voice is also carried by the movement of the air, and is carried through empty space, and the same force that strikes the air now moves, now soothes the emotion of the listener, appeases the angry, raises up the broken, comforts the sorrowful. Therefore let us share a common sound with the singing birds. However, with whom a creature uses a sound, which is reasonable, it cannot be shared with all irrational creatures. For even our senses are shared with other animals, but they do not use the same means as those other animals. The cow raises its eyes to the sky, but it does not know what it is looking at. The wild animals raise their eyes, the birds raise their eyes, their sight is free for everyone: but only humans have the ability to interpret the emotions of what they see. He observes with his eyes the rising and setting of the signs, he sees the ornamentation of the sky, he marvels at the orbs of the stars, he also understands the various glimmers of each, when Hesperus rises, when Lucifer: why does that evening star shine, why does this morning star radiate: what movements does Orion have, what lunar eclipses: how the sun knows its own settings, and how it keeps the rhythm of its own course with solemnity. Other living beings also hear, but who, besides humans, knows through listening? The secrets of wisdom, which are in the earth, can only be gathered by man through hearing, meditation, and prudence. He who can say, 'I will listen to what the Lord God speaks within me' possesses a most precious gift. It is a great privilege for man to be an instrument of the divine voice and to express heavenly oracles with his earthly lips, just as it is written: 'Cry! What shall I cry?' All flesh is grass (Isa. XL, 6). He understood what he was to say, and he cried out. Let those who map out the spaces of heaven and earth with their radios keep their wisdom to themselves. Let them have their understanding, of which the Lord says: And I will destroy the wisdom of the wise (I Cor. I, 19). I will not establish the numbers of speech and the modes, and the measures of the wisdom of music in place: but I define that wisdom, of which the Prophet says: You have made known to me the uncertain and hidden things of your wisdom (Psal. L, 8).

68. But what shall I say about the kiss of the mouth, which is a pledge of piety and charity? Doves kiss each other, but what about the beauty of a human kiss, in which the emblem of friendship and

humanity shines forth, and in which the affection of full charity is expressed with faithfulness? Hence, the Lord, condemning it as a kind of prodigy in the traitor, says, 'Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?' (Luke 22:48). Is this the emblem of charity that you convert into a sign of treachery and an indication of faithlessness? Do you use this token of peace as an instrument of cruelty? Therefore, by bestial obedience of the mouth, you accuse someone who brings death rather than someone who carries the bonds of charity, as confirmed by the divine voice of the oracle. Moreover, that which is unique is that only humans express with their mouth what they feel in their heart. Therefore, silent thoughts of the mind are indicated by the words of the mouth. So what is the mouth of a person if not a kind of access to speech, a source of debate, a hall of words, a storehouse of will? We perceive the body of man to be as a kind of royal palace, in which there is indeed a certain quantity of parts, but the form is that of a unity.

69. The throat follows, through which the vital exchange of the whole body takes place, and the supply of this breath is poured in. The arms follow, and the strong muscles of the upper arms, capable hands for working, and fingers suited for grasping. Hence comes more aptness for working, hence the elegance of writing, and that reed of a swiftly writing scribe, by which the oracles of the divine voice are expressed. The hand is the one that serves food to the mouth: the hand is the one that shines with glorious deeds, which acts as a mediator of divine grace at sacred altars, through which we offer and receive the heavenly sacraments: the hand is the one that works and dispenses the divine mysteries together, by whose name the Son of God did not disdain to be revealed, as David says: The right hand of the Lord has wrought power, the right hand of the Lord has exalted me (Ps. CXVII, 16). Hand is that which made all things, as almighty God said: Is it not my hand that made all these things (Isaiah, LXVI, 2)? Hand is the defense of the whole body, the protector of the head. Although it is in an inferior position, it accompanies the entire crown and adorns it with honorable beauty.

70. Who can adequately explain the firmness of the heart and the softness of the belly? For otherwise, the softer viscera could not be nourished, and the cavities of the intestines would undoubtedly be injured by the hard bones. What is as beneficial as the lung being joined to the neighboring boundary of the heart, so that when the heart becomes inflamed with anger and indignation, it can be more quickly tempered by the blood and moisture of the lung? Therefore, the lung is softer because it is always moist, in order to soften the rigidity of indignation. We have thus thoroughly gone through these things, so that we may appear to grasp them as unlearned people, not as doctors who seem to examine and pursue more fully what is hidden in the recesses of nature.

Moreover, the liver also has a fruitful connection with the spleen, which, while it takes in what it itself may feed upon, wipes away whatever impurities it may detect; so that the finer fibres of the liver may allow the thin and subtle remnants of food to pass through, which are transformed into blood, and contribute to the strength, and are not passed out with feces and filth. Moreover, the intestines, enclosing circular coils without any knots, yet connected with each other, show what else but the divine providence of the Creator, so that the food may not quickly pass through and immediately escape from the stomach? But if this were to happen, an unceasing hunger and continual desire to devour would be generated in humans. For, with their organs emptied and depleted as they are emptied by momentary effusion, it would be necessary for an insatiable and unfillable desire for food and drink to be generated, which undoubtedly would be followed by a

premature death. Therefore, it is concluded that first food is processed in the upper belly, then it is cooked in the liver, and its vaporized juice is transferred to the other parts of the body; and with this substance, the human limbs are nourished, which young people receive for growth and old people for endurance: the remaining as if superfluous is carried through the intestines and expelled through the transverse orifice.

72. Finally, even in Genesis, the ark of Noah is taken as a metaphor for the construction of the human body, of which God said: Make for yourself an ark out of square timbers, you shall make rooms in it, and you shall seal it inside and outside with pitch, and thus you shall make the ark (Gen. 6:14). And further: You shall make a door in the side. And you shall make the lower part of the ark with two divisions and three divisions (Ibid. 16). Therefore, the Lord signifies that the door is in the rear, through which excess food is expelled. For indeed our Creator, led by the sight of man, turns away from the appearance of relics, lest while we cleanse the bowels, we defile the sight. At the same time, consider this, that those things which are full of modesty are placed in a location where they cannot be dishonored by uncovered garments.

73. The pulse of the veins is either a messenger of weakness or of health. However, even though they are spread throughout the whole body, they are neither bare nor uncovered, but are covered by delicate membranes so that there is the opportunity to investigate and the swiftness of sensing, since there is no thickness in the organs that could obstruct the pulse. All the bones, too, are covered by delicate membranes and bound by nerves; especially the head is covered by a delicate skin. They cover themselves with denser hair so that they can have some protection against rain and cold. As for the genitalia, which receive the seminal fluid for the purpose and pleasure of procreation through veins drawn from the neck to the kidneys and loins.

74. What about the duty of the feet, which bear the whole body without any harm from the burden? The flexible knee, by which offense is mitigated before the Lord above all others, anger is appeased, and grace is provoked. For this is the gift of the highest Father to the Son: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus is in the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:10-11). For there are two things that above all else appease God, humility and faith. Therefore, it expresses the attitude of humility and the diligent service of obedience: faith equals the Son to the Father, and both confess the same glory. However, rightly so, a man has not many, but two feet; for four feet belong to wild animals and beasts, and two to birds. Therefore, a man is like a bird, who seeks lofty things with his sight and flies with a certain stroke of the senses' keenness. And therefore it is said about him: Your youth will be renewed like the eagle's (Ps. 103:5); because he is closer to heavenly things and higher than eagles, who can say: But our conversation is in heaven.

Chapter X. On the sixth day, about to bring an end to the entire work, it explains how God rested, and it crowns the discourse with praises of the Creator. But now let our conversation come to an end, since the sixth day is completed, and the sum of worldly work is concluded; namely, the perfect man in whom is the sovereignty of all living creatures, and the highest unity of the universe, and all the grace of the earthly creation. Certainly, let us keep silent; for God has rested from all the works of the world: He has rested in the withdrawal of man, He has rested in his mind and purpose. For He had made man capable of reason, an imitator of Himself, an emulator of virtues, desirous of heavenly graces. In these rests God who says: On whom shall I rest, if not on the

humble, and quiet, and trembling at My words? (Isaiah 66:2)

Therefore, thanks be to the Lord our God who made such a work in which He would rest. He made the heaven, I do not read that He rested; He made the earth, I do not read that He rested; He made the sun, the moon, and the stars, I do not read that He rested: but I do read that He made man, and then He rested, having someone to whom He could forgive sins. Or perhaps at that time the mystery of the future passion of the Lord had already preceded, by which it was revealed that Christ would rest in man, who destined rest for Himself in the body for the redemption of man, as He Himself said: I slept and I rested, and I rose; for the Lord received me (Ps. III, 6). For he himself rested, who made it: to whom be honor, glory, perpetuity from age to age, and now, and always, and forever. Amen.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net